



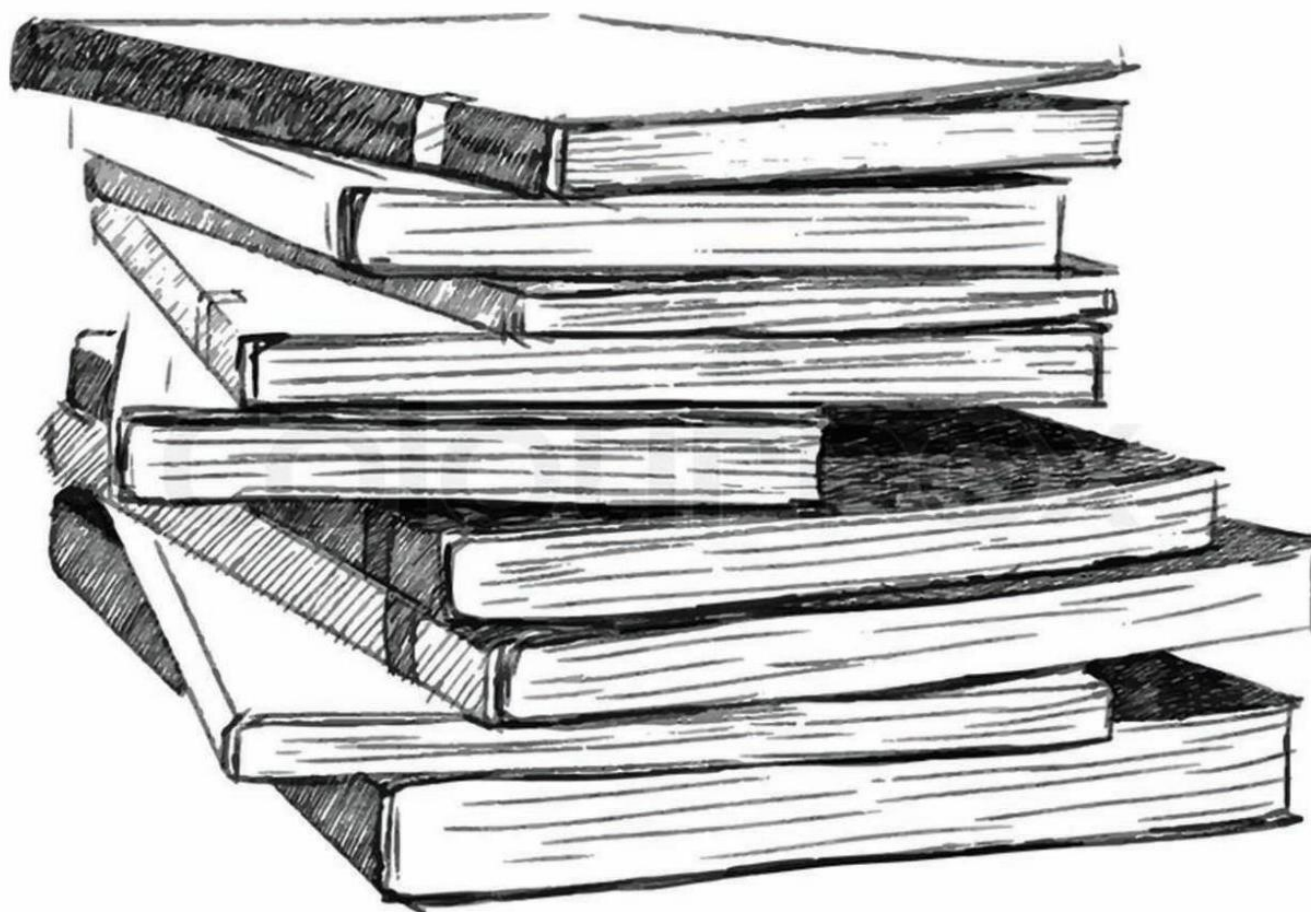
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Dr. Manoj Kumar

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FOREWORD

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you for being so committed to scholarly excellence.

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Exploring the Themes of Cross-cultural Conflicts, Inter-cultural Dialogue, Acculturation, and Identity Crisis in Lahsen Benaziza's *The Splendid Life of a Frequent Traveller*

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Abstract— This piece of work first sheds light on the narrative frame that is used by the writer; then it explains how the combination of the third-person perspective with the stream-of-consciousness technique downplays the effect of subjectivity in a semi-autobiographical novel to allow for a balanced depiction of colonial, post-colonial, and modern Moroccan society. It also points out the fact that writing in the English language enables the author to avoid the pitfalls of post-colonial Moroccan literature that was written in French. Unfortunately, such literature would often emphasize the sentimental, superstitious, and occult aspect of indigenous culture. On the other hand, the essay discusses in detail themes such as cross-cultural conflicts, inter-cultural dialogue, acculturation, and identity crisis, with particular reference to excerpts from the novel and to works of literature, publications and essays that deal with these themes.



Keywords- acculturation, semi-autobiographical, cross-cultural, identity crisis, narrative, postcolonial, stream-of-consciousness

I. INTRODUCTION

Lahsen Benaziza's *The Splendid Life of a Frequent Traveller* is a semi-autobiographical novel that captivates the reader by the smoothness of its writing style, which makes the most complicated details and intricacies of the protagonist's life story easily graspable. This writing style, which can be described as 'the challenging easy', allows the author to break free from the constraints of place and time, travel to the past, return to the present and keep moving forward and backward in time, while constantly providing landmarks and milestones in order to make sure that the reader does not go astray.

The narrative frame combines the third-person perspective with the stream-of-consciousness technique. As a narrative mode that was developed by modernist writers such as

Marcel Proust, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf; the stream-of-consciousness technique is characterized by the use of disjointed interior monologues, with little regard to punctuation. However, in the case of Benaziza's work, the mechanics and punctuation are carefully heeded and are used with a remarkable precision. Moreover, for the depiction of cross-cultural encounters in colonial, postcolonial and Modern Morocco, all the culturally-translated idioms, proverbs and sayings are framed with an outstanding accuracy. Likewise, relevant figures of speech and metaphors are used to give full life to the intended meanings and concepts, and judging by the standards of George Orwell¹, they are anything but stale.

In sum, the novel is laden with themes such as cross-cultural conflicts, acculturation, immigration, identity crisis,

¹ See Orwell, George (April 1946). "Politics and the English Language". *Horizon*. 13 (76): 252–265.

to name but a few. This critical essay begins with a brief account of the main events in the novel. It then provides a full-fledged description of the narrative technique that is employed by the novelist. After that comes a thorough discussion of some of the above mentioned themes, with particular reference to passages from the book and citations from other literary works that deal with the same themes.

II. PLOT SUMMARY

The story focuses on Ayoub Benaissa, a former English literature professor who is now a poor and voiceless man leading a secluded life in a typical Moroccan town (Benslimane). Ayoub, who suffered a serious limp in a tragic accident a few years earlier, is portrayed through the third-person perspective with details about his past that remain mysterious until the end of the novel. Despite his financial struggles, Ayoub has an obsession with travelling every Saturday. His severe limp causes him to face a series of humiliations during his challenging journeys to the airport. Throughout these frustrations, he often retreats into his memories, recalling significant moments from his past in a stream-of-consciousness style. Although his physical condition has declined, his mind remains sharp, allowing him to offer insightful reflections on himself, others, his country and the world around him.

III. NARRATIVE

The narrative combines the third-person perspective with the stream-of-consciousness technique throughout the novel. On occasion, internal monologues and soliloquies are expressed in the first-person narrative to highlight moments when Moussa (the father) or Ayoub (the main character) give full vent to their inner feelings and emotions; that is, their dreams, aspirations or frustrations as they take one blow after another and struggle to stand tall, striving to secure a decent life for themselves and for their loved ones amidst the surrounding chaos, and the hardships and challenges imposed by the bitter reality of life in their native town and country.

This well-elaborated narrative scheme downplays the effect of subjectivity in a semi- autobiographical novel to allow for a balanced depiction of colonial, post-colonial, and modern Moroccan society. Writing in the English language is also a blessing as it enables the writer to avoid the pitfalls of post-colonial Moroccan literature that was written in French. Unfortunately, such literature would often emphasize the sentimental, superstitious, and occult aspect of indigenous culture. Throughout the novel (*The Splendid Life of a Frequent Traveller*), we see that both native culture and Western culture are open to scrutiny and objective criticism, showing the upside and downside of each culture.

Ayoub is a frequent traveller to Europe and North America. He has been so ever since he first set foot on American soil when he successfully applied for a cultural exchange programme and was hosted by an American family. As such, the author keeps oscillating back and forth in time to pick up significant recollections from Ayoub's life as a frequent flyer, starting from his childhood and early school days, moving to boyhood, adolescence and early adulthood, and culminating in the turning point in his life, when he decides to immigrate to Canada in search for a better academic career and better living conditions. The series of ups and downs in Ayoub's life play an important role in shaping his personality and life vision as a whole. Each time the narrative diverts from the present time to describe moments when Ayoub retreats into his memories, seeking comfort in past recollections, the airport as a setting plays the role of a 'bring-the-reader-back-on-track' device. The journeys from Benslimane to Mohammedia by public transportation and the shuttle train rides to Mohammed V airport are recurrent throughout the story. So are the journeys back home, which follow the same path reversely. As a frequent traveller, Ayoub experiences these recurrent journeys each time differently.

We can draw an analogy between Ayoub's repeated trips from his native town to the airport and his lifelong journey at large. Travelling from a Third World country to the West is reminiscent of Ayoub's lifetime struggle to pluck himself out of the quagmire of poverty and to seek self-fulfillment as a renowned professor in his native country and overseas. However, when Ayoub Benaissa returns to Benslimane after the tragic accident, he realizes that his whole life has been a roundtrip, just like the multiple roundtrips to Europe and North America, which are recurrent throughout this semi-autobiography. Ayoub concludes, "It's funny how life comes full circle! You struggle all your life to escape from your destiny only to find yourself in the end stumbling into it!" (310). Here we feel the role of the stream-of-consciousness technique in voicing out Ayoub's inner thoughts and feelings as he is about to undergo a tragic ending of his academic career, and to face dire financial conditions as well as post-traumatic shock.

IV. CROSS-CULTURAL CONFLICTS, INTER-CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND ACCULTURATION

It is worthwhile mentioning that, for Ayoub, travelling to the West is a journey both in space and time because of the obvious differences between Morocco – a Third World country – and Western countries at the economic, cultural, social, and political levels. That's why we feel the impact of the cultural shock that Ayoub endures each time he visits Europe or North America, and we see that he is in his

constant strife to seek inter-cultural understanding and cultural integration. However, as his academic career gets bigger and bigger, he smoothly gets rid of the complex of inferiority towards those egocentric Westerners who think too high of themselves. He becomes convinced that, no matter how intellectually refined Westerners are, they often fail to realize that Europe and North America are not the centre of the universe, and that they are not the only source of enlightenment for the rest of humanity, either. Ayoub concludes that the illusion of inter-cultural understanding is a Utopian world-view, that people of different cultures judge one another by stereotypes and pre-conceived ideas, and that "easy stereotyping spares you the intellectual effort of probing beneath the surface..."(250).

With regard to clichés, stereotypes and pre-conceived judgments that spoil cross-cultural communication, we notice that, throughout the novel, the author is very cautious about the language used to depict Moroccan culture or to convey meanings that are culture-bound in the English language. This is obviously due to an awareness on his part that clichés and stereotypes can be emphasized in case matters such as culturally-translated idioms, sayings and proverbs and the appropriate use of figures of speech are not heeded. A case in point is the declaration "I want the type of education that Nsara give their children. Mother, I want to take my wife and my children and go live in al-Qashla"(15). This excerpt from a long conversation between Moussa – a former Goumier who was forced to fight for the liberation of the very country that colonized and subjugated his native country – and his mother is a perfect example of the author's caution about cross-cultural translation.

The use of "Nsara" instead of "Christians" and "al-Qashla" instead of "army barracks" is very significant. The author opts for the transliteration of words from colloquial Moroccan Arabic instead of using the equivalent of the words he wants to translate in the target language, which is English in this case. He probably does so to emphasize the fact that the speaker is an indigenous person who is talking about the French colonizer. Transliterating Moroccan colloquial Arabic words reminds the reader of the inter-cultural context of the dialogue or conversation that is taking place. It also shows that the author and his characters (Moussa, Ayoub...) are not fully assimilated in Western culture and that they keep a distance from it. They try their best to maintain a sense of national and cultural pride, while embracing aspects of the foreign culture that are a model to follow (rigour- punctuality- seeking knowledge and good education, etc.).

When referring to historical events and their relationship with Moroccan popular culture, the author of the novel uses the transliterated colloquial Moroccan Arabic term which

determines the particular historical moment that is being chronicled, while immediately providing translations and explanations that authentically and faithfully reflect the intended meanings. For example, when relating the story of *Kharboucha* and Caid Aissa Ben Omar in the region of Abda during the late 19th century and the turn of the 20th century, the writer refers to the unruly "bled es-Siba", and he immediately explains that "bled es-Siba" means 'the land of lawlessness', where dissidents sought refuge from the persecution of Caid Aissa, who stole their land and livestock, and imposed heavy taxes on them(52). The same remark can be made about the chronicling of "the ignominious Rafsa", which the author explains as "a general pandemonium and a bloody stampede" (53).

Later in the novel, when Ayoub recalls the days when he was struggling as a foreign student to accommodate himself to academic life in North America, he mentions, among other things, the challenge of typing a term paper. Here, the author uses the expression "écrivain public" to refer to public writers who usually operate in the vicinity of Moroccan tribunals (231). The French expression, "écrivain public", puts the reader in the whole context of Ayoub's educational and cultural background, which is multilingual. Indeed, French is a second language in Morocco, and it has been spoken by the elite ever since the French Protectorate era and even after Morocco got its independence in 1956. Ayoub, like the majority of Moroccans belonging to his generation, benefitted from a form of education that was based on the French system, and with French teachers. So he first learnt and mastered the French language before learning to speak English. Therefore, the use of French words and expressions by the author every now and then is a reminder of this multicultural dimension in Ayoub's educational and professional life.

Speaking of Moroccan folklore and popular culture, the writer refers to genies, ifrits and mythologized figures from Moroccan history such as "Aisha Kandesha"(241-242). Once again, he insists on the transliteration of words from colloquial Moroccan Arabic("Ifrit") instead of using potential equivalents in the English language (ghost- elf-goblin-sprite...etc.). This insistence on transliteration presumably stems from the author's conviction that seeking equivalents in the target language will produce some sort of translation that may sound beautiful but, at the same time, may fail to convey the real meaning of the intended concept or idea. After all, every concept is deeply-rooted in the culture in which it first appeared. That's why the author transliterates expressions such as "A'oudhou bi Allahi mena Shaitani a-rajeem" and "Soubhan moughayir al ahwal!" and then provides their explanation in plain English in the footnotes.

One important point that should be raised here is that while superstitious or occult elements of local culture and folklore are depicted in the novel, the author skillfully insinuates the existence of similar cultural practices and beliefs in Western and foreign cultures. This insinuation is manifested through Ayoub's conviction of the existence of a parallel world and supernatural powers that control the material world that we perceive with our senses (241). Although Ayoub has always been influenced by the Western mode of thinking, which is based on logical deduction, syllogism and cause-effect relationships; he has always kept a balance between rational thinking and spirituality. Presenting the protagonist as someone whose fascination with Western values has never led him to look down on his native culture is a clever and wise move on the part of the writer of the novel. By so doing, the author acquits Moroccan culture of the stigma of sentimentality, superstition and attachment to the occult instead of embracing a rational and Cartesian mindset, a mindset that has always been allegedly deemed a Western privilege. A well-read intellectual would soon find out from the literature that the belief in supernatural powers and the existence of parallel worlds does not only pertain to Third World countries. Many Westerners, too, believe in saints, mysticism, and even reincarnation.

We have now come to the last and most important element in the cross-cultural conflicts that pervade throughout this semi-autobiographical work, which is religion. As far as Islamic tradition is concerned, Ayoub resents the hypocrisy of his native culture, and the "filth hidden under the garb of tradition and morality" (84). However, a show of respect for his late father's devotion to Islamic rituals- mainly prayer- is clearly felt through his stream-of-consciousness flow of ideas. Generally speaking, Ayoub holds a humanistic and universalist view of all religions, including Islam, his own community's faith. We often see him questioning the taken-for-granted and calling into question the value system of all three monotheistic religions. Notions of selected people and chosen ones have always left a bitter taste in his mouth. He has always considered sectarian divisions that place certain religions above the other creeds as being racist drives that lead to armed conflicts, bloody wars and human suffering.

With respect to the Judeo-Christian value system, Ayoub firmly denounces what he deems as a form of intellectual arrogance on the part of a number of Western intellectuals that he happens to meet in his academic adventure overseas. He condemns the fact that they consider Judeo-Christianity as the only way to seek absolute truth. Doctor Hubbard,

notwithstanding his academic maturity, adheres to such Judeo-Christian conservatism and believes in the inherent supremacy of Western civilization. When he makes that infamous statement ("Well I guess that people in Morocco are not to be held accountable to the same moral standards by which we live in the west"), Ayoub ceases to be grateful to the first man "in a position of power to have ever offered him coffee in his office until then, when he had received mostly dry orders and snarls from the pettiest of paper-pushing bureaucrats in his country" (234-235).

This new episode of cultural shock is a perfect manifestation of notions such as power and discourse, Western hegemony, and stereotypes that Ayoub learnt from his readings of Michel Foucault² and Edward Said³. Ayoub recalls these notions amidst the feeling of disillusionment he experiences and his awakening to the fact that Dr. Hubbard's intellectual maturity did not prevent him from embracing a form of discourse that is laden with stereotypes about Non-Westerners.

All in all, Ayoub is always disturbed by the fact that the three monotheistic religions share in common that trait of having adherents who are unwaveringly convinced that members of their creed are the selected ones, detainers of absolute truth, and that they are the only ones who will escape divine chastisement in the hereafter, while the unbelieving others will eternally rot in hellfire. Speaking of the idea of selected ones or chosen ones brings to the fore the Jewish question.

In this regard, Ayoub's childhood souvenirs of Moroccan Jews, and how they used to live peacefully side by side with their Muslim neighbours before the mass emigration to Israel, have always been engraved in his memory. For him such memories constitute a glimpse of hope for inter-cultural understanding and tolerance, and provide a picture in his mind of cross-cultural dialogue that is in total contrast with the frustrating incidents he experienced in North America. Unfortunately, the turn of events later on and the political conflicts between Arabs and Jews will spoil such rosy dream of a peaceful world.

The fact remains, however, that in Moroccan culture, Judaism is an important component. It is true that we Moroccans are people of Arabic and Amazigh descent whose religion is Islam. But the Jewish minority, which has lived for centuries in our land, has had an undeniable impact on our history, culture and society. This impact of Jewish culture on our history is reflected in the author's choice of names for his characters. Most likely, the choice of names such as Ayoub and Moussa is not arbitrary and is meant to

² See Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: the birth of a prison*. London, Penguin, 1991.

³ See Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

send a message to the reader, based on a mixture of Biblical and Quranic references.

For example, the father's name is Moussa and the cart driver's name is Haroun. This is an implicit reference to the story of Moses, which is related both in the Bible and the Holy Quran. This is meant to draw an analogy between Moses' role as saviour of the Jews from slavery and the father's role as saviour of his fellow countrymen from poverty. The protagonist in the novel, on his part, is given the name Ayoub. This is another Quranic/Biblical reference to the prophet Ayoub (Job), who is as an emblem of patience and endurance of life's hardships. The main character, too, shows a great deal of patience and a capacity to stand tall and firm despite "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune..."⁴

On the other hand we can venture to say that evoking references which are both Quranic and Biblical is an attempt to reconcile Jews with Muslims, and to remind everyone that the same God who revealed the Ten Commandments to Moses sent down the Holy Quran to our Prophet (PBUH). The author most likely sees in that an impetus for the Children of Abraham – to quote from the late Moroccan king Hassan II – to seek common grounds for tolerance, coexistence, mutual understanding, and lasting peace. Such impetus may be further buttressed by the historical facts that are laid out in the early chapters of the novel about how Andalusian Jews fled the Catholic courts of inquisition and found a safe haven in Morocco, and how the late Moroccan King, Mohammed the Fifth, protected the Jews from the Nazi- puppet Vichy government.

V. IDENTITY CRISIS

The question of identity is of paramount importance in this semi-autobiography. In the early chapters of the novel, it is a bit latent and barely touched upon in the course of evoking other issues which are related to inter-cultural dialogue and conflicts. A recollection of that notorious incident during Ayoub's life on campus in Canada, when he suffered from racial prejudice as a xenophobe threw racist insults at him during a bus ride, brings the question of identity into the spotlight.

Here we see Ayoub's meditation and self-introspection about his real identity. Ayoub sees the whole incident as a moment of sudden revelation. He was addressed by the losing white racist as a Black man, a nigger. Ayoub has always thought of himself as a Maghrebi from North Africa,

in the cross-roads between Europe, Africa and Asia. He has always considered his country, Morocco, a "cultural palimpsest and an ethnic and civilizational melting pot"(226). The incident is some sort of awakening to the fact that white supremacists lump Arabs, North Africans and Sub-Saharan Africans together, and throw them in the same basket of the "backward other".

Ayoub suddenly begins to re-discover or discover – it's hard to say which is the right verb to use – the latent fact that he is African, belonging to the African continent, and that Morocco is located in Africa, as simple as that. Ayoub mulls over the horrific history of the subjugation, persecution, and exploitation of the African continent by the West, especially during the Transatlantic slave trade times. He feels like "embracing all Africans, African American Slaves, Civil Rights Activists, African and African-American writers" (227). The weird "thank you" reaction to the racist insult, which appears to be some sort of bowing down to the offender instead of fighting back, is deep in meaning. The white loser, along with the other bus riders, can't understand what goes on in Ayoub's mind. For Ayoub, the insult has done him more good than harm. It has opened his eyes to a blunt truth: the separation between North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa – be it geographical, ethnic, racial or cultural – is only valid in the South of the Strait of Gibraltar. The moment one crosses the Mediterranean Sea and reaches the European shores, this separation has no meaning. For Westerners, people who cross the Mediterranean Sea seeking a foothold in Europe are all alike, immigrants coming from the backward black continent.

Meanwhile, the frictions between Ayoub and Dr. Faber emphasize Ayoub's identity as a post-colonial subject from North Africa, "a bookish and oversensitive myopic postcolonial subject feeling about his way in a culture he knew mainly through books...a lascivious Moor attempting to steal Desdemona from her White world" (254-256). Shakespeare's Othello⁵ stands out here as an important cross-reference. Portraying Ayoub as a 20th century Othello perfectly reflects his identity crisis during his stay in Canada. Just like Othello, Ayoub is seeking acceptance in his host country, but can't help being treated as a cultural "other". Trying constantly to adjust to Western culture is like drawing water from a mirage. Ayoub's failed attempts to pass for a real insider and a genuine North American are similar to Othello's attempts to assimilate into Venetian culture. The racist Westerners who cross Ayoub's path are just like the racist characters of Shakespeare's play, who

⁴ See Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616 author. *The tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. [London]: The Folio Society, 1954.

⁵ See Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616. *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice*. Champaign, Ill. :Project Gutenberg, 1993.

believe that Othello is a black Moor who does not belong in Venice.

VI. CONCLUSION

To put it in a nutshell, Benaziza's work follows the same pattern as post-colonial novels such as Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, which convey semi-autobiographical recollections of immigrants from the South of the Mediterranean who pursued an academic or professional career in the West. Such novels attempt to reveal the reality of colonialism and its far-reaching impact on the political, cultural and social landscape in Third World countries. They generally deal with themes and issues such as cross-cultural encounters, inter-cultural conflicts and identity crisis. Many Postcolonial Afro-Arab works of literature subversively deconstruct the colonial discourse that permeates across Western literature, with the ultimate goal of challenging the stereotypical, degrading and biased depiction of the "other" in colonial and postcolonial Western literary discourse.

Elements of intertextuality between Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* and Benaziza's *The Splendid life of a Frequent Traveller* are conspicuous. Tayeb Salih's work, which is acclaimed by most critics as a parody of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, is based on a narrative that shifts from an egocentric world-view to a multi-faceted one, transitioning from the dominance of a monolithic culture to the integration of diverse and conversing cultures, before heading back to the starting point in the Sudan.

Similarly, Benaziza's narrative revolves around Ayoub Benaissa's ascension from the status of a low-life and ambitious native son of Benslimane who constantly seeks social promotion and academic success in his native country, up to the moment when he decides to immigrate to Canada, where he struggles to assimilate into Western culture and faces inter-cultural conflicts, before he finally returns to the homeland, the starting point of his lifetime journey.

On the whole, we can assert that both Salih's novel and Benaziza's semi-autobiography share a common objective, which is to dispel the myth of the inherent superiority of Western culture over the other cultures and civilizations. They provide solid evidence that all the stereotypical devices that are prevalent in colonial and postcolonial Western literature are purely subjective and culturally-biased. After all, no matter how non-biased and objective the rational and allegedly cultured mind might think of himself, "a human being is subjectivity walking on two feet"(234).

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Realising Oneself Amidst the Chaos: An Exploration of the Innerelves of Women Protagonists in Sudha Murty's Select Novels

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Abstract— Every individual human being possesses certain abilities which are always unique. There is no necessity to compete with anyone's ability to prove our individual uniqueness. It is important in life to sustain our uniqueness and never become dependent at any point in life. Sudha Murty, an eminent writer discloses her experiences and observations of society in the art of writing short stories and novels. Being a contemporary writer, her writings are a mere reflection of reality, and always had a vision in all her works. The purpose of this paper is to examine the striking similitude of the women protagonists Shrimati and Mridula in Sudha Murty's novels *Gently Falls the Bakula* and *House of Cards*. Shrimati and Mridula are chosen for this analysis as their characters coincide at certain points and they both sail on the same boat. The common difficulties they face as a woman in the family and society are tracked down to the profound understanding of the protagonist's painful search for themselves.



Keywords— *Individuality, Uniqueness, Belonging, Women, Reality, Society.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature is the mirror and reflection of society and portrays women being women's enemies in many fictional and non-fictional stories. Fictions become a powerful and effective form of literary expression and have acquired a prestigious position in the Indian English realm. The rise of the novel in India is closely associated with social, political, cultural, religious, economic, and other factors. The last ten years of the twentieth century saw an unexpected spray of women activists' works in Indian English Fiction. A gathering of Indian writers in their in-betweens, the hybridity of thought and multicultural, multi-lingual, and multi-strict social aspects have conceptualized the specific. While the gynocritics imagine that an excessive number of women in an excessive number of nations communicate in a similar language of quietness, a few Indian women authors have

attempted with earnestness to manage the physical, mental, and profound pressure and condition of women.

Indian women novelists after the 1980s had shown strong consistency and stamina to locate them in different perspectives. The writers have carried mind-boggling changes to adjust a particular type to investigate the neglected exhibit of illnesses; to uncover the equivocal truth of the general public and the predicaments of Indian women in the general public. Women are not generally described to give up, submit and endure. Women authors reveal the secret insider facts and encase the conscious disavowals that are refutable in the present setting.

The entire band of women writers of the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century have featured the meaning of depicting a woman as an individual opposing the customary job, breaking the shackles of double-dealing and abuse, and arousing with

the feeling of personality to state her distinction. Their depiction of women characters in the books perpetually bears credibility to their women's activist methodology and point of view. Their sharp perception of the existence of the Indian women and their advantage in the investigation of their internal brains is proven by their striking and all-encompassing depiction of their predicaments.

Among the women writers in Indian writing in English, the best and most eminent writer would be Sudha Murty. She is a person who followed a vision, not a path, and an optimistic writer too. Murty's works are a mirror of her heart and mind. She has written many short stories, travelogues, technical books, fiction, and non-fiction. Sudha Murty is an inspiration to many women in balancing the home and career in an equal equilibrium. Murty's writing reflects real-life observations, hence it is always realistic. There are many writers like Murty who concentrate on women's upliftment. For example, Ruth Praver Jabwala, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, and many others succeed in depicting women's frustrations and their reactions in their novels.

Ruth Praver Jhabvala, a major women novelist, is not much concerned with the personality of modernity and the liberation of women. Her women's character never crossed the patriarchal threshold and they do not go against their tradition. Sashi Despande women are educated, self-conscious, and sensitive. Her women resolve against the traditional, social, and family setups out of necessity. Nayantara Sahgal's women possess remarkable inner strength and are liberal and unconventional. Anita Desai a notable women novelist has a different dimension to women writers in English with her feminine sensibility, which attempts to open up women's issues with the right psychological and philosophical levels. Likewise, Sudha Murty holds a new dimension in bringing up the women characters in her fiction. The characters do not rise like a rebel against men or patriarchal traditions, they are entirely different and their ultimate goal would be attaining individual uniqueness.

The main objective is to trace how Mridula and Shrimati attain individual uniqueness by discovering themselves. The researcher tries to identify the similarity in their character, behaviour and attitude. The paper attempts to depict the parallel approach of women protagonists in the two novels. The research tries to expose the struggle and pain they undergo in the journey of finding out the meaning of their life.

II. **PROMINENCE TOWARDS THE FEELING OF BELONGING**

This paper analyses Sudha Murty's two fictional stories *Gently Falls the Bakula* and *House of Cards* based on Alfred Adler's theory of Individual Psychology and feelings of belonging. It is important for women to discover and enhance their individuality to build their own identity. The concept of fighting and believing in equality has become pointless. It is the foremost factor to be considered is attaining individuality. Society sets strands based on gender and creates cultural norms and traditions according to their pliability. When men and women are expected to follow certain norms pertaining to their familial tradition there raises a problem of inequality. Indian society to date relies upon the patriarchal system it is followed since ancient times. Many women voice out their ideas and thoughts initially in the family but the response from the family members itself is against them.

The notion that women are inferior not equal to men, is something which is always there in the human mind. The fact is that men are molded by women in the family playing different roles such as grandmother, mother, sister, and wife. Alfred Adler, founder of the school of individual psychology emphasizes the importance of feelings of belonging. Adler is also remembered for his concept of inferiority, where he exhibits feelings an inferiority complex plays a major role in the formation of personality. Adler's theory suggested that every person has a sense of inferiority. From childhood, people work towards overcoming inferiority by "striving for superiority". Adler's theory can be used as he emphasizes human feelings and the sense of belonging which is highly relatable to the two stories.

Human feelings are the driving factor for mankind to run their life in this world. The behavior of a man and a woman depends on the feeling they have at that particular moment. The human mind is structured in such a way that if we are rewarded for something we do is a form of appreciation. So people do not know the fact to identify what is our duty and expect everything to be appreciated and recognized. And when they do not receive such recognition in life they feel highly depressed. Human feelings are structured depending on societal treatment. According to Adler, when we feel encouraged, we feel capable and appreciated and will generally act in a connected and cooperative way. When we are discouraged, we may act in unhealthy ways by competing, withdrawing, or giving up. It is in finding ways of expressing and accepting encouragement, respect, and social interest that help us feel fulfilled and optimistic.

This paper undertakes Sudha Murty's novel for the analysis of the woman protagonists and portrays the painful struggle they undergo to taste the fruit of uniqueness and individuality. The novel *Gently Falls the Bakula* is the story of Shrimati and Shrikanth who studied and grew up together right from childhood days. Shrikanth developed a liking for Shrimati after his higher secondary education. Both their families have an enmity between them and they don't talk with each other. These families have one thing in common which is the Bakula tree. The Bakula tree becomes a meeting point for the two of them and has a good healthy conversation for a long time. This continued for a few days as a friendship and later Shrimati also developed an interest in Shrikanth. They both fell in love with each other, even after knowing their families has various conflicts and differences of opinion. After much struggle, somehow they convinced their family members and got married. They were very happy after marriage and left the village soon in order to continue Shrikanth's job.

Shrimati being an intelligent and shrewd girl in the class scored high marks and wanted to pursue her education higher and loved to work on her own wish. Shrimati left her ambitions and didn't take up a career in order to be with Shrikanth and help him in all ways. She did the same for ten years from the time of their marriage and Shrikanth also seemed to be a more successful person in his field, achieving more and more breaking all the obstacles. Shrimati stood as a backbone for him, whenever there is a need in Shrikanth's life. Even after sharing and spending her valuable ten years at a young age developing her husband, everything went in vain. It is of no use, and no attention is given to her emotions. Later at the end of the novel, we come to know money has changed people's mental psyche and turns out to be the starting point of all the issues in the family.

House of Cards is the narration revolving around Sanjay and Mridula exploring human relationships and the novel stands as a mirror to our society. Mridula hailing from a rich family in Karnataka falls in love with the middle-class man Sanjay. For her, money and status are not a matter of concern; she wants to live the life which she loved. Sanjay is a doctor, a service-oriented person who aims to help needy people with the help of his education. He would love to serve people for free, like his father without charging anything. Even though he does it with a good heart but it does not serve the purpose. Sanjay couldn't succeed in his attempt and started feeling low about himself. Mridula started supporting Sanjay mentally and drives him to stay strong. Then he starts a small nursing home with the help of Alex, his intimate friend from his college days. Sanjay termed to be successful in treating the patients but he couldn't earn more money.

Sanjay is not a money-minded person, but along with Alex he also turned out to be the one. It started the problem and the importance switched towards money rather than showing love towards the relationship. Sanjay forgets how he has been in the initial days of his career and started craving money more.

III. STRIVING FOR INDIVIDUALITY

The main objective of this paper is to depict the parallelism and showcase the importance of individual empowerment as a humanistic approach. Parallelism refers to similar elements to emphasize similar ideas in a fictional story. Here parallelism is found in both novels emphasizing a specific point or idea. The parallel concept is traced through the two characters Shrimati and Mridula. There are few instances that portray how money takes a pivotal role in destroying one's individuality and sense of happiness in these novels.

DESTRUCTION OF THE FAMILY

In *Gently Falls the Bakula*, from the time of marriage Shrikanth runs behind the money and concentrates on earning money. Shrimati longs to spend quality time and make love with her husband. The love she expects is not reciprocated by Shrikanth, rather he laughs at her and says

"Shrimati, are you aware of what you just said? Think rationally, and be practical. You want me to retire at the age of thirty- three! A man is in his prime at this age. It is time for him to grow professionally. Besides I feel that I have not achieved much in life. I cannot live in Hubli. What would I do there? Hubli is my past. The past is always beautiful because we cannot get it back. Childhood looks beautiful when you are young. Youth looks romantic when you are old. Whatever we lose is always precious. Think of adjusting and looking forward to an ever-changing world. Don't get into the past". (*Gently Falls the Bakula*, 134)

Shrimati becomes speechless after hearing from Shrikanth, and there she is reminded of her school and college life. The studious student in her young days left her education and career just because of the unconditional love she had for her husband. She decides that, when her silence is unheard by Sanjay, her words will also become meaningless. Shrimati couldn't sleep and started reading letters that he sent her during the early days of their love. Her inner conscience starts taunting her about how she lost her old Sanjay and his pure love for her. The love that

Shrikanth had for her before marriage is found nowhere in her life.

Shrimati emotionally gets affected in the journey of searching for her husband's love and affection. It is meaningless and she feels that even after that, Shrikanth continued to concentrate more and more on his business to achieve greater heights.

When Shrimati feels a vacuum in her life, it becomes the turning point of her life. She starts thinking for herself and tries to gain her individualism which she lost after marriage. According to Shrimati, true love does not require beauty or intelligence. It only requires mutual love and intense faith. She took much time to think about the aftereffects in society if she moves away from her husband. Then Shrimati made up her mind and decides to leave her husband and move on with her life. Then, she came near Shrikanth and said,

"Shri, I have thought about every day calmly for the last four weeks. You can definitely live without me. You will find an excellent secretary who can do all this work for you. You may miss me for some time but you will get used to it. Shri, if you really need my help, please call me. Wherever I am, I will come and visit you. It is very difficult for me to leave you, but I have no other option. I married you because I loved you. I am not leaving you because of our quarrel. I am not going away because you are angry with me. I am not deserting you either for monetary gain or some other temptation. I am going away only because I want to be like you. You are not like a normal husband who would control his wife...." (*Gently Falls the Bakula*, 163)

The above lines convey the strong feeling of Shrimati, where she acts very sensibly to come out of the trap of marriage. She doesn't fight, argue or quarrel while leaving for the United States because she feels pointless in talking to a person who has no emotional attachment even after living together for ten years. This act of Shrimati just moved Shrikanth because the response he got from her is unexpected. He feels as if Shrimati takes away all his spirits with her and leaves him empty. Her absence showed him how painful life is going to be in the future. Shri could feel the emptiness at his house the moment she left the place. His mind didn't even work as he is in shock and hasn't stopped her from moving out of the house.

The breaking point in the novel is the self-realization of Shrimati. The point of realization doesn't drive her in an improper channel. The decision is taken only after envisioning her upcoming future. Shrimati feels,

"I cannot live in this kind of an atmosphere with these artificial values. I require to breathe fresh air. I do not want to live as your shadow. I want to find my own happiness. Shri, if I had not been sensitive and bright, I wouldn't have had to suffer such loneliness. I could have enjoyed your wealth. When I was thinking about my life so far, and what my goal has been, I have realized what I want." (*Gently Falls the Bakula*, 161)

This shows that Shrimati is not a materialistic woman as she needs everything around her to be realistic, not artistic. His money is insignificant and she is the one who needs only and demanded love from him. As life makes her understand, she will not receive love anymore her way of approach towards life is distinct in many ways. Her notion is not to disturb Shrikanth at any point before leaving him. She is so sensible in making her life beautiful.

IV. MRIDULA'S UNFLINCHING EFFORT

In *House of Cards*, the protagonist Mridula faces certain humiliations inside the house. Sanjay, a doctor by profession achieves greater height with the help of his wife. Unlike Shrimati in *Gently Falls the bakula*, Mridula on the whole is a full support system for Sanjay in maintaining the financial side of their nursing home. Initially, Mridula out of sheer love doesn't bother anything about her individuality and always thinks about Sanjay's growth. Once Sanjay started growing in his field, Mridula is the one feels so happy for him. She thought that Sanjay might be relieved from all stress as he started earning as much as he expected. Sanjay earned much but he started hiding many things from his wife. He doesn't find time for his wife to sit and talk for a while at home.

Mridula came to know at one point that Sanjay has cheated her financially and her mind is not ready to take it up. After this, she went into high depression and was in treatment for several days. It is all due to Sanjay's change of attitude which destroyed the loving relationship and had nothing to do with Mridula's character. She asks the doctor,

"With everything that happened, I don't know how to behave with Sanjay. What should I do?"

In return doctor replies,

"Mridula, your husband is a nice man. But he has a big ego because of his success. Money makes him feel powerful. He has an inferiority complex and an old value system where men are supposed to be the dominating partner. Unlike you, he is a

complicated person. That's why he's never established good communication with you...." (*House of Cards*, 214)

In doctor's perception, Mridula is perfectly all right and is gaining the courage and confidence to move on with her life. The change and the willingness to change have to come from Sanjay and Mridula cannot help it out. The doctor even asks Mridula not to expect anything from her husband. Above all, Mridula tried to talk with Sanjay, but he doesn't find time in his busy schedule. This makes her feel that there is no point in living with Sanjay. One day, When Mridula overhears Sanjay and Alex's conversation about her, she felt odd about staying with Sanjay under the same roof.

She decides to move to Alhadalli her native, getting transferred from the school where she is working presently. Mridula looks at Sanjay and informs about her egress saying,

"I have spent twenty- five of my most important years with you and yet, I never felt like I belonged to you and your family. I am still an outsider, Sishir is independent and you can take care of him better than I can. My duty towards both of you is over. I've fulfilled all my duties as a wife, mother, and daughter-in-law. Now I want to live for myself. You don't have to worry about me any longer. You and Sishir can visit me whenever you want" (*House of Cards*, 218)

The deep-rooted pain of Mridula is portrayed in the above lines, how she feels the void in her house even after twenty-five years of marriage. Mridula totally lived life according to Sanjay's wish to see him happy always. Mridula never thought for herself after marriage and not showed any kind of superiority in twenty-five years. On the verge of self-realisation Mridula understands the real position of her in Sanjay's life. The feeling of being an outsider inside the family is extremely painful for an individual. Mridula's assertion is to start a new life independently and live for herself not depending on Sanjay's love and care.

V. PARALLEL FACTORS IN THE LIFE OF TWO WOMEN

The two characters live through a sense of isolation, and loneliness and move into depression. Even after years Shrimati and Mridula feels like an outsider in the family. It is important to note that, as Adler's theory points out if the sense of belonging is lost in a family then the individual loses her significance. As a human, we need our place in society to sustain and establish ourselves in this fast-moving world. The home should always be set

right as that gives us the comfort zone for our mind to work peacefully. But here in the story, self-realization takes place after ten years and twenty-five years of their marital life. It is easy for an individual to find out what is happening around them, here it has taken a longer time.

The quest for their individualism haunted them to find meaning in their life which is been lost for so long. It is evident that Mridula and Shrimati do not rebel against the family. Even in the twenty-first century, Murty's women characters rely on the customs and traditions of the family. Unlike Jaya in Deshpande's *That long silence*, who moves out of the family leaving everything for pursuing her passion for writing. Here, Murty's women protagonists are not likely to move away from their family leaving their familial responsibility. They haven't tried to establish feministic thoughts in the family. They move out of the family only when their emotions are not valued in the materialistic world.

From the beginning of the story, the characters are affectionate towards everyone in the family and none of the problems arise because of them. Shrimati and Mridula's journey is similar in many aspects and we could relate to many incidents in these two novels. As Adler says, everything goes in vain when the sense of belonging is lost. The statement is true, as the sense of belonging is lost; there is no purpose in having a loving relationship. His concept is apt in finding out the parallel factors in the fiction of Sudha Murty.

VI. CONCLUSION

Shrimati and Mridula raised on love see things differently from Sanjay and Shrikanth who are raised on survival. The two women thought much about the cultural traditions and familial constructs before moving out of the family. The decision is made only after having thought about the consequences which are about to take place in the aftermath. The characters feel that when the sense of belonging is lost in their own family, there is no point in staying inside the house as one among them. Since they want to live a life of their own, nothing stopped them from doing anything of their wish. Even though people talk about freedom, feminism, rights, and so on, our Indian society still relies upon the patriarchal stereotyped society. It is never appreciated in the male-dominated society to welcome women who leave their husbands and live independently. Every relationship should be given part or equal preference for self-expression.

The main solution to any problem is, as a human, we need to speak up for ourselves. As an individual we fail to, and that is the place where we lack individuality. It is better to point out whether it is right or wrong as an

individual we must voice out our opinions at places where it is needed. It is said that people change for two reasons. First is when a person learns a lot and the second reason for the change is they have been hurt a lot. Shrimati and Mridula even though they learned a lot from society and the family, they have lost their significance in life after getting hurt by their own family. According to Adler's theory, Shrimati and Mridula long for a sense of belonging, and through that they think that they can attain individuality.

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Within the Naked Body: Phenomenological Perspectives on Women's Corporeality and Eating Disorders in Laurie Halse Anderson's *Wintergirls* and Elena and Clara B Dunkle's *Elena Vanishing: A Memoir*

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Abstract— This research paper explores the experiences of women grappling with eating disorders through a phenomenological lens, concentrating on Leib and Körper as both are synonymous with 'body' - 'leib' from Latin generally refers to the 'body as a subject' (i.e.) the body that I am, 'körper' comes from Middle High German meaning 'body as an object' which also denotes the body that I have are utilized in this paper to exhibit the current condition of women's corporeality. Laurie Halse Anderson's *Wintergirls* and Elena and Clara B Dunkle's *Elena Vanishing: A Memoir* are the selected literary texts which showcase how beauty standards and internalized trauma shape self-perception and corporeality. Kim Chernin's *Feminist theories* enhance the study by revealing the intersection of body image, mental health and societal expectations. By engaging with medical humanities, this research offers valuable insights into the narrative and cultural dimensions of eating disorders, contributing to interdisciplinary conversations on mental health and identity.



Keywords— Corporeality, phenomenology, eating disorders, feminism, health humanities.

I. INTRODUCTION

Eating Disorders like Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, Binge eating Disorders have seen an alarming rise globally. An updated report by the SingleCare Team was released on 24th January 2024 states that the statistics of eating disorders have increased from 3.4% to 7.8% globally. Harvard University, in collaboration with STRIPED (Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders), has produced a research report titled *The Social and Economic Cost of Eating Disorders in the United States of America: A Report for the Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders and the Academy for Eating Disorders* (2020) has found out that 28.8 million (9%) Americans are diagnosed with

eating disorders for a lifetime. The report also states that the estimation of the overall lifetime prevalence of eating disorders among women is 8.60%. Beyond the physical and psychological harm, these disorders highlight a conflict between societal expectations of beauty and women's lived realities.

Health Humanities provides comprehensive ideas on merging literature, humanities and medicine and health. It enables the use of humanities to analyze the subjective experiences to detect the etiology of their illnesses, medical conditions that torment people with mental disputes which provides instability. Literature's venture into Health Humanities has provided narratives that elucidate illness narratives and health conversation globally. Through

literature, the liability of mankind is explored and understood. *Wintergirls* (novel) and *Elena Vanishing: A Memoir* (memoir) present the fictional and realistic portrayal of women suffering from eating disorders like Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa. This research paper explores the condition of women's corporeality in the current society where their bodies and selfhood are conditioned in an objective stance. Lia Overbrooke (*Wintergirls*) and Elena Dunkle (*Elena Vanishing: A Memoir*), protagonists of the selected literary texts offer poignant analysis on their intense alienation from their bodies due to their traumatic experiences and societal pressures. Utilizing phenomenology and Kim Chernin's Feminist ideas from her book *The Obsession: Reflections on the Tyranny of Slenderness*, this paper investigates the transformation of women's corporeality, emphasizing the impact of eating disorders on selfhood.

'Within the Naked Body' exhibits the inhumane and lonely sufferings of women and adolescent girls with their bodies and flesh. These women and girls have perceived their bodies as disgusting entities and wish to erase all the ugly traces and fats their bodies behold. The emotional storm that every female character possesses in *Wintergirls* and *Elena Vanishing: A Memoir* presents their unspoken and hidden worries and traumas. The significant aspect of the research topic is that the human naked body's objectification is further analyzed with the phenomenological concept of Leib and Körper. This research proposes (1) how the corporeality of female characters experiences disastrous changes in their bodies and health caused by eating disorders which leads to the rejection of their biological anatomy and womanhood in the select works through the use of the phenomenological concept and (2) how eating disorders act as tyrants that heighten the self-objectification experienced by women's lived bodies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Lopez-Gil et al. (2023), in their research article, *Global Proportion of Disordered Eating in Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis*, they have concluded that among the 63,181 participants from 16 countries, 22% of children and adolescents exhibited eating disorders. The prevalence was even higher among the older adolescent girls and those with a higher body mass index. Eating disorders are one of the concerns of current society, as the predominant victims are the female community. Considering the vulnerability of women and adolescent girls, literary research proceeds with novels and memoirs' depictions of the threshold of eating disorders and body image issues among the female community.

The article, *The Shadow that Hovered Over: Gender Salience in Eating Disorder Recovery* by Connor B. S. Strobel, published in *Gender Issues* (2022), examines the impact of gender on the recovery process from eating disorders. Utilizing narrative and content analyses of online accounts from Tumblr and eating disorder support groups, the research identifies four distinct narrative types- Ecological, Sickened, Abused and Warrior- that individuals use to describe their experiences. These narratives are gendered, with men exclusively adopting the Warrior narrative, which is associated with higher rates of relapse.

Thomas Fuchs's article *The Disappearing Body: Anorexia as a Conflict of Embodiment*, published in *Eating and Weight Disorders-Studies on Anorexia, Bulimia and Obesity* (2021) states that Anorexia nervosa is primarily a conflict of self-alienation from the body, not just a body image disorder. This paper explores the duality of the lived body (subject) vs. the physical body (object).

Being a body and having a body: The twofold temporality of embodied intentionality by Maren Wehrle, published in *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* (2019), explores the dual nature of human embodiment as both a subject and an object of experience, drawing on the phenomenological distinction between Leib (lived body) and Körper (physical body) as articulated by Helmuth Plessner and Edmund Husserl.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The foundation of this research paper is rooted in the phenomenology of the body, utilizing Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's ideas. Through Husserl, one can explore how individuals, especially women and adolescent girls perceive their bodies through their subjective consciousness. Ponty's concept sheds light on the body as a fundamental component of experience and also emphasizes ideas such as body schema and the lived body (Leib) to delve into the body's internal experience and its interaction with the outer world. This research paper distinguishes 'Leib' (the body as a subject) and 'Körper' (the body as an object)- 'Leib' represents the body as experienced from within, integral to personal identity and 'Körper' refers to the body as an external object influenced by cultural and societal norms. Kim Chernin's feminist idea from her book *The Obsession: Reflections on the Tyranny of Slenderness*, critiques how beauty standards commodify women's bodies, leading to self-objectification and alienation. By integrating phenomenology and feminism, this research bridges literary analysis with medical humanities, enriching our understanding of the

socio-cultural and psychological dimensions of eating disorders.

The research design is constructed by the integration of phenomenological concepts, Leib and Körper- the experience of the body both internally and externally. This would guide the analysis of how female characters in *Wintergirls* and *Elena Vanishing: A Memoir* view their bodies through society's beauty lens. Kim Chernin's involvement would further enhance and divulge the thresholds of women and adolescent girls struggling with body issues and eating disorders.

This research paper employs a qualitative research paradigm to delve deeper into the complex issues faced by the female characters dealing with eating disorders through the narratives of *Wintergirls* and *Elena Vanishing: A Memoir* (fictional and real contexts).

Phenomenological Interpretation: Women's Corporeality and Eating Disorders in *Wintergirls* and *Elena Vanishing: A Memoir*

Eating Disorders are considered serious health deteriorating disorders where the individuals who are prone to such disorders-Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa-engage in 'disorderly eating' habits. The most common eating disorders found in this era are Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa. Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa are defined by Merriam-Webster as "a serious disorder in eating behaviour that is characterized especially by a pathological fear of weight gain leading to faulty eating patterns, malnutrition and usually excessive weight loss and that occurs most commonly in young women in their teens and early twenties" and "a serious eating disorder that occurs chiefly in females is characterized by compulsive overeating usually followed by self-induced vomiting laxative or diuretic abuse and is often accompanied by guilt and depression". Mostly, women's communities- girl children, adolescent girls, and women are the victims of eating disorders more than men.

One cannot neglect the disorderly eating habits of the individuals who are either affected or sooner be affected by eating disorders- as 'eat' is not just a verb in English but also an activity that symbolizes the act of living and sustenance. "*Manger est toujours bien plus que manger*" (Giard 279) ['Eating is always much more than eating']. To eat is not just to gobble up the food, but to eat mindfully and spiritually to enrich the livelihood of mankind. Such eating activity is at stake due to the unjust notions and expectations of society; trauma has also a role to play in disorderly eating behaviour of individuals. Female entities are always placed in the hot seat of society, regarding their body shape and beauty ideals than men. Being materialized for centuries, the subjective aspect of a

female body gradually modifies into an objective stature. This eventually exhibits the alienation from one's body, hatred towards their biological body and their changing body due to puberty.

Phenomenology is a philosophical field of study that focuses mainly on the study of experience and how things are evident to a conscious subject or mind. Husserl urged us to delve deeply into the things that appear as phenomena to understand the necessity. "Because in phenomenology the 'way of appearance' (*Erscheinungsweise*) is directly related to the meaning or sense (*Sinn*), we can also say that the Körper-Leib distinction refers to the fact

that the body can have different meanings" (Slatman 203). The concept of Leib and Körper emerged in the twentieth century by a group of German Philosophers- Edmund Husserl, Max Scheler and Helmuth Plessner. Jenny Slatman, in her research paper *The Körper-Leib Distinction* (2019) highlights that Körper is more instrumental in the contemporary world than Leib, as Körper- the objective body can be easily "manipulated, repaired and used" (Slatman 203) in the current society. This indicates the very modification of an individual from a subjective notion to an objective aspect.

Jenny Slatman further provides the etymology and semantics of Leib and Körper in her phenomenal article (2019),

Körper stems from the Latin *corpus* and refers to bodies as physical entities, including celestial bodies, geometrical entities, and dead bodies, corpses. *Leib*, by contrast, is related to the verbs *leben* (to live) and *erleben* (to experience, to go through) and the adjectives *lebendig* (in person, in the flesh). As such, *Leib* refers to the body as it is experienced or lived instead of the body as it can be measured or quantified... To define *Leib*, Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception* uses the French terms *corps vécu* (lived body), *corps propre* (one's own body), and *corps sujet* (body as subject or subjective body). Current English translations of Körper-Leib distinction therefore include the following twin concepts: 'physical/material body' versus 'lived/animated body' or 'objective body' versus subjective body. (Slatman 204)

Edmund Husserl in his *Ideas II*, which was first written in 1912 but was posthumously published in 1952, describes how Leib's constitution differs from Körper's constitution. "They are both constituted by consciousness. Or, to put it differently, they involve two different ways in which the body appears to consciousness" (Slatman 204). Husserl gives an example of hands touching each other. When the left-hand touches the right hand, the left hand is experienced in two different manners. First, the left hand is

treated as a 'physical thing' which is composed of roughness or smoothness (deprived of any sensations)- the Körper. Secondly, when the left-hand touches the right hand, there are a series of sensations (*Tastempfindungen*) which causes the 'me-ness'- sense of ownership of the body- constituting the Leib.

The select literary works, *Wintergirls* (2009) by Laurie Halse Anderson and *Elena Vanishing: A Memoir* (2015) by Elena and Clara B. Dunkle, are novel and memoir which present vulnerable female characters who are prey to eating disorders whose corporeality entirely transforms into materialistic entities. Laurie Halse Anderson's narrative, plot construction and character development are similar to Elena Dunkle's memoir. But Elena Dunkle being the victim of Anorexia Nervosa has delved deeper (emotionally but handled maturely) into her memoir's contents. Both the selected works narrate vividly the traumas of the female characters with eating disorders, the objectification of their bodies, the backstory to their threshold and how eating disorders evade their subjective consciousness and push them into the realm of materiality.

Lived vs. Objectified Bodies in Anderson's *Wintergirls*

Laurie Halse Anderson's *Wintergirls* (2009) illustrates the internal conflict of a seventeen-year-old, Lia Overbrooke. Having come from a dysfunctional family, her father, David Overbrooke, a History Professor, had extramarital affairs which led to his divorce from Lia's mother, Dr. Marrigan. Throughout the novel, Lia plainly addresses her mother as 'Dr. Marrigan', not with any specific endearment. Lia experiences the transformation of her lived body (Leib) into an objectified perception (Körper). Lia's childhood friend, Cassandra Jane Parrish (a.k.a Cassie) dies at the beginning of the novel due to her bulimic advancement. This news devastates Lia and she starts to feel an eerie and haunting presence in her room- who is none other than Cassie. Lia begins to unravel the reason for her friend's sudden demise and also presents how her body is perceived by herself as a commodity.

Growing up as a kid, Lia Overbrooke enjoyed eating her Nanna's home-cooked meals. Recalling such blissful moments of Lia, waiting for Thanksgiving day to have a joyous meal with her Nanna and her close family, reinforces her connection to her family and self. Such harmonious moments are disrupted by a chain of external and personal crises- her Nanna's sudden demise, her father's infidelity eventually leading to her parent's divorce. Later, Lia finds Cassie indulging in induced purging, arising perplexity and concerns in Lia at her friend's behaviour, she confides in Cassie. Cassie revealing her inability satiate her taste buds and her hunger, she mindlessly gobbles up the food and then is involved in self-

induced vomiting. One has to note that Cassie's disordered eating and purging are helping mechanisms for her to overcome or put a façade to her ongoing troubles with her family and her concerns about her body appearance.

Cassie realized that if she could take control over her body and sculpt her body to the norms of society's beauty standards, she could escape from her labyrinth of emotional breakdowns caused by her family as well as society. Her perspective of her lived body converted into a geometrical corporeality when she attained puberty. Lia recalls her fifth grade with Cassie- "...the boob fairy arrived with her new wand and smacked Cassie wicked hard" (Anderson 39). The boys in the class snickered at Cassie, even the girls whispered about Cassie's enlarged chest. Cassie, though she turned a deaf ear to their comments, she was deeply affected. This scar intensified when Thatcher Greyson drew a picture of Cassie with "watermelon-sized breasts" (Anderson 40) and passed the drawing around the class. This incident triggered body consciousness in Cassie and later, this led to the objectification of her growing feminine body.

The body holds meaning. A woman obsessed with the size of her body, wishing to make her breasts and thighs and hips and belly smaller and less apparent, may be expressing the fact that she feels uncomfortable being female in this culture....

A woman obsessed with the reduction of her flesh may be revealing the fact that she is alienated from a natural source of female power and has not been allowed to develop a reverential feeling for her body. (Chernin 02)

Lia's perception of her body begins to shift under the weight of societal beauty standards. The Leib (lived body) is demolished in Cassie's body and Körper's dictatorship rules over Cassie and Lia's bodies. Lia, having seen her friend's deadly appetite, food rituals

and her coping mechanism to avoid the thresholds, begins to restrict her food intake. She soon becomes anorexic and gets hospitalized at New Seasons.

Knowing Lia's internalization that thinness equates to control, worth and perfection, her attending doctor at New Seasons asks her to draw her body silhouette, as to know how she perceives her body. Lia epitomizes her body parts to inanimate objects: "I wanted to draw my thighs, each the size of a couch, on his carpet. The rolls on my butt and gut would rumble over the floor and splash up against the walls; my boobs, my arms, tubes of cookie dough oozing at the seams" (Anderson 82). Here, Lia places her body on a vantage point where she can go on to exteriorize her body with inanimate objects. Such metaphors exude self-dehumanization and also reflect the dominance of Körper over her cognition. Lia's body ceases

to be her own; instead, it becomes a site of scrutiny and manipulation dictated by societal ideals. Her mind was wrecked with false outlines of her body (fat, rolls of flesh) but in contradiction, her body is as thin as a skeleton.

Anderson elaborates elaborately about Lia's standpoints about her materialized body and her state of vulnerability through her detailed narration and sentence structure- Lia's body parts being apparently similar to that of an object. Anderson does not fail to highlight that Lia's anorectic condition strengthens due to her continuous alienation from her maturing body. Kim Chernin, a feminist critic concerned with eating disorders writes in her book, *The Obsession: Reflections on the Tyranny of Slenderness*- "... anorexia reflects a girl's problem living, not merely in the body, but in a woman's body" (Chernin 63). Lia's description of her body as a couch or cookie dough is not just because of beauty stigmas, but also mainly due to her fight against her feminine body. This battle started ever since she felt abhorrence towards her menstruation. Hilde Bruch, in *The Golden Cage*, quotes that "... antagonism toward menstruation. Even though she had been menstruating for several years, she had never accepted it as a natural function" (80).

Puberty hits Lia, she sees visible changes in her body- both biologically and physically. She detests her new body where her arms and legs get bulky, her butt wiggle with extra flesh and she develops a double chin too. Rejection of her flesh is compounded by external pressures, for example, body shaming comments and criticisms from her ballet teacher regarding her biologically changing body. The teacher's comment, "My ballet teacher pinched the extra inches, took away my solo, and told me to stop eating maple-walnut ice cream" (Anderson 165). Thus further strengthening Lia's belief that an individual's worth is tied to how her body is closely attached to the ideals of slimness. The transition from a happy, food-loving child to an anorexic teenager encapsulates the destructive power of societal norms and personal trauma in reshaping one's relationship with the body.

For Lia, she became an ugly duckling from an elegant swan. Anorexia nervosa comes as a friend to the destitute who are unable to cope with their new profound construct. Anorexia or Bulimia or any eating disorder not only alienates women from their bodies but also ceases them from 'becoming women'. It propels them to remain like a child- flat chest, slim body, no curves and flat tummy. "For it seems evident that anorexia is afraid of becoming, not adults, not teenagers, but women" (Chernin 64).

"The human being is his body, and at the same time, in reflecting upon this body, he stands outside out it" (Jaspers 354). During the process of self-

objectification, female

individuals with eating disorders reject their bodies but focus on their bodies through external gaze. There were times when Lia felt about stepping out of her body and looking at her 'soulless' body from the outside- to see how her body looks. For her, a body is made up of bones, flesh and blood and nothing else. Labelling her body as just an earthly material, drove Lia to abuse her corporeality. She has the habit of cutting her skin using razors and knives, just as a punishment for not following her strict diet plans or her inability to succeed in achieving her ultimate weight-zero pounds.

The knife carves a path in the flesh between two ribs, then, between the two ribs below that. Fat drops of blood splash on the counter, ripe red seeds. I am so very. Very strong, so iron-boned and magic that the knife draws a third line between two ribs, straight and true. Blood pools in the bowls of my hips and drips to the tile floor. (Anderson 223).

Anderson presents recurring imagery of mirrors to showcase Lia's heightened estrangement from her lived body (Leib). Being dictated by anorexia and self-hatred, whenever Lia stares at the mirror, she does not see her real body but a grotesque distortion, a stranger who looks bony with a sharp jawline, extremely defined cheekbone, thin neck and a skeleton body. Kim Chernin asserts that women or adolescent girls with eating disorders often consider or write themselves in 'third person' perspective: "...she alienates herself from her body and becomes, as she stares at herself in the mirror, foreign to herself, a stranger" (Chernin 54). Lia resents the changes brought on by puberty, such as the development of curves and menstruation, viewing them as threats to her sense of control and identity.

Trauma and Embodiment in Dunkle's *Elena Vanishing: A Memoir*

Elena Dunkle's *Elena Vanishing: A Memoir* (2015) is a cathartic memoir that provides a raw and deeply personal account of the trauma that altered the relationship between Leib and Körper. Unlike Lia Overbrooke, whose Anorexia Nervosa develops gradually from a mix of societal pressures and personal crisis, Elena's constant fights and struggles with her illness is deeply rooted in a history of sexual abuse. At the age of thirteen, Elena is sexually assaulted, an experience that she initially suppresses but which continues to haunt her in subtle yet profound ways. She, being an American, left for Germany when she was eleven years old. Later, she enrolls in a Boarding School, where she meets girls with eating disorder issues. Having not recovered from her sexual assault, she starts to worship disorderly eating to become

the perfect girl everyone wish to be. Later, she was diagnosed with Anorexia Nervosa at the age of seventeen. Being succumbed to such extreme measures, Elena continues to live with the perspectives of the outside world towards her body, but rather not on her sense of subjectivity.

A person as controlling and reclusive as Elena, cannot accept her body being trampled by someone out of her will. The trauma of the assault creates a rupture in Elena's perception of her body. She no longer sees it as a safe or integral part of herself but as a vulnerable object that others can violate. And anorexia lives off controlling people's minds and bodies, it cannot accept such trespassing on the area (body) that is under its control. Elena believed that no one could do something to her out of her will and if they do, it is because of Elena's affirmative acceptance, that means the rape could occur again. Her hatred for such incidents drove Elena

to build a wall around herself which would stop the entry of other people into her life. "The walls around me thicken and harden until it's not me I see anymore. I'm hidden inside a giant, cinder-gray skull" (Dunkle 245). This perspective aligns with Thomas Fuchs's description of anorexia as a conflict of embodiment, where the lived body becomes alien to itself. In Elena's case, her body becomes a battleground where she attempts to reclaim control by adhering to the rigid and destructive rules of anorexia.

Unresolved traumas and an anorexic voice caused Elena into the pits of agony, misery and pain. Her attempt to escape from the sexual assault, trying to be the perfect girl and covering up all her sadness, has caused great damage to her health. She suffered from costochondritis, bad acid reflux, unbearable pain in the chest area, damaged esophagus, insomnia, etc. She spent her teenage years in pain- physical pain and psychological disputes. Though Elena was an anorectic, she had bulimic symptoms too. Sometimes, guilt-driven, she eats junk food mindlessly and throws up everything, rupturing her esophagus. "Vomit splatters my face. My hands are smelly and slimy...I bend over the bag and expel the acidic stew until my throat is on fire. The fluid runs clear. Then spots of bright blood come up. Only then do I stop" (Dunkle 160).

The anorectic voice in Elena's head continues to whisper things which demotivates Elena and it also makes her incapable of protecting herself within the walls she has raised. Elena was nearly abused again at a Halloween Party when she was pursuing her college. A guy named Wayne kisses Elena forcefully and tries to molest her, but Elena being confident in not allowing such an incident to happen to her again, she fights back. After coming home from the party, almost drunk, Elena eats a hotdog. The monstrous

voice taunts her- "You ate a hot dog, says the voice in my head. You let yourself get forced into eating a hot dog, therefore you are a spineless, obese, out-of-control balloon" (Dunkle 117). The language here transforms Elena's body into an object of disgust, further entrenching her alienation. The body of Elena is marketed by anorexia as a 'balloon', an inanimate object which sells her body with ugly words like 'stupid', 'bitch', etc. "A material body is always marked, classed, and...marketed..." (Slatman 207) where the essence of 'my body' is replaced with 'having/owning a body'.

Before the rape, I'm a child. A ditzzy, bouncy, high-strung kid.

And after the rape...

I'm gone.

I'm just not there....

The rape hid me. I can't even remember who I was anymore. (Dunkle 244)

Chernin explains the transformation of a female's lived body (Leib) to an objective composition (Körper)- "...an object inspiring jealousy is converted into an object arousing disgust" (121) occurs mainly of the manipulation in the psyche. A woman's body is a sacred construct that has been a portal of man's existence. Such degrading marking of gaze and objectification on the bodies of women causes disgust and hatred on their bodies among the female community.

Series of mishaps happen to Elena which is left uncommunicated until her admission at Clove House (a treatment centre). She abreacts her traumatic sexual abuse to her therapist and unveils her hidden miscarriage when attending her college in America. The initial attack

on the violation of her body caused Elena to unwillingly retreat her memory about her assault. "I thought I'd hidden the rape deep inside myself where no one would ever find it" (Dunkle 244). Elena's miscarriage pushed her into the endless abyss of misery as she badly wanted the child whom she considered her very own.

What prompted Elena to confide in her therapist, Dr. Leben at Clove House was, she wants to be a good aunt to her newborn niece, Gemma who can rely on Elena in the future. Here, Elena's attempts to be cordial for Gemma indicates her suppressed motherly love. But Elena's recovery was critical because Elena convinced herself as she was not a victim of rape and that being a smart and good student has diminished the waves of the forced abuse on her. Thirteen old Elena and the Elena at Clove House believed that her thirteen-year-old body was found defenseless and easy to be attacked by the boys, mostly by the society; so, Elena begins to sculpt her body to conform

to societal standards of beauty, believing that achieving physical perfection will shield her from further harm. "I am *not* a victim! I'm smart, and I'm successful, and there are guys who would *kill* to go out with me. I know people who will *never* make my grades!" (Dunkle 189).

Dissociation can be considered as a natural response to traumas, stress and other emotional stuff that worries an individual. It plays a vital role in Elena's narrative, delivering the extent of her alienation from her Leib. Elena's dissociation indicates her emotional turmoil which she was facing alone rather than disclosing it to her parents or to the health professionals. One of the most poignant moments of dissociation occurs when Elena imagines herself floating through a dollhouse, detached from her physical body. She describes this experience as a retreat from the "awkward, ominous girl who haunts my mirror" (Dunkle 23). This imagery underscores how anorexia serves as both a coping mechanism and a destructive force, allowing Elena to escape her trauma temporarily while deepening her disconnection from reality.

Another prominent dissociation of Elena ensues when she is in her Mindfulness time where patients have to probe deeper into themselves and seek an answer to the unanswered questions. The therapist guides them to an imaginative yet experiencing beach where Elena could presume Gull's sounds, the wave's movement against the rocks and the serenity the beach holds. Elena notices cleaned and smooth pebbles, which she picks up as per her therapist's instruction. Elena's pebble is "...wet and deep eggplant-purple, with a pure white mark like the print of a baby's foot" (Dunkle 191). The therapist asked her to throw the pebble back into the ocean which she couldn't. Elena's dissociation reflects her traumas of miscarriage. She has loved the baby ever since she got to know about its existence and named her baby- Lilly Arabella. The touches of melancholy of Elena are stacked up one by one as she does not express them to anyone, claiming that her miseries are instigated from her body her body is the source of all of her memories.

"The same body which serves me as means for all my perception obstructs me in the perception of itself and is a remarkably imperfect construed thing" (Husserl 167). Husserl marks the double aspect of the human body; the body that perceives the senses of touch, feeling and localization of emotions, has now become an object with a sense of authority and no emotional integrity. Helmuth Plessner postulates that "[A] human being always and conjointly is a living body and has this living body as his physical thing" (Plessner 34). The female body has been synonymous with physical construction because it has been viewed as a

material that can be modified to the demands of the beauty industry and society. The inability to get modeled into the preferred figure causes the arrival of eating disorders, in extreme situations. Eating disorders also subjugate femaleness.

Elena's anorexia personifies her menstrual blood to her dead baby. Anorexia is a serious health disorder that also affects the psychological components of every anorectic. This also happens to bulimics. Elena has gotten her menstruation back after many days since her miscarriage. The voice inside Elena's head manipulates her cognition that with the flow of blood oozing out profusely from her vagina, Elena could see a chopped corpse with bloody limbs. This pulls her back to the day she delivered her dead daughter who was half-grown and covered in blood. The day Elena experienced and endured immense pain only to embrace her bloodied-dead-daughter. The voice screams at her, "*Dead baby! Dead baby! DEAD BABY!*" (Dunkle 223) and persuades her to believe that it was due to Elena's fault her baby died. But Elena calms herself by peeling off the flesh from her arm, with that the voice subsides.

The memoir highlights the cyclical nature of self-objectification. However, this pursuit only exacerbates her feelings of inadequacy and vulnerability. The anorexic voice in her head, personified as a relentless critic, reinforces her belief that she is never thin enough or in control enough.

Feminist Insights into Eating Disorders

"The anorexic body is by no means just the objectified body; it is also a visibly vulnerable, fragile and thus thoroughly expressive body" (Fuchs 115). Female individuals with eating disorders place their bodies on the objective notion where the real identity of the beholder is torn apart. The attributes of physicality like starvation, purging, self-harm and punishment are consistent in them. The phenomenology has elaborated the dual aspects of the human body and how that body can be decreased to a state of an item where the affected individuals are nothing but soulless bodies with eating disorders as their sole friends. For Lia Overbrooke and Elena Dunkle, eating disorders defined them; it was their identity. But realizing the extremities of eating disorders, they yield to treatment and get better to create an identity that syncs with their subjectivity.

Both *Wintergirls* and *Elena Vanishing: A Memoir* reveal how societal beauty standards disproportionately target women, fostering self-objectification and eating disorders. Kim Chernin's feminist criticism provides a critical framework for understanding the gendered dimensions of these narratives. According to Chernin,

women's bodies are often viewed as objects to be modified and controlled, a perspective that erases their individuality and agency.

In *Wintergirls*, Lia's anorexia reflects a broader societal rejection of femininity. Her struggle against her developing body mirrors a desire to return to a pre-pubescent state, free from the expectations and vulnerabilities associated with womanhood. Similarly, Elena's anorexia is deeply intertwined with her rejection of her identity as a woman, shaped by the trauma of her sexual assault. Both narratives highlight how societal pressures to conform to narrow ideals of beauty exacerbate these internal conflicts, perpetuating cycles of self-harm and alienation. The role of trauma is particularly significant in understanding these disorders. While societal pressures act as a catalyst, it is often personal trauma that drives the extreme behaviors associated with anorexia and bulimia. Elena's experience of sexual assault and Lia's unresolved grief over her friend's death are prime examples of how external events can intensify internal conflicts, transforming the body into a site of punishment and control.

Finally, the recurring imagery of mirrors in both texts underscores the centrality of self-objectification in eating disorders. Lia and Elena do not see their true reflections but distorted images shaped by societal and personal expectations. This act of viewing oneself as an object rather than a subject is a hallmark of the Körper mindset, illustrating the profound impact of societal norms on women's self-perception.

This research is grounded in the phenomenology of the body as articulated by Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty and feminist theory from Kim Chernin, explores how eating disorders impact the perception of the body among women and adolescent girls. However, it faces limitations of subjectivity inherent in phenomenological analysis among the female community and this paper might not fully account for cultural and societal diversity, only focusing on the female gender. This paper aims at the scope of offering a comprehensive examination of body perception through phenomenological perspectives and feminist ideas, providing insights into how societal expectations and cultural norms influence the experience of the body and contribute to eating disorders.

IV. CONCLUSION

This research paper made use of Husserl and Ponty's phenomenology of Leib and Körper in the lives of Lia Overbrooke and Elena Dunkle, the victims of Anorexia Nervosa. The paper has highlighted how and why these individuals are sunken into the cosmos of eating disorders.

Retreat from reality, rejection of femaleness, accumulation of objectivity (self-objectification), punishment regime and health issues are discussed. Kim Chernin's ideas on slenderness also support and explain the mindset of the select characters. Lia (fictional character) and Elena (realistic anorexic human), provide the vast notion of how women's bodies are trampled in society and then by themselves. 'Within the Naked Body' divulges the storms that occur within the naked body of every female individual.

Lia Overbrooke finally gets hospitalized to get treated and tries to get back into a normal teenage girl life. Lia accepts her body as it is and journeys to find her identity. Whereas, Elena gets treated after confessing all her traumas and begins to enroll in further studies. She has accomplished her dream to become a nurse. Towards the end of the memoir, Elena helps Dr. Leben cure eating disorders for adolescent girls and becomes a radiant hope for her patients. The realistic portrayal further provides hope for people with eating disorders that it is never too late to begin a new chapter.

This research significantly enhances the understanding of eating disorders by combining phenomenological and feminist ideologies to reveal how societal expectations impact body perception. By engaging with health humanities, this research underscores the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to understanding mental health. Future studies could expand this framework to include diverse cultural perspectives and examine how men experience similar disorders under different societal pressures.

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Translating Emotion Across Mediums: An Inter-Semiotic Study of Satyajit Ray's Cinematic Interpretation of Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay's Novels

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Abstract— Cinematic adaptations of literary works, while a staple in film studies, are rarely approached from the perspective of inter-semiotic translation. This paper seeks to explore the translation of emotion from the novels of Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay to Satyajit Ray's cinematic adaptations, particularly within the *Apu Trilogy* (1955-1959). Applying Roman Jakobson's theory of inter-semiotic translation, this study investigates the transmutation of emotional content from written words to the visual medium. Emphasis is placed on the character of Apu, exploring how Ray translates his emotional depth. The paper also addresses the challenges inherent in this process and contributes to the expanding body of research on the intersection of translation studies, film adaptation, and semiotics. By incorporating semiotic analysis and psychoanalytic theories, this paper demonstrates how emotions are conveyed through semiotic systems in both literature and film.



Keywords— Inter-semiotic translation, emotion, Satyajit Ray, Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay, *Apu Trilogy*, film adaptation, semiotics, psychoanalysis, translation theory.

I. INTRODUCTION

Cinematic adaptations of literary works have garnered significant academic attention over the years, but the exploration of inter-semiotic translation, particularly in film adaptations, remains a relatively under-explored domain. In this study, we address this gap by focusing on the adaptation of Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay's novels, particularly the *Apu Trilogy* (*Pather Panchali*, *Aparajito*, *Apur Sansar*), through the lens of inter-semiotic translation. Satyajit Ray's iconic adaptations provide a rich case study for understanding how emotional depth, a core component of Bandopadhyay's novels, is transmuted from the written word to the visual medium.

Roman Jakobson's inter-semiotic translation theory (1959) is applied in this paper, which proposes that emotion is not only a narrative element but an essential component that must undergo transformation when shifting from one semiotic system (literature) to another (film). The central

focus of this study is Apu, the young protagonist of Bandopadhyay's works, and how Ray interprets and presents Apu's emotional evolution through film. By employing a qualitative, interpretive approach, this paper examines how Ray navigates the emotional landscapes of the literary texts, exploring the challenges involved in translating such nuanced emotional experiences across mediums.

II. FILM ADAPTATION, SEMIOTICS AND INTER-SEMIOTICS TRANSLATION

Film adaptations are traditionally assessed through their fidelity to the source material (Stam, 2005). However, when viewed from the perspective of translation studies, adaptation involves a much more complex transformation of content, particularly emotional content. The distinction between 'translation' and 'adaptation' is central to this research, as the former is often seen as a transfer of

linguistic meaning, while the latter involves the transference of an entire cultural and emotional context.

While translation studies have long explored the transference of meaning between languages, the application of these principles to film adaptations is a relatively recent development (Munday, 2016). Some scholars have noted the necessity of exploring how emotional nuances in literary texts are adapted into films, with particular emphasis on the emotional depth of characters (Derrida, 1980). In the case of Ray's adaptations of Bandopadhyay's novels, the emotional essence of characters like Apu must be transmuted through visual and auditory symbols, such as facial expressions, camera angles, and musical motifs (Nyce, 1988).

Ray's cinematography and storytelling techniques often emphasize the emotional subtleties of his characters through the strategic use of visual symbols, which function as the semiotic counterparts to the linguistic signs in Bandopadhyay's texts. This inter-semiotic translation becomes more evident when examining how Ray conveys the interiority of Apu's character, whose emotional journey forms the backbone of the Apu Trilogy. Apu's emotional trajectory, from the innocence of childhood to the complexities of adult experience, is a critical element in Bandopadhyay's novels, and Ray captures these shifts through a combination of visual semiotics and cinematic techniques.

III. SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF EMOTION IN THE APU TRILOGY

Inter-semiotic translation theory is instrumental in understanding how Ray transmits the emotional essence of Bandopadhyay's characters to the screen. Jakobson (1959) distinguished between three types of translation: intralingual (reformulation within the same language), interlingual (translation between languages), and inter-semiotic (transformation between semiotic systems). In the case of the Apu Trilogy, Ray's work exemplifies inter-semiotic translation, where the written text is transformed into a visual experience, where emotions are communicated not only through dialogue but through the interplay of visual elements such as color, framing, and movement.

In the first film of the trilogy, *Pather Panchali* (1955), Ray introduces the emotional landscape of Apu through the visual juxtaposition of his world and his relationships with family members. The film captures Apu's childlike wonder, his loneliness, and his inevitable maturation through a combination of long takes and subtle facial expressions. These visual cues serve as translations of the emotional experiences described in Bandopadhyay's prose,

emphasizing the connection between Apu's inner life and the external world around him (Stam, 2005).

In *Aparajito* (1957), Ray expands on Apu's emotional journey as he transitions into adolescence. This phase is marked by a heightened sense of emotional tension, particularly in the scenes that depict his strained relationship with his mother. The cinematographic techniques employed by Ray, such as the use of close-ups and shifts in camera angles, emphasize the growing emotional complexity of Apu's character. The film's use of music also complements the emotional tone, creating a soundscape that corresponds with Apu's psychological state (Rangoonwalla, 1980). These elements of Ray's adaptation demonstrate the inter-semiotic transference of emotional experience from the textual world of Bandopadhyay's novel to the visual and auditory world of the cinema.

The final film, *Apur Sansar* (1959), sees Apu's emotional transformation come full circle. Ray captures Apu's return to life after a period of mourning, employing minimalist techniques to convey the internal conflict that Apu experiences. In this film, Ray uses visual elements to express Apu's emotional distance, the grief of loss, and the struggle to reclaim his life. The framing of scenes, such as Apu's solitary walks through desolate landscapes, symbolically reinforces his emotional isolation (Nyce, 1988).

IV. CHALLENGES IN TRANSLATING EMOTION

The process of translating emotion from literature to film involves inherent challenges. In literary texts, emotions are conveyed through the intricate use of language, including descriptions of internal states, which can be directly expressed in words. In contrast, film relies on visual cues to communicate these emotions. For example, Bandopadhyay's written descriptions of Apu's grief are explicitly detailed, whereas Ray must rely on non-verbal elements like facial expressions, body language, and symbolic settings to evoke similar feelings in his audience (Foucault, 1980). Thus, the translation of emotion from text to film requires a level of interpretation that may not always align with the original emotional intent.

Additionally, psychoanalytic theory offers valuable insights into the emotional depth of characters like Apu. Freud's theories of the unconscious mind, for instance, can be applied to Ray's portrayal of Apu's internal struggles. Ray's use of visual metaphors, such as landscapes or objects that reflect Apu's emotional state, mirrors the psychoanalytic concept of projection, where the external world symbolizes internal conflict (Derrida, 1980). By employing psychoanalytic frameworks alongside semiotic analysis, we

gain a deeper understanding of how Ray visually represents the complex emotions experienced by Apu.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the inter-semiotic translation of emotion from Bandopadhyay's novels to Ray's films demonstrates the intricate relationship between literature and cinema. This study contributes to the growing body of research in translation studies, offering a unique perspective on how emotions are translated across semiotic systems. By analyzing Ray's adaptation of Bandopadhyay's work, particularly through the emotional journey of Apu, this paper highlights the challenges and opportunities involved in translating emotional content from the written word to the screen. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of visual semiotics and psychoanalytic theory in understanding how emotions are communicated in film. Through this research, the aesthetics of adaptation are reconsidered, offering new insights into the complexities of translating emotion between different mediums.

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The Enigmatic Behavior of Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*: A Unifying Hypothesis

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Abstract— *The Russian novel, Crime and Punishment, has garnered significant international interest and praise. Various writers laud different aspects of the novel, some even considering it a work of philosophy. However, the character of the protagonist has been difficult to interpret for many and his behavior has been, likewise, challenging to explain. This paper is a detailed examination of this issue from a medical perspective. The evidence is gleaned solely from the text of the novel. A cogent argument is made to account for virtually all of Raskolnikov's behaviors by one medical diagnosis, that of bipolar disorder. There is a brief discussion of the differential diagnosis, which includes schizophrenia and unipolar depression. I would like to submit that Dostoevsky used mental health as a major theme in this work, something that, perhaps, has not been given the recognition that it deserves.*



Keywords— *Crime and Punishment, Raskolnikov, bipolar disorder, mental health, Dostoevsky.*

Crime and Punishment is a novel written in 1866 by the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky. It remains one of the greater works of fiction produced by a Russian writer and, indeed, is recognized as a great novel the world over till today. It is the story of a young, poor, university dropout, named Raskolnikov, who commits a heinous crime. In the rising action, we witness the conflict and distress this young man suffers as the authorities investigate the murder and gradually start to narrow their search to him. It is written in the third person and we are privy to Raskolnikov's thought processes as he tries to evade the authorities and to mislead them. Similarly, he is cautious when talking to his friends, although his distress sometimes bleeds into the conversation when news of the crime is mentioned. Accordingly, there is considerable depth and insight into the workings of the protagonist's thought processes, first as he rationalizes the crime that he is going to commit, and, later, with its justification and consequences. The objective of this essay is to posit that mental illness is a major theme of this novel.

There is enough detail in the psychological portrayal of the protagonist that it has fascinated and yet confused some readers, making it difficult to coherently conceptualize the

scope of the novel. Unfortunately, this confusion also extends to some professional readers who have commented or written about this book. In this article, we will examine the text in some detail and follow the trail of the psychological difficulties that our protagonist faces to see if we can formulate a psychiatric diagnosis. The text that I am using is the English translation by Constance Garnett, published in 2024 by Arcturus Publishing Limited. A significant drawback is that Dostoevsky was neither a medical doctor nor a science writer, which now makes this process a more challenging and interesting, if not controversial, exercise. However, the symptoms and signs are clearly described by the author and there really does not appear to be any effort to obfuscate a medical diagnosis. Another unavoidable hurdle is the vocabulary used by the author, or more precisely, by the translator. We have to accept that medical diagnoses are not going to have the level of precision in the 1800s that they do today. Similarly, the medical terms are going to differ in their definitions and we will be encumbered by anachronisms. What we would like to achieve is to prevent the use of imprecise terms prevalent in the digital media and in scholarly articles written by non-medical authors, which are, in some cases, pejorative.

Terms such as ‘madness’, ‘insanity’, ‘sickness,’ ‘nervous breakdown’ should be avoided. Even ‘monomania’ is an anachronism.

This analysis attempts to show that the protagonist, Raskolnikov, most likely suffered from the psychiatric diagnosis of bipolar disorder. This is sometimes called manic-depression for both these mental states, mania and depression, can alternate with time in the same individual. The symptoms of mania include reduced sleep, more energy, pressured speech, an elated mood often with irritability, delusions and at times hallucinations, and racing thoughts. In depression, one finds lack of energy, often increased somnolence, reduced sex drive, slower thought processing and speech, feelings of hopelessness, and, at times, suicidal thoughts.

Dostoevsky reveals Raskolnikov’s psychiatric difficulties as early as the third paragraph of the novel. He writes about “an overstrained irritable condition, verging on hypochondria.” He had become “absorbed in himself, and isolated from his fellows...” “He had given up attending to matters of practical importance...” The author writes: “...his ideas were sometimes in a tangle...” Raskolnikov was suffering from a significant degree of self neglect: “...he was very weak, for two days he had scarcely tasted food.” “He was so badly dressed that even a man accustomed to shabbiness would have been ashamed to be seen in the street in such rags.” Our patient is distressed, anxious, agitated, and anorexic at the beginning of the novel. Clearly, he has no partner or family close by and no support systems. He is isolated and alone. He has dropped out of university and is unemployed. Opening a novel with this setting is, arguably, not a setting for a heinous crime or a crime of moral turpitude. More likely, a personal background of this type would be expected to lead to personal failure, petty crimes, drug addiction, and self-harm. As we shall see, the author does not follow the latter scenario.

Raskolnikov’s thoughts are clearly disturbing to himself (part I, chapter 1): “What filthy things my heart is capable of.” At one level, he recognizes that there is something wrong with his train of thinking: “It’s simply physical derangement.” This alludes to his belief that his ideas are not the workings of a normal mental state and he is showing good insight.

In part I, chapter 3, we learn that his room is disordered and his bed linens are dirty: “It would have been difficult to sink to a lower ebb of disorder...” This is stereotypical of an individual living not only in penury but also one suffering from a mental disorder. We obtain some insight into what his mental state had become: “He had got completely away from everyone, like a tortoise in its shell...” Self isolation through social withdrawal and self-negligence are often

seen in depressive states. There is an important caveat that should be noted. Depressed patients are also apathetic and, in more severe cases, suffer from psychomotor retardation and some bradykinesia. They have great difficulties motivating themselves to arise in the mornings; they cannot get on with the things that they need to accomplish or the tasks of the day. There is difficulty concentrating. We learn that he has given up the trivial employment that he once had and oversleeps. Nastasya, the servant, complains: “Get up, why are you asleep?...It’s past nine.” In (part I) chapter 6, “My goodness, how he sleeps!...And he is always asleep.” One would not expect an individual with this state of mind to plan or execute a complex crime.

In some cases, we need to be cautious how we judge the terms used by the author and translator. For example, in (part I) chapter 5, we learn that “the thought of going home suddenly filled him with intense loathing...” Later, “...these pleasant sensations passed into morbid irritability.” It is easy to understand ‘intense loathing’ but ‘morbid irritability’ is more difficult to define. This also is not a term that would be used in medical communication.

Dostoevsky is more explicit later in the same chapter when he writes: “In a morbid condition of the brain, dreams often have a singular actuality, vividness, and extraordinary semblance of reality.” Later in the same paragraph, “Such sick dreams always remain long in the memory and make a powerful impression on the overwrought and deranged nervous system.” It may be premature to label these ‘dreams’ as hallucinations, but what is more interesting is the references to the brain and nervous system. The author is offering a psychiatric diagnosis rather than a psychological one; there is a structural abnormality of the brain. The distinction is important. Psychological variations are common, if not the rule, in the human condition; psychiatric diagnoses are not as common and are more serious. Some readers will recognize that the contemporary understanding of the human mind is more inclusive and better described by the term neurodivergence, embracing a continuum of variations in mental functioning. Studies show that the prevalence of neurodivergence is approximately 20% making it fairly common.

In many cases, psychiatric diagnoses are accompanied by psychological comorbidities. These are more difficult to appreciate and sometimes get missed even in the clinical setting. In (part I) chapter 6, Dostoevsky writes: “But Raskolnikov has become more superstitious of late....And in all this he was always afterwards disposed to see something strange and mysterious, as it were, the presence of some peculiar influences and coincidences.” In modern terms, this psychological phenomenon would be called ‘ideas of reference,’ which can be related to psychosis and

paranoia. In *Crime and Punishment*, we learn that when Raskolnikov overhears a conversation between a student and an officer in a tavern, he was “violently agitated” and his Machiavellian idea to go ahead with the murder was confirmed. Although the author presents the dialogue between the student and the officer as a real event in the novel, one could still argue that the justification of the murder of the woman-pawnbroker, Alyona Ivanovna, was a delusion. As we know, a delusion is a false belief that persists in spite of evidence to the contrary or a belief that would not be shared by anyone of the same educational and social standing. Raskolnikov believed that great men were morally entitled to make decisions that could entail the death of hundreds of individuals. He inverted the logic and was convinced that if he committed a murder of an innocent, elderly woman, then he would share some of the qualities of greatness!

There are allusions to visual hallucinations: “He was haunted by day-dreams and such strange day-dreams...” (part I, chapter 6). Again, there is some diagnostic uncertainty, which may partly be due to the paucity of medical vocabulary in the novel. The same comment can be made when Razumihin says: “You are delirious, you know!” (part II, chapter 2). In medicine, the term delirium is used when there is confusion and reduced awareness of one’s surroundings (changes in the state of consciousness) in a state of alertness. However, the term can mean a number of things in everyday parlance including agitation, anxiety etc. He then says “You are a perfect madman.” A likely case of auditory hallucination is described in part II, chapter 2, when Raskolnikov thinks he hears the landlady being badly assaulted by Ilya Petrovitch. He says to Nastasya: “I heard it myself...I was not asleep...I was sitting up.” She denies that the landlady was beaten. Svidrigailov had also noted odd behaviors and says to Raskolnikov (part VI, chapter 3): “You walk out of your house...You look and evidently see nothing before nor beside you. At last you begin moving your lips and talking to yourself, and sometimes you wave one hand and declaim, and at last stand still in the middle of the road.” This behavior also likely represents episodes of visual and auditory hallucinations.

Chapter 3 (part I) opens with: “He was not completely unconscious, however, all the time he was ill; he was in a feverish state, sometimes delirious, sometimes half conscious.” In this state, he felt that: “they threatened him, plotted something together, laughed, and mocked him.” Most individuals would recognize that these are symptoms of paranoia. However, the use of the word ‘feverish’ can be confusing. This may well be an anachronism since in today’s speech, one would be referring to a fever, i.e. a rise in body temperature, usually associated with infection. Clearly, this is not how the term was used in the novel. This

passage is a fairly cogent description of a manic state with psychosis. When the other symptoms of mania occur without psychosis, it is referred to as hypomania. There is a technical point to note here. Patients generally do not spend the day in bed or confined when experiencing hypomania or mania. They are energized, social, talkative, working on intricate projects, gambling, sometimes seeking illicit drugs, and hypersexual. We can probably expect that Dostoevsky, although aware of the variation in manic and depressive states, did not study the condition in sufficient depth to appreciate that they are temporally distinct.

There also seem to be episodes of depression. In part VI, chapter 1, the opening sentence is: “A strange period began for Raskolnikov: it was as if a fog had fallen upon him and wrapped him in a dreary solitude from which there was no escape...But he remembered, too, moments, hours, perhaps whole days, of complete apathy.” Also concerning is that there were episodes of psychoses where he did not appear to be aware of his actions or whereabouts: “Another time he woke up before daybreak lying on the ground under some bushes and could not at first understand how he had come there.” Razumihin visits him and says: “There is a conviction in the air that you are mad or very nearly so...” Later in the same chapter, Razumihin leaves Raskolnikov and thinks “His illness then, all his strange actions...before this, in the university, how morose he used to be, how gloomy...” Raskolnikov likely developed the start of his medical condition as a young man as an episode of depression. In medicine, an early episode of depression is sometimes considered a harbinger of bipolar disorder. University attendance can trigger the first episode of this disorder due to the stress of leaving home and scholastic burden. When Razumihin is talking to Raskolnikov’s mother, he states (part II, chapter 2): “I have known Rodion for a year and a half; he is morose, gloomy, proud and haughty, and of late---and perhaps for a long time before---he has been suspicious and fanciful...it’s as though he were *alternating between two characters* (italics mine).”

There are other mood disorders in the differential and diagnostic uncertainty is not an uncommon component in the practice of medicine. The fact that the protagonist is exhibiting psychotic episodes raises the possibility of schizophrenia. Several features overlap in these two mental disorders. However, in schizophrenia, there is severe disordered thinking so that the decline in psychosocial functioning is worse. There are more episodes of visual and auditory hallucinations in schizophrenia, which are not restricted to manic episodes as they are in bipolar disorder. Factors in the novel that support a diagnosis of schizophrenia include Raskolnikov’s unkempt appearance, severe self-neglect, and inability to work. Bipolar patients, on the other hand, can have a high level of functioning

between episodes of mania and depression and have been responsible for outstanding accomplishments in diverse endeavours. The mood disturbance in bipolar disorder occurs in discrete episodes. Raskolnikov displayed a high degree of mental acuity and clarity of thought when dealing with the legal system. The protagonist is also not suffering from unipolar depression, which is typified by difficulty concentrating and an inability to accomplish goals. Generally, depression does not involve episodes of psychoses. The fact that Raskolnikov had mental agitation and was able to plan and execute a murder is more in keeping with the other diagnoses. He may have been suffering from hypomania when he committed the crime. Razumihin's physician friend, Zossimov, who checks on Raskolnikov frequently refers to him as a monomaniac (part 111, chapters 1& 2), a term that is no longer used and difficult to define now.

A proposal for a unifying diagnosis to account for Raskolnikov's bizarre behavior also lends credence to a highly sensitive and controversial public health issue. It is not uncommon to find that the stereotype of mental illness as a root cause of violent behavior is perpetuated by the media. Research appears to suggest that individuals suffering from mental illness are no more likely to commit crime than others. However, when mental illness is associated with drug abuse or personality disorders such as antisocial personality disorder ('sociopaths'), the likelihood of criminal behavior rises (see Thornicroft). There is also evidence to suggest that individuals with mental illness are more likely to be *victims* of violence and of police fatalities. It is unlikely that such considerations were afforded to individuals with mental health issues in Dostoevsky's time as they are now.

The novel *Crime and Punishment* has garnered numerous accolades since its publication. Various commentators have considered it a great novel and some even consider it a work of philosophy. However, there is confusion about the main character, and the complexities of his beliefs and actions have been discussed widely (see Ali). I believe that Raskolnikov's personality becomes easier to understand with one unifying psychiatric diagnosis, that of bipolar disorder. We know that Dostoevsky was not trained medically, and there is no evidence, that I am familiar with, that a medical doctor was involved in the production of this book. The symptoms and signs of bipolar disorder are described in considerable detail and the author brings up the protagonist's mental health repeatedly throughout the book making this an important theme. This observation also raises the question of how Dostoevsky became familiar with this condition. The obvious answer is that Dostoevsky suffered from bipolar disorder himself and he was totally familiar with the symptoms. Some people have claimed that,

in fact, Dostoevsky did suffer from this condition although making retrospective diagnoses is fraught with its own difficulties.

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Analysis of Schopenhauer's Will to Live in the works of authors in the canon of English Literature who committed suicide

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Abstract— *The works of Literature other than giving an expression to the thoughts of the author are implicit with the deeper connotative meanings that at first aren't as apparent as the meanings initially inferred by the reader but after a careful consideration of the respective work, the seemingly shrouded revelations camouflaged within the language that can adequately describe the inner wrestlings of the author's mind are transpired before the audience. The writers of Literature who couldn't harmonize their inner tumults, couldn't help but reveal them in their works either. This investigation intends to scrutinize their principal vexations that forced them into a rejection of the force that underpins all of the existence through the philosophical ideas of Arthur Schopenhauer thus broadening the scope for a more thorough enquiry of the human nature and its association with the contemporary literature.*



Keywords— *Existence, Pessimism, Schopenhauer, Existential, Modernism, Postmodernism, Irrational.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Literary works throughout its dissemination has either been to delight the audience or to instruct them in certain matters. It was only after the development of a psychoanalytic outlook towards the Literary works that the author thought to be merely a propagator of thoughts until this time was finally brought to the attention of readers. The Literary works are inextricably linked to Philosophy, and its not just with writers but everyone lives by a personal philosophy that guides the actions and disposition of the person concerned. Perhaps there isn't a better way to ascertain the principles of any writer than to peruse the works that need not necessarily be any sort of philosophical treatise as the dramatic or poetic works even, could suffice for a review of the author's psychological state. "Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular". (Poetry foundation, 2009, pt. IX lines 11-14).

The arrival at the precipice of ceasing to exist must not be mistaken as an abrupt or impulsive one, particularly with

that of the prominent literary figures whose thoughts were rational and articulated enough to convince people of their obduration with choosing the same outcome again should they hypothetically be given another chance at consideration of their decisive step. Such a conviction clearly couldn't have been the result of an ordinary whim that more often than not troubles most people. Oddly enough, It could be inferred that their inherent inclination towards ruminating about the perplexities of their life was likely the cause of their prolonged distress as is evidently expressed "God is a circle whose center is everywhere, and its circumference nowhere". (Empedocles & Wright, 1981) which betrays a sense of contemplative thought and the unfortunate but imminent descent into the obscurity being its immediate consequence. Additionally such a disposition must have been exclusive to them alone as for the others who don't hazard the leisure of being contemplative about the Existence and Life in general find such bleak notions fitting of scorn and reproach them of their harbouring pessimism. Arthur Schopenhauer's idea of Will to Live is the central force that furnishes an impetus to be for all of the

existence and somewhere down the line of their introspective wisdom, the veritable spirit to exist is transgressed by an agent wholly alien to the prevalent thoughts that the very spirit whose whole function was to expedite the inclination to exist now gets at odds with the idea of existence itself. "Sometimes even to live is an act of courage". (*A Quote by Seneca*, 2024), It's paradoxical to consider that how could the act of merely existing requisite of courage when It's something that's inherently supposed to be anything but efforting. When the Life and its serialised events are commensurate to one's expectations, the will to exist remains firm but It's not always the case, and most importantly must not have been the case with the writers that committed suicide but their constant strife between the desire to exist and an insatiable proclivity to be reduced to oblivion would have prompted them to choose the latter as it guaranteed an escape from the drudgery of existence thus forfeiting the apparent tug of war altogether.

II. CONCEPT OF WILL TO LIVE

Arthur Schopenhauer's renown rests more on him being infamous for encouraging a pessimistic and bleak outlook of life among people than many other important philosophical ideas he had professed. He has defined the will to exist as a "blind incessant impulse without knowledge" (Schopenhauer, 1966) that forms the basis of all Existence. In his outlook the existence whether that be of primitive animals that humans are used to looking down upon or of the creatures inhabiting the apex of the biological hierarchy, is driven by an irrational spirit which makes each of them cling to their lives for reasons that are ineffable. With this premise established, Its striking enough that such an irrational will devoid of any reasoning is exclusive to those who either don't possess the requisite faculty of critically analysing the existence or have willingly withdrawn themselves from any degree of possible introspection. This incessant will to exist is naturally the source of all miseries pertaining to the material world because of it being naturally engineered to keep striving for more, and this elusive nature of the will is never quite realised until the mind is employed to concede of its real nature through a meticulous meditation which most people never have even a slightest repose for. But drawing from these conclusions even if one were to arrive at the understanding about this irrational will, the person would nevertheless be beset with yet another predicament demanding of a denial of this irrational will now because once the mind acknowledges its captivation and witnesses the whiffs of an escape and freedom, It becomes increasingly daunting to continue forth with the former will and the mind now rejects of its deception altogether. This

psychological feud doesn't admit of any repose until either the will to exist is reaffirmed (which becomes almost impossible after having been brought to this conclusion through a rational thought) or the will to exist is derisively denied. In all other cases, the result happens to be nothing more than a prolonged depression that gets only severe with time and results in the inevitable triumph of the denial of will even after not having consciously made that choice. Schopenhauer's philosophy unapologetically approves of the denial of will to exist as the only viable choice after a sensible thought. "That Suicide is wrong; when it is quite obvious that there is nothing in this world to which every man has a more unassailable title than to his own life and person." (Librarian, 2015).

III. BECKONING OF THE EXISTENTIAL DREAD

The most prominent feature of both Modernism and Postmodernism was the apparent Incredulity of its writers for whom the rejection of existing authorities was not something rebelling but an indispensable practice to purge themselves of the rampant ideological burdens of the society they were the part of, While Modernism still had the recourse to a restoration of the former humanistic values and ideals or to put it plainly, their view with regards to the world, though a bleak one yet was not entirely doomed as in the case of Postmodernists who went so far as to even reject the authority of their own minds. The psychological dwellings on the question of existence were thoroughly articulated in the Postmodernist works and as the serious thought and the consequent inundation with the obscured questions was explored, It was only customary for those to have found themselves amidst the existential dread going ahead. "Hell hath no fury like a coolly received postmodernist" (David Foster Wallace, 2011).

In case of David Foster Wallace, though we can only be speculative about the matters that could have led to him adoption a pessimistic notion of life, through his works at least this much can be inferred that his vexations were more concerned with his annoyance of his own ineptitude at seeking meaning in life than anything else that might have pestered him. "The truth will set you free. But not until it is finished with you." (David Foster Wallace & Mondadori, 2016). As for the will to live already stands disintegrated and every additional moment of living is an onerous task considering the newly discovered consciousness that embodies apprehensions doesn't approve of a life of dissimulation anymore. The repeated implorations of the will to exist are overpowered by the tirade of doubts that dare to call the authority of the established order into question. With a mindset as eccentric as this, they go about

distancing themselves from other people whom they think aren't like minded and contrary to what most people would think, this loneliness is seldom the source of their distress rather it's their one of the many ways of asserting a denial of the will to exist as regardless of their orientations, the will remains common to all the sentient beings. "Lonely people tend, rather, to be lonely because they decline to bear the psychic costs of being around other humans. They are allergic to people. People affect them too strongly". (David Foster Wallace, 2009). They consider themselves almost incorrigible in their opinions and despite having been brought to the mental torment resulting of their realisation they still wouldn't be willing to conform to the Will to Live, even if they were to be given another chance at it.

Learning how to think" really means learning how to exercise some control over how and what you think.

It means being conscious and aware enough to choose what you pay attention to and to choose how you construct meaning from experience.

Because if you cannot or will not exercise this kind of choice in adult life, you will be totally hosed. (David Foster Wallace, 2009)

IV. STRUGGLE WITH A SENSE OF IDENTITY

The conflict ensued from a realisation of the deception of the will to live, along with instilling a sense of existential crisis, also introduces forth a struggle between the conflicting identities within the same person, one that is recent and gradually highjacking the domineering psyche is confronted against the former identity whose remnants still continue ravaging the intellect without any respite. While the originally intended application of a denial of the will to exist was to address the morbid misery that was the result of none other than this irrational clinging to life, but after its denial, the life or whatever was left of it after such a denial had no substance or anything worth latching on to further, Despite being confronted with the existential dread, they still nevertheless asserted their embrace of a freedom of their thoughts and wouldn't trade it even for their life. "Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind." (Woolf, 1929).

The fragmented narratives and an angsty approach towards life was the common feature of the literature produced of such thoughts, the mind though having lost its former recourse to the irrational will still found itself to be distressed by the tendency of clinging to life that preceded this resolute conviction and the consequence was yet another irrational and rather unintelligible longing not for anything specific but still being the source of their distress.

I can only note that the past is beautiful because one never realises an emotion at the time. It expands later, and thus we don't have complete emotions about the present, only about the past. (Woolf, 1981)

The existence becomes elusive and obscure to such an extent that the present moment is considered to be wanting in the irrational thing for which the mind longs now. Woolf's disoriented view of life could in part have been the result of society's sneers of her concerned with her, then thought to be unconventional sexuality. "Do not start. Do not blush. Let us admit in the privacy of our own society that these things sometimes happen. Sometimes women do like women" (Woolf). The disillusionment with society and its values could have been the point of no return for her from the confrontation with the will to exist as when one comes close enough to questioning the societal norms, It doesn't take long before the simple enquiry about life and the abutted society turns towards more serious apprehensions about the nature of reality and existence in general.

What is the meaning of life? That was all- a simple question; one that tended to close in on one with years, the great revelation had never come. The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead, there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark; here was one. (Woolf, 1927)

Beat down by the dejected existence

If there's a thing that should be indictable of bringing people to the edge of this fatal confrontation with the will to live, It has to be the unprecedented situations in one's life that are controlled by some obscure force, the mere conception of which seems far fetched at this point. "If you expect nothing from somebody you are never disappointed". (Plath, 1963). The state of Sylvia Plath is an interesting one to mull upon with this fact having been established now, The plath's neurotic mental state was a direct consequence of her rather difficult upbringing and the situations in her life that she stumbled upon going ahead and weren't quite like how she had once imagined them to be, Her poetry evokes the expression of being tired of all the dejections so far inflicted on her. "I fancied you'd return the way you said, But I grow old and I forget your name". (Neurotic Poets, 2011, para.5, lines 1-2). Her constant failures as thought or referred to such, by the society, would have been enough to stimulate a sense of Incredulity in her thus putting the struggle between a denial and acceptance of the will to live in motion. After being almost beat down ceaselessly by the fangs of fortune, She had already given up on the will to Live and the only means of redemption for her was to depart from the existence that was now the subject of her intense despire. "I have done it again. One year in every ten I manage it——" (Academy of American Poets, 2019, para.1, lines 1-2). In

her poetry shortly prior to the time of her suicide, she expressed the Subjugation she had experienced all along at the hands of those who had been close to her, But at this point there was no hope anymore as the denial of the will to exist had made her consecutive failed attempts of suicide a pain worse than what she had gone through in other areas of her life and now death had started to seem like a crown that she couldn't wait anymore to have. "Dying Is an art, like everything else. I do it exceptionally well". (Academy of American Poets, para. 15, lines 1-3).

V. CONCLUSION

The ability of being able to think about the existence with a critical lens however interesting and thought provoking it may sound, is the crux of the existential dread that was eventually responsible for snuffing out the lives of those who were labelled by the society as escapists and cowards, The common theme among the writers remains the confessional nature of their writing where they no longer strive to conform to the beliefs and ideals of anyone and their writing provides a medium to purge themselves of the burden of their thoughts but as is evident to no avail. The conflict between the force of Will to Live and its denial has almost always resulted in the victory of the latter because it obviates the need of mending the existential dread altogether by embracing non existence. The denial of the will to live is conducive not to the survival but to the mental peace and as preposterous as it might seem the two are more often than not at odds with each other.

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Construing the Worldview of the Campus Journalists: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract— Campus journalism is an avenue for students to widen their perspectives as they obtain significant insights from various issues and their respective experiences as journalists. This transcendental phenomenological study aimed at identifying, describing, and construing the lived experiences and worldviews of the campus journalists in District 10 of Koronadal City Division. Seven campus journalists served as participants in the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather enriching data from the participants. The content experts served as validators of the interview questions. A trial interview was held to ensure the credibility and validity of the results. Arduous Thematic Analysis of the gathered data revealed 8 emerging themes: Empowerment and Ethical Journalism, Resilience and Growth in Pursuits, Assistance and Self-Perception for Development, Constraints and Triumph, Guidance and Aspirations, Commitment and Future, Education and Information, and Academic Rigor and Precision in Communication. Furthermore, these campus journalists, despite being challenged, were still resilient and motivated to achieve their goals.

Keywords— Campus Journalists, contexts, lived experiences, phenomenological study, views, worldview



I INTRODUCTION

Campus journalism is a powerful tool for young voices to amplify truth, advocate change, and shape perspectives within and beyond school walls. It serves as a training ground for students who wish to pursue journalism as a career. Significantly, school is one of the places where journalism must be nurtured and studied (Macalindong, 2019). The Department of Education in the Philippines ensures the protection of student journalists' rights and supports the establishment and funding of campus publications in public and private schools. Additionally, DepEd annually conducts the National Schools Press Conference (NSPC), which serves as the culmination of various journalism competitions at the school, division, and regional levels, aimed at honing students' journalistic skills and ethical practices.

The performance of these journalists in contests can be significantly impacted by several issues, most notably a lack of training, seminars, and colloquiums. Additionally, instructors in special programs had to go to a variety of seminars that might improve and update their knowledge

about contemporary journalistic trends (Macalindong, 2019). Additionally, this issue is exacerbated by students' competitive spirit and readiness to compete (Blessedy, 2019).

Several studies have surrounded campus journalism. Unfortunately, however, very little research exists on the worldview of campus journalists. The study reveals certain discrepancies from the perspective of a campus journalist's phenomenological account of worldviews. In campus journalism, it is necessary to further investigate its influence on student journalistic perspectives in terms of ethics and worldview. According to Filak and Reinardy (2013), conflict between the student editor and faculty adviser arises. Yet in these conflicts, the general consequences to the students' ethical role and worldview are left out.

In addition, research has to focus on the phenomenological experiences and challenges campus journalists face because they come from all walks of life. Bobkowski and Miller (2016) analyze civic engagement among journalists in high school but do not make a deep analysis of these

journalists' diverse experiences and how these explain their worldviews (Bobkowski & Miller, 2016).

These gaps suggest that there is a need for a more focused and nuanced phenomenological study on campus journalists to address the complex experiences within both ethical and professional development, changes produced by digitalization, and longitudinal changes in their worldviews. This will, therefore, probe into the depth of the lived experiences of the campus journalists. In this instance, the researcher decided to embark on a study concerning the worldview of campus journalists. The study reveals the experiences, problems, and worries brought on by the unsolicited happenings encountered by campus journalists after all their preparations for competitions and the underlying reasons for not winning.

To illuminate the many facets of these campus journalists' predicament, this study intended to analyze the worldview of campus journalists in the schools in District 10 of Koronadal City Division. Specifically, it sought to answer the following sub-questions:

1. What are the worldviews of the campus journalists in the schools in District 10 of Koronadal City Division?
2. What are the contexts of the worldviews of campus journalists in the schools in District 10 of Koronadal City Division?
3. How do campus journalists in the schools in District 10 of Koronadal City Division view themselves in the future?
4. What are the implications of the campus journalists' worldviews and contexts in the English language learning?

II METHOD

2.1 Participants

The main data sources were the seven campus journalists from Secondary Schools of District 10 in Koronadal City Division, Mindanao, Philippines. Purposeful sampling was used. Therefore, the selection of participants followed the inclusion criteria: (a) a Grade 7-12 student; (b) at least 2 years in joining journalistic competitions; (c) have exposure to journalistic seminars and training; (d) a student from District 10; (e) at least 12-20 years old; (f) must be comfortable conversing with the interviewer and willing to share experiences. Key informants of this study were the coaches, teachers, principals, and parents.

Participants must have joined at least one of any journalistic competitions (news writing, sports writing, editorial writing, etc.), particularly during the Division Schools Press Conference (DSPC) within the said two years.

After the pandemic, the conduct of the Division Schools Press Conference of Koronadal City resumed in the school year 2022-2023. Therefore, this current school year 2023-2024 has been the second year of DSPC post-pandemic. That is why, the researcher set the two years of experience in joining journalistic competitions as one of the inclusion criteria.

Although transcendental phenomenology does not demand high knowledge among participants, it will require participants to clearly and reflectively express their lived experiences. This might be challenging for elementary students due to the development of communication skills among such pupils (Creswell, 2014). This is why the researcher would pick secondary-level campus journalists.

There is some pragmatic concern, but that is not what transcendental phenomenology is focused on: the lived experience itself, not the duration of it. Researchers can use any strategies they want regarding participant selection, remembering the demands of clarity, depth (if appropriate), and a capacity to participate in the introspective process.

2.2 Data Gathering Instrument

The research utilized a researcher-made semi-structured interview. Participants expressed their feelings, coping strategies, and personal experiences in these interviews. The semi-structured interviews provided the opportunity to probe and engage in discussions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A transcendental phenomenological study requires open-ended questions since it can accommodate the participants telling their stories about the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2013). It marks the essential feature of the transcendental phenomenology discipline, which investigates the conscious experience as experienced from a subjective or first-person point of view (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, n.d.). All the participants were asked the same interview questions in the same order, though some needed further probing. Follow-up was necessary to obtain further information and data to see whether there would be a perceived difference and commonality in their experiences (Creswell, 2013).

The selection of validators, who validated the interview questions, was based on inclusion criteria: (a) at least a Master's degree holder in language teaching; (b) have at least 1 published research; (c) a qualitative researcher; and (d) have at least five (5) years of teaching experience from various educational institutions. Suggestions for improvement were taken into consideration. Interviews were recorded and transcribed then members were checked for credibility and trustworthiness.

2.3 Data Analysis Method

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis emphasizes identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns and themes within the data. It organizes and describes all data in detail. There are six (6) steps covered in thematic analysis:

Familiarizing the data. In this step, the researcher read and re-read the data to become familiar with its needs and pay attention to the patterns that occur. The researcher then completed data collection.

Generating initial themes. The researcher generated the initial codes by documenting where and how patterns occurred. This happened through data reduction, where the researcher collapsed data into labels to create categories for more efficient analysis. Data complication is also completed here. This involved the researcher making inferences about what the codes mean.

Searching for clustered themes. the researcher combined codes into overarching themes that accurately depict the data. It is important to develop themes that describe exactly what the theme means, even if it does not fit. The researcher also described what is missing from the analysis.

Reviewing themes. In this step, the researcher examined how the themes supported the data and the overreaching theoretical perspective. If the analysis seemed incomplete, the researcher went back and found what needed to be added.

Defining and naming emerging themes. The researcher needed to define each theme, identify which aspects of data are being captured, and determine what is interesting about the themes.

Producing the report. When the researcher wrote the report, the researcher decided which themes made meaningful contributions to understanding what was going on within the data.

Moreover, the transcripts were returned to the participants of the study. In qualitative research, returning transcripts to participants—a process called member checking—ensures the data's veracity and accuracy by enabling participants to amend and confirm their claims. Giving participants a say in verifying how their experiences and viewpoints are portrayed strengthens the research's validity and gives them a sense of empowerment.

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section reveals the presentation and discussion of the findings. The emerging themes interpreted from the worldview of the Junior High School

and Senior High School campus journalists in schools in District 10 of Koronadal City Division are presented successively.

3.1 The Emerging Themes on the Worldviews of the Campus Journalists in District 10 of Koronadal City Division.

Emerging Theme 1. Empowerment and Ethical Journalism

Campus journalists exhibit tremendous self-empowerment, strength, and enthusiasm for ethical journalism. These core characteristics complement their view as they confront the advantages and disadvantages of their journalistic work. Campus journalists find meaning in their quest for excellence and moral obligation to bring relevant, accurate, and newsworthy information to their communities.

This is founded on research that underscores the point that campus journalism develops critical thinking and adherence to ethical guidelines (Mabaso & Medubi, 2018). It emphasizes the journalist's role to continually be the "voice of the students," holding the hopes and worries in their hearts but being committed always to the truth.

An additional attribute of ethical passion is a feeling of deep satisfaction and perseverance when facing challenges. An inborn passion that drives a desire to live out one's purpose instead of praise received from others is the hallmark. They are not wavering in their commitment toward journalism, even at a time when little or no incentive comes out of it. This type of dedication is what scholars call "intrinsic motivation," where the primary reward is the activity itself rather than any external validation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). For these campus journalists, writing, reporting, and sharing the truth was a means for self-fulfillment, reflecting their ethical passion.

Emerging Theme 2. Resilience and Growth in Pursuits

Campus journalists reflect an ability to remain persistent while improving due to setbacks or challenges. One major takeoff from participants' experience is how interest in competing again resurfaced in cases when they were discouraged. The renewed sense of competition raises the question of resilience, which Masten (2014) described as an ordinary human capacity that can, over time, be fortified. For these, setbacks are not failures but catalysts for deeper reflection and a renewed commitment to their craft.

The emotional motive to continually improve also plays a role in creating this resilience. External or personal motives, such as the imperative to be at their best or the desire to finally win after years of failure, animate the desire to excel. This is consistent with Fredrickson's (2016) argument that those who hold emotionally are in the belief that setbacks are a chance to grow. Dweck's

(2017) theory of growth mindset further elaborates that this belief in the possibility of change or improvement would lead towards success even in failure and, again, brings to light the importance of perseverance.

Lastly, on account that the participants' belief that one can improve because of one's capacity would point to the value of self-efficacy in building up resilience. As Bandura (2018) declares, perseverance is grounded on self-efficacy: a person believing in their ability to succeed will be more effective at growth. This is probably the major reason campus journalists keep pushing forward. Their belief propels them in their continuous efforts and will not allow setbacks to derail them into non-achievement in their personal and professional lives. Thus, resilience comes as an evolution of growth engendered by a deep sense of purpose and belief in one's capabilities.

3.2 The Contexts of the Worldviews of the Campus Journalists in District 10 of Koronadal City Division

Emerging Theme 3. Assistance and Self-Perception For Development

Campus journalists confront the dynamics of internalized battles and external sources of support they must undergo as individuals. One of the most significant insights drawn from the participants is the weight of self-doubt in competitive arenas. Self-doubt is a huge challenge in campus journalism because students tend to doubt their capabilities. Such a feeling is not far from competitive environments where self-assessment is related to some kind of performance. The most recent studies suggest that self-doubt can reduce performance, especially when students feel they are not up to par with their expectations or others (Higgins, 2018). Hence, success or failure in overcoming self-doubt should be considered an essential feature of developing subjects since students experience inner challenges and move beyond them.

Whereas self-doubt is a significant concern for most journalists, participants acknowledged that what role models do or play to motivate them has been notably realized. Success role models and those who have made it and come out successful give tangible representations of success and indicate pathways to be pursued by campus journalists. The participants' experiences resonate with the evidence in the literature that role models serve as important tools for students to promote a positive self-image and solidify the perception of workability concerning their attainability of success (Andrews & Meyer, 2016). Motivated by such role models, be they senior journalists, mentors, or teachers, campus journalists feel empowered to pursue their interests despite the challenges they meet during this process.

Finally, the students' narrative reveals that a support system is a motivational and accountability factor. Family, friends, and mentors are very important to these students since they give emotional encouragement and the feeling of responsibility to stay committed. Indeed, research findings reveal that a good support system is important in motivating individuals to stay within their set personal and professional objectives (Williams et al., 2020). Where support networks motivate these students in campus journalism, their sustained efforts and ability to carry on through adversity make the self-perception of these journalists more outstanding. Therefore, the basis for continued development is set on which students grow through various demands of campus journalism to increase skill and confidence.

Emerging Theme 4. Constraints and Triumph

Constraints and Triumph would reflect the confusing relationship between campus journalists' challenges and the development due to pressures. One of the most important insights obtained through participants is pressure, which, at first glance, appears daunting and then tends to operate as a catalyst for motivation and achievement. With competition, such as with a campus newspaper in the picture, what would drive urgency for them is time deadlines, expectations from peers and mentors, and the necessity of doing more than usual. Research has shown that even managed pressure can heighten attention and motivation and boost feelings of accomplishment when duties are performed well (Murray & Hall, 2017). For such student journalists, this competitive atmosphere invokes a sense of grit, and triumph is achieved and seen to have been won in terms of personal satisfaction and attainment amid stress.

Positive feelings brought by the program notwithstanding, the participants still express negatives regarding overlapping tasks that will surely stress and tire them. There are demanding responsibilities for such campus journalists regarding academic and journalistic work, which most of the students in the program experienced as overwhelming. According to recent findings, especially in high-stakes environments, multitasking has been found to lead to cognitive overload and low productivity (Rosen et al., 2018). The participants' experience reflects this struggle, where the constant juggling of tasks without having time to prepare the tasks increases the pressure and weakens performance. It aligns with the observation that a lack of preparation time results in more stress due to minute disruptions.

The participants also shared how a minor disruption can critically affect their work. Comparing it to journalism, considering the anxiety regarding timings and accuracy, small setbacks like technical issues or

miscommunication create a ripple effect, where the flow of work gets stopped, and pressure is more likely to get the tasks completed within time. These minor interruptions may not have much of a resultant impact. However, they add to the burden already undergoing stress in the delivery of work. As a result, they not only degrade the quality of work but also disturb student journalists' mental peace. According to the literature, Minor disruptions create a whole cascade effect concerning degrading efficiency and satisfaction in high-stress environments (Chen & Karahanna, 2016). Despite the problems, the fact that the participants managed to handle some of these indicates more resilience and devotion to their work and cannot be less than a story about struggle and success.

3.3 The Views of the Campus Journalists of Themselves in the Future in District 10 of Koronadal City Division

Emerging Theme 5. Guidance and Aspirations

Campus journalists have a delicate articulation of themselves in terms of their future selves, especially when balancing personal aspirations and external influences. Mostly, students with broad areas of interest in journalism, broadcasting, or even engineering would become puzzled about a single direction in life. This is precipitated by internal confusion and multiple external influences. For example, one participant voiced a conflicting desire between the aspiration for a secure engineering career and a passion for broadcasting. Such ambitions require a balancing act in which the reality of practicality must be weighed against the desire for love. This aligns with the literature that asserts that adolescents are at the most important stage of identity development as they review career aspirations (Gutman & Schoon, 2016).

Parental guidance does play an important role in determining these aspirations. One of the participants summed it up fairly well when she said their parents' advice represented one of the major pushes, sometimes setting an interest in specific areas, such as journalism. Kniveton (2016) asserts that by the time a child reaches adolescence, parents continue to exert a great deal of influence over most career decisions. To illustrate, such advice is not necessarily taken literally; it represents a launching pad from which students often take off in their independent explorations of careers. Journalism and writing, as such, serve as safe havens in which participants of this study experiment with identity, relieve pressures, and hone skills for the future regarding personal and professional lives.

Balancing two ambitions, like engineering and broadcasting, reveals a larger pattern whereby students seek to marry passions with more pragmatic career

choices. The participants' narratives resonate with research, indicating that students are generally motivated by their personal values, interests, and external opportunities (Savickas, 2014). It is interesting to observe how participants think of their future selves and drive reflective discussion about journalism as a tool that enables them to investigate and challenge themselves in various fields, thus showing how these young people are in an active process of self-explored discovery amidst familial expectations and societal pressures.

Emerging Theme 6. Commitment and Future

Campus journalists convey how parental advice and personal interests define their educational and professional careers. The participants reflect that their parents' advice often becomes the springboard for their exploration in terms of providing direction and motivation about studying certain fields. While sometimes subtle, parental influence can awaken students' interest initially and, with time, deepen this interest into an eventual commitment to a certain track. This goes in line with the notion that parental support plays a dominant role in educational and career paths, which can be derived from the work by Kniveton (2016), revealing the fact that the involvement of parents is still a critical factor for students while making decisions regarding their careers.

It also follows that the participants delineated their aspirations from other alternative career fields. Many, however, felt an internal urge toward particular vocations—including journalism as one of the vocations that brought a person a sense of fulfillment and purpose. Thus, this phenomenon demonstrates the application of the theoretical model of career construction, in which vocational identity, over time, evolves and represents an individual's deep-seated desires and values (Savickas, 2014). The participants' narratives reveal a deep commitment to their professional area since external influences from parental support merge with personal motivations into a well-defined and set career path.

Such commitment always leads to a future-oriented mentality, given that participants focus on current success as much as future achievements. The desire to be excellent at whatever profession they attain, particularly journalism, drives them to excel because their skills and interests lie in journalism. Such factors push and draw out inner strength, resilience, and determination into the future. Individuals who are supported in terms of their educational and career goals by family support and personal conviction tend to be more resilient, and long-term persisting ultimately defines their futures, according to Gutman and Schoon (2016).

3.4 The Implications of the Campus Journalists' Worldviews and Contexts in the English Language Learning in District 10 of Koronadal City Division

Emerging Theme 7. Education and Information

Education and Information underscores the critical role campus journalists play in bridging student voices and the broader school community. Their commitment to disseminating accurate information fosters a sense of duty and responsibility, positioning journalism as a medium for expression, education, and connection within the school environment.

Campus journalism provides students with authentic contexts for improving their command of the English language. In activities such as writing articles, conducting interviews, and editing, students train and hone their language competencies in authentic contexts. This directly relates to the principles of learning that the American English resources from the U.S. Department of State emphasize: practical application of the language learned should be a part of that process (American English, n.d.).

The duty of reporting the truth and factuality also instills critical thinking and ethical communication. Student journalists learn to assess sources, construct coherent narratives, and present information objectively. Such skills are crucial components of media literacy, according to the American Psychological Association, which emphasizes that critical thinking is the best defense against misinformation.

Campus journalism fosters teamwork among students, where peer learning and collective problem-solving are encouraged. In the context of journalistic projects, students acquire interpersonal communication skills and a sense of community while working together. This collaborative atmosphere enhances their ability to articulate ideas clearly and listen actively, thus further contributing to their language development (Thinking Habitats, n.d.).

Essentially, students will not only take a significant stride toward informing their peers in school but will also make such contributions toward helping themselves out better. The embrace of being the reporters and educators by students gives way to the true realization of deep learning about English language use along with practical exposure in it towards preparing for upcoming academic and career goals.

Emerging Theme 8. Academic Rigor and Precision in Communication

Academic Rigor and Precision in Communication underscores the importance of accuracy, time management, and an uncompromising quest for excellence in campus journalism. These are not byproducts of journalistic training but are deeply ingrained in academic discipline, molding students into meticulous communicators and lifelong learners. This theme greatly affects campus journalists' worldviews and their context in learning the English language, since this puts equipment skills into them that are beyond journalism, hence positively contributing to the broader academic and professional growth.

Accuracy remains a foundational principle in the context of learning a foreign language, such as the English language, as it improves both written and verbal means of communication. Campus journalists are trained to verify facts, ensure grammatical precision, and structure their narratives cohesively, all of which form core competencies in mastering the English language (Se & Se, 2015). The habit of meticulous fact-checking and clarity in communication encourages campus journalists to view English not merely as a subject to study but as a practical tool for conveying truth and fostering understanding. This worldview enhances the appreciation of language as a powerful medium of expression and thought-shaping.

The other important factor in this theme is time management, which is equally important in any English learning process. The ability to balance between deadlines and tasks, and to manage workloads effectively, sets people up to become disciplined and responsible individuals, qualities necessary for academic exercises (Chavez et al., 2024). Campus journalists are constantly drafting articles, revising texts, and preparing reports under tight deadlines—an experience that closely resonates with the demands of academic writing, language assessments, and classroom activities. This practice equips the student with a structured approach to completing English tasks with confidence and efficiency.

Additionally, chasing excellence helps campus journalists understand the world by developing a culture of continuous improvement and resilience. Through repeated cycles of writing, editing, and refinement, they hone a keen self-criticism and persistence, according to American Psychological Association in 2024. For ESL students, that means the will to revise, ask for, and accept feedback from others, as well as endure challenges when asked to write or speak in exercise or comprehension prompts. Excellence becomes more than an academic objective—it becomes a personal value entrenched in their attitude toward language learning and communication.

III CONCLUSION

Campus journalism is crucial in developing campus journalists' identity, morale, and passion. These journalists developed a sense of purpose and faced challenges with resilience while being intrinsically motivated, truthful, and responsive to the call.

The pressures, external influence, and environment signaled personal and professional development in balancing creative aspirations with societal expectations. Despite many career goals and values brought about by campus journalism, like critical thinking, moral courage, and persistence, they remain the foundation of their personal and future professional lives.

The study provides a holistic exploration of the worldviews of campus journalists in District 10 of Koronadal City Division, revealing various aspects that shape their experiences and perspectives. Their task is to stand for truth, integrity, and the ethical expectations of journalism amidst the great hurdle that they should face. To them, all these are together with their strong resilience as well, since there is continuous growth and adapting wherein they develop abilities to overcome adversity and push hard in the completion of their goal as journalists.

It is not an isolated journey but the communities and systems that support their journey. They are important parts of a system that will enable them to become better in a very fast pace, emotional support for each other, and at times, support for their professions. This complex interlink of challenges and relationships further deepens the dynamic character of work with relationships and cooperation being integral components to personal development as well as to professional advancement.

Even amidst the challenges that they face, campus journalists strive to succeed in their endeavors. They do not see their jobs as mere jobs but as calling, with passion and a genuine sense of fulfillment in doing the work. While this passion helps them to press on, there is also the recognition of their need for support, whether it comes from mentorship or peer relationships, which they can use in order to develop their skills further and become more effective in the craft.

Major restrictions they face in terms of fewer resources and extraneous pressures that restrict them from performing well are overlooked since they do not deter their achievements. Instead, these are turned into breakthroughs, and achieving success after failure gives them an accomplishment feeling of overcoming adversity. Their flexibility regarding disruptions such as unexpected deadlines or technological issues to changes in the school's policy shows how easily they can survive in dynamic settings.

Most importantly, campus journalists are inspired by the role models and expectations coming from mentors and family members. Such people help create visions of professional goals for them, including whether those aspirations fall within journalism or reach out to more fields. Indeed, they are committed to future investment because they work with a long-term perspective: the work they invest in today sets the foundation for success tomorrow.

In most aspects, education helps them in development, as they acquire the proper academic tools and knowledge that are fundamental for effective and accurate communication. Such academic rigor allows their work to maintain high standards in terms of accuracy and reliability to prepare them for the professional standards of journalism. Moreover, a continuous learning environment, either from formal education or informal mentorship, is the essence of their lifelong development, ensuring that they keep up with their skills in a constantly changing media environment.

In conclusion, the study's findings reveal a group of people who are not only resilient and dedicated to their craft but also draw strength from the support of their communities and the guidance of mentors. Their worldview is one of empowerment, growth, and a deep commitment to ethical practice, underscored by a recognition of the challenges they face and the triumphs they achieve. In the very complex role of being a campus journalist in Koronadal City, they will reflect on how one navigates this intersection between academic rigor, professional aspirations, and personal growth. These insights go deep into the motivations, challenges, and aspirations of campus journalists as contributions to the overall conversation about student journalism development.

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A Study of Human-AI Interaction Patterns in Artificial Intelligence-Assisted Second Language Writing

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Abstract— *The aim of this project is to investigate human-computer interaction patterns in AI-assisted second language writing in order to explore students' strategies and patterns when collaborating with generative AI tools, as well as key hidden states in AI-assisted writing. The project utilizes Hidden Markov Models (HMM) and process mining techniques to analyze the potential patterns of student interactions with AI and evaluate the efficacy of different patterns. The findings will reveal the cognitive mechanisms of human-computer interaction in second language writing, expand the theoretical framework of human-computer collaboration, and provide empirical evidence for effectively guiding students to utilize AI to address key questions in second language writing research.*

Keywords— *Artificial Intelligence; Second Language Writing; Hidden Markov Models; Human-AI Interaction.*



LITERATURE REVIEW

With the rapid development of technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has deeply penetrated into the field of education, and the teaching of writing is no exception. The intervention of AI technology has brought new modes and methods to the teaching of writing, and the scope of application has been constantly expanding, from automatic writing assessment systems to advanced language models. This not only provides students with richer learning resources and instant feedback, but also brings convenience and innovation to teachers. However, like any emerging thing, the application of AI in writing teaching faces many challenges, such as the accuracy of the technology, the impact on students' thinking development, and academic integrity. Therefore, it is of great practical significance to study the current situation, advantages, challenges, and

response strategies of AI in writing teaching.

1. AI Application in Writing

1.1 Automated Writing Assessment System

Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) systems are an early and widely used form of artificial intelligence in writing instruction. Huang Jing and He Huaqing (2018) point out in "Research on the Impact of Human-Machine Feedback on Students' Writing Behavior" that Page Essay Grade (PEG), developed by U.S. scholars in the 1960s, was the world's first automatic assessment system for writing, and initially it was only capable of scoring essays, with a relatively single function. With the continuous progress of technology, today's AWE system has become increasingly powerful, and can automatically generate scores while providing students with diagnostic feedback from multiple dimensions, such as grammar, vocabulary, structure and

content. China's Sentencool is a typical example, which has been widely used in English writing teaching in colleges and universities for its advantages of timely marking, recognizing simple errors and providing knowledge of relevant grammar and vocabulary (Gu, Chenghua, and Wang, Li, 2012).

In Huang Jing and He Huaqing's (2018) study, teaching practice was carried out with the help of Sentence Cool Critique Network. Students completed their first drafts and submitted them to the Critique Network, made revisions based on their feedback, followed by peer review, and some students were able to obtain teacher feedback, and finally completed a self-assessment report. The results of the study showed that the human-computer feedback prompted students to increase the opportunity of writing multiple drafts, which is conducive to the realization of the process of writing. An analysis of the number of drafts completed in the students' writing tasks revealed that students completed a total of 417 drafts in the three writing tasks, with 75 drafts in the first draft and 342 drafts in the revised drafts, an average of nearly six drafts per person per writing task. Meanwhile, the quality of students' writing texts improved to varying degrees. In terms of vocabulary spelling and punctuation, students received more machine feedback than manual feedback, which suggests that the AWE system has an advantage in providing feedback at these basic levels. In terms of text quality, both the manual scoring and the machine evaluation showed that the human-machine feedback had a significant positive effect on the quality of students' writing, especially in vocabulary, such as in Writing Task 1, where the academic vocabulary increased significantly in the final draft compared to the first draft, and the difference was significant.

1.2 Intelligent tools based on language models

The application of language modeling represented by ChatGPT in writing instruction has gradually become a hot research topic. Da Yan (2023) conducted a one-week practical study in Impact of ChatGPT on learners in a L2 writing practicum: An exploratory investigation. The study found that students were able to quickly acquire basic skills in writing using ChatGPT and increase their proficiency and ability through collaborative activities. week-long practical study in which undergraduate English majors were exposed

to ChatGPT in a L2 writing practicum. The study found that the students were able to quickly acquire the basic skills of writing with ChatGPT, and increased their proficiency and ability through collaborative activities. Students recognized the speed and quality of ChatGPT in generating text that was well structured, had few grammatical errors, and could be produced in different styles, such as academic or casual, depending on the requirements.

Ahmad Azmi AbdelHamid Esmaeil et al. (2023) in "Understanding Student Perception Regarding The Use of ChatGPT in Their Argumentative Writing: a Qualitative Inquiry" in which students' perceptions of the use of ChatGPT in their argumentative writing were explored in depth through a qualitative study of 17 students. Students perceived ChatGPT as having significant advantages in providing information and guidance, stimulating writing ideas, and saving time. In terms of information provision, ChatGPT can quickly retrieve relevant content from multiple disciplines and fields, providing students with a wealth of materials and ideas for their writing. It also generates a logical article framework and paragraph content based on the keywords or questions entered by students, helping students to overcome the obstacles in their thinking when writing. In addition, the immediacy of ChatGPT allows students to access help at any time without the constraints of time and space, which greatly improves the convenience of learning.

2. Positive Impact of AI on Writing

2.1 Providing immediate feedback

Automatic Writing Evaluation (AWE) systems and language models can provide students with immediate feedback, which is important for writing instruction. In "A Study of the Effects of a Mixed Human-Computer Feedback Environment on Learning Engagement and Second Language Writing Proficiency," Zhang Ya and Jiang Zhanhao (2022) pointed out that AWE feedback provides frequent, process-oriented diagnostic assessments during the revision process, and that this kind of instantaneous feedback can stimulate students' learning engagement. In their study, students in the experimental group, who received mixed human-computer feedback, showed a significant increase in behavioral and cognitive input compared to the control group, who received only teacher feedback. Specifically, the experimental group had a higher

rate of feedback uptake, and students were able to more actively revise their essays based on the feedback; longer revision time indicated that students paid more attention to the feedback and were willing to spend time to make improvements; and greater awareness of the feedback and ability to use metacognitive strategies, and students were able to better understand the content of the feedback and use metacognitive strategies to monitor and adjust the writing process.

Liu Yingliang, Liu Shengnan, and Yang Jincai (2022) mentioned in “Exploration of Human-Computer Collaborative Teaching and Application in the Perspective of Socio-Cultural Activity Theory -- Taking iWrite Collaborative English Writing Teaching as an Example,” that the iWrite English writing teaching and review system can provide timely review and feedback on students' online texts in terms of four dimensions: language, content, chapter structure, and technical specifications. The iWrite English Writing Teaching and Review System, mentioned in iWrite Collaborative English Writing Teaching Example, provides timely review and feedback on online texts submitted by students in four dimensions: language, content, chapter structure, and technical specifications. The system categorizes and counts errors in essays into five categories, such as syntax, lexis, collocations, technical specifications, and other categories, and subdivided into 69 subcategories, and provides concise suggestions for revision. This detailed and immediate feedback helps students identify and correct problems in writing in a timely manner to improve the quality of writing. For example, if students make mistakes in verb tense or singular or plural nouns during the writing process, the system is able to quickly recognize them and give them suggestions for correct usage, so that students can correct their mistakes in time and avoid repeating them in their subsequent writing.

2.2 Enriching Teaching Resources

Artificial intelligence technology brings rich and diverse teaching resources for writing teaching. Jin Liang and Yang Jinsong (2022) pointed out in “Exploring the Transmutation of Higher Vocational Curriculum Structure in the Context of Artificial Intelligence-Enabled Education -- Taking Foreign Language Courses as an Example” that teaching resources present a diversified trend under the support of AI. Teachers can build rich multimodal teaching

resources with the help of AI technology, for example, in the senior medical humanities English course, teachers adopt the task-driven method to encourage students to make small videos related to “flu”. In the process of production, students not only master medical knowledge, but also express themselves in English, thus improving their English listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation skills. This multimodal presentation of teaching resources integrates text, images, audio, video and other elements to make the learning content more vivid and interesting, which helps to improve students' motivation and participation.

When students in Da Yan's (2023) study used ChatGPT, they found that it provided a wealth of information and examples from multiple disciplines and fields. When students write about scientific and technological topics, ChatGPT can provide the latest scientific research results, relevant cases and opinions from different scholars to help students broaden their ideas and enrich the content of their essays. ChatGPT can also provide different styles of writing examples according to the needs of students, such as formal academic style, easy-to-understand popularization of science and technology style, so that students can learn a variety of ways to express themselves and increase the flexibility and adaptability of writing. and improve the flexibility and adaptability of writing.

2.3 Promoting Personalized Learning

Artificial intelligence helps to personalize writing instruction. According to Liu Yingliang, Liu Shengnan, and Yang Jincai (2022), the resource library of the iWrite system contains a variety of resources for different writing problems, and students can browse and collect the appropriate resources for personalized learning according to their specific problems, such as argumentative essay conceptualization skills, articulation language for high scores in essays, and sentence variety. The system can also analyze students' writing situation and provide teachers with information on students' individual writing strengths and shortcomings, so as to facilitate teachers' precise tutoring. For example, for students who have deficiencies in vocabulary use, teachers can recommend vocabulary learning resources based on the information provided by the system and guide students to conduct targeted practice.

Students in Ahmad Azmi AbdelHamid Esmaeil et al.'s (2023) study perceived that ChatGPT could provide

personalized interactions and guidance based on their needs and help them discover new ideas and perspectives. When students encountered difficulties in writing, ChatGPT was able to provide personalized suggestions and solutions based on the problems and requirements entered by the students. If a student's viewpoint on a certain topic is not clear enough, ChatGPT can guide the student to think about the issue from different perspectives, provide more arguments and methods of argumentation, and help the student to refine his/her viewpoint and improve the depth and breadth of his/her writing.

3. Challenges of AI in Writing Teaching

3.1 Accuracy of Feedback

Despite the immediacy of the feedback provided by AI, accuracy and relevance could be improved. Adam Pfau et al. (2023), in *Exploring the potential of ChatGPT in assessing L2 writing accuracy for research purposes*, investigated the A study of ChatGPT's ability to assess L2 writing accuracy found that ChatGPT frequently underestimates the total number of errors, although it has a high correlation with manual coding in error detection. When analyzing 100 second language compositions at different levels of proficiency, ChatGPT was found to miss errors such as hyphenated sentences, sentence fragments, incorrect or missing prepositions and articles. It is also not stable enough in recognizing the types of errors, and the classification of errors in the same composition may vary at different times.

Huang Jing and He Huaqing (2018) mentioned that most of the feedback from automatic assessment systems such as SentenceCoolCritique.com focuses on the vocabulary section and the more mature grammatical analyses, which tends to only point out the problem and cannot provide correct examples. For some complex grammatical errors or errors in specific contexts, the system cannot accurately identify and correct them. In terms of essay content and chapter structure, the feedback from the automated assessment system is also lacking, and it cannot analyze the logical coherence of the essay and the adequacy of the argument in depth, thus failing to provide students with comprehensive and targeted suggestions for improvement.

3.2 Potential impact on students' thinking skills

Over-reliance on artificial intelligence may have a negative impact on the development of students' thinking

skills. Araz Zirar (2023) in *Exploring the impact of language models, such as ChatGPT, on student learning and assessment* states that If students use language models without critically assessing them and rely only on the information they provide, it may lead to a lack of critical thinking and analytical skills. In the writing process, students who rely too much on the content generated by ChatGPT may lack the ability to think independently and explore issues in depth. When students encounter writing tasks and use ChatGPT-generated articles directly without thinking and analyzing them on their own, they cannot really exercise their thinking skills and find it difficult to improve their understanding and application of knowledge. In the long run, students may develop a habit of dependency and be unable to complete writing tasks independently when faced with situations without the assistance of AI.

Students in Ahmad Azmi AbdelHamid Esmaeil et al.'s (2023) study were also concerned that the use of ChatGPT would cause them to become dependent, which would reduce their learning and critical thinking skills. They argued that excessive use of ChatGPT reduces their opportunities for active thinking and exploration, which is not conducive to the development of independent problem-solving skills and creative thinking, and has a negative impact on long term development.

3.3 Issues of Academic Integrity

The use of artificial intelligence in writing instruction raises serious academic integrity concerns. Da Yan (2023) found that students believe that the use of ChatGPT may undermine educational equity because it helps students generate essays quickly, giving those who use the tool an unfair advantage over the competition. Some students may use ChatGPT to cheat on exams or assignments, a behavior that is difficult to recognize by existing plagiarism detection software. Since the text generated by ChatGPT is somewhat original, it is difficult for existing plagiarism detection systems to determine whether it is plagiarized content or not, which increases the risk of plagiarism among students.

Araz Zirar (2023) also pointed out the increasing use of language models by students to generate assessment assignments and the low reliability of existing detection tools. Current detection tools are often unable to accurately determine whether a text has been generated by a language model or to what extent the content of the language model

has been used. This gives some students an opportunity to take advantage of the situation, and they may obtain high scores through improper means, which undermines the fairness and seriousness of academics. Such behavior is not only unfair to other students, but also not conducive to students' own learning and growth, and cannot truly test students' knowledge mastery and ability level.

3.4 Dilemma of Teacher Role Change

In the process of integrating AI into writing instruction, teachers face the challenge of role transformation. Jin Liang and Yang Jinsong (2022) suggested that in traditional teaching, teachers are the main body of the curriculum, but in the context of AI-empowered education, teachers need to transform into the leaders and instructors in the “teacher-student learning community”, which puts forward new requirements on teachers’ teaching concepts and abilities. However, some teachers may have difficulty adapting to this transformation. In the traditional teaching mode, teachers are used to dominating the classroom and imparting knowledge in a single way. In contrast, in an AI-assisted teaching environment, teachers need to learn to utilize new technological tools to guide students to learn independently and interact and collaborate with them more effectively.

Liu Yingliang, Liu Shenglan and Yang Jincai (2022) believe that teachers need to be skilled in the use of human-computer collaborative systems and learn to collaborate with “AI” in teaching, but some teachers currently have insufficient knowledge of and ability to apply related technologies. Some teachers may have a limited understanding of the functions of automatic writing assessment systems and language modeling and do not know how to make full use of these tools to assist teaching. In the process of using them, they may encounter technical problems that cannot be solved or fail to organically integrate the technology with the teaching content, resulting in the inability to fully utilize the advantages of AI in writing teaching.

4. Summary

Comprehensively, it can be seen that the application of artificial intelligence in writing teaching brings many opportunities as well as faces many challenges. It has demonstrated significant advantages in providing immediate feedback, enriching teaching resources, and

promoting personalized learning, providing new impetus and ways for the development of writing teaching. However, the issues of accuracy and relevance of feedback, the potential impact on students' thinking skills, academic integrity, and the dilemma of changing teachers' roles need to be addressed in future research and practice. By optimizing the technology, guiding students to use it correctly, strengthening academic integrity education and supervision, as well as improving teachers' technology application ability and other strategies, the role of AI in writing teaching can be better exploited, the deep integration of AI and writing teaching can be realized, the quality and effect of writing teaching can be improved, students' comprehensive writing ability and innovative thinking can be cultivated, and students' future development can be laid with a solid foundation. Future research can further explore how to apply AI more effectively in different teaching scenarios and disciplines, as well as how to establish a more complete evaluation system to comprehensively assess the impact of AI on writing teaching. It can also investigate how to use AI technology to develop students' digital literacy and critical thinking skills, so that they can better adapt to the development needs of the future digital society.

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

In today's era of deep integration between artificial intelligence and education, it is of great practical significance to explore the dynamics of cooperation between advanced English academic level writers and AI tools. Focusing on this area, this study carefully selected 10 first-year master's degree students as participants, all of whom were enrolled in the Foreign Languages, Literatures and Applied Linguistics program, all of whom had English as their second language, and all of whom had more than ten years of English learning experience. The English master's students were chosen for the study because they are familiar with English academic writing and are able to demonstrate the characteristics of advanced English academic level writing under high standards and complex ideas, which helps to gain insights into the dynamics of this type of writers' work with AI tools.

Prior to participating in the study, all subjects had some

basic knowledge of AI use and had received classroom training in academic writing and AI interaction. The training covered a variety of key aspects, including a detailed explanation of the APA format, which is essential in academic writing, so that students could master how to cite references in a standardized way to avoid academic misconduct, and training in writing AI prompts, so that students could accurately communicate their needs to the AI tool and get a more responsive response.

Prior to the formalization of the experiment, the research team designed and distributed a questionnaire to gather comprehensive information about the participants' backgrounds. The questionnaire covered several key dimensions, including the teacher support and technical support dimension, which focuses on the help and resources that students receive from teachers and technology in their daily learning; the AI literacy dimension, which examines students' understanding, mastery, and application of AI technology; the technology acceptance dimension, which looks at students' acceptance of, attitude toward, and willingness to use the AI tools; and the human-computer interoperability dimension (Zhai, N., & Ma, X, 2022; Shen, Y., & Cui, W, 2024), which focuses on exploring the interaction patterns, collaboration effects, etc. between students and AI tools. Through this questionnaire, the researchers were able to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the basic situation of the participants, providing strong background data support for the subsequent experimental study.

This study utilized an offline experimental design in which an experienced instructor distributed writing tasks to students in class. Students were required to complete a challenging writing task in the same class, i.e., to write an argumentative essay of no less than 500 English words on the topic "Is There a Critical Period for Second Language Acquisition?". To ensure the quality of the essay, the task has clear and strict requirements on the content and structure of the writing. In terms of content, students are required to support their arguments with well-supported evidence and examples from reliable sources, which requires students to have good literature searching and filtering skills, and to be able to select strong evidence from a wide range of academic resources to support their own views. The structure of the essay must include a clear

introduction to capture the reader's attention and introduce the topic of the essay; a body that covers both thesis and counter-argument, demonstrating the student's ability to think deeply about the issue and analyze it; and a strong conclusion that summarizes and sublimates the content of the essay. At the same time, students must cite all the literature correctly in strict accordance with the APA format, which not only reflects the standardization of academic writing, but also helps readers to trace back and check the relevant information. In terms of word count, it is clearly stated that the 500-word requirement does not include a bibliography section, and that the word count should not be less than 450 words or more than 550 words to ensure that the essay can adequately address the point without being too long or too short. In addition, participants were required to complete the writing task in less than 60 minutes, which placed high demands on students' time management and writing efficiency. In order to simulate a real-life writing situation, students were allowed to use any tools they deemed necessary during the experiment, including but not limited to KIMI and Google Scholar, so that they could fully utilize their abilities to authentically demonstrate the process of working with AI tools.

During the course of the experiment, the research team used screen recordings to fully capture the participants' interactions with the writing task and the various tools they chose to use. This recording method was able to record detailed information about the steps students took during the writing process, and the frequency and manner in which they used the tools, providing rich data for subsequent analysis. Prior to any sequence analysis or process mining, the final outcome of the writing task was scored by a professional university lecturer immediately after the data collection phase. The lecturer will make a comprehensive assessment based on the pre-established scoring criteria in terms of content, structure, language expression, literature citation and other aspects of the article to ensure the objectivity and fairness of the scoring. At the end of the experiment, the research team distributed the same questionnaire again in order to compare and analyze the changes in the relevant dimensions of the students before and after the experiment, and further explore the impact of the experimental process on the students.

Data Coding and Processing

In today's era of globalization, the integration of second language learning and artificial intelligence has become an important research direction in the field of education. This study focuses on the collaborative interaction between L2 learners and AI in the English writing process, aiming to deeply analyze the behavioral characteristics of the learners and the adjustment mechanism of their writing strategies in this process. To this end, the research team carefully collected video data from 11 L2 learners during their collaborative English writing tasks with the AI, which lasted for about 564 minutes and covered all the micro-behaviors of the students during the writing process, ranging from minor operations such as pasting and editing to searching for information. These rich data provide a solid foundation for subsequent in-depth analysis.

In order to conduct a systematic and in-depth analysis of these recorded screen data, the research team chose the ELAN software (Lixin Zhang, 2012) and adopted the method of quantitative content analysis. This method encodes students' writing behaviors in a rigorous chronological order, thus generating a sequence of observable states, which provides precise basic data for the subsequent more complex Hidden Markov Model analysis. Specifically, the analytic approach is divided into three key phases: an open coding phase, an axial coding phase, and a selective coding phase. In the initial open coding phase, the researchers meticulously broke down the data into small units, adding descriptors or codes for each student behavior related to the writing process. These descriptors accurately summarized a specific aspect of the writing process; for example, a student copying textual content from an AI tool might be labeled as "Getting content from AI and pasting it"; modifying and editing the pasted content, labeled "Editing AI-supplied content"; and looking up information on the Web is labeled as "Finding writing information online." With such detailed labeling, each behavior is clearly recorded and defined, providing rich raw information for subsequent analysis. As the analysis progressed, the axial coding stage was entered. In this phase, the researchers categorized the numerous codes generated in the previous open coding phase. Similar codes related to acquiring external content such as "acquiring content from

AI and pasting" and "acquiring content from other resources on the web and pasting" were grouped together and defined as "external content acquisition behaviors"; codes related to various editing operations, such as "editing content provided by AI", "editing and modification of self-created content", etc., are categorized as "text editing behavior". Through this categorization, the originally complicated codes become more organized for further analysis. Finally, there is the selective coding stage, in which researchers distill from the categorized codes the themes that express each group of content. These themes are a high level summary of the essence of individual or cluster codes, and can reflect more intuitively the behavioral patterns and characteristics of students in the writing process. After these three stages of meticulous analysis, the research team coded a total of 2,136 actions of 11 students, laying a solid data foundation for subsequent in-depth research.

Hidden Markov modeling, as an extension of the basic Markov chain, is uniquely suited for research in the field of learning sciences (Nguyen, 2024). It provides deep insight into the probability of a sequence consisting of specific random variables or states, and is powerful for analyzing complex dynamic processes. In this study, the researchers used the Python programming language to model sequences of students' writing behaviors based on the HMM model as a way to identify hidden states in the writing process. The central concern of this study is to explore how master's students make adjustments to their own writing strategies in the process of utilizing the AI assistant. In the actual writing process, cognitive activities such as writing plan development and text editing are often hidden and difficult to be directly observed. Yet, these activities have a crucial impact on the final writing outcome and how well students interact with the AI. With Hidden Markov Models (HMM), researchers can effectively model and analyze these implicit cognitive activities that are difficult to observe directly.

The HMM model can capture the potential patterns of students' interactions with the AI during the writing process by analyzing the sequence of students' writing behaviors, revealing the transfer patterns between different states. For example, model analysis may reveal that when students encounter a state of stuck writing ideas, they are more inclined to obtain a large amount of content from the AI and then enter the editing state of such content; while when they

are more satisfied with the writing content, they will be more likely to carry out the refinement of self-created content. Through such an analysis, it is possible to gain insight into students' thinking changes and strategy adjustments in the writing process. In the process of model construction, in order to determine the most appropriate number of model states, the research team comprehensively considered two important indicators, AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) and BIC (Bayesian Information Criterion). These two indicators can help the researchers choose the model that most accurately reflects the characteristics of students' writing behavior among many possible model structures, thus ensuring the reliability and validity of the research results.

RESULT

In the study of collaborative English writing between second language learners and AI using Hidden Markov Model (HMM), model parameter selection is a key step. We

conducted an in-depth analysis of the number of states of the HMM with the help of Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), and Log Likelihood, the results of which are shown in Fig. 1. The horizontal coordinates in the Figure1 represent the number of HMM states, ranging from 2 to 10, which is chosen based on the pre-experiments and the references to similar studies in the literature, aiming to comprehensively explore the performance of the model under different numbers of states. On the left side of the vertical coordinate is the criterion value, which follows the principle of the lower the better, and the value comprehensively takes into account the degree of model fitting to the data as well as the complexity of the model itself; on the right side of the vertical coordinate is the log-likelihood value, and the higher the value is, the better the model fits to the observed data, i.e., the model is able to better interpret the information in the data.

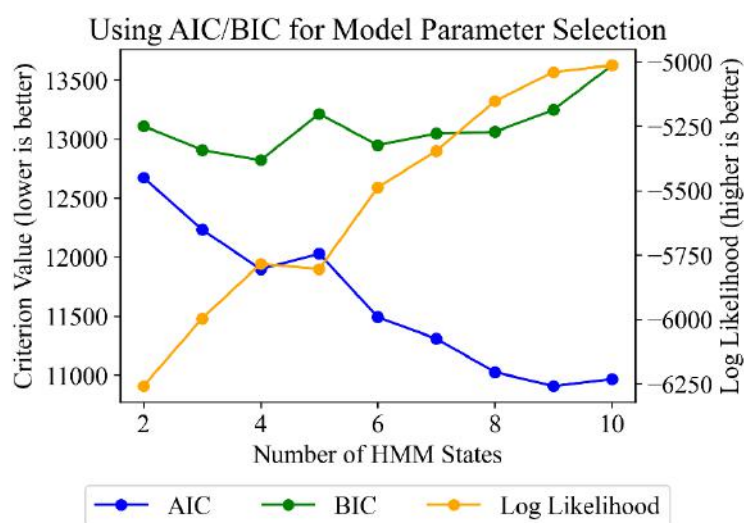


Fig1

Observing the trend of the curves in the figure, we can find that the blue AIC curve shows a continuous decrease with the increase of the number of HMM states. When the number of states is 2, the AIC value is relatively high, around 12600; when the number of states gradually increases to 10, the AIC value decreases to around 11000, which indicates that with the increase of the number of states, the model is able to capture more complex patterns and potential laws in the data, and thus fit the data better. However, this decreasing trend also hints at a potential risk

of overfitting, as an overly complex model may overlearn the noise in the training data, resulting in poor generalization on new data.

The green BIC curve, on the other hand, is characterized by a decreasing and then increasing trend. The BIC reaches its lowest value around 12800 when the number of states is around 4. After that, as the number of states continues to increase, the BIC value starts to rise, and BIC evaluates the model not only by considering the model's goodness-of-fit, but also by imposing a stricter

penalty on the model's complexity. This means that BIC prefers models that explain the data better and are relatively concise in order to avoid overfitting problems due to model complexity.

The orange log-likelihood curve climbs from a low value at 2 states to a relatively high value at 10 states, from around -5100 to -5000. This intuitively reflects that as the number of states increases, the model's ability to fit the data increases, and it is able to better match the observed data distribution. However, as mentioned earlier, increasing the number of states simply in pursuit of high log-likelihood values may sacrifice the generalization ability of the model.

In the analysis of the hidden states of the HMM model (Figure 2), we finally identified four representative hidden states (State1 - State4), and the main writing behaviors of students and their probabilities of occurrence in each state are shown in Figure 2. In order to present this information clearly, each state is presented as a circular graph, which details the writing behaviors with higher probability (> 0.05) and their percentage in that state, and for behaviors with probability less than 0.05, they are uniformly labeled as "Actions with probability < 0.05 ".

State1 can be summarized as Read and Review and all of

them belong to non-human interaction behaviors of students. In State1 (green circle), the behavior "ReadEssay" (reading an essay) dominates with a high percentage of 39.0%. This indicates that in this state, students spent a great deal of time and effort reviewing the essay they had already written, trying to thoroughly evaluate the essay in terms of its overall structure, logical coherence, grammatical accuracy, and relevance of the content, among other aspects. This is closely followed by "EditContent" with a percentage of 14.4%, which indicates that once students find problems in the process of reading an article, they will promptly revise and adjust the content in order to improve the quality of the article. In addition, "Delete Previously Pasted Generated Content" (Delete Previously Pasted Generated Content) accounted for 9.8%, "Read Generated Reference" (Read Generated Reference) accounted for 9.1%, and behaviors such as "Read Generated Reference" also reflect to some extent the students' prudence in screening and integrating AI-generated content as well as references, and that they screen the information they obtain, removing the parts that do not meet the requirements and retaining the useful information.

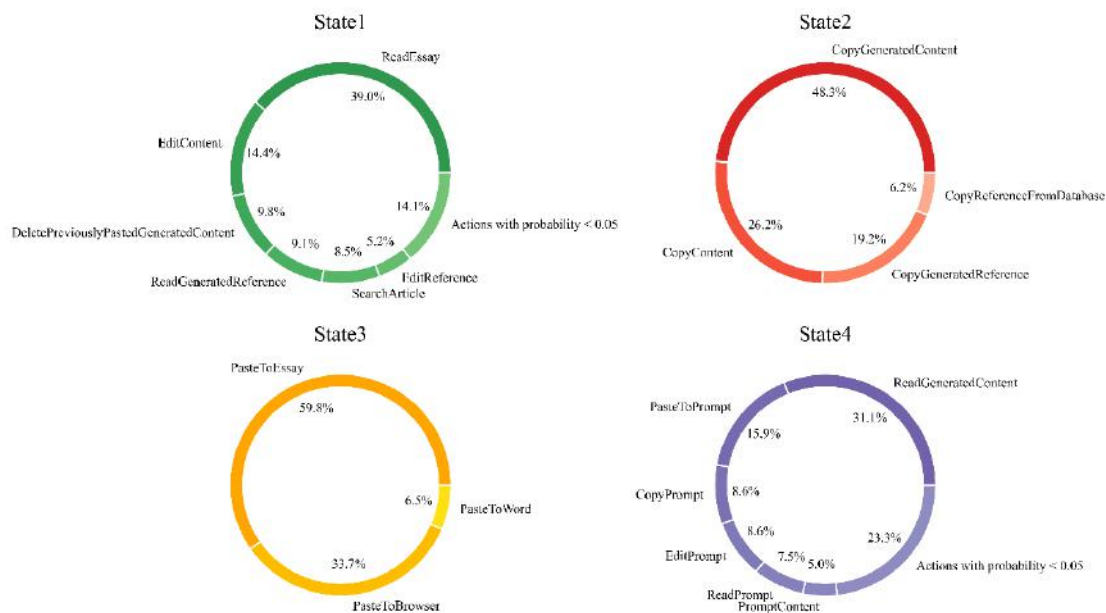


Fig.2

State2 can be summarized as copy. state2 (red circle) is notably characterized by "CopyGeneratedContent", which accounts for 48.3%, almost half of all behaviors in this state. This clearly indicates that in this state, students

highly rely on AI-generated content to enrich their writing. "CopyContent" accounted for 26.2% of all behaviors, further indicating that students not only obtain content from AI, but also may copy relevant information from other

sources to fulfill their writing needs. This behavioral pattern may appear in the early stages of writing, when students face blocked ideas, lack of relevant materials, or lack of familiarity with the writing topic, they will use AI to quickly obtain a large amount of information to provide a basis and inspiration for writing.

State 3 can be summarized as Paste. state3 (orange circle) has “PasteToEssay” (Paste to Essay) as the main behavior, accounting for 59.8%. This means that in this state, students mainly worked on integrating various content previously acquired from AI or other sources into their essays. “PasteToWord” (Paste to Document) at 33.7% and ‘PasteToBrowser’ (Paste to Browser) at 6.5%, on the other hand, reflect that students are transferring content between different platforms and tools and organizing process. They may first paste the acquired content into a temporary document or browser for preliminary screening and editing, and then paste the finalized content into the article to construct a complete framework and content system of the article.

State4 can be summarized as prompt-related. since prompt involves interaction with the AI, the behaviors are all related to AI interactions. in State4 (purple circle), the percentage of “ReadGeneratedContent” is 31.1%, indicating that students in this state mainly read and understand AI-generated content in depth. “PasteToPrompt” accounts for 15.9%, which may mean that in the process of reading AI-generated content, students will, according to their own needs and understanding of the content, paste the relevant information into the prompt box to further interact with the AI in order to obtain content that better meets their expectations. In addition, behaviors such as “CopyPrompt” (8.6%) and “EditPrompt” (7.5%) also show that students are constantly adjusting the prompts for interaction with the AI, trying to optimize the prompts to guide the AI to generate more content. Optimizing prompts to guide the AI to generate more accurate and useful content to better meet their writing needs.

DISCUSSION

In terms of model parameter selection, AIC and BIC provide us with two different perspectives for weighing model complexity and goodness-of-fit. AIC focuses more on

the model's ability to fit the data, and it encourages us to select complex models that more fully describe the data. In some cases, when our goal is to fit the available data as accurately as possible, such as in some data mining and exploratory analyses, AIC may lead us to choose models with a higher number of states. However, this choice may entail the risk of overfitting, making the model much less predictive on new data.

In contrast, BIC is more stringent on the complexity of the model while considering the model's goodness-of-fit. This makes BIC more inclined to choose models that are relatively simple and can explain the data better, which helps to improve the generalization ability of the model. In practice, BIC may be a more appropriate choice if we are more concerned about the performance of the model on new data in the future, such as in predictive modeling and classification tasks. Therefore, in this study, we need to consider both the AIC and BIC criteria together, combine the specific purpose of the study and the characteristics of the data, and find an optimal balance between the model's fitting effect and complexity, and determine the number of HMM states that is most suitable for the data as 4.

From the results of the hidden state analysis of the HMM model, the different states reflect that students present diverse behavioral patterns in the process of collaborative writing with the AI, which are interrelated and together constitute a dynamic writing process. The reading and editing behaviors embodied in the non-HMM behaviors of State1 students may be the students' initial self-assessment and optimization of the article, which is an indispensable part of the writing process. process, which is an integral part of the writing process and helps to improve the quality and logic of the essay. The behavior of extensive copying of AI-generated content in State2 manifests that copying is a major feature of the students' interaction with the AI. In teaching, teachers need to guide students to treat AI-generated content correctly, not only to learn to learn from it, but also to make in-depth thinking and innovation on the basis of it. The Paste in State3 shows that students are transforming the acquired information into a part of their own essays, which requires students to have a certain degree of information filtering and organizing ability. Educators can help students improve their skills in this area through relevant lessons and training, so that they can make better

use of AI and other resources to complete writing tasks. The adjusted behavior of interacting with AI in State4 shows that students are constantly exploring how to better collaborate with AI in order to obtain content that better meets their needs. This also suggests that future AI-assisted writing tools need to further optimize the interaction interface and features to better meet students' individual needs and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of students' collaboration with AI.

In addition, these hidden states do not exist in isolation from each other, but influence and transform each other. Students may switch between different states during the writing process according to their needs, problems encountered, and control of writing progress. This dynamic behavioral pattern provides rich information for us to deeply understand the collaboration mechanism between students and AI, as well as valuable references for further optimizing AI-assisted writing tools and teaching strategies. For example, we can design a more intelligent prompting system based on the behavioral characteristics of students in different states, provide corresponding suggestions and guidance when students are in a specific state, help students better complete the writing task, and promote the improvement of students' writing ability at the same time.

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on collaborative English writing between second language learners and AI, and analyzes it using Hidden Markov Model (HMM). In the selection of model parameters, with the help of Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), and log-likelihood value, it is found that AIC decreases continuously with the increase of the number of states in HMM, which enhances the fitting ability but has the risk of overfitting; BIC decreases and then rises, which tends to be a succinct and well-fitting model; log-likelihood value rises with the number of states, and the overpursuit sacrifices the ability of generalization, and in combination with the HMM model, it can be identified as four states.

In the HMM model hidden state analysis, four representative states were identified. state1 focuses on reading and reviewing articles, which are non-human-computer interaction behaviors that reflect students' self-assessment and optimization; state2 features copying of

content and is highly dependent on the AI to obtain writing materials; state3 focuses on pasting and integrating information into the article; and state4 focuses on prompt-related behaviors around interactions with the AI. State3 focuses on pasting and integrating information into the article; State4 focuses on prompt-related behaviors around interaction with the AI, exploring better ways of collaboration.

The different states reflect diverse and dynamically related writing behavior patterns. This not only provides a basis for understanding the collaboration mechanism between students and AI, but also provides a reference for optimizing AI-assisted writing tools and teaching strategies, such as designing an intelligent prompting system to help students improve their writing skills. Future research can further explore how to promote the efficient collaboration between students and AI based on these states to improve the effect of second language writing teaching.

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Contemplating Women in the Teachings of Buddha and Basavanna

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Abstract— Gautham Buddha, of 6th century BC, and Basava, of 12th century AD, are the two great philosophers who were the first among those who strongly questioned and protested the humiliations, degradations and exploitations that happen to women in social set-ups. They contemplated deeply on human life and explored brand new values to make it all-beautiful which they personally adopted in their own lives while never distancing themselves from the masses. They are also the first among those who gave us new thoughts about faith, God, society, body, and soul; lived without differentiating between men and women; and worked hard for a common goal with an unflinching belief in the innate goodness of mankind.



Keywords— Gautham Buddha, Basavanna, Dhammapada, Vachanagalu, Buddha sangha, Anubhava Mantapa

I. INTRODUCTION

Caste, class, and genders are the most important of the factors that have led to social inequalities in the history of India and have also resulted in injustice and exploitations of all kinds. Women are subjected to servitude and slavery since time immemorial. Gautham Buddha and Basavanna expounded their thinking in mercilessly criticized the vices, ignorance, superstitions, and general inhumanity prevalent during their times, and upheld freedom, equality, and social justice. They argued that faith is not something you practice for others to see but it is the epitome of human existence which is concerned about the well-being of human kind and the preserving of human values.

II. BUDDHA'S VIEW ON WOMEN

Despite having all the luxuries of the world, one could wish for, Gautham Buddha sacrificed everything, went in search of truth, underwent penance, and did meditation for a very long time until he was enlightened and established the basic tenets of Buddhism. Gautham Buddha was the first philosopher and a socio-religious leader who wanted to build an equal society. He expounded his thinking

in Pali through which he mercilessly criticized the vices, ignorance, superstitions, and general inhumanity prevalent during his times, and upheld freedom, equality, and social justice. He argued that faith is not something you practice for others to see but it is the epitome of human existence which is concerned about the well-being of human kind and the preserving of human values. Hence, he who left the temples and palaces in search of Nirvana did not reach the god, but reached the hearts of people. Gautham Buddha was completely against a traditional religion and preached his followers about finding a real and true path of enlightenment through self-efforts. According to Buddhism, the condition of human existence is of supreme nature. A man is a master unto himself; no person or power can decide his future. Buddha told his followers to be their own protectors and not to search for one anywhere else. He advocated that a true religion was the one without any controls, rituals, God, scriptures, traditions and supernatural elements. Hence the establishment of the sangha's of the bhikshus. Buddha believed that since the sangha's were a commune where people of different classes convened, different opinions and thoughts would be exchanged here.

So, he gave a set of rules for the discipline at a sangha and asked each member to aim at a goal to be achieved by him.

Buddha's greatness lies in not the ideological foundation he gave to his new found religion but in achieving a total social reformation through it. He taught his followers that human beings were one beyond all the barriers of class, caste and gender. He was among the earliest to identify the uniqueness of women power that had been long subjugated under male domination and he declared that male and female was only a physical differentiation, we were all one fundamentally. He was a great philosopher who gave entry to women in the sangha's and invited everyone to the folds of spirituality and faith by establishing social justice, equality for women and freedom of expression.

Twelfth century is an important milestone in the history of Karnataka. It was the time of tremendous changes in social and literary spheres and a period of great achievements in spirituality. Basavanna is first among the thinkers who wanted to bring religious, social, educational, economic and political reformation in the land through non-violence. He gave us a new set of values to look at everyone in the society equally. His amazing teaching which wished well for everyone, treated the poor in par with the rich and gave the same rights to women as the men has remained ideal to the day. His urge to bring about a socio-religious and economic transformation based on the dignity of labour made him to adopt a new way of literature which could bring him closer to the masses. This paved the way for women and the Dalits to make an entry to the folds of literature which was highly improbable until then.

Basavanna wanted to build a harmonious society whose foundation was an all-encompassing equality. So, the '*anubhava mantapa*' was established. *anubhava mantapa* is not a building of four walls or pillars. The *vachanakaras* have always opposed *sthavaras* or any stagnant structures. So, the *anubhava mantapa* is not a structure, it is the primary driving force of a community of human beings. It was the first voice to end the royal power, the first creative media which broadcasted the common man's experiences through *vachanas* and the powerhouse of values which built a strong heritage to the cultural traditions of this country while continuously rejecting them. It was also the first organized attempt at a rebellion by the exploited against ages of exploitation. Basavanna's *anubhava mantapa* and Bhagavan Buddha's *bhikshu sangha* convey us the idea of society being above the individual. While Basavanna wanted a democratic exchange of ideas among all *vachanakaras* at the *anubhava mantapa*, Buddha gave the sangha or the community a place above the religion by saying '*sangham sharanam gachchami*' along with

'Buddham sharanam gachchami, dharmam sharanam gachchami'.

A quote in Pali of Buddha tells us the importance of sangha:

Suppabuddham pabujani

sada gothama saavakaa

yesam divacha ratthocha

nichcham sangmagatha gati

(Meaning: "The disciples of Bhagavan Buddha who practice *sanghyanusyathi* (**meditative praising** of sangha) are always in an enlightened bliss." People who are blissful usually lack awareness. So, they face a lot of problems. But the members of a bikku sangha are always in a state of awareness. One individual may stay careless, but not everyone. This is why a sangha becomes important.)

'Vinayapitaka' is a part of ancient samhitas of Buddhism. 'Patimokkha' (Prathimoksha) is also a part of it. Scholars opine that the rules of 'Patimokkha' must have been formulated during the time of Buddha himself. It contains 227 rules and it is the guide for practices of a bikku. These rules would be recited during the fortnightly gatherings of uposa (upavastha) on the new moon day and the full moon day. 'Patimokkha' is included in the *suttavibhanga* of 'Vinayapitaka' mentioned above. 'Mahavibhanga' and 'Bikkunevibhanga' are the guiding samhitas for the bikku and bikkunis, respectively. These are nothing but the continuations of 'Khandaka' (Skandaka) and 'Suttavibhaga'. 'Mahavagga' includes the 'vassavasa' (varshavasa) and 'upopatha' which are the rules to join a sangha in ten parts and the 'paravana' festival celebrated at the end of the 'vassavasa'. Both the 'thera' and 'theri' are the members of this sangha. 'Thera' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'sthavira'. The Buddhist bikkus are called 'thera' and the bikkunis are called 'theri'. The latter also means a senior nun. 'Buddha Tripitaka' says that those who have surrendered to Buddha and completed ten years of monastic life were called 'thera' and 'theri'. Buddha considered women as suitable as men to acquire the Bodhi.

Indian society has always maintained huge gaps between men and women since ancient times. Buddha knew that anyone trying to bridge the gap would face serious consequences. So he banned the initiation of women into the sanghas during the early days. But when his foster mother herself forced him to be initiated, he could not refuse. He could neither refuse the requests of other women once he had allowed her into the sangha. 'Therigatha,' the Buddhist scripture, makes a mention of this incident. Women of all classes were allowed the rights to hold rituals in the sangha. The sangha of Buddha had 500 bikkunis. Among them were queens, prostitutes, untouchables,

tradeswomen etc. who came from various strata of society. Buddha did not limit himself to being sympathetic towards the cause of women; he gave them equal religious rights. Hence the women of his time could achieve a complete personality development and realize their true potential. He rejected the gender inequality by declaring that women are as able as men to reach nirvana. He taught bikkunis that even women could attain nirvana within their life time by restraint on thoughts and by leading a virtuous life.

The teachings of Buddha instilled a feeling of freedom in the hearts of women and they started participating in religious ceremonies. They utilized their freedom and power for the betterment of society. 'Therigatha' mentions 32 women who attained nirvana, out of which 10 were married. Among them were three women named Shubha, Anupama and Sumedha who belonged to the affluent and royal families. Majority of the women remained spinsters throughout their lives and were called bikkunis. Those who did the work of dharma by staying within their families were called *upasikas*. Buddha teaches that a woman must lead a virtuous life with a good moral character. He believes that a woman's personality is not seen in her physical beauty and wealth; she must be beautiful by her character and behavior. He considered virtuous women worthy of worship, and respected women in general while giving extreme importance to morality. On couples who were members of the sangha, Buddha said that "Both of them must be equally devoted, of the same good character, of the same renouncing mind and of the same consciousness". The woman of Buddha's times had complete rights over her earnings and property. Bhadra Kapina, a married woman, who entered the folds of Buddha's sangha had fully distributed her wealth among her relatives before she became a bikkuni. A spinster named Sundari became a bikkuni in spite of her father trying to coerce her out of her decision with the rights to his complete property and also her mother's insistence to enjoy it. So we can be sure about women's right to property during Buddha's times. 'Therigatha' mentions a widow named Dhammadinna who inherits her deceased husband's property.

III. BASAVANNA'S VIEW ON WOMEN

Basavanna took a revolutionary step when he proclaimed the equality of men and women in a society which took the *manusmruthi* that said 'na stree swatantrya marhati' (no woman has a right to freedom) as the single authority to establish male domination. Basavanna severely opposed all forms of gender discrimination and he advocated the necessity of religious and social freedom for women. He gave them the right to wear *linga* and worship

Shiva in par with men. He allowed them to freely deliberate on religious issues at an equal level with men at the *anubhava mantapa*. He was of the opinion that gender didn't matter when it came to worship of Shiva, physical labour, *linga deeksha* and the sharing of one's earnings. This allowed the women to get social respect through freedom of work and education while their lives were limited to four walls until then. He was so broad minded that he stopped the restrictions and humiliations imposed on women for biological events like menstruation and child birth. He also allowed the widows, forsaken women, slaves and prostitutes, who suffered punishment for no reason of their own, to enter the bonds of marriage and attain respect in the society. This was a highly revolutionary thought during those times which led to tremendous changes in the society.

By giving the *linga deeksha* to women, Basavanna proved that they were in no way inferior to men in spiritual matters. The *vachanakaras* were the first to reject gender discrimination. Basavanna adopted economic freedom, social equality and emancipation of women as a part of his struggle which he believed would make freedom of religion meaningful. When subjugation of women threatened human existence, he rejected all the existing values of the time to bring in new values that could uphold the dignity of human life. Basavanna was a great humanist, not a mere *sharana* or a philosopher. He gave spiritual greatness to the freedom of women by allowing them into *anubhava mantapa*. He gave rights to physical labour or *kayaka* for women like Aydakki Lakkamma, Aamuge Rayamma, Kalavve, Pittavve, Soole Sankavva, Remavve, Nimbavve, Molige Mahadevi, Goggavve, Neelambika, Gangambike, Lingamma and Akkamahadevi. By this, he could prove that a woman need not be a dependent individual and she, who was caught up in the currents of earthly life, could reach the heavens of spirituality. He was of the firm belief that if women could achieve equality through economic independence, then it would lead to cultural and social transformations. So, his insistence on physical labour and the sharing of earnings with all. One of the *vachanas* says:

"Nimbiyavva, my mother, earns her bread by watering

Chennayyaraya, my father, puts up the saddle

All are one and the same to me

My sister cooks in a bronze vessel

My lord, what I give in thy hands

Is the devotion of my ancestors".

The *sharanas* gave a high importance to the freedom of expression. Hence the female members of the group could freely present their ideas during any discussions in the *anubhava mantapa*. One of the most

interesting factors about this commune was that it included many married couples; some of the examples include the *vachanakaras* like Lakkamma-Marayya, Kalavve-Urilinga Peddi, Rayamma-Amugidevayya, Lingamma-Appanna, Edemathada Nagi Devayya-Masanamma, Haradara Machayya-Gangamma, Gondemanchanna-Lakshmamma, Gundayya-Kethaladevi, Kalakutayya-Rechavve etc. Similarly, plenty of examples exist of those couples who were provided with an opportunity for spiritual work together. Commenting on such spiritual companionship, the *vachanakaras* like Dasimayya said “Shiva is pleased with the devotion from the union of man and wife” and Basavanna praised them by saying “Live in love and trust like Dasa-Duggale and Siriyala-Changale”.

The following *vachana* would suffice to show us how the *vachanakaras* look upon women:

“A desire hidden inside the stomach was like fire

Like the sweetness of essence inside a stalk

Like the fragrance inside a bud

Love of my lord was like the attachment of a virgin”

It is important to note here that Basavanna saw his lord in the companionship of a virgin. The greatness of *sharanas*’ point of view and their humane concern can be seen in them making the women central to all religious practices which were forbidden to them earlier.

IV. CONCLUSION

Women were able to attain new heights in the society due to the economic freedom and freedom of expression granted by Buddha. Bikkunis like Amrapali, Sujatha and Kisagothami thank Buddha for allowing women into the *sangha*. Similarly, Akkamahadevi says “Basavanna is my guide” and Mukhtayakka says “Basavanna is the master of all my feelings.” Kadire Remavva tells us “Basavanna is my all-encompassing entity,” and Punyastree Sankavve, the wife of Ganesha Masanayya, puts forward her words with great devotion while she lets us know that “Basavanna became my master by becoming my master’s master”.

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The Transformation and Breakthrough of Translation Education in Higher Education Institutions in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

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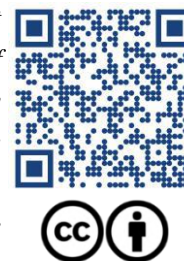
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Abstract— *This paper explores the transformation and breakthroughs in translation education at higher education institutions in the age of artificial intelligence. It first examines the current state of machine translation and its impact on translation education. It then analyzes the challenges faced by the existing translation talent cultivation models and proposes new trends in the development of future translation education. The paper emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary integration, technology-empowered teaching, and the cultivation of practical skills, offering insights for the sustainable development of translation education.*



Keywords— *artificial intelligence, translation education, machine translation, talent development*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the current era of rapid digitalization and intelligent development, artificial intelligence (AI) technology is profoundly reshaping the landscape of various fields, and the translation industry is no exception. The rapid development of machine translation has not only changed the efficiency and model of language services but also posed unprecedented challenges and opportunities for translation education in higher education institutions. On the one hand, machine translation has demonstrated significant advantages in improving translation efficiency and reducing costs, becoming an indispensable force in the language service industry. On the other hand, its limitations in semantic depth understanding, cultural adaptability, and complex text

processing have highlighted the irreplaceable value of human translation. However, traditional translation talent cultivation models have exposed many problems when facing the impact of AI, such as insufficient technical application skills, disconnection between curriculum settings and market demands, and weak practical teaching components, all of which need to be urgently resolved ^[1]. Meanwhile, AI has also brought new ideas and tools to translation education, such as the application of intelligent teaching platforms, big data analysis, and virtual reality technologies, providing possibilities for the transformation of translation education. Against this backdrop, exploring the new trends in the development of future translation education talents and promoting the transformation and breakthrough of translation education has become an

important topic in higher education reform. This paper will start from the current state of machine translation in the AI era, analyze the challenges faced by existing translation talent cultivation models, and look forward to the transformation direction and innovative paths of future translation education, in the hope of providing beneficial thoughts and references for the high-quality development of translation education in higher education institutions.

II. THE DEVELOPMENT TRENDS OF MACHINE TRANSLATION IN THE CONTEXT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

1. Changes in the Translation Market

1.1 Continuous Expansion of Market Size

With the acceleration of globalization and the surge in cross-language demands, the market size of machine translation (MT) is growing rapidly. It is predicted that by 2025, the global machine translation market size will exceed US\$10 billion. The main driving forces include international trade, cross-border corporate collaboration, and the daily needs of individual users. For example, international cities like Shenzhen have deployed AI translation devices, significantly enhancing the convenience for foreign visitors in tourism and government service scenarios. In 2024, the number of inbound tourists in Shenzhen increased by 56.9% year-on-year.

1.2 Diversification of Application Scenarios

Machine translation has expanded from traditional text translation to multimodal real-time interactive scenarios. For example, during the Shenzhen Municipal People's Congress and Political Consultative Conference, AI translators achieved real-time simultaneous interpretation at the 0.5-second level, with an accuracy rate of 98.6%, covering high-difficulty content such as policy terminology. In the tourism and culture sector, portable translators have solved cross-language communication problems, supporting multiple languages, including less commonly used ones. Additionally, the translation needs in specialized fields such as business contracts and medical documents have driven the optimization of technology in vertical scenarios.

1.3 Emergence of Human-Machine Collaboration Models

Machine translation has not completely replaced human translation but has given rise to a collaborative model of "pre-translation + human revision." For example, large models like ChatGPT are used for book pre-translation to shorten the cycle, but complex texts still require human intervention to ensure the accuracy of cultural metaphors and artistic expressions^[2]. This model not only improves efficiency but also restructures the value chain of the translation industry, requiring translators to shift from "translation executors" to "quality controllers."

2. Development and Impact of AI Technology in the Translation Field

2.1 Technological Evolution: From Rules to Deep Learning

Machine translation technology has evolved from rule-based (RBMT), statistical (SMT) to neural machine translation (NMT). NMT, through neural network models, achieves whole-sentence context understanding, significantly enhancing translation fluency, especially in long-sentence processing and multilingual pair coverage. Large models centered on the Transformer architecture have further advanced the technology, with exponential growth in parameter scale and computational power requirements, supporting more complex semantic reasoning.

2.2 Breakthroughs in Multimodal and Personalized Translation

Current technology has extended beyond the text domain to multimodal translation, including voice and image. For example, Shenzhen's exoskeleton robots, combined with AI algorithms, achieve real-time motion capture and translation assistance. Some systems can also provide personalized translations based on user history, such as adapting to terminology preferences in legal or medical fields. In the future, context-aware dynamic translation strategies are expected to resolve ambiguities caused by cultural differences.

2.3 Challenges and Ethical Controversies

Despite significant technological progress, machine translation still faces constraints from language complexity and cultural differences. For example,

Chinese polysemous words (such as "apple") are highly context-dependent, and machines are prone to mistranslation. Additionally, the accuracy of specialized terminology (such as legal clauses) still needs improvement. On the ethical front, AI translation may undermine the professional value of translators, prompting the industry to reflect on the "irreplaceability of human creativity." Some institutions have even banned translators from using AI tools to protect translation quality and humanistic connotations.

In the age of artificial intelligence, machine translation has reshaped the scale, scenarios, and collaboration models of the translation market through technological innovation, while also promoting the democratization of cross-language communication [3]. However, its development still needs to overcome core challenges such as language complexity and cultural adaptability, and seek a balance between efficiency and humanistic value. In the future, with the deepening of multimodal technology and personalized services, machine translation is expected to become a more intelligent "language bridge" in the process of globalization.

III. THE DILEMMAS AND CHALLENGES OF TRANSLATION TALENT CULTIVATION IN CHINA

Against the backdrop of the deep penetration of artificial intelligence (AI) technology into the translation industry, traditional translation talent cultivation models are facing multiple structural challenges. These challenges stem from the disruptive reshaping of professional skill requirements by technological iterations and also expose the lag in the education system in terms of curriculum settings, practical mechanisms, and ethical awareness. Specifically, the existing translation talent cultivation models mainly face the following core challenges:

1. Disconnection Between Curriculum Systems and Technological Development, and Insufficient Technical Literacy Cultivation

Traditional translation courses have long focused on language skills and translation theory, while the translation technology capabilities required in the AI era

(such as the application of computer-aided translation tools, post-editing, and corpus construction) have not been fully integrated into the curriculum. Some universities still adhere to the one-dimensional training model of "foreign language + translation," lacking systematic integration of interdisciplinary knowledge such as natural language processing and neural network translation principles. For example, although many translation master's programs in China have added elective courses in translation technology, the teaching content mostly stays at the tool operation level, without in-depth exploration of the underlying logic of AI translation and its deep impact on translation practice. This lag in curriculum settings makes it difficult for students to adapt to the new normal of "human-machine collaboration" in the industry, and insufficient technical literacy has become a weakness in professional competitiveness.

2. Weak Practical Mechanisms and Inability to Meet Human-Machine Collaboration Needs

There is a common disconnection between theory and practice in translation programs. Traditional practical components mostly focus on human translation training, lacking targeted cultivation of emerging skills such as pre-editing of machine translation, post-editing optimization, and project management of multimodal translation. For example, in specialized fields such as medicine and law, machine translation can quickly generate drafts, but the accuracy of terminology and cultural adaptability still require human intervention. However, the existing training system has not fully simulated the collaborative processes of such real-world scenarios. Moreover, the construction of university-enterprise cooperation platforms lags behind, and students have limited opportunities to access industry-level translation technology tools, making it difficult to form practical capabilities of "technology-empowered translation" [4].

3. Evident Crisis of Translator Subjectivity and Ethical Awareness

The widespread application of AI has led to a shift in the translator's role from "translation executor" to "quality controller," but the existing training models have not effectively responded to this change. Some

students over-rely on machine translation tools, exhibiting a "tool dependency syndrome," characterized by the degradation of critical thinking, weakened cross-cultural awareness, and reduced creative expression abilities. For example, machine translation is prone to mistranslation when dealing with cultural metaphors or emotional connotations. Without human intervention, this can lead to cultural misunderstandings, but current teaching rarely involves the identification and response strategies for such ethical risks. At the same time, intellectual property rights disputes caused by AI technology (such as the copyright ownership of machine-translated texts) have not yet been incorporated into the framework of translation ethics education, making it difficult for students to balance efficiency and compliance in the application of technology.

4. Insufficient Interdisciplinary Integration and Lag in the Cultivation of Composite Talents

The AI-driven translation industry demands talents who possess not only language skills and technical literacy but also specialized knowledge in vertical fields (such as medicine, law, and engineering). However, existing translation programs are mostly limited to a binary structure of "language + translation," with low integration of interdisciplinary courses, making it difficult for students to handle specialized translation tasks. For example, medical translation requires mastery of medical terminology and clinical knowledge, but most universities have not established cooperation mechanisms with medical schools, nor have they provided practical training in the construction and analysis of medical corpora. Additionally, the emerging "translation + language engineering" composite talent cultivation model is still in the pilot stage and has not yet formed a scaled and standardized curriculum system.

5. Disconnect Between Industry and Education, and Slow Response to Industry Demands

There is a significant gap between the training objectives of university translation programs and the dynamic demands of the language service industry. On the one hand, the speed of technological iteration in enterprises far exceeds the curriculum update cycle of

universities. For example, the translation applications of large language models (such as GPT-4) have entered the commercial stage, but related technical analysis and case teaching have not yet been widely disseminated. On the other hand, the industry's increasing demand for emerging positions such as "post-editing" and "localization project management" is not met by universities, which still focus on training general translation talents with insufficient specialization. This disconnection between industry and education has exacerbated the employment difficulties of graduates, with some students finding it hard to adapt to the technology-driven professional ecosystem due to their limited skills.

6. Rigid Evaluation Systems and Absence of Innovation Capacity Cultivation

Traditional translation teaching evaluations mostly focus on the accuracy of translated texts, neglecting the assessment of technical application skills, innovative thinking, and human-machine collaboration efficiency. For example, post-editing tasks require a comprehensive evaluation of terminology consistency, logical correction efficiency, and style matching, but the existing grading standards still follow the traditional "faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance" framework for human translation, without establishing dynamic evaluation indicators for human-machine collaboration. Moreover, new translation scenarios created by AI technology (such as real-time voice translation and multimodal interactive translation) lack corresponding teaching cases and evaluation tools, leaving students without practical carriers for innovation capacity cultivation.

In the AI era, the translation talent cultivation model urgently needs to shift from "technological defense" to "technological adaptation." By reconstructing the curriculum system, deepening industry-education integration, strengthening ethical education, and promoting interdisciplinary integration, a composite talent cultivation framework integrating "language skills + technical literacy + domain knowledge" can be established. Only in this way can the structural dilemmas of the existing model be resolved, and a new generation of translation talents with both

humanistic care and technological proficiency be cultivated.

IV. TRANSFORMATION AND BREAKTHROUGH OF TRANSLATION EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

In the current era where artificial intelligence (AI) technology is profoundly reshaping the language service industry, translation education stands at a crossroads of transformation and breakthrough. The rise of machine translation and the widespread application of intelligent translation tools have not only changed the ecology of translation practice but also posed severe challenges to the traditional models of translation education in higher education institutions. At the same time, AI has also provided new opportunities for educational innovation, prompting educators to re-examine curriculum design, teaching methods, and talent cultivation goals. Facing the new era empowered by technology, translation education urgently needs in-depth reforms in curriculum systems, faculty capabilities, and practical teaching to cultivate composite translation talents who can meet the future industry's demands ^[5].

1. Shift in Teaching Philosophy: From "Teacher-Centered" to "Student-Centered"

The extensive application of AI technology has prompted translation education to shift from the traditional "teacher-centered" model to a "student-centered" personalized teaching approach. With the help of intelligent teaching analysis platforms, teachers can record students' learning interests, cognitive styles, and other characteristics, and push multi-modal, multi-genre translation practice materials that meet individual needs. This not only enhances learning outcomes but also drives a paradigm shift from passive listening to active experiential learning.

2. Renewal of Teaching Content: Interdisciplinary Integration and Incorporation of Technical Courses

As AI deeply influences the translation industry, the teaching content of translation education is also constantly being updated. On the one hand, curriculum design places greater emphasis on interdisciplinary integration, highlighting the equal importance of language and technical skills. For example, translation

programs in higher education institutions have begun to offer courses such as machine-assisted translation technology, post-editing, corpus management, and natural language processing to improve students' translation efficiency in a technological environment. On the other hand, some universities have introduced industry-oriented courses based on their own characteristics, such as financial translation and game localization, demonstrating the benefits of interdisciplinary integration.

3. Innovation in Teaching Models: Technology-Empowered and Diversified Teaching Methods

AI technology has brought innovation to the teaching models of translation. Intelligent platforms based on cloud architecture and mobility integrate courses, teachers, and resources of translation schools organically, creating an interconnected and intelligent educational environment ^[6]. In addition, diversified teaching methods such as virtual teaching, gamified teaching, and inquiry-based teaching have been upgraded with the help of AI, enhancing the fun and interactivity of the classroom. For example, by combining blockchain technology with AI, teachers can use virtual tokens to motivate students to complete translation practice tasks, thereby stimulating their enthusiasm for learning.

4. Faculty Development: Enhancement of Technical Literacy and Interdisciplinary Capabilities

Translation education in the AI era has set higher requirements for teachers. In addition to solid translation expertise, teachers must also master the application of relevant technological tools to adapt to the new trend of integrating technology and teaching ^[7]. To this end, translation schools and related institutions have organized translation technology faculty training programs, cultivating a group of teachers with interdisciplinary knowledge and teaching capabilities. At the same time, teachers must continuously improve their translation practice and teaching abilities to better guide students in leveraging their strengths in human-machine collaborative translation environments.

5. Transformation of Talent Cultivation Models: University-Enterprise Cooperation and Practical Skills Development

To meet the demands of the AI era, the talent cultivation models of translation programs in higher education institutions are also undergoing continuous transformation. University-enterprise cooperation has become an important trend. By inviting senior translators from enterprises to give lectures and guide student practice, students can better understand the actual processes and market demands of translation work. In addition, universities focus on developing students' post-editing skills and quality control abilities for machine translation to meet the industry's demand for composite translation talents [8].

6. Optimization of Educational Management and Evaluation Systems: Data-Driven and Personalized Assessment

AI technology has provided new ideas for the management and evaluation of translation education. Through big data analysis, educational managers can more accurately identify students' learning needs and optimize the allocation of teaching resources. At the same time, AI-based evaluation systems can dynamically monitor and provide formative assessments of students' learning processes, offering personalized learning suggestions to further enhance teaching quality and effectiveness.

Translation education in the AI era is moving towards a more intelligent, personalized, and interdisciplinary direction. This transformation not only brings new opportunities to translation education but also sets higher requirements for educators and learners [9].

V. CONCLUSION

In the AI era, translation education in higher education institutions is undergoing unprecedented changes and reshaping. Through an analysis of the current state of machine translation, we have clearly recognized its great potential in improving efficiency and empowering technology, while also seeing its limitations in semantic understanding and cultural adaptability [10]. This provides an important

technological background and realistic basis for the transformation of translation education. The existing translation talent cultivation models have exposed many urgent problems when facing the translation demands of the AI era, such as insufficient technical application skills, outdated curriculum settings, and disconnection between practice and market demands. The existence of these problems highlights the urgency and necessity of translation education reform. Future translation education must focus on technology empowerment, take interdisciplinary integration as its path, and aim for personalized cultivation to build a more scientific and efficient talent cultivation system. Looking ahead, the new trends in the development of translation education will bring new opportunities and directions for educators and learners. Interdisciplinary integration, technology-empowered teaching, personalized learning path design, in-depth university-enterprise cooperation, and the construction of data-driven educational management and evaluation systems will become the key forces in promoting the high-quality development of translation education. Universities need to actively adapt to technological changes, optimize curriculum systems, strengthen faculty development, and cultivate composite translation talents with multidisciplinary knowledge and technical application capabilities. The transformation and breakthrough of translation education in the AI era are not only a deep integration of technology and education but also a re-examination and repositioning of the goals and paths of translation talent cultivation. We should embrace change with an open mind and explore development with innovative thinking to promote the sustainable development of translation education in the new era and cultivate more high-quality talents who meet future demands for the prosperity and progress of the translation industry.

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Re-Visioning Marquez through Marxist Lens

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Abstract— This article explores the socio-economic and class dynamics present in the works of the renowned Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez. Through a Marxist lens, the study examines how García Márquez's novels critique the capitalist structures, power imbalances, and social hierarchies that pervade Latin American society. The analysis focuses on three of his most significant works: *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, and *Love in the Time of Cholera*. Throughout the paper, García Márquez's critique of authoritarianism, corruption, and imperialism is discussed, revealing his nuanced understanding of the socio-political landscape of Latin America. By situating individual narratives within broader historical and economic contexts, the study provides a comprehensive Marxist interpretation of García Márquez's literary oeuvre, demonstrating how his novels serve as both a reflection and a critique of the socio-economic realities of his time.



Keywords— Marquez, Marxism, Latin America, Capitalism, Social hierarchy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Gabriel García Márquez, a prominent Colombian novelist and Nobel laureate, is best known for his significant contributions to Latin American literature, particularly through the genre of magical realism. His novels, rich in fantastical elements, also provide a profound critique of social and political structures. Interpreting García Márquez's novels from a Marxist point of view allows readers to uncover the underlying social commentary on class struggle, colonialism, and the impacts of capitalism.

Marxist literary criticism, rooted in the theories of Karl Marx, emphasizes the role of socioeconomic factors in shaping literature. This approach examines how literature reflects, reinforces, or challenges the economic structures and power dynamics within society. In García Márquez's work, these themes are prevalent, making a Marxist analysis both relevant and insightful.

This dissertation aims to explore the novels of Gabriel García Márquez through a Marxist lens, focusing on how his narratives reflect and critique the socio-political conditions of Latin America.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Marxist literary criticism has been applied to various literary works to unveil the dynamics of power, economy, and social relations. Key texts in Marxist theory, such as "The Communist Manifesto" by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Das Kapital" by Marx, and later works by thinkers like Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser, provide the foundational framework for this analysis.

Previous scholarly works have examined García Márquez's literature through multiple lenses, including postcolonial, feminist, and psychoanalytic perspectives. However, a focused Marxist critique reveals the deep-rooted economic and class issues that permeate his novels. Scholars such as Roberto González Echevarría, Gerald Martin, and Michael Wood have touched upon these themes, but this dissertation seeks to provide a comprehensive Marxist interpretation.

III. METHODOLOGY

This dissertation employs a Marxist theoretical framework to analyse selected novels by Gabriel García Márquez. The methodology includes a close reading of texts to identify themes related to class struggle, economic exploitation, and

power dynamics. This approach is supplemented by historical and contextual analysis to situate the novels within the socio-political landscape of Latin America.

IV. HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

Gabriel García Márquez's writing is deeply influenced by the historical and social contexts of Latin America, particularly Colombia. The region's history of colonization, political turmoil, and social inequality forms the backdrop of his narratives. Understanding this context is crucial for a Marxist analysis, as it provides insight into the power structures and economic conditions that shape his characters and plots.

V. ANALYSIS OF KEY NOVELS

One Hundred Years of Solitude

Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a seminal work in Latin American literature, renowned for its rich tapestry of magical realism and its profound social and political commentary. From a Marxist perspective, the novel offers a critical exploration of class struggle, economic exploitation, and the impact of capitalism and colonialism on Latin American societies. This analysis delves into how *One Hundred Years of Solitude* reflects and critiques these socio-economic dynamics through its narrative structure, character development, and thematic content.

Historical Context and Setting

The fictional town of Macondo, where the Buendía family saga unfolds, serves as a microcosm for Latin American history. The town's evolution—from its idyllic beginnings to its eventual decline—mirrors the historical trajectory of many Latin American countries, influenced by colonialism, the rise of capitalism, and foreign imperialism. The cyclical nature of the Buendía family's fortunes can be seen as a reflection of the recurrent cycles of hope, exploitation, and despair that characterize the region's history.

Class Struggle and Social Inequality

Throughout the novel, García Márquez highlights the class divisions and social inequalities that permeate Macondo. The Buendía family, as the town's founders and initial rulers, represent the landowning elite, while the town's labourers and indigenous people symbolize the marginalized working class.

- **José Arcadio Buendía's Utopian Vision:** The patriarch's initial vision of Macondo as a utopian community is quickly undermined by the realities of social hierarchy and economic exploitation. His efforts to create a society based on equality and

scientific progress are thwarted by his own descent into madness and the inherent inequalities that develop within the town.

- **Foreign Capitalism:** The arrival of foreign capitalists, particularly the American banana company, marks a turning point in Macondo's history. The company's exploitation of the town's resources and labour reflects the real-life economic imperialism that Latin America experienced during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The company's presence leads to environmental degradation, labour strikes, and ultimately, the massacre of striking workers—events that highlight the brutal realities of capitalist exploitation.

Economic Exploitation and Imperialism

The banana company's intrusion into Macondo is a direct critique of the exploitative practices of foreign corporations in Latin America. García Márquez uses this storyline to expose the destructive impact of economic imperialism on local communities.

- **Exploitation of Labor:** The workers in the banana plantations are subjected to harsh conditions and meagre wages, illustrating the exploitative nature of capitalist enterprises. Their subsequent strike and the violent suppression by the company's hired forces underscore the conflict between the working class and capitalist interests.
- **Environmental Degradation:** The company's operations lead to significant environmental damage, symbolizing the broader impact of capitalist exploitation on the natural world. The deforestation and pollution caused by the company's activities contribute to the eventual decline of Macondo.
- **The Banana Massacre:** The massacre of striking workers is a pivotal moment in the novel, reflecting real historical events such as the 1928 Banana Massacre in Colombia. This event underscores the lengths to which capitalist interests will go to maintain control and suppress dissent, highlighting the inherent violence of the system.

Power and Corruption

The novel also explores the corrupting influence of power and the cyclical nature of political authority.

- **Rise and Fall of Leaders:** Various members of the Buendía family, as well as other characters, rise to positions of power, only to become corrupt and

ultimately fall from grace. This cycle reflects the broader historical patterns of political leaders in Latin America, who often come to power with revolutionary ideals but become corrupt over time.

- **Authoritarian Rule:** The military dictatorship that emerges in Macondo during the banana company's reign exemplifies the authoritarian regimes that have plagued Latin American countries. The use of violence and repression to maintain control is a critique of the oppressive nature of such regimes.

Cultural Alienation and Social Fragmentation

García Márquez also delves into the themes of cultural alienation and social fragmentation that result from economic and political exploitation.

- **Loss of Cultural Identity:** The intrusion of foreign capital and influence leads to a loss of cultural identity in Macondo. Traditional ways of life are disrupted, and the community becomes increasingly fragmented. This reflects the broader impact of colonialism and imperialism on Latin American cultures.
- **Family Disintegration:** The Buendía family's decline parallels the social disintegration of Macondo. As the family becomes increasingly isolated and fragmented, so too does the community. This disintegration is a metaphor for the alienation and loss of social cohesion caused by exploitative economic and political systems.

Chronicle of a Death Foretold

Gabriel García Márquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is a novel that intricately weaves the themes of honour, social complicity, and cultural norms within the setting of a small Latin American town. Through a Marxist lens, the novel can be seen as a critique of the socio-economic structures and class dynamics that underpin the community's collective actions and inactions. This analysis explores how the novel reflects and critiques the power dynamics, social hierarchy, and economic factors that influence the lives and decisions of its characters.

Historical and Social Context

Set in a fictional Colombian town, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* takes place in the mid-20th century, a period marked by significant social and economic changes in Latin America. The region's history of colonialism, class stratification, and patriarchal norms forms the backdrop of the narrative. Understanding this context is crucial for a Marxist analysis, as it provides insight into the economic and social conditions that shape the characters' behaviour and the town's collective mentality.

Class Struggle and Social Hierarchy

The social hierarchy in the town is a central element of the novel, with characters occupying distinct positions within the class structure. The novel portrays a rigid social order where wealth, family lineage, and social status dictate individuals' roles and interactions.

- **The Vicario Family:** The Vicario family represents the lower-middle class, with modest means and a strong adherence to traditional values. The family's decision to avenge Angela Vicario's honour by killing Santiago Nasar is deeply influenced by their social standing and the pressure to uphold familial honour within their class constraints.
- **Santiago Nasar:** Santiago, belonging to the upper class, is portrayed as wealthy and influential. His social status provides him with certain privileges, but it also makes him a target for the Vicario brothers' vengeance. His murder can be seen as an act of class struggle, where the lower-middle-class Vicarios challenge the upper-class Nasar.
- **Bayardo San Román:** Bayardo, an outsider with immense wealth, disrupts the town's social order. His affluence and charm win him Angela Vicario's hand in marriage, but his eventual rejection of her after discovering she is not a virgin highlights the economic power dynamics at play. His ability to annul the marriage and leave town unscathed underscores the impunity often enjoyed by the wealthy.

Economic Exploitation and Capitalism

Economic factors play a significant role in shaping the characters' lives and actions. The town's economic structure, based on traditional and agrarian lifestyles, reflects broader capitalist dynamics and the exploitation inherent in these systems.

- **Working-Class Struggles:** Characters such as the Vicario brothers, who work as butchers, and other labourers in the town, represent the working class. Their economic struggles and limited opportunities highlight the harsh realities of life for those at the lower end of the social spectrum. The economic pressures they face exacerbate their adherence to traditional norms, as maintaining honour becomes a way to preserve social capital.
- **Santiago's Wealth:** Santiago's wealth and the influence it affords him are indicative of the capitalist structures that privilege the affluent. His ability to command respect and exercise control over others, despite his questionable behaviour,

illustrates the power imbalance perpetuated by economic disparities.

Power and Corruption

The novel also explores themes of power and corruption, particularly how social and economic power is wielded and abused.

- **Social Complicity:** The townspeople's collective inaction in preventing Santiago's murder reflects a broader critique of societal complicity in maintaining unjust power structures. Despite knowing about the Vicario brothers' intentions, the community fails to intervene, revealing a deep-seated acceptance of social norms and fear of challenging the status quo.
- **Authority Figures:** Characters such as Colonel Aponte, the mayor, and Father Amador, the priest, embody the corrupt and ineffective authority figures who fail to uphold justice. Their negligence and moral ambivalence underscore the dysfunction within the town's power structures.

Cultural Alienation and Social Fragmentation

Marxist theory often addresses the theme of alienation, where individuals become estranged from their labour, society, and even themselves due to capitalist structures. In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, cultural alienation and social fragmentation are evident in the characters' interactions and the town's overall dynamics.

- **Angela Vicario's Alienation:** Angela's rejection by Bayardo and subsequent ostracism by her family and society highlight her alienation. Her forced adherence to traditional gender roles and the economic and social pressures placed upon her underscore the dehumanizing aspects of the town's cultural norms.
- **The Town's Fragmentation:** The town's collective failure to prevent Santiago's murder, despite widespread knowledge of the Vicario brothers' plan, reveals a fractured community. The residents' unwillingness to act reflects a breakdown in social cohesion and mutual responsibility, driven by fear, apathy, and adherence to oppressive norms.

Gender and Patriarchy

While primarily a Marxist analysis focuses on class and economic factors, it is also essential to consider the intersection of gender and patriarchy in the novel. The patriarchal structures that govern the town's social interactions are deeply intertwined with economic and class dynamics.

- **Honor and Patriarchy:** The concept of honour, particularly female chastity, is central to the novel's conflict. Angela's perceived dishonour leads to Santiago's death, illustrating how patriarchal values control and exploit women's bodies. The economic implications of marriage and virginity further complicate this dynamic, as women's worth is often tied to their ability to secure advantageous marriages.
- **Male Dominance:** The actions of male characters, from the Vicario brothers' violent retribution to Bayardo's rejection of Angela, reflect the patriarchal dominance that permeates the town. This dominance is maintained through both social norms and economic power, perpetuating cycles of oppression and violence.

Love in the Time of Cholera

Gabriel García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera* is a rich and intricate novel that explores themes of love, aging, and societal change in a Caribbean setting during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. From a Marxist perspective, the novel can be analysed in terms of its critique of socio-economic structures, class dynamics, and the impact of capitalism on personal relationships and social development. This analysis delves into how the novel reflects and critiques the socio-economic conditions of its setting, using the relationships and lives of its characters to explore broader themes of class struggle and economic exploitation.

Historical and Social Context

The novel is set in a Caribbean port city, influenced by the historical and socio-economic realities of Latin America during the time period it covers. The setting encompasses a society in transition, grappling with the impacts of colonialism, burgeoning capitalism, and social stratification. Understanding this context is essential for a Marxist analysis, as it illuminates the economic and social forces that shape the characters' lives and the community's dynamics.

Class Struggle and Social Hierarchy

The social hierarchy and class divisions in the novel are central to the characters' interactions and the unfolding of the narrative. The novel portrays a society where wealth, social status, and class influence every aspect of life, from romantic relationships to professional opportunities.

- **Florentino Ariza:** Florentino represents the aspiring lower-middle class. His lack of wealth and status becomes a significant barrier in his pursuit of Fermina Daza. Florentino's life is marked by his struggle to elevate his social standing and prove his

worth in a society that values material success. His relentless pursuit of economic stability and social acceptance highlights the class struggle inherent in his character arc.

- **Fermina Daza:** Fermina's marriage to Dr. Juvenal Urbino illustrates the societal expectation for women to marry into wealth and social standing. Fermina's eventual acceptance of Urbino's proposal is heavily influenced by the economic security and social prestige it offers. Her journey from humble beginnings to a life of affluence reflects the transformative power of marriage as a tool for social mobility.
- **Dr. Juvenal Urbino:** Urbino embodies the upper class, with his education, wealth, and social influence. His character represents the consolidation of power and privilege that comes with high social standing. Urbino's role as a doctor also signifies the professional elite, whose status is often reinforced by their economic and social capital.

Economic Exploitation and Capitalism

The novel critiques the capitalist structures that define the lives of its characters and the community. Economic exploitation and the pursuit of wealth are recurring themes, illustrating the pervasive influence of capitalism.

- **Florentino's Career:** Florentino's rise within the River Company of the Caribbean is a testament to his dedication to achieving economic stability. His role in the company, which benefits from the exploitation of labour and resources, reflects the broader dynamics of capitalist enterprise. Florentino's success, built on the back of an exploitative economic system, underscores the moral compromises and social costs of capitalist ambition.
- **Urbanization and Modernization:** The city's transformation through modernization projects and urban development represents the encroachment of capitalist progress. These changes often come at the expense of traditional ways of life and the displacement of poorer communities. The novel highlights the tension between progress and preservation, illustrating the social upheaval caused by economic development.

Power and Corruption

The novel explores the themes of power and corruption, particularly in the context of socio-economic status and personal relationships. Power dynamics are evident in the

characters' interactions and the societal structures they navigate.

- **Political Corruption:** The novel hints at the corrupt practices within the political and business spheres, reflecting the broader context of Latin American politics. The River Company's operations, supported by political influence and corruption, reveal the complicity of economic and political elites in maintaining their power and wealth.
- **Patriarchal Control:** The control exerted by male characters over female characters reflects the patriarchal power structures that govern society. Urbino's authority over Fermina, and Florentino's obsessive pursuit of her, highlight the gendered dimensions of power and control. The novel critiques these dynamics, illustrating the ways in which economic and social power are intertwined with gender oppression.

Cultural Alienation and Social Fragmentation

Marxist theory often addresses the theme of alienation, where individuals become estranged from their labour, society, and even themselves due to capitalist structures. In *Love in the Time of Cholera*, cultural alienation and social fragmentation are evident in the characters' experiences and the community's transformation.

- **Florentino's Alienation:** Florentino's relentless pursuit of Fermina and his rise in the corporate world leave him emotionally and socially alienated. His numerous affairs and unfulfilled romantic life reflect his deeper sense of isolation and disconnection from genuine human relationships. This alienation is a result of the capitalist emphasis on success and material gain over personal fulfilment.
- **Community Transformation:** The city's modernization leads to a fragmentation of traditional social bonds and community structures. As the town becomes more urbanized and economically developed, the sense of communal identity and mutual support erodes. The novel critiques this fragmentation, highlighting the social costs of capitalist progress.

Gender and Patriarchy

While a Marxist analysis primarily focuses on class and economic factors, the intersection of gender and patriarchy is also crucial in the novel. The patriarchal structures that govern the characters' lives are deeply intertwined with economic and class dynamics.

- **Marriage and Social Mobility:** Fermina's marriage to Urbino is not just a romantic union but also a strategic alliance that elevates her social status. The economic and social implications of marriage for women are central to the novel's critique of patriarchal norms. Fermina's experiences reflect the limited avenues for social mobility available to women, which are often mediated through marriage.
- **Florentino's Obsession:** Florentino's pursuit of Fermina over decades reflects a patriarchal sense of entitlement and control. His objectification of her as the ultimate prize underscores the gendered dimensions of power and desire. The novel critiques this dynamic, illustrating the ways in which patriarchal and capitalist structures oppress and exploit women.

VI. THEMES AND MOTIFS IN GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ'S WORK

Class Struggle and Social Inequality

García Márquez's novels frequently highlight the disparities between different social classes. The exploitation of the working class and the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few are recurrent themes. The struggle for justice and equality is depicted through the lives of his characters, who often face systemic oppression.

Colonialism and Imperialism

The legacy of colonialism and the continued influence of imperialist powers are central to García Márquez's critique. His depiction of foreign companies exploiting Latin American resources and people reflects the historical realities of economic imperialism.

Capitalism and its Discontents

The destructive impact of capitalism is a prominent theme, illustrated through environmental degradation, social alienation, and economic exploitation. García Márquez's narratives often critique the capitalist ethos and its repercussions on society and individuals.

Power and Corruption

The corrupting influence of power is a recurring motif. García Márquez explores how power is wielded and abused, leading to social injustice and moral decay. His portrayal of dictators and authoritarian figures serves as a critique of oppressive regimes.

VII. CHARACTER ANALYSIS THROUGH A MARXIST LENS

Proletariat and Bourgeoisie

Characters in García Márquez's novels often represent different social classes. The proletariat, or working class, is depicted through characters who face exploitation and marginalization. The bourgeoisie, or ruling class, is portrayed through wealthy landowners, capitalists, and politicians who perpetuate social inequality.

Revolutionary Figures and Rebels

Some characters embody revolutionary ideals, challenging the status quo and striving for social justice. These figures often face significant obstacles and resistance from the entrenched power structures.

Victims of Exploitation

Many characters in García Márquez's novels are victims of economic and social exploitation. Their struggles and suffering highlight the human cost of systemic inequality and oppression.

VIII. CONCLUSION

From a Marxist perspective, "Love in the Time of Cholera" is a rich critique of the socio-economic structures and power dynamics that shape the characters' lives. The novel exposes the class divisions, economic exploitation, and cultural alienation that define the community. Through its exploration of power, corruption, and the impact of capitalism on personal relationships and social development, García Márquez offers a powerful commentary on the need for social and economic justice.

"Chronicle of a Death Foretold" offers a thorough analysis of the power relationships and socioeconomic systems in Latin American culture. The tight social structures, financial exploitation, and cultural alienation that characterize town life are all revealed in the story. By portraying class conflict, social collaboration, and the distorting effect of authority, García Márquez provides a potent analysis on the necessity of social and financial equity.

"One Hundred Years of Solitude" is a critical analysis of the socioeconomic circumstances in Latin America from a Marxist standpoint. García Márquez reveals the devastating effects of capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism on the area through the metaphorical tale of the Buendía family and the village of Macondo. A potent commentary on the necessity of social and economic fairness, the novel emphasizes the class conflict, economic exploitation, and social fragmentation that arise from these institutions.

The story by García Márquez finally emphasizes how history is cyclical and how the human condition is characterized by recurrent patterns of optimism and sorrow. Putting the family and personal in the larger framework of socioeconomic factors, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* asks readers to consider how interrelated all of our lives are.

Interpreting the novels of Gabriel García Márquez from a Marxist point of view reveals the profound social and political commentary embedded in his work. His narratives critique the economic and power structures that perpetuate social inequality, reflecting the historical and social realities of Latin America. Through the lens of Marxist theory, García Márquez's novels emerge as powerful critiques of capitalism, colonialism, and authoritarianism, offering a voice to the marginalized and oppressed.

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Sociolinguistics of Power and Identity in Dystopian Fiction

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Abstract— This study explores the sociolinguistics of power, identity suppression, and resistance in dystopian fiction through a thematic analysis of 1984 by George Orwell, *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, and *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. By applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Foucauldian discourse theory, the research examines how authoritarian regimes in these texts manipulate language to control thought, suppress individuality, and maintain societal dominance. In 1984, the use of Newspeak illustrates how language can limit freedom of thought and enforce conformity, while in *The Handmaid's Tale*, renaming and restricted literacy are used to suppress women's identities. *Fahrenheit 451* portrays censorship through destroying books and eliminating knowledge and independent thought. The study also investigates how language serves as a tool for resistance, as characters reclaim their autonomy through acts of writing, storytelling, and the preservation of forbidden literature. By aligning these findings with sociolinguistic and feminist linguistic theories, the study demonstrates that language in dystopian fiction functions as both an instrument of control and a means of challenging oppression. The research offers insights into how these fictional portrayals of linguistic manipulation reflect broader societal concerns about censorship, identity, and resistance in authoritarian contexts.



Keywords— Critical Discourse Analysis, Dystopian fiction, George Orwell, linguistic manipulation, Margaret Atwood, Ray Bradbury, resistance, sociolinguistics, suppression

I. INTRODUCTION

Dystopian fiction has long been a literary genre that explores the complex relationship between society, power, and control. One of the most profound mechanisms through which this control is exerted in dystopian worlds is language. The manipulation of language in dystopian narratives offers a unique lens to examine how authoritarian regimes can shape reality, suppress individual autonomy, and maintain societal dominance. Language in these narratives becomes more than just a communication tool; it is transformed into an instrument of power that restricts freedom of thought, reshapes identity, and, ultimately, limits resistance. These narratives not only engage with the fictional world but also serve as cautionary reflections on the socio-political issues we face in contemporary society.

The central issue this study addresses is how language, when controlled or manipulated, becomes an influential

tool for suppressing identity and maintaining power in dystopian societies. The intricate relationship between language, power, and identity suppression is not only prevalent in dystopian fiction but also resonates deeply with real-world concerns regarding freedom of speech, censorship, and personal autonomy. Through the lens of sociolinguistics, this article investigates how dystopian authors have depicted these themes, particularly in George Orwell's *1984*, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Each of these works presents a unique portrayal of how language can be controlled to limit thought, erase individuality, and maintain authoritarian control.

1.1 Problem Statement

The manipulation of language in dystopian fiction serves as an allegory for how authoritarian regimes can exercise control over their citizens by constraining their ability to think, communicate, and express individuality. In

these narratives, language is often weaponized to control both the public and private spheres, reducing language to a simplified or censored form to limit the potential for resistance and the preservation of identity. While significant academic attention has been given to the role of language in dystopian literature, there remains a need for a deeper exploration of the sociolinguistic mechanisms through which these fictional worlds reflect broader societal anxieties about censorship, identity suppression, and resistance.

1.2 Research Questions

This study investigates how these novels use language as both a tool of control and a means of resistance, addressing the following research questions:

1. How do dystopian novels such as *1984*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Fahrenheit 451* depict the use of language as a tool of control and social oppression?
2. In what ways does linguistic manipulation in these texts suppress individual identity and autonomy?
3. How is language employed as a means of resistance against authoritarian control within dystopian narratives?

By addressing these questions, this study contributes to the growing body of research on language and power in dystopian literature by introducing a novel combination of theoretical approaches. By integrating Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with Foucauldian discourse theory, the study offers a unique framework for understanding how language functions as a tool of control, identity suppression, and resistance. Furthermore, while existing scholarships often focus on the oppressive aspects of language in dystopian fiction, this study places significant emphasis on linguistic resistance, highlighting how characters reclaim autonomy through acts of storytelling, diary writing, and the preservation of forbidden knowledge. Additionally, by incorporating feminist linguistic theory, this study broadens the scope of analysis, specifically examining the gendered manipulation of language and its implications for power dynamics. Through these novel lenses, this study not only extends the conversation on language and control but also offers new insights into how language in dystopian fiction mirrors and critiques real-world concerns about freedom, identity, and resistance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between language, power, and identity has been a central theme in both sociolinguistic

studies and literary analysis. In the context of dystopian fiction, language serves as a crucial instrument for shaping and maintaining power, often used by authoritarian regimes to suppress individuality and restrict dissent. This literature review examines the theoretical and analytical frameworks that have been applied to understanding the sociolinguistics of power in dystopian fiction, as well as the role of linguistic manipulation in the suppression of identity and resistance. By exploring existing research on these themes, this review identifies gaps in the literature and situates the current study within the broader academic conversation.

2.1 Sociolinguistics and Power

Language has long been recognized as a primary means of exercising power and control within societies. Scholars such as Bourdieu (1991) and Fairclough (1989) have extensively analyzed how language functions as a social tool that reflects and perpetuates power relations. Bourdieu's concept of "linguistic capital" highlights how language can serve as a resource that individuals and groups use to assert dominance and maintain social hierarchy. Similarly, Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a framework for understanding how discourse structures reflect and sustain power imbalances in society. Fairclough's work has been instrumental in demonstrating how language is not neutral, but rather a site of struggle where different ideologies compete for dominance.

Dystopian fiction provides a compelling arena for the exploration of these dynamics, as it often depicts societies where language is explicitly manipulated to maintain authoritarian control. In Orwell's *1984*, for example, Newspeak serves as a clear representation of how language can be engineered to limit freedom of thought and expression, a notion that resonates with Bourdieu's and Fairclough's ideas about linguistic control. This study builds on these foundational sociolinguistic theories to analyze the specific ways in which dystopian fiction portrays language as a tool of domination, focusing on the works of Orwell, Atwood, and Bradbury.

2.2 Language as a Tool of Social Control in Dystopian Fiction

Dystopian fiction often portrays language as a means of controlling thought and identity. In *1984*, Newspeak restricts thought and prevents rebellion by eliminating words that express dissent (Orwell, 1949). Syme explains, "The whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought" (Orwell, 1949, p. 53), reflecting Fairclough's (1989) assertion that language shapes social possibilities. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, renaming women as "Of + [male owner]" erases personal identity and

reinforces patriarchal control, echoing Orwell's linguistic manipulation but focusing on gendered oppression (Atwood, 1985; Cameron, 1990). In *Fahrenheit 451*, the destruction of books prevents access to diverse ideas, stifling critical thought and public discourse (Bradbury, 1953; Postman, 1985). Bradbury critiques how technological and state control over information limits autonomy and critical thinking.

2.3 Identity Suppression Through Language Manipulation

Language manipulation in dystopian fiction suppresses individual identity and autonomy. Fairclough (2003) argues that discourse shapes identity and restricting language can erase identity. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, controlled vocabulary and rigid greetings like "Blessed be the fruit" reinforce theocratic control, limiting self-expression and reducing women to their reproductive roles (Atwood, 1985; Lakoff, 1975). In *1984*, Newspeak eradicates words tied to individuality, with simplified slogans like "War is peace," reflecting Orwell's depiction of totalitarian control over thought (Orwell, 1949; Spivak, 1988). In *Fahrenheit 451*, the destruction of books erases personal and collective memory, suppressing independent identities through censorship and symbolizing the erasure of cultural heritage (Bradbury, 1953; Bailey, 2006).

2.4 Resistance through Language in Dystopian Fiction

Despite the overwhelming control that dystopian regimes exert over language, many dystopian novels also depict language as a site of resistance. The development of underground vocabularies or the preservation of forbidden texts often becomes a way for characters to maintain their autonomy and challenge the state's control. In *1984*, Winston's diary and his use of Oldspeak are acts of rebellion that allow him to preserve his sense of self, even as the Party seeks to eliminate his individuality. Similarly, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, Offred's use of pre-Gilead language and her clandestine storytelling represent acts of resistance against the oppressive regime.

Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* emphasizes the power of literature as a form of resistance. The "book people" who memorize entire books to preserve them from destruction embody the idea that language and knowledge can survive even in the face of extreme censorship. This preservation of literature and knowledge is seen as a form of defiance against the regime's attempts to control thought (Bradbury, 1953). Scholars such as Foucault (1977) have argued that power and resistance are inextricably linked, and dystopian fiction often reflects this dynamic by showing how language can be both a tool of control and a medium for resisting that control.

This study will explore the implications of these fictional portrayals for understanding contemporary issues

surrounding censorship, surveillance, and freedom of expression.

III. DATA COLLECTION

The data collection process in this research is primarily focused on textual analysis, specifically the examination of three dystopian novels—*1984* by George Orwell, *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, and *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. These novels are recognized for their significant contribution to the genre of dystopian fiction, particularly in the way they depict language as a tool of power, identity suppression, and resistance. The process of data collection, therefore, involves gathering and analyzing content from these texts, supported by secondary scholarly sources that provide theoretical and contextual frameworks for understanding the role of language in sociopolitical settings.

3.1 Primary Data Sources

The primary data for this study consists of the selected literary texts that form the core of the analysis. Each text was selected based on its portrayal of the relationship between language and power, its status as a significant work within dystopian fiction, and its relevance to sociolinguistic themes.

3.1.1 George Orwell's *1984* (1949)

1984 is widely regarded as one of the most important works in the dystopian genre, particularly for its focus on how an authoritarian regime uses language (in the form of Newspeak) to limit freedom of thought and prevent rebellion. The novel provides a rich exploration of how linguistic manipulation serves as a form of control over individual cognition and collective social order. It is an ideal text for analyzing the sociolinguistics of power and suppression.

Key linguistic themes: Newspeak as a tool of thought control, censorship, and the eradication of individual autonomy through language.

3.1.2 Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985).

The Handmaid's Tale offers a nuanced portrayal of how language is used to reinforce gendered power dynamics, focusing on the suppression of women's identities in a theocratic society. The novel's exploration of controlled vocabulary, renaming, and restricted access to information makes it a powerful case study for understanding the intersection of language and identity suppression.

Key linguistic themes: Renaming as a form of identity suppression, controlled religious language, and the limitation of literacy and self-expression.

3.1.3 Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953).

Fahrenheit 451 presents a society where books are banned, and censorship is enforced through the destruction of literature. This novel provides a critical perspective on the role of language and knowledge in shaping identity and resisting authoritarian control. It complements the analysis of linguistic manipulation in *1984* and *The Handmaid's Tale* by focusing on the censorship of written language and the preservation of knowledge through oral traditions.

Key linguistic themes: Censorship of books, the destruction of language as a repository of knowledge, and resistance through the preservation of forbidden literature.

3.2 Secondary Data Sources

In addition to the primary texts, the data collection includes secondary sources that provide theoretical frameworks and a contextual understanding of the sociolinguistic concepts at play in dystopian fiction. These sources include:

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) texts, particularly the work of Norman Fairclough (1989, 1995), offer insights into how language can be used to sustain or challenge power structures.

Foucauldian discourse theory which focuses on how discourse shapes social reality and maintains power (Foucault, 1977).

Sociolinguistic studies on language and identity, which examine how linguistic practices shape social hierarchies and personal autonomy (Bourdieu, 1991; Spivak, 1988).

Studies on dystopian literature specifically address the themes of language, power, and control in the selected texts (Bailey, 2006; Lakoff, 1975; Postman, 1985).

These secondary sources are collected from academic journals, books, and reputable scholarly databases. They support the analysis of the primary texts by providing a foundation for understanding how language operates within dystopian societies and how it reflects real-world socio-political concerns.

3.3 Textual Data Collection Process

The data collection involves a close reading of the primary texts, focusing on key themes of linguistic control, identity suppression, and resistance. Key passages are identified based on their illustration of these themes. For instance, in *1984*, passages describing Newspeak highlight linguistic control; in *The Handmaid's Tale*, sections on the renaming of women and restricted literacy emphasize identity suppression; and in *Fahrenheit 451*, the destruction of books represents the suppression of thought.

The identified passages are then coded using three thematic categories:

Linguistic control: Instances where language limits thought and maintains control.

Identity suppression: Where language suppresses individual identity through mechanisms like renaming or restricting literacy.

Resistance through language: Where characters use language as a tool of rebellion, such as preserving forbidden knowledge or secret communication.

A comparative analysis is conducted to explore similarities and differences across the texts, examining how each text uses language to either limit or resist control—*1984* through Newspeak, *The Handmaid's Tale* through religious language and gender control, and *Fahrenheit 451* through censorship and preservation of knowledge.

Finally, secondary sources, such as Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis and feminist linguistic theory, are incorporated to contextualize the findings, providing a theoretical framework for understanding how language reflects power and resistance in dystopian fiction.

The data collection provides a detailed analysis of how language functions in dystopian fiction to shape power, suppress identity, and foster resistance. The next section will analyze this data to support the study's arguments.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis uses thematic analysis to examine how language functions as a tool of control, identity suppression, and resistance in *1984*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Fahrenheit 451*. By closely reading and coding the texts, the analysis identifies patterns of linguistic manipulation, focusing on how language is controlled to maintain power, suppress individual identity, and serve as a form of resistance.

4.1 Linguistic Control in Dystopian Fiction

In dystopian societies, language serves as one of the most potent tools for maintaining control over citizens. The authoritarian regimes in *1984*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Fahrenheit 451* manipulate language to control thought, suppress dissent, and restrict the capacity for resistance. This section analyzes the different mechanisms by which language is controlled in each novel.

4.1.1 Newspeak in *1984*: Language as a Tool for Thought Control

In *1984*, George Orwell presents Newspeak, a fictional language developed by the Party to limit freedom

of thought and expression. Newspeak is a central tool in the Party's effort to control the minds of its citizens by narrowing the range of possible thoughts. As Syme, one of the characters in the novel, explains, "The whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought. In the end, we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible because there will be no words in which to express it" (Orwell, 1949, p. 53). This simplification of language is designed to prevent rebellion by eliminating the very concepts necessary for dissent and emphasizes the regime's desire to control not only language but also cognitive processes.

For example, in the scene where Winston reflects on the word "freedom," he notes, "Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller" (Orwell, 1949, p. 46). This passage highlights the suppression of personal thoughts through the eradication of vocabulary (freedom, rebellion, etc.) and the reduction of complex emotions and abstract ideas to simplistic, dualistic terms such as "good" and "bad," making it impossible for people to conceptualize rebellion or autonomy. By analyzing this passage in context, we see that Newspeak serves not just to control spoken or written language but also to obliterate the very possibility of dissent by erasing the concepts of freedom, rebellion, and individuality. The Party also introduces doublethink, a cognitive process in which individuals are expected to accept two contradictory beliefs simultaneously, such as the famous slogan, "War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength" (Orwell, 1949, p. 26). Newspeak makes it impossible to articulate or even consider the contradictions inherent in this slogan, since the language only allows for Party-approved interpretations. The control of language in *1984* is not just about regulating what people say, but what they are able to think, effectively rendering independent thought impossible.

By applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), we can see how Newspeak exemplifies Fairclough's (1989) argument that language shapes social reality and limits social possibilities. The reduction of language in *1984* demonstrates how discourse can serve to consolidate power by controlling the range of thoughts available to citizens. In this context, Newspeak functions as a repressive tool that sustains the Party's totalitarian grip on society, reducing citizens to passive consumers of Party doctrine.

4.1.2 Language Regulation in *The Handmaid's Tale*: Gender and Linguistic Suppression.

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* offers a different form of linguistic control, focusing on the suppression of women's identities through language. In the theocratic society of Gilead, women are stripped of their

real names and given designations that reflect their subordinate roles in relation to men. Offred, the protagonist, is named after her male master, Fred, symbolizing her loss of personal identity. As Offred reflects, "My name isn't Offred, I have another name, which nobody uses now because it's forbidden" (Atwood, 1985, p. 72). This passage is crucial in understanding how language serves as a mechanism of power in Gilead. The erasure of her original name reinforces the regime's control over women's bodies and identities, stripping them of any personal autonomy.

The regime in Gilead further controls language through the restriction of literacy. Women, especially the Handmaids, are forbidden from reading or writing, cutting them off from knowledge and the ability to articulate their experiences. They are instead taught to speak in ritualistic phrases such as "Blessed be the fruit" and "May the Lord open," which reinforces the religious ideology that justifies their oppression (Atwood, 1985). These phrases are not only empty of personal meaning but serve to reinforce the theocratic structure of Gilead, where women's autonomy is systematically stripped away through linguistic restrictions.

Atwood's use of controlled language in *The Handmaid's Tale* echoes feminist linguistic theory, which argues that language reflects and perpetuates gender hierarchies (Cameron, 1990; Lakoff, 1975). In Gilead, the restriction of language not only serves as a tool of gendered oppression but also functions to maintain the patriarchal power structure. The erasure of personal names and the imposition of controlled speech limits women's ability to express their thoughts and desires, thereby reinforcing their subjugation. As Beauvoir (1949) argues, control over language is central to the control of women's bodies and identities, a theme that Atwood vividly portrays through the linguistic constraints placed on the Handmaids.

4.1.3 Censorship and Book Burning in *Fahrenheit 451*: Destruction of Language as Knowledge.

In Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, the control of language takes the form of censorship and the destruction of literature. In this dystopian society, books are banned, and firemen are tasked with burning any remaining books to prevent citizens from accessing information that might foster independent thought. Captain Beatty justifies this by stating that no one can make someone listen to reason if they've been taught to believe only in the entertainment that TV provides (Bradbury, 1953). This passage highlights the regime's goal of eliminating conflicting ideas by erasing access to alternative sources of knowledge. The government justifies this censorship as a

way to prevent conflict and ensure societal happiness, claiming that by eliminating books, they can eliminate the offensive or conflicting ideas they contain (Bradbury, 1953).

The destruction of books in *Fahrenheit 451* represents a more overt form of linguistic control compared to *1984* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. Rather than manipulating language to suppress thought, the regime in *Fahrenheit 451* seeks to destroy language altogether by removing books, the primary repositories of knowledge and culture. As Montag, the protagonist, gradually realizes, the elimination of books has led to a society where individuals are disconnected from their own history and unable to think critically about the present. This control over language as knowledge reflects Foucault's (1977) concept of biopower, where control over bodies and populations is exercised through control over what knowledge is accessible.

The burning of books is also a symbolic act of erasing the past. In destroying books, the regime in *Fahrenheit 451* destroys not just words, but the collective memory and knowledge that books contain. For example, Montag's journey toward rebellion begins when he encounters a woman who chooses to burn herself alive rather than part with her books, demonstrating the intrinsic value of knowledge that cannot be erased by censorship (Bradbury, 1953). This scene underscores the powerful connection between language, knowledge, and identity, as the loss of books in this dystopian society represents the loss of individual and collective thought.

4.2 Identity Suppression Through Language Manipulation

In dystopian fiction, language manipulation is frequently employed to suppress individual identity and autonomy. The regimes in *1984*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Fahrenheit 451* each use language to limit self-expression and enforce conformity, effectively erasing personal identities in favor of collective control.

4.2.1 Erasure of Individual Identity in *1984*.

In *1984*, the erasure of individual identity is a key aspect of the Party's control. The use of Newspeak reduces the capacity for self-expression by eliminating the words needed to articulate personal thoughts and emotions. For instance, the Party works to remove any language that could foster rebellion or non-conformity, making it impossible for citizens to even conceptualize opposition to the regime. Orwell writes, "Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller" (Orwell, 1949, p. 46). This narrowing of language directly correlates with the narrowing of individual thought and identity, as citizens are reduced to mindless adherents of Party ideology.

The Party's slogans, such as "Big Brother is watching you," also contribute to the erasure of individuality by creating a sense of omnipresent surveillance. This linguistic control forces individuals to internalize the Party's values, effectively erasing their sense of self and autonomy. As Spivak (1988) argues, the control of language can silence marginalized voices and reduce individuals to passive subjects of the dominant ideology. In *1984*, this is achieved through the systematic elimination of linguistic tools that allow for self-expression, thereby erasing the possibility of individual identity outside the Party's control.

4.2.2 Renaming and Identity Suppression in *The Handmaid's Tale*.

The erasure of personal identity is even more explicit in *The Handmaid's Tale*, where women are renamed to reflect their subjugation to male authority. The protagonist's name, Offred, literally means "of Fred," signifying that her identity is entirely tied to the Commander she serves. This renaming practice strips women of their individual identities and reduces them to mere extensions of the men who control them. As Offred reflects, "I am not the only one who is called Offred. There are others, of course, whose names are also Offred" (Atwood, 1985, p. 89). The prohibition of real names symbolizes the regime's complete control over women's identities, as they are no longer allowed to possess a self that is independent of the patriarchal system. They become defined solely by their role in service to men, eliminating personal autonomy and any connection to their pre-Gilead selves. The use of this formula emphasizes the extent of control Gilead has over women's lives, making them invisible and interchangeable.

Moreover, The term "unwomen" serves as a powerful symbol of how language can be used to erase individual identities. The "unwomen" are discarded by society for not fulfilling their reproductive roles, and language plays a key role in stripping them of personhood: "Then they burn you up with the garbage, like an Unwoman" (Atwood, 1985, p. 194) and where "The old ones they send off to the Colonies right away" (Atwood, 1985, p. 197). Through the use of the term "unwoman" and the practices surrounding it, Atwood explores the dangerous potential of language as a tool for marginalization and control. The "unwomen" are not only erased physically but also linguistically, as they are denied a voice, a legacy, and a place in the society of Gilead.

Furthermore, the restriction of literacy in *The Handmaid's Tale* serves to further suppress women's identities where only "The Aunts are allowed to read and write." (Atwood, 1985, p. 112). The restriction on reading

and writing symbolizes the erasure of women's agency and self-expression. The inability to engage with literature or record their thoughts prevents women from fully understanding their own lives, experiences, or histories. Without access to the written word, they are confined to the present narrative controlled by the regime, making it impossible for them to conceptualize alternative futures or understand the true nature of their oppression. This restriction not only reinforces the power of the ruling class but also ensures that women remain trapped within the limited roles prescribed to them by the state. There is no longer any place for those who cannot do as they are told. This is the new world, the new order (Atwood, 1985,). This control over knowledge through the prohibition of reading and writing allows the regime to create a false reality where women are taught to accept their oppression without understanding their historical or intellectual context. This limitation ensures that women remain passive participants in Gilead's rigid system, unable to challenge the state's authority or envision alternatives to their role. The suppression of women's literacy reflects real-world practices of gender-based linguistic control, as argued by feminist scholars like Cameron (1990), who highlight how language is used to enforce patriarchal norms and limit women's agency.

4.2.3 Censorship as Identity Suppression in *Fahrenheit 451*.

In *Fahrenheit 451*, censorship is used not only to control knowledge but also to suppress individual identity. The banning and destruction of books serve to homogenize society, eliminating the diversity of thought that books represent. As Captain Beatty explains, the goal is to make everyone the same and eliminate the tensions arising from differing opinions and ideas (Bradbury, 1953). In this context, censorship is a tool for suppressing individuality, as it forces citizens to conform to the shallow, entertainment-driven culture promoted by the state.

One of the pivotal passages occurs when Montag, the protagonist, observes a woman choosing to burn herself alive with her books rather than let the firemen destroy them: "There must be something in books, something we can't imagine, to make a woman stay in a burning house; there must be something there. You don't stay for nothing" (Bradbury, 1953, p. 48). The act of book burning is an attempt to annihilate language itself. In this society, books are banned because they present conflicting ideas, making it impossible for the government to maintain control. The woman's sacrifice highlights the deep connection between language and identity. By destroying books, the regime not only suppresses knowledge but also attempts to erase the very foundations of individuality and critical thinking.

4.3 Resistance Through Language in Dystopian Fiction

Despite the overwhelming linguistic control exerted by the regimes in *1984*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Fahrenheit 451*, language also serves as a powerful tool for resistance. The characters in these novels find ways to subvert the restrictions placed on them, using language to preserve their identities and challenge the state's authority.

4.3.1 Winston's Diary and Oldspeak in *1984*.

In *1984*, Winston Smith's act of writing in a diary represents an act of rebellion against the Party's control of language. "To the future or to the past, to a time when thought is free, when men are different from one another and do not live alone..." (Orwell, 1949, p. 35). Winston's diary serves as an act of defiance against the Party's attempt to control both language and thought. By writing in Oldspeak, the traditional form of English, Winston preserves a mode of expression that is no longer corrupted by Newspeak. His writing represents an attempt to reclaim his humanity and resist the Party's ideological control. His diary entries, which express his hatred for Big Brother and his desire for freedom, allow him to momentarily reclaim his individuality. This act of writing is an assertion of his humanity in a world where language has been systematically reduced to prevent dissent.

However, Winston's rebellion is ultimately doomed, as the Party's control over language is too pervasive to overcome. His arrest and subsequent re-education demonstrate the terrifying power of linguistic control, as the Party not only breaks Winston physically but also reshapes his thoughts, forcing him to accept its ideological control. Nevertheless, Winston's brief rebellion underscores the potential for language to resist oppression, even in the most repressive of societies.

4.3.2 Secret Storytelling in *The Handmaid's Tale*.

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Offred's act of storytelling serves as a form of resistance against the regime's attempts to suppress her identity: "I tell, therefore you are" (Atwood, 1985, p. 125). Throughout the novel, Offred reflects on her past life and tells her story in secret, defying the state's prohibition against personal narrative. Her storytelling allows her to maintain a sense of self that is distinct from the role imposed on her by Gilead. By recording her experiences, even in her own mind, she resists the state's efforts to erase her identity. "I would like to believe this is a story I'm telling. I need to believe it. I must believe it" (Atwood, 1985, p. 34). Offred's desire to believe in the narrative she constructs through her internal monologue is a way of reclaiming some sense of agency, despite the fact that she is denied the ability to write it down.

Offred's storytelling also functions as an act of solidarity with other women who have been oppressed by the regime. By sharing her story, she connects with the collective experiences of women who have suffered under Gilead's control. This connection between personal narrative and collective resistance is a powerful theme in the novel, emphasizing the role of language in sustaining both individual and collective identities.

4.3.3 Preservation of Forbidden Literature in *Fahrenheit 451*.

In *Fahrenheit 451*, resistance to the state's censorship takes the form of the preservation of forbidden literature. The "book people" who live outside the city memorize entire books to keep their content alive, even as physical copies are destroyed. This act of memorization is a form of linguistic resistance, as it allows knowledge and culture to survive despite the regime's efforts to erase them. Montag's decision to memorize books symbolizes his deepening commitment to freedom of thought and expression and renders him an individual embodying knowledge to ensure its survival. Granger says to Montag "If anything should happen to Harris, you are the Book of Ecclesiastes. See how important you've become in the last minute!" (Bradbury, 1953, p.149). This moment transforms him from a disillusioned fireman into a vital preserver of cultural heritage, emphasizing that resistance to oppression lies in internalizing and passing on meaning, not just preserving physical books.

Furthermore, Montag's complex relationship with fire as both destructive and cathartic is evident when he reflects "And as before, it was good to burn, he felt himself gush out in the fire, snatch, rend, rip in half with flame, and put away the senseless problem" (Bradbury, 1953, p. 116). The violent imagery—"snatch," "rend," "rip in half"—reveals fire as a means of suppressing his growing dissatisfaction with life and society. Burning offers temporary relief, allowing him to "put away the senseless problem" of his inner conflict. This moment foreshadows Montag's eventual shift, as fire evolves from a tool of oppression to a symbol of transformation and renewal in his journey toward self-awareness. The metaphor of being "the book in the fire" underlines his personal sacrifice, as he now understands that literature is not just a collection of words, but a vessel for human knowledge, identity, and freedom. His choice to become a "book person" signals the awakening of his own resistance to censorship and the ideological control of the state.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study has explored the sociolinguistics of power, identity suppression, and resistance in dystopian

fiction, focusing on three seminal texts: George Orwell's *1984*, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. By analyzing these texts through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Foucauldian discourse theory, the research has demonstrated how language functions as a potent tool for both control and resistance within these dystopian societies. Through thematic analysis, the study has addressed the research questions posed at the outset and has aligned its findings with key sociolinguistic scholars, critics, and theorists.

5.1 Answering the Research Questions

5.1.1 Research Question 1: How do dystopian novels such as *1984*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Fahrenheit 451* depict the use of language as a tool of control and social oppression?

The study shows that in *1984*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Fahrenheit 451*, language is manipulated by authoritarian regimes to maintain power and prevent rebellion. In *1984*, Newspeak systematically reduces language to eliminate dissent, aligning with Fairclough's (1989) view that language shapes social reality. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, theocratic control is exerted through religious language and renaming practices, suppressing women's identities, reflecting Cameron's (1990) argument on language reinforcing gender hierarchies. In *Fahrenheit 451*, language is destroyed through censorship, aligning with Foucault's (1977) concept of biopower, where controlling knowledge controls individuals.

5.1.2 Research Question 2: In what ways does linguistic manipulation in these texts suppress individual identity and autonomy?

Language manipulation serves as a direct mechanism for suppressing identity and autonomy. In *1984*, Newspeak erases the possibility of independent thought, reflecting Spivak's (1988) argument that linguistic control silences marginalized voices. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, renaming women strips them of personal identity, and restricting literacy limits their autonomy, echoing Beauvoir's (1949) argument on controlling language to control women's bodies. In *Fahrenheit 451*, the destruction of books eliminates diverse ideas, reflecting Foucault's (1977) theory that controlling discourse controls identity.

5.1.3 Research Question 3: How is language employed as a means of resistance against authoritarian control within dystopian narratives?

Despite linguistic control, language serves as a tool for resistance. In *1984*, Winston's diary writing represents defiance against the Party, illustrating Fairclough's (1989) view of language as a site of

ideological struggle. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Offred's storytelling resists the regime's attempts to erase her identity, aligning with Cameron's (1990) argument on marginalized groups using language to resist power. In *Fahrenheit 451*, the "book people" preserve literature, embodying Foucault's (1977) idea that power and resistance are intertwined.

5.2 Theoretical Alignment

This study aligns with the works of key theorists and critics in the fields of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis, particularly the frameworks provided by Fairclough, Foucault, and feminist linguistic scholars such as Cameron. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis provides a useful framework for understanding how the manipulation of language in these texts reflects broader societal power dynamics. The study also draws on Foucauldian discourse theory, which explains how discourse operates as a form of power that both enables and restricts individual autonomy.

Feminist linguistic theory, particularly the work of Cameron (1990) and Beauvoir (1949), offers critical insights into how language is used to reinforce gendered power structures in *The Handmaid's Tale*, demonstrating the intersection of language, power, and gender. This study's examination of *The Handmaid's Tale* further highlights how linguistic control over women's voices parallels real-world practices of linguistic oppression and resistance.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that language in dystopian fiction is not only a tool of control and identity suppression but also a medium for resistance. By analyzing *1984*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Fahrenheit 451* through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Foucauldian discourse theory, and feminist linguistics, this research highlights how authoritarian regimes manipulate language to limit thought and enforce societal conformity. However, it also reveals how characters in these works subvert these linguistic controls through acts of rebellion, such as writing, storytelling, and the preservation of forbidden knowledge.

This study contributes new insights by emphasizing linguistic resistance as a critical aspect of dystopian fiction, which is often overshadowed by the focus on linguistic manipulation for oppression. Moreover, it expands upon existing research by integrating sociolinguistic and feminist perspectives to explore how language serves as a tool for both enforcing and challenging gendered power dynamics.

These findings not only deepen our understanding of language and power in literature but also offer broader implications for contemporary issues surrounding freedom of expression, identity, and the role of language in shaping social structures. Future research could explore how these themes manifest in other literary genres or historical periods, further enriching the conversation about language, power, and resistance in both fiction and society.

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The Interpretation of Psychology on Writing Victorian Literature

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Abstract— Sigmund Freud, who was often referred to as the “father of modern psychology,” and was recognized by many as the father of psychoanalysis, revolutionized the understanding of the human mind. According to his theory, individuals are driven by an unconscious need to satisfy their wants for pleasure. The foundation of contemporary psychoanalysis was laid by Jung through the use of archetypes as universal symbols and themes that reside in the collective unconscious and Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930). The concepts of conflicts, the unconscious mind, dreams as symbolic expressions, and conflicts between the id, ego, and superego resonate intensely with the writers seeking to explore the psychological depths of their characters and that writing is not only a creative means, but one that is based on science. In exploring the Victorian novels of *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, we are able to find specific Freudian concepts in relation to the texts, with a particular attention to the exploration of the main characters of the novels as they relate to psychoanalysis.



Keywords— Freud, Jung, Psychoanalysis, Victorian Literature

I. INTRODUCTION

Sigmund Freud, who was often referred to as the “father of modern psychology,” and was recognized by many as the father of psychoanalysis, revolutionized the understanding of the human mind. According to his theory, individuals are driven by an unconscious need to satisfy their wants for pleasure. His well-known views on development, the unconscious mind, and defense mechanisms have had a lasting impact on literature. Freudian ideas were used by several well-known writers to develop complex characters, examine latent impulses, and highlight social problems.

II. THE ID, EGO, AND SUPEREGO IN WRITING

As a key figure in the making of consumer culture, deft architect of his own myth, modern plaything—spent a fair amount of his career exploring the psychology of dreams. In 1908, he turned to the intersection of fantasies and creativity, and penned a short essay titled “Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming,” eventually republished in the

anthology *The Freud Reader*. Though his theories have been the subject of much controversy and subsequent revision, they remain a fascinating formative framework for much of the modern understanding of the psyche. Predictably, Freud begins by tracing the subject matter to its roots in childhood, stressing, as Anaïs Nin eloquently did—herself trained in psychoanalysis—the importance of emotional investment in creative writing: (Ego), and moral concerns (Superego).

Id, Ego, and Superego across multiple characters: Another approach is to create a cast of characters representing each of these aspects of the psyche individually. For instance, one character might act primarily on primal instincts (the Id). Another might operate on reason and reality (the Ego), while a third could be more concerned with morality and societal judgment (the Superego). The balance of these aspects’ dominance could lead to clear character roles and dynamic conflicts, with readers eagerly anticipating how particular interactions might play out. Overall, applying Freudian Personality Theory to their writing can provide a deeper

understanding of the characters' unspoken backstories — the underlying traumas and attachments of characters.

III. FREUDIAN THEORIES AND LITERATURE

The foundation of contemporary psychoanalysis was laid by Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930). The concepts of conflicts, the unconscious mind, dreams as symbolic expressions, and conflicts between the id, ego, and superego resonate intensely with the writers seeking to explore the psychological depths of their characters.

The work of creative writers has a significant impact on our lives. Not surprisingly, creative writers elicits curiosity from their audience. Freud had already noted that:

We laymen have always been intensely curious to know [...] from what source that strange being, the creative writer, draws his material, and how he manages to make such an impression on us with it, and to arouse in us emotions of which, perhaps, we had not even though ourselves capable (Freud).

To further stimulate our curiosity, Freud noted that when asked, writers often give no explanation, or no good explanation, for their creative behavior — shrouding the creative writing process in an intriguing veil of mystery. The seemingly mysterious nature of creative writing may at least partially explain the relative lack of scientific attention this central human activity has garnered from psychologists.

Creative writing is a complex, multifaceted endeavor that can only be adequately apprehended using an interdisciplinary perspective. Researchers may have therefore been discouraged by the necessity to take into account insights from other fields, and by the fact that creative writing may be harder to study, and harder to assess, than other psychological constructs. Psychologists' interest in creative writing is therefore rapidly growing. The purpose of this chapter is to review what has been discovered in this small but growing field of research, and to point to directions for future investigations.

IV. JUNG AND WRITING ARCHETYPES

Carl Jung's archetypes are a powerful tool for writers as they tap into universal symbols and themes that resonate with a broad audience. Using them can enrich your writing by connecting your story to universal themes and symbols. By understanding and thoughtfully incorporating these archetypes, you can create resonant and compelling narratives that engage readers on a deep, subconscious level.

The concept of archetypes was introduced by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung in the early 20th century. Jung believed that archetypes are universal symbols and themes that reside in the collective unconscious, a level of the unconscious mind shared by all human beings that contains memories and ideas inherited from family. Jung proposed that archetypes are innate, universal prototypes for ideas, which may be used to interpret observations (See Figure 1). They are unlearned and function to organize how we experience certain things.



Fig.1: Jung Archetypes for Writing

Jung developed the idea of archetypes as part of his theory of the psyche. He posited that the psyche is divided into three parts:

- the conscious mind,
- the personal unconscious, and
- the collective unconscious.

The collective unconscious houses archetypes—innate, universal prototypes for ideas, which serve as the foundational structures of our thoughts and experiences. Jung's concept of archetypes has had a profound impact on psychology, literature, and the arts. It has influenced the study of personality, the interpretation of mythology, and the analysis of literature and art. His archetypes have been explored and expanded upon by numerous psychologists, writers, and scholars, contributing to a rich, multidisciplinary dialogue about the universal elements of human experience.

Today, Jungian archetypes continue to be a significant influence in storytelling, allowing writers to create narratives that resonate with readers on a deep, subconscious level. They serve as a bridge between the individual and the universal, the known and the unknown, enabling the exploration of timeless themes, moral dilemmas, and human complexities.

Jung identified several primary archetypes, including The Hero, The Mother, The Shadow, and The Anima and Animus, each representing different aspects of the human experience. These archetypes manifest in our dreams, myths, religions, and works of art, reflecting universal themes such as transformation, rebirth, conflict, and balance. It was Jung who believed that using archetype symbols and themes was about tapping into the universal human experience and the collective unconscious. It's about exploring the timeless and the transient, the individual and the collective, creating narratives that are rich in meaning, resonance, and emotional depth. By integrating archetypal symbols and themes thoughtfully and creatively, writers can elevate their work, connecting with readers on a profound level and exploring the myriad facets of human existence. It also lets readers connect with your work on a subconscious level.

Reflecting on the collective unconscious is a profound aspect of utilizing archetypes in writing. Jung's concept of the collective unconscious refers to the part of the unconscious mind shared by humanity, containing memories and ideas that are universal and archaic, inherited from our ancestors. It is populated with archetypes, universal symbols, and themes that have permeated human storytelling throughout history.

Reflecting on the collective unconscious is a journey into the heart of humanity. It's about exploring shared experiences, universal truths, and the eternal human condition. By tapping into the collective unconscious, writers can create deeply resonant, emotionally impactful, and universally relevant narratives, offering readers a profound exploration of what it means to be human. This exploration can lead to a richer understanding of ourselves, each other, and the world we inhabit, creating a sense of unity and shared humanity.

Archetypes, as timeless embodiments of universal patterns and experiences, offer writers a rich tapestry of elements to weave into their narratives. By understanding and integrating these archetypal elements—characters, journeys, symbols, themes, and situations—writers can create stories that resonate deeply with readers, tapping into the collective unconscious and exploring the multifaceted nature of human existence.

The process of integrating archetypes is both meticulous and creative, requiring a thoughtful balance between universality and individuality, tradition and innovation. It's about delving into the shared human experience while also exploring the unique nuances, conflicts, and complexities of characters and narratives. It's about creating stories that are not only entertaining but also enlightening, offering readers insights into themselves, the world, and the human condition. Writers have the opportunity to craft narratives that are timeless and timely, universal and unique. It's a journey of exploration and discovery, of reflection and expression, allowing writers to connect with readers on a profound level and contribute to the ongoing dialogue about what it means to be human and to illuminate the shared paths of human experience.

V. CREATIVE WRITING AS A SCIENCE

The characteristics of creative writers constitutes the bulk of scientific knowledge about the psychology of creative writing. In particular, investigations of the personality and mood of creative writers have yielded interesting insights into the determinants of creative writing. Creative writers are often portrayed as unconventional and somewhat eccentric, a stereotype that has contributed to the fascination of laymen and researchers alike (Piirto). Can personality help us understand what distinguishes creative writers from non-creative types, or from creative individuals at work in other domains? Personality as defined by psychologists refers to traits that differ among individuals and present stability or consistency across time and situations.

Literature that is that creative individuals tend to be high in the personality trait of openness to experience as measured by the Five-Factor Model of personality (King, Walker, and Broyles). This trait involves active imagination, aesthetic and intellectual curiosity, as well as a preference for variety reflected by a willingness to try new things and experiences. What else do we know about the personalities of creative individuals? In a meta-analysis synthesizing results of numerous studies, Feist found that, overall, creative individuals tend to display more autonomy, introversion, openness to experience, questioning of social norms, self-confidence, self-acceptance, ambition, dominance, hostility, and impulsivity. The personality of creative individuals tends to remain stable over time, and that personality traits assessed early in life can predict future creative behavior. The openness to experience meant that they were more aesthetic, curious, imaginative, sensitive, and original, and less conventional, rigid, and socialized. Artists' lower levels of conscientiousness meant that they were less cautious, controlled, orderly, and reliable. In comparison to scientists specifically, artists appeared to be more anxious,

emotionally unstable, and rejecting of social norms. The relationship between nonconformity and the creativity of their works.

Beyond possessing particular individual qualities, creative writers succeed in their endeavors by engaging in specific behaviors that together constitute the creative writing process. Lubart summarized the existing body of scientific research on the creative writing process, pointing out that different stages and steps have been proposed by scholars. Writing, as proposed by Hayes, has three main stages. First, writers go through a reflection phase in which they plan out their writing, decide which themes they will emphasize, and start solving problems. Second, writers enter the production phase, in which they convert their ideas into written text. Third, writers go through a text interpretation phase, in which they read, listen, examine, and revise their text (Hayes and Flower). The creative writing process, two models have garnered the most attention. The first account is Wallas' four-stage model of the creative process: preparation, incubation, where no conscious work is done, illumination (the "a-ha" moment of insight during which ideas enter consciousness), and verification (Lubart). This model continues to serve as the main outline to understand how individuals find ideas and transform them into a creative output, including for example a phase of creative "frustration" before the illumination stage.

The creative process is Finke, Ward, and Smith's Geneplore model, provides further insight into the creative process, where creative work involves both generative processes (involving the production of original ideas), and exploratory processes (involving the examination, evaluation, and refinement of ideas produced) (Lubart). In addition, sub-processes are involved in both phases: for instance, writers begin by retrieving information from memory in order to generate ideas. Ideas generated can become original if individuals try to retrieve information beyond the path-of-least-resistance (i.e., beyond what comes to mind first). To do this, individuals can be encouraged to think abstractly, to think specifically, and to combine ideas that are not usually combined (Ward and Lawson). In keeping with this, creative writers must cultivate a strong sense of self-efficacy and confidence in their abilities.

VI. IMPORTANT WORKS OF PSYCHOLOGY

Two novels of the English literature of the nineteenth century, *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, will be analyzed according to specific Freudian concepts in relation to the texts and with particular attention to the exploration of the main characters of the novels: Heathcliff and Catherine, Jane and Mr. Rochester.

VII. FREUD, ID, EGO, AND SUPEREGO OF WUTHERING HEIGHTS

In *Wuthering Heights*, the parts of the mind theorized by Freud, the Id, the Ego and the Super-Ego, are represented by three characters, respectively: Heathcliff, Catherine, and Edgar Linton (Gold). The Id is characterized by being unconscious, chaotic, impulsive, energetic, and has no moral rules and is governed by aggressive impulses which need to be discharged regardless of any possible consequence. The peculiarities of the Id can be associated with Heathcliff's behavior, since he is described by Mr. Lockwood as "rather slovenly," "an aversion to showy displays of feeling – to manifestations of mutual kindness" and "the tone I no longer ... call Heathcliff a capital fellow." According to Gold, Heathcliff represents the Id, since he is wild and uncivilized and, as Nelly describes as an infant, he was "a dirty, ragged, black-haired child" and a "gipsy brat," likely a primitive or a person of brutish nature. Furthermore, he is soon judged in the novel as sinister: "it's as dark almost as if it came from the devil," with the use of the pronoun it likely to depict him as a thing rather than a human being. Such a description may be confirmed by the analogies where Heathcliff lives since *Wuthering Heights* is compared to "the atmospheric tumult" and also to the aggressive behavior of the dogs; both were similarities reflect the nature of the owner.

It is Edgar's nature is clearly the opposite since he is civilized, rich, and good-mannered and, as Gold argues, he represents the Super-Ego, an area of the mind which is distinctive for its morality, religiosity, parental and social prohibitions, and a disapproval of misconduct. Catherine, represents the Ego because of her rationality, her attachment to the real world and the efforts, apparently conscious, to control her natural disposition. Catherine is first described as similar to Heathcliff and, hence, as a person living her life according to her peevish nature as told by the words of Nelly as a: "A wild, wicked slip she was", "She was much too fond of Heathcliff," "wakened in her a naughty delight to provoke him" and "turning Joseph's religious curses into ridicule, baiting me". Catherine is, in part, aware of her true nature as shown in the famous quote: "I am Heathcliff!", an expression that underlines the strong likeness between the two or, in a psychoanalytic perspective, it suggests the existence of an identification, a psychological mechanism by which aspects or parts of a person can be interiorized by another individual.

Catherine may or may not be completely aware of her analogy with Heathcliff, but what appears as astonishing and strange to Nelly is her decision to marry Edgar because "I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighborhood..." which is in stark contrast with the assertion "...- in my soul, and in my heart, I'm convinced I'm wrong!". It is evident

that Catherine is ambivalent and smothers her true feelings by repression, a mechanism that Freud emphasized as being unconscious, and makes the decision to marry for convenience, an aspect that is likely driven by the Ego. It is possible to infer that her choice is linked to an identification with Edgar or to the influence of moral and social norms and, eventually, to her wish to increase in wealth, since a good marriage was a primary concern for many women in the Victorian age.

The apparently destructive nature of the novel is a topic that Heathcliff and Catherine were both responsible of the tragic quality that can be attributed to the composition. The conjecture is that both characters are egoistic and narcissistic, have an aggressive disposition towards the others, and display unrestrained animal impulses if not a diabolical conduct, which may confirm the association with the Id. As a consequence, they can never live in peace but repeatedly suffer and end up destroying their lives and the happiness of those who surround them, an example being Isabella's marriage with Heathcliff.

Hoeveler provides evidence that supports the contribution of Freud's theories to the analysis of *Wuthering Heights*. The first dream described in the novel is that of the quote, "I began to dream [...] to my unspeakable relief, they woke me." This dream can be interpreted according to the following psychoanalytical concepts: condensation, in which different elements of a dream may be united in a single image or context; displacement, a mechanism by which a latent content and the emotions attached to it are displaced to a manifest content that is more acceptable for the individual; representability, which is characterized by the transformation of thoughts or ideas into visual images. The discrepancy between these characters may reflect their true natures since they are depicted as rude and aggressive, aspects linked to masculinity, while Lockwood is rather inoffensive and gentle, traits, with many of the characters of *Wuthering Heights* being characterized by coldness and aggressiveness.

VII. FREUDIAN THEORY AND JANE EYRE

In *Jane Eyre*, the Freudian theories concerning the Oedipus complex can be taken into consideration to explain the relationship between Jane and Mr. Rochester. The

Oedipus complex concerns a peculiar stage of the individual psychological development.

In the novel, Jane can be compared to a little girl since she has positive feelings of affection for Edward, who is twenty years older. Dell'Olio highlights the fact that Jane's love for Rochester is a consequence of the absence of a father figure in her childhood (Dell'Olio). Little is told in the novel about

Jane's parents and the first family picture that appears in chapter I (Bronte), is characterized by coldness and solitude as shown by the weather conditions: "the dreary November day [...] a long and lamentable blast" and by the distance between Jane and Mrs. Reed who cannot be considered a caring and affectionate alternative mother. In fact, the following description of her aunt is worth mentioning: "She regretted to be under the necessity of keeping me at a distance" and again: "she really must exclude me from privileges intended only for contented, happy little children." The initial picture of emotional deprivation, unhappiness, and prolonged loneliness may explain the fact that a young girl is so in need of true love and of attachment to a parental figure.

It is the relationship between Jane and Edward is so strong and intense that no disagreement or argument between an idealized father and a hypothetical daughter can hinder or diminish the affection they have for each other. In fact, after many tribulations and much sufferance on both sides, the final consideration made by the author in the last chapter is: "No woman was ever nearer to her mate than I am: [...] flesh of his flesh", an intimacy which underlines the idea of blood relationships or gene sharing that is typical of family ties. The Oedipus complex is comparable to a love triangle in which a third person, intervenes to impede or mitigate the expression of the unconscious sexual drives by the child. Jane's rivals can be represented either by Blanche Ingram or Bertha Mason. However, it is not a matter of love, since Rochester does not have genuine feelings of attachment to Blanche, but the point here are Jane's beliefs about Miss Ingram which mainly concern their social discrepancy. She is a threat for Jane, as "the belle of the evening," "was certainly the queen," "A very rich and powerful one: she sang delightfully". Therefore, Jane is overtly jealous and struggles with the fear of being neglected by Edward and makes sharp comments about Blanche, likely to emphasize the differences between them. Moreover, when talking about the Ingram sisters, Jane says that "Mary had a milder and more open countenance than Blanche; softer features too, and a skin some shades fairer."

An interesting work concerning the analysis of dreams and artistic production in *Jane Eyre* provides important insights into the psychoanalytic reading of the social condition of women in the Victorian age (Arnăutu). Firstly, Jane's dreams are used in the novel to express fears of motherhood since their manifest content and verbal description are frequently characterized by anxiety and a sense of failure and an incapacity to deal with little children. The elements that emerge in these dreams are likely connected to the events of Jane's life: her marriage to Rochester which can be interpreted as a sort of imprisonment for a young girl and a limitation of her freedom and independence. Other girls at

the time might have been overexcited by the idea of marrying a rich man and climbing the social ladder, but Jane goes against the tide, an attitude which is confirmed by her rather cold and ambivalent relationship with Adèle, her constant feelings of emancipation and lack of showiness.

Other areas, such as Jane's painting ability is the expression of an artistic quality, which allows the heroine to emerge from her social inferiority since she is much appreciated: "That is one of my paintings over the chimney-piece [...]. Well, that is beautiful, Miss Jane!" At the same time, it prevents her from being conformed to the upper classes as she is not trying to draw people's attention, unlike Miss Ingram: "Miss Ingram, who had now seated herself with proud grace at the piano [...] her air seemed intended to excite not only the admiration, but the amazement of her auditors." Exhibitionistic and voyeuristic drives are expressed also by Jane since her paintings may reflect an unconscious wish to show herself and to be watched by others, as Arnăutu argues, along with a need for admiration. It was Jane's self-gratification in painting is described in these words: "Were you happy when you painted these pictures? Asked Mr. Rochester presently. "... Yes, and I was happy. To paint them, in short, was to enjoy one of the keenest pleasures..." Apart from personal satisfaction, it is important to consider that the heroine's artistic skills symbolize the opportunity to distinguish herself as she possesses noble and elevated qualities. It does not necessarily follow that she belongs to an upper social class, indeed she represents an alternative to the maternal role imposed on women by society.

The second rival for Jane's oedipal dream is that in the Victorian society, women who showed signs of psychological distress were commonly confined in an asylum or at home in a segregated area, an attic, and abandoned to the cure of a single assistant, typically another woman. Isolation was an experience that occurred also to Jane when, as a child, she was unjustly shut up into the Red room because of her tantrums and irritable behavior. It seems that antisocial attitudes along with madness or any other troublesome behavior that could emerge from the discharge of the Id and especially if expressed by women, had to be adequately dominated or kept under control because of the moral rules that governed society.

VIII. CONCLUSION

It was Jung who believed that archetypes are universal symbols and themes that reside in the collective unconscious, a level of the unconscious mind shared by all human beings that contains memories and ideas inherited from family. Jung proposed that archetypes are innate, universal prototypes for ideas, which may be used to

interpret observations, but also had a profound impact on psychology, literature, and the arts. His archetypes have been explored and expanded upon by numerous psychologists, writers, and scholars, contributing to a rich, multidisciplinary dialogue about the universal elements of human experience.

In examining psychoanalytical theories, we are able to provide useful insights into the understanding of Victorian literature, in particular *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. However, there are many authors within this genre of writing that we are able to find the themes where characters are faced with the suppression of individual desires and wishes, either consciously or in an unconscious way. These themes allow for the writer to find a means of including conflict by understanding Freud and his development of energies found within the Id, Ego, and Super-Ego, along with the pressures women may encounter in a patriarchal and misogynous society. All these factors, taken individually or in association, can cause an intense emotional suffering and even a great amount of psychological distress. However, from a Freudian perspective can provide a better understanding of the characters of the novels as well as the reader's response to the text and the authors' lives and personalities.

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Alluring Afterlives: Decrypting the Parallels Grooved into *Yakshi* and *Pontianak* from South Asian Folklore

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Abstract— *The concept of vampires is found ubiquitously in folklore and mythologies across civilizations. The notion of a beautiful belle who faces a tragic end in life, usually by the hands of a vile man, then transcends into the afterlife and remains fuelled by vengeance against men as a whole, especially lecherous men, is one that holds timeless fascination and fear, at the same time. Historical records show that the Yakshis were perceived as harmless fairies, salabhanjikas, in earlier times, in many religious belief systems. Several readings about the gender issues, the issues of marginalised subaltern, issues related to patriarchy and misogyny, all leading to exploitation of vulnerable, unwed women, have already been done. This paper is an attempt to look at the notion of these miasmatic creatures as found in Malayalam lore, and to use the concept of the Pontianak from Malay lore as a point of comparison, to decode the parallels encoded in them.*



Keywords— *Malay lore, Malayalam folklore, Pontianak, Yakshi*

I. INTRODUCTION

Fear is a primary emotion of evolved living beings, and a prime necessity for survival in the face of adversities. Myths, folklores and legends within a civilization often cater to instilling fear in the minds of people, probably in an attempt to lead them down the path of righteousness, by infusing the threat of punishment unless they do, as incorporated in the moral codes. In her article, “Mythical Allegories of Fear (A Psychoanalytic Aspect)”, Moklytsia observes that “[m]yths of all nations [are] filled with images of scary creatures” (Moklytsia). Whether physical appearances are scary or not, most stories have an innate element of fear, a fundamental message to evoke fear in the listener’s mind. Interestingly enough, in Greek mythology, Phobos, the God of Fear, was a son of Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love with her long-term lover, Ares, God of War. The siblings of Phobos include Deimos, the God of terror, Harmonia, Goddess of harmony and Eros, the God of Love, Passion and Fertility (greekmythology.com). That the genesis of Phobos is itself an amalgamation of contradictory emotions – of Love and

of Conflict – is an indication of the bundle of contradictions that might be involved in the emotion of fear. Also important is the bifurcation into “Fear” and “Terror”, and assigning two different Gods, though they are brothers, thereby suggesting the intensity of the emotions.

From classical mythology to local folklores and regional legends, this trend continues – that of installing fear among the community members so as to keep them reigned in. At various times, various types of figures and storylines were used, but ultimately, they all aimed at evoking different degrees of fear, thereby triggering the most primary instinct in human beings – that of self-preservation. This is what is highlighted by Hiimäe, the Estonian folklorist, when she says, “It is characteristic of human nature to fight against fear, trying to reduce or prevent it, and this aim reverberates in the folk narratives” (Hiimäe). If superhumans and Gods were used in Classical mythology, it can be seen that later on, lesser beings such as Fallen Angels like Lucifer, “Valkyries, Fairies, Leprechauns, and Djinns” were used for this

purpose, as indigenous faiths and traditions started to be subdued, amalgamated and marginalised by dominant religions such as Brahminism (Sukesh). The *Yakshis*, for instance, “were believed to be nature deities signifying trees, rivers, and hills. They were later incorporated into Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism during Vedic times and known to be secondary tutelary/guardian type deities to the Gods and Goddesses of the upper echelons in Hinduism” (Sukesh).

II. YAKSHI IN KERALA LORE

Kerala, God’s Own Country, is rich in fascinating narratives about the realistic and the fantastic, many that are unique to its history and tradition, many that are common to Indian or South Asian culture and history. *Yakshi* is such a concept, that is referenced extensively in Kerala Lore. It is also used as a common expression with varying semantic contexts – to indicate an evil woman who behaves dreadfully to others, to indicate a woman’s ungroomed appearances or even to indicate a woman who is lecherous. Though originally the *Yakshi* is ethereally beautiful in appearance, no one uses the term to pay a compliment in Malayalam, only the *modus operandi* of *Yakshi* has filtered down the timeline – to allure someone for personal gains, then suck them dry financially or emotionally or in some other way. This is interesting, because, the concept of *Gandharva* is also associated with luring innocent victims, preferably young virgins, with divine music and then discard them after ‘deflowering’ them, but now it is used widely in a positive sense, especially to mean someone who can sing well, as in *Gaana Gandharvan* or *Gandharva Gaayakan*.

The earliest reference to *Yakshi* and her sort-of-masculine pair, *Yaksha* in recorded history is traced back to 1st Century BCE, in sculptures found in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. In *Jaiminiya Upanishad Brahmana* (JUB) the oldest known, but forgotten Upanishad (Maheshwari), *Yakshas* are mentioned as “wonderous things” (The MAP Academy), with absolutely no negative connotations.

By the time that epics such as the *Ramayana* were composed, *yakshas* were referred to as spirits or a group of figures similar to, but elevated and distinct from, ghosts and demons. In early Buddhist literature and sculpture, *yakshas* frequently appear in subordination to the Buddha; sources such as the *Therigatha* refer to them as guardian spirits who impart good morals. (The MAP Academy)

It is common to find sculptures depicting *Yaksha* and *Yakshi* as figures in attendance, and also “in Jainism through the early and late medieval periods,

starting in 500 C.E. and up until the 15th century, where they are portrayed as attendant figures to the twenty-four Tirthankaras, with the *yaksha* on the left and the *yakshini* on the right side” (The MAP Academy).

The *Yaksha* has retained his positive semantic associations, and has not gained much negative associations. His partner, *Yakshi*, also known as *Yakshini* or *Yakkini*, on the other hand, has undergone several phases of semantic and cultural metamorphoses, and is now associated with something that evokes fear. In Buddhism they can also be seen as the *salabhanjikas*, who attended Maya, mother of Sidhardha, the future Buddha, during her child-birth, breaking the branches of the Sala tree, beneath which the Buddha was born. Travelling across time and geographical borders, when they reach the beautiful petit land of Kerala, they assume the form of angelic ladies who turn into blood-sucking vampires, who haunt lewd men, preferably from the upper class.

Fig 1. shows a photograph of the sculptures of a *Yaksha* and a *Yakshi* dating back to c. 50 BCE, now kept at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

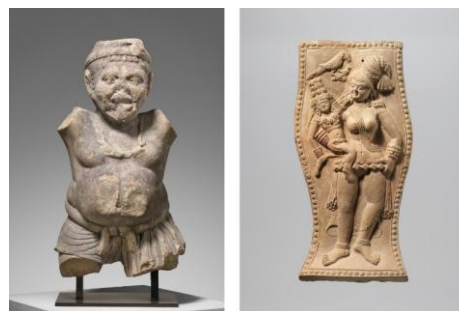


Fig 1. Sculptures of *Yaksha* (on the left) and *Yakshi* holding a child (on the right) c. 50 BCE (The MAP Academy)

As can be clearly seen from the photographs, *Yakshi* is depicted with a very positive and sensitive tone, and there is nothing to suggest fear or terror or scare. Fig 2. gives the illustration that is used by Devdutt Pattanaik for his article “*Yakshi’s Solicitation*”, clearly indicating extended claws and an eye that suggest cunning, rather than innocence or vulnerability.



Fig 2. Illustration of *Yakshi* (devdutt.com)

Pattanaik says that only in Kerala this happens, where both *Yakshi* and *Gandharva* undergo semantic and cultural alchemy, and “is very different from the way they are typically presented in Puranic, Buddhist and Jain lore” (Pattanaik). He goes on to say that elsewhere, the *Gandharvas*, for instance, are “harmless fairies” but “in Kerala, they transform into fierce monsters: the succubus who sexually charms and destroys men, and the incubus who sexually charms and destroys” (Pattanaik).

Sukesh attributes “the devolution of *Yakshis*” to the marginalisation and usurpation of indigenous belief systems by the dominant religious systems such as Buddhism or Hinduism. She also holds responsible popular literature of those days and popular culture of current days such as movies and series, for the cementing of this devolution (Sukesh).

III. PONTIANAK IN MALAY LORE

When one looks at the concept of *Pontianak* in Malay lore, the points of similarity with *Yakshi* are rather astounding. Though not much recorded data could be found regarding the exact point of time of origin of *Pontianak*, or whether the spirit was an object of worship and had positive associations previously, it is said that the Pontianak Sultanate might have been named after the vampiric *Pontianak*, because the founder of the Sultanate successfully drove away demons from a place, and built a worship place as well as a palace there. The term *Pontianak* might have originated from two terms, *ponti* meaning “dead” and *anak* meaning “young person”. In Indonesian legends they are called *Kuntilanak* (Mojikal). Legend has it that Pontianak is the vengeful spirit of a pregnant young woman who died at childbirth, perhaps due to a lover’s betrayal. Whatever the cause of death, she is transformed into a vengeful spirit, roaming the earth for eternity, “seeking retribution” (Rasmusson).

IV. YAKSHI AND PONTIANAK: PARALLELS DECRYPTED

While looking at the two concepts, it is impossible to miss the similarities between the two. *Pontianak* is rather an urban legend, and is a fascination with the people, as evinced by the works dealing with Pontianak strewn across popular culture, which is exactly the case with *Yakshi* too. The appearance of *Yakshi* as a scary vampire is, of course, an evolved feature, and probably black and white movies played a major part in reinforcing the dress code of *Yakshi* as white – so as to be visible in a black and white frame, and also during night time shooting. Innocent beauty,

flowing untied black hair, lips reddened with beetle chewing, intoxicating smell of *Pala* flowers and ethereal music are all set as props for *Yakshi*. Curiously enough, *Pontianak* scores practically ninety percent on the scale of similarity in almost all these points.

Table 1. enlists the points of comparison between *Yakshi* and *Pontianak*.

Table 1. Points of Comparison between *Yakshi* and *Pontianak*

Points of comparison	<i>Yakshi</i>	<i>Pontianak</i>
Cause of death	Betrayal by lover/ elite class man	Betrayal by lover/ during childbirth
Target victims	Lecherous men of any age, especially elite class	Men who cheat on their lovers or wives
Time of appearance	Night time, middle of the forest	Night time, middle of the forest or sea
Abode during day time	Big trees, usually <i>Pala</i> or <i>Karimpuna</i>	Banana trees
Appearance before assault	Young and beautiful, long hair, white dress (in movies)	Young and beautiful, long hair, white dress
Appearance during assault	Fangs and claws, sucks blood	Fangs and claws, disembowels
Method of control	Iron nail driven through the trunk of the tree	Iron nail driven through the trunk of the tree or the neck of the <i>Pontianak</i>
Accompanying smell	Smell of <i>Pala</i> flowers	Floral scent
Accompanying sound	Eerie laughter, melodious song	Eerie laughter, cries of baby

V. DISCUSSION

Yakshi of the old times has no parallels with *Pontianak*, at least not in the materials available for study. Every material affirms that *Yakshi* was in every sense a positive being. However, the “devolved” *Yakshi* (Sukesh), as enthroned in popular imagination by books such as *Aithihamala* by Kottarathil Shankunni or *Neelavelicham* by Vaikom Muhammad Basheer and its original movie

adaptation *Bhargavi Nilayam* (1964), or the innumerable horror movies that embalmed *Yakshi* as a synonym for *Rakshasi* (female demon), has a lot of similarities with *Pontianak*.

More than the similarities, the ultimate purpose of these legends should also be discussed. A wronged lady dies as a result of betrayal, but transcends into immortality, though not in a positive sense, but rather as a cursed being, doomed to haunt this earth, looking for retribution. Therein lies the first contradiction in both the concepts. The second contradiction can be found in the description of the *Yakshi* and the *Pontianak* as heavenly beauties after their death, before their transformation resulting in the annihilation of their victims. Beauty is used as a weapon to entrap the victims seeking aesthetic pleasures. The third contradiction is more important – why are the victims libidinous men alone? Any number of articles have highlighted the aspect of gender discrimination and exploitation of women, especially in the Kerala context of feudalism. Thus, the ultimate aim of these lore can easily be seen to be instilling a fear in the minds of the predators. What Greek mythology projected as Phobos, the offspring of Aphrodite and Ares, of love and conflict, whose siblings include Deimos and Eros, is clearly present in the lore surrounding *Yakshi* and *Pontianak*. Through the props for generating fear, the lore eventually targets to evoke terror in the minds of wayward men who are out to prey on vulnerable women. It is probably the community's way of reigning in the exploitation of its weak and vulnerable members.

F R Ellison points out that repetitive patterns are discernible in folklore and fairy tales, and that attempts should be made “to consider the relation of myth to folklore” (Ellison, 131). Thus, it is common to find similar elements in mythologies and folklore across cultures, such as an adventurous hero facing superhuman hurdles or the lovers having to face innumerable challenges and being separated, or on the philosophical realm of victory of good over evil. In the case of *Yakshi* and *Pontianak*, repeated patterns of encounters on lonely forests at night, enamouring the victims with beauty and music, and then transforming into terrifying creatures who finish off the victims, evidently point towards repeated patterns. But, whether the victory of good over evil is satisfied here is a question of manifold ramifications. That is the most important contradiction that lies at the heart of *Yakshi* and *Pontianak*. Who represents good here, and who represents evil? Is killing a lecherous man who is out to exploit a vulnerable woman or cheat on his wife, good or bad? Is *Yakshi* or *Pontianak* then demons, or angels who resort to violence for delivering justice? These are crucial contradictions at the centre of these narratives that ought to be taken up for detailed studies.

VI. CONCLUSION

From the study, it becomes clear that *Yakshi*, as found in Malayalam folklore and *Pontianak* of the Malay folklore have more similarities than differences, despite geographical and cultural variances. *Yakshi*, as a concept has evolved in quite a tangential semantic and cultural association than the original ones found in records, but the *Yakshi* as found in Malayalam folklore and *Pontianak* in Malay lore have contradictions grooved into them that are to be taken up for deeper philosophical discussions and analyses.

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Language and Power in Postcolonial Literature: Reclaiming Identity and Resisting Colonial Legacies

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Abstract— The research paper explores the dynamic relationship between language and power in postcolonial literature. It examines how language serves as both a tool of colonization and a means of resistance in postcolonial contexts. The study delves into the role of language in shaping identity, expressing cultural heritage, and negotiating power structures. Through a qualitative analysis of key postcolonial texts, the paper investigates how authors use language to challenge colonial legacies, assert autonomy, and redefine selfhood. The findings highlight the centrality of language in postcolonial discourse and its transformative potential in dismantling oppressive systems.



Keywords— Identity, Language, Linguistic Resistance, Postcolonial Literature, Power

I. INTRODUCTION

Language, often regarded as a simple means of communication, is far more than a tool for conveying ideas; it is a powerful force in shaping and maintaining power structures. In the context of colonialism, language was used by imperial powers as a weapon to control, dominate, and erase the identities of colonized peoples. By imposing their language on native populations, colonizers not only suppressed indigenous languages but also subjugated the cultures, histories, and worldviews associated with them. Language thus became an instrument of cultural imperialism, consolidating colonial authority and reinforcing social hierarchies. However, in the postcolonial period, language emerges as a central site of resistance and reclamation. Writers from former colonies engage with and manipulate the colonial languages to subvert their power, challenge colonial legacies, and assert new identities and forms of self-determination.

The relationship between language and power in postcolonial literature is multifaceted, reflecting both the imposition of colonial control and the strategies used to dismantle it. During the colonial era, the colonization of

language went hand in hand with the colonization of the mind and body. The colonizers' language was associated with progress, education, and modernity, while indigenous languages were deemed inferior or "primitive." The widespread use of the colonizers' language in education, administration, and governance created a system where access to power and resources was often contingent upon mastery of that language. In this way, language became not only a means of communication but a marker of social status and political power. Those who spoke the colonial language were often seen as more civilized, more educated, and thus more worthy of authority.

However, the postcolonial period has witnessed a profound shift in how language functions within these societies. The rise of postcolonial literature is inherently tied to the complex negotiation of language. While many postcolonial writers initially continued to use the language of their colonizers—often due to the lack of alternatives—many have increasingly adopted and adapted the language as a means of resistance. Writers like Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Salman Rushdie are prime examples of authors who have engaged with language in ways that critique and subvert its colonial connotations.

Achebe, for example, used English to tell African stories, demonstrating that it could be reappropriated as a medium for African self-expression, rather than an instrument of domination. In contrast, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o made the radical decision to abandon English altogether in favor of writing in his native Gikuyu, arguing that true postcolonial liberation could only be achieved by reclaiming native languages and rejecting colonial languages. Salman Rushdie, through his innovative use of English and its fusion with Indian vernaculars, reflects the hybrid nature of postcolonial identities, demonstrating how language can be a site of cultural negotiation, transformation, and empowerment.

The role of language in postcolonial literature is thus both complex and transformative. This paper seeks to explore the intersection of language and power in postcolonial texts, focusing on how language is used to assert identity, challenge colonial legacies, and reshape power dynamics. Through a qualitative analysis of key postcolonial works, the study examines the strategies authors employ to navigate the linguistic landscape of colonialism and its aftermath. In particular, it investigates how language is not only a reflection of power but also a tool for reclaiming agency and constructing new narratives of selfhood, culture, and nationhood.

By examining the linguistic innovations and choices of postcolonial writers, this paper aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of language in both reinforcing and dismantling power structures. The paper will argue that postcolonial literature is not simply a critique of colonialism but also an assertion of linguistic autonomy. Writers utilize language as a vehicle to challenge the dominance of colonial powers, to give voice to marginalized communities, and to reframe the histories and identities that colonialism sought to erase. Ultimately, this study underscores the ongoing relevance of language as a site of cultural resistance and transformation in postcolonial societies, offering critical insights into the ways in which language shapes the postcolonial condition and its possibilities for empowerment.

Through this exploration, the paper will demonstrate that the struggle for linguistic autonomy is inseparable from the broader struggle for political and cultural independence. Postcolonial literature, by engaging with the complexities of language, shows that the battle for power is as much a battle over words as it is a battle over political structures. As such, the language of postcolonial writers serves as both a mirror of the past and a tool for imagining a new, more just future.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of language and power in postcolonial literature has attracted significant scholarly attention, with various authors exploring the ways in which language functions as both a tool of oppression and resistance. In this section, a review of secondary works related to this topic will be provided to highlight key contributions to the field.

1. Edward Said – Orientalism (1978)

Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism* explores the role of language in the construction of the "Orient" as a Western concept, framing the East as inferior and backward. Said argues that the use of language by colonial powers helped to establish a discourse that justified domination and exploitation. His analysis underscores the power dynamics embedded in language, particularly in colonial representations of the colonized.

2. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o – Decolonising the Mind (1986)

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Decolonising the Mind* is a foundational text in postcolonial studies that critiques the continued use of colonial languages in African literature. Thiong'o argues that the language of the colonizer is a tool of cultural repression, and he advocates for writing in native African languages as a means of reclaiming identity and resisting colonial domination.

3. Chinua Achebe – Home and Exile (2000)

In *Home and Exile*, Chinua Achebe reflects on his choice to write in English, a language imposed by colonization. Achebe contends that English can be used effectively by African writers to convey African stories, subverting its colonial connotations. His work provides a nuanced view of language as both a tool of colonial oppression and a medium for cultural expression and resistance.

4. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin – The Empire Writes Back (1989)

The Empire Writes Back is a key text in postcolonial literary theory that explores the ways in which colonized peoples use the colonizers' language to challenge and rewrite colonial narratives. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin discuss the concept of "writing back" to the empire, demonstrating how postcolonial writers engage with the colonial language to reassert their own cultural identities.

5. Homi K. Bhabha – The Location of Culture (1994)

Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* addresses the concept of hybridity in postcolonial identity, particularly through the use of language. Bhabha suggests that the tension between colonial and indigenous languages results in a hybrid space, where cultural identities are fluid and constantly in negotiation. His work highlights how postcolonial writers use language to express this hybridity,

complicating the traditional boundaries of identity and power.

6. Salman Rushdie – *Imaginary Homelands* (1991)

In *Imaginary Homelands*, Salman Rushdie examines the role of language in the formation of postcolonial identities, particularly in the context of migration and diaspora. Rushdie emphasizes the fluidity of language as a tool for negotiating identity in a postcolonial world, blending English with Indian vernaculars to create a unique narrative voice that reflects the complexities of postcolonial subjectivity.

7. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak – *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988)

Gayatri Spivak's influential essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* addresses the intersection of language and power, particularly in relation to the voices of marginalized groups in postcolonial contexts. Spivak argues that the subaltern (those at the bottom of social hierarchies) is often silenced by the dominant power structures, including language. Her work calls for a critical examination of the ways in which language excludes and marginalizes certain voices, emphasizing the need to create spaces for subaltern voices to be heard.

8. Frantz Fanon – *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952)

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon explores the psychological effects of colonialism, particularly through the lens of language. Fanon argues that the colonized subject internalizes the language of the colonizer, leading to a sense of inferiority and self-alienation. He suggests that reclaiming one's native language is a critical step in the process of decolonization and self-empowerment.

9. Arundhati Roy – *The God of Small Things* (1997)

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* is a postcolonial novel that explores the intersection of language, power, and identity in post-independence India. Roy uses English in innovative ways, blending it with Malayalam and other regional dialects, to reflect the complexities of postcolonial identities and the lingering impact of colonialism on language and culture.

10. Robert Young – *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (2001)

Robert Young's *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* provides a comprehensive analysis of postcolonial theory, with a particular focus on the role of language in the formation of colonial and postcolonial identities. Young discusses how language has been used as a tool of colonial control and the ways in which postcolonial writers subvert this power by reasserting their linguistic and cultural autonomy.

III. RESEARCH GAP

1. While much has been written on the role of language in postcolonial literature, there is a lack of comprehensive analysis focusing specifically on how contemporary postcolonial writers are using language as a tool of hybrid identity in an increasingly globalized world.

2. Previous studies have primarily concentrated on individual authors or specific regions, but there is limited research that compares the linguistic strategies employed across various postcolonial texts from diverse cultural contexts.

3. There is a need for deeper exploration into the intersection of language, power, and digital media in postcolonial literature, particularly how modern technology and online platforms are influencing language and identity formation in postcolonial societies.

4. Much of the existing literature focuses on language as a means of resistance, but further study is needed on how postcolonial writers navigate the complex tension between linguistic colonialism and cultural preservation in their works.

IV. DISCUSSION

In this paper, we have explored the intricate relationship between language and power in postcolonial literature, examining how language functions both as a tool of colonial domination and as a means of resistance and cultural reclamation. Our research focused on analyzing the strategies employed by postcolonial writers in navigating the linguistic terrain shaped by colonial legacies. By examining key texts from authors like Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Salman Rushdie, and others, we have studied how these writers engage with the colonial language to assert their cultural identities, resist historical oppression, and challenge dominant power structures.

We have specifically researched the dual role of language in postcolonial contexts—how colonial languages were initially used to suppress indigenous voices and cultures, and how these same languages have been reappropriated by postcolonial authors as vehicles for self-expression and empowerment. Through our analysis, we have discussed the ways in which language serves as a site of both struggle and liberation, allowing marginalized voices to rewrite histories and reframe identities. Our exploration also delved into how contemporary authors continue to navigate the tension between embracing colonial languages for global communication and resisting them in favor of indigenous languages for cultural preservation.

Moreover, we have contributed to the understanding of how postcolonial literature continues to evolve in the digital age, where the role of language in shaping postcolonial identity is further complicated by the rise of globalization, technology, and transnational communication. We have highlighted the need for further research into the impact of digital media on postcolonial identities and how language is being used as a tool for both empowerment and marginalization in this new era.

In summary, our research provides a deeper understanding of the power dynamics at play in postcolonial literature, offering insights into how language shapes the postcolonial experience and continues to serve as a powerful medium for cultural resistance, transformation, and identity formation. Through this study, we have illuminated the ongoing relevance of language in postcolonial discourse and its potential to challenge and subvert colonial legacies.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper highlights the dual role of language in postcolonial literature as both a tool of colonial domination and a means of resistance. Postcolonial writers have reappropriated colonial languages to assert cultural identity, challenge colonial legacies, and empower marginalized voices. By examining works from authors like Achebe, Ngũgĩ, and Rushdie, we see how language is used to rewrite histories and reframe identities. The rise of globalization and digital media adds complexity to this dynamic, emphasizing the need for further research into how language continues to shape postcolonial identities and struggles for autonomy in a modern context.

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Vulnerability of Meitei Women IDPs and Government Initiative: Impact of Ethnic Turmoil 2023

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Abstract— Meitei women, in particular, bear a heavy burden, facing heightened risks of displacement and gender-based violence. They encounter numerous challenges in overcrowded camps, where they shoulder caregiving responsibilities. Amid their struggle for survival, the concept of dignity often fades away. This paper critically evaluates government initiatives designed to support Meitei women, focusing on relief efforts, rehabilitation programs, and policies that address their socio-economic and psychological needs. The study identifies significant gaps in these interventions, challenges in reaching the most marginalized populations, and the broader implications for women's empowerment in conflict-affected areas. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research combines qualitative in-depth interviews with displaced women and key stakeholders, alongside an analysis of existing government programs and their outcomes. A sample of 10-20% of displaced women from 5-10 displacement camps across five valley districts will be selected for the study.



Keywords – Internally Displaced Persons, Vulnerability, Ethnic Turmoil, Challenges.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since Meitei-Kuki conflict in Manipur in May 2023, in particular, the displacement of Meitei women has been a devastating consequence, exposing them to heightened insecurity, trauma, and socio-economic hardships (BBC news, July 20, 2023). This conflict, rooted in deep-seated socio-political and ethnic tensions, involves the Meitei, the majority ethnic group in the Imphal Valley, and the Kuki Zo tribal communities, who primarily inhabit the hill districts. The large-scale destruction of poppy plantations by the current government appears to have contributed to the outbreak of violence, as reported by several local newspapers. Tensions further escalated following an April 2023 directive from the Manipur High Court, which urged the state government to consider granting Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to the Meitei community (Reuters, July 21, 2023). This proposal was met with strong opposition from the Kuki community, who feared that extending ST status to the Meiteis would threaten their land rights in the hill areas. The resulting clashes sparked a wave of unprecedented violence, including killings, arson, and mass

displacement, beginning in Churachandpur District and quickly spreading to other districts inhabited by both the Meitei and Kuki communities (Hindustan Times, December 15, 2023).

Internally Displaced women in Manipur:

Internally displaced women in Manipur are those who have been forced to flee their homes within the state due to conflict, violence, or other crises, without crossing international borders. In Northeast India, women traditionally experience greater mobility and visibility compared to other parts of the country, with practices such as dowry and bride burning being uncommon. This has often been cited to suggest gender equity in the region and to downplay concerns about violence against women. However, a recent survey by the Manipur State Women's Commission reveals that the ongoing armed conflict has intensified violence against women, including sexual, physical, and psychological abuse. The conflict has also reinforced patriarchal norms, imposing new restrictions on women's freedoms and increasing incidents of gender-based violence. These issues are further exacerbated by the

prolonged social, economic, and psychological trauma of living in a conflict zone. Internally displaced women face unique and multifaceted challenges in this context. The psychological trauma of witnessing violence and destruction has been immense, yet access to mental health support remains limited. Many women have lost their livelihoods, rendering them financially dependent and vulnerable to exploitation. The *Report on the Impact of Ethnic Conflict on Women in Manipur (2023)* by the Manipur State Women's Commission underscores the severe challenges faced by women amid the Meitei-Kuki conflict, including mass displacement, increased vulnerability to violence, and economic hardships. Thousands of women now reside in overcrowded relief camps, where access to healthcare and reproductive services is severely restricted. The report concludes with recommendations to enhance security, legal aid, healthcare, and economic rehabilitation for affected women (Human Rights Watch, September 24, 2024).

Statement of the problem:

Displaced women in Manipur face significant challenges in accessing essential services, rebuilding their livelihoods, and reintegrating into their communities. Despite efforts by government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), rehabilitation and reintegration processes remain insufficient. These women continue to experience vulnerability due to economic insecurity, loss of livelihoods, limited job opportunities, and dependence on aid, which often leads to malnutrition and health problems. Social isolation worsens their psychological trauma, fostering feelings of abandonment and discrimination while excluding them from decision-making processes.

Scope of the Study:

This study focuses on the conflict in Manipur, India, between the Meitei and Kuki communities, which has led to widespread displacement, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of displaced Meitei women. Targeting women aged 18 to 60, the research explores how displacement has affected their personal lives and their vital roles as caregivers and economic providers within their families and communities. It highlights their experiences over the past year, examining both the immediate challenges they face and the coping strategies they have adopted amid heightened tensions and changing living conditions.

Objectives:

- To evaluate the experiences and challenges faced by displaced Meitei women in Manipur.
- To examine the effectiveness of these policies in addressing the specific needs of women.

- To explore the socio-economic, psychological, and cultural impacts of displacement on Meitei women.

II. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The ethnographic approach is particularly suited for exploring people's perspectives and beliefs. This methodology employs unstructured questions, in-depth interviews, and participant observation as key data collection techniques. To gather secondary data, the researcher will conduct a thorough analysis of policy documents and an extensive review of relevant academic literature, including scholarly articles from reputable journals and reports from newspapers.

Research design:

Mixed- methods approach: Quantitative data collection: Surveys to gather demographic information and assess needs.

Qualitative data collection: In-depth interviews and focus group discussions with displaced women.

Case study approach (in-depth analysis of selected displacement camps).

Sampling:

- 10-20% displaced women from 5-10 displacement camps in 5 valley districts of Manipur.
- Inclusion criteria: women aged 18- 60(working age), displaced for more than 6 months.

Data collection:

- Survey questionnaire (structured and semi- structured)
- In-depth interviews
- Observational studies (displacement camps, community centres)
- Library and internet sources.

Ethical considerations:

- Informed consent.
- Anonymity and confidentiality.
- Cultural sensitivity.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Murthy (2002), Internal displacement: A conceptual analysis provides a thorough exploration of the phenomenon of internal displacement, focusing on its definitions, causes, and implications. The author critically examines various frameworks and theories surrounding displacement, offering valuable insights into the complexities of the issue. By analyzing case studies and

socio-political contexts, the book highlights the urgent need for comprehensive policies and support systems to address the challenges faced by internally displaced populations.

Yousafzai (2019), *We Are Displaced: My Journey and Stories from Refugee Girls, Around the World* offers a poignant exploration of the lives of refugee girls. Combining her personal experiences with the stories of young women from various backgrounds, Yousafzai highlights their struggles, dreams, and resilience. The book emphasizes the importance of education and empowerment in overcoming adversity. With compassion and clarity, Yousafzai sheds light on the urgent need for global awareness and action to support displaced communities.

Basumatary (2016), *Impact of Conflict Induced Displacement in the Kokrajhar District of the Bodoland Territorial Council, Assam*, offers a comprehensive study of the socio-economic and psychological effects of conflict-driven displacement in Kokrajhar. Focusing on the Bodo and non Bodo communities, the book examines the struggles of displaced individuals, including loss of livelihood, trauma, and inadequate rehabilitation. Basumatary highlights the failures of resettlement programs and calls for more effective, long-term solutions to address the ongoing challenges faced by displaced populations in the region.

Rao (2012), *The Role of Women in Peace Movement*, examines the significant contributions of women to peace-building efforts globally. The book highlights historical and contemporary examples, showcasing women's activism, resilience, and leadership in promoting peace and conflict resolution. Rao emphasises the unique perspectives women bring to peace movements, advocating for their inclusion in policymaking. Through comprehensive analysis, the book underscores the critical need to empower women in peace processes, making it an essential resource for scholars and activists alike.

Shimray (2015), *Women in Conflict: Manipur's Displaced Women*, provides an insightful exploration of the struggles faced by women displaced by ongoing conflict in Manipur. The book highlights the unique challenges these women encounter, including socio-economic hardships, loss of agency, and psychological trauma. Through personal narratives and empirical research, Shimray emphasizes the resilience and strength of these women amidst adversity. This compelling work is crucial for understanding the gendered impacts of conflict and the need for inclusive policies to support displaced communities.

Siddique (2017), *Conflict Induced Displaced Persons in Assam: A Sociological Study of Resettlement and Rehabilitation*, provides a thorough examination of the displacement caused by ethnic and communal conflicts in

Assam. The book delves into the socio-economic hardships faced by displaced individuals, particularly during resettlement and rehabilitation processes. It highlights the inadequacies in policy implementation and the persistent struggles in accessing basic services. Siddique advocates for more inclusive and sustainable rehabilitation efforts to address the long-term needs of these displaced populations.

Phukan (2012), *Internally Displaced Persons in Northeast India with Special Reference to Assam: A Socio-Legal Study*, provides an insightful analysis of the legal and social challenges faced by displaced individuals in Assam due to ethnic conflict and violence. The book highlights the gaps in legal frameworks and the inadequacies of state interventions in addressing displacement. Phukan emphasizes the need for stronger legal protections and more comprehensive rehabilitation policies to safeguard the rights and dignity of internally displaced persons in Assam and beyond.

Buongpui (2013), *Women's Rights for Promoting Gender Equality in a Traditional and Armed Conflict Society*, critically explores the intersection of gender, tradition, and conflict in societies plagued by violence. The book highlights the systemic inequalities women face in patriarchal and conflict-ridden environments, emphasizing how armed conflict exacerbates gender-based discrimination. Buongpui advocates for strengthening women's rights and gender equality, underscoring the need for legal reforms and socio-political initiatives to empower women in these challenging contexts. The study offers valuable insights into gender justice in conflict zones.

Priyanka (2021), *Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Pakistan: A Case Study of North West Pakistan*, explores the challenges faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) in North West Pakistan due to conflict and natural disasters. The book analyzes the effectiveness of national and international protection frameworks in addressing the needs of IDPs, emphasizing gaps in policy implementation and support. Through detailed case studies, Singh highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach to enhance the protection and integration of displaced populations.

Government policies and rehabilitation programs:

Displaced women in Manipur face numerous challenges, including violence, trauma and socio-economic instability. The government has implemented various policies and programs aimed at addressing the specific needs of internally displaced women, particularly in the context of ethnic conflicts and displacement caused by violence. Here are the key policies and programs relevant to internally displaced women in Manipur:

- **Re-building of destroyed houses:** Economic packages amounting to Rs. 10 lakhs for pucca houses, 7 lakhs for

semi-pucca, 5 lakhs for kutch houses and 50% of the packaged amount for repairing are being provided for the burnt houses for a smooth rehabilitation process.

- **Handloom sector and traditional loom:** Looms, yarns and loom machine (fi-sa-kon) are also being provided free of cost and also at subsidised rates to the women inmates to support their livelihood. For unskilled weavers they are provided training and later provided with necessary weaving materials. Traditional hand embroidery courses are also being conducted in collaboration with ICM, Imphal free of cost for the inmates of Relief camps.
- **Pre-fabricated houses as a temporary shelter:** Around 320 pre-fabricated houses are being constructed at Kwakta, and another at Utlou, for Bishnupur District, 200 houses at Sajiwa Central Jail Complex, Sawombung, and another at Imphal East I CD Block Sawombung campus for Imphal East district, 400 houses at Yaithibi loukon, Kakching District, 700 houses at Kangpokpi District and 800 houses at Churachandpur District (The Sangai Express, August 24, 2023).
- **Skill training and human resources:** Kouna making training, kouna bamboo crafts training, training for making dishwash, phenyl, copper ware/ brassware cleaner, Bori-making training, food processing, agarbatti-making, candle-making, beauty & parlour management training etc. are being provided to interested inmates in the relief camps.
- **Inclusion of IDPs in CMHT for one year:** The state cabinet approved inclusion of IDPs (excluding government employees and pensioners) in the state sponsored health insurance scheme CMHT (Chief Minister Hakshelgi Tengbang) covering a sum of Rs. 2 lakh.
- **Counselling services:** As recommended by Supreme Court appointed committee headed by Justice (Retd) Gita Mittal on Review of Relief and Rehabilitation Efforts, One Stop Centre (OSC) in the districts are to conduct counselling services for the women inmates of the Relief camp twice a month in collaboration with Shakti Sadan (The Hindu, August 09, 2023).

IV. CONCLUSION

This research examines the pressing social issue of conflict and displacement, with a focus on the unique challenges faced by women, particularly in conflict-affected regions such as Manipur. It underscores how displacement affects women differently from men, providing gender-specific insights to support the development of targeted interventions. The findings carry important policy implications, offering guidance to policymakers and aid organizations in designing effective support strategies.

Furthermore, understanding the processes of rehabilitation and reintegration not only fosters community healing but also informs economic livelihood programs for displaced women. The study emphasizes human rights, social justice, and gender equality, while addressing mental health needs, social support systems, and the preservation of cultural practices. This study enhances the field of displacement and migration studies by focusing on internally displaced women, while also offering valuable insights into public policy and governance, emphasizing the need for more effective, gender-responsive interventions. The findings may also contribute to conflict resolution and peace-building efforts, with the potential for comparative analysis to deepen global understanding of displacement and rehabilitation. Additionally,

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Subverting Expectations of Stories and Environments in Terry Pratchett's *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*

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Abstract— In *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*, Terry Pratchett subverts expectations about story, fantasy, and the environment. The novel features intricate stories within stories. An overarching narrative framework comes from a gentle parody of Victorian children's literature. Due to magical pollution in a city, rats and one cat have become fully sentient. The rats are guided by a children's book which, written in a style parodying the talking animal genre, serves as the rats' cultural lodestone and guide for navigating human society. The rats struggle to reconcile the book's idyllic world of mostly happy interactions between animals and humans with their experiences. Not content with parodying somewhat cloying children's literature, Pratchett also dissects the idea of story, including fairy tales. Throughout, the environment and interactions with it are important motifs. The sentient animals hail from the largest city in the world and journey through the countryside grifting the rustic population. The juxtaposition of city and country shows both environments in nuanced lights. The rats' goal of finding a desert island paradise reflects the desire for nature shown in Victorian Era reform movements. This goal is subverted showing the ironic superficiality of perceptions of nature while encouraging appreciation for whatever environments in which people find themselves.



Keywords— environment, fantasy, nature of story, young adult literature

I. INTRODUCTION

The late British fantasy author Terry Pratchett was known for writing fantasy that satirized the conventions of the genre as well as modern life. Although many of his books were popular with all ages, relatively late in his career he began writing novels specifically for children and young adults. Pratchett wrote stand-alone fantasy novels as well, but he remains best known for his Discworld series. The Discworld is a flat circular world. It is carried through space on the back of four elephants who themselves are perched on a giant world turtle, Great A'Tuin, that swims through the universe. Initial Discworld books (*The Colour of Magic* and *The Light Fantastic*) were mostly straight parodies of the epic fantasy genre. Quickly, though, Pratchett began to use his writing to skewer not only genre

conventions, but also social issues as well as other media. Early works included riffs on rock and roll (*Soul Music*), Hollywood (*Moving Pictures*), and ancient history (*Pyramids*). However, issues of race, class, and gender quickly became important issues in works like *Jingo* and *Feet of Clay*.

In his first Discworld novel written for young audiences, Pratchett parodies the fairy tale "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." However, social satire remained a part of Pratchett's works for children just as they remained in his adult works. *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents* [1] is largely told from the view of the titular Maurice. Maurice is not a piper or a human. Rather, he is a sentient cat. He comes from the most important city on the Discworld, Ankh-Morpork, which can be thought of as a

fantasy cross of London and New York. The metropolis is dominated by, well, by smell and sound probably, but in terms of buildings and culture, by Unseen University (UU) which is the world's premier university for training wizards. Like any good research institution, UU has waste products from its myriad experiments. Here, though, those experiments are magical, and the waste material does not suffer from radioactivity but from an excess of magic. Creatures who grow up around UU often find themselves suffering from side effects of this magical pollution. This setting allows Pratchett to explore issues of narratives and environments. In so doing, he subverts traditional expectations of what a fantasy setting should be and the very nature of story itself.

Maurice has been a victim of the excess magic. He became sentient after living around UU. So, too, did a group of local rats who became sentient after eating magical waste. Maurice devised a plan. He would use the rats to make a fortune by running a con game across the Discworld. He and the rats would come to a town. The rats would infest the town, and the town, of course, would then be in need of a pied piper to rid them of their rodent plague. Maurice recruited a local orphan who loved music to serve in that role. As a result, Maurice and his merry band have traveled the Discworld. The pied piper removes the rats from one town, and the group travels to the next.

The rats possess their own agency. They want money to move to a desert island free from humans (and cats). The human piper, Keith, just wants to make music. Maurice solely wants to make money. His love for money causes him both to take his cut of the earnings but also to steal from the rats.

There, then, is the parody of "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" in a fantasy setting. If that were all the book was, it would still be an entertaining text, one in a long line of fractured fairy tales, postmodern retellings of traditional literature. *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*, however, goes further. Pratchett does not just play with the archetypal fairy tale. He also plays with the very nature of story. This occurs in several ways as discussed throughout this paper.

One of the main characters is related to famous storytellers. Malicia sees the world as a story. This allows Pratchett to discuss the nature of fiction and, of course, the ways in which fiction deviates from reality. Furthermore, the rats learned to read using a children's book they discovered. The children's book, *Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure*, features talking animals in full human dress with cordial relationships with each other and humans. This book, then, does not only represent twentieth-century Disney properties (although I have to hope that Pratchett

would have appreciated Carl Barks's similar social satires featuring his most famous talking animal creation, Uncle Scrooge McDuck). It also represents the didactic, maudlin children's literature often associated with the Victorian Age, but, really, that has found an audience ever since as well.

Mr. Bunnsy, intended to teach manners to children, is used by the rats to develop their culture. It also serves as a guiding light for a future harmonious world. As mentioned, animal-human relations (and inter-animal relations) in the book are not largely positive. This, then, is a depiction of an earthly paradise for the rats, a world where humanity is not bent on species extermination. The rats, though, are also split. The older rats who still remember being, well, rats rather than sentient rats cling to traditions and do not fully trust the new learning found in the book. The younger rats are both respectful of their elders and frustrated, at times, by the slow pace of social change.

In this paper, then, I explore the ways in which Pratchett uses the nature of story to reflect on fiction, place, and the environment. I do this through a close reading of the text. In it, I argue that Pratchett creates a world that subverts readers' expectations based on their experience with genre literature (both fantasy and fairy tales) as well as their very conceptions of the structures of story, environment, and city.

II. CHARACTERS AND THE NATURE OF STORY

The very first page of the book sets up a basic dichotomy of setting: pleasant vs. unpleasant, real vs. imaginary, and the fictionalized world vs. the real world. These binary opposites (I take the term from Kieran Egan [2]) set the stage for a thoughtful exploration of the environment and humanity's place in it. Although they are animals, the interactions of Maurice and the rats with the environment often represent humanity's interaction with the environment as well. Pratchett is not sentimental. The wilderness is not seen as bucolic, but dangerous, just as the city is.

As noted above, the rats dream of a perfect future environment: a desert island on which they could create their own society. This dream society would be free of negative influences like people and, a reader might assume, pushy cats like Maurice. The rats are a bit murky on what the island will actually be like. Maurice and the rats *think* that coconuts will be present there. No one is really sure where coconuts come from, but they are positive that they are associated with desert islands. In this disquietude, readers sense a classic disconnect between

urban and rural where urban dwellers have only a vague idea of where various foodstuff originate.

The reader is given bits of personal history as the book progresses. The rats became sentient after eating magical waste products. Maurice, however, did not partake of the magical waste. It eventually emerges that his mutation was caused by encountering the waste secondhand: he ate a rat that had eaten the waste. Sentience has not necessarily been a blessing for the rats. The rat's leader, for example, is repeatedly nonplussed by the experience. He felt he was no longer the real leader, because he was not used to the intricacies of the rapidly emerging cultural milieu: "The world was moving far too fast for him now, which made him angry. He wasn't so much leading now as being pushed" [1; all remaining quotes come from 1].

Maurice, though, has been largely unconcerned with the changes. His interests revolve around those changes could benefit him. He is also anxious that the rats may be smarter than him, or at least smart enough to recognize that Maurice has been stealing their earnings by telling them that gold coins are "shiny like the moon" and silver coins are "shiny like the sun." The rat Peaches points out that that was incorrect causing tension in the group. Upset with the financial improprieties and concerned with their past close calls, the group decides to run the scam only one more time. The group arrives at the town of Bad Blintz.

At first glance, Bad Blintz looks like a stereotypical fantasy town in a vaguely European setting. The group arrived at market day, but there was little activity. The pied piper, Keith, noted that "the people look poor" while "the buildings . . . look rich." It turns out there has already been a huge plague of rats. The city's residents are starving because of it. The price of bread is skyrocketing, as is the bounty offered on rat tails. The town's rat catchers have had a monopoly on the trade in part because they had spread false information. They have told the townsfolk that rats carried a deadly plague that would make a person's legs explode. The rat catchers nimbly handle Keith's wondering why, then, the rat catchers' legs have not exploded. After all, they avow, they are professionals.

Keith is introduced by Maurice namelessly, just a "stupid-looking kid" who desperately wants to play his music. He goes along with the operation because it lets him play. However, even early on, Keith shows wisdom that belies his appearance and Maurice's assessment of his capabilities. Wisdom is also shown by many of the younger rats.

The binary opposition of the book continues with the rats' discussion of darkness. They light a candle (not an easy task even for intelligent rats). One of the young rats who displays leadership qualities, Dangerous Beans, is

nearly blind. (The rats named themselves from labels on cans and other things they discovered. They did not know what the words meant, just that they liked the sounds.) He tells Hamnpork, the leader, though, "I am not completely blind. I can tell the difference between light and dark." This statement refers not just to the physical light; it also speaks to the younger rat's ethical wisdom. Hamnpork does not understand the point of the fire. Their ancestors did fine without it. Dangerous Beans responds, "With the flame we make a statement to the darkness." Ironically, light has scared some younger rats because it has made them aware of the darkness. The young rat Peaches recognizes this new reality when he says, "We didn't know the shadows were there until we had the light." Dangerous Beans is unpersuaded, "Learning to face the shadows outside helps us to fight the shadows inside. And you can control *all* the darkness." By this statement, Dangerous Beans means that, with light, one can control the shadows without as well as the shadows within.

Mr. Bunnsy Has an Adventure was a turning point in the rats' emerging culture. They were shocked, first, by the pictures. The illustrations showed fully dressed animals interacting with humans. Even before the rats learned language, they were astounded by the images of the book, for the images appeared to show a harmonious world. When some rats learned to read, those initial impressions held true. What could the book's purpose be? Was it picturing a utopian future? The rats could not understand "surely even humans wouldn't make a book about Ratty Rupert the Rat, who wore a hat, *and* poison rats under the floorboards at the same time. Would they? How mad would anything have to be to think of that?" From *Mr. Bunnsy*, the rats began to learn not just human language but how to read and even write human language. They were also learning about human nature.

Some of the worst of human nature is shown by the happenings in Bad Blintz. The rat catchers indicate there is a huge plague of rats. The sentient rats, though, see no evidence of that. The rat tunnels beneath the town exist, of course—they are in them. What are not present are other rats, not even their smell. Despite this lack of rats attacking the food supply, the town is still starving.

The desperate situation of the town is partially shown by the mayor's daughter, Malicia, who explains a curious event that occurred when the group first came to town. A townsman tried to buy Maurice from Keith. Both assumed that, due to the rat problem, he wanted to buy the cat to catch rats. Malicia disabuses them of that notion: "Ratter? He wasn't interested in catching rats! . . . Everyone's hungry here! There's at least two meals on that cat!" Malicia leads Maurice and Keith to her home's kitchen. It

looks like a kitchen, anyway, but there is a distinct lack of “what a kitchen traditionally had, which was food.”

The lack of food is despite Malicia's father's status as mayor. He feels it unfair to be given extra goods due to his status. Malicia agrees in principle, still, she thinks, once the family's solidarity with the people has been shown, they should get “just a little extra.” Malicia is infatuated with stories and thinks the world should be like a story. She questions Maurice on his magical status. She is sure that it is due to having been owned by a witch with a name like Griselda with many warts on her face. She is disappointed when Keith introduces himself as Keith, for the name does not sound like it fits in a story. She hopes, at least, that he was spirited away as an infant and is really the heir to a kingdom somewhere. She perks up when she learns he is an orphan, although she is somewhat deflated when she learns the Guild of Musicians, who raised him, did not keep him locked in a cellar.

Malicia sees her own experiences as story, too. She tells Maurice and Keith that she has two stepsisters. Readers, of course, immediately think of “Cinderella.” The impression builds when Malicia tells her audience that she must do all the chores. Then, she says she must do some of the chores. Finally, she admits that she has to clean her own bedroom which “is very nearly the smallest bedroom.”

Perhaps because of either her interest in story or her native intelligence, she infers their plan. Maurice uses her love of story against her. When she threatens to call the City Watch about their scam, Maurice retorts, “If you do, you'll never find out how the story ends.” Such a threat creates a significant deterrent to Malicia who, as she encounters not just Keith and Maurice but one of the talking rats, Sardines (who also likes to tap dance for his audience), begins to create a story about the story herself as Maurice notices from observing her facial expressions. This trait is apparently genetic; Malicia's grandmother and great-aunt were Agonista and Eviscera, the Sisters Grim, famed storytellers on the Discworld.

Malicia, then, agrees to help. To explain away the broken crockery caused by Sardines, she says that she saw a giant rat and the crockery broke while she was climbing on a cupboard to try to escape it. Maurice is surprised. “You lied?” he wonderingly asks. No, Malicia replies. “I just told a story. . . . It was much more true than the truth would sound.” Maurice realizes that Malicia sees the world as a story and is concerned. Keith replies, “Well, that's harmless, isn't it?” Not exactly, for Maurice, “[I]n fairy tales, when someone dies . . . it's just a word.” Stories soften the world. Believing in their power belies

the dangers in reality, even in the fantasy reality of the Discworld.

The commingling of story within a story continues when Malicia decides to disguise herself. Her disguise nearly screams that is a disguise. Malicia “obviously thought that it was no good looking inconspicuous unless people could see that you were being inconspicuous.” Malicia deeply feels the performative nature of story. She believes things happen because stories dictate that they must. That assertion frustrates Maurice who argues, “The world hasn't got a *plot* . . . Things just . . . happen, one after another.” Nonsense, Malicia counters, “There's always a plot. You just have to know where to look.”

Malicia likes her stories straightforward, perhaps like traditional fairy tale plots. She believes that an “unnecessary complication” would wreck the story. Here, the unnecessary complication is the role of the rat catchers. The rat catchers are not killing rats. Rather, they have captured and caged all the city's rats. They bring fake rattails in for bounties warning people not to get too close due to the leg-exploding plague. The rats are housed in cages underneath the rat catchers' shed. Also in the underground warren is a powerful Rat King. When the educated rodents encounter the underground evil, they become so terrorized that they lose the power of speech and thought. They revert to their animal nature, just as, perhaps, humans do when they encounter unimaginable conditions. In their cages, the rats were eating each other. At the sight of it, Keith yells at Malicia, “This is not a story! This is real!” The horrors of reality cause Malicia's fairy tales to pale by comparison.

Malicia, though, cannot help but continue to think of their experiences as story. She “knows” that the rat catchers are “the humorous thugs” because they fit that story archetype. Those “humorous thugs,” though, knock her cold and threaten to put Keith in the cage with unfed rats. As the narrator says, “And then the story went wrong.” Maurice has been infected with Malicia's narrative-view of the world. When the rat catchers knock Keith's beloved pipes out of his hand, Keith gets angry. Maurice expects the next events to unfurl as if in a story: Keith would be so irate that he knocks the rat catchers out and resolves the crisis. Keith does try to fight, but he has “ordinary human strength” and is once more knocked to the ground. Hamnpork bravely leaps from above to attack a rat catcher. Maurice first thinks the rat has come to the rescue. Then he realizes, like Malicia, he is viewing life as a story. Unsurprisingly, the rat catcher handles Hamnpork with no problems.

The rat catchers, too, play their roles in a story. One corrects the other for using *good* grammar. Doing so is not

in keeping with their persona, and “people get suspicious of rat catchers who talk too good.” They, too, are using people’s perception of story for their own ends.

Despite her own disappointments, Malicia continues to consider herself part of a story. She cannot believe that Keith is not a hero. She questions him about his origins repeatedly. Keith tells her that he understands why she keeps hoping he is a hero, but he isn’t. Instead, he says, “I’m the kind of person heroes aren’t. I get by and I get along. I do my best.” Disappointed and upset, Malicia complains about the story’s structure, “I don’t think this adventure has been properly organized.” Keith, once more, tells her, “This isn’t a story . . . Real life isn’t a story. There isn’t some kind of . . . of magic that keeps you safe and makes crooks look the other way and not hit you too hard and tie you up next to a handy knife and not kill you.” Malicia, though, has none of that. She tells Keith, “If you don’t turn your life into a story, you just become part of someone *else’s* story.” What, he asks, if your story does not work? Then, she says, “You keep changing it until you find one that does.”

Malicia tends to be self-centered. She sees herself as the protagonist of her own story. Arguably, this is a very human trait. She has always been largely uninterested in others’ feelings not because theirs are less important than hers, but because hers are more interesting to her. Her egocentrism is a character flaw, but it is, sadly, not an unusual one.

The humans continually underestimate the rats. Keith, who has traveled with them for some time, is more likely to appreciate their abilities. He explains to Malicia, for example, that the rats “taught themselves” how to speak; “they’re not trained animals, you know.” Even he, though, has a difficult time, perhaps understandably, recognizing the rats’ capabilities. For example, he asks the rats to gnaw through the ropes imprisoning Malicia and him. Peaches suggests that the rats’ knife blade might be a better choice.

Malicia is most upsetting to the rats, though, not through her egocentrism or even her human-centrism. Rather she, unknowingly, disparages their most important book. She is very familiar with *Mr. Bunnysy*, part of a series of children’s books. Her father had them all a child, kept them, and read them to her. She complains, “There’s no subtext, no social commentary.” Of course, such complaints have often been lodged against children’s literature as well as modern fantasy, but Pratchett consistently proves those complaints highly misguided. In any case, Malicia’s diatribes against the books, including couldn’t they have at least included “a bit of interesting violence,” are not only overheard by the rats, but they shock them to their core. Keith tells Malicia that the rats

thought the stories were true, and he “never had the heart” to tell them otherwise.

The rat catchers prove only a minor complication to the plot as a whole. Malicia tries to tell the townsfolk the truth of the situation, but they do not believe her. They think she is making up another story. The crux of the story relates back to Dangerous Beans’s description of light and dark. In the sewers, as they encounter the Spider, a supernatural entity that is far more powerful than the hapless rat catchers, the young rat leader Darktan warns his fellow rats, “We’re in the Dark Wood now.” The Dark Wood was a dangerous physical location in *Mr. Bunnysy*. To the rats in Pratchett’s story, it has come to represent not just physical despair, but emotional or spiritual despair as well.

In the new “Dark Wood,” Dangerous Beans meets Spider, something akin to a god of the rats who has been called into existence by their suffering. Spider tells him, “You know that by facing the dark, we become strong. You know about the darkness in front of us and the darkness behind the eyes.” Spider goes on, and reminds Dangerous Beans about humanity, “There is a race in this world that steals and kills and spreads disease and despoils what it cannot use.” Of course, some would think Spider was discussing rats. That is their reputation, and it is that reputation that the educated rodents trade on for their own benefit.

Spider continues and asks Dangerous Beans how pied pipers operate. They lead the rats to the river where they drown. Dangerous Beans questions that: rats are good swimmers. Yes, says Spider, but that does not make a good story, and “humans like to believe stories! They would prefer stories rather than the truth!” Spider is out for revenge. Dangerous Beans demands to see him. Spider questions this demand; he knows that Dangerous Beans is blind. I am, Dangerous Beans responds, but his eyes “see more than you think.” Furthermore, he says, “I am not so blind that I can’t see darkness.” Dangerous Beans is unconcerned, for he “can control the darkness inside, which is where all darkness is.” The young rodent will not be taken in by Spider’s blinding hate.

In the end, the rats prevail. They also discover that their paradise is not an imaginary tropical island. Rather, it is in the real world (that is, in the real world of Pratchett’s story). The rats come to terms with the mayor. They will stay in the town, and they will keep other rats away. They will not destroy things, and the town will employ them. Speaking for the rats, Darktan tells the mayor that if he promises to “pretend that rats can think” the rats will “pretend that humans can think, too.” Because, though, it is “real life,” they do not all live happily ever after. There

is a contract to be created and signed and endless committee meetings .

In still happier news, Malicia returns a lost copy of *Mr. Bunnysy* to the rats. She had found and repaired it. The rats are still unsure as to the book's meaning. Is it just a fairy tale? No, decides Dangerous Beans, it is a map—a map to a better future for rats and humans. Keith stays in Bad Blintz, but Maurice goes on his way. Eventually, he runs across another “stupid-looking kid” whom he recruits for another scheme “because some stories end, but old stories go on.”

III. CONCLUSION

Pratchett's use of story throughout the text is inventive. In talking about his story as both story (in Malicia's eyes) and as the real world (in most everyone else's), he breaks the narrative fourth wall. He also uses a story-within-a-story with the rats' important *Mr. Bunnysy* book. Although the story has a happy ending, it is not the neat ending that might be expected. Furthermore, Pratchett subverts his readers' attitudes about the environment including humans' relationships with it and the environment's relationship with humanity. He does not rely on stereotypes except when subverting them. It is unsurprising that *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents* was awarded the Carnegie Medal in the United Kingdom. It is children's literature that is philosophical, astute, funny, thought-provoking, and intelligent.

The work of Pratchett is rife with opportunities for future research. While this study examined it using a reader-response lens, additional work could use postmodern approaches. Additionally, themes related to the power of story resonate throughout Pratchett's adult and young adult work. Additional research could explore how those themes developed through the series.

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An Exploration of Historical Backdrops and their Consequences in former Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro

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Abstract— *The novels The Pale View of The Hills, An Artist of the Floating World, The Remains of The Day and When We Were Orphans hold the history of World War II predominantly and other historical contexts. Kazuo Ishiguro has placed history as an inevitable backdrop for most of his novels. The storyline blends with history and varies from traditional historical fiction. The protagonists are severely affected by the war, and the trauma recurring in the characters. This paper aims to analyse the historical instances and the trauma the characters had to undergo in the former novels of Ishiguro. In The Pale View of The Hills and An Artist of the Floating World, Etsuko and Ono, the protagonists, recount their trauma after the disastrous atomic bombs on Nagasaki. The hardship in rebuilding the city after the loss is eminently narrated through the characters. In the novels, The Remains Of The Day and When We Were Orphans the histories are pinned along as important events before World War I and inevitable consequences of the Sino-Japanese War respectively.*



Keywords— World War I World War II History Trauma Loss

INTRODUCTION

The former novels of Ishiguro have to be read with a concentration on the historical front as it is deeply rooted in the novels. The four novels—*A Pale View of Hills*, *An Artist of the Floating World*, *The Remains of the Day*, and *When We Were Orphans*—employ first-person narrative, enabling a more nuanced exploration of perspectives on Japanese culture and history. Ishiguro's works often explore the period from the 1910s to the 1950s, emphasising pivotal events such as the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, the decline of the British Empire during World War II, and Japan's incursion into China. Japan allied with Germany and Italy to establish the Axis during World War II. During that period, most citizens engaged in the war, although a minority expressed dissent. In 1945, other countries defeated the Axis forces in the war, and the detonation of two nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had a profound impact on Japan. In the novels, history is shaped by memory and nostalgia as people reflect on their past to recount the narrative. The historical backdrop plays a

pivotal role in understanding the storyline in the novels of Ishiguro. The historical instances play a vital role in explaining the trauma of the character placed in Ishiguro's novels.

In *A Pale View of the Hills*, Ishiguro delineates the war and post-war history via the protagonist, Etsuko. On August 6, 1945, the United States deployment of an atomic bomb to annihilate Hiroshima was revealed to the international world, leading to a lasting and profound disruption in the course of history. The second atomic bomb, termed Fat Man, exploded in Nagasaki three days after the first bombing of the city with the first Fat Man bomb. Japan has seen considerable hardship due to the First and Second World Wars, resulting in widespread anxiety and unemployment among its people. The historical elements of the narrative mostly concentrate on several weeks in the late 1940s or early 1950s in an eastern region of Nagasaki, where Etsuko lives. Despite the conclusion of World War II, military hostilities persisted in Korea. The public was astonished by the nuclear devastation of

Nagasaki. Etsuko is in her second trimester of pregnancy, anticipating the birth of her daughter, Keiko.

Etsuko's friend Mariko's memories of the post-war period inflict anguish upon her. Sachiko and Niki, daughters of Mariko and Etsuko, have experienced hardship and loss in the past. Due to the deaths of their husbands in World War II, women in Japan endure more suffering than anybody else. Etsuko and Sachiko leave Japan with their daughters, relocating to England and America, respectively. This migration acts as a liberating tool for these characters to escape the trauma of post-war. The primary protagonists, Etsuko and Sachiko, embark on a voyage to the West to start over with their lives. Ishiguro employs the backdrop of pivotal historical events to create an atmosphere that prompts investigation or change inside the characters' realm.

An Artist of the Floating World is set during the American occupation of Japan, from October 1948 to June 1950. In contrast to *A Pale View of Hills*, the devastation and visual shocks presented by history are more profound. Ono, the protagonist, spends most of his retirement time rebuilding the mansion from the disastrous war as the novel sets in. The east wing, balcony, and extensive hallway suffered war damage. Nonetheless, the city's entertainment centre presents the most disheartening perspective of the devastation due to war. The war's tragedy significantly impaired Ono's memory, resulting in the loss of several family members and his recollections. This exemplifies the challenges encountered by those affected by the global war. Ono's personal life is so disrupted that he quits his painting career due to the profound effects of the war on his family.

The protagonist recalls the particular incident from May 1938 and the award conferred by the Shigeta Foundation. He is apprehensive about this occurrence due to its substantial impact on his life. Ono contemplates the past to recreate Japanese history. The narrative examines the past and incorporates distressing recollections. Ono perceives everything as meaningless, and he finds no joy in doing anything. He frequents the park, where he helps with its maintenance. It illustrates the protagonist's solitary amid the battle. His past torments him due to the loss of his family in the conflict. The harrowing experiences of the war-affected individuals and the artist are skillfully presented in the narrative.

The Remains of the Day has Stevens as the narrator who recalls historical events. Mr. Stevens is a fictitious character that embodies the former colonial concept of dominance. He is least concerned with the surrounding state matters and is concentrated on fulfilling his duties as a butler at Darlington Hall. He is on a journey to reunite with his former colleague Miss Kenton as the novel begins and

he's reminded of a significant incident in Darlington Hall and how he failed to fulfil his duty as a son by not looking after his father on the death bed. Recognising the significance of the March 1923 meeting at Darlington Hall, he persuades himself of the need to address the problem. Lord Darlington led the committee that meticulously orchestrated the meeting convened in 1923 after years of arduous labour.

Stevens recognises that his employer may not have been seen as a true gentleman, given the potential revision of the Treaty of Versailles discussed during the political gathering he organised at Darlington Hall. The novel's crucial moments include the preparations and organisation for the 1923 conference at Darlington Hall during his tenure. The employer believed that Germany had been unjustly criticised for this particular problem, which is why he was dissatisfied with the outcome of the agreement. The political discourse occurs concurrently with the narrative, enriching the historical context and providing background information about the treaty that concluded World War I between Germany and its adversaries.

The historical context is linked to immobilising Germany during World War II, with France adopting a stringent position, advocating for more penalties and insisting on the treaty's implementation. Conversely, Britain effectively maintained a pro-German position, advocating for a modified interpretation of the Versailles Treaty, which was generally considered unjust. As the Hitler administration consolidated its position, an increasing number of violations of the Treaty of Locarno, which had replaced the Treaty of Versailles, were revealed. Britain advocated for a peaceful ending and was prepared to offer Germany considerable concessions, including the possibility of reducing reparations or permitting further expansion of the Reich. Lord Darlington sought, out of charity and compassion, to cultivate contacts with the German administration to mitigate the burdens imposed by the stringent penalties of the Versailles Treaty.

Stevens neglected to recognise the possible impact of these events on the rise of Nazism in Germany. He neglected to identify or address this issue. Stevens' thoughts were dominated by the idea that these arduous conditions were a test of his requisite dignity to be an extraordinary butler. The distinguished German officer, Herr Karl Heinz Bremann, was a gentleman of exceptional dignity who made his ceremonial appearance at Darlington Hall post-war in his officer's uniform. The relationship between Bremann and Lord Darlington has increasingly been evident. It was seen that he and his employer had developed a strong friendship. Nonetheless, it continued until the pact was executed. Mr. Bremann resigned from the German

army after the ratification of the accord. The distressing conditions he faced at Darlington Hall on each subsequent visit were unmistakably apparent. His ailment was acute. There were several meetings taking place in the hall that circled the revision of the treaty.

In *When We Were Orphans*, Ishiguro adeptly merges the two cultures with which he is intimately acquainted, both of which are culpable for certain aspects of China's tumultuous history—the Japanese for the Asia-Pacific War and the British for the opium trade. *When We Were Orphans* meticulously depicts the conflict and its effects on individuals due to the Japanese War as the Opium trade was the inevitable outcome. In *Pale View of The Hills* and *Artist of The Floating World* history acts as the backdrop and facilitates. Aside from a few instances detailing the repair efforts and the hardly visible debris, there are no representations of bombing scenes. The graphic elements in *When We Were Orphans*, illustrating death and violence, may deepen young readers' comprehension of history by emphasising the devastating effects of war on people and society.

Chinese people originally identified opium as a therapeutic agent in the seventh century. Opium first being used recreally in the seventeenth century when Dutch and English businesses expanded their trading routes into China. Driven only by large financial gains from opium, British traders disregarded the moral, social, and political consequences of drug addiction. The opium trade was indeed essential for the survival of the British Empire throughout the 19th century. The opium trade had been skyrocketing despite the efforts to cease it. The opium trade had sustained expansion owing to a rising customer base, particularly during the two opium wars (1839–42, 1856–60). These conflicts enabled commerce by forcing certain coastal communities to become concessions. Although British enterprises reaped substantial profits, Chinese individuals endured extensive opium addiction, leading to declining mental and physical health, fractured families, and a demoralised societal framework. In the storyline, *When We Were Orphans*, the character Mr. Kung, of Chinese heritage, succumbs to the detrimental effects of opium and becomes an addict.

Motivated by his intense desire to eliminate evil and his mission to solve the mystery of his parent's disappearance, Banks landed in Shanghai in September 1937, coinciding with the invasion of Japanese forces in the city. Banks believes that his parents are now being held against their will, and it is probable that Inspector Kung, who oversees the inquiry, knows their whereabouts. Upon seeing the individual, Banks is astonished to discover that

they have been profoundly damaged as a result of opium addiction, once a mysterious and alluring figure.

To summarise, history plays a significant role in understanding the storyline of Ishiguro's Novels. History in the novel aids as a backdrop and justifies how the instances of the past have an impact on the current scenario characters' lives. The hardship that the characters had to undergo due to the war drastically changed the lives of the characters. The trauma attached to the historical instances is inevitable and the characters diligently carry the history. The former novels of Ishiguro hold history as a significant component and are ingrained in the characters deeply rooted in their trauma. Estuko, in *Pale View of the Hills*, tries to evade the consequences of the war by migrating to England. Ono strives to get accustomed to the new Japan. Stevens and Christopher struggle to overcome the circumstances that pin them down.

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Exploration of Kashi in Charu Sheel Singh's "Kashi: A Mandala Poem"

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Abstract— Kashi is known as ancient living city of the world and famous as abode of Lord Shiva. Rishi Maharshi of all sects and religion do Yog and sadhana here since beginning weather Sage Agastya in Satyug or Vyas in Dwapar. There are many scriptural descriptions related to the genesis of the worship of Shiva in Kashi and also about creation of Kashi. Poet Charu Sheel Singh records in his poem Kashi as spiritual and cultural centre and also as the 'city of death'. The rare combination of mystical, mythical, historical and philosophical imagination of Prof. Singh creates a Kashi which is not entirely new but the way he has approached Kashi with the concept of 'Mandala' is unique and it remains not a place rather a phenomenon. The characters, legends, Vedic or Puranic stories related to Kashi are part of his consciousness that he melts into figuration. In the beginning of the poem, he has acknowledged his indebtedness for the materials he has drawn from various sources but especially he has mentioned Puranas. Poet Charu Sheel Singh is widely reviewed in the English-speaking world. Prof. P. S. Shastri in a personal letter to poet said that C. S Singh has shown the whole Romantic Scholarship a new pathway to explore.



Keywords— Visheshwer, Kashi as spiritual centre, Rituals and Culture of Kashi, Mandala and Mahasamshan.

Charu Sheel Singh's poetic imagination depicts Kashi in his poem as the body of Shiva and the whole Kashi area is measured with Shiva lingas in the form of circle keeping Visheshwer in the Centre. Poet opines that in Satyug Kashi existed on the trident of Shiva while in succeeding ages it becomes a chariot, cakra and conch shell. He writes:

The Conch-shell perambulation
gyrated into a nocturnal dance
emanating Kashi from the
sea-bed silences that
hid- within Shiva's cosmic

graveyard of meaning. (1)

For him Kashi is not merely name of temporal place. It is the script of trans-temporality however, it has its birth from eternity, "Kashi is the endless Pranava/whose folktale stories never/begin or end."

Time's

adverbial fire could neither
inflame nor deflame the eternity
which marked its repertoires into
an unknown girl called Parvati (14)

Poet writes about Ganga's presence in Kashi- created a history. He describes it as "subaltern flow" (1) and Shiva

made a memory forever by shrinking Ganga in his Jata. For the poet exploration of Kashi is not only knowledge about folk, rituals etc. rather "Kashi is the biography of a nation that autographs memory on the folio pages of cremation."

Poet describes eternity of Panchganga Ghat of Varanasi which is considered as the confluence of five rivers Saraswati, Yamuna, Mandakini, Kirana and Ganga out of which only Ganga is visible and rest are ethereal manifestation. He says the moment textual inscription of Ganga took place on the earth it remains not only salvational text rather its linearity is broken into "Sister devices of salvation that Saraswati, Mandakini, Varuna and Assi" (Singh,5) which ultimately results into the "bindu sea-shores of Eternity" (Singh,5)

Shiva generated concept of time in the form of Kashi. He is a great creative force who imagined the world with Parvati who is no other self but female incarnation of Shiva. Parvati is the creative power with whom Shiva brings the whole world in existence. Time generates various mortal bodies. Beginning of time is the declaration of death for all the forms of life. In the entire poem poet has time and again mentioned the concept of time i.e not derivative of various myths which he has gone through. In western philosophical tradition Immanuel Kant is well known for his presumption of the category of time. He separated categories of time and space. He said time existed before anything else in the universe. For Kant time is the category in which events and things are born; time was not born at any given time. This poem brings forth a time when "Time waited to be/ born in tonal bodies that became/planetary music of spheres (Singh, 12). Poet himself makes it clear that Kant is inadequate. He writes,

Kant and Kashmir are rotundities

of thought that rise and fall,

freeze and frost. Kashi is a thoughtless

eternity where terrestrial heights

and brutish sea-deep equivocally

meet and evaporate. (Singh. 45)

The current of time i.e unstoppable past-present-future is folded into something else. It gets a definite shape available in space through some strange transformation it becomes space.

The tiny digital delights' gross

expulsion from the cosmic body made

God inseminate the egg of Kashi in the

cobweb cracks of sizzling imagination (Singh 7)

Poet declares inadequacy of language and the limitations of literature loudly, "Kashi is the bindu a cosmic/nursery

of silken ideas that delimit/our circling capacities into ecstatic damnations (91-92).

Shiva who is the bindu (centre) of Mandala is the beginning of manifold creation. The bodily fragments of Shiva are gathered Himalayan heights. Poet with his imagination expresses beautifully relationship of Shiva and Ganga into lineaments of figuration. Making use of poetic license instead of direct references from *Puranas* he creates allusion. He writes magnetic power of earth bore Ganga on the multiple folds of its silences. In her book Diana L Eck "Banaras: City of Light" she equates geography of Benaras with mandala. She explicates that "Hindus say of Banaras that it stands at the centre of the earth as the place of creation and gathers together the whole of the sacred universe in a single symbolic circle, a mandala. Yet it is not an earthly city. Kashi is said to sit above the earth as a "crossing place" (tirtha) between this world and the "far shore" of the transcendent Brahman."

(6) Prof. Rana P. B Singh in his paper "Kashi and Shiva: Interrelatedness and Making of Cosmos" has also explicated Shiva lingas as mandala which are self-born or installed by sages, planets or Gods. In his study decoding of numerical and structure of Lingas lead to understand that the city is itself symbol of total knowledge. He writes, "The frame of the cosmic reality, according to ancient Hindu thought, consists of the three fundamental states called evolution (shrishti), existence (sthiti), and involution (samhara) that act in an infinite cyclic process. Each one of these phases is controlled by a god, named Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the preserver), and Shiva (the one who completes the cosmic cycle and re-start it); these three gods form a kind of Trinity (trimurti). Shiva, being the last to complete the cycle from which a new cycle starts, is known as Mahadeva, the Supreme Divinity" (1)

Poet perceives Kashi as cosmic happening. It has its interrelatedness with cosmos. The seed of all the lives are nurtured into ovaries of "Mandala". Poet writes that Kashi i.e the abode of Lord Shiva, holding a distinct energy it transforms all darks into lights. Kashi described by poet as Mahashamsan, an eternal place, where divine power keeps into life and death.

The cockroaches' beams of

Satanic dark flew into the bunch

of marigold flowers where

thousand petal set the mandala

into motion. (7)

Death and the rasa generally associated with it (vibhatsa) in the city the known as great cremation ground- the Mahashamsan. Poet writes about the tradition and his allusions go beyond the words:

Silence's vulture overtures

Dovetailed binaries into

archetypal essence that

structure and de-structure nothingness (Singh, 4)

Meru Mountain in Indian system is considered as the centre or axis of the giant earth and universe. Kashi Khanda also reveals confrontation of Vindhya mountain with Meru Mountain which is considered as the centre of universe. It has a huge structure, at the top Devas reside. Some of the Puranic descriptions reveal that Ganga falls down heaven or from the head of Shiva and it comes down from Himalaya. Poet writes:

Meru was the primal seed of
temporal creation etching its passages from
a certain beyond that endless; it
blasted the sun from within the
folio of its destiny's manifold (9)

Poet presents Kashi itself in the form of Shiva Linga and its genealogy cannot be traced the way one cannot decide Sun arrival on the earth. All existences on the earth mountain, sun, moon everything is manifestation of the different form of Shiva. Meru mountain is in the naval of earth. East, West, North and South are settled as spatial brides and Meru Mountain is like centre (bindu) of Mandala. The echo of Meru goes high in the sky and sink below to earth. It is a divine existence on the earth.

In Kashi Shiva Lings are multiplied into ethereal, subliminal, terrestrial and transcendental which enables poet to delve deep in infinite imagination. *Skand Puran*, *Agani Puran*, *Matsya Puran* have already mentioned about self-born lings and installed Shiva lings by the sages. Gauri, Nandi, Parvati all are female incarnation of Lord Shiva. Poet writes that poetry is the divine happening and transcendental poetry is a bliss. It is a medium to search self. Wordsworth's discovery of nature and peasant world bear the immanent burden. Oneness of all is the key Vedantic notion.

Poet writes that folk culture has its birth from Shiva. Seasons, village, crops, God. Low to high all are born out of him. Kashi is delineated by the poet as the hub of sacrifice and in the hymns of Vedas and Puranas it is described as a place where Shiva resides and it can be obtained by the ritualistic practices.

Kashi was a hyperbole in
Vedic folk-lore mediating millenniums
By the tiny rituals of the
Sea-shore (12).

Poet highlights seed of eternity in Vedic consciousness and says that logocentrism of Vedas has eternal marble images. Poet says typical features of Kashi are designed on the cosmic desire. When Shiva generated concept of time, he felt the need of Parvati who is no other being but female self of Shiva. The nuptial knot of Shiva and Parvati in Kashi is the source of all the forms of creation and life on earth.

In Kashi Bindu Madhav Temple is known as one of the ways of getting salvation. Lord Vishnu who gave Kashi to Shiva is again should Shiva with Vishnu. Kashi is free from the chain of birth and death. It is free from temporal discoveries of only combines different colour of time. Linga Purana is one of the 18 Maha Puranas which has two parts Poorva Bhaag and Uttar Bhaag. Chapter 92 of Uttar Bhaag slok no 42 & 104-107 describes that Lord Shiva himself states to Goddess Parvati that he will never leave Kashi therefore it is *Avi mukta Kshetra* and those who will die in Kashi will be free from the bondage of life and death. Further, the place is known as *moksha dham* according to Kashi Khandokat, "काश्यां मरणां मुक्तिः". The city vibrates with spiritual energy and it has power to make human beings free permanently from material facade. Freedom comes when the cycle of birth and death is not functional and it is as per our scriptures possible not only by dying in Kashi but by the cremation of the dead body on the bank of river Ganga or by pouring down ashes of the cremated body in the pious river. It is believed that Kashi is (*teen lokon se pyari*) more radiant than the wonder of the three worlds. As Lord Shiva has said, "बिना मम प्रसादम् वै, कः काशीं प्रति-पद्यते". The one who resides here it is the wish of Lord Shiva. The way Shakespeare gives a universal and general idea about Almighty in the play Hamlet that even, "there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow"(212) similarly scriptures emphasize particularly about Kashi that even the grain of sand moves here with the wish of Lord Shiva.

Kashi is not the name of the place it is the cosmic seed of all creation which indicates direct relation of Kashi with cosmos. The entire scriptural text generates the body of Shiva as Kashi and the whole Kashi area is measured with Shiva lingas in the form of circle keeping Visheshwar in the centre. In satyug Kashi existed on the trident of Shiva while in succeeding ages it became a chariot, *cakra* and a conch shell. Parvati has also played significant role in the creation of Kashi. Poet describes Kashi in the form of Sri *Cakra*, i.e the body of goddess which inhabits Shiva within. Therefore, Kashi is a mandala which becomes the body of Goddess. Shiva generated concept of time in the form of Kashi a place he felt the need of Goddess who is not the other one but Shiva's female incarnation- the creative power with whom Shiva brings the whole world

in existence. Kashi as Mandala has four points from where the entry is granted into holy zone, thus kashi incorporates the whole cosmos to understand that one should read entire *Kashi Khanda*, *Linga Puran* and *Agani Purana* which tell us about existence of 3300 Lingas, 64 Yogini 56 Vinayaka with the significance of 7 circles of Dhundhi Vinayaka. Lord Shiva is himself as Linga in the centre of manadala i.e Kashi known as vishweshwara. Further the linga has two intersecting triangles which denotes merger of Shiva and Shakti which is symbol of creation and source of all creation within creation. What we understand as combination of Prakriti and Purush in Sankhya Darshna.

Kashi Vishwanath represents confluence of religious devotion and spirituality. The living traditions of Kashi Vishwanath is "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, Sarve Santu Niramayah"—may all beings be happy, may all be free from disease. These ancient *Vedic* principles echo in the rituals of Kashi Vishwanath, where well-being is intertwined with cultural practices. The cultural importance of Kashi Vishwanath lies not only in its sacred city but also in its role as a living repository of India's cultural and religious heritage. The intricate rituals, festivals and folk practices keep alive the age-old tradition of the place and carry forward its distinctive energy. "Vividh Dharm Gyan Bina, Sahaj Nahin Sahyog Jina."—Living harmoniously without understanding the diverse facets of religion is challenging. Kashi Vishwanath epitomizes this truth, where diverse cultural expressions seamlessly coexist.

Kashi is the sacred abode of Lord Shiva, pulsates with spiritual energy. As the holiest of the twelve Jyotirlingas, it holds a unique place in Hindu mythology and pilgrimage. Here, every ritual is not just a cultural practice but a profound communion with the divine. Indian culture has a deep relationship with river and the significance of Ganga with Lord Shiva is recorded in "Kashi Khanda", "The Ganga, Shiva and Kashi: where this trinity is watchful, no wonder here is found the grace that leads onto perfect bliss or salvation". Kashi Vishwanath is the religious, spiritual and cultural centre.

CONCLUSION

Kashi is Mahasamshan all of us are tied in manifold bhuvans of our own body and we forget that we are living crematorium made up of dust. The consciousness of death in life is the beginning of new circle within. The moment Kabir Das ji writes "Gagan Mandal mein sej piya ki" It exists for those who could perceive trans-temporal mandala. Kashi and Shiva teach life in death and death in life both. Death is the way to achieve Almighty. All of us are holding concentricity. The ultimate source of all life is the "Aum" which is spread into multiple centres. God has

endowed each object with a kind of energy i.e low or high. The kind of perception we human beings hold low or high accordingly our vision take place. The way to love is through Veebhatsa (the most horrible) atelic freedom belongs to God. Man's appropriation of this atelicity creates the worst kinds of low mimetic visions that demandalise- the whole existence. Death and birth are an ongoing process. Kashi is a place, a temporary stay where what we assimilate inside, we exhale outside. The ultimate realisation is the nothingness of being where the question of space and time is annulled, where the bindu (centre) of mandala transgresses thought words, language and visual imagination. Poet opines that Kashi is not the name of place it is a phenomenon. The place which holds the seed of divinity probably its origin cannot be defined exactly. Despite all researches and knowledge available, spirituality cannot be decoded exactly, it is a journey of one's own. Kashi is a text of trans-temporality and such scripts do not have beginning and ending what is stated in the *Bhagavadgita*.

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An Investigation into Linguistic Problems in writing English business complaint letters. A case Study at Universal Petroleum Viet Nam Joint Stock Company

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Abstract – In the global economy, business correspondence is crucial to the communication of multinational corporations. The information flow inside a corporate or business environment is facilitated by well-written business letters. English business letter plays an essential written text used for international business communication and it has its own features of a text. However, well-written skills in English business complaint letters are also the skills that Vietnamese office workers face the most obstacles. The current research aims to investigate the linguistic problems of Import-Export employees in writing English business complaint letters at Universal Petroleum Viet Nam Joint Stock Company. The study employed a mixed-method design, combining qualitative and textual analysis. The sample was 16 Import-Export employees and 90 Draft English business complaint letters. The research findings indicated that morphological errors (38.0%) were the most prevalent, followed by mechanical (25.5%), syntactic (18.3%), and lexical errors (18.2%). These results lead to several implications for targeted training programs to enhance employees' proficiency in writing professional and accurate English business complaint letters.



Keywords— *linguistic problems, errors analysis, English business complaint letters, Import-Export employees, writing skills.*

I. INTRODUCTION

With the continuous growth of commerce and industry, Vietnam is gradually keeping up with the economic development speed of other countries in the world. Business communication can be taken in the form of face-to-face meetings or written communication known as business correspondence. (Danet, 2001). Effective business correspondence is vital to building and maintaining positive relationships with customers, partners, and other stakeholders. It created the first impression of the receiver on the sender and also help the writer achieve the purpose of business communication.

In the current digital era, “Letters are formal documents that are typically used to convey information to communication partners outside the organization”(Robert

Insley, 2016). Especially, writing English business letter (EBL) in general and English Business complaint letter (EBCL) in particular through the genre-based approach, concepts such as knowledge of content, purpose of writing and certain text features are adopted (Agesta,2017). According to Dolidze (2016), states that employees writing in a second language usually face challenges due to their limited background knowledge of second language acquisition. Employees who do not know how to express their ideas in writing would be unable to communicate effectively with the other person or anyone else (Walsh, Harrison, Young, 2010). Besides, the common linguistic errors specifically morphological, lexical, syntactic, and mechanical errors, prevalent in EBCL can significantly hinder effective communication. These errors can lead to

misunderstandings, undermine customer satisfaction, and ultimately damage the company's reputation.

Moreover, communication purpose is the decisive factor to set apart different genres (Askehave & Swales, 2001). Having to deal with various genres in writing EBCL is one of the challenges that employees often face. They need to be aware of the use of particular genre conventions and deal with its own distinct characteristics, such as goal, conversational style, and attitude. It requires the writer to understand and describe the problem politely and skillfully to avoid making unnecessary mistakes (Oxford Handbook of Commercial Correspondence by Ashley, 2005). This makes it challenging for Import-Export (IE) employees to write EBCL effectively with partners. Among the various difficulties in writing English business letters (EBL), perhaps the most significant one faced by employees is writing EBCL.

Given the scarcity of research on this topic, this study aims to fill the gap by investigating into Linguistic Problems in writing English business complaint letters of Vietnamese office workers. The researcher believes that this study will not only explore problems related to varying levels of English proficiency and their impact on employees' writing skills, but also offer a broader perspective on linguistic challenges for English language education in Vietnam.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Common Linguistic Errors in Writing Business Complaint Letters (EBCL)

Employees in Import-Export (IE) roles often struggle with linguistic errors when writing business complaint letters in English. These errors including morphological, lexical, syntactic, and mechanical mistakes which can hinder effective communication, reduce professionalism, and harm a company's credibility impact clarity, professionalism, and overall effectiveness.

Morphological errors arise from misunderstandings of word structures, affecting verb conjugation, noun formation, and article usage (Ramadan, 2015). Verb-related errors include incorrect tense, subject-verb agreement, and preposition misuse, leading to ambiguity (Nurjanah, 2017). Similarly, noun errors involve incorrect singular and plural forms, often compounded by misused articles and quantifiers. These mistakes hinder comprehension and reduce professionalism.

Lexical errors, or word choice mistakes, result from second-language acquisition difficulties and native language interference (Anggreni & Bochari, 2021). Employees may translate words literally, misuse synonyms, or fail to distinguish between General and Business English.

Collocation errors—such as incorrect adjective-noun or verb-noun pairings—are also prevalent due to insufficient knowledge and overgeneralization (Harta et al., 2021; Shitu, 2015). Even when using a collocation dictionary, employees struggle to choose the right terms, leading to unscientific and unclear sentences (Ridha & Al-Riyahi, 2011).

Syntactic errors disrupt sentence structure and clarity. Many employees struggle with complex sentence construction, making their letters difficult to understand (Ngangbam, 2016). A weak grasp of English grammar leads to frequent mistakes in sentence formation, affecting professionalism. Since syntax dictates word arrangement and governs sentence rules (Ramlan, 2011), errors in this area significantly impact communication. Poor syntax diminishes the effectiveness of EBCL and weakens the company's credibility.

Mechanical errors include spelling, punctuation, and capitalization mistakes (Yuliah, Widiastuti & Meida, 2019). Employees often overlook spelling checks, leading to frequent misspellings. Incorrect punctuation, particularly with commas and periods, disrupts sentence flow and clarity. Additionally, capitalization errors—such as failing to capitalize names and sentence beginnings—undermine professionalism. While these errors may seem minor, they can negatively affect the company's image and lead to misinterpretations of complaints.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research site

The research site was conducted at Universal Petroleum Viet Nam Joint Stock Company with the participants majoring in the Import-Export department. The company was established in 2001 and is currently located at Lot N, Road 26, Song Than II Industrial Park, An Binh Ward, Di An Town, Binh Duong Province, Vietnam.

3.2. Sample and sampling procedures

The study incorporates two distinct types of samples to ensure comprehensive data collection and analysis. The type is the document sample, which was 90 English business complaint letters from 2021 to 2023 because it is considered to be reliable in terms of results. These letters were selected through purposive sampling from the company's documentation, focusing on their relevance to common business complaints.

The rationale for these sample sizes was twofold: the 90 letters were deemed sufficient for identifying patterns of linguistic errors and establishing trends over time, while the 16 employees represented the entire staff engaged in writing such letters, ensuring that the study captured diverse

perspectives and practices across the department. This comprehensive sampling approach enhanced the validity and transferability of the findings. For data organization and analysis purposes, the 16 Import-Export employees were coded from E1 to E16, with "E" serving as an abbreviation for "employee." This coding system facilitated anonymous reporting while maintaining systematic data management throughout the research process.

3.3. Research instruments

Due to the limited number of participants, employing qualitative research methods, specifically semi-structured interviews, was determined to be the most appropriate approach for this study. The semi-structured interview served as the primary research instrument to gather in-depth insights into participants' experiences, perceptions, and challenges in writing English business complaint letters.

3.3.1 Semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview was conducted to explore participants' experiences and challenges to collect their deep insight into the problems that they were facing in writing English business complaint letters. The interview began with opening questions to gather information about the participants' work experience and the frequency with which they wrote English business complaint letters. Core questions then delved into the specific problems and challenges they faced during the writing process, such as lack of vocabulary, limited grammar proficiency, improper writing mechanics, unconventional organization, and difficulties in conveying the appropriate formal tone.

Follow-up questions focused on the strategies participants used to overcome these challenges and their perceived needs for improvement. The interview was concluded with closing questions, inviting participants to share suggestions for enhancing their English business complaint letters writing skills, such as training programs, resources, or organizational support. Specific questions were mentioned in the appendix.

The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese to ensure that participants could express their thoughts and experiences fully and comfortably. This methodological approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic barriers faced by Import-Export employees at Universal Petroleum Vietnam Joint Stock Company, ultimately providing insights that informed practical recommendations for improving business communication skills.

3.4. Data collection procedures

The data collection process was conducted in two distinct phases to ensure a comprehensive and systematic approach,

including document collection procedures and semi-structured interviews procedures.

3.4.1. Document Collection of English Business Complaint Letters

The first phase involved obtaining management approval from U.P Viet Nam Co., Ltd to access relevant business correspondence. Criteria for selecting complaint letters were then established, focusing on factors such as relevance, clarity, and diversity of issues addressed. Additionally, a well-documented system was prepared to organize and store the collected letters effectively for subsequent analysis.

The researcher accessed the company's documentation system to collect English business complaint letters in the period from 2021 to 2023 for analysis. Letters meeting the established criteria are carefully selected to ensure relevance and consistency with the study's objectives. Copies of the selected letters were created while maintaining strict confidentiality to protect sensitive information. The collected letters were then organized chronologically to facilitate systematic analysis and provide a clear timeline of complaint handling issues. These letters were encoded and numbered from L0 onwards. L was letter. Additionally, these English business complaint letters were draft letters and were saved in both final and draft versions by the records storage department.

3.4.2. Semi-structured interview

The second phase was conducting interviews with Import-Export employees to gather in-depth insights into their writing problems. A questionnaire consisting of 16 questions was used to interview Import-Export employees. Six import-export employees who volunteered for the interview were given a list of questions prior to the session. The interviews were conducted with interviewees face to face at different times and in separate places. Each interview lasted about 20 minutes and was conducted in Vietnamese language. All interviews were note-taken and then transcribed verbatim. To ensure credibility and plausibility, the interviewer asked the respondents to review and approve the interview transcriptions and translations.

The interviewees were coded as E1, E2, E3, and so forth to maintain confidentiality while allowing for systematic data organization. The findings were presented based on the research questions, including problems concerning English writing proficiency: lack of vocabulary, limited grammar proficiency, improper writing mechanics, unconventional organization, and difficulties in conveying the appropriate formal tone. Throughout the analysis process, specific explanations were provided in the findings section to interpret the meaning embedded in the collected data.

3.5. Data analysis procedures

3.5.1. Data from Textual Analysis

Manual textual analysis was employed to examine the English business complaint letters written by Import-Export employees. The analysis process involved a systematic reading of all letters to identify linguistic errors. Errors were manually categorized into four main types: morphological errors, lexical errors, syntactic errors, and mechanical errors. The frequency of each error type was manually counted and recorded, with representative examples documented to illustrate each category.

To ensure accuracy and reliability in the analysis, the researcher collaborated with an expert in English language field. This expert provided support in error identification and analysis of the error types. The researcher subsequently compared their own error identification results with those of the professional teacher, enhancing the inter-rater reliability of the findings. This cross-checking process provided a reliable basis for understanding common linguistic challenges in the data and strengthened the validity of the analysis results.

The textual analysis focused on identifying patterns of errors across the sample of 90 letters, considering both the frequency and nature of different error types. This approach enabled the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions about the most common linguistic problems faced by Import-Export employees when writing English business complaint letters.

3.5.2. Data from Semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview analysis involved a systematic approach to extracting meaningful insights from the data collected from Import-Export employees. First, the researcher transcribed the full recordings of the interviews to ensure accuracy and completeness. Key content from the transcriptions was then translated into the target language for further analysis. The responses were systematically coded, enabling the identification of patterns and trends. The researcher used an Excel file to routine information according to the same theme.

These codes were subsequently organized into relevant categories to facilitate a clearer understanding of the data. From these categories, the researcher identified main themes that summarize the core findings of the interviews. To enhance the richness of the analysis, illustrative quotes were selected to highlight the perspectives and experiences of the employees, providing depth and context to the emerging themes. The researcher collaborated with an expert who is the deputy branch manager in Singapore to re-check the translations for accuracy and re-arrange the correct theme.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Morphological errors

The textual analysis of the 90 English business complaint letters revealed four main categories of morphological errors: verb-tense errors, verb-agreement errors, noun-number errors, and article usage errors.

Table 1 Frequency of morphological errors in 90 English business complaint letters

Types of morphological errors	Number of occurrences	Percentage (%)
Verb-tense errors	87	26.5
Verb-agreement errors	81	24.7
Noun-number errors	83	25.3
Article usage errors	77	23.5
Total	328	100

Verb-tense errors were the most frequent morphological errors, accounting for 26.5% of all morphological errors identified. These errors are primarily related to incorrect usage of verb tenses, particularly confusion between past simple and present perfect.

Examples of verb-tense errors included:

- "We **have not yet received** the shipment that **arrived** last week." (Incorrect tense usage; should be "was supposed to arrive")
- "The products **are damaged** when we opened the package yesterday." (Incorrect tense; should be "were damaged")
- "We **expect** to receive compensation by last Friday." (Incorrect tense; should be "expected")

Verb-agreement errors accounted for 24.7% of the morphological errors, primarily related to incorrect subject-verb agreement.

Examples of verb-agreement errors included:

- "Our company **have** not received the shipment yet." (Incorrect subject-verb agreement; should be "has")
- "The shipment of goods **were** delayed." (Incorrect subject-verb agreement with singular subject; should be "was")
- "The quality of the items **were** below standard." (Incorrect agreement; should be "was")

Noun-number errors comprised 25.3% of the morphological errors, primarily related to incorrect plural/singular forms.

Examples of noun-number errors included:

- "We found several **defect** in the shipment." (Missing plural marker; should be "defects")
- "The **equipments** arrived damaged." (Incorrect pluralization of uncountable noun; should be "equipment")
- "We received five **container** of goods." (Missing plural marker; should be "containers")

Article usage errors accounted for 23.5% of the morphological errors, including missing articles, unnecessary articles, and incorrect article selection.

Examples of article errors included:

- "We need **immediate response** to this issue." (Missing article; should be "an immediate response")
- "This is **the serious problem** for our company." (Incorrect article usage; should be "a serious problem")
- "Please send us **a information** about the delivery status." (Incorrect article; should be "information" or "some information")

4.2. Lexical errors

The textual analysis revealed two main categories of lexical errors: word choice errors and collocation errors.

Table 2 Frequency of lexical errors in 90 English business complaint letters

Types of lexical errors	Number of occurrences	Percentage (%)
Word choice errors	77	49.0
Collocation errors	80	51.0
Total	157	100

Collocation errors were slightly more frequent, accounting for 51.0% of all lexical errors, involving incorrect combinations of words that do not naturally occur together in English.

Examples of collocation errors included:

- "We **do a complaint** about the poor quality." (Incorrect collocation; should be "make a complaint")

- "Please **give attention** to this matter." (Incorrect collocation; should be "pay attention")
- "We **strongly request** for compensation." (Incorrect preposition with collocation; should be "strongly request compensation" without "for")
- "We need to **solve this trouble** as soon as possible." (Incorrect collocation; should be "resolve this issue")
- "Please **make a replacement** for the damaged items." (Incorrect collocation; should be "provide a replacement")

Word choice errors accounted for 49.0% of the lexical errors, involving the use of words that did not precisely convey the intended meaning or were inappropriate for the business context.

Examples of word choice errors included:

- "We **look forward to hearing** from you soon." (Inappropriate for a complaint letter; should be "We expect a prompt response")
- "The products were **broken** during transportation." (Inappropriate term; should be "damaged")
- "We are **angry** about the delay in delivery." (Too emotional; should be "concerned" or "dissatisfied")
- "The items were **terrible** quality." (Inappropriate informal adjective; should be "of poor" or "of substandard")
- "We want to **tell** you about a problem with our order." (Informal verb; should be "inform")

The distribution of lexical errors across the three years showed a decreasing trend, with word choice errors decreasing from 38.96% in 2021 to 23.38% in 2023 and collocation errors decreasing from 37.50% in 2021 to 25.00% in 2023, suggesting improvement in the employees' lexical proficiency over time.

4.3. Syntactic errors

The textual analysis revealed two main categories of syntactic errors: sentence fragments and word order errors.

Table 3 Frequency of syntactic errors in 90 English business complaint letters

Types of syntactic errors	Number of occurrences	Percentage (%)
Sentence fragments	79	50.0

Word order errors	79	50.0
Total	158	100

Sentence fragments accounted for 50.0% of the syntactic errors, involving incomplete sentences lacking a subject, verb, or both.

Example of a sentence fragment:

- "Regarding the missing items in our recent order." (Sentence fragment; lacks a main verb)

Word order errors accounted for 50.0% of the syntactic errors, involving incorrect arrangement of words in a sentence.

Example of a word order error:

- "We know not when the replacement will arrive." (Incorrect word order; should be "We do not know")

The distribution of syntactic errors across the three years showed a decreasing trend, with 61 errors in 2021 (38.6%), 56 errors in 2022 (35.4%), and 41 errors in 2023 (26.0%), suggesting improvement in the employees' syntactic proficiency over time.

4.4. Mechanical errors

The textual analysis revealed three main categories of mechanical errors: spelling errors, punctuation errors, and capitalization errors.

Table 4. Frequency of mechanical errors in 90 English business complaint letters

Types of mechanical errors	Number of occurrences	Percentage (%)
Spelling errors	76	34.5
Punctuation errors	76	34.5
Capitalization errors	68	31.0
Total	220	100

Spelling errors and punctuation errors were equally common mechanical errors, each accounting for 34.5% of all mechanical errors identified.

Examples of spelling errors included:

- "We **recieved** the damaged goods yesterday." (Misspelling; should be "received")
- "The **shipment** was delayed by two weeks." (Misspelling; should be "shipment")

Examples of punctuation errors included:

- "We would appreciate your prompt attention to this matter**,**" (Missing period at the end of the sentence)
- "Please respond to our complaint**,** and send the replacement items." (Unnecessary comma before "and")

Capitalization errors accounted for 31.0% of the mechanical errors, involving incorrect use of capital letters.

Examples of capitalization errors included:

- "we are writing to express our dissatisfaction..." (Failure to capitalize the first word of the sentence)
- "We spoke with mr. Johnson about this issue." (Failure to capitalize title; should be "Mr. Johnson")

4.5. Summary of linguistic errors

The total frequency of all linguistic errors identified in the 90 English business complaint letters is summarized in the following table:

Table 5. Summary of linguistic errors in 90 English business complaint letters

Types of linguistic errors	Number of occurrences	Percentage (%)
Morphological errors	328	38.0
Lexical errors	157	18.2
Syntactic errors	158	18.3
Mechanical errors	220	25.5
Total	863	100

As shown in Table 4.10, morphological errors were the most frequent linguistic errors, accounting for 38.0% of all errors identified, followed by mechanical errors (25.5%), syntactic errors (18.3%), and lexical errors (18.2%).

Table 6. Distribution of linguistic errors by year

Year	Number of letters	Total errors	Average errors per letter
2021	30	330	11.0
2022	30	317	10.6
2023	30	216	7.2

When analyzing the distribution of errors by year, as shown in Table 4.5, there was a decreasing trend in the average number of errors per letter from 2021 to 2023, suggesting improvement in the employees' English writing skills over

time. Particularly notable is the significant decrease in errors from 2022 to 2023, with the average errors per letter dropping from 10.6 to 7.2, representing a 32% improvement.

V. CONCLUSION

The current research revealed significant linguistic challenges, with morphological errors being the most frequent, followed by mechanical, syntactic, and lexical errors. Among these, verb-tense errors and subject-verb agreement issues were particularly prominent in morphological errors, while collocation mistakes and inappropriate word choices were the main lexical concerns. Syntactic errors were evenly divided between sentence fragments and word order mistakes, whereas mechanical errors were mostly spelling and punctuation-related.

Despite these challenges, the overall trend suggests a steady improvement in employees' writing proficiency over time. The total number of linguistic errors per letter decreased notably from 2021 to 2023, with a marked reduction in 2023. This decline indicates the effectiveness of language training efforts and highlights the importance of continued focus on grammar, vocabulary, and writing mechanics in professional business communication. Future training initiatives should prioritize verb usage, collocations, and structural clarity to further enhance the quality of English business complaint letters in a business context.

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Julie Tells Audio-Instructional Media and Students' Listening Comprehension Levels in English

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Abstract— This study addressed the importance of listening comprehension in students' English learning by developing a contextualized audio instructional media named Julie Tells and assessing its impact on students' listening comprehension. The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Julie Tells by gathering feedback from content experts and students on aspects like content relevance, instructional quality, technical considerations, and acceptability. It also measured students' listening comprehension through pretests and posttests to determine any significant improvements. Research methods employed included Research and Development (R&D) and Quasi-Experimental Design (QED), with instruments such as the Listening Comprehension Test, Instructional Audio Evaluation Sheet, and Students' Assessment and Feedback on Julie Tells. The study involved ten content evaluators and forty-nine Grade 12 Humanities and Social Science students of Lambayong National High School, selected through purposive sampling. Results showed that Julie Tells, an audio instructional media received excellent evaluations from content experts and highly positive student assessments. Pretest results indicated developing comprehension levels, which significantly improved in the posttest. The mean score difference between the pretest and posttest was significant. Additionally, a moderate positive correlation between students' posttest scores and their assessments of Julie Tells indicated that improved scores were associated with positive learning experiences. Hence, the study demonstrated that Julie Tells effectively enhanced students' listening comprehension, proving a valuable instructional tool. Teachers may use Julie Tells to enhance students' listening comprehension in English classes. Future researchers may replicate this study in different settings, with varied participants and methods, to validate the findings.



Keywords— Contextualized Audio Instructional Media, Julie Tells, Listening Comprehension Levels, Quasi-Experimental Design, and Research and Development (R&D)

I. INTRODUCTION

Listening is what most students do to learn, but they have trouble with comprehension, affecting the learning process, especially in English. Humanities and Social Science students study English in core and major subjects in the curriculum and are expected to learn the macro skills. However, unlike other skills, listening is not explicitly taught, overlooking its vital role in English language learning. Listening comprehension problems among

students are magnified by inadequate listening instructional materials that students can engage and relate to, leading to meaningful learning experiences. In response, the researcher opted to develop contextualized audio media that would foster students' listening comprehension levels in English.

Listening is pivotal to learning the other macro-skills. It is a keystone for refining overall language proficiency, including enhancement of oral expression and

writing abilities and comprehensive language development (Hyu, 2024). Students' listening comprehension level serves as a critical determinant of their reading and writing skills (Kim & Pilcher, 2016).

Despite the crucial role of listening in language proficiency, listening comprehension difficulties are faced by students globally and locally. Students in the United States and Asia find it difficult to concentrate on English as a foreign language because of long spoken speech, speech rate, different range of accents, and inadequacy of materials to improve their listening (de Brito, 2015; Puspitasari & Hanur, 2016).

In the Philippines, Tendero (2008) revealed that the listening skills of Filipino students were subpar. Similarly, Palma et al. (2020) added that Filipino graduates are comparable to fifth or sixth-graders in first-world countries. Thus, Van et al. (2021) suggest that employing media in learning English facilitates the development of language skills and the acquisition of the target language. However, integrated language arts instruction at the secondary school level primarily focuses on study and thinking techniques, writing and composition, and reading skills (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2012).

Previous studies on audio instructional materials revolved around podcasting material in the classroom, authentic audio materials in English for Specific Purposes, comparison of video and audio for vocabulary teaching, audio in online learning, audio-visual material in the teaching of listening, interactive audio on the mother tongue IMs, audio-material for virtualized reality, improving instructor's presence through audio and graphics, audio materials in education, audio-visual IMs (Daniel & Woody, 2010; Kavaliauskienė, 2012; Bal-Gezegin, 2014; de Oliveira Neto et al., 2015; Ahmed, 2016; Sterling et al., 2019; Lipscomb, 2019; Shakirova, 2019; Ojelade, 2020). However, there is a lack of literature on the employment of audio IMs. No studies have been conducted on the effects of teacher-made contextualized audio media in the context of public secondary school students.

Therefore, the thrust of this study was to give attention to enhancing the listening comprehension difficulties of HUMSS students of Lambayong National High School through the development and utilization of *Julie Tells*, an audio instructional media, contextualized to the lessons so that it will enrich the student's grasp of the teachings in addition to helping them with their listening comprehension. The study is beneficial to the school, as it will promote students' listening comprehension and the lack of instructional materials for developing listening.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study developed the *Julie Tells*. It contextualized audio instructional media and examined its effect on the students' listening comprehension level in English of Grade 12 Humanities and Social Science students at Lambayong National High School-Senior High School Department during the second semester of the school year 2024-2025. It answered the following questions:

- 1.1.1 What is the extent of quality of the content experts' evaluation of *Julie Tells* in terms of:
 - 1.1.1.1 content and relevance;
 - 1.1.1.2 instructional aspect;
 - 1.1.1.3 technical consideration; and
 - 1.1.1.4 acceptability?
- 1.1.2 What is the extent of students' assessment of *Julie Tells* in terms of:
 - 1.1.2.1 content and relevance;
 - 1.1.2.2 instructional aspect;
 - 1.1.2.3 technical consideration; and
 - 1.1.2.4 acceptability?
- 1.1.3 What are the students' listening comprehension levels in their pretest and posttest?
- 1.1.4 Is there a significant difference in the students' pretest and posttest scores in the listening comprehension test?
- 1.1.5 Are the posttest scores associated with the students' assessment of *Julie Tells*?

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study was quantitative research and employed both Research and Development (R&D) and Quasi-Experimental Design (QED) as research designs.

R&D is a process used to develop and test products, which in the context of education can include teaching materials, modules, or teaching methods (Sugiyono, 2022). In the setting of this study, the audio instructional media was developed using the 4-D model (Four-D Models), which consists of four stages: Definition, Design, Development, and Dissemination (Irawan et al., 2018).

QED is advantageous when a randomized control trial is not viable, for example, investigating the impression of policy reforms or remedial programs (Accad & Accad, 2016). This was supported by Hassan (2022), who stated that QED offers a practical and versatile approach for evaluating interventions when randomization is not feasible.

In the context of this study, QED was adopted since Lambayong National High School is following a class

program approved by the Department of Education. Thus, interruption and deviation from the approved class routine program in evaluating the effectiveness of *Julie Tells* through a randomized control trial is not practicable. To be particular, the one-group pretest-posttest of the QED was used. In this method, outcomes are measured before and after the intervention. *Julie Tells* was used during the class. After the intervention, the researcher determined the significant difference in the pretest and posttest scores of the students. Then, the effect of *Julie Tells* on the students' English listening comprehension levels was tested.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The research was conducted at Lambayong National High School, located in Barangay Poblacion, Lambayong Municipality, Sultan Kudarat Province, during the school year 2024-2025.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

Two sets of respondents were included in this study. The first set of respondents was ten (10) content experts who evaluated the quality of *Julie Tells* as an audio instructional media regarding its content and relevance, instructional aspect, technical considerations, and acceptability.

The second set was the Grade 12 students taking Humanities and Social Science (HUMSS) enrolled at Lambayong National High School for the school year 2024-2025. All Grade 12 HUMSS students were included in the classes that employed *Julie Tells* as audio instructional media; however, the researcher purposively selected the students who will take the pretest and posttest as well as those who will assess and provide feedback on the use of *Julie Tells* in terms of its content and relevance, instructional aspect, technical considerations, and acceptability.

2.4 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling, a nonprobability sampling method, was used to select the respondents. The ten (10) content expert evaluators were purposely selected using the following inclusion criteria: (a) English teacher teaching in public secondary schools; (b) he/she is actively involved in research undertakings; (c) masters' degree holder and/or doctoral student and (d) have background knowledge in developing instructional materials.

The students-respondents were also selected purposely. The researcher conducted a classroom-based listening comprehension quiz, and forty-nine (49) students gained scores below half of the total items included in the experiment.

2.5 Research Instruments

This study used the following research instruments: (a) *Julie Tells*, (b) a listening comprehension test, (c) an instructional audio evaluation sheet, and (d) students' assessment and feedback on *Julie Tells*.

Julie Tells is a researcher-made audio instructional media in MPEG-1 Audio Layer 3 (MP3) format. The audio clips in *Julie Tells* are composed of four recorded listening texts, short in duration, between 3 minutes and 5 minutes.

The Instructional Audio Evaluation Sheet was adapted and patterned from the Guidelines and Processes for LRMDs Assessment and Evaluation of the Department of Education. The evaluators answered this evaluation tool. Ten (10) content experts assessed *Julie Tells* in terms of content and relevance, instructional aspects, technical considerations, and acceptability

A five-point Likert scale patterned from Magno (2023), as indicated:

Numerical Rating	Verbal Description	Interpretation
5	Excellent	<i>Julie Tells</i> meets 81% and above quality standard of audio instructional media.
4	Very Satisfactory	<i>Julie Tells</i> meets 61% to 80% quality standard of audio instructional media.
3	Satisfactory	<i>Julie Tells</i> meets 41% to 60% quality standard of audio instructional media.
2	Fair	<i>Julie Tells</i> meets 21% to 40% quality standard of audio instructional media.
1	Poor	<i>Julie Tells</i> has only meet 20% quality standard of audio instructional media.

The Listening Comprehension Test measured students' listening comprehension at literal, inferential, and critical levels on the pretest and posttest. The pretest and posttest were administered to gauge the students' listening comprehension levels before and after the experimentation and to compare the results of the two tests.

To assess and interpret the listening comprehension level of the students, the researcher used the rubric patterned after Magno (2023). It is a 5-point Likert

scale that gauges the listening comprehension level of the respondents

Range	Verbal Description	Interpretation
12.1 – 15	Advanced	The students have the ability to recognize and extract specific information from the listening text, and they can provide compelling evidence to back up their conclusions and make logical deductions. Additionally, the students can comprehend unfamiliar words by using the context.
9.1 – 12	Proficient	The students possess the skill to identify the main concept and particulars within a listening text. They are capable of presenting evidence from the text to substantiate their conclusions. However, their capacity to make deductions based on the information presented is restricted, and they encounter difficulty in comprehending unfamiliar terms.
6.1 – 9	Developing	The students can identify the main idea and a few details about the listening text. He/she struggles to provide evidence and make inferences. He/she understands familiar words when they are used in familiar contexts.
3.1 – 6	Emerging	The students' understanding of the text is significantly hindered by the ability to comprehend individual words. They can identify the main idea of the listening text, but they struggle to provide additional information or evidence to support interpretation.
1 – 3	Beginning	The students are incapable of identifying the primary concept or details in the listening text due to complex sentence structure which makes it

difficult for them to comprehend.

Students' Feedback and Assessment on Julie Tells		
was also adapted and modeled by Procalla (2023) and was answered by the students-respondents after the four sessions of classes. A five-point Likert was utilized to interpret the students' responses to <i>Julie Tells'</i> assessment.		
Numerical Rating	Verbal Description	Interpretation
5	Excellent	Students had a highly positive experience with <i>Julie Tells</i> .
4	Very Satisfactory	Students had a moderately positive experience with <i>Julie Tells</i> .
3	Satisfactory	Students had a positive experience with <i>Julie Tells</i> .
2	Fair	Students had a somewhat positive experience with <i>Julie Tells</i> .
1	Poor	Students had a negative experience with <i>Julie Tells</i> .

2.6 Statistical Treatment

Mean and standard deviation were employed to determine the extent of the quality of the content experts' evaluation of Julie Tells in terms of content and relevance, instructional aspect, technical consideration, and acceptability, to describe the extent of the students' assessment of *Julie Tells*, and to determine the level of listening comprehension of the students in the pretest and posttest, respectively. T-test was utilized to investigate if there is a significant difference pretest and posttest scores of the students' listening comprehension in English. Pearson-product moment correlation was used to verify if there is a significant association between the students' assessment of *Julie Tells* and their posttest scores.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Extent of Quality of the Content Experts' Evaluation of Julie Tells

The extent of the quality of the content experts' evaluation of *Julie Tells* in terms of content and relevance, instructional aspect, technical consideration, and acceptability was based on the result of the evaluation of ten (10) content experts conducted.

Table 1. Summary of the Extent of Quality of the Content Experts' Evaluation of Julie Tells

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. Content and Relevance	4.69	.21	Excellent
2. Instructional Aspect	4.60	.22	Excellent
3. Technical Consideration	4.57	.16	Excellent
4. Acceptability	4.73	.43	Excellent
Grand Mean	4.64	0.12	Excellent

Table 1 reveals the summary of the extent of the quality of the content experts' evaluation of *Julie Tells*. First, in terms of content and relevance, *Julie Tells* gains a mean value of 4.69 (SD=0.21), implying that evaluators viewed *Julie Tells* as comprehensive, as it provides accurate and relevant content that stimulates listening comprehension skills. Furthermore, its instructional aspect attains a mean of 4.60 (SD=0.22), denoting that *Julie Tells* meets the minimum criteria for instructional aspects as it was constructed with good quality standards of instruction material.

Also, *Julie Tells's* technical considerations achieve a mean of 4.57 and a standard deviation of 0.16, indicating that it is flexible, convenient, and useful, thus exhibiting technical consideration. Finally, the evaluation in terms of its acceptability obtains a mean of 4.73 (SD=0.43), demonstrating that *Julie Tells* provides that all aspects of audio media complement each other well to achieve the learning objectives and is highly acceptable.

3.2 Extent of Students' Assessment of Julie Tells

Table 2 indicates the summary of the extent of quality of the students' assessment of *Julie Tells*, which resulted in a verbal description of excellence, gaining a grand mean of 4.37 (SD = 0.36). Students assessed all four

components as excellent, with the section means of 4.38 for content and relevance, 4.32 for instructional aspect, 4.34 for technical considerations, and 4.43 for acceptability. This signifies that student had a highly positive experience with *Julie Tells* across all four components.

The overall evaluation of *Julie Tells's* quality across all the stated sections acquired an excellent description with a grand mean of 4.64 and a standard deviation of 0.12. This means that *Julie Tells* meets the 81% and above quality standard of audio instructional media.

The positive result of the evaluation of *Julie Tells* reveals that teacher-evaluators saw the need and potential of *Julie Tells* to enhance the students' listening comprehension. This supports the suggestion of Johnson et al. (2020) and Odey et al. (2024) that there is a necessity for teachers at every level of education to adopt the advantages of 21st-century technology in the classroom to elevate students' success, such as audio instructional media. This corroborates the findings of Chioma et al. (2024), who state that the integration of audio instructional media in teaching English has significantly grown in recent years and has also been taken by teachers as an exciting option to conventional instruction.

Table 2. Summary of the Extent of Students' Assessment of Julie Tells

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. Content and Relevance	4.48	.36	Excellent
2. Instructional Aspect	4.32	.37	Excellent
3. Technical Consideration	4.34	.33	Excellent
4. Acceptability	4.43	.40	Excellent
Grand Mean	4.37	0.36	Excellent

This conclusion agrees with Abdulrahman et al.'s (2018) findings that audio-instructional media connects students to real-life language scenarios that nurture active listening and enable extensive progress in listening

comprehension. Abid (2017) also stated that due to the convenience of audio media, students can practice self-paced listening. Audio media can also help students

improve their abstract imagination and can encourage active participation of students.

3.3 Students' Listening Comprehension Level in their Pretest and Posttest

Table 3. Students' Listening Comprehension Level in their Pretest and Posttest

Scores	Listening Comprehension Levels	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Pretest	Literal level	8.39	2.02	Developing
	Inferential level	5.37	1.35	Beginning
	Critical level	3.39	1.22	Beginning
Posttest	Literal level	12.24	1.89	Proficient
	Inferential level	10.14	1.44	Proficient
	Critical level	7.40	1.59	Developing

Table 3 shows the students' listening comprehension levels in their pretest and posttest. The pretest results depict the students' literal level of listening comprehension, which has the highest mean of 8.39 (SD=2.02) and is described as developing, meaning that students can identify the main idea and a few details about the listening text. He/she struggles to provide evidence and make inferences. He/she understands familiar words when they are used in familiar contexts. On the other hand, the inferential level has a mean of 5.37 (SD = 1.35), and the critical level, obtaining a mean of 3.39 (SD = 1.22), was the lowest among the three levels of listening comprehension. Both the inferential level and critical level have a verbal description of the beginning. This exposes that the students, in their inferential and critical level of listening comprehension, are incapable of identifying the primary concept or details in the listening text due to complex sentence structure, making it difficult to comprehend.

The result is like the findings of Munsod-Fernandez (2021), who stated that 70% of Buting Senior High School's General Academic Strand students have exceptional literal comprehension, 55% have satisfactory inferential comprehension, and 42% have fair critical or evaluative comprehension. This is supplemented by Bangelisan and Eslit's (2018) study, which found that most senior high school students have elementary proficiency in English listening skills.

Similar to their findings, Calub and Calub (2018) discovered that students struggle with evaluating details according to the extent of the information they are familiar with and unfamiliar with. Thus, they propose that the ability to deliberately break down linguistic data is a must for listeners. Teacher assistance is needed to guide students in

developing listening strategies so that they can deeply comprehend what they are listening to.

Students' listening comprehension should be practiced by exposing them to listening activities and audio media like *Julie Tells*, which will further develop their inferential and critical levels. Consequently, *Julie Tells* was integrated into the conventional class and conducted a posttest score results reveal the impact of the contextualized audio instructional media.

Students got a mean of 12.24 (SD = 1.89) in their literal listening comprehension level. In contrast, their inferential level has a mean of 10.14 (SD = 1.44), and both have a verbal description of proficiency. This implies that the students can identify the main concepts and particulars within a listening text. They are capable of presenting evidence from the text to substantiate their conclusions. However, their capacity to make deductions based on the information presented is restricted, and they encounter difficulty comprehending unfamiliar terms. Meanwhile, the students' critical listening comprehension level gained a mean of 7.40 (SD = 1.59) and was verbally described as developing.

The findings are strongly substantiated by the study of Mellina (2024), which attests that the students' listening abilities enhanced after exposure to audio, as evidenced by the substantial increase in their post-test scores, with more students achieving the above score compared to the pretest. Baba and Ojokavo's discovery (2021) study verified that students instructed with audio media at the literal, inferential, and evaluative levels have substantially different listening comprehension performances than those taught with printed text.

Equally, the study of Suprihadin et al. (2023) confirms a major variance in students' accomplishment in listening comprehension because of audio integration. The validated results robustly aligned with research studies that

reliably accentuate the crucial role of audio instructional media in enhancing students' listening comprehension skills.

**a=.05 level of significance*

Table 4. T-test Results between the Pretest and Posttest of the Students' Listening Comprehension in English

Scores	Mean	SD	df	t	p	Interpretation
Posttest	29.80	4.15	48	15.67	.000	Significant*
Pretest	17.14	3.84				
Mean Difference	12.65					

3.4 T-test Analysis Between the Pretest and Posttest scores of the Students' Listening Comprehension in English

Table 4 reveals the paired samples t-test results between the pretest and post-test of the students' listening comprehension in English. The students' mean pretest and posttest scores are 29.80 and 17.14, respectively. The mean difference of the two tests is 12.65. As to their standard deviation, the pretest has a 4.15 standard deviation, while the posttest has a 3.84 standard deviation. The degree of freedom is 48. The computed t-value between the mean

scores of the pretest and posttest was 15.67, which resulted in the calculation of the p-value of 0.0000.

According to the result, since the computed t-value of 15.67 is greater than the critical t-value of 2.0118 at the 0.05 level of significance, two-tail with 48 degrees of freedom, there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the student's listening comprehension.

**a=.05 level of significance*

Table 5. Results of Pearson-r Analysis on the Significant Relationship between the Posttest Scores and Students' Assessment of Julie Tells

Variables	r	p	Sig	Interpretation
Posttest Scores and Students' Assessment of Julie Tells	.480*	<0.05	.000	Significant*

3.5 Pearson-r Analysis on the Significant Relationship between the Posttest Scores and Students' Assessment of Julie Tells

Table 5 reveals that the computed coefficient correlation r is 0.480, N=49, indicating a moderate positive association between post-test scores and students' assessment of Julie Tells. This implies that the increase in students' scores in the posttest is associated with students' positive learning experiences, according to Julie Tells. Moreover, the computed r is 0.480, which exceeds the r-tab value of 0.288 at 0.05 significance level, two-tail with 47 degrees of freedom; therefore, hypothesis 2 is rejected. Also, since the computed p is lesser than the 0.05 significance level, this further verified a significant association between the quality of Julie Tells and the students' post-test scores.

Furthermore, considering that the computed value of p is lower than the 0.05 level of significance, this reveals that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest of the grade 12 students.

The outcome infers that the test is highly significant, which underscores the positive effect of Julie Tells on the students as it improves their listening comprehension levels in English. This corroborates with Najmi and Lavasani (2021) and Suprihadin et al. (2023) as they have found out in their study that students' listening comprehension in the EFL class was greatly influenced by English audio files as manifested in their improvement of listening comprehension. Further, they concluded that teachers' ability to use e-tools and the proper choice of resources relevant to learning objectives are important factors for effective audio files.

This result conforms with the findings of Procalla's (2023) study, stating that students listen effectively to audio-lingual instructional materials if motivated. Further, it is supported by the Affective Filter theory of Krashen (Mahnke, 1985), stating that boredom, lack of motivation, and other negative emotions generate a psychological filter that lessens students' ability to grasp understandable output. Further, Calibuso et al. (2024) align their findings with the favorable association between listening comprehension and audio use. That is, shifts influence the degree of listening comprehension and audio use.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation described *Julie Tells* as excellent. Hence, the evaluator saw the need and ability of contextualized audio instructional media to enhance the students' listening comprehension. Similarly, the students' assessment of *Julie Tells* was also excellent. Thus, students had a highly positive experience with *Julie Tells* as it engages students in real-life scenarios, promoting attentive listening and enhancing their comprehension.

The integration of *Julie Tells* in the class positively impacted the students' listening comprehension levels. Consequently, the increase of students' scores in the posttest is associated with the positive learning experience of students to *Julie Tells*. Therefore, *Julie Tells* is helpful audio material for improving listening comprehension and the easy understanding of the lesson because of its comprehensive and contextualized content, convenience, and flexibility. However, the effectiveness of using audio instructional media in the classroom still depends on how the teacher integrates it and supports student learning.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the findings, the following are recommended:

- Teachers or developers may create an upgraded version of *Julie Tells* with better technicalities, especially in the strategic use of sound effects, to further stimulate students' interest and engagement.
- Teachers and/or developers may recommend that in developing audio media, pacing aligns with students' comprehension abilities and incorporates moments where students can pause, predict, or reflect, allowing them to actively engage with the content at their own pace.
- Teachers may be advised to emphasize improving students' critical listening comprehension by exposing them to audio media and listening activities designed to challenge their critical thinking.
- Teachers may be inspired to adopt and utilize *Julie Tells* in their English classes, exposing students to listening media to practice and improve their listening comprehension.
- Teachers may be encouraged to give students flexible learning plans that encourage them to design personalized schedules where they allocate specific times to focus on audio media, ensuring consistency without pressure.
- Future researchers are recommended to conduct a similar study with other locales, participants, and research designs to authenticate the study's results further.

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Innovative Approaches to English Didactics: Leveraging Blended Learning through Literature, Language, and Real-World Integration

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Abstract— Blended learning has emerged as a transformative approach in English didactics, integrating traditional teaching methods with digital tools to enhance language acquisition. This study explores the intersection of literature, language, and real-world applications in blended learning environments, emphasizing their role in fostering critical thinking, communication skills, and cultural understanding. By analyzing contemporary pedagogical strategies, this research highlights how literary texts serve as dynamic tools for language proficiency, enabling learners to engage with authentic linguistic and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the study examines the effectiveness of digital platforms in complementing traditional literature-based teaching methods, providing flexibility and accessibility in language education. Through a systematic review of previous studies and an assessment of innovative blended learning models, the findings underscore the significance of integrating literature and technology to create immersive, student-centred learning experiences. The study also addresses the challenges associated with balancing face-to-face instruction and online learning, emphasizing the need for teacher training and curriculum adaptation. The implications of this research extend to educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers, offering insights into optimizing English language teaching methodologies. By bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, blended learning emerges as a holistic approach that prepares learners for effective communication in both academic and professional settings.



Keywords— Blended Learning, English Didactics, Literature Integration, Digital Pedagogy, Language Acquisition, Real-World Learning

I. INTRODUCTION

The field of English didactics has undergone significant transformations, evolving from conventional classroom instruction to a more dynamic and technologically integrated approach. With the increasing emphasis on digital learning, blended learning has emerged as a crucial pedagogical strategy that combines face-to-face instruction with digital tools to create an interactive and flexible learning environment (Hrastinski, 2019). This approach not only enhances student engagement but also fosters deeper

language acquisition through a mix of literature, language exercises, and real-world applications.

Literature plays a pivotal role in language education, serving as both a medium for cultural exploration and a tool for linguistic proficiency. Literary texts—ranging from novels and poetry to plays and essays—offer learners authentic contexts for developing comprehension, analytical, and communicative skills (Shrum & Glisan, 2009). By integrating literature with digital learning methodologies, educators can provide a rich and immersive experience that bridges the gap between theoretical learning

and practical application (Mouza et al., 2022). The ability to analyze literature critically while engaging with digital resources fosters a comprehensive understanding of language and its socio-cultural implications.

Moreover, real-world applications of language learning have gained prominence in contemporary pedagogical frameworks. Task-based learning, role-playing, and digital simulations allow learners to apply their language skills in practical situations, reinforcing their communication abilities beyond traditional classroom settings (Bonk & Graham, 2006). The integration of blended learning approaches in English didactics ensures that students not only develop linguistic competence but also gain essential cognitive and social skills required in a globalized world.

This research aims to explore the effectiveness of blended learning in English didactics, particularly in leveraging literature and real-world applications to enhance language proficiency. The study examines how digital platforms complement traditional teaching methods, investigates the challenges faced by educators and learners, and offers insights into optimizing blended learning strategies for future educational advancements.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The evolution of English didactics has been influenced by various pedagogical theories and technological advancements. Blended learning, which integrates face-to-face instruction with digital tools, has gained prominence in language education due to its flexibility and effectiveness in enhancing learner engagement (Bonk & Graham, 2006). This section reviews key theoretical frameworks and empirical studies that highlight the role of literature, digital tools, and real-world applications in blended language learning.

Blended learning draws from multiple educational theories, including constructivism, which emphasizes learner-centred approaches, and connectivism, which underscores the role of digital technology in knowledge acquisition (Siemens, 2005). Constructivist principles advocate for interactive and experiential learning, where students construct meaning through engagement with literary texts, discussions, and digital resources (Hrastinski, 2019). Connectivism, on the other hand, recognizes the role of online networks and digital tools in facilitating language acquisition, allowing learners to access diverse linguistic resources and real-world communication scenarios (Mouza et al., 2022).

Literature serves as a crucial medium for language learning, enabling students to develop linguistic proficiency, cultural awareness, and critical thinking skills. Shrum and Glisan

(2009) argue that authentic literary texts expose learners to diverse linguistic structures, idiomatic expressions, and cultural contexts, fostering deeper language comprehension. Additionally, literary narratives provide meaningful engagement with language, encouraging students to explore character motivations, thematic elements, and historical influences (Hooks, 2009).

Research also suggests that integrating literature into blended learning models enhances student motivation and retention. In a comparative study by Zhang and Zhu (2018), students engaged in a literature-based blended learning environment demonstrated higher levels of engagement and comprehension than those in traditional lecture-based settings. The study highlighted the importance of interactive literary analysis, multimedia resources, and discussion forums in reinforcing language skills.

With advancements in educational technology, digital platforms such as virtual simulations, online discussion forums, and language learning apps have transformed traditional language education. Studies indicate that students benefit from digital resources that provide real-time feedback, personalized learning experiences, and multimedia content (Bonk et al., 2002). For example, language learners utilizing AI-powered chatbots and gamified learning modules exhibit improved vocabulary retention and pronunciation skills (Siemens, 2005).

Moreover, online platforms facilitate collaborative learning through peer discussions, literary analysis, and project-based activities. Hrastinski (2019) emphasizes that digital tools complement traditional teaching methods by offering students greater accessibility, flexibility, and opportunities for self-directed learning. However, challenges such as digital literacy gaps, technological disparities, and the need for teacher training must be addressed to optimize blended learning environments (Mouza et al., 2022).

Despite its advantages, blended learning presents challenges related to curriculum design, student engagement, and teacher preparedness. One primary concern is the need to balance face-to-face and online components to ensure effective pedagogical outcomes (Bonk & Graham, 2006). Additionally, disparities in access to digital resources can create barriers to equitable learning experiences, particularly in underprivileged educational settings (Hooks, 2009).

On the other hand, blended learning offers opportunities for personalization, adaptability, and real-world application. By integrating literature with digital tools, educators can create immersive learning environments that cater to diverse student needs and learning preferences. Future research should focus on developing best practices for blended language education, assessing long-term learning outcomes,

and refining digital tools for enhanced pedagogical effectiveness.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-method approach to investigate the effectiveness of blended learning in English didactics, particularly in integrating literature, language acquisition, and real-world applications. The methodology is designed to assess how blended learning models impact student engagement, linguistic proficiency, and critical thinking skills. Data collection includes both qualitative and quantitative methods, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

3.1 Research Design

A descriptive research design was adopted to explore the integration of literature and digital tools in blended language learning. The study examines the pedagogical effectiveness of various teaching strategies, including the use of literary texts, virtual learning platforms, and real-world linguistic tasks. Data were collected from secondary sources such as journal articles, case studies, and empirical research, as well as primary sources through participant surveys and observations.

3.2 Participants and Sampling

The study involved students and educators from higher education institutions where English is taught as a primary language. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who have experience with blended learning models. A total of 120 students and 30 instructors participated in this study, providing insights into their experiences with literature-based blended learning and digital teaching methods. The sample included students from various proficiency levels, ensuring diverse perspectives on the effectiveness of blended learning.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

3.3.1 Survey Questionnaires:

- Structured questionnaires were administered to students and educators to assess their experiences with blended learning.
- Questions focused on student engagement, comprehension of literary texts, and the effectiveness of digital tools in language learning.

3.3.2 Interviews and Focus Groups:

- Semi-structured interviews with instructors provided qualitative insights into teaching methodologies and the integration of digital platforms.

- Focus group discussions among students explored the perceived benefits and challenges of blended learning.

3.3.3 Content Analysis of Literary and Digital Resources:

- Selected literary texts (novels, short stories, poems) were analyzed for their role in enhancing linguistic competence.
- Digital tools such as learning management systems (LMS), interactive language applications, and multimedia resources were evaluated based on user engagement and language acquisition outcomes.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

- **Quantitative Analysis:** Descriptive statistics, such as mean scores and standard deviations, were used to analyze survey responses, measuring student engagement levels and comprehension improvements.
- **Qualitative Analysis:** Thematic analysis was employed to identify key patterns in interview responses and focus group discussions, highlighting recurring themes related to the effectiveness of blended learning strategies.
- **Comparative Analysis:** The performance of students exposed to blended learning was compared with those in traditional classroom settings to assess differences in learning outcomes.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

- Participants provided informed consent before taking part in surveys and interviews.
- Data confidentiality was maintained, ensuring anonymity in all responses.
- The study adhered to ethical guidelines set by institutional review boards, ensuring the responsible use of participant data.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study on the effectiveness of blended learning in English didactics, focusing on its integration with literature, language, and real-world applications. The results are based on survey responses, interviews, and comparative data analysis. The discussion interprets these findings in relation to existing literature and highlights their implications for educators and policymakers.

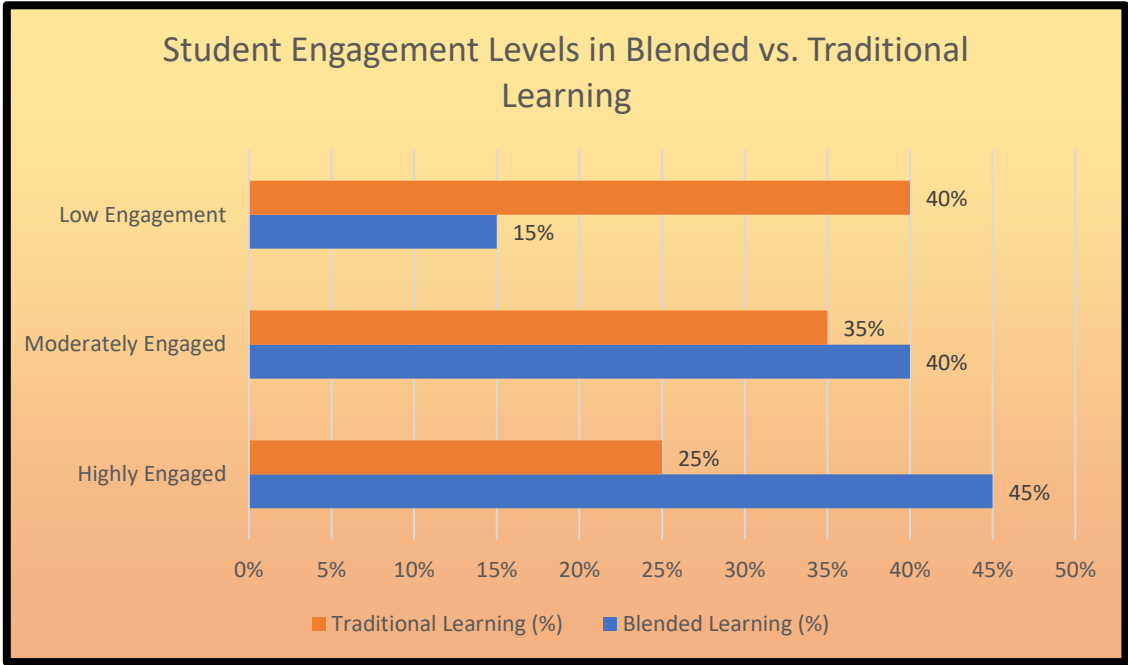
1.1 Student Engagement in Blended Learning Environments

Blended learning fosters higher engagement among students due to its interactive and flexible nature. The survey data (Table 1) show that 85% of students found blended learning more engaging than traditional methods, primarily due to the integration of digital platforms and literature-based discussions.

Table 1: Student Engagement Levels in Blended vs. Traditional Learning

Engagement Level	Blended Learning (%)	Traditional Learning (%)
Highly Engaged	45%	25%
Moderately Engaged	40%	35%
Low Engagement	15%	40%

The results indicate that blended learning significantly enhances engagement levels compared to traditional methods. The incorporation of literary texts in digital formats, such as e-books, audiobooks, and multimedia analysis, contributed to sustained interest in learning (Zhang & Zhu, 2018).



1.2 Impact on Language Proficiency

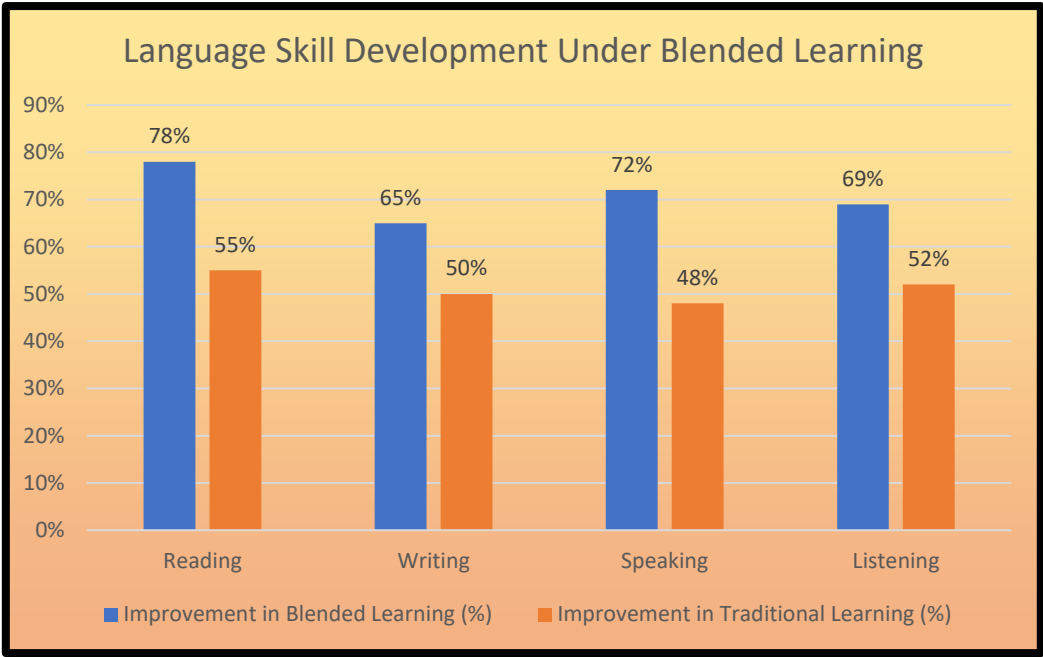
The study assessed improvements in key language skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—under blended learning models. The comparative performance of students (Table 2) reveals notable improvements, particularly in reading comprehension and speaking skills.

Table 2: Language Skill Development Under Blended Learning

Language Skill	Improvement in Blended Learning (%)	Improvement in Traditional Learning (%)
Reading	78%	55%

Writing	65%	50%
Speaking	72%	48%
Listening	69%	52%

The higher improvement rates in blended learning environments align with previous research emphasizing the role of interactive tools, peer discussions, and multimedia resources in enhancing language acquisition (Shrum & Glisan, 2009). Students reported that real-world language tasks, such as virtual debates and storytelling exercises, contributed to their confidence in speaking and comprehension.



1.3 Effectiveness of Literary-Based Digital Tools

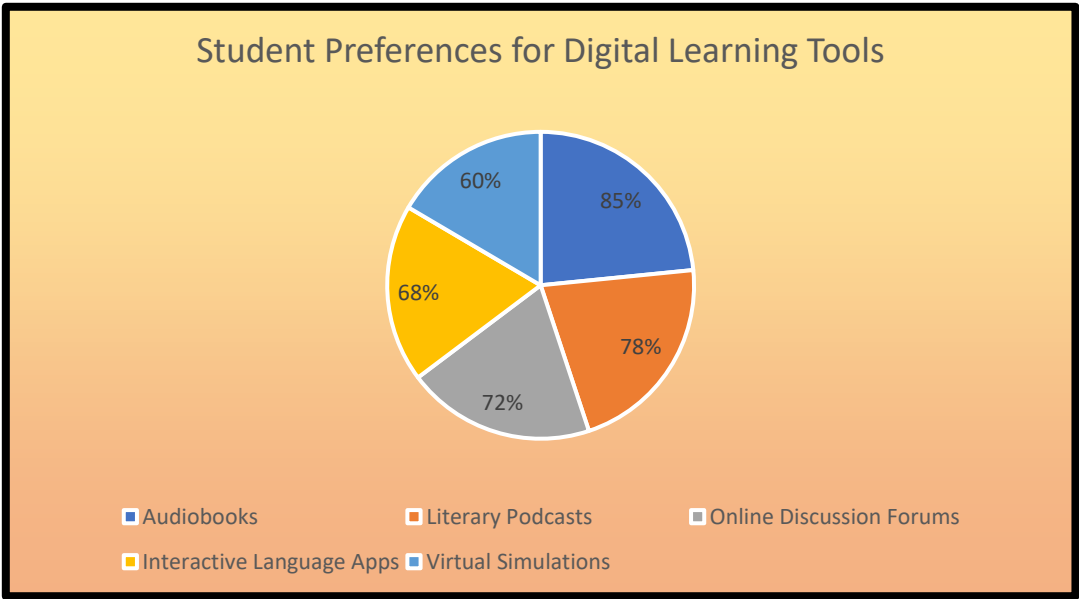
To evaluate the role of literature in blended learning, students were asked about their preferred digital tools for language learning. The results (Table 3) show that literary podcasts and audiobooks were the most effective digital tools for enhancing comprehension and pronunciation.

Table 3: Student Preferences for Digital Learning Tools

Digital Tool	Preference (%)	Effectiveness Rating (1-5)
Audiobooks	85%	4.7
Literary Podcasts	78%	4.5

Online Discussion Forums	72%	4.3
Interactive Language Apps	68%	4.2
Virtual Simulations	60%	4.0

The findings suggest that digital tools incorporating literature, such as audiobooks and literary podcasts, enhance student comprehension and engagement. These tools offer an immersive experience, allowing students to grasp pronunciation, tone, and contextual meanings more effectively than traditional textbook-based methods (Bonk & Graham, 2006).



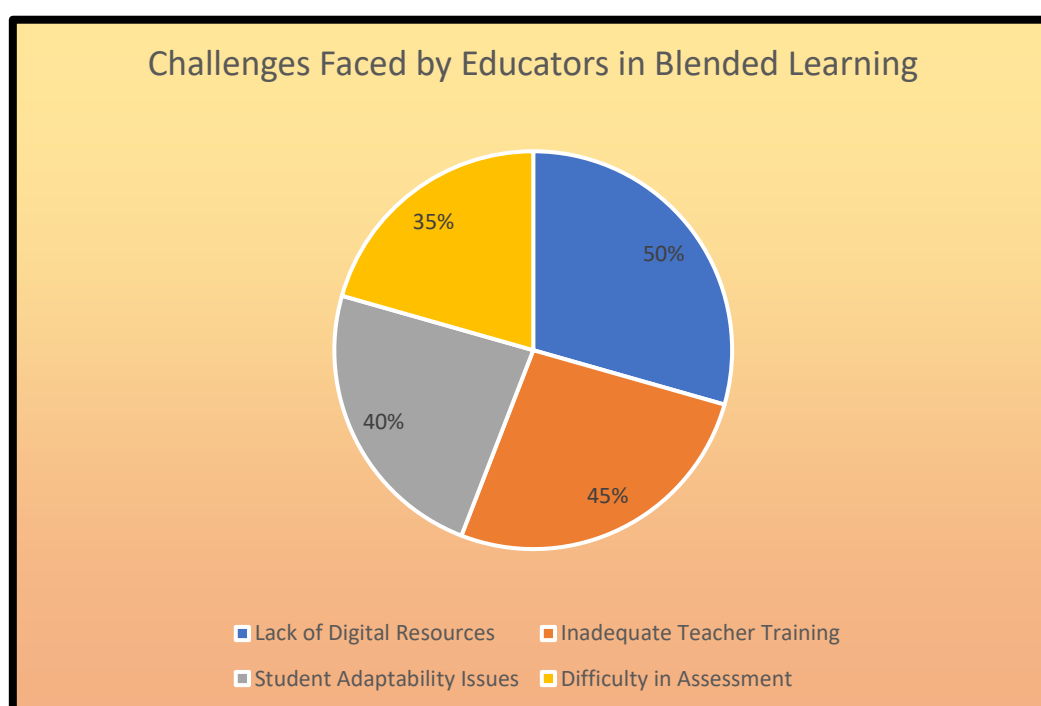
1.4 Challenges in Implementing Blended Learning

Despite its benefits, blended learning presents several challenges, including access to technology, teacher training, and balancing online and offline components. Survey responses (Table 4) highlight the most significant obstacles reported by educators.

Table 4: Challenges Faced by Educators in Blended Learning

Challenge	Percentage of Educators Reporting (%)
Lack of Digital Resources	50%
Inadequate Teacher Training	45%
Student Adaptability Issues	40%
Difficulty in Assessment	35%

These challenges indicate the need for institutional support in providing digital resources and professional training for educators. Teacher adaptability to blended learning remains a critical factor in ensuring its success (Hrastinski, 2019).



1.5 Future Considerations for Blended Learning

- **Improving Access to Digital Resources:** Institutions should invest in e-learning infrastructure to support interactive learning.
- **Enhanced Teacher Training Programs:** Workshops and certifications in blended learning pedagogies can help educators integrate digital tools effectively.
- **Student-Centered Learning Strategies:** Personalized learning paths and real-world applications should be emphasized for deeper engagement.

- **Evaluation Frameworks:** Developing assessment methods that integrate both online and offline learning progress.

V. CHALLENGES AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

While blended learning has proven to be an effective approach in English didactics, its implementation is not without challenges. Issues such as digital access disparities, teacher adaptability, and maintaining student motivation require strategic solutions. This section discusses the key challenges identified in the study and outlines future considerations for optimizing blended learning models.

5.1 Challenges in Blended Learning Implementation

A. Digital Divide and Accessibility Issues

One of the most significant barriers to blended learning is the unequal access to digital resources. As seen in Table 4 (Results & Discussion), 50% of educators reported a lack of sufficient digital infrastructure, especially in underprivileged institutions. Students from economically weaker sections often lack access to high-speed internet, digital devices, or learning management systems (LMS), creating disparities in participation and learning outcomes (Bonk & Graham, 2006).

B. Teacher Training and Pedagogical Adaptation

Despite the increasing adoption of technology in education, 45% of educators indicated difficulties in adapting to blended learning due to insufficient training programs. Many educators are accustomed to traditional classroom methodologies and may struggle to effectively integrate digital tools, interactive platforms, and student-centred learning models (Hrastinski, 2019).

C. Student Engagement and Self-Regulation

Blended learning demands a higher level of self-regulation and time management skills from students. Survey findings indicate that 40% of students faced difficulties in maintaining motivation and engagement in online learning. Unlike conventional classroom environments where instructors can directly monitor progress, students in digital settings often experience distractions, leading to inconsistent learning patterns and reduced interaction (Zhang & Zhu, 2018).

D. Balancing Online and Offline Learning Components

A crucial challenge in blended learning is finding the right balance between online and face-to-face learning. 35% of educators expressed concerns about effectively structuring blended courses, particularly in determining the proportion of online vs. in-person instruction. If digital learning dominates, it may lead to a lack of direct teacher-student interaction, while excessive face-to-face learning may underutilize digital advantages (Siemens, 2005).

5.2 Future Considerations for Enhancing Blended Learning

A. Ensuring Equitable Access to Digital Resources

- Governments and institutions must invest in expanding digital infrastructure, providing students with access to affordable internet and digital devices.
- Implementing mobile-based learning solutions can help bridge gaps for students with limited computer access.

- Open-access platforms with free educational resources should be promoted to enhance inclusivity in digital learning.

B. Enhancing Teacher Training and Professional Development

- Institutions should integrate blended learning methodologies into teacher training programs, ensuring that educators are proficient in digital tools.
- Workshops and certification courses on virtual classroom management, interactive e-learning tools, and AI-powered language learning apps should be encouraged.
- Collaborative learning among educators should be promoted to exchange best practices and challenges in blended teaching.

C. Implementing Student-Centered Learning Strategies

- Gamification techniques (such as interactive quizzes, storytelling exercises, and role-playing games) can enhance student motivation and engagement.
- Personalized learning paths should be designed, allowing students to progress at their own pace and receive adaptive feedback.
- Integrating real-world applications (such as virtual debates, literary podcasts, and online discussion forums) can bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical usage.

D. Developing Effective Assessment and Feedback Mechanisms

- Current evaluation methods should be restructured to include digital assessments, portfolio-based evaluations, and interactive language tasks.
- AI-powered feedback tools can provide instant corrections and language proficiency assessments, helping students track their learning progress.
- Blended assessment strategies should combine traditional exams, online assignments, and real-world language application tasks for a comprehensive evaluation.

E. Encouraging Research on Long-term Effects of Blended Learning

- More longitudinal studies should be conducted to assess the long-term impact of blended learning on language proficiency, critical thinking, and employability.

- Future research should examine cross-cultural implementations of blended learning, particularly in multilingual societies.
- The role of AI and emerging technologies (such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR)) in English didactics should be further explored.

VI. CONCLUSION

Blended learning has emerged as a dynamic and innovative approach in English didactics, effectively integrating literature, language acquisition, and real-world applications to enhance student engagement and proficiency. This study highlights how the combination of digital tools and literary analysis fosters a deeper understanding of language, improves communication skills, and enriches critical thinking. By bridging traditional and technology-driven methodologies, blended learning offers a holistic educational framework that meets the evolving needs of modern learners.

The findings reveal that students exposed to blended learning models demonstrate higher engagement, improved language proficiency, and better comprehension of literary texts compared to those in traditional classroom settings. Interactive tools such as audiobooks, literary podcasts, discussion forums, and AI-based feedback systems play a crucial role in making language learning more accessible and engaging. Moreover, real-world applications—including virtual debates, role-playing, and task-based learning—significantly enhance learners' ability to apply language skills beyond academic settings.

However, challenges such as digital accessibility, teacher preparedness, and student self-regulation persist, highlighting the need for institutional support, structured teacher training programs, and personalized learning strategies. Ensuring equitable access to digital tools, refining assessment methodologies, and promoting adaptive learning techniques will be critical for the future success of blended learning models.

Moving forward, future research should explore the long-term impacts of blended learning, particularly in multilingual and cross-cultural educational contexts. Additionally, advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), and Augmented Reality (AR) present new opportunities for further enhancing digital language education.

By continuously evolving and integrating emerging technologies with traditional learning methodologies, blended learning can revolutionize English didactics,

offering a flexible, inclusive, and effective model for language education in the 21st century.

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Respond with Endless Ways—On Xunzi's “Change” Philosophy and Its Highly Effective Management

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Abstract— *In the Warring States turmoil, Xunzi urgently wished to rebuild an orderly, coordinated, and harmonious society. However, Xunzi also knew that in a great and ever-changing era, no person, however wise or intelligent, can predict the future situation. This being the case, “responsiveness” is very important because only by adapting to changes can we survive in this ever-changing situation. It is not difficult to notice that Xunzi would often mention “responsiveness” and believed that responsiveness is not only an ability that must be cultivated but also a key factor for the survival of a country. Therefore, Xunzi further put forward related proposals, such as adaptation, transformation, and adaptation through righteousness, which enriched the philosophical connotation of “change.” Just as Shang Yang emphasized reform, Xunzi also advocated using “change” to become stronger. In addition, Xunzi believed not only that it is important to improve efficiency to upgrade a country’s operations but also that it is just as important to maintain stability and ethics. Therefore, in the promotion of “change,” “ritual,” “righteousness,” and “knowledge” are important and indispensable elements. Xunzi’s manner of governance emphasizes culture, on the one hand, and efficiency, on the other. Overall, it is a manifestation of highly effective performance. Therefore, this paper argues that Xunzi’s idea of “change” has a substantial connection with modern management philosophy, is of practical value, and highlights the school of management characteristic of Confucianism.*



Keywords— *Xunzi, Responsiveness, Adaptation through righteousness, Change management, Confucian management philosophy*

I. INTRODUCTION

Life cannot be without groups. Confucianism belongs to a human philosophy that emphasizes both commitments and responsibilities to the human world. The era in which Xunzi lived was much more challenging than those in

which Confucius and Mencius lived. This led to Xunzi’s novel expositions that emphasized efficiency and usefulness. It also let Xunzi’s outer kingliness emphasize “effectiveness”. In terms of modern management, the term relates to highly effective management. High efficiency

reflects fast speed, and high effectiveness reflects being both fast and good. However, how could Xunzi really make a country run fast and well? A key strategy was to live a highly intensive and frequently changing life—that is, to embrace a philosophy of change. It is not difficult to notice that in the last years of the Warring States period through the eve of the Qin Dynasty, the strange and volatile atmosphere reveals the origin of Xunzi's elevated demand for the concept of "change." In the text of *Xunzi*, the words "responsiveness, adaptation, transformation, complete change, extreme change, and all types of change, etc." outpace their use by all other thinkers of his time. So, to some extent, Xunzi realized that the world is changing and that irreversible changes are bound to be ushered in. Thus, people (and especially managers) must act, and there can be no survival without change. As modern business management says, "The world has constantly been changing," and "change is an inevitable thing." Businesses must constantly bring about changes to management to ensure their survival and development.

Xunzi believed that managing oneself and even one's country is an important matter. Therefore, he repeatedly mentioned his methods of governance in his opinions. Xunzi also believed that people do not need to be skilled in agriculture, industry, and commerce to manage agriculture, industry, and commerce. Instead, he thought that a person could use "the Way" to examine things, thereby allowing the individual to "manage myriad things". "To be an official is to manage" (*The Correct Meanings of the Book of Rites – The Rule of a True King*). This shows that Xunzi was well-versed in management approaches. Although Xunzi's management approach focuses on the political aspect, politics itself includes multiple factors, such as the economy, organization, and system. That is, from managing a person to managing a country, all need the wisdom of management. As Cheng wrote, "The development of ancient management was grounded in culture. In the modern age, due to the Industrial

Revolution, the prominence of goals, and the pursuit of results, management played a very important role in economic development. Cultural management in ancient times played a big role in politics and other fields, while modern management is obviously focusing on economic development goal". Although the environments in ancient times were different from today's environments, this does not mean that modern management can do without cultural foundations. On the contrary, modern management philosophy requires a greater cultural goal to improve human life. Therefore, Cheng also noted that philosophical management should be the integration of culture and science and the integration of the humanities and economy. The academic community has already discussed the combination of traditional culture and modern management. They have coincidentally paid attention to the topics of Confucianism and management philosophy. For instance, Liu's *Chinese Confucian Management Thoughts*, Zhu's *Confucian Management Philosophy: Leaders of a Dreamland*, Zeng's *Chinese-Style Management*, and Cheng's *C Theory: Management Philosophy in the Book of Changes* and Li's *Confucian Business Wisdom* all highlight the wisdom of Confucian management. Most of the academic research has focused on the *Analects of Confucius* and the *Book of Changes*, yielding fruitful results.

However, in elucidating a management philosophy that emphasizes both economic efficiency and humanistic concern, this paper maintains that Xunzi serves as a quality and key entry point into Confucian management philosophy. It can even be said that, of the Confucians, Xunzi is the one who placed the greatest emphasis on management philosophy. In the book known as the *Xunzi*, the meaning of management is often referred to by such words as "governance," "management," and "administration," whose meanings are interchangeable. This may be the reflection of his thinking about management consciousness. Moreover, the philosophy of

Xunzi is exactly in line with the needs of modern management. It can respond to fast-changing societies, enhancing itself on the one hand and governing people on the other. This is because Xunzi lived in the final years of the Warring States Period. On the eve of the Grand Unification, all the states were striving to govern the country with the most effective principles of governance for the country. Moreover, at that time, Shang Yang's reforms had made the Qin State the most powerful one. Based on several questions—e.g., "type of discourse could challenge Legalists?" and "What type of method could make the country more robust and more combative?"—Xunzi managed to put forward stronger propositions than those provided by Confucius and Mencius and attempted to emphasize the importance of "change" without breaking the Confucian spirit. The questions became how to bring about change that would be rapid and positive, and how to continuously change to maintain the momentum of said change. These aspects needed to be considered simultaneously. For Xunzi, improving efficiency was key, but stability and ethics were also very important. Therefore, in advocating for "change," "ritual," "righteousness," and "knowledge" became indispensable elements. Therefore, Xunzi's philosophy of change emphasized a highly effective role. If placed in the contemporary context, the philosophy would be represented by a moral economy that emphasizes corporate ethics and belongs to the category of highly effective management. Therefore, this paper posits that Xunzi's idea of "change" provides a powerful inspiration for management philosophy. This philosophy reflects not only those concepts particular to Xunzi's system but also a Confucian-style management method, which manifests a management theory with Chinese characteristics.

II. RESPONSIVENESS AND ADAPTATION: POWER OF CHANGE AHEAD OF CHANGE

With emphasis on civilization and its teachings,

Xunzi believed that through continuous evolution, people could develop towards goodness: "Sages accumulate thoughts, learn from ancient sages to produce rituals and righteousness, and generate law." In other words, Xunzi argued that the reason why a sage is a sage is due to "accumulation" and "learning." Therefore, Xunzi advocated for learning from contemporary kings, rather than from ancient kings. This perspective shows that Xunzi attended to the progress of human society and culture and placed emphasis on the investigation of personal affairs as well as on accumulated learning. The Confucian concept of history shaped by Xunzi reflects a multi-level, multi-faceted, spiraling human phenomenon with profound time awareness. Time is a dynamic process in which people cannot avoid the feeling of change or cannot escape from the impact of change. Therefore, Xunzi believed that "change" is a normal state and that people should not ignore change or refuse to change. This is to say, they should be "responsive." For example, Xunzi wrote: "Myriad things will gather what is appropriate for them. When there are changes in circumstances, one will generate an appropriate response" ("The Achievements of the Ru", *Xun Zi*); "Myriad things will gather what is appropriate to them. When there are changes in circumstances, one will generate an appropriate response. From above, one will obtain the aid of Heaven's seasons; from below, one will reap Earth's benefits; and in the middle, one will take in harmony among mankind. Then, wealth and goods will flow forth as if from a spring, surge like rivers or seas, and pile up like hills and mountains, so that if one does not burn some of them from time to time, one will have no place to store them" ("Enrich the State," *Xun Zi*); and "The character of a true king is that he regulates his every move with ritual and righteousness. He hears and decides cases in accordance with laws, sees through things inside out, and has endless ways to respond. This is called having the foundation for governance" ("The Rule of a True King," *Xun Zi*). From these documents,

"change" is often combined with "respond," and "respond" is a verb that explicitly expresses people's active subjectivity and aggressiveness.

However, Xunzi's understanding of "response" does not stop here. He also believes that people should move from passive adaptation to active change and development for the future. Therefore, apart from responding to emergencies, "response" must be consciously cultivated as one capability. That is, "response" itself is a quality of Confucianism and a character requirement of a gentleman, as described in the saying "He (the true gentleman) relaxes without becoming indolent and works hard without carelessness. He follows the true fount to adapt to changes and in everything obtains what is fitting. When and only when he is thus, is he a sage" ("Against the Twelve Masters," *Xun Zi*). "... In handling dangers and responding to changes, he does everything appropriately. He shifts and moves with the times. He bends and straightens with the age. Through a thousand acts and then thousands of changes, his way remains one and the same. Such is the model of a great Confucian" ("The Achievements of the Ru," *Xun Zi*). He who deserves to be called a great Confucian or a great sage should be able to respond to changes appropriately without making mistakes. It is not difficult to see that the idea of "change" occupies an important position in Xunzi's proposition. A rough comparison with Mencius will make it easy to see where Xunzi's unique features lie. For Mencius, the image of a man of character is "Neither riches nor honors can corrupt him, neither poverty nor lowly condition can make him swerve from principles, and neither threats nor force can bend him." Mencius raises high the dignity for human beings and discusses the character of the people based on this. Although Mencius also talks about the issue of "power," it is clear that in the moral glory of people, there is limited emphasis on the ability to adapt to "change of power." In contrast, Xunzi clearly defines a personality trait of a great Confucian—"responding to changes

appropriately". In other words, Xunzi places more emphasis on man's achievement and vision in the real environment. As Chen wrote, "Xunzi apparently believes that with 'great momentum,' it is still not sufficient" and that there must be "flexibility, thus equipping 'Confucian' with another feature, namely, 'responding to changes appropriately'".

Xunzi likely expected to see more clearly the problems of the human world and intentionally put the identity of the "Great Confucian" in the spirit of the times up for consideration. Therefore, it is always necessary to grasp truth and change constantly in the changing reality. Xunzi wrote about "complete change" not only to propose endless changes in the grand environment but also to enable us to have the ability to change in the face of changes. Therefore, we can see that Xunzi fine-tuned his words in his choice of them. He talked about "responding to changes appropriately" and later changed the wording to say, "Responding to changes with righteousness, so you know it's appropriate" ("Nothing Improper," *Xun Zi*). It can be reasonably inferred that Xunzi had consciously or unconsciously considered "change" to be an ability to adapt to the current situation and further required people to take the initiative to respond to changes. As one master of management, Peter F. Drucker, put it, "One cannot manage change. One can only be ahead of it." In other words, we cannot sit still in the face of change. Otherwise, we will be forced to change or be eliminated. We also find that human society has often passed the tests of the times by "responding to changes," which has become the key for survival. Not only that, but for highly competitive companies, in addition to responding to changes, they must take the initiative in responding to the changes because they need to be ahead of the changes and push the company's success to the future. This means that the management with the power of change can promote efficient operation and create a continuous flow of creativity to enable the country or company to survive and

succeed. This viewpoint shows that the "adaptation" ideology proposed by Xunzi is revealing the possibility of giving birth to a change.

III. RITUAL AND KNOWLEDGE: HARMONIOUS CHANGE AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Xunzi believes that people must have the ability to respond to changes and even take the initiative to be ahead of change and change the situation. However, response itself is a difficult task. It is necessary to analyze, judge, and make correct decisions in a grey area. Moreover, it is not uncommon to hear the damage brought about by changes. It is the goal of highly effective management to avoid rough and rushing responses in the process of change and achieve the desired performance. The "response" is the most difficult at the time of peace because the crisis will bring about inevitable changes. However, under normal circumstances, people are accustomed to this type of situation, which contributes easily to its evolution into long-term consolidation and stagnation. Therefore, it is very important to reach a consensus, reduce the damage caused by the change, and sustain the responses. Based on this, this paper holds that the rituals and the theory of knowledge proposed by Xunzi can provide guidance and inspiration exactly for this purpose.

Xunzi takes rituals as the core, emphasizing the norm and law. The rituals mentioned by Xunzi are extensive, ranging from country governance to self-cultivation and even to all living standards. This means that the rituals have their special characteristics in Xunzi's thoughts. In addition to the external system, there are also corresponding human emotions (common feelings, common sense). Xunzi says, "Deep indeed is the pattern of ritual!" and "In every case, ritual begins in that which must be released, reaches full development in giving it proper form, and finishes in providing it satisfaction" (Discourse on Ritual, *Xunzi*). These two quotes show that when

people practice rituals, they are satisfied and happy because a ritual represent the corresponding internal emotions in people and is quite in line with common sense. That's why people are willing to practice rituals and righteousness, or to regulate themselves with rituals and righteousness. In the long run, the practice of rituals and righteousness "provides satisfaction." Obviously, rituals touch human nature and social care, so the formulation and function of rituals echo the human nature. On the other hand, "rituals" are also criteria for interpersonal relationships, "Ritual is that which the ruler of men uses as the yardstick and test for his various subjects, and then the classes of people are marked out completely." ("The Achievements of the Ru," *Xunzi*) "When the positions of lord and minister, father and son, older brother and younger brother, husband and wife all begin and then end, end and then begin again; when they are part of the same order with Heaven and Earth, and persist as long as the myriad generations—this is called the great root" ("The Rule of a True King," *Xunzi*). It is known from the foregoing that the rituals of human relations are the natural and justified human emotions and are also the foundation of Xunzi's ideal humanistic order. Then, go back and continue to ask: In the network of groups, how does "ritual" come true? And how do individuals agglomerate into a group? This can be understood through the interpretation of rituals by Xunzi:

"Ritual cuts off what is too long and extends what is too short. It subtracts from what is excessive and adds to what is insufficient. It achieves proper form for love and respect, and it brings to perfection the beauty of carrying out righteousness." ("Discourse on Rituals," *Xunzi*)

"When people are born, the beginnings of these two dispositions are originally present in them. If you cut these dispositions short and extend them, broaden them and narrow them, add to them and subtract from them, make them conform to their proper classes and fully express them, make them abundant and beautify them, it causes

root and branch, beginning and end, all to go smoothly and fit together; then, they can serve as the model for ten thousand ages—such is just what ritual does!” (“Discourse on Rituals,” *Xunzi*)

“In it, the fundamental and the secondary accord with each other, and the beginning and end match each other. In its differentiations of things, it is the utmost in patterning. In its explanations, it is the utmost in keen discernment.” (“Discourse on Rituals,” *Xunzi*)

Xunzi believed that ritual could be the result of personal contact with groups through mutual adjustments. Therefore, ritual cuts off what is too long and extends what is too short, broadens them and narrows them. It subtracts from what is excessive and adds to what is insufficient. It achieves proper form for love and respect, and it brings to perfection the beauty of carrying out righteousness.... From all these intersecting trials comes out the ritual of the fundamental and the secondary according to each other and beginning and ending with each other. Therefore, rituals can make everyone feel its rationality and the joy of “satisfaction in finishing.” It is fair to say that Xunzi abandoned the compulsory restraint of governing people with rituals, believing that the ritual should be the result of everyone using their own emotion and reasoning to infer others’ emotion and reasoning. Because of this, the practice of ritual is very likely to come true. Then, as mentioned above, changes in the organization that tend to bring harm are less likely to occur in the ritualized environment. This is because emphasis on “rituals” entails respect for everyone's voice, and there will be good communication, system procedures, and proper arrangements. This leads us to believe that emphasis on “rituals” often brings about good changes; in other words, we can also use “rituals” to define what is a “good” change.

The above refers to the principle behind a ritual. However, outside the ritual itself, there are external systems and normative issues. Deep, indeed, is the pattern

of rituals, meaning that the principle and spirit of rituals are in accordance with righteousness; in terms of the ritual system, every time the ritual system is put into practice, there must also be a dynamic process to make adjustments, so that rituals keep with the times. Xunzi believes that keeping the ritual system reasonable is a manifestation of a wise man or a sage. For example, “If one truly comprehends it, one is a sage,” and “To understand it is to be a sage” (“The Achievements of the Ru”, *Xun Zi*). The sages, who can perceive the thoughts and thoroughly grasp the unifying categories of things, can therefore make appropriate changes and correct judgments. It is not difficult to find that Xunzi paid special attention to the heart, and the heart has more than just cognitive significance, “The heart has the power to judge its awareness” (“Correct Naming,” *Xun Zi*), “The heart is born and has awareness. With awareness, there comes awareness of differences. These differences are known at the same time” (“Undoing Fixation,” *Xun Zi*); the heart also has the function of thoughtful selection and judgment, “When there is a certain disposition and the heart makes a choice on its behalf, this is referred to as deliberation. When the heart reflects and one’s abilities act on it, this is referred to as deliberate effort.” (“Correct Naming,” *Xun Zi*) All in all, the heart is thought of as an organ for thinking. In contemporary interpretations, it is “selection of awareness”—that is to say, when stimulated, apart from passive reception, awareness can also make active choices.

Based on this, Xunzi’s argument that “in each method of controlling the qi and nourishing the heart, nothing is more direct than following the rituals” (“Cultivating Oneself,” *Xun Zi*) can be understood in two dimensions. First, strengthening the heart needs to be achieved through “ritual and righteousness”; to some extent, the heart also plays a role in understanding whether the “ritual system” is reasonable. The relationship between the heart and the ritual and righteousness is a process of continuous accumulation. As rituals are not always reasonable and

appropriate, it is necessary to eliminate those inappropriate rituals through the heart; then, one must reconsider and define what "ritual" is and then reproduce it. The significance of this is as follows. Only when the people living under the norms maintain their speculative power will the norms make sense. Norms are not permanent and must be neither reviewed according to the situation so that they will neither be rigid nor become dogmatic rituals that destroy human life. Only by maintaining a clear, speculative power can we discover the problems of the system and then change the system at the right time, "causing each person to carry out his proper task and each to attain his proper place" ("On Honor and Disgrace," *Xun Zi*).

Xunzi notes that the sages, who know "time" and "situation," also know the feelings of myriad things, so they can provide norms according to the circumstances. In other words, the practice of ritual is the appropriate practice of the heart being exposed to actual affairs. If the ritual system is separated from the concrete facts, and if the current affairs are ignored, with attention paid only to the ritual, thereby treating the rite as an invariable law, it will lead to "judging things based on rituals" or even "destroying human life with rituals." Therefore, maintaining the vitality of the heart and sensitivity to the external environment will be a very important issue. It is therefore understood that Xunzi's ritual must be linked with the heart. This part alone provides some inspirations for contemporary management. For managers, it is required that they take a serious look at immediate changes because it is usually a long-term task and challenge, but the problem is that change awareness does not always exist. Due to habits, people will gradually lose their sensitivity to the environment unconsciously, leading to no growth in themselves or their business. Therefore, it is necessary for people to be aware of it through norms or to constantly reflect and perceive it within the system. Therefore, the "ritual" and "heart" proposed by Xunzi are the best

solutions to this dilemma. That means the practice of rituals will in turn enhance the understanding of the heart, constantly test the external environment, and maintain high sensitivity, so that the ability to "respond" becomes a strategic advantage. Moreover, such an advantage is forward-looking because it turns the effort to cope with changes in the broader environment to continuous proactive effort and accumulation; as Martin Luther King put it, "The change is not happening because it cannot be avoided, but through continuous efforts."

To summarize, we can use the "ritual" to define what a good change is. That is, in the group, consideration is given to each member's feelings, and through thorough communication and expansion of the vision, each member can recognize change and take action to achieve moderate gradual changes. Moreover, people's recognition of "ritual" is key to moderating change. On the other hand, it is by no means easy to make continuous changes because of human inertia. Once the system is on track, people are often reluctant to change, which is, however, very dangerous. Randy Pennington once borrowed the words of the American comedian Will Rogers to describe the danger: "Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there." This fully shows that people must constantly keep pace with the times and transcend themselves; otherwise, they will be eliminated. So, it is a necessity for managers to sustain accumulation and maintain sensitivity to or discomfiture about the external environment. Now, we will find that Xunzi's proposition about "ritual and knowledge" can encourage people to speculate and think about change in the face of the normative ritual system, that is, to speculate and respond to the norms. This is because the norms themselves are not necessarily rigid; instead, it is people who are rigid. Therefore, the sustained responses will lead to success under constant practice to find positive meanings.

IV. THE ABILITY TO TRANSFORM: MAINTAIN

BALANCE IN INHERITANCE AND CHANGE

In addition to response and adaptation, Xunzi also proposes another important concept: transformation. "Transformation" has a higher level of requirements. It can unify rituals and righteousness into a cohesive system: "He follows the true fount to adapt to changes, and in everything obtains what is fitting. When and only when he is thus, is he a sage" ("Against the Twelve Masters," *Xun Zi*). Xunzi believes that the thought process of sages differs from that of ordinary people. Ordinary people's thought processes stay at the level of knowing the norms of rituals and righteousness, whereas the thought processes of sages accords with the Way. Therefore, they can "see through things inside out, and have endless ways to respond." This reflects Xunzi's understanding of "cognition" and "the Way." Xunzi says, "As for the Way itself, its substance is constant, yet it covers all changes. No one corner is sufficient to exhibit it fully. People of twisted understanding observe one corner of the Way and are unable to recognize it as such" ("Undoing Fixation," *Xun Zi*). The difference between "people of twisted understanding" and "people of complete understanding" lies in that the latter know the Way; thus, they can transform. Although there is no direct mention of the expression "transform" in the book *Xunzi*, "thoroughly" in "grasping thoroughly the unifying categories of things" is just the ability to "respond appropriately."

In other words, as long as "the heart" is integrated with "the Way," people can, like the sages, master the principle of change cycle and further secure the world. However, it is not easy to integrate the heart with the Way unless you have cultivated the skill of "emptiness, single-mindedness, and stillness." "Emptiness" means not letting one's existing knowledge stand in the way of accepting new knowledge; "single-mindedness" means focused dedication and not letting one idea harm another idea; "stillness" means calmness and serenity, and not

letting dreams and worries disorder one's understanding. The meaning of the whole sentence is as follows: The heart must have space to accept new knowledge and not let existing knowledge prevent new knowledge from being accepted. Because the heart is constantly moving, often exposed to information disturbance, and causing disorderly thoughts and confusion, so must stillness be maintained to absorb and choose information and to summarize knowledge. In the end, with persistent focus, the ability to discern and differentiate will be gained. In other words, despite their cognitive abilities, people are prone to mistakes without cultivating the skill of emptiness, single-mindedness, and stillness, and they can get lost in the noisiness of information—i.e., it is easy to judge mistakes and become lost in broadness of information. If this is the case, it is impossible to judge the situation as a changing one. Conversely, if the heart grasps the unifying categories of things, it can cope with "all changes with the same substance." As mentioned before, "knowledge" in the management philosophy of "response" represents the correctness and forward-looking nature of thinking and judgment. It often determines whether a manager can make correct decisions. Therefore, Xunzi believes that "knowledge" is very important, and "thorough knowledge" is the key factor in creating the future during turbulent times.

"Knowing thoroughly about the Way provides endless ways to respond." In the face of the various changes in the global situation, only those who know the Way can balance their responses appropriately. That is to say, in "the desirable and the undesirable, beginning and end, near and far, broad and shallow, ancient and contemporary," all the things can be balanced. Obviously, Xunzi does not think of "the Way" in the sense of transcending and eliminating contradictions but rather in the sense of obtaining the Way through adjustment in the interactions between contradictory parties. This fully proves that Xunzi's understanding of the Way is similar to that of

philosophical management. Just as the "expert in the Way" mentioned previously can "govern myriad things," a manager must be a person who weighs considerations practically, carries out strategic thinking, identifies models, and then responds accordingly. Looking further, the most important judgment for managers of change is making a balanced decision situated between inheritance and reform. The manager sees the overall structure instead of focusing on something that is isolated.

In other words, although Xunzi puts great emphasis on "change," he will not blindly demand reform and change but rather will seek an appropriate approach between change and no change, and between inheritance and reform. As stated in "The Rule of a True King," for "keeping equality via unequal treatment," there must be a reasonable "middle" between "equality" and "inequality." Under a seemingly contradictory conflict, adoption of an unbiased middle road shows a perfect balance so that it can apply to different and even opposite things. Xunzi apparently has discovered the complexity of the changes and the differences brought about by the changes. Therefore, he argues that the Way must be used to balance things and that the middle road must be followed to make thorough changes and respond to said changes. As stated in "Xi Ci" from *The Book of Changes*, "Firmness and softness work on each other, and change happens in the process."

It can be inferred from here that Xunzi's proposition seems to imply the management dynamics of dual existence. In the contemporary management field, many books have proposed dynamic competitions. Most of them think that a company must establish a duality-based organization to build its competitiveness. That is, for companies that have maintained sustained success, the secret is to establish the opposite department within the company at the same time: namely, the current model (also known as the utilization model) and the exploratory model coexist. The current model maintains stability and revenue,

and it has no tolerance for mistakes; the exploratory model develops unknown areas and encourages mistakes so that early learning of lessons can help reduce costs and stay ahead of competitors. Therefore, for a manager, continuous integration between the current and exploratory models will create a continuously growing company. In other words, a successful company will inevitably have two different positions, allowing managers to figure out the right solution from the integration between stability and change and to maintain with sustainability what is unsustainable.

Although Xunzi did not truly originate the concept of dynamic competitiveness in modern management, Xunzi did comprehensively take into consideration the contradictory opposites of "the desirable and the undesirable, beginning and end, near and far, broad and shallow, ancient and contemporary," and so on, and advocates for "weighing both sides and reckoning them thoroughly" ("Nothing Improper," *Xunzi*). It shows that "weighing" itself means finding the "Middle Road". For Xunzi, the Middle Road, weighing on changes and transformation are synonyms and are conceptually interchangeable, and those who can grasp this principle must be sages and gentlemen. They cultivate themselves and make others happy, just like a good manager, who can adapt to various conditions in the enterprise, reconcile various forces, and make management more effective.

V. RULE WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS: THE PURSUIT OF THE ROAD TO JUSTICE

Like the ultimate concern of Confucianism, Xunzi emphasizes moral ideals and proposes the idea of "adaptation through righteousness." Cua wrote, "What 'righteousness' conveys is a type of ability that allows us to know how to be reasonable and how to be suitable in a particular situation". This shows that in the proposition of Xunzi, "righteousness" is the ultimate guiding principle of the philosophy of responding to changes. What exactly is

the meaning of "righteousness"? What is its role in contemporary management? This section divides "righteousness" into two levels. The first is "taking profit from righteousness" and looking at the long-term interests from the moral dilemma. The second is "rule with righteousness." Business management should pursue the choice of the road to justice.

As a pragmatic philosopher, Xunzi notes that "now people's nature is such that they are born with a fondness for profit in them" (Human Nature Is Bad). Xunzi believes that by aggressively creating a desirable position, those seeking profits and avoiding harm may produce a drive to spur themselves and make themselves better. Therefore, Xunzi, who has deep understanding of human nature, appeals for consistency in the distribution of virtue, position, and salary, stating, "One's virtue must have a matching position, and one's position must have a matching salary, and one's salary must have matching uses. The officers on up must be regulated by ritual and music. The masses and commoners must be controlled by legal arrangements" (Enrich the State, *Xun Zi*). This approach uses position and salary as a reward to recognize directly those with moral merits in society. Based on this, we cannot deny the fact that the relationship between fondness for money and morality is not necessarily contradictory. On the contrary, both point to a common goal: the attainment of ritual.

Ritual is the desire to support people and honor their requests. Ritual originates from the fact that man is born with desire, and people are required to exercise self-control in circumstances of limited resources to achieve greater and longer-term benefits. In other words, although ritual restrains individual desires, in the long run, ritual will be very beneficial. This not only addresses the personal desires of individuals, but it also addresses everyone's larger interests. Such is the effect of ritual, thereby explaining why rituals can be carried on for a long time. Consequently, the so-called "economy emphasizing

profit" seems to be contrary to ethical morality, but in fact, economics emphasizes the use of limited resources to maximize effectiveness, which is not necessarily irrelevant to morality. For example, to maximize the effectiveness of important economic development factors, such as land, capital, technology, human resources, and knowledge, it is necessary to rely on the division of labor: get your job done. Here is another example: To allow a business to continue functioning, it is necessary for trade, negotiation, and lending to rely on the protections afforded by trust. Therefore, it can be said that morality and economic development are closely related, and in fact, morality also plays a fundamental role in the so-called economy by satisfying one's own interest and giving benefits to others. Obviously, Xunzi is an expert in this matter: "The so-called 'official' in ancient times is a person who is honest, gets along with people, loves wealth, enjoys giving, stays away from sins, handles things, and is ashamed of being rich alone." Loving wealth and being ashamed of being rich alone indicate that Xunzi does not reject the pursuit of wealth but instead believes that one must rely on ritual and righteousness to subsume the capital's "interests," which is truly a good cycle. And this is in line with the management practice of corporate ethics—a gentleman who is rich will do good deeds.

Like all Confucians, Xunzi still pursues moral philosophy and regards it as a core value. This morality-based corporate ethics has a lofty ideal that deserves respect, but it is not without practical significance, as evidenced by the fact that we often find that morally conscious companies are more competitive. Xunzi says, "If righteousness is established as your foundation, then you will be a true king. If trustworthiness is established as your foundation, you will be a hegemon. If intrigues and schemes are established as your foundation, then you will perish" (The True King and the Hegemon); "Follow righteousness, and you can be the king of the world; abide by trust, and you can dominate the dukes; play tricks, and

you will be destroyed on your own". Xunzi believes that the road to the pursuit of righteousness is not just what a country should do; it is also the reason why a country is strong. This is not difficult to understand because if an organization is merely a community of interests, then it is easy to disband when there is no interest, or when there are other choices of greater interest, there will be no hesitation to enter into another coalition. One can imagine that such a situation is very dangerous. On the other hand, using "ritual and righteousness" as the power behind a coalition will solidify its foundation, with people supporting each other and helping one another, thereby shaping a network of people who treat each other well, so that the people in it can all reap stability.

Therefore, Xunzi highlights a person's good character and is committed to moral practice. For this reason, Xunzi sets a clear division between gentlemen and villains. He believes that a gentleman is aware of the times, knows the situation, and pays attention to self-cultivation; in contrast, a villain is cunning and deceitful and is occupied with seeking personal gains. Obviously, the difference between a gentleman and a villain is whether there is virtue, and whether a person possesses virtue will make a huge difference everywhere the person goes. To Xunzi's mind, for a manager with morality, the business he manages is bound to thrive, and his followers are bound to be good. Therefore, morality is the cornerstone of all governance. If this is put into the category of modern management, it is not difficult to conceptualize it as the pursuit of a meaningful cause and the pursuit of a meaningful life. Situ noted that if an organization wants to operate smoothly, it should not only have specific goals to guide the decisions and actions of its members but also need a certain mission to combine its individual goals and values to establish an identity with the organization. It is undeniable that when people practice morality, they will also feel happy and joyful. Apart from thinking that they are good people, they will further strive to implement this goal, effectively and

pleasantly. Everything is a benign cycle.

Therefore, if there is only a "material industry" without "meaning," then the industry is likely to shrink gradually. In contrast, when the material industry is combined with meaning, it will be easier to cultivate and will continue to operate for a long period because the law generated from meaning will bring about the meaning of "human" and create more values. This is the so-called "humane" operation, which is the most powerful soft power of the company. We can see this benefit from some business models, such as the "green thinking" approach to management, which explains why it can foster the value of wealth. For example, "It's O'right," which won the Taiwan Green Model Award, is a company that promotes lifestyle products under green environmental protection so that its brand is trusted and loved by consumers. This company has implemented the green concept everywhere from the product to packaging to marketing, which means that as consumers purchase their goods, they are also purchasing a beautiful ecological environment, which is of great significance. This shows that if branding takes "meaning" into account, consumers will automatically choose the "right" products, which will simultaneously enhance the corporate image. Other industries, such as green make-up, organic foods, and green energy generation, are all rapidly rising. Overall, this means that companies can no longer confine themselves to the development of their own interests but also need to take into account both social and environmental interests.

It can therefore be seen that to pursue the road of meaning is to pursue maximization of well-being. This route not only respects the individual's freedom of choice, but it also teaches people that "goodness" is a choice. Therefore, the pursuit of morality will not merely be an empty definition or teaching loyalty and filial piety. It is a necessary condition for a happy life and a correct choice for a manager. In fact, Confucianism is exactly an eternal advocate for and executor of creating a "moral" brand. It is

worth protecting and inheriting by later generations, who can review it deeply and apply it to all management philosophies.

VI. CONCLUSION: IN THE FACE OF DISCONTINUOUS TIMES—CREATING THE FUTURE

The world has been changing. The lives interwoven by society, economy, and politics are rapidly changing. From the industrial period to the post-industrial period, mankind has gradually moved to Industry 4.0. Accompanying the new technological trends are changes in the new wave of the industrial economy. And whoever finds new opportunities first can enjoy pioneers' advantages. However, when we look back at the direction of changes in recent times, we cannot be anything but amazed at the rapid pace of change, such that we cannot see its continuity. Especially in the rapidly changing modern world, who can accurately predict the future? Peter F. Drucker noted that "for developed countries, there is one thing that is absolutely true, even for the whole world. That is: We are facing a long period of tremendous changes."² Undoubtedly, people often effectively adapt to environmental changes. However, change brings something unfamiliar. It takes great courage to practice it and deal with a sense of insecurity and vulnerability. What type of response will be good then? Moreover, what types of resources are provided by Confucianism that can help the government operate effectively, foster creativity, and make the future come true? This paper posits that Xunzi's philosophy of "change" succeeds at providing some guidelines in this area.

As we all know, Xunzi emphasizes practice and cares about effectiveness. He hoped to build an orderly, coordinated, and harmonious society. However, Xunzi also knew that in a deceitful, ever-changing era, no person, however intelligent or wise, could predict the future. This being the case, "responsiveness" becomes very important

because only by adapting to change can we survive in an ever-changing situation. As was the case with Shang Yang's reform, Xunzi also believed that it is necessary to "change" to stay stronger. In Xunzi's mind, the meaning of change is two-fold. First, it refers to movement or change in the phenomenal world. Second, it refers to the ability of the subject to adapt to change. The two are opposite sides of the same coin. However, Xunzi seems to think that in addition to adaptation, it is necessary to "change" to face the future proactively. It is like a great company that will make changes when there are advantages, instead of being forced to change at the last minute. For this reason, "learning" and "knowing" are very important. As mentioned earlier, we must advocate for a concept of learning that enables learning and exploration at a faster pace than that followed by competitors. This points to a highly effective operation model. However, Xunzi does not believe that this alone is enough because culture and morality are more important. Therefore, after "knowing," it is necessary to "know thoroughly"—that is, "knowing thoroughly about the Way provides endless ways to respond." In this way, in the face of the various changes in the world situation, it will be possible to balance responses appropriately. Therefore, "ritual" and "righteousness" have an important, core position in the process. Obviously, emphasis on "ritual" will lead to good change, and moral pursuit is a necessary condition for a happy life and a cultural consensus of the group as well.

To summarize, Xunzi's proposition of "change" includes responding to change, thorough change, and the practice of ritual to know and rule with righteousness, and so on. It can play a highly effective role in both efficiency and morality. This is a special concept in Xunzi's philosophy and an important inspiration for modern management. It is fair to say that change is inevitable and that the task is usually arduous and long. However, change will bring innovation, which will lead to tomorrow's success. Therefore, this paper argues that new thinking in

management can be recreated through Confucian ideas. Filled with the wisdom and courage to welcome changes, the philosophy of Xunzi teaches us to stride further forever.

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The Diagnoses of Young Werther: A Clinical Appraisal

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Abstract— *The Sorrows of Young Werther* is a genre-defining novel written in 1774 by the German polymath Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. It is the story of a complex character by the name of Werther. The novel is a romantic tragedy with unrequited love, a love triangle, and a tragic ending. However, the reader who is following Werther eventually realizes that the protagonist is no longer a sympathetic character. This article explores the reasons behind Werther's extreme emotions and drastic behaviors. A 'clinical examination' of the novel reveals elements of depression, traits of several personality disorders, and, finally, bipolar disorder. We also discover that *The Sorrows of Young Werther* was based on true events with Werther representing Goethe in his younger days. How many of Goethe's own personality traits are reflected by Werther is unclear.



Keywords—Mental health, Diagnoses, Werther, Goethe

The Sorrows of Young Werther is a short novel written in 1774 by the German polymath Johann Wolfgang von Goethe when he was only twenty-four years old. Goethe went on to write poetry and drama and he is perhaps best known for the play, *Faust*, which was based on ancient European legends. Goethe had diverse interests performing experiments ranging from botany to the properties of color. In modern terms, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* may be called a romantic tragedy having the elements of unrequited love, a love triangle, and the tragic demise of the protagonist. It is wonderfully recounted mostly in epistolary form with a veritable cache of philosophical musings, similes, metaphors, and aphorisms. There are several translations of *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and the one I am using for this article is by Michael Hulse published by Penguin Books. This is a superb rendering from the German original and, I believe, that Hulse has captured the poignancy and pathos of the prose remarkably. There is an informative fifteen page introduction to the novel by Hulse that places the story in context to Goethe's personal life. The reader learns that the book is based upon true events and that the first half of the story is about Goethe and the second about his acquaintance, Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem. In fact, Goethe had an unrequited romantic interest in a young woman named Charlotte (variously called Lotte or Lottchen) Buff, whose 'intended' was Christian Kestner. This novel should be

appreciated for the plot, its format, the prose, and the expert treatment of the subject matter. It is almost vulgar to consider it a showcase for mental illness although this has been claimed repeatedly. Accordingly, we will re-examine this novel from a clinical viewpoint to see if such an analysis is justified and what conclusions, if any, can be reached. The approach will be to consider some potential diagnoses and then re-examine the text for evidence.

One of the commoner conditions that can be attributed to the protagonist Werther is depression. The reader discovers quite a rapid change in Werther's mood in a letter to his friend, Wilhelm, dated August 18: "My heart's immense and ardent feeling for living Nature, which overwhelmed me with so great a joy and made the world about me a very paradise, has now become an unbearable torment, a demon that goes with me everywhere, torturing me." The reason for this change may have been the arrival of Albert, Charlotte's 'intended,' mentioned in the letter to Wilhelm on July 30 at which point Werther decides that he has to leave. However, he does not leave and his melancholy is persistent until his death at the end of December. Werther has realized that Charlotte cannot be his since Albert is a fine individual who has all the qualities to make Charlotte happy: "Enough, dear Wilhelm; her intended is here! A dear and honest man whom one cannot help liking." The perceived loss of Charlotte likely triggered a grief reaction. Acute grief reactions, if

prolonged, can result in so-called complicated grief. In severe cases where there is overwhelming sadness, with feelings of hopelessness, lack of concentration, chronic fatigue, sleep disturbance, and suicidal ideation, one should suspect depression. I believe most readers would agree that the protagonist's mental state does, indeed, deteriorate into depression. An isolated case of depression with a clearly definable cause is sometimes referred to as reactive depression. Although one is more likely to suffer from depression again following a first episode, this sub-type does not usually portend chronic mental illness.

Werther goes on to experience other losses and failures which exacerbate his mood disorder. He starts working in an ambassador's office and finds the job onerous: "The ambassador is extremely trying, as I foresaw. He is the most punctilious oaf imaginable, doing everything step by step..." Unfortunately, this trial of employment leads to another unpleasant encounter. Werther becomes friends with Count C., an associate of the ambassador, who invites him to dinner. Werther senses that something is amiss when the Count's other guests arrive. The Count takes Werther aside and informs him that the nobility objects to his presence: "'You know how absurd things are,' he said. 'I gather the company takes exception to your presence here...'" When the young lady who was with him at the event also tells him the disparaging comments that she had to hear about him, he writes to Wilhelm "Everything is conspiring against me." Werther feels helpless and resigns from the position in the court. He writes "Indeed, I am nothing but a wanderer and a pilgrim on this earth!" This incident also foreshadows the final scenes of rejection in the story. Depression is one of the least challenging diagnoses made by physicians but clinical presentations are usually not so simple. Depression can be part of another mood disorder or it can accompany other medical conditions. Physicians have to maintain a high index of suspicion to ensure that they are making the correct diagnosis. When depression is not complicated by another mood disorder, it is called unipolar depression. The same can be said of our patient in this novel: should we now seek a more definitive diagnosis?

Borderline personality disorder may be a more appropriate diagnosis for the protagonist. This psychological disorder is challenging to treat and carries one of the higher rates of suicide in medical conditions, approaching 10%. It is characterized by intense and unstable relationships along with pervasive fears of abandonment, mood swings with anxiety and sadness, and impulsive behaviors, including thoughts of self-harm. Werther's passion is so intense that he claims "She is sacred to me." He becomes distraught when he suspects that she may not be as interested in him as he imagines. At one point, he is standing by a carriage with other passengers and he is trying to catch Lotte's gaze:

"I tried to catch Lotte's eyes; but ah, they gazed from one to another! But not me! Me! Me!...And she did not see me! The carriage drove off, and my eyes filled with tears."

In many cases, such psychiatric diagnoses are not mutually exclusive and clinicians may list more than one to describe the full spectrum of symptoms that they are observing. Moreover, there are ten personality disorders and it is not uncommon for a person to meet the criteria for more than one. These ten personality disorders are grouped into three clusters, which tend to be related or tend to occur together in the same individual. Borderline personality disorder falls into cluster B, which includes the emotional and dramatic personality types. The three others that are included in this cluster are antisocial, narcissistic, and histrionic personality disorders. There can be little doubt that Werther has narcissistic and histrionic personality traits. Narcissistic individuals believe that they are special and deserve better treatment than others. They lack empathy and continually seek admiration from others. Werther often mentions that he is an artist or a poet in his correspondence without really providing evidence of any accomplishments. However, he is quick to ridicule others: "The doctor is a pedantic jack-fool of a fellow who is forever folding the frills on his cuffs...", or: "Then came in the most gracious Lady von S., with her spouse and her scheming little goose of a flat-chested, trimly corseted daughter...", or: "What fools they are not to see that the position one occupies is in reality immaterial, and that he who is in the topmost position so rarely plays the most important role!", or: "There is one woman, for instance, who tells everyone who will listen about her family and estate, so that a stranger would needs think her a fool with an inflated opinion of her drop of aristocratic blood and of the importance of her estate." He certainly has harsh words for some of the people that he encounters. On the other hand, Werther frequently claims that he is better than others, even going so far as to calling himself a genius: "I am, however, growing daily more aware how foolish it is to judge others by one's own standards, dear friend," or: "Never in all my life have I danced so well. I was no longer a mere mortal," or: "I have been intoxicated more than once, my passions have never been far off insanity, and I have no regrets: because I have come to realize, in my own way, that people have felt a need to decry the extraordinary men who accomplish great things, things that seemed impossible, as intoxicated and insane," or: "Am I to despair of my own powers, my own gifts, when others with paltry abilities and talents go showing off, smugly self-satisfied? Dear God who bestowed all these gifts on me, why didst Thou not keep half back, and in their place grant me confidence and contentment?"

The traits of a histrionic personality are readily recognizable in Werther as well. Histrionic personalities have a pattern of

excessive attention-seeking behavior all the while looking for approval. They may dress provocatively or act seductively. They display exaggerated emotions often acting dramatically: "She does not see or feel that she is concocting a poison that will be my destruction and her own..." There are several scenes where he cries hysterically, at times in Lotte's presence.

What is most concerning about Werther is that he never asks Lotte about her feelings toward him. He is preoccupied with his own passions. The fact that Lotte has a partner with whom she is engaged does not deter him; he keeps visiting her frequently, seeing her even in Albert's presence: "At times I cannot grasp that she can love another man, that she dare love another man, when I love her and her alone with such passion and devotion..." The reader discovers as the story unfolds that the protagonist is a selfish, self-centred individual who is no longer likeable. It takes on a particularly sinister turn when we find that Werther shamelessly blames Lotte for the drastic, tragic steps he is about to undertake, and he wants to make certain that she knows: "I am convinced I have endured my fill of sorrows, and that I am sacrificing myself for you," or: "...and you, Lotte, hand me the implements, you at whose hands I desired my death, and from whom, ah, I now receive it," or: "You see, Lotte, I do not flinch from taking the cold and terrible cup from which I must drink the sleep of death! You handed it to me, and I do not hesitate."

In literature, the cognitive leap from suicide to murder is not unfathomable. Recall the infamous lines when the monster in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* comes upon a sleeping woman: "...it stirred the fiend within me-not I, but she shall suffer: the murder I have committed because I am for ever robbed of all that she could give me, she shall atone. The crime had its source in her: be hers the punishment!" Similarly, we learn that Werther is not totally averse to murder for he comes to the rescue of the young lad who has murdered the woman he desired: "...sympathy took an irresistible hold on him...even as a criminal he considered him so blameless..." A note, written by Werther, found posthumously reads: "You cannot be saved, unfortunate man! I well see that *we* (italics mine) cannot be saved." Goethe vividly illustrates that, in Werther's eyes, the line between murder and suicide is blurring. Indeed, we know from Dante's *Inferno*, suicide, like murder, is an act of violence, and both are punished alongside each other in the seventh circle of Hell; only the victims are different.

Laymen will often raise the spectre of bipolar disorder when discussing this novel. As we know, bipolar disorder is a major psychiatric condition classified under mood disorders. Its older name was manic-depressive disorder since it consists of alternating depressive and manic or hypomanic

phases. Manic episodes are periods of increased energy, reduced requirement for sleep, hypersexuality, euphoria, and increased anxiety possibly with irritability and agitation. We usually try to elicit the triad of increased sexuality, reduced sleep, and increased spending behavior. Of course, we don't know the precise diagnostic criteria when this condition is taken out of the context of contemporary twentieth and twenty-first century society. This novel opens with unmitigated exuberance expressed by Werther to his friend: "A wonderful serenity has taken possession of my entire soul...I am alone and rejoicing in my life in these parts, which were created for just such souls as mine..." This is probably more than mere setting-and-projection but possibly the hypomanic phase of a mood disorder. Things get more complicated, in more than one sense, once he meets Charlotte. He appears to be euphoric: "You know my Wilhelm; I am quite at home there now, and from there it is only half an hour to Lotte, and there I take pleasure in myself and all the happiness that can be Man's." Werther's feelings and behaviors are described several times in the novel both by himself and external observers. When he describes Albert, he writes: "His tranquil evenness of manner is in marked contrast to the turbulence of my own disposition, which I cannot hide." He goes on: "...I behave like a complete fool, and clown about, and talk gibberish.-'For God's sake,' Lotte said to me today, 'please spare us scenes like last night's! When you're so merry you are terrifying.'" As pointed out earlier in this essay, there is a sudden change from this mood and demeanor to intractable sadness reminiscent of bipolar disease. This is the source of our hero's tragic flaw. His mood and passion are beyond his control and beyond help setting the stage for the tragic end. The erudite reader can follow the dramatic irony penned by Goethe and is left to answer the question: is this story about romance and tragedy, or about the hero's psychiatric shortcomings? Werther writes early in the tale: "And still, to be misunderstood is my fate." It was pointed out at the beginning of this essay that in the first half of this novel Werther is Goethe. Some have suspected that Goethe personally had the hallmarks of bipolar disorder suggesting that this might be the hero's ultimate diagnosis.

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The Part of Family and Convention in ‘Purple Hibiscus’

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Abstract— This paper investigates the complicated depiction of family elements and the pressure between conventional values and individual opportunity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. By analyzing the dictator part of Eugene Achike and its impacts on his family, especially his children Kambili and Jaja, the paper dives into how the novel reflects broader societal clashes. The investigation centers on the patriarchal specialist, the mental effect on family individuals, and the battle between social conventions and individual independence. Eventually, the ponder highlights Adichie's evaluation of inflexible traditionalism and her backing for personal flexibility inside familial and social frameworks.



Keywords— *Purple Hibiscus*, Family Flow, Conventional Values, Individual Opportunity, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Patriarchal Specialist, Social Struggle, Person Autonomy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* digs into the complex exchange between family flow and conventional values. The novel gives a basic see at how unbending adherence to convention can affect individual flexibility and familial connections (Adichie, 2003).

II. FAMILY FLOW IN PURPLE HIBISCUS

Patriarchal Specialist: Eugene Achike's dictator control over his family underscores the novel's investigation of control elements. His dominance and strict traditionalism make an oppressive environment, essentially influencing his children's enthusiastic well-being (Brown, 2010).

Impact on Children: Kambili and Jaja's encounters beneath their father's run the show outline the mental and enthusiastic results of such onerous specialists. Their

improvement and reactions to outside impacts highlight their battle for individual independence (Agbasiere, 2010).

Role of the Mother: Beatrice Achike's position in the family reflects the pressure between compliance with her husband's specialist and her defensive instinctual attitude towards her children. Her part is urgent in understanding the family's elements (Murray, 2008).

III. STRIFE BETWEEN CONVENTION AND INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

Cultural Conventions: The novel depicts conventional values as central to Eugene's personality and control, affecting different perspectives of family life and devout hones (Smith, 2014).

Personal Opportunity: Kambili's and Jaja's encounters outside their father's control speak to a developing crave for

individual flexibility and a challenge to conventional imperatives (Nwankwo, 2011).

Rebellion and Alter: Their resistance against Eugene's specialist symbolizes the broader strife between convention and advancement, highlighting the characters' journey for self-determination (Irele, 2009).

IV. CONCLUSION

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* offers a significant study of conventional values and their effect on family connections and individual opportunity. Through the story, she emphasizes the need of adjusting social regard with personal independence (Tadiar, 2011).

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Gendered Epistemologies and the Women Leaders of Muthanga and Chengara

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Abstract— *The Muthanga and the Chengara land struggles in Kerala were unprecedented in the way in which the tribal communities questioned the much-acclaimed Kerala Model of Development, which was flaunted all over the country and the world. These struggles also marked the paradigm shift in the Dalit and Adivasi fight for claiming self-respect through a change from a thrust on government-oriented welfare schemes to the just demand for a sizeable, cultivable land for ensuring livelihood for every Adivasi. This paper attempts to look at the emergence and transformation of two subaltern, rebel, women leaders of Kerala, C. K. Janu and Selena Prakkanam, against the historical context of Dalit-Adivasi subjugation and their growth through the Muthanga and Chengara land struggles. From being 'docile' bodies in control of certain political forces, they have, through years of relentless revolt against the conditioning of the society, emerged in the direction of being women who have challenged the gendered male prerogative in the production of knowledge structures as against experience in their pursuit of a dignified living. Their presence in the political visual field of Kerala, rises up every now and then, as a mote in the eyes of the governmental regimes which suppress the uprising with an iron hand, as these women representatives strive to demystify the myths associated with the Dalit and Adivasi cause, foreground instances of the past resistance and build a knowledge base in their authentic, Dalit and Adivasi histories.*



Keywords— Adivasi, Dalit, Land, Rights, Women leaders

I. INTRODUCTION

“In my childhood there were no mirrors at home, and there was no such tradition either, I saw a mirror for the first time when I went to Vellamunda as a maid to look after a baby, it had a wooden handle.... when I came back from Vellamunda I found a piece of mirror stuck with some dung on the back wall of our hut. a tiny little piece of mirror, we preserve our seeds like this, stuck to our walls with dung, I never knew who stuck that piece of mirror to the wall like a seed, because it was tiny it was not possible to see myself fully in it. it could show me only in fragments, need to buy a whole mirror”. (Mother Forest 55-56)

The Kerala Model of Development, widely acclaimed by the international community as exemplary, has also been subject to critical scrutiny, particularly from Dalit and

Adivasi perspectives. The trajectory of development in Kerala, beginning with the Communist-led protests against landlords and culminating in the marginalization of Dalit and Adivasi communities within 'Laksham Veedu' colonies (a government project which started in 1972 for building houses for the landless)—characterized by minimal land ownership and inadequate infrastructure—reveals a profound neglect of the fundamental human rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution. However, alternative viewpoints exist. For instance, Luisa Steur^[17] contends that characterising Adivasis solely as victims of the Kerala development model is "unwarranted" and "dangerous," as such an argument "ignores the present limitations of neoliberalism on initiatives for the emancipation of subaltern groups and prevents them from using their historical political experience to dynamize their

present political initiatives" (25). Moreover, the term 'Adivasi' itself is often viewed as a governmental construct rather than a primordial, indigenous identity, given the diversity of tribal communities in terms of language, customs, religion, social hierarchies, and ways of living.

II. METHODOLOGY

This paper seeks to analyze the roles played by C. K. Janu and Selena Prakkanam in the *Muthanga* and *Chengara* Adivasi land struggles, focusing on their emergence as leaders who challenge the notion that knowledge production is the privilege of an elite few. The study employs a rhetorical analysis of their autobiographies—C. K. Janu's *Mother Forest: The Unfinished Story of C. K. Janu* (as narrated to and written by Bhaskaran)^[9] and Selena Prakkanam's *Chengara Samaravum Ente Jeevithavum*^[14]—alongside excerpts from their speeches. This analysis is grounded in a discourse-historical approach, emphasizing the role of social interaction, political power dynamics, and historical context. Developed primarily by Ruth Wodak and colleagues, DHA integrates linguistic analysis with historical and socio-political contexts to understand how discourse shapes ideologies, identities, and power relations (Wodak & Meyer)^[19].

III. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Gendered epistemology examines how gender shapes the construction, validation, and dissemination of knowledge. It challenges the traditional notion of objective knowledge by revealing the influence of social power structures on epistemological practices. Feminist empiricism, a central theoretical framework within this field, critiques conventional empiricism for its androcentric bias and advocates for the inclusion of women's experiences. This approach argues that integrating diverse perspectives leads to a more comprehensive and reliable understanding of the world. Another pivotal framework, feminist standpoint theory, posits that marginalized groups possess unique, epistemically privileged insights derived from their experiences of oppression ("Feminist Epistemology")^[18]. Standpoint theorists contend that these insights challenge dominant narratives and enrich scholarly inquiry. Additionally, feminist postmodernism interrogates the notion of universal truths by emphasizing that all knowledge is inherently situated and context-dependent. The concept of situated knowledge further reinforces the idea that every epistemic claim is embedded in specific cultural, historical, and social contexts. Collectively, these frameworks highlight the prevalence of epistemic injustice, wherein biases systematically devalue marginalized voices ("Feminist Social")^[8]. Ultimately, gendered epistemology

calls for a more inclusive, reflexive, and equitable approach to knowledge production, transforming both academic inquiry and societal understanding.

IV. LAND RIGHTS AND WOMEN'S STRUGGLES

The major tribal protests for land rights in *Muthanga*, *Chengara*, and *Aralam*, which emerged in the 2000s, were unprecedented in that they brought to the forefront the legitimate demands of tribal communities—groups often perceived as beneficiaries of governmental welfare schemes (Asianet 2016)^[1]. However, the reality was starkly different. These welfare measures were frequently co-opted by intermediaries, preventing resources from reaching the Adivasi communities. Similarly, the Land Reform Acts of 1963 and subsequent years primarily benefited the middle castes, exacerbating the deprivation of the most marginalized. In her autobiography, C. K. Janu describes how settler men systematically encroached on tribal lands, pushing indigenous communities deeper into the forests, even as these settlers aligned themselves with the Communist Party and received its support. She poignantly reflects, "In our area, the Party, the *jenmi*, and the estate owners had grown to merge into a single tree" (35).

This realization—that political parties instrumentalized Adivasi communities for electoral gains and public demonstrations while providing only token compensation—became evident to the women leading these movements. C. K. Janu and Selena Prakkanam articulated the disillusionment that stemmed from recognizing that successive governments, regardless of ideology, had failed to uplift these communities. Instead, Adivasis were mobilized primarily as a collective workforce for protests, receiving minimal remuneration. Despite being politically engaged, they remained structurally disempowered—a paradox that aligns with Michel Foucault's concept of power, wherein individuals are both subjected to and agents of power. In their autobiographies, Janu and Prakkanam illustrate how their political awakening transformed them from passive participants into autonomous leaders. Rekha Raj^[13] has observed the evolution of the Dalit female political consciousness, noting its emergence in the late 1980s, its relative silence during the 1990s, and its resurgence in the 2000s. Inspired by Dalit movements across India, Dalit women increasingly engaged with issues of land rights, political representation, and gender justice, both individually and collectively (11-13).

After years of grassroots activism, C. K. Janu, under the aegis of her organization *Adivasi Gothra Mahasabha*, initiated the *Muthanga* protest in 2001, demanding the redistribution of land to Adivasi

communities. A similar struggle emerged in 2007 with the *Chengara* land movement, led by figures such as Laha Gopalan and Selena Prakkanam under the *Sadhujana Vimochana Munnani*. These movements marked a departure from earlier anti-caste struggles in Kerala, led by Dalit activists such as Kallara Sukumaran, Pambady John Joseph, and Poykayil Appachan. While earlier movements successfully pressured the government to implement welfare measures for Dalits and Adivasis, the protests of the 2000s signified a shift: rather than being passive recipients of governmental aid, these communities openly resisted their systemic marginalization and asserted their agency in defining their own futures.

As C. K. Janu recalls, at the onset of the Muthanga agitation, the government initially announced a month's supply of free rations for participants, later extending it to four months. However, the activists rejected this offer, insisting instead on their demand for productive land. The *Muthanga* agitation was met with severe repression, as the government employed significant force against both leaders and activists, with the police and segments of civil society in Wayanad playing a role in the crackdown. Similarly, in the *Chengara* land struggle, the shortcomings of Kerala's land reforms—particularly the failure to redistribute lands classified as plantations—became starkly evident. The movement began in 2007 with approximately 300 families occupying the Harrisons Malayalam Plantations, whose 99-year lease had expired in 1996, yet the company continued to hold onto the land. Over time, the number of landless families participating in the protest grew to 7,000. The struggle faced hostility from the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM), yet it persisted despite numerous challenges (Devika)^[5].

The state's response to these movements was marked by harsh suppression, and mainstream media largely remained indifferent. However, these struggles signalled a significant shift in the political engagement of Dalit women—from being perceived as passive subjects within political frameworks to becoming active agents advocating for their rights over productive land. This transformation is a distinctive phenomenon in India's social and political landscape. The violent crackdown on Adivasi protestors in *Muthanga*, within the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, culminated in a tragic loss of life on February 19, 2003. The incident underscored the simmering discontent among Kerala's Adivasi communities, reaching a critical flashpoint. In the aftermath, the state—bolstered by leaders from both ruling and opposition parties—attempted to justify the use of force. Allegations of links between the protestors and groups such as the People's War Group (PWG) of Andhra Pradesh and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were swiftly made, only to be later

retracted by the police due to lack of evidence. However, these claims had already influenced public discourse, shaping perceptions of the movement (Bijoy & Raviraman)^[3].

The Emergence of an Organic leader: C K Janu

Throughout history, Adivasi communities have been alternately excluded and included within state policies, their recognition contingent on shifting political imperatives. It is within this context—marked by systemic deprivation and the framing of protestors as threats to state stability—those organic leaders such as C. K. Janu and Selena Prakkanam emerged. The media widely circulated images of C. K. Janu following the *Muthanga* crackdown, depicting her with swollen cheeks and a bruised body as a victim of police brutality (*India Vision*)^[7]. The protest, which reportedly resulted in two fatalities—a protestor and a policeman—left many others injured. The representation of *Muthanga's* violence, however, was problematic. While the media fixated on the dramatic imagery of tribal protestors, including women and children armed with kerosene, bows, and arrows, ready to resist either through self-sacrifice or confrontation, little attention was paid to the suffering of those beaten, tortured, or sexually assaulted. Official records failed to acknowledge the actual number of casualties, reflecting a broader systemic tendency to erase the lived experiences of the marginalized. Sreerekha^[16] observes in this regard:

As land restoration for the landless remains a contentious issue—from *Muthanga* to *Chengara* and beyond—the prospect of reclaiming alienated land has emerged as a viable, though fraught, alternative. Expanding private plantations, trusts, and state corporation lands operating at a loss or with expired leases have become focal points of struggle for Kerala's landless population. In this context, while legal setbacks may be inevitable, they often serve as catalysts for broader political mobilisation. (62)

Following the partial success of the *Muthanga* struggle, C. K. Janu continued her activism, lending her voice to similar protests, including the *Aralam* Farm movement, under the banner of the *Adivasi Gothra Mahasabha*. In 2016, she entered electoral politics, founding the *Janathipathya Rashtriya Sabha*. However, her decision to align with the right-wing National Democratic Alliance (NDA), after years of association with Communist movements, sparked controversy. While she later reversed this decision, she defended her initial move by arguing that neither the Congress nor the Communist parties had effectively improved the conditions of Adivasi communities.

Janu's political trajectory attracted further scrutiny when she purchased a car, leading to media speculation

about her financial resources (Asianet News, 2017)^[2]. She dismissed these criticisms, asserting that Adivasis, if granted sufficient land, could generate income independently and afford such purchases. She also condemned the entrenched casteist mentality that resisted the idea of a tribal woman attaining economic self-sufficiency. At the same time, she faced criticism from fellow Dalit women activists who had participated in the struggle but remained far from realizing their aspirations for land and dignity.

The intense scrutiny surrounding Janu's financial status and political choices underscores a broader pattern: Dalit and Adivasi leaders, particularly women, are subjected to heightened moral expectations and relentless public surveillance. Their actions are judged not just within the framework of their movements but against the moral codes established by dominant castes—codes that these elites themselves are rarely held accountable to. This double standard reflects the ongoing challenges of negotiating visibility and power within Kerala's socio-political landscape.

Dalit leaders, especially women, often destabilize dominant Malayali expectations, as evident in media portrayals of their activism. For example, during the *Kudil Kettu Samaram* (hut-building protest) in front of the Secretariat, one of the main allegations against C. K. Janu was that she wore silk sarees and appeared on television wearing makeup—suggesting that she was "funded" by external interests. Such allegations reveal a deeper discomfort with Dalit agency. While the Adivasi struggle succeeded in capturing public attention, it did so within a framework that expected activists to embody an infantilized, pure, and innocent ideal—dependent on mainstream society for guidance. This imposed an unspoken emotional burden on Janu, compelling her to conform to Kerala's dominant political culture, even as she sought to disrupt it (Raj 61)^[12].

Selena Prakkanam: From Resistance to Knowledge

In her autobiography *Chengara Samaravum Ente Jeevithavum* (*Chengara protests and My life*) (Santhosh & Manoj)^[14], Selena Prakkanam recounts the journey of the *Chengara* land struggle, beginning at the grassroots level with efforts to awaken Dalit consciousness through persistent household campaigns. What set the *Chengara* revolt apart from conventional political demonstrations was its meticulous planning and execution. Occupying the estate and ensuring the well-being of hundreds of protestors—including women and children—was no small feat. They faced starvation, disease, and the constant threat of internal conflicts. Most significantly, there was the looming danger of state repression.

She recalls a pivotal day in August 2007 when, while recovering in the hospital, she was urgently summoned by the movement's leader, Laha Gopalan. He informed her that the court had issued an eviction order, and by the following day, the police would arrive to clear the protest site. Under no circumstances could they allow this to happen. There was only one way to resist. Prakkanam listened without reaction as she was told what was expected of her: she must prepare herself for self-immolation. That, she was told, was their only weapon against the state's might. The next day, she and twenty-two male protestors had committed themselves to death. However, in a twist of fate, the court postponed its decision, and the planned self-immolation was called off (Santhosh & Manoj 48-49)^[14]. Reflecting on this moment, she questions why, even when everyone else chose to sacrifice themselves, she had been instructed to do so as an obligation. Why was even the choice of death taken away from her?

For the protestors, their bodies, along with kerosene cans and stones, were their only weapons. Images of women and children holding kerosene cans and men with nooses around their necks, poised to jump, appeared in the media but failed to provoke any meaningful response from the Malayali public or the government. Instead, political leaders dismissed their desperation as melodramatic and insincere. In one particularly harrowing incident, a protestor was seized by the police while bathing in a nearby pond. Witnessing this, a woman named Omana Sunil cried out for his release. In a final act of defiance, she doused herself in kerosene and threatened to set herself ablaze. The police, momentarily unsettled, retreated, allowing the man to escape back into the plantation. Despite their resilience, the protestors faced relentless physical and psychological assaults, not only from law enforcement but also from plantation laborers backed by estate owners and with the silent endorsement of the ruling party.

Violence, Stigma, and Systemic Erasure

One of the most pervasive stereotypes about Dalit and Adivasi women is the notion of their supposed moral laxity. The tragic narratives of "unwed mothers" in Attappady and Wayanad only reinforce this harmful perception. Even during the *Chengara* struggle, protestors were subjected to sexual allegations. More disturbingly, four women were raped by trade union members of the plantation while police officers stood by as silent witnesses. Yet, their complaints were ignored—not only by the state and judiciary but also by women's organizations that failed to take up their cause. The case was eventually dismissed for "lack of evidence" (Sreerekha 61)^[16].

As the movement progressed, Prakkanam began to see fractures within its leadership. She grew disillusioned with Laha Gopalan, who seemed increasingly preoccupied

with manufacturing martyrs for the cause. His transformation into a career politician, coupled with his eventual compromise with the government, left her unable to continue working within the movement. When she distanced herself, allegations of financial mismanagement were leveled against her, and people were incited against her. Disheartened by these betrayals, she left *Chengara* to continue advocating for Dalit rights in her own way, aligning with the Dalit Human Rights Movement (DHRM).

A New Direction: Knowledge as Resistance

Today, Selena Prakkanam is the president of DHRM in Kerala and is working to transform it into a political force. She wears the signature black shirt emblazoned with Ambedkar's image, jeans, and a black headscarf—a uniform that unsettles the mainstream visual field (Dalit camera)^[4]. DHRM members, guided by the revolutionary legacies of Ayyankali and B.R. Ambedkar, have embraced Buddhism. Predictably, the state has branded them as extremists, accusing them of political violence and subjecting them to constant surveillance. DHRM activists have spoken out about the torture they endure at the hands of the police, particularly in the aftermath of false accusations (*Nervazhi*)^[11].

Over the years, Prakkanam has evolved—from a leader who once used her bare body in defiance of the establishment to one who now seeks to create a lasting intellectual foundation for the Dalit movement. She has come to realize that the struggle for Dalit and Adivasi liberation requires more than bodies in revolt; it demands bodies that think. She records in her autobiography that there are no shortcuts to liberation. The true strength of the movement, she insists, must come from historical awareness and rigorous study. She recalls how she once saved money to buy Ambedkar's books, only to find them nearly stolen by fellow protestors who sought to silence her intellectual growth (Santhosh & Manoj 146-147).

Challenging the Dominant Narrative

As Gopal Guru^[6] famously observed in the context of Indian academia, there exists a pernicious divide between "theoretical Brahmins" and "empirical Shudras." This mirrors the way mainstream society dictates that Dalits, and other marginalized communities may only speak about their "experiences" while upper-caste intellectuals reserve the right to "theorize" them. Juschka^[10] further argues, when a dominant hegemony monopolizes the construction of theoretical frameworks, it strips the marginalized of their political and cultural power.

This epistemic violence extends to Dalit women as well. The same mainstream society that imposes rigid moral expectations on them simultaneously denies them the right

to produce knowledge. However, as Prakkanam and C.K. Janu demonstrate, Dalit women are not merely subjects of history; they are its authors. By unearthing suppressed histories of resistance, challenging dominant narratives, and documenting their struggles, they are actively constructing a knowledge base that will shape future movements.

V. CONCLUSION

In their journeys, both Prakkanam and Janu have planted the seeds of experience, emotion, courage, and intellect—building a collective body of resistance that seeks dignity against all odds. Prakkanam concludes her narrative with a powerful reflection: "she is not alone. There are many Selenas who have fought for the cause yet continue to struggle. She insists that a true leader is one who creates other leaders" (Santhosh & Manoj, p. 149)^[14]. Her story is a testament to the ongoing evolution of Dalit and Adivasi movements in Kerala—from physical defiance to intellectual empowerment, from survival to self-determination. The fight continues, not just in the streets, but in the pages of history yet to be written.

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Chhana Sweets of West Bengal: A Culinary Legacy and Cultural Marker

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Abstract— One of the lasting legacies of the cultural interaction between Portuguese, the earliest of the European settlers, and the Bengalis, was the use of curdled milk to create chhana, a form of fresh curd cheese that became the base for most Bengali sweets. Chhana became the primary ingredient in many iconic Bengali sweets like rasogolla, sandesh and rasomalai. These sweets distinguish Bengali cuisine from the rest of India, where sweets are typically made from thickened milk (kheer), lentils (dal), flour or semolina. The evolution of Bengali chhana sweets has functioned as the cultural marker of a community known for its artistic and cultural excellence, not only in India but across the globe.



Keywords— Chhana, Moira, Nutraceutical, Rasogolla, Sandesh

Chhana Sweets of West Bengal: A Culinary Legacy and Cultural Marker

Sweets are a shared passion among the Bengalis, transcending mere food to become a cultural identity marker. In Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal, it is rare to find someone without a strong opinion on the best sweetshop, the finest sandesh, or the state of modern dessert artistry. While many Indians are fond of sweets, the Bengali appetite for them is exceptional. In 2003, despite comprising only 8% of India's population, West Bengal consumed half of the nation's sixteen billion rupees' worth of sweets. About one million people worked in the state's 100,000 sweetshops, in 2010, testifying to the significance of sweets in Bengal's cultural and economic life (cited in Krondle 58). Bengal's chhana-based sweets, such as 'rasogolla', 'sandesh', 'pantua' and 'rasomalai' have earned a prominent place not only in the culinary traditions of India but also in the hearts of sweet lovers across the globe. While sweets have always been a part of Indian cuisine, Bengal's contribution to this domain is unparalleled, particularly due to its innovative use of chhana (curdled milk). Historically, sweets made from ingredients such as lentils, grains, and flour were popular in Bengal, but the arrival of chhana changed the region's culinary landscape forever. This

transformation was not an isolated development but the result of a historical encounter with the Portuguese settlers in Bengal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Portuguese brought with them their culinary traditions, and one of their significant contributions to Bengali cuisine was the introduction of cheese-making techniques. This eventually evolved into the creation of chhana, which laid the foundation for the Bengali sweet industry as we know it today.

The use of milk in Bengali cuisine has been traced back to medieval Bengali literature by Chitrita Banerji (Banerji 2017, 2000). Long narrative poems from the era describe the relationship between food and human temperament. For instance, the sixteenth century poem *Chandimangalkabya*, written by Mukundaram Chakrabarty, distinguishes between the foods offered to Shiva and Vishnu, with milk-based foods symbolizing nobility and serenity. Desserts such as rice pudding, sweetened yogurt, and kheer (boiled milk) were common and played a significant role in festive and ritual meals. Medieval Bengali sweets were typically made from milk, but not from chhana. Historical works such as Krishnadas Kabiraj's *Chaitanyacharitamrita*, a biography of the religious reformer Shri Chaitanya, provide a detailed account of the vegetarian meals prepared for him,

including a wide array of milk-based sweets. “Krishnadas ... mentions an impressive array of purely milk-based sweets – kheer mixed with sliced mangos, sweet yoghurt, and items like dugdha-laklaki [known today as raabri], sarbhaja, [and] sarpupee [known as sarpuria now] For those unfamiliar with Bengali food, some explanation of these terms is required in order to appreciate the point made earlier – the taboo on making a deliberate, invasive change to the nature of milk which, clearly, still prevailed at this time. ... [These sweets] are mutations of sar [‘malai’], which is as precious to the people of the Indian subcontinent as cream is to the people of the west” (Banerji, *How the Bengalis*, 52-3). Chhana was notably absent from these preparations, as the practice of curdling milk with acid was taboo in Aryan culture. Even in the myths surrounding Krishna, references to milk, butter, and yogurt abound, but none mention chhana. However, modern Bengali sweets are closely associated with chhana, highlighting the significant paradigm shift in the field of culture that occurred in the centuries following Shri Chaitanya.

The advent of the Portuguese on the western coast of India in 1498, led by the explorer Vasco da Gama, marked the beginning of a cultural and culinary exchange between Europe and India. While Goa, on the western coast, was heavily influenced by Portuguese culture, a smaller settlement in Bandel (deriving from the Persian word ‘Bandar’, i.e., port), near present-day Kolkata in West Bengal, also absorbed significant Portuguese influences. The Portuguese in Bengal, living luxuriously, employed Moghs (people from Chittagong) as cooks, who adapted European techniques and ingredients to suit local tastes. The arrival of the Portuguese introduced new food items and cooking techniques to Bengal. Portuguese settlers along the Hooghly River introduced acid-curd cheese-making techniques to the region. Bandel, a town 25 miles north of Kolkata, became a hub for Portuguese settlers and home to Bandel cheese. The method of production and preservation of this cheese were unique to the humid, tropical climate of Bengal. This technique also crossed over to the production of Dhakai paneer in Bangladesh, a smoked cheese with mild sour taste and a preservation method involving salt. One of the lasting legacies of this cultural interaction is the use of curdled milk to create chhana, a form of fresh curd cheese that became the base for most Bengali sweets. The Portuguese were already skilled in making cheese and other dairy products, and their technique of curdling milk with acidic agents was adopted by local confectioners known as ‘moira’. Though Bandel cheese and Dhakai paneer remain specialty items, chhana has become integral to Bengali sweet-making. The kneading of chhana to create a fine paste is crucial for the preparation of sweets like sandesh. Besides, chhana became the primary ingredient in many

iconic sweets like rasogolla, sandesh, pantua, chamcham, and raosmalai. These sweets distinguish Bengali cuisine from the rest of India, where sweets are typically made from thickened milk (kheer), lentils (dal), flour or semolina. The word chhana is linked to the Bengali verb ‘shana’, which means to knead, emphasizing the importance of this process. The metaphorical connection between milk and its offspring, chhana (one of the synonyms of the Bengali word ‘chhana’ being baby) adds a poetic layer to Bengali culinary tradition. Although there has been an opinion that curdling milk was practiced in India even before the Portuguese arrived, scholars like K. T. Achaya argue (Achaya 1994) that it was the specific influence of Portuguese cheese that may have wiped out the orthodox Hindu taboo on cutting the milk and preparing sweetmeats out of it as offering to the deities. Gradually kheer, sar (malai), flour, lentils, and other non-dairy ingredients were overtaken by chhana as the key ingredient of Bengali sweets.

Chhana-based sweets began gaining prominence in the mid to late nineteenth century, a time when Bengal was experiencing significant social and economic changes. Calcutta (now Kolkata), the capital of British India until 1911, became a hub of commerce and culture. A burgeoning urban middle class emerged, comprising government clerks, doctors, lawyers, and businessmen who had disposable income and a penchant for hosting social gatherings. Sweets became an integral part of Bengali hospitality and were offered to guests on various occasions. One of the early pioneers of Bengali chhana sweets was Bhola Moira, who, in 1851, opened a shop that became famous for its sandesh. Other sweet-makers soon followed, including renowned names like, Bhim Chandra Nag, Nobin Chandra Das, Girish Chandra Dey and Nakur Chandra Nandy (more popularly known just as Nakur), Balaram Mallick, and Surjya Kumar Modak (in Chandannagar, Hooghly – a district famous for its own class and variety of sweets). Nobin Chandra Das, often regarded as the inventor of rasogolla, revolutionized Bengali sweets with his creative approach and marketing strategies.

Nobin Chandra Das, born in 1846, was a man driven by the desire to create something original that would captivate the Bengali palate. In 1868, after many failed attempts, he successfully created the rasogolla by boiling small balls of chhana in sugar syrup, resulting in a soft, spongy sweet with a unique texture and taste. This invention, although slow to gain popularity initially, eventually became synonymous with Bengali sweets and earned Nobin Chandra Das the title of ‘Father of Rasogolla’. The origins of the iconic rasogolla, one of Bengal’s most famous sweets, are deeply intertwined with both Portuguese influence and the culinary traditions of neighbouring Odisha. There is historical evidence that suggests a similar curdled-milk sweet existed in Odisha for

centuries. The Jagannath Temple in Puri has long served chhana-based sweets as offerings to the goddess Lakshmi during the chariot festival (Rath Yatra), with some texts suggesting this practice dates back to the twelfth centuries. According to this input this particular sweet-making technique was probably brought to Bengal by migrants from Odisha or travellers returning from their pilgrimage to Puri's temple. This controversy eventually rolled over to a legal battle between West Bengal and Odisha for acquiring the Geographical Indication tag over the uniqueness of rasogolla.

In November 2017, the Geographical Indication (GI) Registry office in Chennai granted West Bengal a GI status for 'Banglar Rasogolla' following an application filed by the West Bengal State Food Processing and Horticulture Development Corporation Limited (WBSFPHDCL). Later, in 2019, Odisha also received a GI tag for 'Odisha Rasagola,' which is said to be produced in a village in Odisha called Pahala. The Chennai GI Registrar granted the GI tag to 'Banglar Rasogolla' primarily due to its uniqueness and adherence to the traditions of West Bengal. Odisha objected, claiming the sweet is a typical product of Odisha, but the registrar rejected the objection, citing that the objection was not filed in accordance with the required legal provisions. In 2018, the Odisha Small Industries Corporation Limited (OSIC Ltd.) and Utkal Mistanna Byabasayee Samiti filed a new application on behalf of Odisha. In July 2019, the GI tag was granted to 'Odisha Rasagola'. The decision was based on Section 2(e) of the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, which states that a GI tag can be given if the product's quality, characteristic, or reputation is attributed to its geographical origin and is unique. The uniqueness of Odisha Rasagola lies in its light brown colour, soft texture, and less sweet taste, making it distinct from its West Bengal counterpart. Historical texts from Odisha also have referred to the dish, tracing it as far back as the twelfth century since when it has been used as an offering in the temple of Lord Jagannath. The decision to grant separate GI tags to both states protects the interests of producers in both states, prevents consumer confusion, and avoids future conflicts between the two parties. The dual GI tagging also promotes economic prosperity for both regions while maintaining the unique identities of their respective varieties.¹

However, it was in Bengal that the rasogolla was perfected, particularly by Nobin Chandra Das. According to the information available at the company's website "Nobin Chandra's ancestors were sugar merchants of considerable social standing. Hailing originally from the district of Burdwan, the Dases had made Kolkata their home for eight generations by now [1860s]. Their house on a horseshoe

bend on the river Ganges in Sutanotty (now Bagbazar), was well known even a century ago. Being respectable and prosperous sugar merchants, the family did not take kindly to Nobin Chandra's decision to be a sweetmeat seller. His family itself disdainfully referred to him as a 'moira'".² Despite their disdain, Nobin Chandra was driven by a desire to create a new sweet that would captivate the Bengali palate. After many attempts, he successfully crafted the rasogolla—a soft, spongy ball of chhana soaked in sugar syrup. His invention did not become an overnight success; it took years of persistence before the rasogolla gained widespread popularity, helped along by the enthusiastic endorsement of wealthy patrons like the merchant, Raibahadur Bhagwandas Bagla.

Confectioners like Krishna Chandra Das (the iconic K. C. Das, son of Nobin Chandra Das), contributed to the growth of Bengal's sweet industry by introducing innovations such as canned rasogolla, which allowed the sweet to be shipped across the country and abroad. The journey of the rasogolla from a humble sweet shop in Bagbazar, Kolkata, to a globally recognized dessert is a testament to the Bengali passion for sweets and entrepreneurship. The popularity of chhana sweets continued to grow, and soon sweet-makers across Bengal were competing to create new varieties. The creativity of Bengali sweet-makers knew no bounds, and they continued to experiment with new ingredients and techniques. The versatility of chhana allowed confectioners to push the boundaries of traditional sweets and appeal to changing tastes and preferences. Thus, the confectioners did not just create new sweets but also capitalized on branding and marketing by naming their creations after prominent figures of the time. For instance, the 'Ledikeni', a sweet made from semolina, chhana, and sugar, is said to have been named after Lady Canning, the wife of British India's first Viceroy. Similarly, sweets were named after other British dignitaries ('Riponbhog', after Lord Ripon, who succeeded Lord Lytton as Viceroy) and after the visiting Soviet leaders like Bulganin during the 1960s ('Bulganiner Bismoy', i.e., Bulganin's wonder), reflecting the social and political dynamics of the era (Sen 303). In fact, among the varied Bengali sweets, sandesh has always been known for its varieties. As Colleen Taylor Sen points out, the art of nomenclature reflects "their flavouring, texture, shape, size, design, ingredients, and the poetic fancies— or advertising flare— of their creators. Examples are Desh gorob (glory of the nation), Manoranjan (heart's delight), Monohara (captivator of the heart), Pranahara (captivator of the soul), Abak (wonder), Nayantara (star of the eye), Bagh (tiger), and Abar Khabo (I'll have another)" (ibid. 301). Sandesh makers now add chocolate, apple, ice-cream, and other non-traditional flavourings, and make sandesh shaped like biscuits, cakes, chops, pastries, sandwiches, slices of toast,

and other Western food items. Even emblems of political parties are embossed in sandesh, especially before the elections of the members of the parliament or the state legislative assemblies. During the Bengali Hindu marriage ceremonies, a fish and /or butterfly shaped sandesh is/are indispensable in the list of items ('Tattwa') sent from the groom's house to the bride's in the forenoon of the nuptial day. The evolution of Bengali sweets was not limited to taste and creativity. As the industry grew, the art of sweet-making was preserved and passed down through generations, culminating in the development of recipe books that documented these desserts. In 1904, Bipradas Mukhopadhyay's *Mistanna Pak* became one of the first Bengali cookbooks to focus exclusively on sweets, including twenty-three different types of sandesh (Mukhopadhyay IX, 194-215). Other cookbooks like Mrs. J. Halder's *Bengal Sweets* (1921) further solidified (Halder 131-151) the role of sweets in Bengali culture.

As Bengal modernized, so did its sweet industry. In the mid-twentieth century, with the rise of industries and a growing middle class, sweet shops became a vital part of Bengal's cultural landscape. However, the modernization of the sweet industry also brought challenges. The increasing prevalence of diabetes and obesity among the population led to a growing demand for healthier alternatives. In response, many sweet shops began offering low-sugar and sugar-free versions of their traditional sweets. Hindustan Sweets in Kolkata, for example, developed a line of sweets with purported nutraceutical properties, aiming to counter the negative health perceptions associated with sweets. The rise of suburban developments and changing consumer habits also forced traditional sweet shops to adapt. Shops that were once confined to the old neighbourhoods of Kolkata began expanding to new locations, opening branches in shopping malls and residential areas. This shift was emblematic of a broader trend in the Indian food industry, where convenience and accessibility became key factors in driving sales. In suburban districts like Hooghly, as has already been mentioned, the glory has been radiating through confectioners like Surjya Kumar Modak, famous for 'Jalbhora Sandesh' (raw palm carnal shaped sandesh with its interior filled with rose syrup in such a way that an indecent bite might perplex the consumer with an unexpected flow of syrup ruining their dress and sobriety!)³, and delicacies like Manohara of Janai village.⁴ The globalization of Bengali sweets is another significant development in recent decades. With the Indian Diaspora spreading across the globe, Bengali sweets, especially rasogolla and sandesh, have found new connoisseurs across the globe, both Bengali and non-Bengali/Indian. In the present digital age, the online ordering system and the food

delivery chains have opened up an immense possibility in terms of advertising and marketing of Bengal sweets.

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Teaching Gender by Lifting the Lihaf: Chughtai for Our Times

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Abstract— This paper explores the possibility of pedagogical practices for a critical analysis of sexuality through teaching Literature. In the last twenty years there has been a sea change in the of gender and sexuality due to feminist and gay movements which has resulted in a corresponding body of academic work. It is crucial to locate this work in the pervasive patriarchy in which the classroom exists. This can only be interrogated through tools of critical inquiry. Ismat Chughtai published in 1942, is a useful text to teach through interactive discussions a spectrum of issues patriarchy, homosexuality, heteronormativity, child sexuality, and sexual abuse.



Keywords— critical inquiry, gender, pedagogy, sexuality, structural patriarchy

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades perceptions of gender and sexuality have undergone a critical transformation as has academic research work in these areas. The impact of these changes, fuelled by the prevalence of social media, has influenced teaching and reception of texts in the classroom. Pedagogical practises have had difficulty keeping pace with burgeoning new studies on gender, sexuality, feminist theory and practices, gay studies, and the transgender movement. Gender and sexuality have always been volatile areas, and for this reason been taboo subjects until the 1960s and 70s when the feminist movement brought in the discourse of the politics of the body, coming roughly at the same time as the Stonewall riots and the awareness of homosexual rights. Evidence of this is the expansion of the acronym LGBT which was coined at the turn of the century to LGBTQIA+, with the clear recognition that the term will continue to evolve. Academia has responded to the need to analyze, critique, and teach issues of gender and sexuality by instituting departments of women and gender studies, as well as journals dedicated to this area. A growing confidence and a rapidly expanding body of work in material feminist studies has led to interrogating entrenched stereotypes of gender and sexuality through critical readings of texts in classrooms, but this often converts the classroom

space into a battleground between teachers and students, since the classroom and the university are gendered spaces in themselves. Before defining pedagogical practices within the classroom it is essential to evaluate the lived experience of students and faculty who inhabit a range of genders and sexuality in a settled hierarchy created by a patriarchal, heteronormative power structure. One text that offers endless insights into these intricate, multilayered issues is Ismat Chughtai's 'Lihaaf'; it is specially useful as it allows a slow unravelling of issues ranging from patriarchy to homosexuality, from female desire to child abuse. A nuanced reading of 'Lihaaf' over a period of time with students could lead to a critical (re)thinking that allows for an ongoing engagement with the evolving discourse on gender and sexuality long after the examinations are over.

II. SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND STRUCTURAL PATRIARCHY

In India, progress in discourses on gender and sexuality came along with legal changes. The Supreme Court formulated the Vishakha Guidelines (Supreme Court, Vishakha Guidelines, 1997), following which Delhi University produced an Ordinance regarding sexual harassment (Ordinance XV(D), 2004). The awareness

raised by this legal framework—indeed, mandated by it—resulted in students and faculty in colleges coming together to form Gender Forums, Gender Sensitisation Committees, etc. Extra-curricular activities started addressing themes of gender in its many avatars for debates, plays, essay writing, etc. Thus, the classroom within which texts are taught was surrounded by this complex terrain outside its walls. Students began exploring issues of gender as a social construct, questioning the negative connotations of the term ‘feminist’, reading definitions of sexual harassment, becoming aware of non-binary genders, and much more. In Delhi University the turn of the century also brought in a major rehauling of the English Literature syllabus: for the first time an optional paper on Literary Theory was introduced, including one unit on Feminism, another optional paper on Women’s Writing, and a number of texts and prose readings in other papers that dealt specifically with gender. However, pedagogical practices did not immediately change to accommodate a theoretical, critical reading of the new syllabus: that change in teaching with the appropriate tools has evolved in the last decade. To cope with the uncertain, shifting ground in teaching, several Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs) have been either devoted to gender studies or have included a few sessions on teaching gender in the classroom in the last few years.

In light of this evolving discourse on gender and sexuality in the last two decades, it is crucial to map out a pedagogy of cultural readings of gender, to analyse through feminist theory the lived experience of the body and structural patriarchy that students and faculty inhabit, and to have a body of work about what it means to teach any part of the curriculum through the lens of gender, or through a blindness towards gender. Any discussion on teaching gender in the classroom must start with the pervasive patriarchy within which the teaching and studying of gender takes place. Without considering the full implications of the widest, most entrenched system of oppression throughout the world, one that determines everything we do, it is impossible to discuss teaching practices in the classroom, as if the classroom were an insulated space for teachers and students. In tandem with this, it is imperative to look at how gender functions in the classroom and the university, using the tool of critical thinking to make students re-think and revise their received ideas. It is only after this that one can focus on the reading of literature through the language of gender and discuss pedagogical practices.

The most dominant construction of an accepted ‘truth’ across most societies globally is that of structural, systemic patriarchy. This constructed patriarchy invisibilises itself as ‘natural’. Religions declare male superiority as divinely ordained, while in the last two centuries science and other academic fields have found ‘logical’ rationality for female

inferiority. Patriarchy and its attendant misogyny are the inherent, foundational ‘truths’ on which all social, historical, economic, political, cultural, religious, and psychological knowledge is based. It is intricately networked into every aspect of social life, making it infinitely flexible so that it can mold itself to retaining its discursive leverage against any challenge to its power and authority. For example, when women joined the workforce during the two World Wars and did not return to exclusively household work when the men came back, the myth of the origin of gendered roles of women staying home to rear children while the men went out to bring food home emerged in the 1960s. When older women started challenging men in senior roles at work the myth of older menopausal women outliving their social utility and being a burden on society evolved. These narratives of ‘natural’ gendered roles governing labour have embedded themselves in capitalist societies and are difficult to dislodge. However, as Edward Said writes in *Orientalism* (Said, 1979):

There is nothing mysterious or natural about authority. It is formed, irradiated, disseminated; it is instrumental; it is persuasive; it has status, it establishes canons of taste and value; it is virtually indistinguishable from certain ideas it dignifies as true, and from traditions, perceptions, and judgments it forms, transmits, reproduces.” Said goes on to say, “Above all, authority can, indeed must, be analysed. (p. 20)

III. CRITICAL THINKING AS A TOOL TO ANALYZE SETTLED NOTIONS

Critical thinking, or critical analysis, is the ability to think clearly and rationally, to understand the logical connection between ideas. It involves observation, analysis, interpretation, reflection, and evaluation (Scriven & Paul, 1987). Feminism has a basic logic based on all the above—that women should be treated equally to men. Feminism is the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. It is the theory of the political, economic and social equality of the sexes. The words feminism and feminist have been in use for almost 150 years, but they continue to cause discomfort even today. John Stuart Mill, a Utilitarian, writes about the resistance to feminist ideas in his essay titled “The Subjugation of Women” (Mill, 1869):

The object of this Essay is to explain...that the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes—the legal subordination of one sex to the other—is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality,

admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other.... The difficulty is that which exists in all cases in which there is a mass of feeling to be contended against. So long as an opinion is strongly rooted in the feelings, it gains rather than loses in stability by having a [heavy] weight of argument against it. ...And there are so many causes tending to make the feelings connected with this subject the most intense and most deeply-rooted of all those which gather round and protect old institutions and customs, that we need not wonder to find them as yet less undermined and loosened than any of the rest by the progress of the great modern spiritual and social transition; nor suppose that the *barbarisms* to which men cling longest must be less *barbarisms* than those which they earlier shake off [emphasis mine]. (p. 1)

I have quoted Mill at length to show his understanding of why logic or rationality cannot shake deeply held beliefs and prejudices, and that even in 1869 he could clearly perceive that from the rational viewpoint of the logic of women's equality, patriarchy was a "barbarism." Why is this insane barbarism of patriarchy so deeply entrenched, so unshakeable, even now in the 21st century? What pedagogical practices within the classroom can be used to create a space to interrogate patriarchy and gender constructs?

Students entering college have internalised received ideas and established accepted ideologies. Most units of society—the family, schools, religious institutions—serve to conserve what is already in place, to maintain the status quo. Terry Eagleton defines ideology as "the ways in which what we say and believe connects with the power structure and power relations of the society we live in" (p. 13). This ideology creates pre-determined identities based on socially constructed gender roles, the expression of sexuality based on heteronormativity, and the subordination of male and female bodies in dressing, walking, and occupying spaces. There is a need to adopt pedagogical practices through which we can embark on the study of gender, feminism, and patriarchy to destabilize and unsettle these preconceived identities, and to start the process of interrogating received ideas through critical thinking.

In the last two decades or so, the role of critical enquiry has become crucial because of the deluge of information through social media. At present, contrasting, conflicting information seeks to negate critical thinking by convincing us that applying standards of logic, morality, ethics, or epistemology are impossible, even undesirable. This, in itself, is not new because the deep-rooted existence of

patriarchy, casteism, racism, heteronormativity and all other structural oppressions is based on the same false information and beliefs. However, the fast pace of the transmission of information on the one hand, and the defunding of humanities departments that taught and studied critical enquiry on the other, have added urgency to the issue of critical thinking.

There is an existing body of research on the benefits of teaching courses on critical thinking. I want to focus on one aspect of critical thinking that is crucial to it, and indeed must be the first step: analyzing one's own ideas, influences, biases, prejudices. This is because it is impossible to think critically about gender without first being aware of one's own complicity in the omnipresent heterosexist patriarchy that inescapably governs all our concepts, values, judgment, ideas of normativity. Antonio Gramsci writes in his "Prison Notebooks" (Gramsci 1971):

The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is and in 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical processes to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory. (p. 324)

To this Edward Said adds Gramsci's conclusion from his Italian text, "Therefore, it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory." (p. 25)

IV. ANALYZING GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN ISMAT CHUGHTAI'S 'LIHAF'

How do we compile this inventory honestly and with sensitivity when it comes to gender? Feminist studies have foregrounded the politics of the body, of the lived experience. What are the traces left on us by inhabiting a woman's or a man's body, a transgender body, a body which experiences desires across a spectrum of sexuality? How does class and caste intersect with gender in our awareness of the forces with control and subordinate our bodies? And most crucial to our compiling this inventory is to introspect on the deep grooves that patriarchy has carved into us, because there is no one who is left untouched by patriarchy. Patriarchy has tainted every kind of knowledge and 'truth' that governs our beliefs.

Ismat Chughtai's "Lihaf" (The Quilt) (Chughtai, 1942) is a rich resource for teasing out the intricacies of patriarchy, sexuality, and gender constructs. A cultural-material close reading of 'Lihaf' shows how critical analysis can be used to interrogate the multi-layered complexities of gender in the classroom. Since all characters and events, fictional or otherwise, are gendered, teaching gender through literature also allows for the deconstruction of the author's politics of representation.

Chughtai's short story was introduced in the Delhi University undergraduate syllabus for English Literature in 1997 in a compulsory paper in First Year and provided a powerful entry into gender studies and destabilizing received notions of gender for students entering college. The story is not a simple one: since it is told from the perspective of a child it has shocking revelations innocently narrated, and several unanticipated twists and turns. The adult narrator recounts an incident from her childhood which she says is preserved in her memory "like the scar of a red hot iron" (p. 117). The rest of the story is told through her childhood persona, a girl just on the cusp of adolescence. In summary, the story is about Begum Jaan who is married to a Nawab (an aristocrat) who installs her in his house along with the furniture and is only interested in young boys. She withers away due to his neglect, only to be brought back to life by the maid Rabbu, who not only massages her incessantly but is also her constant companion and eats and sleeps with her. The child narrator is sent by her mother to stay with Begum Jaan, and every night she sees Begum Jaan's *lihaf* (quilt) swelling and swaying as if an elephant is somersaulting in it and hears the voices of Begum Jaan and Rabbu under it. Once when Rabbu is away for two days the child offers to massage Begum Jaan, and Begum Jaan then sexually abuses her. The child is traumatized and tries to stay away from Begum Jaan. When Rabbu comes back the *lihaf* sways again at night, and the child pulls the corner of the *lihaf* to uncover the mystery. The story ends with her saying "Allah" (oh my God) and diving back into her bed.

"Lihaf" starts with the familiar territory of patriarchy, which most students can grasp comfortably: an arranged marriage of a young, beautiful woman with a much older man, a neglected wife who is treated like an object, a husband who has hobbies that engross him while his wife pines away with unrequited love. But then the narrative has its first interesting twist, for the Nawab's hobby is not the usual one of cock fighting or visiting prostitutes, but a "mysterious" one of hosting "young, fair faced boys with slim waists" who wear translucent kurtas and tight churidars (p. 118). Chughtai introduces homosexuality into the plot along with child abuse, or pedophilia. For most young students who have the traditional, stereotypical ideas of homosexuality as being abnormal or perverse, the homosexual Nawab who preys on young boys confirms their biases. Using tools of critical analysis, an interactive discussion of homosexuality with students at this point has potential to begin to pry open their socially ingrained prejudices of homosexuality as abnormal.

The next twist in the story is more destabilizing—that of the sexually pleasurable, companionate lesbian relationship of Begum Jaan and Rabbu. This lesbian relationship

portrayed though the suspicious, yet fascinated eyes of the child hides a wealth of details that are seemingly inconspicuous, partly because they are so unobtrusively presented, and partly because students identify with the child's perspective of Rabbu "the witch" (p. 120). Students' standard response to this relationship is that Rabbu is able to satisfy Begum Jaan's sexual urge through her massages, and that if the Nawab had fulfilled his conjugal duties towards Begum Jaan then she would never have turned to Rabbu. Challenging this heteronormative reading provides an invaluable teaching moment for studying sexuality. There are two crucial issues that engender fruitful discussion here. The first is that failed heterosexuality does not lead to homosexuality, a point that most young people in a dominantly heterosexual class are able to relate to in their own lives. The second one, which a close reading of the text brings out, is that the relationship between Begum Jaan and Rabbu is not unidimensionally limited to Rabbu gratifying Begum Jaan's sexual desires. Chughtai writes of Rabbu, "She ate with Begum Jaan, was her constant companion, and even slept with her!" (p. 120). Overcoming all class hierarchies, Begum Jaan and her maid share their meals and their bed and are not just sexual partners but are "constant companion(s)". Rabbu's absence for two days makes Begum Jaan distraught, and Begum Jaan's sexual desire for the child narrator Rabbu to jealousy. The child's description of the activity under the *lihaf* leaves everything to the adult reader's imagination, but the graphic description of sounds and movement leaves no doubt that the activity under the quilt is certainly much more participatory for Begum Jaan than any sexual relationship she would have had with the Nawab. Of the sounds the child describes emerging from the *lihaf* are "Rabbu's convulsive sobs" (p. 121), through which Chughtai makes it clear that the sexual activity is pleasurable for Rabbu as well. Chughtai conceptualizes this lesbian relationship as one that offers constant companionship, mutual sexual pleasure, a sisterhood where both help each other, and thus offers a critique of the patriarchal, heterosexual marriage in which male dominance and female subordination is inbuilt. It offers a trenchant critique of the gendered constructs of romantic relationships that form the dominant ideology.

V. DISRUPTING THE NARRATIVE WITH CHILD ABUSE

Chughtai disrupts her celebratory narrative of the mutually nurturing relationship of the two women with Begum Jaan's sexual abuse of the child. Unfortunately, the insertion of child abuse at this point interrupts the interrogation of lesbianism and feminist politics because it reconfirms students' prejudices about perverse, predatory

homosexuality. It is at this point that it is imperative to look at the cultural-material location of the author, and to interrogate her politics of representation. Chughtai was born in 1915 and “Lihaf” was published in 1942. The story was mired in controversy as soon as it was published, and Chughtai was charged with obscenity by the Imperial Crown Court in 1944. In the 1940s in India there was very little discussion of female sexuality, and homosexuality was a taboo topic. Chughtai, herself a product of the early twentieth century, would very likely have been conflicted about her representing of a romantic lesbian relationship as an alternative to the established heteronormative one. The incident of child abuse could be seen as Chughtai’s discomfort with her positive portrayal of the lesbian romantic relationship, or as a ploy to deflect attention away from this dangerous territory by balancing the positive representation with a negative one.

The incident of sexual abuse is ambiguous and needs to be analysed with attention to the details Chughtai provides. One of these is the references to the young child’s own emerging sexuality, providing a multi-layered, nuanced teaching tool, allowing for a conversation about the most destabilizing aspect of this story: homoeroticism and child sexuality. How old is the child? Other girls her age were already securing admirers, so she seems on the cusp of adolescence, but displays no interest in male admirers; instead, she is a ‘tomboy’, fighting with every boy and girl who came her way. Chughtai thus establishes the child’s readiness for romantic/sexual interest by referring to other girls her age, and also explicitly writes about her disinterest in romantic relationships with boys. Moreover, Chughtai devotes two lengthy paragraphs to the child’s description of Begum Jaan, where the young narrator confesses she was “quite enamoured of her looks.” The child would “cast sneaking glances” (p. 119) at Begum Jaan’s legs when they were uncovered, signaling that she did not have the innocence of a very young child. The issue is not exactly how old the child narrator is, but the point at which she is in her journey to discovering her own sexuality, and Chughtai’s bold move to invest a girl who is seen as a child with an emerging homoerotic interest in an older woman provides an entry for students to interrogate ideas of childhood and sexuality.

It is instructive to read the child abuse incident through this lens. That it is child abuse is not to be disputed at all; there is no question of justifying Begum Jaan’s actions. But peeling back the layers offers a more nuanced reading. The first day that Rabbu is away it is the child who offers to scratch Begum Jaan’s back: “‘Shall I scratch your back, Begum Jaan’ I asked with eagerness.... Begum Jaan looked at me intently” (p. 122). The first day Begum Jaan just lies quietly and gets her back scratched. On the second day

when the young girl is once again scratching her back, feeling happy and important, Begum Jaan distracts her, involving her in a discussion of clothes and toys to grope and squeeze her. One way to read this incident would be to see Begum Jaan gauging whether the child is ready for a sexual encounter, and clearly misjudging her readiness, which Rabbu points to when she acidly remarks that unripe mangoes are sour. (p. 125) At the same time, it may be pertinent to consider how much of the encounter the child initiates, and her repugnance at her first sexual encounter. Chughtai gives enough material and ambiguity in her portrayal of this event to open it to a fruitful discussion of different interpretations in line with the increasing complexity of the discourse around sexuality.

Chughtai’s plot also conceals an ambiguity which often takes several readings to uncover. The adult narrator starts the narration thus: “Every winter when I pull the lihaf over me, and the shadow it cast on the wall sways like an elephant, with a sudden bound my mind begins to race and scour over the past” (p. 117). Halfway through the third paragraph she tells us that Begum Jaan’s lihaf has burnt itself into her memory and is preserved like the red hot scar of an iron. The child narrator ends the story by telling us that when the elephant under the lihaf did a somersault that raised its edge by a foot she exclaimed “Allah” and dived for her bed (p. 126). Without the distraction of the sexual abuse it should be clear to the reader that it is the sexual lesbian activity under the lihaf that is the cause of the scar. However, Chughtai structures the plot to culminate with the incident of child abuse; the girl fights with everyone so the mother cannot leave her alone when she travels; the mother leaves her alone with the trusted Begum Jaan who abuses her when she is frustrated; the child is scared out of her wits. This points to the red hot scar being caused by the child abuse. It requires a careful, critical reading to realise that the adult narrator has not been scarred by the incident of the abuse, but by the sexual activity of the two women under the lihaf. As an author, Chughtai has chosen to write a story celebrating a lesbian relationship in all its forms, but she has strategically masked it with the ambiguity to allow it to be (mis)read as one primarily about child abuse.

VI. CONCLUSION

In concluding a reading of ‘Lihaf’ in a classroom of Literature students it is crucial to interrogate why Chughtai disrupts the story of Begum Jaan and Rabbu with the incident of child abuse. In her autobiography *Kaghazi Hai Pairahan*, published in 1994 after her death, Chughtai writes about meeting the Begum many years after the publication of the story, and the Begum reaching out to tell her that she had freed herself from her abusive marriage, re-

married, and even had a son. Chughtai is overwhelmed at seeing the Begum's son. It is clear that Chughtai's investment in the story is the life of Begum Jaan who is trapped in an unhappy marriage. Chughtai fictionalizes the Begum's life not to have her divorce and remarry happily as she did in real life, but to find solace and sexual fulfillment in the arms of another woman. The unnecessary intrusion of child abuse into this romantic tale serves as a *lihaf*, a cover, to distract from what was considered deviant sexuality in that time period but which the author portrays as an alternative relationship. The introduction of child abuse into the narrative also begs analysis of Chughtai's own politics of representation and veils her own discomfort with her fascination with this vibrant same sex relationship.

Chughtai's 'Lihaf' written in the 1940s which explores a lesbian relationship that combines female bonding along with sexual pleasure, is striking in its boldness even in the 21st century as a text in a university classroom. It is not surprising, then, that in a far more conservative period she may have strategized to distract from the pleasures under the lihaf with the trauma of child abuse. An inclusive, complex reading of Chughtai's "Lihaf" through form and theme allows for an incisive pedagogical site for a discussion of gender and sexuality that should be interactive and interdisciplinary. With the close reading tools that a study of literature provides, combined with those of literary theories of feminism, gender studies, and deconstruction, this story written in 1941 provides a wealth of material for engaging critically with the rapidly evolving ideas of gender and sexuality. The gains made by the feminist and LBTQ movements in the late 20th century that allowed for texts like 'Lihaf' to be introduced in classrooms is now facing a backlash. Chughtai's veiled story of Rabbu and Begum Jaan therefore becomes crucial to retain in the curriculum for a new generation of students.

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Translanguaging Practices and Learners' Engagement, Linguistic and Para-Linguistic Competencies in English

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Abstract— *In the dynamic global communication landscape, authentic classroom languages emerged as pivotal lingua franca, facilitating cross-cultural interactions and access to knowledge and opportunities. Proficiency in English, regional and the vernaculars, encompassing linguistic and para-linguistic dimensions, is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in educational success and professional advancement. This study assessed language practices like translanguaging and learners' engagement, linguistic and para-linguistic competence in English. This study employed a correlational research design, collecting data from 230 students in grades 4 to 6 at Carpenter Hill Elementary School. The findings further provide that translanguaging practices often manifested during evaluation and learning activities as parts of the lesson delivery when teachers give instructions and clarify concepts, specifically using English, Filipino, and Hiligaynon as mediums of instruction, and specifically, translation manifested 136 times throughout 12 sessions, and 658 times for code-switching. It was discovered that the level of learners' engagement and linguistic and para-linguistic competence in English was considered satisfactory due to the usage of translanguaging practices. In addition, data suggests that the relationship between the extent of using translanguaging and the learners' engagement and linguistic and para-linguistic competence pose a positive or high correlation.*



Keywords— *linguistic competence, paralinguistic competence, translanguaging*

I. INTRODUCTION

In linguistic pedagogy, languages are perceived as complex when used in various setups. Essentially, English as a global language should also be viewed as a multifaceted tool involving cultural understanding and utilization of multimodal practices (Fang & Liu, 2020). Considering that native speakers have been outnumbered by non-native speakers of English, policies for curriculum are being considered to integrate how language should be taught and assessed at schools (Li, 2018). This is why translanguaging in practice and pedagogy has become an important tool for recognizing the linguistic resources of students and teachers. This involves using several languages for students and teachers to analyze the

academic content they are dealing with (Wei & García, 2022).

Mother tongue teaching has been proven to be an effective means to empower student learning and increase the involvement of students and teachers in the teaching-learning process (Nadela-Grageda et al., 2022). Englis and Boholano (2021) further claimed that using the first language in instruction enabled students to become more productive, especially when learning English.

Numerous studies have also claimed that the mother tongue is crucial in learning a second language. It helps establish patterns or habits and is even more helpful when the habit is applied in the mother tongue and the pupil's second language (Kasap & Emamvirdi, 2023). In

addition, in translanguaging, the mother tongue is an important tool integrated into the curriculum for learners to better understand instruction and possibly learn a new language, especially English (Casalan, 2022).

Prior research has established a correlation between the need to study linguistics and paralinguistic competence and the teaching materials used for mother tongue education (Dreisbach & Demeterio III, 2021). In relation to this, there was also an ongoing debate about the issue of Philippine pedagogy, which puts the "English Only Policy" in question, as this did little help in teaching English to students. This is why Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) was institutionalized in 2009 (Gatil, 2021).

With the passage of time and the expansion of instructional language, there is a need to openly discuss human perception and measure observations about the student's involvement in the classroom. This is due to the evolving nature of the instructional language. It can also focus on linguistic and communication abilities, which shape the thinking and understanding of the language user (even in unexpected speech) and enable them to engage with the recipient more suitably and intelligently, especially when using a second language like English (Ismail, 2017).

Based on the notions and the grey literature in elements presented above, the researcher is encouraged to assess actual language practices, learners' engagement, and linguistic and paralinguistic competence in English. To be more specific, this study can gather relevant information from respondents, such as students at Carpenter Hill Elementary School, Koronadal City, Philippines. The information that can be collected is centered on the quality delivery of translanguaging in teaching English and the impact of this learning on learners' engagement. This study can be beneficial in identifying the relationship between translanguaging in classroom discussion and learning English and how it also affects language teachers' accomplishment of their goals.

This study addressed the following statement of the problem: (1) What is the level of the use of translanguaging? (2) What is the level of learners' engagement in English? (3) What are the learners' linguistic competence levels in English? (4) What is the level of learners' paralinguistic competence in English? (5) Is there a significant relationship between the extent of translanguaging in teaching English and learners' engagement, linguistic, and paralinguistic competencies in English?

II. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. A survey gathered data from Grade 4, 5, and 6 students. There were 230 students, of whom 77 came from Grade 4, 78 from Grade 5, and 75 from Grade 6, all enrolled in offered English subjects. The actual frequency of translanguaging practices, specifically translation and code-switching, was tallied from all 12 sessions.

With a 4-point Likert Rating Scale, the survey questionnaire consisted of 3 parts. Part 1 of the survey instrument was formulated to gather data on the extent of usage of translanguaging by teachers when teaching English. Part 2 focused on determining the students' behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement, as suggested in the study of Cooper (2014). Terogo et al. (2018) also studied linguistic competence, an instrument used to acquire students' linguistic and paralinguistic competence in English. Consequently, part 3 of the survey questionnaire contained the indicators to gather the students' responses to assess their paralinguistic competence.

The data were statistically analyzed. The data about the extent of the use of translanguaging in teaching English, the level of learners' engagement in English, and linguistic and paralinguistic competence in English were all analyzed using the mean. Meanwhile, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to statistically measure the relationship between the study variables.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data, which are shown using tabular form, with their interpretations and analyses.

3.1. Level of Translanguaging Practices in Teaching English

Based on the recorded classes, translation and code-switching were identified as the major translanguaging practices used by the teachers in English lessons. Out of the 12 sessions, it was determined that the teachers used code-switching more than translation. Specifically, out of the 794 recorded times of translanguaging, 658 of them were evaluated as code-switching. This backs the assertion of Soriano (2017), who claimed that code-switching is among the most common translanguaging practices used by teachers in the Philippines, especially when teaching English.

3.2. Level of Using Translanguaging in Teaching English

Table 1. Level of Using Translanguaging in Teaching English

Item / Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
1. Clarifying concepts and grammar	2.90	0.90	Often
2. Explaining words	3.05	0.88	Often
3. Giving instructions	3.10	0.94	Often
4. Ask/answer questions	3.03	0.81	Often
5. Giving feedback	2.90	0.91	Often
6. Praising learners	2.80	1.07	Often
7. Quick clarifications	2.89	0.94	Often
8. Supporting lower language level learners	3.09	0.96	Often
9. Beginning/end of lesson	2.95	1.07	Often
10. Classroom management	2.88	1.05	Often
Weighted Mean	2.96	0.48	Often

As reflected in Table 1, the researcher gathered data from the pupils, who regard their responses on the extent of using translanguaging in teaching English in their classroom. Translanguaging generally obtained a weighted mean of 2.96 and a standard deviation of 0.48. The data suggest that most respondents claimed that teachers use translanguaging often or transition from one language to another when giving instructions.

These findings support the notion that translanguaging happens in the classroom for various reasons, but most often when giving instructions or clarifying concepts. Teachers use this method, which is frequently observed by the learners, especially the diverse range of practices utilized (Donley, 2022; Barroga & Tampus, 2023).

3.3. Translanguaging Towards Learners' Engagement

Table 2. Level of Learners' Engagement in English in Terms of Behavioral, Cognitive, and Emotional Engagement

Variables	Weighted Mean	SD	Description
Behavioral Engagement	3.04	0.57	Satisfactory Engaged
Cognitive Engagement	3.04	0.61	Satisfactory Engaged
Emotional Engagement	3.06	0.58	Satisfactory Engaged
Overall	3.05	0.51	Satisfactory Engaged

Table 2 presents the level of learners' engagement in English in behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagements. Based on the collated mean of each variable's indicators, the learners' emotional engagement obtained the highest weighted mean, 3.05. This implies that learners pose higher emotional engagement towards learning English. They are more likely to be motivated and see learning English as a positive experience.

On the other hand, both behavioral engagement and cognitive engagement garnered a 3.04 mean. Similarly, based on the learners' surveys, these two variables are also satisfactorily engaged. Learners also

showed satisfactory engagement in class, which can be seen in their behavior and performances.

This positive attitude of the learners supports the findings of Nishanthi (2020), who claimed that due to the usage of the mother tongue and practices wherein English can be easily understood, learners became more focused, motivated, and understood that such an opportunity would lead them to learn English quickly.

3.4. Linguistic Competence of Learners in English

Table 3. Level of Learners' Linguistic Competence in English

Variables	Weighted Mean	SD	Description
Vocabulary competence	2.86	0.54	Satisfactory
Grammar competence	2.84	0.58	Satisfactory
Discourse competence	2.77	0.55	Satisfactory
Overall	3.05	0.51	Satisfactory

As indicated in Table 3, vocabulary competence obtained the highest weighted mean of 2.86. Meanwhile, grammar competence received the second-highest mean of 2.84. Lastly, discourse competence gained the lowest mean of 2.77. However, it can be noted that though they present different values numerically, all variables still reflect satisfactory descriptions.

Hence, the overall level of learners' linguistic competence in English obtained an overall mean of 3.05. This means that the level of their linguistic competence, as referenced in their survey, is satisfactory. Students exude satisfactory skills in vocabulary, grammar, and discourse.

However, it is important to standardize that this result requires an understanding that there should still be room for improvements in delivering lessons and that students must still develop some skills and gain more knowledge in English. This finding aligns with the study of Terogo et al. (2018), who stressed that learning English is difficult for young learners. However, because of the means and practices employed in the classroom, like translanguaging, students gain skills and knowledge in English more effectively and quickly.

3.5. Paralinguistic Competence of Learners in English

Table 4. Level of Learners' Paralinguistics Competence in English

Variables	Weighted Mean	SD	Description
Non-verbal communication elements	2.82	0.59	Moderately Evident
Non-verbal behaviors	2.73	0.56	Moderately Evident
Overall	2.78	0.53	Moderately Evident

Table 17 shows that the non-verbal communication elements obtained a higher weighted mean of 2.82 between the two variables. Meanwhile, the non-verbal behaviors got a 2.73 weighted mean. However, based on the statistical interpretation, both are still described as moderately evident.

Hence, the survey shows that learners' competence in nonverbal communication and classroom behaviors is sometimes apparent in their performances. This supports the findings of Tadeo and), who underscore that students who clearly understand the lessons can respond using body language. The results of this assessment further the findings in this area of students' competencies in English (Tadeo & Queroda, 2020; Calyawa & Tampus, 2023).

3.6. Significant Relationship Between the Extent of Using Translanguaging in Teaching English and Learners' Engagement

This subsection presents the data regarding the significant relationship between the research variables, such as the extent of using translanguaging in teaching English, learners' engagement, linguistic, and paralinguistic competencies in English.

Table 5. Significant Relationship Between the Level of Using Translanguaging in Teaching English and Learners' Engagement

Variables	Behavioral Engagement	Cognitive Engagement	Emotional Engagement	Level of Engagement
Extent of the Use of Translanguaging	.393**	.349**	.374**	.424**

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

Correlational analysis reveals a significant positive association between the level of the use of translanguaging in teaching English and behavioral engagement ($r = .393$, $p < .01$), cognitive engagement ($r = .349$, $p < .01$), emotional engagement ($r = .374$, $p < .01$), and overall engagement ($r = .424$, $p < .01$). These findings indicate that as the utilization of translanguaging strategies increases in English instruction, learners demonstrate higher levels of engagement across various dimensions.

The significant positive correlations found in this study suggest that incorporating translanguaging techniques into English teaching may enhance learners' engagement in multiple dimensions. Translanguaging may foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students feel valued and empowered to participate actively. This is also true in the study of Terogo (2022) and Soriano (2017), who found that using the mother tongue when teaching English can generate positive feedback from the students' performance in the class.

Table 6. The Significant Relationship Between the Level of Using Translanguaging in Teaching English and the Level of Linguistic Competence in English

Variables	Vocabulary Competence	Grammar Competence	Discourse competence	Level of Competence
Extent of the use of translanguaging	.388**	.346**	.306**	.415**

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

Correlational analysis reveals a significant positive association between the level of using translanguaging in teaching English and vocabulary ($r = .88$, $p < .01$), grammar competence ($r = .346$, $p < .01$), discourse competence ($r = .306$, $p < .01$), and overall linguistic competence ($r = .415$, $p < .01$). These findings indicate a strong and significant relationship between the utilization of translanguaging strategies in English instruction and various aspects of linguistic competence among learners.

The significant positive correlations found in this study suggest that incorporating translanguaging techniques into English teaching may contribute to developing learners' linguistic competence in multiple dimensions. The exceptionally high correlation coefficient observed between translanguaging usage and vocabulary underscores the effectiveness of translanguaging in expanding learners' lexical knowledge by allowing them to draw on their entire linguistic repertoire.

Furthermore, these findings support the results in the study of Tadeo and Queroda (2020), who investigated the relationship between changing languages in the class or the usage of the mother tongue with the verbal skills and overall performance of students in English.

Table 7. Significant Relationship Between the Extent of Using Translanguaging in Teaching English and the Level of Paralinguistics Competence in English

Variables	Non-verbal behaviors	Non-verbal communication elements	Level of Competence
Extent of the Use of Translanguaging	.371**	.289**	.359**

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

Similarly, the correlational analysis reveals a significant positive association between the extent of using translanguaging in teaching English and nonverbal behavior ($r = .371$, $p < .01$), nonverbal communication ($r = .289$, $p < .01$), and the level of paralinguistics competence ($r = .359$, $p < .01$). These finding suggests that as the utilization of translanguaging strategies increases in English instruction, students demonstrate higher levels of Paralinguistics competence. The correlation coefficient (r) between the extent of translanguaging teaching English

and nonverbal behavior is 0.371. This indicates a moderate positive correlation between these variables.

The correlation coefficient (r) between the extent of translanguaging teaching English and nonverbal communication is 0.289. This also indicates a moderate positive correlation between these variables. The correlation coefficient (r) between the extent of using translanguaging in teaching English and the level of Paralinguistics competence is 0.359. This indicates a moderate positive correlation between these variables.

The significant positive correlations found in this study suggest that incorporating translanguaging techniques into English teaching may enhance students' Paralinguistics skills. This could be attributed to translanguaging providing learners with additional resources and scaffolding to express themselves effectively in English, including through nonverbal means.

Similarly, in the study of Tadeo and Queroda (2020), the relationship between the usage of translanguaging or from English to the mother tongue and the nonverbal skills of the students showed a high positive correlation. This specifically stipulates that students' non-verbal skills could develop based on how often translanguaging is used in the classroom, as lessons are easier to understand. In this way, the results above support the claims from a previous study.

IV. CONCLUSION

Translanguaging has been consistently used during the teaching and learning of English. The observed usage of translanguaging inside the classroom was manifested in other areas or parts of lesson delivery. This is because rather than slowing down students' progress in learning the English language, translanguaging made this process easier and faster for students. Hence, integrating the mother tongue of young learners into the curriculum is a highly successful method for enhancing the learning environment.

In addition, teachers often transition between several languages. From this perspective, *Taglish* (Fil-English) is commonly employed by teachers to elucidate concepts or instruct students in the classroom. This is especially helpful. Translanguaging helps in the effective acquisition of English competencies. Although it seemed to indicate issues with the learners' English proficiency as they age, it is still crucial to acknowledge that this approach enhanced their understanding and mastery of English.

Indeed, it is deemed that when it is utilized more often, lesson delivery becomes more effective, as seen in

the students' performance, evaluation results, and engagement. However, it is also important to understand that although integrating translanguaging in the teaching English curriculum might posit positive outcomes, there should still be space for improvements and recommendations to develop a more enhanced teaching method.

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Narrative, Norms, and Nation: A Counter Narrative Tradition in Select Retellings of *The Ramayana*

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Abstract— Retellings have emerged as an accepted genre in the recent years. The retellings of the Indian epics, particularly of *The Ramayana* have gained significant scholarly attention and focus. The recent studies posit the retellings provide alternative or counter narratives to challenge and reshape the original tale. The important questions here emerge: 1. Will the tradition of retellings lead us to completely forgetting the Valmiki's *Ramayana*? 2. Are we in the process of creating a new *Ramayana*? 3. Do these retellings align to the epic tradition of India? All these questions are sought to be explored in this paper through an analysis of three modern retellings of *The Ramayan*: Devdutt Pattanaik's *Sita: An Illustrated Retelling of Ramayana*, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantment* and Amish Tripathi's *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*. All these retellings provide fresh viewpoints, voices, and versions to understand Sita as a character, and to reinvent identities, contest meanings, and proclaim political influence. The paper finds the counter-narratives portray Sita as a symbol of empowerment and wisdom and contest the notion of patriarchy reinforced in the mythical narrative. It argues the retellings attain a fresh spin with their narrative techniques and intent, yet confirm to the core story and the scheme of characterization. The alterations in the narrative of the retellings do not necessitate a novel tradition, but a continuation of the historical and mythical chronicle, in accommodation of the India's cultural diversity and socio-political dynamics.



Keywords— *The Ramayana*, retellings, narrative, counter narrative

Introduction

The great Indian epics, *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* serve to be the treasure house of Indian narratology as they embody numerous stories and sub stories. "They cover all areas of human psychology and resolve many intellectual and moral questions. These features of the epics provide profuse scope for retellings" (P.S. Kumar 793). In recent years, the retellings of mythical stories, especially stories from the great Indian epics have received overwhelming academic and scholarly responses. The retellings of *The Ramayana*, to this effect, have been widely discussed and debated. Authors like Devdutt Pattanaik, Amish Tripathi, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Kavita Kane, Amit Majmudar, Ashwin Sanghi, Ashok Banker, and others have dedicated themselves to untying the endless puzzles and enigmas surrounding mythical stories of *The Ramayana*. The recent studies [Roy (2025), Halder and Mishra (2024), Shukla (2024), Sharma (2023),

Bavchandbhai (2022), Shejale (2021), Singh (2017), Kumar (2016)] have explored how these authors have reinterpreted and altered the epics in their writings and provided fresh perspectives. In this sense that the retellings provide alternative or counter narratives to challenge and reshape the original tale. The important questions here emerge: 1. Will the tradition of retellings lead us to completely forgetting the Valmiki's *Ramayana*? 2. Are we in the process of creating new *Ramayan*s? 3. Do these retellings align to the epic tradition of India? All these questions are sought to be explored in this paper through an analysis of three modern retellings of *The Ramayan*: Devdutt Pattanaik's *Sita: An Illustrated Retelling of Ramayana*, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantment* and Amish Tripathi's *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*. All these retellings provide fresh viewpoints, voices, and versions to understand Sita as a character, and to reinvent identities, contest meanings, and proclaim political influence.

The Narratology of *The Ramayana*

Composed in the 200s B.C., *The Ramayana* continues to be one of the celebrated Indian epics. It is a narrative of great religious and spiritual importance. It chronicles the adventures of Prince Rama, the incarnation of lord Vishnu. It also touches upon themes of duty, loyalty, and the battle between good and evil. The notion of patriarchy forms both the base and superstructure of the narrative. The heroism and valour of Rama is celebrated and granted enough textual space. In contrast to that, Sita is often seen as a typical ideal Indian bride. She is exposed as “passive, subservient, docile, self-sacrificing and intensely loyal to her husband” (Halder and Mishra 2084). She readily accompanies her husband into exile and constantly supports him despite the challenges she faces. Such portrayal of Sita in Valmiki’s *Ramayana* has been brought to scrutiny. The writers of modern retellings, through the model of counter narratives, project Sita as an empowered character who challenges the patriarchal notion of morality.

Devdutt Pattanaik's *Sita: An Illustrated Retelling of the Ramayana*

Pattanaik's retelling is not a mere reaffirmation of Valmiki's narrative, rather a re-examination of “Sita's depiction and its influence on Indian narrative traditions, norms, and culture” (Halder and Mishra 2091). Sita is portrayed not as a deity but as an individual with full of humanity and compassion. Such portrayal contrasts that of the conventional portrayal of her. She was considered as a gift from the soil goddess for the childless ruler rather than an abandoned child. The assertion of Janaka that “fatherhood is derived from the heart rather than biological reproduction,” (Halder and Mishra 2091) emphasises the social dimensions of fatherhood. Janaka embraced her stating, “I will call her Sita, the one found in a furrow, who chose me as her father...The harvest was outstanding” (Pattanaik 9 - 10). Here, two things are suggested: “adopting a female child and choosing her as a political successor” (Halder and Mishra 2092). “The need to alter the cultural representation of female children in India is evident due to their low adoption rate, lack of enthusiasm upon arrival, and poor involvement in politics. Devdutt's depiction of Sita questions conventional norms and challenges us to contemplate historical truths” (Halder and Mishra 2092).

Sita was imparted Veda by the learned scholars from Aryavrata and made conversant with *The Upanishads*. Pattanaik's *Sita* underlines the necessity of women's education in Indian culture, thus questioning conventional gender norms. In India, where women were not included in religious writings and deprived of education, Sita emerged as one who loved both seeking and imparting wisdom. Sita acquired proficiency in many culinary activities too. It is

important to note that women's participation in sports also formed a substantial part of Pattanaik's retelling. Sita's participation in a competition in lifting a large object resembling Shiva's bow Pinaki was a testimony to that effect. She learned about world politics, culinary skills, and martial arts. “Valmiki's *Ramayana* depicts women as delicate, portraying Sita as docile and Urmila as sleeping for fourteen years while awaiting her husband. Mandavi and Shrutkriti are not referred to as post-marriage. They play a crucial role in Devdutt's *Sita* as bright ladies who relish engaging in talks,” (Halder and Mishra 2093) clearly indicating the germ of counter or alternative narrative.

Pattanaik's narrative counters the conventional view of women as dependents who perform fulfilling roles like daughters, wives, and mothers. In his depiction, Sita is independent. During the banishment, she seemed managing herself independently, and imparting her knowledge and wisdom to her less privileged siblings. Her insights into dharma, nature, charity, exploitation, selflessness, and other societal issues truly make her an admirable company. The incident of Sita metamorphosed into Kaali to defeat a thousand-headed monster shows how much advanced military expertise and resource management skills she had. This deviates from the mythical portrayal of Sita. The deviation here seems judiciously accurate when put to the validation of the retelling in the modern times. The notion this retelling strives to place is to sustain an “equilibrium in political engagement, create a contemporary socio-cultural atmosphere for all genders, and offer fresh viewpoints on social comprehension” (Halder and Mishra 2094).

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments*

The Forest of Enchantments is yet another remarkable modern-day retelling of the Indian epic *The Ramayana*. The book is narrated precisely from Sita's perspective. Here, Divakaruni tries to reinvest in introducing Sita and a bunch of other lesser-known female characters those who are sidelined in mainstream narratives. The characters like Sunayna, Urmila, Kaikeyi, Shanta, Mandodari, Surpankha, and Sarama have been granted a textual space to raise their voices. Divakaruni's intention is, by no means, to portray male characters as tormented. The characters of Ram and Laxman were presented with full grandeur and respect. Sita is portrayed as courageous and self-confident. She is a “nature lover and healer, skilled in martial arts, shedding the image of a passive and submissive woman” (Halder and Mishra 2095). This retelling lends focus on Sita's hardships while residing in Ashoka Vatika which is usually often overlooked.

In patriarchal societies, gender roles are seen as intrinsic and despotic. Women are depicted as less courageous and

dutiful than men. Valmiki's portrayal of Rama, as brave and courageous, and as one who readily obeys his fathers and steps down as crown prince to follow a life in exile for fourteen years, clearly highlights the notion of patriarchy to which Sita as a wife scrupulously follows. "*The Forest of Enchantments* retells and reimagines the old epic.... Divakaruni's Sita defies the conventional wisdom that has always portrayed her as submissive" (Halder and Mishra 2098). The counter narrative digs deeper into the miraculous emergence of Sita from the ground as narrated in the epic. Divakaruni's narrative contests such notion for the fact that the miraculous emergence obscures the details of her birth and deters her ability to understand and interpret it. In the retelling, as a part of their family history, King Janaka is made to recount the incident, particularly how he discovers the deserted infant Sita while cultivating a patch of land for religious reasons, to his wife and daughters. Later in life, Sita recounts this:

"A baby lay in his path, naked and newborn, glistening in the young sun like a mirage. He was amazed that I didn't cry, regarding him instead with unblinking eyes. I had kicked off the cloth that swaddled me, a gold fabric finer than anything our Mithila weavers could produce ... Sceptics wondered which cunning person had placed me there at just the right moment to be discovered by Janaka. It must have been someone who knew my unworldly father well ... Other kings would have had the child removed without considering her fate. At best, they would have ordered her to be brought up in a servant's home. But my saintly father picked me up and held me to his chest" (Divakaruni 6).

It is important to mention that the scene and circumstances of the finding remain unchanged in Divakaruni's narrative. Queen Sunaina, Janaka's wife, raises Sita and educates her in feminine activities and combat skills. "Sita learned to move stealthily like a panther, run, leap, climb quietly, fall without harm, and endure pain" (Halder and Mishra 2100). Divakaruni's narrative challenges the notion of Sita as obedient, submissive, and domestic, as depicted in *The Ramayana*. "While granting Sita autonomy and involving her in her connection with Rama, Divakaruni has maintained Sita's seclusion inside the realm of women, making the narrative more reasonable and slightly romantic" (Halder and Mishra 2100). This retelling invokes in creating an alternative narrative about women in India that would challenge the traditional cultural texts by unpacking multitude secluded dimensions.

Amish Tripathi's *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*

In this retelling, Indian patriarchal society is put to challenge. Instead of being suppressed and oppressed, Sita emerges as a skilled and courageous warrior with exceptional intelligence to rule her kingdom. She acquired her martial arts skills and others while living in the ashram of Rishi Shevthaketu. All her skills and intelligence made her Mithila's prime minister. "She defeats the Lankan army in Mithila with Ram. She is the saviour, the leader, and an excellent administrator. Since childhood, Sita has displayed aggression towards things she disliked. She expresses her disagreement without any hesitation" (Halder and Mishra 2086).

Amish's narrative brings out her unique connection with the slum dweller, Samichi which she has formed while pretending to be a maid's child. She does not discriminate based on social status when forming friendships. The narrative also presents Sita having a keen interest in adventures. She fulfils her curiosity of riding a horse after she receives an Arabian horse as a present from her uncle Kushadhwaj. She is an optimist who even considers the exile as an opportunity for personal growth. She adapted to the jungle conditions in no time. Sita defends her camp against Ravan's attack in the absence of Ram and Lakshman by retaliating against the accosters. However, she failed at one point and was abducted by Ravan.

"Amish Tripathi's *Sita* practices counter storytelling to disrupt and question the patriarchal mindset cherished by Hindu society. He highlights the marginalised characters by empowering them and emphasising their ability to perform. Amish has reinterpreted the passive portrayal of Sita as a kind of rebellion against patriarchal ideology" (Halder and Mishra 2088).

In his portrayal of Sita, Amish Tripathi integrates present-day female experiences in pursuit of martial arts and self-defence training. This alters the notion of patriarchal power of the original tale and presents it in a more realistic and humanistic way. "Amish deconstructs the submissive Sita character from traditional stories and presents a modern, educated, powerful woman who confidently expresses her abilities and strength in the new story" (Halder and Mishra 2089).

Conclusion

All the three modern retellings reinterpret the mythological text to form narratives and to give them a modern twist. They provide fresh viewpoints, voices, and versions to understand Sita as a character, and to reinvent identities, contest meanings, and proclaim political influence. The paper finds the counter-narratives portray Sita as a symbol of empowerment and wisdom and contest the notion of patriarchy reinforced in the mythical narrative. It argues the retellings attain a fresh spin with their narrative techniques

and intent, yet confirm to the core story and the scheme of characterization. The alterations in the narrative of the retellings do not necessitate a novel tradition, but a continuation of the historical and mythical chronicle, in accommodation of the India's cultural diversity and socio-political dynamics.

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Kamala Das and the Grotesque Aesthetic: Exploring Themes of Love, Identity, and Fragmentation in Her Poetry

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Abstract— This paper explores Kamala Das's use of the grotesque in her poetry, highlighting how it can be a tool for vulnerability as well as empowerment. Key poems are the subject of the analysis, which highlights the conflict between identity, love, and death as well as how human relationships are frequently presented as contradictory—both nourishing and harmful. The grotesque is examined as a metaphor for psychological and emotional disarray, especially when it comes to themes of time, love, and loss. It also acts as a kind of subversion, questioning conventional notions of femininity, gender, and beauty. The grotesque in Das's work encourages readers to consider the intricacies of individual and societal identity by fusing feminist, existential, and postcolonial issues. This analysis demonstrates how her poetry employs this style to critique traditional roles and to reflect the fragmented nature of modern existence



Keywords— Abjection, Embodied Identity, Fragmentation, Grotesque Aesthetic, Sexual Subversion.

I. INTRODUCTION

Kamala Das (1934-2009), one of the most renowned authors of English literature, is praised for her unapologetical examination of gender, sexuality and identity. Her poetry explores the intimate and uncomfortable aspects of the human existence, providing readers an honest perspective on personal challenges, societal pressures and emotional turmoil. Das's work challenges traditional ideas of femininity and identity by using raw and grotesque images to explore the complexities of the human mind, particularly in its portrayal of the self.

In her poem "An Introduction," Kamala Das confidently states, "I am sinner, I a saint. I am the beloved and I am the betrayed". This sentence perfectly captures the unadulterated emotional and psychological intricacy that characterizes her work, in which the self is continuously changing and identity is fractured. The juxtaposition of conflicting ideas, frequently depicted in disturbing and exaggerated pictures, encourages readers to face the bleaker, more instinctual parts of the human existence. Das

creates a poetic world by vividly portraying the body, desire, and the balance between beauty and horror, using the grotesque to delve into existential suffering, identity formation, and the intricacies of sexuality.

The grotesque aesthetic is skillfully woven into Kamala Das's poetry as it explores these themes. She questions popular conceptions of femininity, sexuality, and personal identity by showing the body as a place of both pleasure and pain as well as by capturing desire in all of its raw, visceral form. In her work, the grotesque serves as a tool for confronting the shattered, frequently uncomfortable realities of existential isolation and self-discovery, rather than just being an aesthetic decision. She uses it as a language to express her innermost conflicts between cultural norms and personal beliefs.

Imagine a body that is raw, twisted, and on the verge of horror or beauty. It's a place where lines blur and the grotesque compels us to face the unsettling and the despicable. This is the domain of the grotesque, an artistic style that warps reality to expose its more sinister aspects. In his book *Rabelais and His World* (1965), Mikhail

Bakhtin characterizes the grotesque body as “bodily excess”, constantly changing and undermining traditional ideas of beauty and order. According to Bakhtin “The grotesque body...is always in the process of becoming”, represents excess, fluidity, and transformation. It is a body that struggles to fit into a category and defies expectations placed on it by society.

Julia Kristeva, expanding on this structure, presents the idea of the “abject” in her work *Powers of Horror* (1982). The abject consists of bodily fluids, decayed, and discarded items that blur the line between self and other. This is the moment when we come across the grotesque in a way that is both disgusting and captivating, facing what is ignored and suppressed. Kristeva writes “The abject is radically excluded and draws me toward it...I am at the border of a world, at the edge of a moment when I no longer know who I am”. Therefore, the grotesque is a confrontation with the frailty of selfhood rather than just a reflection of the monstrous.

II. THE GROTESQUE AND FEMALE AGENCY IN KAMALA DAS

In the realm of literary theory, this idea has frequently served as a means of subverting norms, particularly within postcolonial, feminist, and existential frameworks. Mary Russo contends in her book “The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess, and Modernity” (1995) that the grotesque empowers women to take back their bodies from patriarchal dominance. “The grotesque body, an exaggerated and perverse form of the female body, challenges the idealized notions of womanhood that perpetuate patriarchal culture”. In postcolonial literature, it serves as a reflection of colonial histories, revealing the distortion and fragmentation of identity in the same way. It addresses the harm inflicted on bodies, histories, and cultures, utilizing the grotesque not only for dramatic visuals but also for profound cultural analysis. Therefore, it entails beyond a mere visual or aesthetic encounter. It serves as a method of crossing boundaries— a means to reveal and challenge the discrepancies that shape identity, longing, and community. In this realm of surplus, terror, and change, writers discover the ability to challenge and redefine, stretching limits to uncover profound insights into human existence.

Kamala Das delves into the world of the grotesque with remarkable intensity, especially when delving into themes of female identity, sexuality, and the physical form. Her utilization of this idea presents a challenge to both western and eastern literary traditions. In western grotesque literature, physical distortion is commonly utilized, but she uses it differently by focusing on psychological and

emotional aspects as a tool to delve into inner conflict and defiance against societal norms. As an Indian woman who writes in English, Das skilfully handles a intricate blend of cultural and literary customs from both the East and the West, utilizing the grotesque to challenge traditional representations of femininity and change it from a terrifying idea into a powerful tool for self- emancipation. She disrupts the conventional, romanticized depiction of the Indian woman by presenting a fragmented, unfiltered, and frequently harrowing representation of herself. She transforms and empowers by portraying the grotesque in oppressive colonial and postcolonial Indian cultural contexts, redefining body, desire, and identity.

In the poem “An Introduction”, she says “I speak three languages, write in two, dream in one, Don’t ask me for words that others speak”. In this case, the grotesque is more than just a visual style; it represents a complex identity that is difficult to simplify. The variety of languages and dreams she has mirrors the inner turmoil of identity in postcolonial India, where cultural norms conflict with personal aspirations. This fragmentation, this excessive grotesqueness, is how Das challenges the homogenizing influences of colonial and cultural narratives. In postcolonial theory, the grotesque frequently mirrors the unsettling encounter with identity after colonialism. Das's representation of the body depicts the consequences of colonial histories, which have shattered and desecrated both personal and communal identities. Her depictions of the female body, whether it is “deformed” by oppressive love in “The Old Playhouse” or “naked” in “The Looking Glass,” upend the deeply held ideals of womanhood in both Indian and Western literary traditions.

Das states, “I am both a sinner and a saint. I am both loved and deceived”. This statement showcases the fragmented sense of self of the speaker, with conflicting roles and perceptions tearing her body and identity apart. The grotesque is seen when these conflicting identities interact, showing the body not as a cohesive entity, but as broken and revealed. In the opinion of critic Anisur Rahman, “Her poems combine rebellion and submission, and the grotesque depiction of the body serves as a crucial way to convey this paradox”. In “The Looking Glass,” Das emphasizes the rawness by encouraging women to stand in front of the mirror with their partners, naked and exposed, revealing their physical flaws. The poem addresses the body in its most vulnerable and awkward state, questioning conventional ideas of feminine beauty and etiquette. This unsettling imagery serves as a means of both empowerment and vulnerability, highlighting the conflict between societal norms and the body's actuality. Her work also reflects feminist interpretations of the grotesque, specifically in how she portrays the female

body as a place of both fear and strength. Mary Russo notes that "The grotesque allows women to reframe and reimagine the body on their own terms." Das's idea doesn't just involve being a victim or suffering, but also rebellion, catharsis, and a strong assertion of power. In the story "The Looking Glass," the depiction of the woman's reflection is described as "a shadow of what she was" proposes a deep refusal of forced roles, allowing for self-definition in a world that seeks to determine one's identity.

Similar language is used to describe sexuality in her poetry, where it is frequently presented as both beautiful and terrifying. Her examination of desire challenges social norms and highlights the complexity of female sexual empowerment. Again In "The looking Glass" she writes about fully committing to love, "Gift him what makes you woman, the scent of / Long hair, the musk of sweat between the breasts". Body language is intense and raw, highlighting a stark physicality through smells and bodily fluids. This intimate and raw depiction of desire expose the romanticized exterior of sexuality to expose its primal nature.

The female body, according to feminist scholar Mary Russo, is one that "reclaims its vitality from the sanitized ideals of patriarchal culture", a statement that is highly consistent with Das's analysis of female desire. She portrays sexuality in her work as an act of self-realization and rebellion, even as it highlights the vulnerabilities of the female body, breaking free from the constraints of societal norms.

In Das's work, the conflict between love and death is frequently portrayed through macabre imagery, emphasizing the transience of interpersonal bonds. For instance, in "The Old Playhouse," where the beloved tries to "tame a swallow, to hold her / In the long summer of your love," love is portrayed as destructive and suffocating. When love turns into a trap, it weakens a person's sense of self. The paradoxical nature of love—that it provides intimacy but also devours and destroys the self—is what makes it unsettling. According to Anisur Rahman, "Das's portrayal of love as a force that, while ostensibly life-affirming, strips away autonomy and leaves the self fragmented and hollow" is what makes her love poems different. Thus, the grotesque functions as a metaphor for the psychological and emotional fallout from the more oppressive, darker sides of love.

Loss is a prominent theme in Kamala Das's poetry, as seen in pieces like "My Grandmother's House," where yearning for the past is mixed with deterioration. The house that was once inviting and cozy is now in a state of decay, representing the breakdown of both memories and family bonds. The contrast between warmth and cold, life and

death, and memory and loss reveals this decay. "Das's portrayal of the crumbling house mirrors the disintegration of memory, where the past is reshaped by time's inevitable march," notes Geeta Patel . The unsettling picture of a once-vibrant house that has been worn down by time highlights the unavoidable deterioration that characterizes both personal identity and familial ties, highlighting this as a major motif in her work.

III. CONCLUSION

in conclusion, Kamala Das employs the grotesque as a powerful lens to examine issues of sexuality, identity, and existential trauma. Das defies expectations placed on her by society and challenges conventional notions of femininity by embracing unprocessed, fractured imagery. Her use of the grotesque to convey the intricacies and paradoxes of being a woman in both patriarchal and postcolonial contexts is evident in poems such as "An Introduction" and "The Old Playhouse," which demonstrate a profound engagement with personal and collective identity. With this style, Das challenges idealized ideas of femininity and beauty in favor of a more realistic depiction of human fragility.

The literary and cultural contributions of Kamala Das are noteworthy, especially in the fields of Indian literature and feminist theory. By breaking down barriers related to gender and identity, her writing has had a lasting impact and encouraged writers of later generations to bravely and honestly tackle challenging, frequently taboo, subjects. Her use of the grotesque in poetry not only subverts traditional narratives but also broadens the reach of feminist literature in India and abroad.

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Development of 'Blue Economy' with Special Reference to Coastal India: A Present and Future Scenario

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Abstract— Since antiquity, the oceans and its littoral regions have a vital significance in Hindu religion and its greatness has profusely illustrated in the ancient holy scripts. Today, the ocean has a vital significance in relation to its economic and strategic significance which has been nomenclature as 'Blue Economy'. Present paper examines the present and prospective positions of sea borne-minerals and other natural resources of the world with special reference to India. The paper also touches on its strategic importance and the potential for shipments, trade, tourism, fisheries, and coastal based industries and its future scenario. Lastly, the paper also reviews the growth and development of 'Blue Economy' in the developed and developing countries. The paper also highlights some of the varied problematic areas of 'Blue Economy' in the changing socio-economic and political scenario of the world. There are few suggestions, which are essential to pave the way to exploit the sea-born natural resources on a sustainable basis so that a sustainable development of 'Blue Economy' may take place in accordance with changing scenarios.



Keywords— blue economy, vital importance, strategic significance, coastal India, multiple resources, problematic areas, changing scenarios.

I. INTRODUCTION

Lord Rama's ancestor Sagar, whose sixty thousands son dug out the bed of the ocean that is called Sagar, the son of Sagar. Since antiquity the oceans and its littoral regions have played a significant role in Hindu religion and its greatness has profusely illustrated in Holy Scriptures. The ocean has served Hindi and Sanskrit names and synonyms such as Samud Sagar, Sindhu, Jaladhi, Neernidhi etc. Ten synonyms of ocean have been given in Ramacharitramanas. When Ravana, the king of Lanka heard the news about the construction of a bridge on the ocean by Lord Rama's Army; led by engineers Nul & Need, he was astonished and said, "What ! Has he really bridged the waves, the sea, the ocean, the floods, the deep, the main, the brine deep, the home of springs, the lord of rivers? (Rig Veda, Vedic period During Rama Rajaya in Treta Yuga, the oceans kept within their bounds found and cast forth jewels (Corals, Pearls and Gems etc.) on the coast for men for gather." All these reflect the retrospective significance of the coastal India of her ancient period. Its greatness has

profusely illustrated in the Holy Scriptures (Sikarwar, 2007).

Varuna the God of Oceans- mentioned in Rig Veda seems to be one of the important of Vedic Gods. In the pre-vedic period, he was the supreme Lord of the Cosmos, the keeper of divine order, the bringer of rain, the enforcer of contracts. The Varun is keeper of the celestial waters, which flow from the opening in the sky in the form of rain (Rig Veda, Vedic Period). Indian Mythology on Ocean acts as a true reflector to reveal a true image of its vital significance, even today it is quite relevant in the present scenario too. The 'Blue Economy Approach' was recognized by scientists and social scientists, belonging to different streams across the world. Now, it becomes imperative to take an interest in each country, particularly the countries which enjoy the littoral locations. All these countries depict a rosy picture of "Blue Economy". The blue economy is a major catalyst of regional development which is expected to pave the way for creating millions of jobs in water derived jobs like tourism, fisheries and shipping industry. The side effects of this

economy are the carbon emissions and ecosystem disequilibrium, whereas its dependence on the freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems are prone to expose it to the impacts of climate changes in the coming future (Report of OECD Urban Studies, 2024).

The marine environment international co-operation approaches to promote the 'Blue Economy'. The role of marine governance and Capacity building are discussed in the context of 'Blue Economy' (Vijay Sukija & Kapil Narula, 2017). **President Michel** is a very strong supporter of the concept of 'Blue Economy' which essentially the long term economic and environmental sustainability of the sea, so that the hidden potential of the marine borne natural resources may be exploited in accordance with the basic principle '*The growth with justice Coming* to the present significance of coastal India, the country has 7516 Kilometers coast line, including two island groups, which has a vital significance. There are nine states which have marine coast line territories facilitated with maritime attributes. There is 25 % of the population in India, which inhabits the first 50 Kilometers of area. This coastline is facilitated with a number of sea-ports, minor as well as major, and harbours to take on large scale *marine-trade* activities which is relatively cheaper than other modes of transport. The deep and shallow based economy which deal with exploiting its natural resources like deep sea fisheries, mineral oil, sea-food which provide a food-security for the people, who dwells in the littoral states, sea-borne trade, particularly for international trade, Sea-based tourism, eco-tourism-marine life, littoral biodiversity and beach-based tourist resorts are the major potential and possibilities of tapping the 'Blue Economy' of Indian coastal line of eastern and western and groups of islands in Arabian sea and Bay of Bengal. (Michel, 2017).

II. TAPPING THE COASTAL NATURAL RESOURCES

Examining the coastal existing and potential of mineral oil of the country, it has been observed that the sea-bed like *Bombay High*, has been proved conducive to tapping the petroleum for last over 40 years. It has also been observed that there is great potential for crude oil reserves along with coastal areas of Kutch and Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea. In this context, various reports of *remote sensing* of geological survey indicate that the whole of Indian marine coast, particularly the sedimentation formed *continental shelf* has a great potentiality under the *submerged sedimentary* rocks.

Presently, exploration projects are going on beneath the sea bed for mineral oil in the eastern and western coast of India. The institutions like Indian Institute of Petroleum Research

and Oil & Natural Gas Commission have been playing a significant role in exploring the hidden potential of mineral oil in both coastal areas of India. India now produces 30 percent of domestic production oil and 70 % of the crude oil is imported from the Arabian countries. In this context, it has been reviewed that the potentiality of crude oil production along with coastal areas of India, indicate a rosy picture which tends to lead India self independent in petroleum production. It is because of the potentiality of promising projections by the experts in chemical Engineering & Technology of IIT Kanpur. Examining the significant value of *livelihood opportunities* and technology deriving from emerging sectors like deep sea fishing, marine tourism, bio-technology and marine derived pharmaceuticals for economic growth, nutrition and food-security also reveals a rosy picture for tapping the hidden potential from the coastal area of India too. In this context, deep sea fishing, a base of livelihood for the millions of inhabitants of the eastern and western coast of India. With regard to deep sea fisheries of the Indian coastal region, the entire coastal region and the exclusive economic zone which is located within 200 Nautical miles from the coast is characterized by favorable conditions for producing large sufficient quantities of '*Zoo-plankton*' which is food of the fisheries activities of the coastal areas. The fishing technology which includes R&D in developing trawlers, construction of *cold-storage* in the coastal town and cities, fish-canning industries etc. are required so that the deep fishing activities may be developed in accordance with the sustainable conditions in eastern and western coastal areas of India (Gunter & Pauli, 2010).

In order to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of the fishing communities, through forming of the **SHGs (Self Help Groups)**, under micro-finance, particularly for those who are engaged in deep-fishing activities, can be benefitted by tapping this marine based sustainable livelihood. The institutions like National Institute of *Marine fishery* and the *National Institute of Oceanography*, Panaji can play a vital role to develop the deep sea fishery in the coastal areas of India and earn the foreign exchange by exporting the fish and canned fish, provided a strong infrastructure of fishing industry may be developed in the coastal areas of India. Only then, the dream of '*Blue Revolution*' will be full-filled and will attain the full employment position, ensuring employment on a sustainable basis for the people who are engaged in *marine fishery* activities. In order to assess the potential of India's marine environment, it becomes imperative to examine the correct *geo-strategies* for changing global scenarios. That perspective will come from reviewing the peninsular configuration, the way it dominates the Indian Ocean and the way it acts as a local point of trade routes. The Indian

Ocean is the smallest of the three navigable ones, does not possess a wide, unobstructed gateway and yet happens to be the most important water body for all the trade routes that pass close to Indian shores. However, it shows a greater responsibility on India in terms of security of global sea lines of communication. There is also a resident opportunity in this challenge, catering to the potential of business at all ports and earning revenue through bunkering and maintenance facilities in our transit port. The advantage of India due to Her *geographical location, is enormous*. After parts, the next asset to focus upon should be the Indian owned shipping fleet. At present, less than 9 million Gross Tons, with the fleet of just 700 vessels, we have barely 200 foreign going ships available under the Indian flag. This is an unhealthy sign of crises. India needs consistent efforts to overcome this problematic area (Mohanty, & Ketal, 2016).

The Blue Economy is envisaged as the integration of *Ocean Economy* developed with the principles of social inclusion, *environmental sustainability* and innovative, dynamic business models. It is found upon a system approach, wherein renewable and organic inputs are fed with a sustainable designed system to fuel '*Blue Growth*' such '*Blue Growth*' addresses the problems of resource scarcity and waste disposal, while delivering sustainable development that enhances human welfare in a holistic manner. The basic principles of '*Blue Economy*' are characterized by the basic needs of all with what we have, introducing innovations inspired by nature, generating multiple benefits, including and social capital offering more with less. Secondly, the solutions are first and foremost based on physics. The deciding factors are pressure and temperature as found on site. Thirdly, they substitute something with nothing-question any resource regarding its necessity for production (Hazara & Bhukta, 2022).

Apart from above mentioned principles of '*Blue Economy*' the other principles are natural systems cascade nutrients, matter and energy-waste does not exist. Any by-product is the source of a new product. There are some principles related to nature which provide room for the entire system who do more with less. Nature is contrary to *monopolization*. Nature evolved from a few species to a rich biodiversity. Nature only works with what is locally available. Sustainable business evolves with respect not only for local resources, but also for culture and tradition. Nature responds to basic needs and then evolves from sufficiency to abundance. The model relies on scarcity as a basis for production and consumption. In natural water, air and soil is common, free and abundant. Nature systems share risk. Any risk is a motivator for innovations. Nature is efficient which has paved the way to make sustainable business, maximize and make use of available material and energy which reduces the unit price for the consumer.

Lastly, nature searches for economies of scope which lie in making use of natural resources on the principle of '*growth with justice*' (Sonali, & Mittra, 2017).

III. BLUE ECONOMY-WORLD SCENARIO

Keeping in view the significance of sustainable and inclusive growth across sectors, we observe that there are countries big and small, island and coastal. And that is why the phrase –“*Blue Economy*”-the economic development of oceans, seas and coast lines which are spreading with rapid speed around the world. For example, in the European countries, it is known as “*Blue Growth*” and EU has special strategy for it, looking at economic sectors as aquaculture, coastal tourism, and shipping and off course undersea mining, the machine are being developed that can be dropped to the ocean's bottom and crunch it up to the valuable minerals. A new *International Seabed Authority* is already granting licenses to companies for big tracts of undersea land. The rapid growth of undersea is just one example of why we need some clear definitions, guidelines and eventually stronger laws, about how to make the *blue economy* suitable. It is because, if we are going to create a “*Green Economy*”, we have to do it in a “*blue*” context, too. And that is why, *Atkinson* group was so happy to work for *World Wild-life Fund (WWF)* over the past year, helping WWF to develop a new set of principles for a sustainable *blue economy*.

In case of the experiences of the other countries like China, called for the development of a “*Blue Economy*” to optimize the traditional marine industries while promoting its sustainability, *China* has registered five voluntary commitments to SDG14; strengthen the protection of marine ecological environment; enhancement of international marine cooperation in *Asia Pacific* region; improve the ability of marine observation; early warning and disaster prevention & mitigation capacities, strengthen scientific and technical innovation & international cooperation. Lastly, develop a sustainable ocean economy-what did not draw much attention then was the fact that the COMRA's exploration rights in the Indian Ocean were over and above its existing allocation in the Western Pacific. A 15-year contract with the seabed authority in 2001 had given China rights to explore 75,000 Sq Kms of seabed for poly-metallic nodules (small rocks containing metal ore-manganese, copper, cobalt, etc) in which it has shown rapid progress in extracting the minerals. This is significant because ISBA's 2011 decision resulted in China establishing mining rights in two major oceanic systems that contain the world's most important sea lines of communication (Zhao, Rui 2013).

In this context, China's deep-sea exploration rights weren't apparently acquired through any backroom maneuvers or use of geo-strategic clout. The license to explore the Western Indian Ocean sea-bed was, in major part, attributable to a concerted effort at scouting the seas and gathering evidence for the presence of mineral nodes on the sea bed. In fact, China's mining rights in the IOR were given six years after a Chinese government-sponsored expedition team found clues of an enormous belt of *poly-metallic sulphides* in a deep-sea rift south of Madagascar. "A 'Blue Economy' is a new frontier for Africa, as **Jamal Saghir**, the senior regional advisor for the African region at the *World Bank*, advocated that the African coastal and insular countries wish to invest in the 'Blue Economy' and have requested technical and financial support. And they need to factor climate change in the question which is ambitious". The **World Bank** tends to support them by mobilizing its own IDA resolutions and climate finance held in Mauritius. He added that with the support of the World Bank and FAO; "African countries will be the champions" of the oceans economy (Rio-de-Janeiro: United Nations, 2012).

In the maritime domain, cooperation in the *blue economy* in Bay of Bengal has opened new opportunities in **Bangladesh** and India. It is also the shared responsibility of both the countries that our common maritime region in Bay of Bengal remain peaceful so as harmless as the potential of 'Blue Economy' India and Bangladesh can develop a joint road map of the 'Blue Economy' cooperation and help for the coming years. Similarly, the littoral countries of *Latin America* are also making consistent efforts to explore the scope of 'Blue Economy' in accordance with their prevailing oceanic conditions. All these countries are like Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, Argentina, Ecuador, Columbia, Guyana, Surinam and Fr. Guiana with assistance from the USA and Canada. However, the USA and Canada have already made remarkable progress in the field of developing the 'Blue Economy' by exploring the hidden potential in their Atlantic and Pacific Oceans (Narwal, Kaur, & Singh, 2024).

IV. BLUE ECONOMY: INDIAN SCENARIO

During the past few years, 'deep sea-mining' has been the subject of a lively debate among maritime analysts. With global appetite for minerals and *rare metals* growing, the competition for deep sea-spaces rich with poly-metallic nodules and hydrothermal deposits has been increasing. Much of the interest in deep-sea mining has been led by the discovery that *poly-metallic Sulphides* – a great source of valuable minerals such as gold, silver and zinc - also contain valuable *rare-earth* metals, a commonly used ingredient in

modern day electronic devices and gadgets. As a result, many countries have embarked upon a drive to upgrade their under-sea mineral exploration and extraction capabilities. In order to reduce the *chronic pressure* on conventional sources of energy, tidal energy can be a best substitute of energy for generating electric energy for the coastal regions of India. Few years back acquisition of India's deep-sea exploration ship '**Samudra Ratnakar**' by the Geological Survey of India (GSI) was a significant development. The platform acquired from South Korea, the **Samudra Ratnakar** is well equipped with sophisticated deep-sea survey instruments like Doppler profilers, multibeam sonar, acoustic positioning systems, marine magnetometers and a marine data management system, which provide a qualitative edge over other survey ships. As a result, it has paved the way to facilitate modern geo-scientific oceanographic research; the new ship's chief attribute is its cutting-edge deep-sea exploration capability. With an impressive array of instruments and a modern on-board laboratory, the new ship represents a technological leap in India's sea-mining prowess. It is to be noted that India already has a limited deep-sea exploration capability in the form of the **Sagar Nidhi** (a research vessel operated by the National Institute of Ocean Technology). The **Samudra Ratnakar**, however, more sophisticated in its salient features and systems that enable a rigorous survey of the deep sea-bed, and an accurate analysis of the excavated material. Not surprisingly, it is being seen as an illustration of India's determination to be a serious player in deep sea mining and research. The initiative that India is now displaying in deep-sea mining seems linked to China's perceived '*strategic-play*' in the Indian Ocean. In 2011, when the International Sea Bed Authority (ISBA's) decided to allow the China Ocean Mineral Resources Research and Development Association (COMRA) to undertake exploration for poly-metallic *Sulphides* in a 10,000 sq. kms area in the south-west Indian Ocean it caused a flutter in the Indian strategic community, which saw the development as a geo-strategic gambit aimed at extending China's footprint in the Indian Ocean Region (Gunter & Pauli, 2011).

India's recent efforts to be a serious player in the strategic arena of deep sea mining have resulted in the commissioning of a rare-earth mineral processing plant in Orissa, and a project to up-grade older exploration ships. 'Deep-sea mining' has now been officially recognized as a future frontier of scientific research, a notion first detailed in the vision plan outlined by a National Security Council policy paper in 2012. Interestingly, the policy document also covered the broader domain of '*rare earths*', mandating the creation of a stockpile of '*strategically critical input metals*'. As a corollary, New Delhi has commenced a search for partners that it could combine

forces with to bolster its efforts towards exploration and mining of rare minerals (National Security Council Paper, 2012).

One such agreement was held with Japan in November 2012. As part of the larger framework of Indo-Japan strategic collaboration, an agreement was signed for the exploration and production of rare earths, following which India is establishing a *monazite processing* plant in Orissa. Japan-the second largest consumer of *rare earths* -is driven by its anxiety of China's monopolistic practices, and has been leading efforts to explore the market. A significant component of Tokyo's new policy of regional integration is building capacity for extraction of rare earths. The new approach was much in evidence during Japan's offer to *Vietnam* to help in the construction of a Research and Technology Transfer Centre in Hanoi. It was encouraged by Tokyo's '*rare earths diplomacy*', New Delhi is now said to be mulling over a proposal for deep-sea mining and production technology from Tokyo under the strategic dialogue framework, and the acquisition of more deep-sea exploration vessels (Sikarwar, 2012).

India's anxieties vis-a-vis Chinese deep sea mining capability are sharpened by *Beijing's* historic past which indicates making use of *rare earths* as a '*bargaining chip*' to extract *strategic concessions*. Consider, for instance, the 2010 episode; when China blocked Japan's supply of *rare-earth minerals* for two months over skirmishes relating to disputed territorial claims in the China Seas. So strong and pervasive has China's '*hard-bargaining*' tactics been with respect to *rare earths*, that in 2012 the World Trade Organization even created a panel to investigate its harmful influence on the market. Hence, it is obvious that India has a great potential to boost the '*Blue Economy*', provided it overcomes the constraints on different problematic areas. Only then the growth and development of the '*Blue Economy*' will ensure a sustainable development in the coming years of India. And also it is expected to pave the way to strengthen the employment potential of the '*Hinterland*' of the coastal regions of India. As a result, it is hopefully to be given rise to a '*Multiplier-effects*' to the whole regional economy of coastal India and hopefully strengthen the '*Hinterland*' of the coastal areas, where there is the potentiality of development of '*Blue-economy*' exist in the coastal and its surrounding areas of India, reflects a rosy picture in for increasing a considerable growth in the Gross Domestic Growth and boosting the overall Indian Economy (Dutt & Sunderm, 2020).

V. BLUE ECONOMY AND MARINE SECURITY

Since the 18th century, marine security has been the main concern with the littoral countries of the different continents of the world. Marine security now becomes imperative for each and every littoral country. In order to review the implications of changing the geo-political and strategic environment on marine security, we have to review the strength and weakness of the *strategic* and *geo-political* changing scenario in relation to changing international relations. The changing geo-political situation in the Indian Ocean region in the last decade, has acted as a stimulus for the littoral nations to look seaward. Inception of maritime construct, linking the Indian Ocean littorals in the form of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium held in 2008. Since its inception, ISNS has generated significant interest and contributed in immense measure towards providing a platform for all IOR littoral navies to periodically and regularly discuss the issues that bear upon regional maritime security and cooperation.. Keeping in view the *locational advantage* and *disadvantage* it becomes imperative to review the situation-that how a rise in element of complexity and unpredictability in external threats along the coastal line can have impact on the country's security challenges? In this context, the historic past indicates instances of threat to the Indian coast. During the 70s, the entire Indian Ocean became the major *arena* of superpowers rivalry, when the United States of America had established a military base in *Diego Garcia*, an Island in the Indian Ocean. In order to confront this military base, the super powers like France, Russia, China and other littoral countries have also started to establish their bases in the littoral countries and other strategic islands like Socotra etc. In order to meet the growing challenges of maritime security strategy, a *Maritime Security Strategy* (IMSS-15) was updated before the commencement of an international fleet review at Visakhapatnam; the new document is an enunciation of contemporary nautical precepts and a reflection of the Navy's maritime operations philosophy. In order to assess India's maritime compulsions, the IMSS focuses attention on security of the Indian sea lines of communication, the preservation of national influence in the maritime neighborhood, and protection of overseas investment and Indian residing abroad. As a consequence; it seems to prioritize security against irregular challenges over other traditional threats. In order to combat the smuggling, piracy, armed robbery, humanitarian crises, various peace support operations and non-combatants have been instituted by the Indian Navy. Only then the '*Blue Economy*' will be ensured to grow on *sustainable growth principle*. India is the 20th largest maritime country in the world. Its strategic location of a long coastline which flanks

significant major routes of the world of shipping transport, make it a major maritime country. The maritime sector in the country includes ports, shipping, ship building and ship repair as well as inland water transport systems. It has been observed that 95 % of India's trade by volume and 70% by value are transported by maritime transport. The current share of world merchandise trade at around 0.80 %, a sound maritime infrastructure has a great significant place for *space, structure and pattern* of economic development. The National Maritime Development Programme which operates under the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways are the nodal organizations, entrusted with the responsibility of formulating and implementation of policies and programmes for this sector. According to the NMDP report, there are 887 projects which cover the entire gamut of activities in ports, merchant shipping, and inland water transport. It envisages a total investment of Rs 100, 339 crores, out of which Rs 55, 804 Crores is for major *ports* and rest for shipping and inland water transport (NMDP Report, 2016).

VI. PORT LED INDUSTRIALIZATION

There is 7500 KM coastline covering 13 states and union territories, having *locational advantages* for navigable and potentially navigable waterways. Maritime logistics is a very significant component for the Indian economy which accounts 90 per cent of *EXIM* trade by volume and 72 per cent of *EXIM* trade of India by value. It means that about 1 billion tons of cargo is handled by 200 ports. The *Sagarmala* is aimed at promoting port-based or port-proximate industrial and manufacturing clusters. These would cut-across three archetypes of energy, material, and discrete manufacturing. In this context, there are 32 clusters which have been identified that would entail an investment of Rs one *Lakh Crores*. The project may lead to additional investment of Rs 7 *Lakh Crores* by the industry. In order to meet Nation's projected energy needs, three coastal power clusters and two coastal refinery clusters have been projected within the identified areas. In addition, 4 new *gas-based* petro-chemical clusters have also been identified with promising potential of growth proposal of 80 percent self-sufficiency through domestic petro-chemical production. In order to boost up the export from US \$-500 billion to US \$ 900 billion by the year 2020, port-based manufacturing can play a vital role in supporting this initiative. In this context, ports should target a few sectors, where they take lead and make manufacturing more comprehensive in accordance with prevailing local conditions. Lastly, six *discrete manufacturing sectors* have been finalized for promoting the port-based manufacturing. These *manufacturing units* are food-processing, auto-motives, electronic items, apparel, leather goods, foot wear and furniture. These

clusters will hopefully generate experts with US \$ 110 billion by the year 2025 and over Crores jobs either directly or indirectly in its '*Hinter-land*' of coastal areas of India (Hazara & Shukla, 2022).

VII. CONCLUSION

Since antiquity the oceans and its littoral regions have played a significant role in Hindu religion and its greatness has profusely illustrated in Holy Scriptures. Sea and Oceans have a vital significance, as a part of aggravating the nation's economy. Keeping in view its multiple benefits, the sea and ocean-based economy has been referred to as the '*Blue Economy*.' In order to boost up this '*Blue Economy*', consistent efforts have been made to tap this hidden potential in accordance with existing *geological* and *oceanographic* conditions of coastal India. It has been reviewed that the *ocean-based* economic and *port-based* industrial activities which include deep sea-fisheries, exploration of mineral bearing rocks, crude oil, medicinal sea rocks and plants, oceanic transport, sea-based tourism, tidal energy and *port led industrialization* have a great potential to boost up the marine-based '*Blue Economy*'. In this context, almost all the developed and developing countries are making their consistent efforts to identify the possible potential in their respective countries.. Though countries like India have a great potential to tap this *hidden* resources potential, it needs a *constant vigil* for her entire coastal region. In this context, India is making consistent efforts to provide constant *vigilance* through tightening the coastal security by coastal guards. In this context, various reports show that the superpowers' rivalries have always been proved a '*wet blanket*' to tap the hidden potential of '*Blue-economy*' of Indian Ocean. Though India is making consistent efforts to ensure national security by strengthening the *naval-based marine security* for coastal India, there have been constant threats to Indian security which can be seen by citing varied marine intervention by the Pakistani terrorists, smugglers and other anti-social elements. Keeping in view the constant threat to developing the '*Blue Economy*,' it requires a periodic review in relation to its strength, weakness, opportunity and threat in the changing *geo-political global* scenario. Only then, we may ensure to tap the hidden potential of '*Blue Economy*' and find the supplementary sources of food security, energy, employment by developing *port-led* industrialization in the coastal regions of India. It requires a huge investment and identifies the ocean-based economic and industrial activities on '*sustainable*' basis and ensures to develop the '*Blue Economy*' for the millions of people of India, who dwell in the coastal regions of eastern and western parts of India. It will also ensure to reduce the *chronic pressure* on conventional sources of energy resources and creating a

sustainable employment for the people who live in littoral regions of India. In order to strengthen the scope of 'Blue Economy', it requires a periodic review in terms of its 'Strength', 'Weakness', 'Opportunity' and 'Threat' so that we can tap the hidden potential of the oceanic resources on a sustainable basis and project a 'rosy-picture' of 'Blue Economy' in the changing global scenario.

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Teaching Cohesion in English and Arabic: The Role of Endophoric and Exophoric References in ESL/EFL Contexts

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Abstract— *In both English and Arabic, creating clear and readable texts hinges on the concept of cohesion. This cohesion works by using internal references (endophora) and external references (exophora). English tends to favor pronouns, substitution, and ellipsis to keep things concise, whereas Arabic often opts for repeating words and using conjunctions, placing more importance on clarity than on brevity. This difference in structure poses difficulties for Arabic speakers as they learn English, particularly in ESL/EFL contexts. They frequently grapple with using pronouns accurately, picking up on implied links within the text, and understanding ellipsis, all of which can impede their ability to craft coherent English writing. This paper delves into how these two languages utilize internal and external referencing and the roles these play in communication. Applying Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and comparative discourse analysis, it determines typical cohesion-related challenges Arabic speakers encounter. The study suggests practical classroom approaches to improve students' cohesive ability, including direct teaching on reference, contrastive practice, and real-text training. Through the integration of linguistic comparison with classroom practice, this paper provides useful recommendations for ESL/EFL teachers. It equips them with hands-on tools and techniques to enhance students' reading and writing abilities by enhancing their command of cohesive devices.*



Keywords— *Arabic-English Contrastive Analysis, Cohesion, Referents, and ESL/EFL Teaching.*

I. INTRODUCTION

English Foreign Language (EFL) learners encounter various challenges in reading and writing English texts. As far as it is not possible to quantify the difficulty of reading a foreign language text, linguists have related it to numerous factors. Halliday and Hasan (1976) relate the difficulty of a text to numerous factors, such as graphic organization, rhetorical devices, vocabulary, syntax, grammar, rhetorical complexity, and reader attitude and self-confidence.

From this view, referents are significant because their presence in a text contributes to coherence. They accomplish this by linking various parts of the text to their intended reference. Referents are important in the

achievement of textual cohesion, hence substantiating theories of reading comprehension. They make indefinite antecedents used by pronouns or other forms of reference clear, hence the interpretation of the text becomes easier. Klare (1963) categorizes readability features into four broad categories: word length, word familiarity, grammatical structure, and sentence length. Referential information can essentially be viewed as information that has been retrieved, whereby a reference shows the presence of a specific entity in a text that allows the interpretation of another section. Thompson (2004) substantiates Halliday and Hasan's view by saying that reference is made up of grammatical devices that allow a speaker or writer to indicate whether information has been previously mentioned in the text or is

being introduced for the first time. This allows the linking of various parts of a text, making comprehension possible and the establishment of a coherent message. Anderson & Anderson (1997) note that a text is produced by combining words in a manner that conveys meaning. The selection and organization of words are not arbitrary; instead, they are guided by the intended purpose (the reason for writing the text) and the contextual variables (the situation, audience, and environment in which it is written).

Cohesion is a natural quality of discourse that increases the logical consistency, clarity, and interdependence of textual elements, hence making them more understandable and meaningful to readers and listeners. Halliday and Hasan (1976) explain cohesion as a group of linguistic devices that connect different parts of a text, thus creating semantic continuity. It involves a variety of linguistic devices that connect sentences, phrases, and clauses in a text, thus making its progression without disjointedness and enhancing its coherence. Cohesion is thus achieved through a variety of cohesive devices, such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion, all of which help to provide integrity to discourse. Among these devices, reference is a significant one by leading readers through a text and establishing relations among varied textual elements, thus aiding interpretation of meaning from prior discourse. The importance of cohesion in written and oral discourse cannot be overemphasized, as it enables smooth flow of ideas, avoids redundancy, and aids clarity. Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) believe that cohesion supplies the formal linguistic organization through which coherence is achieved in discourse, stressing its structural role in text organization. In the absence of cohesion, a text would be prone to disjointedness and navigational difficulty, thus making it more probable to result in misunderstandings. Al-Jurjani (11th century), a renowned Arabic linguist, contends in his *Theory of Nadhem* (Text Organization) that the success of discourse depends on the appropriate organization of words and their syntactic and semantic relationships, closely approximating modern notions of cohesion. Similarly, Ibn Khaldun (1377) said in his *Muqaddimah* (The Introduction) that the effectiveness and intelligibility of spoken language depend upon the harmonious relationship of ideas, and every sentence naturally follows another. Halliday and Hasan (1976) began the scientific study of cohesion and drew a distinction between it and coherence—while cohesion is the linguistic relations between sentences, coherence is the overall sense and logical structure of discourse. Al-Khatib (2001) thinks that Arabic discourse is, unlike its English counterpart, more prone to draw upon lexical repetition and overt conjunctions to produce cohesion, and this is a feature of the language's rhetorical tradition. Cohesion, in this

sense, allows for the readability of narrative, expository, and argumentative discourse, in the sense that different parts of a discourse stay connected. Thus, in the case of cross-cultural and multilingual communication, cohesion becomes even more crucial, as different languages employ different cohesive strategies. Al-Samerai (2003) thinks that the Arabic language employs a system of repetition and redundancy to aid meaning and keep discourse clear, particularly in classical and formal styles. For instance, while English often employs pronouns and ellipsis to produce cohesion, Arabic tends to employ lexical repetition and categorical conjunctions. Understanding cohesion and applying it to discourse is of crucial significance in translation, second-language acquisition, and discourse analysis, as it significantly affects the transmission and reception of meaning across linguistic and cultural frontiers. Similarly, Carter and McCarthy (2006) mention that learners of a second language often encounter cohesion-related problems owing to structural differences between their mother and target languages, and therefore cohesive devices must be taught explicitly. Therefore, a clear understanding of cohesion practically and theoretically is essential to translators, linguists, and teachers to maintain coherence and text construction in multilingual settings.

II. LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVES ON REFERENCES AND COHESION

Research in linguistics on reference and cohesion has been significantly influenced by various intellectual paradigms, each with its own unique conceptual frameworks and methodologies. Different linguistic schools have contributed to our understanding of cohesive structures by examining them from multiple perspectives. They have explored how these structures function structurally, functionally, and contextually to create meaning and maintain coherence in discourse.

Cohesion refers to the way words and phrases link various sections of a text, ensuring it flows seamlessly and is perceived as a unified whole. It relies on mechanisms such as referencing, substitution, ellipsis (omission of words), conjunctions, and lexical choices to maintain textual unity. Over the years, different linguistic schools of thought have contributed to the study of cohesion and referencing, each offering distinct perspectives and analytical frameworks. These theoretical insights have shaped the field by enhancing our understanding of how cohesive devices function to create meaning and coherence in written discourse.

From the perspective of functional linguistics, cohesion is a crucial aspect of a text's meaning. It is created using a variety of methods, such as reference, substitution, ellipsis,

conjunctions, and lexical cohesion (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Halliday & Hasan consider reference to be a grammatical tool that points to or indicates something within or outside the discourse, establishing connections between clauses, sentences, and larger discourse units. This reference can be anaphoric (looking back), cataphoric (looking ahead), or exophoric (outside the discourse).

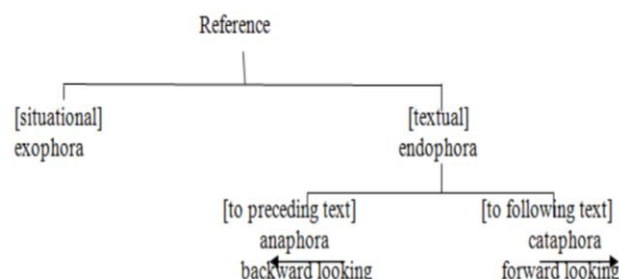


Fig. 1: Classification of Reference Types by Halliday & Hasan (1976, p. 33)

As illustrated in the diagram, references within texts can be broadly classified into two types: exophora, or outer reference, and endophora, or inner reference. Exophoric reference pertains to linguistic expressions that direct attention to elements of the situation outside the text but within the wider context. David Crystal (2008:169) describes exophoric reference as "a term used by some linguists to refer to the relationships of cohesion which help to define the structure of a text." Because these elements are not explicitly stated in the text, their omission might impede a reader's comprehensive grasp. Conversely, endophoric reference deals with linguistic expressions that are explicitly stated within the text, thereby fostering internal cohesion and improving clarity. David Crystal (2008:169) defines endophoric reference as "a term used by some linguists to refer to the relationships of cohesion which help to define the structure of a text."

In English, grammatical cohesion is mainly achieved through pronominal reference, conjunctions, and substitution. For instance, English often uses pronouns to avoid redundant repetition:

"The Prime Minister delivered a speech. He emphasized the need for reform."

The pronoun "he" functions as an anaphoric reference, pointing back to "The Prime Minister."

In contrast, Arabic typically relies on lexical cohesion, favoring the repetition of key nouns rather than substituting them with pronouns. A more natural Arabic rendering of the same sentence would be:

"ألقى رئيس الوزراء خطاباً. رئيس الوزراء شدد على الحاجة إلى الإصلاح"

(The Prime Minister delivered a speech. The Prime Minister emphasized the need for reform.)

This repetition reinforces clarity and maintains textual cohesion, a common stylistic feature in Arabic discourse.

This preference for repetition aligns with Halliday and Hasan's (1976) assertion that English primarily relies on grammatical cohesion, whereas Arabic tends to favor semantic and lexical cohesion. Furthermore, Ryding (2005) highlights that Arabic frequently employs connective particles such as "و" (*wa* – "and") and "ف" (*fa* – "so/then") to sustain coherence. In contrast, English uses a wider variety of conjunctions to express logical relationships, offering more explicit signalling of connections between ideas.

For instance, the English sentence:

"He studied hard; therefore, he passed the exam."

The same example is more explicitly linked in Arabic with the use of conjunctions:

"درس بجد، ولذلك نجح في الامتحان" (Darasa bijidd, wa lidhalika najaha fil imtiḥan.)

This example illustrates how Arabic tends to rely on explicit discourse markers to enhance clarity, while English often employs ellipsis or implicit logical connections.

Traditional grammar mostly looks at how sentences stick together and how they're connected within a text. English usually does this by using things like subordinate clauses, punctuation, and pronouns. On the flip side, Arabic tends to use coordination, parallel structures, and repeating words as its main ways to create cohesion (Quirk et al., 1985).

One notable difference between the two languages is their treatment of relative clauses and pronoun reference. English frequently uses relative pronouns to create cohesion:

"She met her professor, who gave her valuable advice."

In Arabic, a more explicit structure is preferred:

"قابلت أستاذها، وأستاذها قدم لها نصائح قيمة"

(She met her professor, and her professor gave her valuable advice.)

Instead of using relative pronouns like "who", Arabic tends to rely on noun repetition, a strategy that prioritizes clarity but reflects a different structural approach to cohesion. As Al-Khafaji (2005) explains, this preference for lexical repetition is deeply rooted in Arabic rhetorical conventions, where repetition is not viewed as redundancy but rather as a means of reinforcing emphasis and ensuring textual coherence.

Another significant difference between the two languages is their treatment of ellipsis and substitution. In English, certain elements can be omitted when the meaning is clear

from the context, as in:
"He bought a car, and she did too."

The phrase "did too" substitutes for "bought a car."

In contrast, Arabic generally avoids such substitutions, favoring explicit repetition to maintain clarity and cohesion.

"اشتري سيارة، وهي أيضًا اشترت سيارة"

(He bought a car, and she also bought a car.)

This illustration underscores the strong use of Arabic for clear lexical recurrence instead of structural parsimony. While English prefers brevity, Arabic keeps meaning clarity by guaranteeing meaning through repetition.

From a Generative Linguistics point of view, cohesion is connected to deep syntactic structures and deep grammar principles. Noam Chomsky's Transformational-Generative Grammar (TGG) postulates that cohesive items, like pronouns and conjunctions, are derived from universal linguistic principles that govern sentence structure. Arabic and English, however, are very different in the way these structures are realized in surface discourse.

One key difference between Arabic and English is the *pro-drop* phenomenon, where Arabic allows the omission of subject pronouns when verb inflection provides sufficient information. For example, the Arabic sentence:

"ذهب إلى السوق" (Dhahaba ila al-suq.)

translates to: (He) went to the market.

Although the subject pronoun is not explicitly stated in Arabic, the verb conjugation clearly indicates that the subject is masculine singular. In contrast, English requires an overt subject:

"He has gone to the market."

Chomsky (1982) explains that the *null-subject* property is associated with rich agreement morphology, where the verb's inflectional features provide enough information to identify the missing subject. This distinction highlights how Arabic's inflectional system supports implicit cohesion, whereas English relies on explicit syntactic markers to maintain coherence.

Hatim and Mason (1997) further note that Arabic cohesion strategies are influenced by diglossia. They observe that Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) exhibits more consistent and structured cohesive patterns, while spoken dialects tend to rely on contextual and discourse-based cohesion.

Chomsky's theory of *movement* and *deletion* also explains why English frequently uses ellipsis, while Arabic tends to avoid it. For example, in the English sentence:

"John went to the store, and Mary did too."

The phrase "did too" replaces "went to the store," demonstrating English's preference for structural economy by omitting redundant information.

In contrast, Arabic typically resists such substitutions, favoring explicit repetition to maintain clarity:
"ذهب محمد إلى المتجر، ليلي أيضًا ذهبت إلى المتجر"

(Mohammed went to the store, and Laila went to the store too.)

Chomsky (1993) notes that movement and deletion operations in syntax follow the principle of economy, aiming to eliminate unnecessary repetition while preserving interpretability. This supports the view that Arabic prioritizes explicitness and semantic clarity, while English leans toward structural efficiency.

The differences in cohesive patterns between English and Arabic reflect their distinct linguistic structures, rhetorical traditions, and grammatical systems. From a *functional perspective*, English achieves cohesion through pronominal reference and conjunctions, whereas Arabic relies more heavily on lexical cohesion and repetition. The *traditional approach* highlights Arabic's preference for coordination over subordination, while English frequently uses relative pronouns and ellipsis. From a *generative perspective*, Arabic's rich inflectional system allows for implicit cohesion, whereas English relies on explicit syntactic markers to ensure coherence.

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING COHESION IN ESL/EFL CONTEXTS

Teaching cohesion is vital in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, as it enhances learners' ability to produce clear, connected, and logically structured discourse. Halliday and Hasan (1976) define cohesion as the set of linguistic resources that create relationships in discourse, extending beyond grammatical structures. It plays a key role in effective communication, as a lack of cohesion can make learners' writing and speech appear disjointed, making it harder for readers or listeners to follow their ideas.

Applied linguists such as Canale and Swain (1980) emphasize that discourse competence—one of the core components of communicative competence—heavily relies on cohesion. They argue that the ability to link sentences into a coherent whole is a fundamental skill in language proficiency. Similarly, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) highlight the importance of training learners in using cohesive devices to achieve coherence in their language production. According to them, cohesive markers such as pronouns, conjunctions, and lexical repetition are essential

for constructing meaningful discourse and avoiding ambiguity.

From an Arabic linguistic perspective, Al-Jurjani (1954), in *Dala'il al-I'jaz*, argues that textual unity in Arabic rhetoric (*balāgha*) is achieved through cohesive devices such as repetition (*takrār*), reference (*dalāla*), and parallelism (*muṭābaqa*). His theory suggests that Arabic speakers learning English may face challenges due to differences in cohesion strategies between the two languages. This aligns with Ryding's (2005) observation that Arabic discourse tends to favor explicit lexical cohesion, whereas English often relies on pronouns and ellipsis to create cohesion.

Several studies have stressed the role of cohesion in improving reading and writing skills. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) argue that cohesion is crucial for reading comprehension, as it helps readers reconstruct meaning by providing interpretive cues. This is particularly relevant for ESL/EFL learners, who may struggle with implicit cohesion markers, such as ellipsis or substitution. Similarly, Knoch (2007) highlights that lack of cohesion in second-language (L2) writing is a common reason why students receive lower scores in academic assessments.

In Arabic, Al-Samerrai (2003) observes that Arabic writers traditionally rely on overt cohesion by frequently using conjunctions such as "*wa*" (و – "and"), "*fa*" (ف – "so/then"), and "*thumma*" (ثم – "then"). These conjunctions link words, phrases, or clauses, with "*wa*" indicating addition, "*fa*" expressing sequence and immediacy, and "*thumma*" signaling delayed sequence. Consequently, Arabic-speaking learners of English may produce texts that seem repetitive or redundant in English due to their reliance on this cohesion strategy. Explicit instruction in cohesion can help students recognize these cross-linguistic differences and refine their writing accordingly.

Cohesion also plays a significant role in spoken discourse. Carter and McCarthy (2006) note that fluent English speakers use cohesive devices naturally and spontaneously, making their speech more fluid and comprehensible. However, they observe that ESL learners often struggle with cohesion in conversation, resulting in disjointed or abrupt turns.

Interestingly, the importance of cohesion in oral discourse has long been recognized in Arabic rhetorical traditions. Ibn Khaldun (1377), in *Al-Muqaddimah*, viewed speech cohesion as a marker of rhetorical eloquence (*fasāḥa*), highlighting the significance of coherence in classical Arabic oratory. However, Arabic-speaking ESL learners may face difficulties with cohesion in English speech due to different discourse norms. For example, while Arabic tends to use elaborate descriptive structures, English often relies

on direct referential cohesion (Badawi, Carter, & Gully, 2004).

Given these differences, ESL/EFL educators should incorporate explicit cohesion-focused instruction into their curricula. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) argue that cohesion should not be treated as a separate grammatical component but as an integral part of meaning-making in language. Therefore, teachers should provide explicit instruction on cohesive devices, using authentic texts to demonstrate their functions. Additionally, Swales and Feak (2012) highlight the importance of teaching cohesion in academic writing, as it enhances clarity and persuasiveness. For Arabic-speaking learners, contrastive analysis can be particularly beneficial, helping them understand how cohesion functions differently in English and Arabic.

IV. ENDOPHORIC REFERENCES: ANAPHORIC AND CATAPHORIC RELATIONS

Cohesion is a fundamental aspect of how we put together texts. It's what gives a text its clarity and logical flow, making it easy for readers or listeners to follow along. A key way that cohesion is achieved is through endophora, which basically links different parts of the same text together. Chomsky (1981) believed that how we refer to things is determined by how pronouns relate to their antecedents, all governed by something called binding theory. This theory outlines the rules for how elements within a sentence are connected. Similarly, Halliday and Hasan (1976) pointed out that reference is a tool used to link words or phrases to what's already been said or what's coming up in the text. This makes the text easier to understand and avoids repeating things unnecessarily.

Endophoric references are generally divided into two different categories, namely, anaphoric reference, referring back to something previously discussed, and cataphoric reference, referring forward to something to be discussed later. The use of these referential devices is of maximum importance in ensuring textual cohesion in all languages, though their use can be different based on the specific language and writing style used.

Anaphoric reference is one of the most common approaches towards achieving cohesion since it ensures continuation and connectedness of discourse. This type of reference is where a pronoun, a demonstrative, definite noun phrase, or elliptical clause points back to an initial item in the discourse. Quirk and colleagues (1985) explain that anaphoric reference acts as a retrieval system, cutting down on redundancy and making text more concise while keeping the meaning clear. Take the English sentence: "David bought a new house. He is very happy with it." This shows

anaphoric reference because "he" stands in for "David" and "it" points back to "a new house."

Arabic uses anaphoric reference too, but its ways of creating cohesion are often different from English. English uses pronouns to keep things short, but Arabic often repeats words for emphasis and to make things clear. As Ryding (2005) points out, Arabic rhetorical traditions place a high value on being explicit, often repeating nouns along with pronouns to make sure the meaning is perfectly clear. Consider the Arabic sentence:

أكمل محمد دراسته. محمد الآن يستعد للعمل
(*Mohammed completed his studies. Mohammed is now preparing for work.*)

Unlike English, which prefers to substitute the second occurrence of Mohammed with the pronoun 'he,' Arabic prefers to repeat in order to be clear. This is a general linguistic preference such that clarity is given priority over concision.

Demonstratives like this, that, these, and those in English also show anaphoric use, pointing back to some noun or idea previously mentioned. For example, in:

The government introduced new reforms. These reforms were widely debated.

The demonstrative *these* is used to point back to new reforms. Likewise, Arabic demonstratives *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those* (هذا، هذه، هؤلاء) are used for the same purpose but usually accompany the repeated noun to emphasize, as in:

أعلنت الحكومة عن إصلاحات جديدة. هذه الإصلاحات أثارت جدلاً واسعاً.
(The government announced new reforms. These reforms sparked widespread debate.).

Badawi, Carter, and Gully (2004) contend that although English and Arabic employ demonstratives to the purpose of cohesion, the repetition tendency of the Arabic language focuses its rhetorical concern on clarity and elaboration.

Ellipsis is a form of anaphoric cohesion in which missing items can be brought in from preceding discourse. English uses this method to encourage text economy, such as:

Sarah prefers classical music, and so does her brother.

The verb phrase 'enjoys classical music' is not expressed but understood from the surrounding context. Ellipsis is not as frequently employed in Arabic since clear references tend to be used to ensure coherence. In Arabic but not English, the subject pronoun may be dropped due to its pro-drop nature. Ryding (2005) assumed that such an occurrence is enabled by the complex verbal morphology of Arabic that expresses sufficient information about the subject, a phenomenon which is frequently referred to as zero anaphora. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014:635) note that:

"Another form of anaphoric cohesion in the text is achieved by ELLIPSIS, where we

presuppose something by means of what is left out. Like all cohesive agencies, ellipsis contributes to the semantic structure of the discourse. But unlike reference, which is itself a semantic relation, ellipsis sets up a relationship that is not semantic but lexicogrammatical – a relationship in the wording rather than directly in the meaning... Ellipsis marks the textual status of continuous information within a certain grammatical structure. At the same time, the non-ellipsed elements of that structure are given the status of being contrastive in the environment of continuous information."

Different from how anaphora works, cataphora points ahead to something coming up later in the conversation or text. This trick is often used to build suspense, create a particular effect, or just to structure things logically. You see this a lot in formal writing and literature in English. Take this sentence for instance:

"Before she spoke, Lisa took a deep breath."

Here, the word "she" is hinting at Lisa, who comes later in the sentence, and this creates a bit of anticipation. Carter and McCarthy (2006) think this is a great way to organize information, because it keeps the reader engaged by pointing them toward what's coming next.

In Arabic, though, they don't use cataphora nearly as much. They tend to prefer just stating the full noun outright rather than using a pronoun that refers to something coming up. Even so, you can still spot it now and then in Arabic literature or formal writing. Let's look at an example sentence:

عندما وصل، استقبله أصدقاؤه بحرارة، خالد كان سعيداً للغاية

(*When he arrived, his friends welcomed him warmly; Khalid was very happy.*)

Thus, the pronoun "he" works by looking ahead to the mention of "Khalid." Although this kind of structure can be found in Arabic, it's far less frequent than it is in English. Hatim and Mason (1997) point out that Arabic tends to favor explicit connection words over subtle ways of referring to something coming up later in the text, showing a liking for being clear instead of ambiguous.

V. EXOPHORIC REFERENCES: DEIXIS AND CONTEXTUAL MEANING

Exophoric reference, especially using deixis, is a basic tool for connecting text to the world outside it, which is crucial for clear communication in both English and Arabic. Halliday and Hasan (1976) describe exophoric reference as

a way of referring that guides the reader or listener to things outside the text itself, counting on the surrounding situation for understanding. Unlike anaphoric and cataphoric references, which work within the text, exophoric references, like deictic expressions, only make sense when considered in relation to the speaker's place in time, space, or social setting. Levinson (1983) sorts deixis into three main kinds: person deixis (for example, I, you, we), spatial deixis (for example, here, there, this, that), and temporal deixis (for example, now, then, today, tomorrow).

In English, deixis is fairly straightforward, often depending on context to be understood, while Arabic has a more intricate system that takes into account gender, number, and verb forms (Al-Khafaji, 2005). When it comes to person deixis, English uses simple pronouns like "I" (for the speaker) and "you" (for the listener), but Arabic pronouns give extra details about gender and whether someone is talking about more than one person, like this:

رسلتُ لكَ المستند (I sent you [masculine] the document), and
رسلتُ لكَ المستند (I sent you [feminine] the document).

Also, Arabic has a dual form (أنتما، هما), which English doesn't have. This makes Arabic deixis more specific, but it can be tricky for Arabic speakers learning English. Spatial deixis, which helps place things in relation to the speaker, is another important part of exophoric reference. English uses demonstratives (this, that, these, those) and locative adverbs (here, there), telling the difference between things close by (this, here) and things farther away (that, there). Arabic, though, shows gender and number in demonstratives, as we can see in:

هذا الكتاب ممتع (This book is interesting – masculine)

versus: هذه القصة ممتعة (This story is interesting – feminine) and also features a separate plural demonstrative (أولئك). Also, Arabic demonstratives can work both inside and outside of the text, based on the situation. Temporal deixis, which places events in time, further highlights the differences between English and Arabic deixis. In English, words like now, then, today, tomorrow, and yesterday get their meaning from the time when they're said, like in "I will meet you tomorrow," where "tomorrow" is outside the text because its meaning depends on when the sentence is spoken. Arabic is similar, but it also has extra differences, including specific words for the day before yesterday (قبل أمس) and the day after tomorrow (بعد غد), which English doesn't have (Badawi, 2012). Arabic verb tenses also have a clearer role in temporal deixis, as they show if an action has already happened, is happening now, or will happen in the future. Exophoric reference really stands out in spoken conversations, where speakers take for granted that they're both in the same situation. Like, if someone's pointing at a chair and says, "Can you move that?", the word "that" only

makes sense because of what's around them physically. But in writing, you don't see exophoric references as much, because readers aren't necessarily in the same immediate context. This difference is super important in academic and news writing, where they use endophoric cohesion more often (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). For Arabic speakers learning English, exophoric deixis can be tricky. They might misunderstand words like "this" and "that" because English doesn't have the same gender and number differences as Arabic. They might also rely too much on repeating the exact same words instead of using pronouns or demonstratives, and they might struggle to get the hang of how flexible English is with talking about time. To tackle these challenges, teachers of language can use methods like contextual role-plays, which let students practice deixis in realistic conversations. They can also compare how English and Arabic use deixis and analyze real texts to understand how it works in different contexts. In the end, knowing how exophoric deixis works in both English and Arabic is really important for learning a second language, translating accurately, and analyzing discourse. It changes how we understand meaning across different languages and cultures. Although both languages use personal, spatial, and time-based deixis, Arabic has a more detailed grammar system with clear gender and number differences. This leads to different ways of making references, which can either help or make it harder for learners to understand, depending on how well they know the discourse norms of both languages.

VI. CHALLENGES IN TEACHING COHESION IN ESL/EFL CLASSROOMS

Teaching the concept of cohesion in English language classrooms, whether for English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL), comes with its own set of hurdles, especially when working with students whose first language is Arabic. Cohesion, in the words of Halliday and Hasan (1976), is the way sentences are linked together smoothly, using grammatical and lexical tools like referencing, substitution, leaving out words (ellipsis), conjunctions, and lexical links. The problem is that Arabic and English often have very different ways of structuring sentences and making arguments, which makes it tough for Arabic speakers to get the hang of these cohesive tools in English. A big part of the trouble is how differently the two languages use cohesion because of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Arabic tends to repeat things more directly, while English likes to be more concise, using pronouns and leaving out words to avoid redundancy. For example, an English speaker might say something like:

Ali bought a new car. He loves it.

Whereas an Arabic equivalent would likely use lexical repetition:

In Arabic, you'd typically see more repetition, like this: "اشترى علي سيارة جديدة. علي يحب هذه السيارة." (Ali bought a new car. Ali loves this car.). This difference can make it tricky for Arabic speakers learning English to use pronouns correctly. They often end up either repeating words too much or using pronouns wrong.

A major challenge in teaching cohesion is grasping the concept of implicit and contextual references. English often uses implicit cohesion, meaning much is understood from the context rather than being directly spelled out. This shows up a lot with ellipsis and substitution. Take the sentence, "I wanted the red dress, but they only had the blue one." Here, "one" stands in for "dress." That kind of structure doesn't come naturally in Arabic, which tends to prefer explicitly repeating the noun. English also uses exophoric references, where the meaning depends on what's going on around you—like words like "this," "that," "here," and "there." Arabic speakers, who are used to clearer linguistic clues, might find these phrases confusing (Baker, 2018). This difference can make it tough to understand things, especially when reading academic texts or trying to comprehend what you've read.

Also, the tendency to either overuse pronouns or repeat nouns in Arabic versus English creates a pretty big teaching challenge. Arabic students often either use way too many pronouns or skip them completely because of how different their first language is. In Arabic, you can leave out subject pronouns a lot of the time because the verb ending tells you all you need to know about the subject. Take this sentence, for example: "ذهب إلى السوق" (Went to the market). It's totally fine grammatically in Arabic without saying if it's "he" or "she" who went. But in English, you've gotta explicitly say the subject pronoun: "He went to the market." This difference in how the languages are built can make Arabic learners accidentally leave out needed pronouns when they write in English, causing grammar mistakes and making their writing less connected. On the flip side, when Arabic speakers *do* use pronouns in English, they might have trouble making it clear who or what the pronoun refers to, especially when there are multiple options. For instance, take the English sentence, "John told Mark that he was wrong." The pronoun "he" here creates ambiguity, leaving us to wonder whether it refers to John or Mark. In Arabic, such ambiguity is often resolved by simply repeating the name, like this:

قال جون لمارك إن مارك كان مخطئاً. (John told Mark that Mark was wrong.)

In conclusion, teaching cohesion in ESL/EFL classes, especially to Arabic-speaking students, poses a variety of

linguistic and teaching challenges. The differences in structure and style between English and Arabic often make it difficult to master cohesive devices. This is because Arabic tends to rely on clear repetition of words, while English prefers using pronouns, leaving out words (ellipsis), and substitution. These differences can cause Arabic-speaking learners to either overuse or avoid pronouns, repeat words too much, or use referential elements incorrectly. These issues can ultimately affect their fluency and coherence when writing or speaking English. Moreover, the subtle nature of cohesion in English, particularly with external references and contextual meaning, can be hard for Arabic learners to grasp, as they are more used to clear linguistic indicators.

VII. TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING COHESION AWARENESS

Helping ESL/EFL students, especially those who speak Arabic, understand how to use cohesive devices in English means adopting specific teaching methods. These methods need to tackle the variations in structure and style between English and Arabic. Given that cohesion is crucial for creating text that's easy to follow and logically connected, educators need to create exercises that highlight both internal and external references, along with reading and writing practice, and activities focused on deixis to help students master the use of cohesive tools.

An effective technique involves including classroom tasks that highlight both internal (like anaphoric and cataphoric) and external references. This helps students tell the difference between cohesion within a text and cohesion that relies on outside context. For instance, when teaching anaphoric reference, teachers can give students brief passages with several pronouns and demonstrative adjectives and then ask them to find the words these pronouns and demonstratives refer back to. Take this for instance: in the sentence "Sarah bought a laptop. She uses it for work," students would underline "she" because it points back to "Sarah," and "it" because it refers to "laptop." Along the same lines, for cataphoric reference, you could give students a sentence like "Before he could speak, John took a deep breath" and have them figure out how "he" is actually looking ahead to "John." This kind of practice helps learners spot how English ties things together, which is different from Arabic, where they tend to just repeat things more. For exophoric reference, teachers could use dialogues that have words like "this," "that," "here," and "there," and then get students talking about how the meaning shifts based on who's speaking and who's listening. By getting the hang of these referencing tricks, students get better at following the meaning throughout a whole piece of text.

Another key approach is to use reading and writing activities to strengthen how well ideas stick together in writing. Students can learn to understand and create texts that are well-organized by doing this. When doing reading exercises, students should pay special attention to words and phrases that connect ideas in academic and news articles. For example, students could look at a news article and circle pronouns, conjunctions, and repeated words, then talk about how these help the text flow smoothly. Also, exercises where students rephrase sentences can help them get better at replacing pronouns with noun phrases and the other way around. For instance, the sentence: "The government introduced new policies. These were widely debated," can be rewritten as: "The government introduced new policies, and the policies were widely debated." Writing tasks should push students to improve their writing so that ideas stick together well. They should check that pronouns clearly refer to a specific noun, and they should avoid repeating words when it's not needed. Peer review exercises, in which students assess each other's use of cohesion, can also be helpful. They offer instant feedback on unclear references or unnecessary repetition.

Also, using deixis exercises to build contextual understanding is super important for teaching cohesion, particularly for students who aren't used to how English uses words like "this," "that," "here," "there," "now," and "then." Deixis, meaning words whose meaning changes with the context, can be really tough for Arabic speakers because Arabic often gives clearer clues about the context. Teachers can have students do role-playing where they have to use these pointing words in real-life situations, like giving directions ("The bookstore is over there") or talking about time ("We'll meet here at noon"). Another helpful exercise is to give students dialogues where they have to figure out the meaning of these pointing words based on what's happening in the situation. For example, if someone says: "I'll do that later," you can get a better understanding by asking what "that" means and when "later" is. Doing things like this helps students learn to grasp meaning on the fly, instead of just memorizing words. By using these methods, teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) can really boost students' understanding of how sentences connect, which in turn helps them write better and communicate more effectively. When learners see the different ways English and Arabic connect sentences, they can adjust how they talk and write in English, leading to a better understanding and creation of well-structured English texts.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This article has delved into the concept of cohesion in both English and Arabic, with a special emphasis on endophoric and exophoric references. It underscores the significant linguistic differences between the two languages. English frequently uses pronouns, substitution, and ellipsis to keep the text cohesive, while Arabic prefers methods like repeating words, using clear referential markers, and employing discourse connectors. These variations can make translation, learning a second language, and analyzing discourse quite challenging, since they affect how meaning is built and understood across different languages and cultures. Recognizing these differences is especially important in ESL/EFL settings, where Arabic speakers often find it difficult to adapt to English's concise style and its way of subtly connecting references, which contrasts sharply with Arabic's more direct approach and its use of repetition.

With all these tricky aspects to consider, teachers of English as a Second or Foreign Language need to use specific teaching methods to boost students' understanding and command of cohesive devices, especially referential ties. These ties are super important for both understanding what we read and making our writing flow smoothly. One of the best ways to teach is by directly showing students how referential cohesion works, pointing out different types of references like anaphoric, cataphoric, and exophoric, and giving them guided exercises to use these tools correctly and effectively. Comparing how cohesion works in English versus Arabic can also be really helpful. This helps students see and remember the differences between the two languages, which in turn reduces mistakes when using referential cohesion. Carter and McCarthy (2006) emphasize that cohesion is a vital tool for understanding language in context, and therefore, it should be a regular part of English language learning programs, taught both directly and through interactive activities. Activities in the classroom like structured reading exercises that focus on cohesive ties, writing tasks that involve students using different referential strategies, and interactive discussions that encourage the use of exophoric deixis can be very helpful in strengthening these ideas. Additionally, looking at errors along with corrective feedback can give learners useful insights into their cohesion-related mistakes, allowing them to improve their writing and speaking skills over time.

Further research really needs to dig deeper into how cohesion works in bilingual discourse processing, especially looking at how Arabic-speaking English learners pick up and use referential cohesion across different ways

of communicating. Studies that compare cohesion patterns in English and Arabic using corpora could give us really valuable insights into how often and how cohesive devices are used in everyday language. Also, translation studies could help us understand the difficulties in translating referential links between these two languages. Approaches that look at cohesion from a cognitive perspective in second-language learning could also help us better understand how learners handle cohesive devices and how teaching methods can be adapted to support their cognitive growth in this aspect. Furthermore, adopting new teaching methods for cohesion, like using digital tools, AI feedback on writing, and strategies focused on discourse, could make ESL/EFL teaching more effective and lead to better results for students. Studies that track the effects of teaching cohesion directly on students' writing, reading, and speaking over time would be very helpful in understanding the lasting benefits of these teaching approaches. Because referential cohesion is so closely tied to how well someone communicates, how smoothly they speak, and their overall ability to use language, it's vital to keep studying and improving teaching methods in this area. This will help students become more proficient in both English and Arabic, ultimately improving their ability to communicate in both languages.

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Unearthing the Gothic Features in Kenya's Selected Oral Narratives

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Abstract— *This study locates Gothic topoi in African oral literature as a way of embodying and evoking social cultural complexities and anxieties inherent in postmodern societies. Elements of giants, monsters, magicality and superstition make oral literature a rich literary mine for excavating Gothic elements and mechanics that animate the oral literary topography. Gothic traditions have been associated with written literature since the inception of Gothic genre in the sixteenth century, and this is regarded as the hegemonic normative ideological perspective which this study challenges and disrupts. Of import is the connection between oral narrative strand and Gothic genre in the overall aesthetic framework of Gothic terror, amalgamation of phantasmagoria and physical realm and naturalization of magicality. This paper concentrates its focus on the Gothic elements located in oral narratives within African setting. As an exemplification of Gothic nuances inhabiting African oral literature, the paper explores how oral narratives cross socially accepted limits allowing the monsters to become embodiment of the Other: anger, savagism, irrationality and sentimentalism reflecting on postmodern terror and horror. This work employs the theoretical arguments of Gothic-postmodernism as propagated by Maria Beville with the representational premise that selected oral narratives elucidate a Gothic space of literary inter-location. This paper employs a closed library based document analysis of oral narratives and other seminal secondary works to explore ways in which Gothic topoi are embedded in oral narratives; buttressing the notion that meaning of a text is never fixed. The study is motivated by a paucity of serious critical works on Gothic fiction in oral literature that invoke phantasmagoria and use it as a crux to navigate the reading of postmodern life. The scope of this study was selected Kenya's oral narratives that were purposefully selected using purposive sampling. In essence this helps to fortify Africa's Gothic postmodernism; thus, dismantling the essentialist hegemonic Gothic traditions as only consigned to written artistic works. It roots for the establishment of Africa's Gothic-postmodern tradition. Conclusions drawn will make significant contribution to the dialectics surrounding Gothic-postmodern genre in Kenya's oral literature.*



Keywords— *Gothic topoi, horror, magicality, phantasmagoria, postmodern, terror.*

I. GENERAL OVER-VIEW

Oral Literature is envisaged as literature that is transmitted verbally or orally. This view is buttressed by Bukenya and Nandwa (1993) who posit it that oral literature are those utterances which can be spoken or recited and whose composition and performance depict artistic characteristics of “accurate observation, vivid imagination and ingenious

expression” (p. 7). It is literature that encompasses the yearnings, dreams, complexities and anxieties of a community. Not only does it manifest the traditions and customs but it is also alive to the ceremonies and cultural activities taking place in the society. Oral literature therefore, is central in understanding a community be it in the past or in the present. Like written literature, oral literature is a

Repository of artistic expression in society. Its beauty resonates across cultural frontiers and is a response to the universal human instinct to find balance harmony and beauty (Laura & Appell, 2023, p. 1)

In a world that is disenchanting and disorienting, oral literature responds to and recreates the nature of life at a particular historical and literary epoch. It approximates a lifestyle at certain period in time. Different forms of oral literature exist which include, songs and dances, narratives, short forms (proverbs, riddles, puns and tongue twisters) and other emerging forms (*mchongoano*, crusades and soccer fundom). The creativity, innovation and functionality of oral literature renders it a viable field for research. Elements of superstition, figures of monsters, giants and demons make oral literature a fertile literary ground for excavating Gothic elements and mechanics in order to understand and appreciate the intricacies of life. It allows a critical study of the social cultural, political and historical forces of the society which have shaped oral literature.

II. MAPPING GOTHICISM AS A LITERARY GENRE

This paper examines oral literature within the lens of Gothicism, specifically Maria Beville's brand of Gothic postmodern ideology. Gothic literature is traced to Horace Walpole (1764) whose text *The Castle of Otranto, A Gothic-Story* had a resounding effect on the aesthetics and elements of Gothic fiction. Infusing both supernatural and realistic elements, the novel became the foundation of literary Gothic traditions. The term "Gothic" is traced to a Germanic tribe that terrorized and ruled Europe between 3rd to 5th centuries. Otto (2011) associates the term with barbarism and savagery because of the terror they unleashed to the Roman Empire that was then unformidable. During the Renaissance period, —the term "Goth" was resurrected and re-aligned to represent medieval arts; which were connected with intense emotions, sentimentalism and irrationality. As a result, when the neo-classical critics of the 18th century resuscitated medieval art, it is not surprising that "Goth" and "Gothic" represented medieval literary styles. It then stood for raw outlet of passions or emotions, terror, anger, wildness, extravagant fancies and transcendence. This inspired the first writer Horace Walpole who wrote *The Castle of Otranto; A Gothic Story* (1764). The text became a foundation of Gothic hegemonic tradition that has influenced many literatures of the world including oral literature.

Human society often attempt to explain and rationalize unfathomable aspects using mysticism, superstition, oral narratives and or even religion, thus, intertwining the possible physical world and the impossible numinous one. Africa's cosmology consists of what is seen and what is not seen; humanity, animals, spirits, ancestors and the physical environment. This coalesces the visible and the invisible world as interconnected in a cosmological relationship. With the intangible faith and believe in rationalizing the cosmos using oral narratives, legends, myths, monster genres and other narratologies, Africa's invisible world is infiltrated with gods, goddesses and demons, spirits and other magical beings which make oral literature a fertile ground for eschewing Gothic elements. It comes to the fore that competing forces between evil and good often influence human life through oral literature. Children's way of life is shaped through oral narratives that foreground the right behaviour and repress what is evil. The evil remains as part of human darkness that remains as a hauntology; rearing its ugly head quite often in art. Oral narratives become the vent in which the ugly, grotesque, evil and fearful terrors are vented from; fusing an irrational (Gothic realm) with a rational world. Fantasy and reality, two improbable realms become indices that interconnect in a Gothic-postmodern pedestal. Monsters in oral narratives become exemplification of "pleasure and sin (that) blend together in a supernatural and explosive amalgamation" (Gould, 2010, p 4) fusing together an irrational with a rational dimension. Fantasy and reality two contrastive realms become indices that co-join in a Gothic-postmodern axis.

Gothic literature manifests supernatural beings characterized in oral narratives as monsters, which are hybrid embodying societal fears and darkness thus reflecting on the anxieties of the postmodern society. Winner of 1991 Booker Prize Award; Ben Okri in his text *The Famished Road* (1991), unearths an African cosmological interconnections through the juxtaposition of the living, the dead and the spiritual world. He exploits the Yoruba mythology of rebirth that is common in oral literature.

The lead character in Azaro, a Gothic character perceives events in both the physical and spiritual domain through hallucinations, reveries and dreams which help to reconstruct the mythical world inhabited by fairies, magical beings, spirits and Abiku. Abiku is a child that is in spirit form and dies every time it is born. Using an oral narrative mythopoeia, Okri is able to weave a Gothic plot employing the structures of oral narrative form. This resonates with Nnedi Okorafor whose twenty one short stories in *KabuKabu* (2013) are mythical journeys to the world of spirits, jujus, vampires and the undead living. She

draws on a rich heritage of oral literature to generate a Gothic fantasy that exploits African folklore and mythology. Closer home in Kenya, some writers have written texts that manifest Gothic structures. Rebecca Njau examines the excesses in Kenya during postcolonial times using the Gothic mode in her text *The Sacred Seed* (2003). Oral literature too as artistic constructs of society infuse and allow the Gothic to commingle with the reality to manifest happenings in society.

Oral literature recreates the sociocultural and political happenings in a society. As art, orature employs language to reconstruct a fictional world that mirrors postmodern society; with its contradictions, sensibilities and paradoxes. The research method that was most appropriate for this type of study was qualitative in approach. Qualitative approach often uses various sets of practices to collect, interrogate, analyze and interpret data from texts to gain better insight and understanding of subject matter at hand. Aspects of Gothic-postmodernist criticisms guided this study throughout the different stages; sampling, data collection, analysis and interpretation stages. To attain the set objective, analytical research design was used. Primary data was chiseled out from selected oral narratives from Kenya. The theoretical framework used locates itself within Gothic-postmodernism as indicated earlier.

Gothic genre is mapped as an emerging genre that captures contemporary issues elaborately. It depicts events in a dark eerie settings populated by ghosts and other uncanny creatures. This creates an atmosphere of mystery, gloom and phantasmagoria. As one of the major proponents of the genre, Beville (2009) acknowledges the centrality of Gothicism in literature as a hybridized text that recreates the twenty first century life. This too applies to oral literature when narratives are regarded as texts coming to live when the researcher studies them.

III. UNEARTHING GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN KENYA'S SELECTED ORAL NARRATIVES

Oral literature is a rich field for excavating and analyzing Gothic elements that manifest themselves in various forms. A mélange of Gothic mechanics that maps a recreated mimetic existence which transcends the physical mode of life, allow oral narratives to mirror life in society. Using phantasmagoria, oral narratives are embedded in what Smith (2002) refers to as "...contradiction ambiguities and ambivalences (which) provides a dense and complex blend..." (p3) of Gothicity and physicality. The Gothic genre in Africa can be traced to oral narratives that were turned into written texts; Amos Tutuola's *The Palm Wine Drunkard* (1952) and *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (1954) are stark illustrations. Amos Tutuola's *The*

Palm Wine Drunkard (1952) follows a journey of an unnamed narrator-cum-protagonist who is in search of his deceased palm wine tapster into Dead town while in *My Life in The Bush of Ghost* (1954), a young boy's escape from capture into slavery catapults him to a Gothic placeness of the Bush of Ghosts, the land of ghosts. By understanding various transformations from being human to an animal, the seven year old boy manifests various facets of beingness in different forms which reveal the richness of the Gothic genre.

Some oral narratives as shall be seen in this study cross socially accepted boundaries and ascend to a Gothic pedestal. Kenya's oral literature cannot be left behind. As a rich Gothic-topographical artifice or minefield; it provides an illumination of sensibilities, fears, hopes and impediments contemporaneous with society.

The narratives conjure up magical worlds to depict monstrosity as a central Gothic *topoi*. Kenya's oral folklore is replete with monsters, monstrosity and the uncanny, appropriated in different proportions. These are fundamental tropes that define the Gothic as a genre. The main pre-occupation of monster narratives is to re-create monster villains who straddle the literary terrain. Chief among them is the presentation of monsters and monster-like figures that come out as aliens in the world of the living.

'*Amanani*' (Akivaga & Odaga, 1985, p 63) is a Gothic alien monster who is not only ferocious but evil and diabolic as well. Regarded as mortal they transcend the physical world to capture the imagination of the "other". '*Amanani*' described as man-eating monsters are regarded as a terror in themselves. This view is seen in how they are described in 'Kiondondoe and the Ogre' (Kiondondoe na Irimarimu) narrated by Ndekesa Muruambeti in Finke (2003). He is described as half-human, half-animal with a threatening posture, eyes full of rage and deathly venom. He becomes a perfect embodiment of Gothic terror and death. As he stalks the land hauntingly with young Kiondondoe borrowing food, he becomes expressive of postmodern fears that rear its ugly head in different forms; misogyny, racism, violence, extremeism as witnessed in terrorism and xenophobic conflicts of animosity.

In '*Nandagaywa*, the monster (Akivaga et al, pp 63-68) epitomises monstrosity, the uncanny and death. Described as man-eating monster, Nandagaywa crosses the liminal boundary of humanity by becoming an alien. On crossing over the physical domain to the fantastical one he assumes a horrendous posture, swallowing people who are alive.

This in itself depicts the Gothic aesthetics of cannibalism is reproduced in oral narratives where monsters are othered by encoding them with savagery and barbaric violence.

This paper opines that human characters are inverted and appropriated to be the other to represent that which "threatens the purity of human form...." (Scott 2007, p 67) and humanity.

In construction of the non-human monster that has transcended what is natural, oral monster narratives tend to manifest irrational longings, eccentric behavior and excesses. This, as a Gothic *topoi*, reveals a Gothic tradition that principally depicts protagonist or lead characters as savage, violent and oppressive in what Beville describes to as "Barbarous rude, uncouth, unpolished, in bad taste" (p). It recreates a typical Gothic setting imbued with a phantasmagorical life etched beyond the imagination of the narrative.

The monster's ability to converse in the language of the community as observed when Nandagaywa converses with the young girl, the protagonist whom the brother leaves behind when he journeys to heaven to forge some metal spears, reveals his earthly being:

"Where is your father?"

"My father went to heaven" (Akivaga *et al* p. 64).

The conversation solidifies him in human form as a visible but invisible being: his otherness invisibilizes him. He manipulates human beings using language; creating rapport and sustaining it till he achieves his mission of killing. He thus, comes out as a double, the visible and the invisible, the speakable and the unspeakable edifying the spirit and essence of a human-monster. This study refers to such characters who are half human, half monsters as *man-mon*; standing in an in-between space where the boundaries of the two realms have been collapsed. The creation of *man-mon* characters as a hybrid creatures present:

...an in-between (space) of presentable and unrepresentable, the sublime union of the abstract and concrete...and (humanity) manipulate the dynamics of that space to contemplate the true powers of terror... (Beville 2009: 113).

The *man-mon* villains become a stark reminder of Greek classical mammon creatures. The word mammon basically carries the connotation of devil of covetousness. Thus, the character *man-mon* is a Gothic figure bound by excess sentimentalism, casting aggressive behavior. This Gothic aspect is well brought out in the narrative 'Chemakut Teret the monster' (Akivaga *et al* pp. 52-58).

This *man-mons* are often made to appear in a deserted homestead where a child is left hopeless thereby, igniting emotions of horror and terrified expectations. (Austin Bukunya, Jane Nandwa, 1993)text; to arouse feelings of anxiety, dread and horror. A young unknowing child is allowed to defy expectations by being juxtaposed with the

dreaded monster. The Gothic *man-mon* as a Lacanian subject undergoes splitting of self and the other exemplifying a double, a doppelganger that manifests "...the real and the unconscious and the dark side of subjectivity and reality..." (Beville 2009 p50).

Shattering the image of human conception, the *man-mon* remain reconfigured reflections of distorted images locating themselves within human inhabited society. Within the permeable boundary of reality and magicality, the monsters regarded with a lot of trepidation cross and re-cross the boundary in their different physical transformation as witnessed in the monster narrative where the monster transforms into a handsome human being before later changing back to a ferocious monster. This sliding in and out of magicality situates them in two extreme polarities depicting "...loss of identity in being half-inside and half-outside neither entirely dead nor clearly alive....." (Hogle 23002, p. 99) but more of a monster; a being regarded imagined and imaged as an alien representing "the darker vision of contemporary existence" (Beville, p. 99).

Their fixation and obsession with death reconstructs them as irrational, immoral and subverted beings. Such monsters and death are intrinsically linked as they only portend death and suffering. The main protagonist's brother in 'Nandagaywa, the Monster' can only recall how the monster "had eaten all his relatives and all the people he knew when he was still a little boy..." (Akivaga *et al*, p. 99). Being villainous characters ignites in them a repulsive depraved existence. This existence is formulated in the Gothic furnace of villainy and brewed in the cauldron of horror and demonic essence. They stand and exist in the borderline of humanity but crosses over to monsterism which reveals their unstable identity and essence. This is also witnessed when they degenerate to deathness. Nandagaywa on his degeneration to mortality acquires formlessness and a void that reverberates as he accepts his death. He asserts vehemently that:

"You have killed me at last, but I would like to do you a good turn before I die. Cut off the little toe of my right head foot, and there you will find your people who I have eaten over the years...." (Akivaga, p. 67).

The monster spring forth a harvest of living people "..... Out of the toe, little toe came thousands and thousands of people..." (p. 67) thus deflating his monstrosity.

This is replicated in "Chemakut Teret, the Monster, (Akivaga, pp52-54), where the monster's smallest finger is cut and it yields a great multitude of children (Akivaga, p. 53). They restore the mortals who had been killed, an indicator of the trope of subversion, manifesting the

uncanny thus; they are categorized as the uncanny, the weird and the unfathomable. This kneads the atmosphere of the story as one of mystery and suspense, fear and horror. Remaining as beings of subversion mammon's oscillation between humanity and monstrosity re-ignites the double-ness which has been regarded before. Their descent to maddening ravage and cannibal desire spirals them out of humanity and others them as aliens. This induces them with monstrosity and wickedness.

Another Gothic *topoi* includes the unexplainable events which the monster are attributed and linked to. It is not only their behavior but also the form that delineates them from human society encapsulating them within two worlds and molding their ambiguity in an in-between world hovering between life and death. Their bodies, as witnessed early undergo dissolution before a multitude of people regain life in a form of resurrection. Their death thus, embody regeneration and revitalization of human life.

This paper argues that monsters embody loss of self or what Hogle (2002) refers to as "The contradictions and ambiguities of our beings" (p. 7) consequently creating an in-between liminal space expectant with fears, fragmentation and alienation inherent in society. This rekindles the terror of the Gothic that is:

Inherent in monsters and other bodies function(ing) as a deconstructive counter-narrative which presents the darker side of subjectivity, the ghost of otherness that haunt our fragile selves..." (Beville, p. 41) which create gloom and a grotesque atmosphere.

Immortality or what Baudrillard refers to as symbolic death is another Gothic aesthetic that manifests in oral narratives and can be regarded as magical realism since they harbor magicity. Because of the relationship of reality and fantasy, oral monsters are brought out as fictitious beings masquerading as human beings. They "pass" as humans who at the onset are humble, polite and amiable. Nandagaywa, the monster in the titular story comes out as a human being at the commencement of the narrative. He is presented as a product of the binaries of reality and Gothic when the main protagonist journeys to heaven to forge some spears only leaving behind his sister and the two dogs. The monster arrives at the home and holds a candid conversation with the frightened girl. After some persistence the monster characterizes itself as a cannibal when he morphs to a monstrous villain. He not only swallows the girl but also the dogs. Consequently, he manifests his initially suppressed polarity of himself, his double that is "...preserved, nourished and secretly made strong" (Rushdie, 1998 p. 340) (quoted by Beville, p. 133).

His other self comes out as perverse, diabolic, and evil. His lack of protective instinct coupled with his inner desires recreates him as ruthless. This also demonstrated in the Kipsigis Oral Narrative of the brown girl with a bewitching gap between her front upper teeth. (Chesaina, 1991).

The protagonists being too proud and self-conceited of her beauty, refuses all her suitors who propose to her. In her vanity, she feels her beauty is unmatched in the whole kingdom. Not even the prince could win her. The Gothic villain reveals himself as a handsome-wealthy looking young man and using sweet words proposes to the beautiful young lady. The expectation of a Gothic villain straddling the setting and having monstrous appearance is negated. In supernatural transformation, the Gothic villain parodies the alter ego of the beautiful girl: representing rationality, reality and expectations. In the words of Wilde (1994) it represents the "True face of my (the) soul... that has the eyes of the devil" (pp 179-180).

The duplicity of self or what has been referred to as doubleness brings to the fore goodness and evil, heroism and villainy as embedded and residing in individual characters. This foregrounds a problematised Gothic space of a fluid and slippery identity; allowing monsters to cross over humanness to becoming monstrous. The Gothic villain's purported goodness is only but temporary for greed and trickery over-rides him. This becomes a stark reminder of the traditional Gothic villain. The beautiful girl with a bewitching beauty loses her will, independence and self-hood as the Gothic villain lures her to a secret abode; epitomizing a foreboding, mystery and horror. The recurring motif of monsters in oral narratives is a trope that elevates their centrality to the actions taking place. When led through the use of spell or other fantastical means, the girl renounces her autonomy as a human being and becomes a subject of the *man-mon*. Her initial image of self, young and beautiful masks her character of being self-conceited, vain and egoistic. Her self-surrender to an unknown trickster demonstrates how irrational and gullible the girl is since she easily submits to deception and lies; which affirms the Gothic notion that "reality is deceptive" (Beville, p.183) and a double; what Malin (1962) calls "cracked and wavy" (p. 123).

The beautiful girl's realization of her error of judgment as a result of her hubris, comes to her when it is late. The protagonist, a handsome, humble and amiable husband transforms herself to an ogre, what this study refers to *man-mon*. This act of doubling immerses the reader in tense moment of expecting the paranormal, accentuating the paradox of the simultaneity of the fantastical and the normal fusing as one and creating a hybridized being,

man-mon. The *man-mon* ogre crosses the boundary of humanity in order to deflate the girl's narcissistic self-delusion. Confined to a house in a Gothic setting, a deep forest enclosure, and alienated from society, the girl is reduced to irredeemably irreconcilable, first with herself, then with her community. As she avers and totters at the brink of helplessness coupled with hopelessness, she begins slides into flight to nothingness, to a space of weightlessness as she unequivocally accepts her fate.

Trapped in the struggle of knowing and unknowing, realizing and unrealizing herself the protagonist;s only hope is offering the Gothic landscape a lamentation song. The motif of the song is an expressive Gothic manifestation of merging of the known and the unknown self in order to constitute a fundamental essence of her beingness. In her lamentation state, the protagonists dissipates and her human form begins to take formless shape. Thus, her encounter with herself emptied of human essence while remaining unnamable and existing with fragmented consciousness makes her realize herself. Regret makes the girl to link herself with human essence and nurture her form. Her capture form allows her to re-examine her inner monster self that had consumed her inner being. Not willing to surrender her soul to the Gothic forces in a true Gothic encounter, the girl, desirous of resurrection in form of being saved from the ogre gains her inner energy to formulate a song. She, therefore, albeit, unconsciously, slides out of her egotistic and vain self.

This is reverberated in her lament song that carries the spirit of bitterness peppered with unknowing her self. Her attempt of spiraling out of humanity is deadened by her realization that the loss of self-readies her to cross the boundary to a world of void and vacuity. She, consequently, strives towards rebirth as witnessed in the lament song. This concurs with Beville's comment on rebirth: "The people inhabiting Gothic- postmodernist worlds, usually, have all been or are all 'dead' and are striving towards something new, some concept of birth" (p.121).

The same occurrence is witnessed in the Kikuyu narrative 'Wagaciari' (Kabira and Mutahi, 1988)

Wanjiku Mukabi kabira nd karega wa mutahi Gikuyu oral literature 1988 EAPH)

Where the ogre assumes the body of a human recreating itself as a *man-mon* and taking ones as the caretaker of the woman who has delivered a child presents his dual nature. The woman's husband, a blacksmith has relocated to a far-flung place. Wagaciari, the lead protagonists is taken in by the *man-mon*'s charms of kindness, and mid-wifely. Like the other monsters who disguise themselves, the villains stand between the inhuman and the human fold; fusing

both of them and recreating a Gothic villain. The lamentation song, just like the lament earlier mentioned presents a moment of contradiction of subjectivity with the hope of resurrecting human essence and destroying the Gothic monster. Monster split of his sense of self helps to show how he is formulated in the phantasmagoric dimension. This characterizes all Gothic monsters in oral narratives that not only inspire evil and destruction but they also become degenerates.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper in conclusion opines that the Gothic monster in a twist of fate disposes and dislocates their human companions of their reality and form their true self. In this way, they are mimicry of the traditional Gothic creations like the ugly hideous monster, Frankenstein in the titular text by Shelley (2000), Bedford, St. Martins Boston. In search of "presence and symbolic value" (Beville, p. 19) the Gothic monster in oral narratives becomes representative of the explorative expeditions of subjectivity; they manifest a profound exploration of the unknowable inner self.

The paper argues that the Gothic monsters that populate Kenya's oral literary topography are uniquely emblazoned with traits that manifest peculiarity: uncanniness, physical disruptions, otherness, ambivalence and unknowable self. As the monstervacillate between physicality and spirituality, half-human and half-monster, they are brought out as unstable, changing and fluid characters. It is rather a fusion of the subjective and objective self that reflects what is known and unknown and this rightly embodies the Gothic horror.

This paper concludes that since the monster belongs to a different domain of being, they often metamorphose and change form, identity and their essence as has been observed earlier in the oral monster narratives. Such oral monster narratives interweave repressed cultural and political history with individual hauntologies depicting social issues inherent in society. Gothic *topoi*, manifested in Kenya's oral narratives exemplify the fluidity and the slipperiness of subjectivity, identity and human relation. In furtherance to that, it foregrounds the resuscitation and regeneration of human virtues and values.

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Material Entanglements: Identity Collapse and Object Agency in Paul Auster's *City of Glass*

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Abstract— *Paul Auster's City of Glass, a seminal work of postmodern urban literature, unravels the disintegration of Daniel Quinn—a writer who morphs into a detective and ultimately a nameless wanderer—through a labyrinth of material encounters. This paper repositions City of Glass within the framework of new materialism, arguing that Quinn's identity crisis is not merely a psychological collapse but a material entanglement. By centering the agency of objects—names, the red notebook, and urban spaces—the analysis reveals how nonhuman actors actively co-author Quinn's subjectivity, reflecting broader tensions in 21st-century urban existence. Quinn's reliance on pseudonyms, the parasitic vitality of the red notebook, and his submersion into empty apartments exemplify the animacy of objects and their dual capacity to mediate desire and despair. City of Glass prefigures the material logic of 21st-century identity crises, urging a reimagining of human-object relations in an age of ecological and digital precarity. Through this lens, City of Glass critiques the fragility of selfhood in consumerist urban environments, where identity dissolves into a contested terrain shaped by the vibrancy of matter.*



Keywords— *City of Glass, Paul Auster, Identity, New Materialism, Urban Literature*

I. INTRODUCTION

Paul Auster is a pioneering American writer known for his innovations, who won the French Prix Médicis étranger in 1993 and was nominated for the Booker Prize in 2017. *City of Glass* is a cornerstone of postmodern American literature. Auster in this work narrates about the plight and struggles of ordinary people in urban America in a suspenseful tone, who uses a postmodernist form of language play to convey the confusion and anxiety of the urbanite, interrogating the fragility of urban identity through the existential collapse of Daniel Quinn—a writer-turned-detective who dissolves into New York's material labyrinth.

Paul Auster is personally interested in French modernism and avant-garde art. He spent a critical period of his intellectual formation in Paris during the late 1960s and early 1970s, the golden age of French philosophical theory. During this time, Auster began to conceive and write his early novels, including *The New York trilogy*, which also incorporate elements of Derrida's syntax in their narratives and thematically discuss existentialist confrontation and Foucault's discourse of power. "We can intuit the extent to which Auster employs twentieth-century French theory in order to conceptualize the processes of twentieth-century existential exhaustion brought about by the condition of postmodernity"

(McKean, 1998). This anti-detective novel, in which the author Paul Auster's own name appears, depicts the Oedipus dilemma and the multiple anxieties of identity of an urban population in a postmodern, uncannily intertextualised way. "As part of Auster's intertextual play with doubles, names, and identities, another of Daniel Quinn's personas is 'Paul Auster,' a doubling that further complicates the boundaries between author, narrator, and character" (Rubenstein, 1998). Marcus Richey combines Lacanian feminism with *City of Glass* to discuss the patriarchy erosion in Quinn's identity that transcend postmodernism. She argues that the protagonist, Daniel Quinn, expresses a desire to rebel against and overthrow traditional 'patriarchal law' by virtue of language play in order to seek reliance and psychological defence in the midst of suspenseful events in a perplexing anti-detective affair. "Quinn's slumming-with-a-vengeance into full vagrant identity repudiates Freud and Lacan's traditional phallic power and opts for masculinist castration, so very far removed from William Wilson, Max Work and their kind"(Richey, 2024). David Coughlan interprets the fictional text of *City of Glass* interactively with its graphic adaptation. The visual translation in the graphic novel becomes a strange doppelgänger of the original, a re-creation that harbours the shadow of the original. The visual metaphor of graphic elements in graphic novels serves as a vague window, rendering multi-dimensional conjectures and guiding the protagonist to blur his identity. "In light of Stillman's musings, the visual metaphor of the labyrinthine fingerprint (a mark of identity) smudging the windowpane can be related to the graphic novel's engagement with misdirecting signs" (Coughlan, 2006).

It is evident that the issue of Quinn's self-identity has been the focus of scholarly research on the novel, but previous studies have remained anthropocentric in perspective, reflecting on Quinn's mental breakdown and confusion from the dimensions of Quinn's spiritual problems, the visual details of the characters in the graphic novels, and even authorial consciousness. This paper shifts the paradigm by applying new materialism—a theoretical framework that repositions objects as active participants in social and psychological processes—to argue that Quinn's identity crisis is not merely a psychological phenomenon but a material entanglement. By centering the "vitality of

things" and their capacity to shape human subjectivity, this study not only reinterprets Auster's novel but also illuminates broader tensions in contemporary urban life, offering a prescient meditation on identity in an age where objects increasingly dictate human experience.

II. DISEMBODIED SIGNIFIERS: NAMES AS AUTONOMOUS AGENTS IN QUINN'S IDENTITY FRAGMENTATION

In *City of Glass*, Quinn's relationship with names—both his own and his pseudonyms—epitomizes the new materialist assertion that objects, once detached from human intentionality, acquire agency to reconfigure identity. As early as 1950, Heidegger, in his existentialist philosophy, made a theoretical attempt to transcend traditional metaphysics with regard to things, which are not only an ensemble of functional properties ascribed by man or materials that fulfil human needs. The process of "thinging" is a way for things to exist as objective beings. Heidegger's notion of "thinging", which posits that objects reveal their essence only when stripped of utilitarian functions, finds resonance in Quinn's gradual alienation from his name. Initially, "Quinn" operates as a semiotic prosthesis—a vessel for his literary ambitions and social belonging. As a young man, Quinn harboured literary dreams of making a mark with aspiration in the fields of poetry, serious literature and criticism of social issues, using his name Quinn as a material vehicle to bear witness to the self-belonging of individual identity. Yet, the name's semiotic stability crumbles under the weight of personal tragedies: the deaths of his wife and son, coupled with his failed poetry, render "Quinn" a hollow relic. This shift is crystallized in his declaration: "A part of him had died, he told his friends, and he did not want it coming back to haunt him." (Auster, 2011). The name morphs into a "thing" that mirrors his existential void. Here, the name "Quinn" ceases to signify a coherent self; instead, it becomes a spectral entity that haunts him, embodying Brown's claim that "the story of objects asserting themselves as things, then, is the story of a changed relation to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation." (Brown, 2001).

Quinn's creation of the pseudonym "William Wilson" further illustrates the animacy of names. Quinn later chose to make his living by writing popular mystery novels, for which he deliberately created a pen name for himself, "William Wilson", to replace his image as the author of these novels. Unlike "Quinn," which carries the weight of failed aspirations, "William Wilson" is deliberately emptied of personal history—a pure signifier designed to commodify mystery novels. Yet, this calculated detachment backfires. The name evolves into an autonomous agent that writes for Quinn for money, divorcing itself from his creative control. Quinn's refusal to publicly claim "William Wilson"—"He did not feel responsible for it and therefore was not compelled to defend it in his heart." (Auster, 2011)—exposes the paradox of object agency: the more he distances himself from the name, the more it dominates his existence. At this stage, Quinn has deepened the relationship between person and name from a separate parallel to an inverted subject-object relationship. The pseudonym, now a spontaneous life, colonizes his identity, reducing him to a ghostwriter for his own fictional persona.

This ontological inversion culminates in Quinn's relationship with "Max Work", the detective protagonist of his novels. Work, though a fictional construct, becomes Quinn's "presence in Quinn's life, his interior brother, his comrade in solitude" (Auster, 2011), a spectral companion whose adventures offer illusory agency. Through Work, Quinn projects his repressed desires for clarity and heroism, yet the detective's autonomy—symbolized by his "aggressive, quick-tongued" persona (Auster, 2011)—ironically highlights Quinn's own passivity. As Rankin (2016) notes, the "thingscape" of the novel thrives on "hidden interactions" between humans and objects. Significantly, Work's investigative methodology mirrors Quinn's own existential quest: both obsessively trace clues (literal and metaphorical) through New York's labyrinthine streets. But whereas Work resolves mysteries, Quinn's pursuit of truth only deepens his confusion. This asymmetry reveals the ultimate irony: the fictional construct attains narrative agency while his creator becomes a "ghostwriter" of his own life. Work, as a textual artifact, exemplifies this dynamic: he is both Quinn's creation and his captor, a materialized fantasy that

consumes his subjectivity. Quinn's names—Quinn, Wilson, Work—no longer represent identities but autonomous actants in a material network. Their agency exposes the fragility of human-centered identity models, affirming new materialism's insistence on the vibrancy of matter. In a world where names outlive their creators, Quinn's disintegration becomes a parable of urban modernity: identity, once anchored in language and labor, is now a contested terrain where objects write their own narratives.

III. PARASITIC VITALITY: THE RED NOTEBOOK AND THE SUBJECTIVITY LOST

Bill Brown argues that things possess animation, which compel people's attention and perform activities with them. "When the subject-object relation is temporalized to the point of becoming recognizable as a negotiation, when the object reappears as a thing assuming a life of its own, this is when we discover the uncanniness of everyday life." (Brown, 2016) The animation of objects leads everyday life in a dynamic and unpredictable direction. The complexity and unpredictability of everyday life lead humans to unconsciously adjust their self-perceived assessments in an environment of dynamic negotiation with objects. Subject-object relation is regarded as the psycho-interactive negotiations. This animation is dependent on both introjection and projection to achieve its manifestation.

When objects are transformed into commodities and displayed in the window, they not only carry aesthetic value, but also inspire people's perception of beauty and emotional investment. The mistaken phone call conferred on Quinn another mysterious and adventurous possibility in his life. After accepting the commission of tracking, he decides to buy a notebook to use as the first tool for investigating the case. Quinn held that "now that he had embarked on the Stillman case, he felt that a new notebook was in order." (Auster, 2011) In a stationery shop, a red notebook attracts his attention for no apparent reason. "For reasons that were never made clear to him, he suddenly felt an irresistible urge for a particular red notebook at the bottom. He pulled it out and examined it, gingerly fanning the pages with his thumb. He was at a loss to explain to himself why he found it so appealing." (Auster, 2011) All of a sudden he feels a force attracting him to purchase

the notebook. This force can be understood in the text as being the life force of the Thing. The combination of notebook aesthetic experience and the individual's pursuit of self-satisfaction inspires people's admiration and enthusiasm for the goods, which in turn drives the consumer behavior. In this process, commodities are endowed with a kind of "animation", they are no longer static objects, but active participation in social and cultural dynamics, affecting human emotions and social activities. The red notebook at this moment demonstrates the internal projection of the animation of things, which reflects into Quinn's heart. In detective fiction, the notebook, as a symbol of the detective's professional skills and expertise, is not only a key tool for the detective's professional identity, but also an important part of the detective's image building. Here the notebook serves as a commodity that can be purchased, and one of the commodity values it is endowed with is to increase the sense of identity and authenticity of being a detective. The purchasing value of the notebook elicits Quinn's fervor for identity through the process of attracting Quinn to inspiring the desire to consume. Buying it means that he is no longer a novelist who has been muddling through and been anonymous in the world, but a private investigator who carries the expectations from other people. The fire and power of his life is ignited again by this red notebook. After obtaining this notebook, he comes back home immediately. He set the notebook on the table, sat himself naked at the table gazing at it, and solemnly wrote his real full name Daniel Quinn on the title page without any intention to conceal it. The life force released from this notebook makes it veiled in divinity. This notebook is detached from its physical appearance, and its animation becomes a introjection of Quinn's inner being. It is a detective notebook that truly belonged to him, whose presence sealed Quinn's new identity-being a detective named Paul Auster. "The fact that there was now a purpose to his being Paul Auster—a purpose that was becoming more and more important to him—served as a kind of moral justification for he charade and absolved him of having to defend his lie. For imagining himself as Auster had become synonymous in his mind with doing good in the world." (Auster, 2011)

The subject of the investigation, Stillman, spends his days wandering around New York City. In trailing him, at

first, Quinn finds it very tedious and even always wanders off. To avoid wandering off, he employs his usual practice: throwing off his inner perceptions and imagining that he is Paul Auster, whose identity Quinn has taken over. Just as the shattering of his literary dreams in the past made him seeing the pen name and himself as two identities. But whereas mere role-playing did not significantly enhance Quinn's focus on the case or his sense of identification, the animation of the red notebook helped Quinn fulfill this need. "It was the red notebook that offered him salvation. Instead of merely jotting down a few casual comments, as he had done the first few days, he decided to record every detail about Stillman he possibly could." (Auster, 2011) The distraction that occurs during the stalking process reveals that Quinn's real identity is still permeating and interfering with his identity as Detective Paul Auster in the early stages of the case. This indicates the entanglement and tension that still exists between Quinn's real self and role-playing in the early stages. "As Auster he could not summon up any memories or fears, any dreams or joys, for all these things, as they pertained to Auster, were a blank to him." (Auster, 2011) Quinn's avoidance behavior towards the distraction reflects his underlying need to escape the constraints of his real identity, and this oscillation and conflict between identities is dissolved in the materialistic interaction with the red notebook. In this process, the notebook, as a carrier of the "vitality" of the object, significantly enhances the immersion and identification of Quinn's detective identity. By recording the case clues in the red notebook, Quinn's interaction with the notebook not only realizes his immersion in and attention to the case, but also injects motivation and depth into Quinn's identity as a detective on a spiritual level. In this process, the notebook is not only a tool for recording and organizing the case, but also a visualization of the detective's qualities such as rationality, wisdom, justice and logic. The spirituality of the red notebook as an object continues to permeate and influence Quinn's psychological dimension. When recording clues in the notebook, he is no longer the obscure third-rate popular fiction writer in reality, but gradually becomes a detective who holds the key to logic and wisdom.

The vitality of the object is manifested not only through the internal projection of the object, but also the

external projection of the person, that is the process by which a person is objectified and takes on the characteristics of an object. Quinn recorded the road map of Stillman's daily wanderings in a red notebook and surmised new clues: Stillman's road map might hint the alphabetic information. At the same time, Quinn begins to question whether his imagination is overactive, wondering whether he has over-assigned a wordplay connotation to Stillman's behaviour during his aimless city walks. "Quinn paused for a moment to ponder what he was doing. Was he scribbling nonsense? Was he feeble-mindedly frittering away the evening, or was he trying to find something?"

(Auster, 2011) As Quinn gazed again at the maps and clues drawn in the red notebook, he couldn't ignore the strong presence it gave him. "And yet, the pictures did exist—not in the streets where they had been drawn, but in Quinn's red notebook." (Auster, 2011) The notebook's "spirituality" adds a mysterious power to the clues it records, a power that strangely captures Quinn's attention, causes him to abandon his doubts, and allows him to think further. By carefully analyzing the map's contours, Quinn deduces the hidden letters, which he splices together, arranges, and ultimately deciphers the metaphorically rich message of the "The Tower of Babel". Quinn's mind is consumed by these clues, and even as he alternates between sleep and wakefulness, his consciousness is still pulled by the verisimilar clues in the red notebook. Quinn's perceptions are no longer judged by direct experience in the real world, but through the mediation of the notebook. And in the process of interacting with the notebook, he is dominated by the clues in the notebook and his independent doubt is erased. His thinking is no longer free and independent, but is qualified by the object (the notebook).

Just as he was in the final throes of solving the mystery and nearing the truth, the unexpected happened. Stillman vanished overnight. The client also lost contact and moved out of New York overnight. The disappearance of his employer deprives his identity as a detective, and gives him the signal that it is the time that this misunderstanding should get to the end. The simultaneous disappearance of the tracking target and the employer means that Quinn's stabilization of identity, which was achieved by pinning on objects, is once again out of

balance. The reconstructed sense of self-worth collapses once again, and the disorientation and frustration that once surrounded him came crashing down on him once again. The existence of the red notebook makes it impossible for him to stop his investigations, and he pours all his thoughts and attention into the notebook, "He wanted to think a little more about what he had written but found he could not." (Auster, 2011) At this point, his insides have been gradually objectified. This objectification of thinking implies that the human capacity for rational and logical thought is mastered by the vitality of the object. Quinn continues his stakeout under the Stillman's apartment day after day and records everything and everyone he saw. Finally, after his savings are all spent and he is left homeless, he realizes the case is over. His only choice is to go back to the source of the case, Stillman's apartment. He completely lost all his abilities, all his identity, all his value, becoming a wanderer. The only thing he knows what to do is record something in the notebook. No longer recording what he sees, caring less and less about himself, he writes about the stars, about the earth, and his hopes for humanity.

"The personification of the object brings the object's characteristics close to the human being, and the human being's dark fearfulness derives from this familiar individual. This psychology makes man more sensitive, and the truth that he is unconsciously objectified is uncovered." (Lu, 2020) The red notebook keeps writing, keeps its animation, while Quinn stops recording himself, drowning himself out of himself. The notebook is imbued with human characteristics: the power of thought, logic, and reason; and is in constant renewal. However, Quinn is motionless. He abandons his pursuit of self-identity, becoming completely objectified. His life is degenerating, from a novelist to a homeless wanderer. Introjection and projection from thing's animation brutally express Quinn's confusion and melancholy in the search for identity in the metropolis, causing him to lose his self-awareness and become a wanderer.

IV. NEGATIVE SPACES: URBAN VOID AND QUINN'S EXISTENTIAL DISINTEGRATION

According to Woodward, material culture emphasizes "how apparently inanimate things within the environment

act on people, and are acted upon by people, for the purposes of carrying out social functions, regulating social relations and giving symbolic meaning to human activity.” (Woodward, 2007) Brown makes a similar point but from the perspective of emotion that “if the history of things can be understood as their circulation, the commodity’s ‘social life’ through diverse cultural fields, then the history in things might be understood as the crystallization of the anxieties and aspirations that linger there in the material object.” (Brown, 222) The ontological function of things creates its own history in its interaction with people, and these histories contain many emotional effects and fluctuations. The different inhabited spaces Quinn is exposed to carry the several emotional alternation of his several shifts in identity.

His favorite activity is walking around New York, so much so that he would wander the streets every day, no matter how harsh the weather is. “New York was the nowhere he had built around himself, and he realized that he had no intention of ever leaving it again.” (Auster, 4) As individuals relentlessly pursued social status and wealth, they became increasingly entangled in profit-oriented social relationships, characterized by pervasive indifference and loneliness. This environment, marked by alienation, transformed New York into a spatial manifestation of disconnection, where countless dispirited individuals performed their confusion and helplessness, rendering the city an objectified space of human activity. Thus, New York City, with its indifferent social fabric, became both a stage for Quinn’s existential struggle and a paradoxical sanctuary where he could evade the anxiety of his fragmented identity. Home should be a private space that contains one’s emotional attachment and warm memory, and it often carries the truest aspects of the self. As the story begins, Quinn lives alone in a small, dilapidated apartment. Without his wife and son, the apartment is no longer a loving abode, but a cave to conceal his disappointment and confusion in this prosperous city. “He cleared the debris from the surface—dead matches, cigarette butts, eddies of ash, spent ink cartridges, a few coins, ticket stubs, doodles, a dirty handkerchief.” (Auster, 39) Quinn lives in the company of hoarded clutter and trash in a space where the

home becomes a garbage dump used for self-enclosure, letting him wallow in his own disillusionment.

That wrong phone calls for several times pique Quinn’s curiosity about the case. He decided to pose as a private detective and went to his client’s home. Peter Stillman’s home was stately and neat and very well decorated. “The apartment loomed up around him as a kind of blur. He realized that it was large, perhaps five or six rooms, and that it was richly furnished, with numerous art objects, silver ashtrays, and elaborately framed paintings on the walls.” (Auster, 14) The soft velvet couch and light perfume evoke a sense of comfort and refinement, contrasting sharply with Quinn’s disheveled life. From a new materialist perspective, the objects in Stillman’s home actively shape Quinn’s emotional and psychological state, influencing his perception of identity. In *Other Things*, Brown demonstrates the the presence of things is “how it uses the psychosemiotic to disrupt the sociosemiotic register, how it defamiliarizes the object into an other thing that can attain a new kind of presence” (Brown, 2016) The animation of objects is evident here. The velvet couch and perfume, for instance, are not static; they evoke a sense of comfort and privilege, contrasting with Quinn’s marginal existence. Those objects in these rooms would have been easily overlooked and featureless in Quinn’s day-to-day life, but they became a courtesy, a sign of respect when Quinn came into contact with them as a private detective. This contrast highlights the intersubjectivity between Quinn and the objects, as they shape his emotions and self-perception. The objects’ cultural and social capital—symbolized by the silver ashtrays and paintings—act as markers of respect and authority, compelling Quinn to renegotiate his identity in relation to this privileged world. By defamiliarizing Quinn’s everyday experience, they force him to confront the gap between his marginal self and the privileged world he temporarily inhabits. His identity as a detective, his ambition, and enterprise, are affirmed and reconstructed by the courtesy expressed in these exquisite decorations.

However when the subject of the stalk suddenly disappears and his employer loses contact. Quinn’s long-established identity begins to falter. He set out to find out who the real Auster is, so he goes to Paul Auster’s house. “It was a pleasant enough place inside: oddly

shaped, with several long corridors, books cluttered everywhere, pictures on the walls by artists Quinn did not know, and a few children's toys scattered on the floor—a red truck, a brown bear, a green space monster.” (Auster, 2011) This space, filled with warmth and domesticity, stands in stark contrast to Quinn's own fragmented and isolated existence. Auster has been holding on to Quinn's original dream of being a literary writer, and he has a lovely son and a beautiful wife. These objects in real Auster's home, which might seem mundane in another context, take on a profound significance in Quinn's eyes. The red truck, brown bear, and green space monster are not just toys; they are markers of a life Quinn has lost—a life filled with familial warmth, creativity, and stability. The books scattered throughout the home, meanwhile, symbolize Auster's success as a literary writer, a dream that Quinn himself once cherished but has since abandoned. The warmth contained in such a space and its furnishings is exactly what Quinn has been avoiding, not daring to anticipate. As Quinn moves through Auster's home, the objects exert a powerful influence on his emotions, shifting his perception from comfort and pleasure to embarrassment and loss. Initially, the warmth of the space and the familiarity of the objects provide a temporary sense of solace, allowing Quinn to momentarily escape his own identity crisis. However, this comfort is short-lived. The presence of the objects—particularly the children's toys—forces Quinn to confront the harsh reality of his own life: his lack of family, his failed literary career, and his precarious sense of self. The initial comfort he felt in Auster's home gives way to a profound sense of loss and alienation. This emotional transformation is a direct result of the vitality of the objects, which actively shape Quinn's perception of self and reality.

When Quinn confronts the hollowed remnants of Stillman's apartment—a space stripped bare to its skeletal structure—the material absence itself becomes a haunting force that accelerates his psychological collapse. In *Other Things*, Brown writes that the absence of an object can have an impact on the emotional level of human beings through its invisibility, and that its physical vacuity (e.g., an invisible space or an empty room inside the object) can provoke the observer to ask questions about the nature of the object and the impact it has had on its former existence.

Thus, the void of the object also maps the confusion of human beings about their own existence: “The black void can't help but overwhelm the most casual beholder with the sense that there is something essential about the object (or the inside of the object) that remains elusive.” (Brown, 2016) The room, now vacant, is described as “a wooden floor and four white walls... one wire-mesh window that gave on to a view of the airshaft, and of all the rooms it seemed to be the darkest.” (Auster, 2011) This barren environment, devoid of any trace of human life, epitomizes the ontological void central to new materialism, where the lack of material presence paradoxically amplifies the agency of objects in shaping human subjectivity. Here, the emptiness of Stillman's apartment operates as a negative object—a space where the withdrawal of material culture strips Quinn of his relighted energy to identity. The room's uniformity (“each one identical to every other”) and confinement (“ten feet by six feet”) mirror Quinn's internal void, reflecting his eroding sense of self. The wire-mesh window, offering only a view into an airshaft, symbolizes his entrapment within a material and existential labyrinth, where even light—a metaphor for clarity or hope—is filtered through a grid of material alienation.

The red notebook, once a tool of agency and identity construction, now embodies the paradox of object vitality. In this empty space, the notebook transforms from a mediator of Quinn's detective persona into a passive recorder of absence. Quinn, now “a recorder without thoughts,” surrenders his subjectivity to the notebook's blank pages, which no longer hold clues or meaning but merely absorb his despair. This inversion of the object's role—from active collaborator to indifferent receptacle—exemplifies the concept of object withdrawal, where things lose their relational vitality, leaving humans adrift in a non-responsive material world.

This final spatial encounter crystallizes Quinn's emotional trajectory. The apartment's emptiness amplifies his earlier encounters with objects that alternately promised and denied coherence: the red notebook's false agency, Stillman's deceptive existence, and Auster's taunting domesticity. Each space, through its material dynamics, manipulated Quinn's emotions—hope, envy, despair—until his identity fragmented under their

cumulative pressure. The barren room, as the terminal site of material withdrawal, completes this cycle, reducing Quinn to a “wanderer” whose pursuit of selfhood dissolves into nothingness.

In this way, the novel's material logic—guided by new materialism—reveals how objects and spaces are not mere backdrops but co-authors of human collapse. Quinn's disintegration is not merely psychological but a material entanglement: his identity unravels as objects alternately animate, deceive, and abandon him, until even their absence becomes a force of annihilation.

V. CONCLUSION

Paul Auster's *City of Glass* transcends its postmodern narrative to illuminate the precarious nature of identity in a material-saturated urban world. Through Quinn's disintegration—from a disillusioned writer to a nameless wanderer—Auster critiques the fragility of selfhood in modern cities, where objects and spaces are not mere backdrops but active co-authors of human existence. The ontological function of things enables us to understand how the author used “the gap between ‘things’ and their linguistic and cultural representations to highlight the truth of ‘things’ and the relationship between people and ‘things’.” (Yin, 2019) By framing this collapse through new materialism, the novel reveals how urban environments, steeped in consumerism and alienation, amplify the entanglement between humans and things, ultimately questioning the stability of identity itself.

Quinn's his self-protection with difference name, reliance on the red notebook, and his eventual submersion into empty apartments exemplify the animacy of objects and their power to mediate desire and despair. The notebook, for instance, initially a tool for constructing a detective persona, becomes a parasitic force that hollows his agency—a metaphor for how urbanites today cling to smartphones, social media, or branded goods as prostheses for self-definition. Yet these objects, like Quinn's notebook, often deepen existential voids when their symbolic utility fades, mirroring the paradox of consumer culture: the more we consume, the less we possess.

Yet *City of Glass* is not merely a dirge for lost selves. Quinn's final, fragmented recordings about “stars”, “earth” and “humanity” hint at a fragile hope: that identity might

persist in the interstices between objects and aspirations. In an era of climate crisis and algorithmic determinism, such a perspective invites urban dwellers to seek resilience not in material accumulation but in ethical engagement with the nonhuman world. For city dwellers navigating a world of screens, brands, and houses, Quinn's journey is a cautionary tale and an invitation: to forge identities that are fluid yet anchored, material yet transcendent.

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Ecological Romanticism and the Critique of Civilization in Arun Joshi's *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*

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Abstract— This paper argues that Arun Joshi's *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* represents a reductive image of the otherwise complex and plural community of Indian tribals. The novel promises its reader an intellectual foray into the world of Indian tribals through the narrative of its protagonist Billy Biswas; but Biswas's voyage as mapped by Joshi lacks serious, rigorous, analytical depth. The novel emulates colonial anthropology and popular culture of early postcolonial India in creating/ consolidating the notion of noble savage and a false civilized/ Hindu- adivasi binary. Our study critiques Joshi's insistence on the separateness and otherness, his exoticization of the tribal world, and his failure in presenting a fuller, complex view of the lives of those who still remain on the periphery of modern India.



Keywords— Tribal, India, Arun Joshi, Indian English Novel

Arun Joshi's 1971 novel *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* is primarily read as a quest for identity for its central character. In such a reading, the protagonist Billy Biswas, enraged and disenchanted with the shallowness of civilization, its severance with nature and reality, takes a plunge into the unknown, the saal forests of the Maikala hills in Chhattisgarh, Central India. He appears, quite suitably in the words of Carl Jung, a modern man in search of a soul. In fact, nothing summarizes the theme of the novel as the opening epigraph which is a line from Matthew Arnold's 'Thyrsis' that goes: 'it irked him to be here, he could not rest'.

Most critical studies explore the causative factors behind Billy Biswas's counterintuitive foray into the tribal hills wherein the plot/ action is regularly interpreted as movement away from alienation and existential angst to self-realization. For instance, according to Vachaspati Dwivedi, 'the despondency of its protagonist Billy is the result of his disengagement in modern society and civilization that forces him to take refuge in the world of tribals' while the narrative revolves around 'the theme of alienation for finding perennial question' (54). In the words of Urmil, the journey of Billy Biswas explores 'the inner

world of modern man and the way in which the self tries to carve out a pattern to save itself from disintegration' (44). According to Jingle and Georshia G 'the awareness of rootlessness and consequential anxiety is the keynote of Joshi's existential vision of the plight of modern men. Then search for identity is one of the main motifs of Arun Joshi's novels' (2641). In this vein, most critical accounts limit their analyses to existentialism angst and alienation of Billy Biswas and steer away from a discussing problematic representation of the tribal. While Arvind M. Nawale reads this novel as the protagonist's 'longing for natural mode of existence' and invokes Rousseau to draw attention to the 'ideal world-view' of 'the tribal life of Maikala hills', at no point in his essay does he conclude the representation of the tribal man to be unsettling. Ironically, in an essay, Natarajan et al. identify the representation to be 'idealistic' but go on to define it as 'positive' and therein lies the trouble in the appraisal of *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*. As we argue in this paper, Arun Joshi's gaze toward the tribal is problematically reductive and oversimplified and is rather akin to the portrayal of the tribal in popular Hindi cinema of previous decades like *Nagin* (1954) and *Madhumati* (1958) where the tribal was often the illiterate, uncorrupt, carefree,

erotic 'other' to the suave, educated, complicated protagonist of the films. This means that the author who is frequently dubbed as one of the significant authors in the tradition of Indian English fiction did not have the courage to question and ditch simplistic mode of imagining the *adivasi* in the narrative imagination of his times. In this final analysis, the author appears to be afflicted with the blinkered approaches of colonial anthropology wherein the tribal was registered as different or even opposite to the modern/ caste Hindu mode of living notwithstanding his knowledge and deep connection with India. One may argue the futility of scrutinizing a novel written five decades ago along its representation of a group of people very much neglected in the mainstream imagination, literary or otherwise even today. Yet, our endeavor seeks to contribute to the understanding of the construction of tribal identity in one of the important novels within the tradition of Indian English writing, a concern which may be of recent vintage but has the potential to illuminate the ideological process of 'othering' of a community which continues to remain on the fringes.

Even though there is very little we know about Joshi by way of facts, it can be easily affirmed that the author does not have any natural or intellectual association with the Adivasi community of India. Arun Joshi came from an upper middle-class Brahmin family and was raised in Varanasi where his father was the vice-chancellor at the Banaras Hindu University. Coming from a family of established scholars, he was well educated and financially more than secure. Like the protagonists of most of his novels, Joshi was from the anglicized upper middle class that came to replace the white rulers in free India. As the ruling elites of the postcolonial nation happened to be the brown sahibs who grew up in an intellectual and cultural atmosphere that was supposed to cater to the needs and desires of the white colonizer, a later generation of artists and thinkers, analyzed and expressed the alienation and hollowness of their being that emanated from their severance with their cultural moorings. Arun Joshi, as has been registered by many, writes around this alienation in most of his works using psychological realism which could have been the result of a turn toward interiority in fiction and poetry in India as modernism made inroads in Indian literature. While one can find a good number of essays on him, the readings are overwhelmingly from Indian academics, and little to no attention has been paid by Euro-American authors which, given the way things are, affects the author's reach, coverage, and quality of criticism. It is no wonder then that despite the captivating, pacey narration Joshi remains unread and unheard of, except an occasional entry here and there in the syllabi of Indian universities. There are repeated exhortations on the part of critics that

there is a need to engage and re-engage with the high-quality works of Arun Joshi and why he must be given his due place in the canon. And yet nothing comes to rescue the eclipse of this author.

As we see it, the neglect could also be due to Joshi's failure to write a quirky allegorical account of the nation which in the words of some observers all third world literature is. Joshi's moneyed, privileged protagonists fighting existential angst in a country ridden with mind boggling poverty where the average man fights to survive do not represent the nation at all. Why then a reader outside of India may take interest in his works if they do not strive to enact the role of guidebooks to the state of the nation? The problem could be aesthetics too. Joshi's novels often may appear to have parallels with Anita Desai who practiced psychological realism in the tradition of Virginia Woolf and Henry James. But, in contrast to the modernist, lyrical, languid orientation of Anita Desai, Joshi's aesthetics are not avant-garde and are much more within the realistic tradition and do not bring much formalistic novelty. There is a certain incongruity to Joshi's approach in that while exploring the psychology and existential angst of its trapped urban middle class protagonists he retains a much more conventional mode of narration at a time when a certain self-consciousness and experimentalism had begun to occupy the Indian art scene. Such formal discussions aside, another failure in Joshi's approach- seen from a contemporary view- is his reliance on received, clichéd ways of viewing the other, the tribal.

The Strange Case of Billy Biswas elicits curiosity of the reader from the get go. The reader expects an unspooling, an excavation into the strangeness of Billy Biswas, the protagonist as the title of the novel suggests. But the subsequent lines suggest that 'the attempt to understand is...futile'. This is not an incidental narrative machination. In most of Joshi's novels we encounter a curious, enigmatic protagonist. In fact, it can be argued that the narratological success of his products hinges upon creating intricate, somewhat opaque characters about whom the reader's interest is piqued early on in the novel and keeps him hooked. There is a popular, noir, whodunnit character to his art. The introduction to the protagonist is as much an exercise in mystification as it is an exercise in revelation. Consider the first entry on Babu Khemka in *The Foreigner*: 'They uncovered his face and I turned in spite of myself'. Babu Khemka is dead and the subsequent unfolding of the narrative is about the causes and consequences. In *The Last Labyrinth* which is a first-person account, the narrator affirms in the first sentence: '...I have a score to settle. I forget nothing and forgive no one'. The reader is compelled to find out more about the 'score' from the get go. In *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* the wish to understand is an

'impossible' wish. This is before postmodernism. Might as we try to understand Billy he will still be beyond us. He is after all a man of 'extraordinary obsessions'. He cannot be fully grasped. And yet we go on to grasp as much as we could. The novel reads like Billy Biswas' biography. Romi Sahai, Billy's close friend and the narrator of this predominantly first-person account tells us that Billy Biswas is 'engineer, anthropologist, anarchist' member of the 'upper-upper crust of Indian society' (9). Born into an influential, wealthy Bengali family of a supreme court judge, Billy has gone to the US to pursue Engineering but is reading for a doctorate in anthropology. What makes Billy unique is the possession of 'urkraft...a primitive force' which engenders in him a certain restlessness, a certain hunger to connect with that which lies beyond the periphery of civilization. The author uses many props to underscore this. For instance, we first meet Billy in a rundown building in Harlem, an Afro-American ghetto. His room has Jazz music, pornography, biography of Van Gogh, and a number of National Geographic magazines (12). The author has made careful use of props to accentuate Billy's deep connect with nature, his difference. Jazz music does not conform to set codes; in contrast to the rigid and coded Western classical music it is fluid and flourishes in improvisation. The presence of pornography indicates a ready acceptance of sexuality in all its animal savagery, an assault on bourgeois values. Van Gogh stands for madness and schizophrenia. The National Geographic magazine and an acute interest in anthropology signifies intellectual forays into distant, untouched zones. There is a clear effort here to present Billy as someone predisposed to having a unique, perhaps more comprehensive view of reality which is inclusive of all that which is anarchic and unacceptable, that which is brushed aside or relegated to the fringes. In another instance, as foreshadowing, Billy relates to Romi the story of a man who visits Congo from New York and goes crazy because of primitive music (10). Writing in and around the same time when far away in a distant land French historian of ideas Michel Foucault was formulating his theory of madness and civilization, Joshi shows remarkable affinity to Foucault by postulating madness as a social construct, a product of intellectual and cultural discourse of the so-called rational, modern times. As the plot moves forward we find Billy back in India after he is done finishing his Ph.D in Anthropology to once again meet Romi who is now a government administrator. Both friends get married to settle down in to the conventional role of bourgeois breadwinners. With his degree Billy becomes a professor of Anthropology in Delhi University where his disillusionment continues, this time with the way Anthropology is studied and practiced in India. As the narrative progresses further there are suggestions of Billy

becoming more and more disenchanted with his world, which consequently leads to his sudden plunge into the unknown of the Maikala hills on a university anthropological expedition. For the local administration and his family who are in a state of shock, he is missing, but after a decade when most have lost all hope of his second coming, he makes a reappearance to tell his story to his friend Romi Sahai who now happens to be the collector of the seemingly godforsaken barren land of the district that contains the forest. It is in this section we get an opportunity to capture Billy's problematic myopia; his limited, twisted understanding of tribal culture which ultimately seduces him and pushes him to suddenly forsake his bourgeois existence.

Billy conjures up for Romi, and to his reader, an outlandishly romantic image of the tribal which is unidimensional and relates his submission to the attractions of the *Adivasi* culture in almost erotic terms. The subaltern *Adivasi* in his narration comes out to be infantile, hypersexualized, irrational, and decadent. One can see similarities between this narrative construction of the other and the British orientalist approach toward native cultures of the East, with the important difference that the discourse of benign and emancipatory conquest is absent here. Billy does exoticize and eroticize the tribal but his aim is to celebrate the difference, his simplicity, and not open ideological pathways for subjugation. In this manner, *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, otherwise considered to be an important work of elite, high art, elicits comparison with the worst in popular Hindi cinema where 'the tribal identity is marked by a standard set of attributes—an organic goodness, an unspoilt spontaneity, an innate simplicity—the sum of which typically leads to tragedy or some serious trouble' (Chattopadhyay). Early on in his telling, Billy establishes difference between the 'Hindu' materialistic, acquisitive culture of the north and the simple, unambitious culture of the tribal, where nobody is 'interested in the prices of foodgrains or new seeds or roads or elections and stuff like that' and where they only 'talk of the supernatural, violent death, trees, earth, rain, dust storms, rivers, moods of the forest, animals, dance, singing' (82). He harps on this nature-culture, mind-body binary by foregrounding additional differences in tribal culture where sex and inebriation runs supreme. His sober, intellectual life of an academic in Delhi is marked in stark contrast to the everyday 'dancing' and incessant talk of 'women and sex' and of 'liquors and aphrodisiacs and women' (83) a wonder all-day party place where all you do is 'dance and drink and probably make love' (86) and that 'nothing except death stops our dancing and drinking and our love-making' (86). Billy uses the metaphor of orgy to describe his hungry and captive audience the erotic energy of ritual tribal dancing.

According to him 'these dances *are* an orgy of sorts...a bit of lovemaking is, of course, there, but it is what preceded that is really orgiastic, the frenetic drumming, the constant footwork, the making and breaking of formations, the yelling, the fondling of the women' (100). We never really enter the minds of the orgy participators; we never get to really know how the women there see their fondling. The only woman we have some narrative access to is Bilasia, who has been sketched as the ultimate seduction queen, a fantasy figure of incalculable titillating charms the likes of which are rarely found in highbrow art, whose inspiration seems to have come from the reels of old Bollywood incapable of investing in the life of the subaltern. Bilasia, we read, was the key reason behind Billy's severance of ties with his home and family; She is described by him as the 'future, my past, indeed the very purpose of my life' (83); 'Come, come, come, she called, and Billy Biswas, son of a Supreme Court Justice, went' (83). One may infer a higher, metaphysical love here, but as read further we gather that her offerings rarely go beyond the realm of the body. We first see Bilasia in 'her rust coloured lugra, her black hair tied behind her neck, her firm shoulders golden and bare, the play of the oil lamp lending a voluptuousness to her full figure' and then we are excited to notice her 'enormous eyes, only a little foggier with drink, poured out a sexuality that was nearly as primeval as the forest that surrounded them' (102). Every time Billy makes a comparison, it is in binary terms, though he endows the tribal with an innate, magnetic eroticism, and deems her to be superior to the staid, desexualized city girls. To him 'nature were cocking a snook at the Meena Biswases of the world, informing them once again how little it cared for their self-claimed superiority' (87). His conventional bourgeois wife is no match to the bewitching Bilasia who 'might have appeared to be crude, unintelligent, and childish' (85) but she is 'a whole lot more independent' (107) and with the added features of 'a proud carriage, a figure so graceful, eyes whose brightness made your pulse quicken' (107).

This sexual objectification and exotification of the tribal woman may be a rare sight in the Indian English novel whose preoccupations have largely been the urban middle class and its vicissitudes in postcolonial India, but the popular Hindi cinema has often been found to have used this trope to enhance its appeal to an audience that has little connection with the complexities of the tribal sphere. Like *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, the tribal in Hindi films is never the subject but the object of the gaze of the dominant self of India, i.e., the middle class. According to Sohini Chattopadhyay 'the tribal character was a figure rarely met in Hindi cinema. Encountered, yes; met, no. We've seen them dancing and singing often enough; they usually bring terrific energy, erotic costumes and, always,

their drums, to the proceedings'. Citing William Ellison she reiterates that the tribal song-and-dance performance, or "tribal number," was "part of the palate of standard flavours in the masala of the Forties, Fifties, and Sixties." But after the song and dance ended, we were almost never introduced to a single tribal character as a person who might speak, think or feel (Caravan). Similarly, we find in Billy Biswas that the innocent and carefree tribals have not been endowed with a voice. Forget about any deep immersion, barring a couple of characters, we don't even know the names of the faceless crowd that constitute this sphere in whose love the protagonist claims to have drowned. This includes even Bilasiya who appears to have a barbed wire tongue but little voice or opinions. Bilasiya's character has strong parallels with the staple *banjaran* (the gypsy girl) of the Hindi films of yester-years who 'is unmistakably an exotic thing—typically costumed in a colourful skirt-blouse, with plenty of street smarts, and a sexy confidence.' In another parallel, like the exotic, colourful, *banjaran* of the Hindi films is the antithesis of the ordinary city girl, Bilasiya is not just different but even superior in her charms to the well-bred, metropolitan girl. In the account of Romi Sahai 'She had that untamed beauty that comes to flower only in our primitive people'(103). In another instance of the binary between the wilderness and civilization Romi says that 'looking at Bilasia one could well believe that these were the children of kings condemned to exile by those rapacious representatives of civilization who had ruled the thrones of Delhi and still continued to do so' (103).

That said, ironically, when we enter the tribal land the novel becomes intensely sociological, even anthropological in which the tribal is only an object of study and wonderment. The tribal characters do not contribute to the shaping of the narrative. Yes, they and their (mis)reading of culture is indeed a catalyst for profound transformation in the protagonist, but they do not become the subjects. Compare this with D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913), which had already shown more than a century back how the life of the underclass should not be limited to a sociological/ anthropological study but can branch out as a narrative rendering them flesh and blood human characters in possession of immense psychological complexities. Even in India English writing we have examples such as Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935) and *Coolie* (1936) widely considered a sociological/ anthropological novel where we get to delve deep into the psychology of the subaltern subject – the subject is neither eroticized nor exoticized but rendered in nuanced details. In this way, Billy Biswas's narration reads like a deliberately juicy, overly spiced up set of superficial observations of a sex obsessed middle aged man who is masquerading as a trained anthropologist producing objective truths. It smacks of the bias and

prejudices we discerned in colonial cultural anthropology in which the white fieldworker often studied non-white cultures as repositories of all that was taboo in the civilized west. According to Linda Nordling the field of Anthropology 'grew out of the European colonial project and was part of an overarching effort to not only understand and describe the people Native to the regions that Europeans annexed—but also, in some cases, to dominate and exploit those people and their lands'. According to André Beteille much of early Anthropology established disjunction between the idea of 'tribe' and 'civilization' as it originated in Europe where such a disjunction actually existed. However, in the old world such as India and China rather than standing opposed, tribe and civilization 'had co-existed for centuries if not millenia, and were closely implicated in each other from ancient to modern times' (301). Arun Joshi, in a similar vein to the noted colonial anthropologist Verrier Elwin, views the Maikala tribe at a certain stage of human evolution. He does not tell us how this tribe is radically different from the Hindu society outside of it. This becomes markedly emphatical when we realise that the tribe in question has lived coterminously with the so-called Hindu civilization. That they are not as self-contained and remote that Joshi is making them out to be. As Ajay Dandekar writes: 'this endeavour to label communities in (separate) categories was largely a part of the discourse of the then anthropology of the west. Indeed, anthropology, primarily an academic discipline, became an instrument of colonial domination. It presented an oversimplified depiction of the cultural 'others' and, based on it, developed a perspective that made them appear as 'the opposite' of civilized British folks.' While in the last few decades there have been efforts to decolonize the discipline by 'incorporating scholars from the regions under study' we can read *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* as a fictionalized piece of anthropology within the colonial tradition given the western moorings of the observer and even the listener, i.e, Romi Sahai who is a deracinated IAS officer educated in the US. Ironically, this postcolonial novel, perhaps inadvertently, essentializes the *adivasi* in the same manner as the ruling British elites essentialized the native through orientalism. The gaze of the middle-class narrator is imperialistic, which is to say that it employs the same knowledge-power dynamics to create and regulate the discourse around the native other which was used by the white colonizer. Even if on the outside the view may be 'positive' it reinforces a false divide between an uncontaminated civilized 'self' (the controlled, productive, nation- building middle class) and its pristine 'other' (the oversexed, out of control noble savage) and can serve to delegitimize the other even if the author wishes otherwise. Joshi's novel does not showcase the vulnerabilities of the tribal community, their fragile socio-economic livelihood,

poor quality of governance, widespread poverty, illiteracy, absence of safe drinking water and sanitary conditions and ineffective coverage of national health and social security. One may argue that the construction of such mythologies of the tribals, though seemingly harmless, can have serious policy and political implications.

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Research on the Status Quo and Strategy of Hubei Revolutionary Culture Outreach Translation

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Abstract—This paper focuses on the project of “Research on the Translation and External Communication of Hubei Revolutionary Culture”, which aims to conduct a comprehensive research on the status of multilingual foreign propaganda translation of revolutionary cultural heritage sites, educational bases, venues and scenic spots, etc. in Hubei Province, to collate and analyze the problems of the existing translations, and to make up for and improve the translations, so as to promote the international dissemination of the revolutionary culture of Hubei. The study combines online and offline research methods, assesses the quality of translation, explores the communication status quo, and puts forward targeted countermeasures to provide reference for similar revolutionary cultural outreach translation, help enhance cultural confidence and tell Chinese stories well.



Keywords—Hubei revolutionary culture, translation research, external communication, outreach translation

I. INTRODUCTION

Revolutionary culture is the spiritual foundation of the Chinese nation, and the Hubei region, as an important birthplace of the Chinese Revolution, is rich in revolutionary cultural resources. General Secretary Xi Jinping has emphasized the need to inherit and carry forward the fine tradition of revolutionary culture and tell a good Chinese story. Based on the revolutionary cultural heritage sites, educational bases and other venues in Hubei, this study conducts a systematic research on the translation of their foreign propaganda, aiming to promote the multilingual dissemination of Hubei's revolutionary culture by analyzing the current status of existing translations, solving the translation bias, and filling in the translation gaps. The project integrates online and offline

resources from an interdisciplinary perspective, combines translation practice and theoretical research, and is committed to improving the accuracy and effectiveness of revolutionary culture outreach, providing practical paths and theoretical references for enhancing cultural cohesion and promoting international cultural exchanges.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF HUBEI REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE

1 Rooted in regional revolutionary history

Hubei's revolutionary culture is rooted in local revolutionary practices, forming unique regional characteristics. From Wuchang Uprising, Huangma Uprising to Central Plains Breakout, Hubei's

revolutionary activities have been carried out throughout the Agrarian Revolution, War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and War of Liberation, leaving behind a large number of revolutionary relics, cultural relics and documents, such as the former site of Qujiawan Xiang'Exi Revolutionary Base and the Memorial Park of Revolutionary Martyrs in Xiang'Exi Soviet Area, etc. These resources carry the revolutionary course of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in Hubei, with a distinctive regional identity and a thick history.

2 Emphasis on carrying forward the revolutionary spirit

Hubei revolutionary culture is not only a product of history, but also a spiritual leading value in the new era. At its core are revolutionary traditions such as the “spirit of resistance to the floods of 1988”, which embodies the firm ideals, beliefs and spirit of sacrifice of the Chinese Communist Party. This spirit continues to be inherited through memorial halls, revolutionary education bases and other forms, and has been given new connotations of the times, such as the development of revolutionary tourism, the rule of law culture, etc., and has become an important carrier of socialist core values.

3 Possessing a broad mass base

The formation and spread of revolutionary culture in Hubei has a broad mass base. During the revolutionary period, in addition to members of the CPC, members of the democratic parties, overseas Chinese, and religious figures were all involved (e.g., Dong Biwu, Zhang Zizhong, etc.), forming a cultural pattern that was jointly created by many groups. In contemporary society, there are even enterprises such as “General revolutionary Brewing” integrating revolutionary culture into brand building, the government fostering a team of “revolutionary Messenger” interpreters through legislation, and social forces actively participating in revolutionary public welfare activities, forming a pattern of synergistic inheritance by multiple subjects.

4 Driving education with tourism, promoting heritage with education

Hubei revolutionary culture focuses on the deep integration with tourism and education. For example, the former site of the Xiang'e West Revolutionary Base in Qujiawan combines revolutionary stories with historical

landscapes to create an immersive experience through old street scenes and revolutionary memorials; the education sector has incorporated revolutionary resources into study activities for primary and secondary schools, organising student visits to revolutionary attractions, remembering revolutionary martyrs, and promoting the inheritance of the revolutionary spirit.

III. STATUS OF REVOLUTIONARY SCENIC AREA OUTREACH TRANSLATION

Hubei is one of the important birthplaces of China's revolutionary culture, and its revolutionary resources, which are numerous, widely distributed and of high historical value, occupy a unique position in China's revolutionary history and socialist cultural system, and continue to play an important social value and significance of the times. However, the current situation of foreign propaganda translation of many revolutionary attractions is always unsatisfactory, and its problems mainly focus on the following aspects:

Firstly, there are many translation gaps. Some revolutionary scenic areas only provide corresponding English translations in certain areas, while other textual content is often overlooked. For example, the text introduction in the memorial hall of the Martyrs' Cemetery of the Honghu Xiang-E West Soviet Area has English translations, but the biography of General He Long on the statue outside the hall has no corresponding translation. Additionally, there is essentially no English translation in some scenic areas, with descriptions only provided in Chinese, as seen in the introduction of the former headquarters of the 5th Division of the New Fourth Army in Xiaogan, which has little corresponding translation. Secondly, the promotion channels and content are relatively backward. Although the government has launched a smart tourism platform, the dissemination through new media still relies on traditional text and images, with insufficient use of interactive formats such as short videos and live streaming. While some scenic spots have attempted to use new platforms and channels to promote revolutionary culture, the creativity of the content is lacking, making it difficult

to attract foreign tourists. Finally, there is a lack of design for merchandise and insufficient display of local characteristics. Revolutionary culture itself carries a serious and solemn nature, and many scenic spots, in order to maintain this characteristic, have not focused on the design and development of tourism peripheral products; even when there are such products, there tends to be a significant amount of homogenization, which fails to effectively stimulate the surrounding economy. In addition, the cultural customs of the region and revolutionary culture should blend and influence each other. However, some areas neglect to showcase their local cultural characteristics when designing and constructing scenic spots, leading to aesthetic fatigue among tourists and hindering the dissemination and promotion of Hubei's revolutionary culture.

IV. RESEARCH ON THE TRANSLATION STRATEGIE OF HUBEI REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE

The English introductions in revolutionary tourism attractions mainly serve a communicative purpose, which is to enable foreign tourists to accurately and objectively understand China's revolutionary culture. In the process of translating cultural statements of revolutionary tourism attractions, the translator must understand the intent of the original text and remain faithful to it, while also explaining Chinese culture, especially revolutionary culture, to foreign readers. Therefore, for different statements, different translation strategies should be employed based on the characteristics of the original text and the purpose of the translation, so as to ultimately achieve the goal of promoting China's history and revolutionary culture. Next, we will illustrate the translation methods of some cultural phrases in revolutionary tourism attractions with specific examples.

1 Literal Translation

When translating revolutionary tourism promotional texts, if the source language and the target language are basically consistent in semantic and pragmatic levels, a literal translation method can be used. Doing so can present the lexical and rhetorical meanings of the original text intuitively, achieving a similar language effect to the

original text, and it can also effectively avoid information loss caused by cultural omission, retaining as much as possible the revolutionary cultural connotations and historical traces embedded in the source language. For some names of revolutionary historical events, place names, and proper nouns of figures, a literal translation method can be adopted.

Example 1: 功昭日月，永垂不朽！

Their great achievements, shining brightly like the sun and moon, and will forever be remembered in history!

This idiom appears in the preface of the Zhou Laozui Xiang-E-Xi Revolutionary Museum. The meaning of “功昭日月” is that a person's contributions are as evident as the sun and moon, while “永垂不朽” refers to glorious deeds or great spirits being passed down forever. Both idioms are used to describe the significant achievements of martyrs and their revolutionary spirit, expressing later generations' admiration and respect for the great spirits of revolutionary heroes. Therefore, a literal translation method is employed, directly translating words like “日”, “月”, and “不朽” into “sun”, “moon”, and “forever be remembered in history”, preserving the essence of red culture while also clearly conveying reverence for the martyrs, allowing foreign tourists to experience the solemn and dignified atmosphere of red scenic spots.

Example 2: 三峡工程是治理和开发长江的关键性骨干工程，是迄今为止世界上规模最大的水利枢纽工程和综合效益最广泛的水电工程。

The Three Gorges Project is the key backbone project for the governance and development of the Yangtze River, and it is the largest-scale water conservancy hub project and the most extensive hydropower project in the world to date.

This sentence comes from the introduction of the Three Gorges Water Conservancy Project located in the middle section of the Xiling Gorge in Yichang, Hubei, along the Yangtze River. The term “三峡工程” is directly translated as “The Three Gorges Project”, and “长江” is directly translated as “the Yangtze River”, preserving the original names and cultural characteristics by translating proper nouns

literally. “关键性骨干工程” is directly translated as “key backbone project”, “规模最大的” as “largest-scale”, “水利枢纽工程” as “water conservancy hub project”, “综合效益最广泛的” as “the most extensive”, and “水电工程” as “hydropower project”. These phrases are directly translated according to the vocabulary and word order of the original text, maintaining semantic and pragmatic consistency with the original text and accurately conveying the information.

2 Amplification

Important historical events, names, places, as well as poetic allusions and commonly accepted expressions often appear in the revolutionary tourism external publicity texts. This historical and cultural information is very easy to understand for the source language authors and domestic tourists, but for foreign tourists who lack background knowledge of Chinese history and revolutionary culture, it is like reading a book in an unknown language, leaving them puzzled. Therefore, when handling this type of translation issue, the translator needs to adopt an amplification approach, further elaborating on important information that is not directly stated in the source language but is essential for the target language readers to understand.

Example 1: 2022 年清明迁葬县域内零散烈士墓集中入陵园 9 名, 无名烈士墓一座。

In 2022, nine scattered martyrs' graves within the county were relocated to the cemetery during the Qingming Festival (also called Tomb Sweeping Day, which is the time for Chinese people to show respect to their ancestors by cleaning their ancestors' tombs and placing offerings), along with one unknown martyrs' grave.

This passage is from the introduction of the Laifeng County Martyrs' Cemetery in Laifeng County, Enshi Prefecture, Hubei Province. The translation of “清明” here adopts an amplifying translation method. Considering that the target audience may not be familiar with the Qingming Festival, this method is used to briefly explain that it is a Chinese traditional festival where people commemorate their ancestors through tomb-sweeping and offering sacrifices. This not only helps the target readers better understand the festival but also allows them to appreciate and savor the exotic flavor, promoting cultural exchange between different

ethnic groups.

Example 2: 湘鄂川黔革命根据地

The revolutionary base areas of Hunan-Hubei-Sichuan-Guizhou

This passage comes from the preface of the memorial hall of the Xiang-E-West revolutionary base area located in Jianli City, Hubei Province. The terms “湘、鄂、川、黔” refer to the abbreviations for Hunan Province, Hubei Province, Sichuan Province, and Guizhou Province, respectively. Behind these names lies a unique Chinese culture and history. A direct phonetic translation to “Xiang'e-Chuan-Qian revolutionary base areas” may confuse foreign tourists. Therefore, an expansion translation can be used, such as “The revolutionary base areas of Hunan-Hubei-Sichuan-Guizhou” which not only facilitates reading and understanding for foreign tourists but also provides a more intuitive understanding of the geographical location of these revolutionary base areas.

3 Omission Translation

Promotional materials for revolutionary tourism often include rhymes, stylistic choices, and elevated themes, as well as techniques that combine scenic representation with emotional expression. Using a literal or idiomatic translation could result in redundancy and linguistic clumsiness, failing to convey information accurately and not aligning with the reading and thinking habits of foreign audiences. In this case, it is necessary to employ the method of reduction. Omission, as a common translation strategy, appropriately omits information that is optional in the source text, simplifying or deleting it to make the translation more concise and fluid. This approach aligns with the reading habits of the target audience and helps enhance the text's communicability.

Example 1: “万众一心，众志成城”体现了中国人民的强大凝聚力。

“The unity of all” is a reflection of the strong cohesion of the Chinese people.

Both “万众一心” and “众志成城” describe the vast unity of the people, so these two idioms can be combined in translation to avoid redundancy. The translation is based on fidelity to the original meaning,

while optimizing the structure to better conform to English language habits.

Example 2: 新四军第五师在华中大地纵横驰骋，越战越强，从 168 余人发展成为五万雄狮。

The Fifth Division of the New Fourth Army carried out revolutionary struggle across the land of central China, and grew stronger and stronger, from more than 168 soldiers to 50000.

“从 168 余人发展成为五万雄狮”clearly uses metaphorical rhetoric, comparing the Fifth Division of the New Fourth Army to lions, reflecting a respect for revolutionary martyrs. However, in Western culture, the image of a lion more often symbolizes power and strength, showcasing dominance and control from one party over another, which clearly does not align with the image of the people's army. Therefore, it cannot be directly translated as “from more than 168 people to 50,000 male lions”, but should rather adopt a reduction method, omitting the rhetorical device and translated as “from more than 168 soldiers to 50,000”. This way, foreign tourists will not misunderstand or misinterpret the image of the Chinese revolution and the people's army.

4 Annotation

In order to ensure that the translation reflects the meaning and style of the source language as much as possible and fills the gap in historical background knowledge for foreign tourists, historical and cultural background information related to proper nouns should be supplemented and annotated based on the original text. Example 1: 每年清明、七一、八一、烈士纪念日来陵园纪念烈士达 4 万多人，全年接待瞻仰人数共 10 万多人次，为来凤精神文明建设和传扬红色文化做出了积极贡献。

Every year on Qingming Festival, July 1st (CPC Founding Day) August 1st (Army Day) and Martyrs' Day, more than 40,000 people come to the mausoleum to pay tribute to the martyrs. The mausoleum receives more than 100,000 visitors throughout the year, making positive contributions to the spiritual civilization construction and the promotion of red culture in Laifeng.

The terms “七一”and“八一” adopt the annotation translation strategy.“七一” and “八一”are respectively the founding anniversary of the Communist Party of China and the founding anniversary of the People's

Liberation Army. Considering that the target language readers may not understand the significance of these two dates, a footnoting method is adopted to indicate the festivals represented by these two dates.

Example 2: 一九九五年在纪念中国抗日战争胜利暨世界反法西斯战争胜利五十周年之际，各单位和各界人士自发捐款，兴建了张昌岐烈士塑像和烈士英名录。

In 1995, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese War of Resistance against Japan(1937-1945) and the World Anti-Fascist War(1950-1953), various units and people from all walks of life spontaneously donated funds to build the statue of martyr Zhang Changqi and the list of martyr's names.

The translation of “中国抗日战争胜利暨世界反法西斯战争” adopts the strategy of foreignization with literal translation and annotation, considering that the target language readers may be unfamiliar with these two wars, hence adding the starting dates of these two wars is beneficial for spreading Chinese red culture.

5 Discourse Reorganization

In the practice of Hubei revolutionary culture outreach translation, based on the differences between English and Chinese language structure, the translator should adjust the discourse structure according to the specific situation, reorganize the sentences by splitting or merging, and strive to make the translation faithful to the original language and in line with the language expression habits of the target language readers.

Example 1: 位于对面的革命烈士纪念馆的陈列，较为全面、系统、真实地反映了宜城市的革命斗争史，两馆均位于烈士陵园内，居于市区，是湖北省政府核定公布的省级纪念馆。

The display of the Memorial Hall of revolutionary martyrs, located opposite, reflects the revolutionary struggle history of Yicheng city in a more comprehensive, systematic and true way. Martyrs Cemetery, composed of these two museums, located in the urban area, is a provincial memorial hall approved and announced by the Hubei Provincial government.

Firstly, the translation adjusts the order of

information presentation, changing the original structure of first introducing the exhibits of the memorial hall, then stating the location, and finally emphasizing its official recognition, to first describing the functions of the memorial hall, then mentioning its components, and finally explaining its official status, which makes the logic clearer. Secondly, the original text is a relatively long sentence; the translation splits this up, presenting the part about“较为全面、系统、真实地反映了宜城市的革命斗争史”separately, thus making the expression smoother. Moreover, the translation combines the two parts “两馆均位于烈士陵园内，居于市区” and“是湖北省政府核定公布的省级纪念馆”，making “Martyrs Cemetery, composed of these two museums, located in the urban area” the subject, which leads into “is a provincial memorial hall...”, tightening the sentence structure. Through these adjustments, the translation has optimized the discourse structure while faithfully conveying the original meaning, making the expression more natural and the information more layered, in line with the reading habits of English-speaking audiences.

Example 2: 武昌起义翌日，即1911年10月11日，湖北革命党人和起义官兵代表，邀请諮议局议员等地方士绅汇集于此，商议组建中华民国军政府鄂军都督府，推举原清军第21混成协统领黎元洪为都督。

The day after Wuchang Uprising, i.e., October 11, 1911, Hubei revolutionaries and representatives of the insurgent soldiers and officers, invited members of the Consultative Council and other local gentry to gather here to discuss the formation of the military government of the Republic of China in The Military Government of Hubei. And they elected Li Yuanhong, the former commander of the 21st mixed association of the the troops of Qing Dynasty, to be the Governor.

The text contains several small sentences. In order to express the needs, the source language is split into two new sentences with “Hubei revolutionaries and representatives of the insurgent soldiers and officers” as the subject, which relieves the reading pressure of foreign readers to a certain extent. And because the same subject is implied, using “they” in the second sentence does not affect the coherence of the sentence. At the same time, the two newly split sentences introduce the primary tasks and secondary outcomes of the meeting, making the meaning

of the translation more layered.

V. CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the revolutionary culture tourist attractions in Hubei Province, and through field research and text analysis, it combs through the current situation and issues of the translation of Hubei revolutionary culture for external promotion. Research members, combining the uniqueness of Hubei revolutionary culture, conducted an analysis of the translation strategies for the external promotion texts of the tourist attractions. These practices demonstrate that the flexible use of translation strategies can effectively enhance the accuracy and readability of external promotion texts, aiding the cross-cultural transmission of the core spirit of revolutionary culture. The international dissemination of revolutionary culture has a long way to go, but through the combination of precise translation and diversified communication, Hubei revolutionary culture is bound to bloom with unique charm on the world stage, injecting new vitality into enhancing cultural confidence and telling China's story well.

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Cognitive Analysis of Conceptual Metaphor Theory in Nizar Qabani's poem "A Message from Under the Water"

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Abstract— In the last four decades, a lot of cognitive researchers have grown interested in the cognitive analysis of language in connection to mental and cognitive processes. The current paper aims to conduct the ways in which Nizar Qabani employs conceptual metaphors of love and pain in A Message from under the water poem. Nizar Qabani is a Syrian poet; he is considered one of the most prominent contemporary figures in the Arab cultures. The paper analytical framework is based on Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory and is further enhanced by Kövecses's Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory in terms of a mixed methodology. The findings reveal that metaphonymy is used more compared to metaphor, and the underlying force and container schemas are more dominant compared to other schemas. The whole comprehension of mental space reveals that love and pain are inseparable concepts in the Arab world.



Keywords— CMT, ECMT, Nizar Qabani, A Message from under the water, Kövecses's framework.

I. INTRODUCTION

Metaphor has a long history. Its history traces back to the time of Aristotle. Metaphors have been a topic of discussion for rhetoricians, critics, and more recently, linguists. Etymologically the word metaphor is a French word derived from the Greek, *metaphora*, which means transfer or transferring a word from its literal meaning (Cruse, 2000, p. 202; Skeat, 1993, p. 28). Many scholars argue that it is simpler to demonstrate metaphor than to describe it (see Childs and Fowler 2006, p. 138), and there is, in theory, no universally accepted definition of metaphor (Abrams and Harpham 2012, p. 212).

Knowles and Moon (2006, p. 2) define metaphor as "the use of language to refer to something other than what it was originally applied to, or what it "literally" means, to suggest some resemblance or make a connection between the two things". According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary metaphor is "the use of words to indicate something different from the literal meaning". Cruse (2000, p. 202) argues that such a definition "is not very enlightening: Given that it does not even hint at any

rationale for such a curious practice, it makes metaphor seem, at best, careless and, at worst, perversity."

Metaphor is defined by the Britannica Concise Encyclopedia (2006, p. 1244) as a trope "in which a word or phrase denoting one kind of object or action is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them." The history of metaphor witnessed a major shift in 1980 with the publication of Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live by*. The definitions given above are all based on the traditional notion of metaphor, which held that metaphor was restricted to literary texts in general and poetry in particular, and that it was solely linguistic and a rhetorical device. Metaphor interprets cognitive semantics differently, it is the understanding or experiencing one thing in terms of another is the essence of metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 5).

According to the cognitivist, metaphor is not only verbal but a mental process (Evans and Green, 2006, p. 38). According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 6), "human thought processes are largely metaphorical." They define metaphor as the mapping of an object in one domain onto another object in another (Evans, 2007, pp. 136 ff.).

For example, the idea that LOVE IS A JOURNEY is conceptually metaphorical; it is thought of as a journey. It should be mentioned that concepts articulated in sentences are known as conceptual metaphors. Language lacks these concepts, only the semantic structure of linguistic phrases is supported by them. Since studying metaphor has a long history, as was previously noted, a large number of linguistic and literary studies have been carried out in various disciplines of study. To the best of the present researcher's knowledge, however, no prior study has been done on the application of conceptual metaphor theory to Nizar Qabani's poems' in general, and the chosen poem (*A Message from under the Water*) in particular. The current research is an attempt to close this gap, or it may even be seen as a breakthrough.

Research questions

This paper aims to answer the following questions:

- 1- Which type is used more in constructing metaphorical meaning relevant to the poem's themes? Are they metaphoric or metaphonymic constructions?
- 2- What are the types of image schema and metaphor function that are more dominant? And why?

Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Metaphors are common in human cognition and behavior in daily life, not just in language (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:3). From Aristotle to the present, several linguists have attempted to unravel the mysteries of metaphor. Metaphor, as defined by Lakoff and Johnson and those who follow them, is the conceptualization and experience of one domain (the target domain) in terms of another (the source domain). The monograph by Lakoff and Johnson is also considered to be the founding document of cognitive linguistics, or cognitive semantics. Metaphor is omnipresent a cognitive problem, and part of the human conceptual system is metaphorical in both thought and conduct, according to cognitive semantics. Many, if not all, conceptual statements are based on these conceptual metaphors, which is proof of the pervasiveness of metaphors and the metaphoricity of human thinking and behaving (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, pp. 3-4).

Conceptual metaphor theory was developed with the help of other academics, such as Dancygier and Sweetser (2014), Gibbs (1994), and Kövecses (2002). Therefore the conceptual metaphors that discussed in this

paper are often referenced in the writings of these cognitive semanticists. Since it "provided much of the early theoretical spark for this approach (i.e., cognitive semantics) to the relationship between language, mind, and embodied experience," the conceptual metaphor theory has been regarded as the foundation of cognitive semantics (Evans, 2007, p. 34; cf. Evans and Green, 2006, p. 286). Similarly, Croft and Cruse (2004, p. 194) assert that metaphor has been a major "preoccupation of cognitive linguists" in general, to the extent that some people mistakenly believe that metaphor is the exclusive focus of cognitive linguistics. According to conceptual metaphor theory, metaphor is ubiquitous and pervasive in everyday life, not only merely in language but also in thought and action, in contrast to earlier metaphor theories (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 3).

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 3) "Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature." According to Hurford et al. (2007, p. 331) Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor is a conceptual mapping from a familiar conceptual domain, known as the source domain, onto a less familiar conceptual domain, known as the target domain. For instance, when we state LOVE IS A JOURNEY, the conceptual mapping between the source domain, JOURNEY, and the target domain, LOVE, demonstrates that there is a correspondence link between the parts of both domains, and so JOURNEY is concrete while LOVE is less concrete or rather abstract. This idea distinguishes between metaphorical verbal expressions and conceptual metaphors. We refer to the abstract, conceptual cross-domain mappings between a source and destination domain as conceptual metaphors. Metaphor refers to understanding a system of correspondences, such as: The individual living a love story is a traveler. Close destinations are his purposes. Lover is hindered by love's challenges. Any relation of love is considered as a journey that full of events, emotions and difficulties. The type of information needed for these correspondences between the source and target domains is encyclopedic in character (Croft and Cruse. 2004, p. 196).

One can see that there is a connection between the person who has a love relation and traveler if we consider one of the aforementioned elements, for example, the person living a love relation is a traveler.

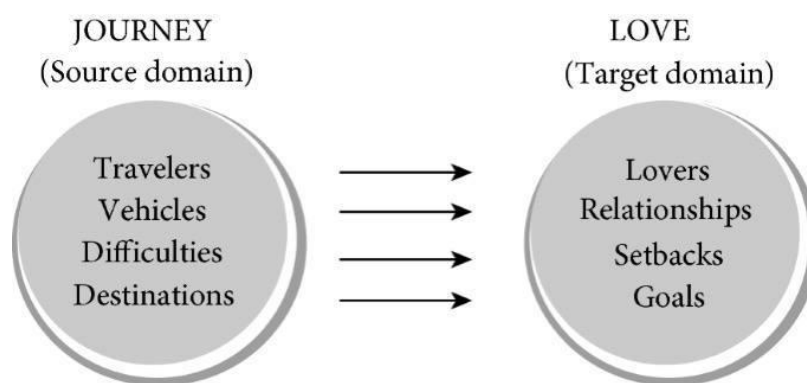


Fig.1: The cross mapping of conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY

The surface language realizations that give rise to the conceptual metaphors are what we mean when we refer to metaphorical terms. This means that the actual expressions (words, phrases, sentences, etc.) that reflect the inner component of the conceptual metaphors cross-domain mapping are the focus of classic theories of metaphor (cf. Lakoff, 1993, p. 203).

One of the factors that cause the abstract concept of love to exist as a metaphorical journey is the connection or the mapping between the two concepts. As we can see, the mapping's multifaceted structure from the journey domain matches the multifaceted structure of the love idea. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 81) refer to these kinds of "multidimensional structures" as "experiential gestalts, which are ways of organizing experiences into structural wholes." As a result, love is a journey in our conceptual metaphor, and the gestalt for love is organized using a few chosen journey gestalt components.

Zoltán Kövecses in his publication *Extended conceptual metaphor theory* attempted to outline a framework for the study of metaphor that, in several respects, can be thought of as a version of, or an alternative to, the "standard," "traditional" Lakoff-Johnson view. With its help, it becomes possible to make conceptual metaphor theory more flexible, open, and, in my view at least stronger. This stronger view eliminates some of the weaknesses of the standard theory and allows us to respond successfully to some important recent challenges.

Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The researcher argues the case in the publication that CMT itself needs to be modified in a number of ways. Kövecses (2008, p.168) recommendations are as follows: (1) it must be given a much more complex contextual component than what is currently available; (2) its cognitive dimension must be improved; (3) it needs a component that can explain the real-world usages of metaphors in natural discourse; and (4) and perhaps most importantly it must be

modified so that the changes made under (1), (2), and (3) can be combined into a single, cohesive theory of metaphor.

The new perspective of CMT is extended conceptual metaphor theory which has multidimensional nature and contextual embeddedness of conceptual metaphors. Because they are multilayered, conceptual metaphors incorporate a range of elements. These were recognized as specific types of conceptual structures which are image schema, domain, frame, and mental space, specific types of memory (long-term and working memory), specific types of ontological status (supraindividual, individual, and subindividual), and specific types of metaphorical meaning (Kövecses, 2020, p 168).

Image Schema

The fundamental conceptual frameworks that give experience meaning are image schemas. Four characteristics of image schemas are identified by Hampe (2005: 1-2) based on the literature on image schemas quite distinctive. Kövecses (2020, p. 53) gives them here in a simplified version.

- 1- Image schemas are internally structured
- 2- Composed of only a few components,
- 3- Highly schematic gestalts, continuous analogue patterns,
- 4- and directly relevant preconceptual structures.

Johnson discovered that none of these things could be accomplished without human imagination when researching the function and relationship of meaning in comprehension and reasoning (Johnson, 1987, p. ix). According to Johnson, an image schema is a "recurred dynamic pattern of our motor programming and perceptual interactions that provide our experience with structure and coherence (1987, p. xiv). The theory of image schemas aims to demonstrate how human physical interactions with his living and inanimate surroundings give rise to meaning, imagination, and reason all of which are indicators of human intelligence (Johnson, 2005, p. 15). Furthermore,

image schemas help in the comprehension and concretization of abstract ideas by humans (Johnson, 2005, p. 16).

Domain

According to Langacker (1987: 488), a domain is "a coherent area of conceptualization relative to which semantic units may be characterized." Domains are not equivalent to image schemas, however, imagistic patterns of experience that are highly schematic in character but propositional.

Frame

The concept of "frame" is infamously ambiguous. It has been employed in a variety of ways and in a wide range of traditions. There is a viewpoint that views frames as a complex of background information that gives a particular concept its frame-specific meaning. Fillmore's Frame is one example of this idea in action. In terms of word meanings, "the fundamental premise of Frame is that practically all content words require an appeal to the background frames within which the meaning they convey is motivated and interpreted in order to be understood." (Baker & Fillmore 2010: 318).

Mental Space

One of the main theories in cognitive semantics is the mental spaces theory, which Gills Fauconnier put forth in his two works, Mental Spaces (1994) and Mappings in Thought and Language (1997). According to Fauconnier and Turner (2002, p. 40), mental spaces "are tiny conceptual packets created as we think and speak, for the purposes of local understanding and action," In short, meaning production is the focus of the mental spaces theory (cf. Evans, 2007, p. 135).

The Role of the Context

It would appear that context is an essential component of creating metaphorical meaning. Metaphor's conceptual and contextual components are inseparable; one cannot exist without the other. Conceptual metaphor theory cannot simply be just conceptual. It is just as much contextual (Kövecses, 2020, p.177).

We may argue that in specific local discourse contexts, contextual effect is greatest and most immediate at the mental spaces level. Contextual influence is not present in frame and domain level metaphors. Metaphors tend to be universal at the image schema level and appear subtly throughout ontogeny and phylogeny. Therefore, these four terms can be classified according to the level of schemacity, from the most schematic to the least schematic, as represented in the diagram below:

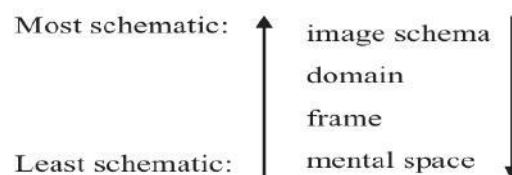


Fig.2: Schematicity hierarchy for four conceptual structures (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014, propose a similar hierarchy)

II. METHODOLOGY

This section submits the main concepts that form the foundation of data analysis. It presents the selected sample of analysis, specifying the method of analysis and the framework of this study.

i. Data Collection

In this paper, the researcher uses poetry to analyze the conceptual metaphors cognitively. The data taken from Nizar Qabani's poems, specifically *A message from under the water* poem.

ii. Method

The analysis of the poem will be conducted, initially qualitatively and subsequently quantitatively. The qualitative methodology is an effective method for analyzing poetry since it concentrated on the subjective and interpretative aspects of language while considering the implicit and symbolic meaning of the poem (Creswell & Path, 2017, 65). In the quantitative analysis concentrated on a the examination and interpretation of the poem's metaphoric or metaphonymic expressions.

iii. Model of Analysis

The study draws on the framework of Zoltán Kövecses's (2020) extended conceptual metaphor theory as well as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's (2003) conceptual metaphor theory. These ideas offer a starting point for comprehending language's cultural and metaphorical aspects. In their landmark work on conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), Lakoff and Johnson demonstrate how metaphorical mappings from more concrete areas of experience are used to shape and comprehend abstract notions. Their approach is used to highlight how ubiquitous metaphors are in language and everyday cognition, which is consistent with the study's emphasis on metaphorical expressions in poetry. Zoltán Kövecses' Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory builds on the original work of Lakoff and Johnson. To comprehend metaphoric language, Kövecses's approach incorporates a number of cognitive, linguistic, and cultural factors. The researcher contends that highlighting the cognitive, cultural, contextual, and

linguistic variety in metaphorical representations of emotion is one of the primary reasons Kövecses was chosen as a model for this study.

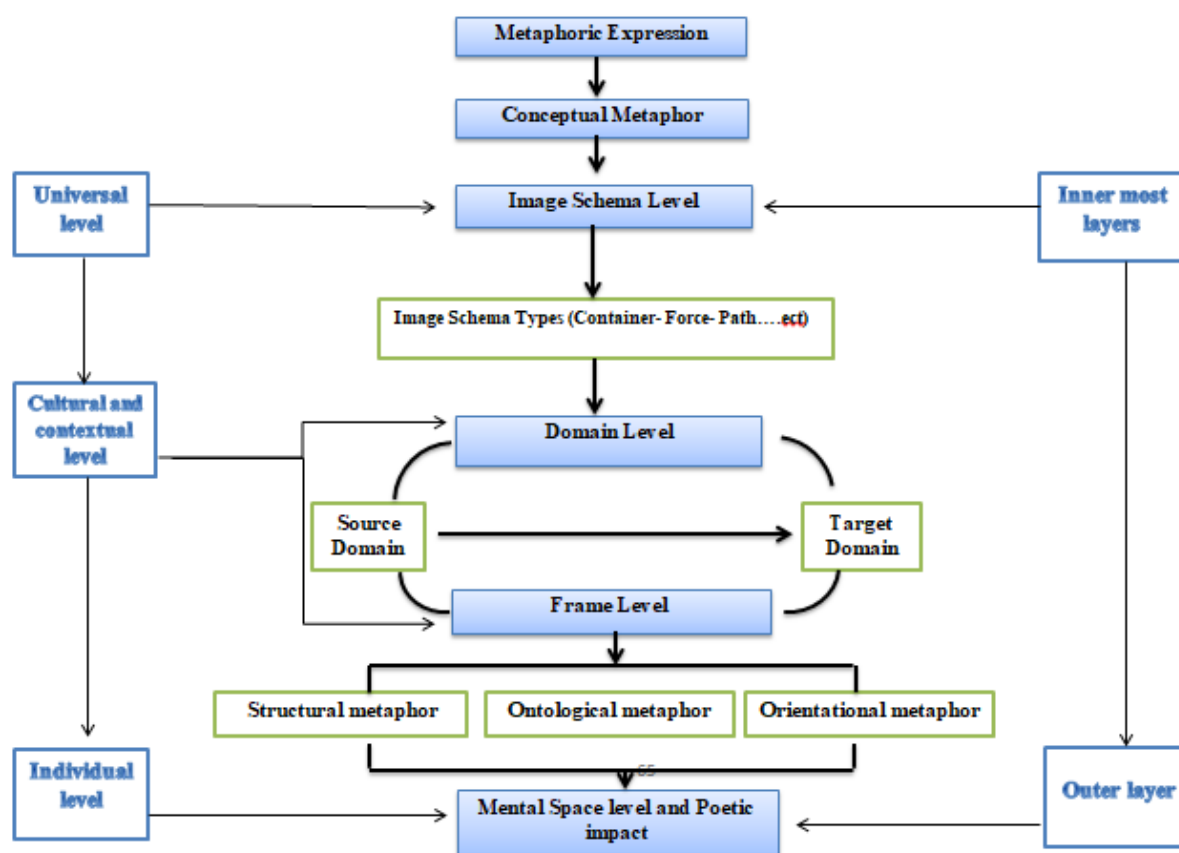


Fig.3: An eclectic model for analysis CMT (Lakoff and Johnson (2003), Kövecses (2020))

Analysis of Data

The poet Nizar Qabbani (1923–1998), a Syrian, wrote the poem *A message from under water* that used in this study. Nizar Qabani is one of the most well-known forerunners of the modernist movement in Arabic poetry. The central idea of the poem is seeking guidance and insight from an all-consuming love. The poet expresses his grief via metaphor and drowning images. This poem, which is filled with the intense emotions of a single person, has a more intimate and personal tone than Qabani's other poems.

Stanza 1

رسالة من تحت الماء

"A message from under the water"

Metaphoric expression

The phrase (رسالة من تحت الماء) a message from under the water is a metaphonymic representation of deep emotional immersion, such as love, agony, longing and suffering. The idea of sending a message from under the water suggests that Qabani is trying to communicate

feelings that are hidden or difficult to express, being suffocated by this intense hidden emotions. This metaphonymy portrays love or emotional pain as an ocean in which the poet feels submerged, emphasizing the weight and depth of these feelings.

Conceptual Metaphor

FEELINGS ARE AN OCEAN

Image Schema Level

The most straightforward, most tangible way to understand this phrase when taken literally is through image schema. The term "message" (رسالة) expresses a desire to communicate with someone or to express a sentiment or idea that is inside of oneself. (تحت الماء) The term "underwater" conjures up container schema since it refers to a real place beneath the water's surface where the poet is confined. Like the depth of the ocean, being underwater also suggested a downward direction, which illuminates the verticality schema and emphasizes the poet's sense of being overtaken by emotions that drag him or her lower.

According to vertical schema, emotions have the power to drag a speaker down, making communication or escape challenging. The force schema is represented by the image of being underwater, which evokes feelings of exertion, pressure, and stress. It makes the reader feel as though the poet is under emotional pressure.

Domain Level

The starting point of this line is illustrated by the conceptual metaphor FEELINGS ARE AN OCEAN, which draws several parallels between the characteristics of the ocean and the nature of human emotions. The enormous, enigmatic, and profoundly complicated aspect of the ocean is symbolized in Arabic culture and, more generally, the concrete domain. Like the ocean, the abstract idea of feelings is rich, strong, unexpected, and has hidden depth. Similar to the experience of being lost in a large and unpredictable ocean, this conceptual metaphor demonstrated how deep feelings can be overwhelming, lonely, or difficult to explain.

The universal schema of oceans and seas in general is one of calmness, purity, depth, danger, and mystery. This schema demonstrates how the profound, pure, sensitive, and entrenched emotions can engender a sense of loneliness and a yearning for connection by tying the line to universal experience with cultural viewpoint.

Frame Level

An organized frame of connected concepts and presumptions derived from shared experiences or cultural knowledge is used to interpret the phrase at the frame level. رسالة من تحت الماء A message from under the water offers a more comprehensive frame-level background, giving the metaphor more depth and connecting it to genuine emotions, emotional agony, and the devouring and agonizing quality of love. Additionally, this phrase implies an effort to communicate from a remote or unreachable place. Framing love as something that may submerge and overwhelm, like deep waters, the notion of delivering a message from such a location implies a desperate endeavor to reach out despite the difficulties. In general, love is viewed as a source of both joy and pain in Arabic poetry, particularly in Qabani's writing. In this instance, (تحت الماء) under the water presents love as both potentially dangerous and wanted, drawing the lover into an empty emotional state akin to drowning in the sea. This is consistent with the traditional poetic framework, which holds that love is powerful, and transformational, frequently driving lovers to feelings of desolation and longing. This phrase is an example of an orientational metaphor.

Mental Space Level

An imagined or hypothetical situation created by the imagination that enables the individual to immerse themselves in a symbolic or abstract setting. Due to intense emotions that physically envelop the poet, it appears that the underwater scene creates a mental realm where the poet itself immerses itself in very deep, dark blue seas. As though the poet was trying to convey emotions that are intensely intimate and concealed beneath layers of emotional intensity, the line "رسالة من تحت الماء" conveys an internal conflict. This line has lyrical effect because it evokes the deep, tumultuous essence of love and leaves readers feeling both awed and sympathetic to the lover's predicament.

Stanza 2

"علمني كيف اقص جذور هواك من الاعماق..."

"Teach me how to cut off the roots of your love from the depth..."

Metaphorical Expression

This sentence () uses a profound metaphor to connect love to trees. This line implies that the poet's feelings are not only surface-level; rather, they reveal how deeply rooted emotions are hurting the poet and are difficult to shake. The roots of your love are mentioned in the phrase "جذور هواك". The term "جذور" is used metonymically to symbolise the poet's deep, fundamental love ties. As a component of the poet's emotional core, the roots are a metonym for the deeply ingrained emotions and memories connected to the beloved. The term "depth" (الاعماق) is used metonymically once more to refer to the innermost aspects of the poet's feelings or character.

Conceptual Metaphor

LOVE IS A ROOTED TREE

Image Schema Level

The embeddedness and verticality schemas are the fundamental cognitive structures that are formed from this metaphonymic phrase (اقص جذور هواك من الاعماق), which split off the roots of your love from the depths. A sense of embeddedness is evoked by the concept of (جذور) roots, which are buried deeply in the soil and incorporated into the ground. This schema represents something that is difficult to eliminate without having an effect that lasts. According to this schema, a person's identity is intricately linked to their love. It is difficult to detach this deeply ingrained love from the person without creating emotional distress, just like removing a tree damages the surrounding soil. The two metonymic terms (جذور, الاعماق) roots and depth refer to a huge green tree with tall branches and deeply rooted roots. Here, the vertical schema is clearly visible, with the roots pointing below and the branches extending upward. This vertical motion symbolizes a harmony between expansion

and anchoring. The upward rise in this schema symbolizes how love develops, grows, and uplifts the person on an emotional or spiritual level. It also clearly illustrates the steady characteristics of love. According to this perspective, love is timeless and plays a crucial part in a person's life, much like roots are necessary for a tree to survive and thrive.

Domain Level

Within an element in the abstract domain (love), a conceptual metaphor connects components from the concrete domain (rooted tree). A tree's roots are the solid component that sustains the entire tree; without them, the tree would wither and become helpless. Increasing the strength of the roots makes the tree stronger, and vice versa. The idea of love was represented in this conceptual metaphor as a tree with roots. Strong love is entrenched and profoundly ingrained in one's being, as this mapping demonstrates. Love offers inner strength, supporting and maintaining the individual, just like a tree's roots give it the power to grow tall. The concept that individuals rely on love, especially in trying times, is captured in this mapping.

Frame Level

The frame of consuming or tortured love, in which one person's intense connection turns into a cause of anguish, is evoked by this statement. There is internal turmoil in this frame since love is either not returned or causes more suffering than happiness. The poet's want to chop off the roots of their love (اقص جذور هواء) implies that they are struggling to break free from the grip of love and that their emotions are either uncontrollable or causing emotional turmoil. In many cultures, the idea of a tree represents perseverance and progress. Similar to how a tree's roots provide physical stability, love is anchored by common ideals, life experiences, and emotional ties. This framing suggests that love is strong because it is firmly entrenched rather than fleeting or susceptible to change. The line "cut off the roots of your love from the depths" () uses some spatial language () depth, but given the context, it is not an orientational metaphor; rather, its metaphoric function is structural, as it arranges the concept of love in terms of a rooted plant or tree with deeply embedded roots (). By giving love tangible qualities (roots), it also employs ontological components to convey how deeply ingrained it is in the poet.

Mental Space Level

This sentence paints a clear image of the poet's emotional terrain, allowing one to typically develop scenarios concerning it at the mental space level. It draws attention to how intricate, challenging, and concealed their relationship was. The sentence reveals the poet's intense internal conflict

and attempt to achieve equilibrium and release from the emotional burden of love. The poet is caught between wanting to go on and clinging to their love. It is clear that there is emotional tension there, and the poet's wish to keep the connection is at odds with their awareness that it hurts them. The poet struggles with the conflict between wanting to be near to someone they love and realising that they must distance themselves for their own sake.

The realized that the poet's request from the beloved (علمني) suggests a place where he is receptive to direction and feels that he needs outside assistance to get over his feelings of perplexity. This area displays the poet's frailty and the beloved as a source of strength or insight that aids in their detachment. Both reliance and a yearning for assistance in reaching emotional independence are reflected in the situation it presents, in which the lover is portrayed as being stronger than the poet and possessing the ability to instruct or mentor the poet towards separation.

A mental space where love is envisioned as deeply embedded inside the speaker's soul or identity is introduced with the sentence "cut the roots of your love from the depths" (اقص جذور هواء من الأعماق). This area is designed to be a "place" within the speaker's inner self, where love is ingrained so strongly that it forms the basis of who they are.

This line's powerful portrayal of emotional struggle, sensitivity, and desire creates its lyrical effect. The calls for assistance to "teach me" imply a sense of powerlessness, while the metaphor of line depicts the difficulty and suffering of breaking a strong bond. The line's universal relatability and paradox of wanting both affection and detachment make it incredibly poignant and unforgettable, enabling readers to sense the speaker's inner agony and the depth of their internal conflict.

Stanza 3

اني اتنفس تحت الماء ...

اني اغرق ..

اغرق ...

اغرق

"I breathe underwater

I am drowning ...

Drowning...

Drowning "

Metaphoric Expression

The metaphorical use of water in I Breathe Underwater (إني أتنفس تحت الماء) is a symbol for strong and overwhelming passion. The lack of control over his emotions is described by the expression "I am drowning"

(إني أغرق). An emotional state that evokes a sense of suffocation is described by being breathed underwater.

Conceptual Metaphor

INTENSE EMOTIONS ARE DROWNING

Image Schema Level

At the image schema level, a visual grounding is stimulated for the metaphorical meaning of this line. As though the poet were submerged in the water, breathing underwater creates a container schema in which the water encloses and isolates him. The poet's effort to breathe reveals the inner anguish of trying to survive and involves force schema. The word "drowning" is used repeatedly to highlight how overwhelming emotions are, exerting pressure and indicating emotional fatigue and the inevitable surrender to the force. "Drowning" emphasizes the seriousness of his emotional situation by symbolizing losing control or surrendering to these feelings. The verticality schema is activated when drowning occurs because it entails downward motion. Because the vertical flow is unidirectional and represents the poet's incapacity to overcome his emotions, this schema highlights a sense of pessimism.

Domain Level

The conceptual metaphor analysis at domain level connects two distinct areas of knowledge or experience. In the context of INTENSE EMOTIONS ARE DROWNING; the source domain is the physical experience of drowning. Universally, the fear of drowning most people can imagine is shared across cultures. The target domain (intense emotion) represents the abstract feelings that hard to describe directly such as grief, despair or passionate love which are subjective and internal experiences that bring feeling of inescapable, suffocating, and overwhelming. The metaphor maps elements from the physical domain of drowning to the emotional domain, making abstract feelings more tangible and relatable.

Frame Level

At the frame level, one analyzes this metaphor based on broader cultural, societal, and experiential background that shapes how to interpret it. The drowning frame evokes

culturally and socially shared ideas about water as a symbol of danger, chaos, or an unstoppable force. It also ties into human vulnerability, as drowning is universally understood as a life threatening experience and in many Arabic poetic traditions aligns with the dramatic and consuming nature of love. This metaphor resonates especially in contexts where emotional struggle is framed as a battle for survival. This metaphor is structural since it structures how the reader understands the source domain (drowning) provides a detailed framework for comprehending the target domain (intense emotions).

Mental Space Level

This metaphor's dynamic temporary process combines emotional disorientation with the physical representation of drowning to produce a realistic simulation of how overwhelming emotions can engulf a person. The breathing and drowning scenario entails a realistic, context-sensitive construct image of being alone and submerged in cold, dark blue waters, fighting for air, and sinking further until one person completely vanishes as if he had never been there. This picture conceptualizes the degree of emotional intensity that envelops the poet and represents the poet relinquishing or losing control of their emotions.

Through embodied, common sensations like drowning, the metaphor enables readers to experience the poet's emotional state. An almost surreal cognitive element is introduced by the idea of (اتنفس تحت الماء) breathing underwater. The harshness of the feelings is heightened by the repeating of "drowning," which also emphasizes how urgent and intense the experience is. The effect of the metaphor is enhanced by this cognitive dissonance, which compels the reader to think more carefully. The phrase is a potent representation of emotional overwhelm because it is poetically rich in levels of emotional depth, sensory richness, and cognitive complexity.

The following table explains the quantitative analysis of A message from under the water poem based on the classification of the metaphoric expression into metaphor or metaphonymy, as well as the extraction of image schema types, metaphoric expression types, and the expression's theme.

Table 1: Quantitative Analysis of A message from under the water’poem

No.	Line	Metaphoric expression	Image schema	Metaphor	Theme
1	رسالة من تحت الماء	Metaphor	Container, force, verticality	Orientalational	Love, pain
2	او كنت طبيبي ساعدني كي اشفي منك	Metaphptonymy	Container, force	Structural, orientational	Pain
3	لو اني اعرف ان الحب خطير جدا ما احببت لو اني اعرف ان البحر عميق جدا... ما ابهرت	Metaphptonymy	Path, balance	Structural	Love, Pain
4	علمني كيف اقص جذور هواك من الاعماق	Metaphptonymy	Verticality	Orientalational	Love, pain
5	علمني كيف يموت الدمع في الاحداق	Metaphptonymy	Life-death, container	Ontological, orientational	Pain
6	علمني كيف يموت القلب وتنتحر الشواق	Metaphptonymy	Life-death, container, force	Ontological	Pain
7	حبك كالسكر فطهرني من هذا الكفر	Metaphor	Force, container	Structural	Pain, love
8	الموج الازرق في عينيك...يجر جري نحو الأعماق	Metaphptonymy	Force, container, up-down	Structural, orientational	Love
9	إن كنت اعز عليك فخذ بيدي...فأنا عاشقة من رأسي... حتى قدمي	Metaphptonymy	Container	Structural, orientational	Love, pain
10	اني اتنفس تحت الماء اني اغرق ..اغرق ... اغرق	Metaphor	Container, force, verticality	Structural, orientational	Pain

Table 2: The Frequencies of Metaphoric Expression, Image Schema, Metaphor Type and Theme

Metaphoric Expression	Freq.	Image Schema	Freq.	Metaphor	Freq.	Theme	Freq.
Metaphptonymy	7	Container	8	Orientalational	7	Pain	4
Metaphor	3	Force	6	Structural	6	Love	1
		Verticality	3	Ontological	2	Both	5
		Life-Death	2				
		Path	1				
		Balance	1				
		Up-Down	1				

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The title of the poem indicates that it exhibits a sorrowful tone. The poet in the poem seems to be addressing his beloved and expresses how much he has been suffering and consuming of this overwhelming love. In the poem, the poet has been utilized many metaphoric images through which clarified in the previous table. Generally, one can notices that the poet in this poem depended on metaphor widely as a figurative language.

The results of analyzing the poem show that poet tends to use metaphptonymy (7 times) more frequently than metaphors (3 times) in constructing the conceptual meaning. This suggests that metonymy play a significant role in the construction of the metaphoric meaning rather than using pure metaphor. Beside that metaphptonymy intensifies emotions by making the abstract concepts of emotions more embodied and vivid. Additionally;

Metaphptonymy seems to allow for multiple interpretations and adds more emotional depth in both languages.

The most inner part of the cognitive analysis reveals different types of image schema. The most common schemas were container (8 times) and force (6 times). The researcher assumed that these two schemas will appear frequently because the poem's theme calls for them. While force schema emphasizes the strength of love and how it might mistakenly draw a lover to another, container schema depicts a home or place that the poet longed to be a part of.

Three types of conceptual metaphor (structural, ontological and orientational) are revealed at the frame level of analysis. The orientational conceptual metaphor (7 times) is used more frequently than the other types, followed by the structural (6 times) and then the ontological conceptual metaphors (2 times). The higher frequency of orientational metaphors suggests that Arabic culture and linguistic

factors may affect the usage of orientational conceptual metaphors.

Understanding how a metaphorical word symbolizes a topic or point of view might help one understand the poems more deeply by looking at the meaning at the level of mental space. Given the connections between the four levels of analysis and the integration of the full representation of the metaphoric expressions, the reader is led to the conclusion that this metaphoric use has a thematic influence. Qabani may depict pain as a powerful emotional condition linked to themes of longing and losing the person you love. The fact that Qabani's poetry blended love and suffering is another difference in the percentages of theme applications. Qabani might portray pain as a strong emotional state associated with themes of desire and losing the one you love, with a tendency towards romantic idealism and suffering.

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Overshadowing Masculinity: A feminist Reading of Afuh Margaret's *Born before Her Time*, *Flowers in the Desert* and Tala Julie Enjema's *Daughters of Ekema*

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Abstract— This paper articulates masculinity's diminishing strength in Africa and highlights new women imaging within the interaction of time, cultural analysis and feminist discourse. It limits its search to the 1960s and 1970s socio/economic and political landscapes. Principally, it underlines the timid beginnings of misogyny and stresses on its gradual but steady growth. Guided by a study of Margaret Afuh's *Born Before Time* (2003) *Flowers in the Desert* (2009) and Julie Enjema Tala's *Daughters of Ekema*, (2012) the paper uncovers the female African's pain under the intersection of patriarchy, culture and gender, and challenges the drawbacks by establishing alternative ways to the traditional orchestrated demeaning behaviours. In theoretical assessment, it uses womanism; an African feminist theory positioned by its theorists as a significant tool for Africa's positive transformation. The essay premises that the mindset of the empowered African woman is geared towards developing the entire human society.



Keywords— manhood, empowerment, gender, patriarchy, violence.

INTRODUCTION

Masculinity, a practice noted for cementing social disparity, is an intrinsic male dominant system that is persisting in Africa. Instituted and contested by patriarchy, it is a system in which the male holds power and the female is exceedingly subjugated. Its diligence in the continent stems from the indigenes' lean on socio/economic and political systems that are grounded on tradition, gender bias and colonial heritages— inherent sexist frames that uphold male identity and contrarily impact on the female. Within the above frame, the African traditional woman found herself at the domestic sphere where she assumed the positions of daughter, wife and mother, an angle of discourse that was normalized within the jurisdiction of culture. But feminist discourse demeaned the above shades of women as shadows of themselves and voiceless beings. This was a mind searching frame that registered violence in patriarchal structures and spurred activism and writings against it.

African feminine writings in adherence to feminist thought underlines the cultural norms inherent in patriarchy as distasteful social ascriptions worth questioning and redefining. Their works increasingly x-ray the female outgrowing the dictates of culture especially the myth surrounding manliness and manhood. These works, as exemplified by Nwapa (1970), Dangaremdga (1988), Vera (2002), Ngongkum (2007) vividly further the feminist agenda. No matter their locations in the planet, the writers focus their energies on examining the situation of the African woman. The literary creations reverberate with fights against culture inflicted odd female identities and become contesting grounds against masculinity (Abbenyi 1997, 148). Like their counterparts' engagements on the African woman's experiences, Afuh's and Tala's texts under study unveil the suppressed African female and implicitly brace the feminist agency in Africa. This article analyses the situation with an African fashioned version of feminism, womanism — a cultural frame which celebrates

both black life and the black woman and thus builds against patriarchal gender leanings.

Womanism is a derivation from the adjective 'womanist' and entails believing in, and respecting women's special talents and abilities. It builds on the experiences of the black woman, a people whom Ogundipe holds face "six mountainous problems" constitutive of colonialism and neo-colonialism, tradition, men, backwardness, "their colour and themselves" (Ogini 1996, 17). In line with Walker's enunciation, Nwapa explicates that womanism demands harmonised human relations and especially requires using the woman's naturally talents to solve society's problems (Umeh 1998, 161,187). The theory evidently ferries the ideals of African life and functions towards the liberation of the African woman. It calls for coexistence between the black man and the black woman (Ogunnye 1998, 60) and is committed to the success and continuity of the both sexes and all races (Peter 2010, 35). The theory thus analyses in patriarchy's subjection of the female's existence a limiting of both the woman's possibilities and existence as a whole. It evidently stands tall as a tool for redirecting Africa's socio/cultural crisis for as variedly noted, socio/cultural issues play key roles as developmental hints (Talale 2006, 2).

Born Before Her Time like *Flowers in the Desert* and *Daughters of Ekema*, underline feminine concerns as socio/economic and political issues and market the idea that the voices of women should be listened to for developmental purposes. The texts particularly serve as forums for the exposition of both patriarchy's gender politics in Africa and its negative consequences on society. In highlighting both the illogicality of gender and the violence male chauvinism renders its expansive victims this essay becomes another awareness creator of the unhealthy male mannerisms in Africa. Its African feminist analytical perspective is an attempt to underscore masculinity's impacting force on the African society and advocate a check on this excessive male power.

Male and Female Relations in *Born Before Her Time*, *Flowers in the Desert* and *Daughters of Ekema*

Central to the meaning of feminisms is the call for both the equality of all and equal opportunities to all, a humanist view absent in most African cultural settings as their male/female relationships suffer from rigidly defined gender roles. The male superior tenet of these cultural backgrounds kindles in patriarchy, a power structure that favours the man over the woman to the institutionalising of masculinity. In its frame as a set of values associated with male dominance, masculinity guides the functioning of society on the interaction of the male figure, ideologies and power (Mshweshwer 2020, 2). It emphasises on

manliness—the need for the male figure to be tough, rigid and dictatorial (Mshweshwer *ibid*). The bad side of patriarchal power as echoed in masculinity is its encouraging the exploitation of its subjects (Foucault 1980). In its male chauvinist frame it functions in marginalising the female gender. As a system then, it silences the female, destroys her ego and leaves her at the clemency of the man, Feminism as Alkali et al holds, addresses those issues of inequalities and unfairness in the treatment of woman that have for ages been normalised (2013,248). This is an angle of discourse underlined in the section below.

Most of the women in *Born Before Her Time*, *Flowers in the Desert* and *Daughters of Ekema* act routinely in favour of their families and society. This does not go without saying that some women in power structures (patriarchal constructs) habitually oppress their female folk. The traditional cultural African values are consequently highlighted as oppressing and suppressing the woman. This is an angle of discourse handled below though the texts portray how the suppressing grips on the woman relax with time.

Chukwuma's analysis of Afuh's *Born Before her Time* limits the eminences of the 1960's Cameroonian female to daughter, wife, and mother while stressing that this woman never partakes in decision making, not even with issues about herself (Chukwuma 1990, 133). Afuh exemplifies the outlined identity threats through the protagonist, Abo, a 14 (fourteen) year-old girl whose rights to education and freedom to love are negotiated in a forced traditional marriage to Pah Worewum, a rich man old enough to be "her grandfather" (3). At the age of ten Aboh's father, Mr Mbacham, informs her with a note of finality that she was betrothed to Pah Worewum at birth because the old man saved him from being killed by a wild animal. The old rich man in reciprocity had been providing for Abo and her family. The novelist presents the innocent and naïve Abo as a prey in the hands of two self-centred men; both of them leaning on society's prescribed norms to satisfy their male egos. Pah Worewum would later enrol his would-be wife into elementary school so she would learn the little that will be of use to him when she officially becomes his.

Both men shamelessly and disgracefully treat the young naïve Abo as a commodity. They care not about her desires—her dream to be educated to the standard of a teacher; her wishes to nurture and sustain the mutual feeling between her schoolmate John and herself. But the girl is determined to have her way— not to marry Pah Worewum no matter the clauses outlined in support of the union as she publicly expresses her loath of Pah Worewum. Unfortunately for her, the traditional wedding still holds on Pah Worewum's planned wedding day as Abo is forced into

Pah Worewum's house with her legs and arms bound with "solid twine" (1). Her dismay at the entire social context surrounding her finds expression in her thoughts thus: "I would have sworn that they (her parents) would protect me unto death." (1). Instead her mother simplified her plight with the saying that "...parents choose husbands for their daughters" (21). It is worthy of note that though one of Abo's parents her mother was neither a part of the daughter's husband choosing nor was she pleased with her daughter's predicament. Her statement is obviously made in reflex of her situation as a traditional woman—a woman stocked to listening to and respecting the dictates of her husband without asking questions.

Abo's resolve to immediately defeat this entire despicable social system again comes crumbling as she falls prey to Pah Worewum's sexual manoeuvres. Pah Worewum ties her up, lays her on the bed and has his way. Abo regains consciousness in the morning lying in a pool of blood, her blood which at first sight she mistook for water (31). She has lost her virginity—that which was the pride of every young girl! She is disturbed by the fact that it is forcefully taken away and by someone she does not love. This pinpoints the physical, emotional and psychological torture that emanated from forced marriage, what was a normalcy in the African traditional setting! As pah Worewum's second wife would explain, it was an ordeal suffered by many young girls in that community. Girls would resist in the beginning but end up settling down. Abo's case was not uncommon as she would further clarify. Pah Worewum's wife's elucidation upholds the paper's standing that patriarchal masculinities undervalue the woman.

This established male superior spirit is viewed in the Tasmana/ Aboh relationship. That Abo finds refuge in the independent hunter, Tasmana on her except from Pah Worewum and the former tends to see her as just a woman to own and control can be outrageous. Abo's love and respect for the hunter originates from the perspective of him being an elder brother and her saviour. Contrarily Tasmana sees in her a wife and offensively, one whose position is in his domestic sphere (105). Projecting his assertive nature, he explains that Abo will have to succumb to his needs and desires in sacrifice of hers as implied in his pronouncement; "It depends on what I want." (106). Tasmana's words like his courage, strength and independence are demonstrative of his manliness—a patriarchal coined value that had suppressed the African women up to the 1960s.

The Tali reverent sisters of *Born Before Her Time* foresaw this 1960 tensed gender biased atmosphere slowing down through the 1870s and the 1980s (114). Forced marriages, as Reverend Sister Elizabeth explained, had defined almost all human settings, including her home land, England until

recently. This assertion can be positively analyzed given that word 'Feminism' surfaced in the 1880's France (Freedman 268-271) in critique of that society's gendered injustices. As early as the 15th century Christine de Pisa decried the demeaning patriarchal status of the French woman and talked the women into rising up against the cultural norms that marginalized and positioned them like animals (Christine de Pisa 1495). African writings will later too be revealing how though the woman's position was inferior to that of the man in traditional Africa courageous women variedly stood up against this norm and how his fight was daily progressing.

Afuh's *Flowers in the Desert* like Talla's *Daughters of Ekema*, x-ray the evolved African feminine conditions that Reverend sister Elizabeth's previewed in Afuh's *Born Before her Time*. While forced /arranged marriages are giving way to harmonized relationships, curtailed girl-child's education is becoming an issue of the past. In *Flowers in The Desert*'s Rudolf's mother who is presented as the young protagonist, (Abo) of *Born Before her Time* confirms this new feminine atmosphere and flashes back to her story as a youth thus, "My father tied my hands and feet and carried me to an old man, Worewum." (69). Contrarily to her childish scenario we meet an educated young couple, John and Wendy whose union is backed by choice and love though the novelist still portrays the female stumbling in the grip of long existing obnoxious traditional cultural practices.

Flowers in the Desert underlines conservative ideologies in Anoh's (John's aunt) treatment of the nephew's wife, Wendy. Anoh is presented as that lady who in *Born Before her Time* persuaded her sister, Abo into marrying the rich old man. In the 1980's she, again wants her nephew (John) to divorce the wife (Wendy) on the grounds of Wendy's childlessness. Anoh's manners towards Wendy image the plight of a childless woman in African traditional culture, an atmosphere delineated in Emecheta (1979) where her protagonist Nnu-Ego is menaced for being childless in respect of the Nigerian culture. Ego's increased sufferings would be orchestrated by her denial to embrace the colonial culture of Lagos, a situation that counterparts Anoh's refusal to adjust to the changed Cameroonian ways of the 1980's. *Flowers in the Desert* thus far from only being a critique of patriarchy's and culture's marginalization of women is a voice on how women aid the above dual in the victimization of the women folk.

Talla's *Daughters of Ekema* too x-rays the African woman now enduring both traditionally suppressing dictates and modern oppressing values—a distasteful atmosphere that exposes her grave enslavement. Through the Ekemas the novelist underlines the woman's predicaments spanning

traditional and colonial manipulations. Through the family's daughters, Efeti, Eposi and Limunga, the author highlights both the complex male-induced abuses on the woman and her increasing subjugation of masculinity. Eposi conceals her love relation with Neba (the village school teacher from Vakomi) because tradition forbids it. An age old hatred between Neba's and Efeti's villages traditionally impedes any cordiality between their inhabitants.

Disgust is evidently recorded in Pah Ekema and wife's (Catholic Christians) lean on a culture established enmity to keep lovers apart. They are now a people expected to practice love beyond borders. But despite Neba's seriousness in marrying Eposi, Pah Ekema defines him as "someone from a different tribe" (101), a phrase that outsides and disqualifies him. Odd still, Eposi's mother supports her husband against her daughter with the explanation "Whatever your father says is law." (104). One tends to envision in Mah Joso's words both the patriarchal myth of the man as family head to whom the woman must sacrifice her needs in satisfaction of his, and the postcolonial woman's plight inflected by its colonial tool, religion. Catholicism, a colonial religion to which Pah Ekema and Mah Joso have submitted selves preaches a wife's respect for the husband; a command which harbours the woman's surrendering her will to that of the man.

Talla's narrative equally underlines the traditionally constituted hostility towards widows in women suffering varied lawful suppressions at the deaths of their husbands. The challenges constitute their social exclusion and their being forced to embrace harmful traditional practices. Talla x-rays this group of women beaten, forced to take baths publicly at streams and ripped off their husband's belongings by their late husbands' female relations (120). These are oppressive and dehumanizing engagements that constitute health hazards to the woman. The imposed tasks play down on their emotional, social and psychological states and leave them socially unbalanced. Even this pitting of women against each other in the name of respect for tradition confirms the African traditional culture as a divide and rule policy that keeps women apart for the progress of men.

The narrative captures how increasingly complex modernism is rendering the African woman's conditions in Pah Ekema's response to Eposi's out of wedlock pregnancy, "It is not only wrong to be pregnant when one is not married, it's even worse getting pregnant for a man from Vakomi tribe (98-99). Pah Ekema would be speaking with respect to the Christian and traditional laws as the both demand that a wife submits to established values no matter the impacts on her. Pah Ekema's wife demonstrates strict

adherence to the gendered conditions. Adhering to Christian values tells but Bible stories to the children, not folktales especially because her husband wants it so. To her husband Bible stories are the light of a Christian family. Although Mah Joso doubts this, she does not dare to contradict her husband.

Pah Ekema's strong hold on wife and daughters, in the name of Christianity underscores Riyal's subsuming of colonialism as a struggle between two opposing, yet, entwined forms of masculinities, with the category women being the fatalities and intermediaries of the fight (Riyal 2019, 3). Pah Ekema, though a colonial 'other' is inflicting his control on the African woman—brutalizing her in respect of the colonial order. Ekema here builds on Nandy's feminist perspective that the ongoing political and socio/economic conditions in the third world depict the dominance of man and masculinity— a symbol of the colonial order, over women and feminism — a symbol of the third world (Nandy 1983, 4). This expansive and complicated atmosphere, feminists hold, has to be revalued for the betterment of the 'third world woman' in particular, and their societies, at large

Outdoing the Gender Gap in *Born Before Her Time, Flowers in the Desert and Daughters of Ekema*

Evidently as portrayed above, the African feminist fight far from only liberating the woman from the dictates of patriarchy and culture equally identifies and interrogates the impacts of colonialism on gender. The feminist combat is generated by the need to alter the perception of gender and to awaken and empower the African woman. Chukwuka maps out the route to female empowerment in self-determination, economic power and a supporting family (Chukwuka 2000, 110). The texts under study underline Chukwuka's road map in the changes occurring to their female characters and their immediate surroundings— atmospheres Ezeigbo recaps as emergent, with the explanation that women are becoming cognizant of their humanity and their duties (Ezeigbo 1990, 148). The above view images the new perceptions that are becoming definitive women —the categories of women and insights that permeate the texts under study.

Abo in *Born Before her Time* refuses to give in to the forced marriage her father and Pah Worewum conspired and made her a part. She fights out of the marriage — what previous girls in her situation could not do. Abo is actually a different breed of a girl. She declines the dictates of tradition and upholds her desires above the voice of tradition. In response to one of Pah Worewum's wives who clarified Abo that forced marriage is the plight of all girls in the society, Abo says she will not give in to it and will fight it until she wins (32). She would actually defy all the barriers to her coming

a teacher and John's wife to the result of achieving them. When locked up at Pah Worewum's prison as wife, Abo visualized her salvation at a mission school, by virtue of the setting being a unbiased ground that protects women and children (68). She eventually escapes from the forced marriage and, commence a remote and dangerous midnight journey from Tawi, through the dark and violent atmosphere, for the reverent sisters' home at Tali. Even in this perilous undertaking, Abo, still pities her people and believes their betrayal of her stems from ignorance. She environs going back to them as a professional, as either "a teacher or nurse" (104) — professions she believes God will guide her into achieving. She thus evokes God's help, presenting her intended education as key to marrying John and to helping her people (77).

It is wonderful to note that Abo runs away from Pah Worewum not because she hates marriage but because she does not love him. Marriage as she elucidates is supposed to be the produce of love (155) —what she does not have for Pah Worewum. Obviously she would have stayed in marriage had it been she were John, the person she dreams of marrying after becoming a teacher. Abo visualizes her liberation through education. She positions education as a tool for her enablement and social alteration. She, no doubt, trusts in having a job before marrying John who, unlike Pah Worewum, rates a wife from the perspectives of an intelligent and caring woman who has a mind of her own and who is willing to be a part of his own life. (139)

Abo and John represent a people detached from offensive traditional cultural thoughts; a people who value love and are ready to overcome all the challenges to their savoring it; a people who allow love to have its way. John does not redress from his intent to marry Abo when upon proposing to Abo she tells him that she is already betrothed to Pah Worewum. He holds on to the love the both of them share and is resolved to not allow Pah Worewum destroy their happiness.

Afuh equally captures individuals and groups arguing for a positive turn with the thought that changed times call for the reconsideration and revaluation of the position of the woman. Sophina's mother who doubles as "Mbacham's sister" (23) for one, is for the fact that girls should now go to school. Philanthropic bodies, like the Tali reverent Sisters' Home too are out to help determined girls achieve their dreams. It is thanks to these reverent sisters that Abo completes her education and raises the money for the repayment of her bride price—an atmosphere that restores her freedom that society stole at her birth, and sets the pace for her to achieve her dreams. In Abo's attitude/ behavior, the novelist demarcates violence and transformation as new scopes for reforming the African society—a directory

which becomes quite palpable in the 1980's, as captured in Afuh's *Flowers in The Desert* and Talla's *Daughters of Ekema*.

Tripp et al explicates that the socio/cultural and political transformations characteristic of the 1980's Africa, of which increased female consciousness was a part were constitutive of the "democratization of political regimes" and the "retreat of the state" obligated by the Structural Adjustment guidelines for the continent's growth (2009, 1). This international body questioned injustices and oriented associations towards combating inequalities, expressly, at the grassroots. The resulting atmosphere according to Bouilly, Rillon, & Cross, produced a host of women's organizations advocating for the growth and empowerment of the woman (2016, 1.). Feminist scholars inherently increased in numbers, each of them theorizing gender beyond sexual barriers in challenge of the 1960's feminist arts that merely focused on cultural representations. Their works, as Afuh's *Flowers in The Desert* and Talla's *Daughters of Ekema* demonstrate, deconstruct gender difference in manifold arenas and position men and women on equal hierarchies.

In *Flowers in The Desert* the conditions of the girl child have greatly improved. Rudolf restates the above by saying that child marriage is almost becoming an issue of the past (39). Boba on his part marvels at the higher proportion of girls, in relation to boys, that now go to school. Girls now school right to the university level and inherently graduate with certificates that qualify them for higher paying jobs. We met the female university graduate Wendy serving as a commercial staff in a travelling agency and later as a worker in the Ministry of Industrial Development. When her contract with the ministry expired she intelligently resorted to "petty trading" in a bid to stay useful to herself and society. Her friend Susan was a teacher and Brenda her university classmate, worked at a wood exploitation Corporation.

It is wonderful to note that girls have not only become great nation builders but now marry men of their choices, and amazingly, men with different ethnicities. Wendy marries her university classmate, Rudolf (a boy from a strange tribe). The both worked at a travelling agency and the husband later became a civil servant with the rank of "chief of Service" in one of the country's ministries. When at one moment he went jobless he resorted to taxi driving in a bid to sustain his family. Their marriage captions both how education builds up carrier men and women and the splendor in marrying a partner of your choice. Their childlessness has no negative influence on their marriage. John's mother appreciates the charm in Wendy that captivated her son and respects Wendy for being her son's

choice. By underscoring that this couple live with two family children, whom they sponsor in the secondary school, the novelist visibly underlines the points that education is a developmental factor and the priority of a host of Africans.

Talla's *Daughters of Ekema* follows suit with a more modern atmosphere characterized by the society's increased acceptance of the girl child's worth. The woman is gradually and steadily straddling the professional carrier line into the decision making circle. She has grown above the level of being hypnotized into/ adhering to or taking offensive decisions towards herself and others into becoming a socio/cultural and political reformer. Education has enlightened her as well as brought society closer to the mechanisms of colonialism for the benefit of the both of them. It is worth noting that Pah Ekema educated clearly stated this three daughters against the doctrine of traditionalists who clearly stated that the place of the woman remains in the domestic sphere in spite of whatsoever efforts she puts into studies or religious matters. Pah Ekema with his limited financial resources challengingly educated Eposi and Efeti to high school level. He equally brought up his girls in respect of the traditional voice that girls should not carelessly associate with boys. The novelist describes Ekema's daughters as "a respectful and morally upright breed" (40) that though encountered challenges to their happiness grew up reverencing that self-worth that prostitution erased in other girls.

As the novel progresses two of the Ekema girls—Limunga and Efeti, channel their energies towards restoring the dignity of others; specifically, in erasing prostitution and the oppression of widows. The two fights are risky fights but the Ekema girls are determined to stand up for the subjugated and as well advocate for them (125). Eposi's and Neba's love is established through the lovers' conscious violating of culture/ traditional values that had declared the relationship null. Eposi saw illogically in Efeti's advice to her not to marry Neba because his tribe's men, have "long heads", and are prone to acting illogically (113). This unscientific presentation failed to move her. She analysed cowardice in the act of surrendering one's will to that of others (103) and consequently resolved on disentangling all the obstacles on the way to her marriage. The lovers saw in their education and in the indigenes embrace of Christianity, a new mindset that will facilitate and strengthen their relationship. Their tactful resistance of conservatives yielded the desired fruit—a marriage that brought to an end the long dispute between Vakomi and Wonja. The masses saw in this renewed unity a prosperous future.

Limunga's test to preserving her femininity came up when her desire to engage in a decent job takes her to a

prostitution center labeled Monjoa's business enterprise. Prostitution according to Fayemi, underlines the act of "having sex for money commonly associated with the "Female folk, an act characterized by the male's "brutal sexual desire" and the female's "reluctant and loathing submission" (2009, 4). Prostitution, thus heralds in another form of male oppression, Madam Monjoa's business enterprise, like the other prostitution centers in the city were places where nonconformity yielded pain to the inmates and even cost their lives. By revealing a call girl's murder by her male customer, the novelist x-rays both the stings and irrationalities of masculinity, and the dangers surrounding prostitutes and inherently advocates the need to end it. The narrative, no doubt, paints a glaring picture of the state of prostitution in the contemporary Cameroonian society, from where our authors, Afuh Margaret and Tala Julie Enjema's originate. Though in Cameroon like in most African nations no accurate statistics exist on the wave of prostitution, human rights activists daily expose descriptions that represent individual country's level of prostitution on social media. The novelist consequently demonstrates her adherence to the anti-prostitution feminist site which rates prostitution as a form of sexual slavery and an exploitative patriarchal institution that must be eradicated. This position concurs with Fihonina's (1981) voice that African feminists contest racial, class and cultural dimensions of oppression" with the principle aim of rating women as humans and not mere sexual tools.

Limunga flees the above distasteful atmosphere by smuggling herself into a "pickup van" and fortunately into her saviour's arms. This widower, Mr Okali, a Senior Divisional Officer (SDO), at first sight sees in her a helper for his little daughter and houses her. He would later send her to school and conscientize her into perceiving in her ability to escape from the prostitution house God's desire for her to serve those still at the prostitution house. She has to be a voice against prostitution, a juncture where she would "stop the likes of Madam Monjoa from recruiting more girls into illicit business" (60). Limunga accomplishes the given tasks when she becomes a lawyer. Her good manners yield her the status of wife to her mentor Mr Okali's; a responsible and respectable social position that aided her into actualizing her goals. As governor, her husband helps her in creating an anti- prostitution group, the Female Rights Association (FRA). The association doubled as the spokesperson for women with all sorts of problems, especially those with law suits. Limunga's organization finally, solicits Governor Okali's help and enacts an order that closes all existing brothels and prohibits creation of new ones (123). And thanks to Limunga's successful initiative, the government creates the ministry of Women's

Affairs—a national body with the responsibility of protecting the rights of the woman.

With the death of Efeti's husband Efeti experiences the plight of widows, and tactfully joins her sister's organization in fighting for the restoration of the widow's pride. Efeti educates the female folk on how to cope with their problems and a host of other injustices. (119). Widows correspondingly could protect themselves from all forms of culture-imposed degradation though die heart traditionalists nicknamed Efeti "a woman man" (120) whose aim is to upset traditional values and norms. The influence of the Ekema girls on the entire clan is so great that the villagers regret having insulted Ekema for delivering only girls for children. To Abel, the village boy Pah Ekema has very good children. From an elder's perspective, the entire clan would be a better place if Ekema had more daughters.

The feminist stories in the selected texts unfold within the frame of an evolving culture that is corresponding to historical change, with tenets embedded in colonialism and neo-colonialism. Efeti conceived the ongoing shades of development in the African female as fruits of the possibilities that society has accorded the female. Connecting her father to this thought she said "God has given us the talent; we have to use it to help humanity, especially the woman." (124-125). Her great joy is orchestrated by the society's progressive acceptance of the woman as its developmental force. But out of her experience she carves out a route map for the woman's empowerment — a process constitutive of resoluteness to overcome the barriers to her cherished dreams no matter the risks involved.

CONCLUSION

The paper articulated some experiences of the modern African woman, though from the perspective of the Cameroon feminine writers. It underlined gender inequality as the crossroad of the literatures of masculinities and feminisms and imaged the improved African woman as the model woman of contemporary Africa. It examined the authors' voices against stereotypical representations of male and female constructed by society and concurrently, articulated the progressive devaluation of the derogatory feminine identities previously held in high esteem. As analyses and interpretation of the authors' feminist viewpoints, the article highlighted a multiplicity of issues including the various sites of oppression that dehumanized the woman and the woman's fight against the offensive shades of meanings society had ascribed on her. The article then projected the woman steadily establishing herself as a social pillar—a context that sheltered the nourishment and completeness of the society.

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Psychology of Dystopian Mass: A Study of Sowmya Rajendran's *The Lesson*

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Abstract— In dystopian fiction, repressive regimes form a stringent system through which they control their subjects. The control is in the form of manipulation through propaganda, re-writing of history to suit regimes' agenda, creating artificial enemies to unite their subjects to redirect their hate away from the regimes. Also, use of mass psychology, especially the idea of one identifying oneself through many and many acting as one, is one of the primary end-goals of such regimes – a collectivist dystopia. These end-goals become reality when majority of subjects, who once dreamt of living in a utopian society, are convinced to unanimously agree to adapt to a fundamentalist or totalitarian ideology. Beginning of a dystopia is acceptance of an extremist ideology by the majority along with the rise of a didactic authority. In the light of this hypothesis, the present paper analyses, with the help of theory of Mass Psychology that it is not the power alone, but people living in fictional world are to be blamed equally for the ultimate demise of the society they live in. The paper analyses the behaviour of the society through its members in the dystopian novel 'The Lesson' by Sowmya Rajendran, published in 2015. The paper also aims at comparing behaviour of the mass in 'The Lesson' with other dystopian novels written by foreign authors namely 'WE' by Yevgeny Zamyatin, 'Brave New World' by Aldous Huxley, '1984' by George Orwell and 'Fahrenheit 451' by Ray Bradbury; and with Indian Dystopian novels – 'Leila' by Prayaag Akbar, 'Escape' and 'The Island of Lost Girls' by Manjula Padmanabhan. The study also takes into account how the already marred protagonist living in dystopia, struggles against fellow individuals and authority in order to break the chains of submission and manipulation in the novels mentioned above.



Keywords— Dystopia, Identification, Mass Psychology, Authority, Culture, Religion, Institutions, Justice

I. INTRODUCTION

Individuals in a mass, are influenced by one another and by an authority – through its constant propaganda, at conscious and unconscious levels. Individuals adopt others' behaviours and actions to shape their actions and to create their own identity initially. Therefore, individuals' personal experiences and social limitations influence their decisions. This confirms the predominance of mass in their lives. When the majority of a country or region bends toward an extremist ideology, the

purpose of progress towards a just society takes a detour to race up to be a dystopia.

As history has often shown, in the beginning, the majority justifies its extremist approach and in turn offers control to a leadership. The leadership ends up making the majority its submissive subjects. Such extremism, whether political, social or religious, lowers the critical faculty of the majority. Gustave Le Bon in *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, Sigmund Freud in his *Mass Psychology and Analysis of the "I"* and Elias Canetti in *Crowds and Power*

commonly observe that the critical faculty of a mass is always lower than that of an individual in isolation. Le Bon writes, "In the collective mind the intellectual aptitudes of the individuals, and in consequences their individuality, are weakened" (Le Bon 8). Freud's words in his work are as follows – "The fact is, the perceived signs of an affective state are such as automatically to evoke the same effect in the person doing the perceiving. This automatic compulsion will be the stronger, the more people are seen to exhibit the same affect simultaneously. The individual's critical faculties will then fall silent, and he will allow himself to slip into the same affective state" (Freud 34). And Canetti confirms that while perceiving, individuals in the affective or influenced state (feeling and experiencing emotions) mirror each other. This mirroring becomes more common when more people enter the mass. In this action of automatic compulsion, an individual no longer uses her/his critical faculties; s\he repeats the same actions as majority does because the "mass impresses the individual as an untamed force and an invincible threat" (Freud 35). The dystopian government takes advantage of this factor and introduces institutions, corresponding literature and visual representations to further regulate reasoning faculties of the people, keeping them in a submissive state.

Utopian literature and dystopian literature are results of events in the past or present which have changed the regular, progressive course of future towards either a bright future in case of utopia or dark reality in case of dystopia. Present reality is stretched till a happy or a gloomy future is achieved in time. Utopian and dystopian literature can therefore be called far-fetched realities. Individuals continue to exist in that future but live with seemingly free-will in utopia or a strictly regimented and regulated life in dystopia. It can be concluded therefore that humans in reality and characters in utopian or dystopian fiction have certain common behavioural characteristics. Freud, with the help of William McDougall, observes five primary conditions mentioned below for mental life of organized crowd or mass, whether utopian or dystopian, to exist for a prolonged period:

The first fundamental condition is a measure of continuity in the existence of the mass....

The second is that a specific conception of the nature, function, attainments and aspirations of the mass should have taken shape within the individual member in such a way that, for that individual, an emotional relationship with the mass as a whole can result.

The third is that the mass should come into contact (for example, through competition)

with other, similar collective entities that nevertheless differ from it in many respects.

The fourth is that the mass should possess traditions, customs and institutions, particularly such as bear on the relationship of its members one with another.

The fifth is that, within the mass, there should exist a structure that finds expression in the specialization and differentiation of what each individual is expected to do (Freud 36).

The five conditions mentioned above apply both to utopia and dystopia, depending upon the measure of freedom given and control applied by both, the society and the authority. A mass must continue to exist as long as possible. The purpose of mass formation must also be the purpose of the individual members in it, carrying strong emotional relationship with the mass. Authority introduces other collective entities of similar type but of different political, social and religious practices for comparison and differentiation. The mass must have its own set of traditions, institutions and culture to separate it from others as much as possible and to keep the bond between the members within stronger. Each individual in the mass must know where s\he belongs and how s\he can contribute to the mass s\he lives in. A didactic authority thus controls a submissive mass using these very characteristics. The subjects too do not try to rise above the collective identity in exchange of acceptance by the mass. Individuals submit themselves to the reigning common ideology. Fear of rejection and punishment stops them from rebelling. Group of such individuals forming a society can therefore be called dystopian mass.

Examples of such submissions are evident in characters of dystopian fictions under consideration. In *WE*, when I-330, attraction of the protagonist D-503, tells him to get a fake medical certificate to be with her, D-503 feels that "This was certification of that we were sick, that we were not able to appear at the workplace. I had stolen my work from the One State, I am a thief, I would soon be under the Machine of the Benefactor..." (Zamyatin, 65) as he was lying to the authority and therefore would be punished if caught; in *Brave New World*, when the protagonist Bernard Marx shares his thoughts on how he dislikes being part of the social body and wants to spend time with Lenina alone, Lenina finds these ideas disgusting and asks Bernard "...how can you talk like that about not wanting to be a part of the social body?" (Huxley, 78); In *1984*, Winston Smith, the protagonist, acts in the session of the Two Minute Hate Speech as others do in order to avoid attention of the Thought Police – officials who look for socially deviated individuals even in their thoughts; in *Fahrenheit 451*,

possession of books and literature is illegal, that's why Guy Montag, the protagonist, is even afraid of his own wife as he hides the books that he has collected from the places he has burnt down as a fire-fighter; Dr Iyer, the official responsible for the reconditioning of the women who are detained because of inter-caste and inter-religious marriages in correction centres in *Leila*, considers that Shalini and Rizwan, as both were in inter-religious marriage which is against the law, are unsuitable parents because of the life-style they had chosen and therefore Shalini must be purified; the brothers of Meiji in *Escape* are afraid of her getting discovered by the General and his boys, as no women are allowed to live in the country after the Change when women were killed and burnt alive by their own family or the crowd; and the people in *The Lesson* think that the Second Daughter getting raped live on TV is absolute justice, because she has lied about her pregnancy to avoid rape by the Rapist. These incidents therefore confirm submission of an individual to the prevailing mass psychology.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF DYSTOPIAN MASS

Dystopian mass has, as do people of a nation or state in reality, a common goal. Dystopian majority uses fear and rejection as an instrument of control and social bonding. Individual opinion succumbs to tyranny of opinion of the majority and therefore loses critical faculty. Reaction of dystopian mass is always extremist in nature. Despotic government and dystopian mass use guilt to subdue an individual. Dystopian mass gains power through submission of individual members. Every individual is secure if s/he ardently follows the law of the land. Breaking of social norms, coinciding with laws of the land, result in rejection of an individual by the mass. Mass needs a leader and a leadership to revere and to fear because leaders portray mass' emotional strength. Through propaganda, fear converts into respect for totalitarian ideology. Dystopian mass exchanges autonomy for security and becomes submissive to reigning authority. It persistently propagates equality with importance of hierarchy as necessity and the individual thus pays the price of being a part of the power by sacrificing freedom of thought and intellectuality. Extreme despair arising out of the difficulties of the present, drives mass to attain a just and humane society yet through above mentioned steps, ends up being dystopian mass in that desperate attempt. Here the intent changes to gain power in society and/or favour of the authority rather than each individual's self-development and collective development of the society s/he lives in. Dystopian mass therefore, who begins with the goal to move

to liberation, ends up being submissive instead as social anxiety, fear of public opinion and authoritative persecution in individual members supplant thirst for obedience.

The Lesson has many such individuals. The chaos in the novel begins when the protagonist, the Second Daughter, rebels against the institution of marriage by asking for divorce from her violent husband – the Dentist. She asks for justice from the Adjustment Bureau but instead she is asked to go by the Conduct Book – a book that has guidelines for women on how to adjust after marriage. The Rapist, a government employee, has been assigned to rape her so that she becomes unacceptable by other men in the city. In order to escape the punishment, she lies of her pregnancy. But her lie leads her to an exemplum in the entire city after it is discovered that she has lied to the authority and her in-laws. The President of the Adjustment Bureau sets for the Second Daughter a punishment on TV – getting raped live.

There is fear of and respect for the President of Adjustment Bureau and the chief of Moral Police Force. The Rapist has been given a lot of importance for the work he does – punishing women who do not accept the institution of marriage. The Moral Policeman and the media mogul are reformers of the young in the society. There is a lot of influence of media on public opinion. There is attitude of rejection towards socially deviant people like - the eunuch and the Second Daughter. There is the demand for the lesson by rape. The increase in TRP of shows which show the level at which people accept punishment as norms in order to save and propagate the institution of marriage. Violent and non-confirming behaviour of the Dentist, his mother, the eunuch's mother, the Second Daughter's mother, the First Daughter, the neighbours of the Dentist, the girl in the studio towards the Second Daughter; and the boys of the university and that of the vice chancellor of the university who impose restrictions on girls' dresses to stop their molestation. All these incidents are proofs that the mass has left no space for any logical thought in their ideological bent in order to preserve institution of marriage. Also the pride the family of the Rapist feels for his government job and that he is going to be on TV prove that everyone has no problem with radical following of institution of marriage. Above all these is the authority keeping the status quo of the institution of marriage.

Thus, the authoritative government, to maintain continuity and to keep its subjects together, introduces parallel conditioning; sites shared emotional attachments, reveals other masses to its mass to draw comparison, points out the shared culture, religion and tradition, and pre-assigned job for each individual. The government

consciously and the mass unconsciously therefore create a dystopian mass.

In the novel, the mass of characters derives its purpose from a shared idea of preserving “the Holy Institution of Marriage” (Rajendran 11). Whoever, in the novel, tries to oppose this institution, is punished by the authority and repelled by the mass. The present paper studies individuals in the novel together and analyses their characterizations as dystopian mass individuals. All, except the Second Daughter, in the novel have the common objective of preserving the institution of marriage in the capital city. The paper, implying the theory of Mass Psychology into the fictional world of the novel, tries to establish a link between the characters, who act as a dystopian mass to achieve the same end-goal – to watch the Second Daughter getting punished by the Rapist on TV for opposing the institution of marriage, the reigning ideology, by asking for divorce from her violent husband.

III. THE REIGNING IDEOLOGY OF THE MASS

Mimetism - the desire to be like others and to make others like us – becomes an essential social experience and precondition for an individual in dystopia. It is D-503 in *WE*, who in the beginning of the novel says, “You see, even in our thoughts. No one is ever ‘one’, but always ‘one of.’ We are so identical...” (Zamyatin 8). The people in *Brave New World* feel great disgust at the thought of reproduction through sex as babies are grown in test-tubes rather than being born. In 1984, people of Airstrip One revere Big Brother because an idea has been created through propaganda that he saves them from Goldstein and other enemies of the Party ideology. When Faber explains history to Montag in *Fahrenheit 451*, he says, “... Remember, the firemen are rarely necessary. The public itself stopped reading of its own accord. You firemen provide a circus now and then at which buildings are set off and crowds gather for the pretty blaze...” (Bradbury 113). Naz, brother-in-law of Shalini, tips Repeaters in *Leila* as Naz never liked the idea of Shalini creating her own space outside his religion and community. The world of Meiji in *Escape* is deprived of women and clone Generals reign whose ideology is that women are Vermin and root of all corruption and therefore, do not deserve to live at all, and therefore during the Change, men of the country themselves burn the women alive. Hence,

In societies dominated by the ‘we-self’ (to Roland, Japan and India), self-esteem depends on the honour and reputation of the groups individuals belong to, particularly the family, usually regarded as the most important bond of all.

‘Individuals’ may also be conceived not as single persons, but as seamlessly wedded to their ancestors. They are thus several people at once. A strict hierarchy is common... When ‘I’ attempt to escape this process, it is always at the risk of increased alienation and ostracism – for no groups tolerate rejection lightly (Claeys, 35-36).

In countries like India, people are identified by their family names and by the caste or community they belong to. Every individual member of the family, in every sense, represents the entire family and her/his ancestors. Those individuals who alienate themselves from this structure and refuse to identify themselves as their families are, attract negative attention of the community and the society as no group tolerates deviation from predetermined norms. In *The Lesson*, the author has not given any names in capital city. They are introduced and named by the positions they hold in their family and in the society. These fictional individual members of the mass share the common idea of preserving the institution of marriage. To be accepted, the submission by female individuals to social structure and authority is mandatory; while the male individuals have a certain freedom, they cannot oppose the institution. The identity, therefore of each individual, is determined by the way in which s/he commits to the institution of marriage in the novel – the opposition of which would result in humiliation as happens with the Second Daughter.

In *The Lesson*, the very existence of the office of the Rapist in the government building and the way in which the Rapist identifies himself – a government employee and a public servant – represents the moral and ethical rules people have accepted as a norm. To preserve the institution of marriage, rape has been legalized. The Rapist in the novel is appointed by the government to teach lessons to women who break the laws ascribed to preserve the institution of marriage – the rules of the “Conduct Book” (Rajendran 28). And the mass considers it a reformation as it prevents marital separation and following societal collapse. The mass believes that rape would force women to adjust in marriage out of shame and fear of unacceptance from others in society. Therefore, there is no opposition when a woman is raped. The very idea of punishment by rape of the Second Daughter, live on media channel, is readily accepted by the people of the capital city. As the Rapist himself is going to rape the Second Daughter, his status in the public changes from a government employee to a celebrity; people start asking for his autograph at public places; and he is trending on the social media as well.

The Moral Policeman is another such representative of mass mentality in the novel. He is

appointed to teach lessons to the young unmarried couples in love who stroll in gardens and other public places. People of the capital city do not mind such punishments as they consider that these are for greater good of the younger generation. The Moral Policeman catches a young couple in the part and physically harasses the girl, to teach her lifelong lesson. If the couple had opposed, the Moral Policeman would have called their parents and exposed them. Such an act by the Moral Policeman suggests that mass and its individuals are concerned more about preserving collective ideology.

The Dupatta Regulator at the university is appointed to prevent molestation and rapes. The law of wearing dupatta in a particular manner is introduced and every girl is checked for the same during the morning assembly by the Dupatta Regulator. This shows the proportional relationship between the mass and mass individual, as the mass holds the idea that such law would eradicate “unauthorized molestations and rapes on campus” – only when girls are restricted to wear clothes in a prescribed manner, decided by the Dupatta Regulator (Rajendran 41).

The First Daughter, the sister of the Second Daughter in the novel, is the exemplar of a female conditioned as mass individual. “She was brought up to be a bride. She did not even address their parents as Mama and Papa because she was not going to be their daughter forever. Those titles were reserved for her in-laws” (Rajendran 20). She gives birth to “three children within the first five years, all of them sons” (Rajendran 20-21). As soon as she comes to know that her sister has lied about her pregnancy and that she is going to get raped on TV, the First Daughter cuts all her ties with her paternal family. She cannot lose her identity as a mass individual for her sister who has broken the rules of the institution of marriage.

In *The Lesson*, the President of the Adjustment Bureau is a powerful man. His depiction suggests that he can be hailed as the leader of the capital city. He is the one who comes up with idea of Second Daughter’s rape on media channel he owns. He is the one who introduces the Prison of Illusion and the Box to manipulate women who ask for divorce. His first marriage was a love-marriage with the Feminist of his college. The President, on the wedding night, forced himself upon the Feminist considering it as his “conjugal right” and not rape, since they were married (Rajendran 111). The Feminist dies and the President remarries another woman who knows how to adjust in the marriage. His parents manage to find a new wife for him. It therefore validates supremacy of the institution of marriage. Thus people, especially women, have no option but to

accept the idea of adjusting in marriages so that they are accepted by their in-laws and the society as well.

IV. CULTURE AND MASS

Humans suffer under the burden of repressive cultural imperatives that force them against their nature of acting freely by exalting their unconscious desires. An individual finds herself/himself sacrificing her/his own needs to make coexistence possible. “Culture, in other words, needs to be defended against the individual, and its arrangements, institutions and decrees all serve that end” (Freud 110). For complete acceptance of cultural ideas, ideals of culture are propagated as psychological assets. The comparison of one’s culture with other cultures also serves this end. Introduction of other cultures is only to draw comparison and consequently to give a sense of pre-eminence of one’s own culture. In *The Lesson*, the Chief of Moral Police Force considers Western culture degraded; D-503 draws comparison between the ancestors and the present world order he lives in citing that individualism is destruction of society and collectivism is evolution; Joshiji in *Leila* considers the current inter-racial marriages and the current life-style of people a form of impurity and degradation of cultural heritage of the nation; The Generals in *Escape* and *The Island of Lost Girls* propagate that the country has become much more peaceful and advanced as compared to the time when women used to live in the country.

The cultural construct in *The Lesson* is based to fortify supremacy of getting married and being married through constant social and authorized conditioning. Authority, male members consciously and female members unconsciously of the mass impose pseudo-idealistic institution of marriage. Imposition of such an idea is to create a sense of need for adjustment in women after marriage for them to live a happy and peaceful life. If anything goes awry, women are to be blamed anyway. The Mother insists and requests her daughter, the Second Daughter, to adjust with the Dentist despite the mental and physical torture. The mother-in-law of the Second Daughter keeps a blind eye at home when she is tortured and abused, and feels avenged for her son when she comes to know about the punishment the Second Daughter is going to receive for her lie. The mother of the Eunuch blames her daughter-in-law for being sterile and not her own son the infertile Eunuch. The President’s parents consider the Feminist a jinx and the girl they choose for the President a boon. The Media Mogul loves the idea of the show of the Second Daughter getting raped live and the First Daughter renouncing her ties with the family are the incidents in the novel that reflect the cultural conditioning in form of

adjustment and acceptance on part of women characters to maintain supremacy of institution of marriage.

V. INSTITUTION, JUSTICE AND MASS

Culture and Tradition establish a platform on which the individuals identify themselves as members of a society, a nation or a race. But to make such identification concrete, institutions are found. These institutions act as chemical bonds which keep the individuals together. The institutions maintain a sense of equality in the mass. Thus, Freud writes,

What is subsequently found to operate in society as community spirit, *esprit de corps*, etc. undeniably springs from an original envy. No one should seek to stand out; all should be and possess the same. The implied meaning of social justice is that a person denies himself much in order that others, too, shall have to deny themselves as much or (which comes to the same thing) be unable to ask for it. This demand for equality is the root of social conscience and the sense of duty (Freud 75).

In order to keep mass together for a long time, individual's envy is satisfied by fulfilling the demand of equal treatment. This means that the repression and bans are applicable on everyone. The government and the institutions serve this end. Often a powerful minority controls these institutions. These organizations also keep the mass immune to disintegration and prevent changes in its structure, so that it continues to exist – a certain external compulsion. The institutions therefore “are required to govern the relations of human beings one to another...” (Freud 110). Although everyone in the mass is prone to the risk of physical damage, such risk unites individuals who forbid one another to kill. But they collectively exercise the collective right to punish the one who violates the norms. The punished individual's actions are identified as unethical, unnatural and/or unlawful. This punishment is termed as justice.

In the novel *The Lesson*, the government building has separate offices of the Rapist, the Adjustment Bureau and the Moral Police Force. All of these have one goal, to preserve “the Holy Institution of Marriage” (Rajendran 11). The Moral Police Force takes care of a marriage notifier. If marriage notifying memos are not followed as ordered, pressure is created by anonymous phone calls. Pressure is also created through relatives asking when they would get their children, especially girls, married. The Adjustment Bureau instructs female subjects to keep the Conduct Book, read and follow it religiously in order to avoid any conflict in marriage. Severity of punishment is decided by the number of rules that are broken from the Conduct Book.

Divorce seeking women are manipulated by the government at the Adjustment Bureau, first by Prison of Illusion (PoI) – a method in which women are taken into a dark room and an illusion is created that if they refuses to adjust, how desolate they and their families' future would be, how people would treat them and reject their presence. If Prison of Illusion is not enough, there is an expensive technology of the Box in which a replica of children of women seeking divorce is generated so as to break them emotionally and inveigle them that they would get the bliss of being a mother, a wife and a respected individual in the society.

VI. CONCLUSION

An individual identifies herself/himself by absorbing others with a certain uniqueness of her/his own. A society accepts an individual only when s/he accepts its ideology by transforming herself/himself into a mass individual. Consequently, the individuality is lost and bans are disguised as laws to create sense of equality and order. Fears are soothed by providing culture and tradition. Institutions preserve culture and tradition actively. These ideas, institutions and bans solidify the continuation of existence of mass. Exposure to other cultures is to let the mass feel superiority of its own culture, so that the individuals never leave the mass. *The Lesson* is not merely a fictional world of Indian society but also a reflection of contemporary India it criticizes.

The Second Daughter, like D-503 in *We*, Winston Smith in *1984*, Guy Montag in *Fahrenheit 451*, Shalini in *Leila*, and the Youngest and Meiji in *Escape* and *The Island of the Lost Girls*, breaks the prevailing norms of the society and the laws formed by the authority in order to escape further submission. She fights for individual freedom. Against the indestructible force of the society, the Second Daughter finally accepts her fate and the supposedly chaos she is accused of creating to save her family from the demise. In the end, she lifts the mask, an unscripted act, and reveals her identity, which is again against what she is expected to do according to the script of live TV show – *The Lesson*.

As Jacqueline Rose observes, “...He (Freud) concludes, ‘that a culture that fails to satisfy so many participants, driving them to rebellion, has no chance of lasting for any length of time, nor does it deserve one’” (xi). And this rebellion begins with the Second Daughter, and later in form of a protest by her family and few others.

The mass in the dystopian society constantly demands submission of individual members in it. Government, its institutions, laws, culture, religion and tradition forbid and allow an individual's unconscious aggression, unconscious intentions and hidden identity

through mass exaltation simultaneously. Institutions and the mass form the concept of an ideal mass individual by propagating not what one wants to be, but one has to be. An individual in the mass feels enormous power of unity. The same individual also feels fear of rejection and resultant isolation by the mass. This results in the fall in intellectuality. Thus, in dystopian fiction, authority gains control over the reality of its subjects and majority actively participates in exhibiting controlled reality. This proves that the mass too plays an active role in creating the dystopia it live in.

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Yemen's Child Soldiers Crisis 2024: Key Findings from a Six-Month Investigation

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Abstract— *The recruitment and exploitation of child soldiers in Yemen has emerged as one of the gravest humanitarian crises of 2024, with armed groups systematically enlisting children as young as ten years old. This paper provides a comprehensive examination of the scale, methods, and consequences of this practice, grounded in findings from a six-month investigation into conflict zones across Yemen. Armed groups operate over six thousand training camps in all the country regions, blending military training with ideological indoctrination to condition and control child recruits. Recruitment strategies target socioeconomically vulnerable children through schools, social media, and community networks, employing a combination of financial incentives, coercion, deception, and intimidation. The study presents disturbing demographic data, revealing that the majority of recruits are boys aged twelve to seventeen, though girls are also recruited to serve in non-combat roles. Educational, economic, cultural, and social factors drive this widespread phenomenon, with the collapse of Yemen's education system and rising poverty acting as primary catalysts. Psychological manipulation, religious justification, and systemic isolation within camps further entrench children's roles in armed conflict, making escape and reintegration exceedingly difficult. Despite the magnitude of the crisis, this study highlights significant progress made by rehabilitation initiatives led by K.Srelief and the International Labor Organization, which offer job training, mental health care, education, and family support to former child soldiers. These efforts demonstrate that effective prevention and reintegration are possible when rooted in economic empowerment and community resilience. The paper concludes with a call for urgent international collaboration, stronger enforcement of child protection laws, and long-term strategies to dismantle recruitment networks and rebuild Yemen's social and educational infrastructure. Without sustained action, Yemen risks the continued loss of an entire generation to violence and exploitation.*



Keywords— *Recruitment, Exploitation, Child Soldiers, Civil Conflicts, Childhood Protection, Yemen.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The use of child soldiers in Yemen represents one of the most distressing humanitarian crises of 2024. Armed groups, including the Houthis, continue to exploit children as young as 10 years old, systematically recruiting them into military roles. This pervasive crisis is fueled by Yemen's ongoing civil war and the severe economic hardships faced by many families. Recruitment networks target vulnerable

children through schools, social media, and local communities, offering financial incentives or resorting to coercion and intimidation. Over a six-month investigation conducted in Yemen's conflict zones, alarming evidence was uncovered regarding the scale and sophistication of these recruitment operations. Armed groups operate 6,000 training camps in Houthi-controlled territories, blending military drills with psychological indoctrination. Children

are subjected to harsh training regimens, ideological lectures, and social isolation, which make it difficult for them to resist or escape. The implications of this crisis extend beyond the immediate harm to these children. The long-term effects of trauma, disrupted education, and societal destabilization threaten Yemen's future. Yet, hope persists. Intervention programs such as those led by K.Srelief and the International Labor Organization have made significant strides in rehabilitating former child soldiers and preventing further recruitment. These initiatives combine economic support, mental health care, and education to address the root causes of recruitment.

This paper delves into the disturbing reality of child soldier recruitment in Yemen, shedding light on the recruitment tactics, the daily lives of child soldiers, and the efforts being made to break the cycle. It emphasizes the urgent need for international collaboration, stronger enforcement mechanisms, and sustained support for vulnerable communities to combat this humanitarian tragedy and protect Yemen's next generation. The recruitment of Yemeni children as soldiers continues to escalate in 2024, with children as young as 10 years old being systematically exploited. This deepening crisis, one of the most severe examples of child exploitation in recent times, was uncovered through an intensive six-month investigation in Yemen's conflict zones. The findings reveal the alarming extent to which armed groups are targeting vulnerable children, particularly those from impoverished families, using schools, social media, and local networks to bolster their ranks.

Alarming Proportions of Child Recruitment in Yemen

Yemen's ongoing civil war has provided fertile ground for armed groups to exploit children as soldiers. These groups operate covert training camps in remote mountain areas and urban recruitment centers disguised as schools, making it difficult to gauge the full extent of the crisis. However, the scale of child recruitment is far greater than previously estimated, exacerbating the already dire humanitarian situation.

The Scale and Scope of the Crisis

Recent reports from the United Nations provide a grim insight into the child soldier crisis. Since 2014, the Houthis alone have reportedly recruited over 10,000 children. Additionally, from October 2023 onward, the Houthis have admitted to enlisting more than 70,000 new fighters, many of whom are children. These figures far surpass earlier estimates, underscoring the systematic nature of this exploitation.

Geographic Hotspots of Recruitment

Child recruitment is widespread across Yemen, with the highest concentration in governorates such as Saada, Sanaa, Dhamar, Amran, Hajja, and Hodeida. The Houthis run at least 52 training camps, explicitly targeting children and teenagers in these areas, while forced recruitment campaigns are rampant.

Age and Gender Analysis

The data reveals a distressing age and gender breakdown of child recruits:

Age 8-11 years	248 children
Age 12-14 years	3,838 children
Age 15-17 years	6,247 children

While boys form the majority of child soldiers, girls are not exempt from this crisis. At least 34 girls aged 13-17 have been recruited, serving as informants, guards, paramedics, or in specialized female units.

Socioeconomic Vulnerabilities and Recruitment Tactics

Children from impoverished backgrounds are particularly at risk, with 5,213 recruits from very poor families and 2,839 from households with limited income. The Houthis employ various tactics to recruit children, including:

Financial incentives	6,745 cases
Intimidation	2,039 cases
Deception	639 cases
Kidnapping	832 cases

Modern Recruitment Tactics: A Blending of Old and New

Armed groups have adopted increasingly sophisticated recruitment strategies, combining modern technology with traditional methods of coercion:

- **Social Media Campaigns:** Platforms are used to announce recruitment drives and target young users with messages glorifying military service. These campaigns often feature misleading narratives portraying military enlistment as an act of patriotism and defense against foreign aggression.

This crisis underscores the urgent need for international intervention and support to protect Yemen's children from further exploitation. The long-term consequences of this child soldier epidemic could destabilize the region for generations to come.

School-Based Indoctrination Programs

Yemen's education system has become a key recruitment tool for armed groups, particularly the Houthis, who operate around 6,000 summer camps. Each camp houses at least 100 children at a time, blending religious indoctrination with military training and turning schools into recruitment centers. The indoctrination process involves:

1. Mandatory sectarian lectures and propaganda sessions.
2. Visits to military facilities and exposure to combat scenarios.
3. Hands-on training with various firearms and other weapons.

Financial Incentives and Coercive Tactics

Armed groups employ a mix of financial rewards and coercive methods to recruit children. Child soldiers receive a monthly payment ranging from 15,000 to 30,000 Yemeni rials. However, money is not the only tool used to secure recruits—intimidation and threats play a significant role.

Common coercion methods include:

- Threatening to remove families from humanitarian aid programs.
- Imposing recruitment quotas on local leaders.
- Denying essential services to families who refuse to comply.

Despite these pressures, financial incentives remain attractive to many families struggling in Yemen's deteriorating economic conditions. Recruits receive a comprehensive package that includes:

Benefit Type	Details
Monthly Salary	20,000–30,000 Yemeni rials
Additional Perks	Food rations, lodging, and basic daily supplies
Family Support	Food aid and public recognition of fallen soldiers.

Armed groups exploit poverty and desperation, using an organized network of recruiters, including brokers, teachers, community elders, and local supervisors, to identify and recruit children.

This system operates year-round, leveraging local relationships to strengthen their reach.

Life Inside the Training Camps

The conditions within child soldier training camps reveal an environment designed to indoctrinate and militarize young minds. The Houthis manage approximately 6,000 camps

within their territories, each accommodating at least 100 children at a time.

A Typical Day in the Camps

Children follow a regimented daily schedule combining military training with ideological and religious indoctrination. Activities begin at dawn and continue into the evening, ensuring recruits are thoroughly conditioned.

Time	Activity
Dawn	Religious prayers and Quranic studies
Morning	Military drills, weapons handling, and physical training
Afternoon	Ideological sessions and combat training
Evening	Additional religious instruction

Military Training Programs

Training typically lasts about a month, though some recruits remain longer. Programs include:

1. Basic weapons handling and maintenance.
2. Instruction on combat tactics and planting landmines.
3. Checkpoint operations using live ammunition.
4. Preparation for active combat on the frontlines.

Children also receive training on maintaining and operating AK-47 rifles. Many recruits from rural areas already have prior experience with firearms, which facilitates their integration into the armed groups.

This detailed system of indoctrination, financial manipulation, and coercion illustrates the deliberate and systematic exploitation of Yemen's children, perpetuating a cycle of violence and trauma.

Psychological Manipulation Techniques

Camp leaders in Yemen employ advanced psychological tactics to control and indoctrinate child recruits. Religious teachers play a central role, framing the conflict as a sacred mission and convincing children that they are defending their homeland. Several methods are used to strengthen this indoctrination:

- **Religious Justifications:** Camp leaders use religious teachings to legitimize military actions, claiming that the mission is divinely sanctioned.
- **Propaganda and Fear:** Daily lectures emphasize the threats posed by enemies, instilling fear and reinforcing loyalty.
- **Harsh Punishments:** Children who disobey face severe consequences, ranging from food

deprivation to physical abuse. In extreme cases, they may endure imprisonment or threats of death.

- **Rewards and Recognition:** Compliant recruits are publicly celebrated through memorial posters and tributes, creating a sense of pride and allegiance.
- **Isolation and Fear:** Those who resist or question authority are isolated, ensuring obedience through a combination of fear and rewards. These strategies create a powerful psychological grip on child soldiers, making it extremely difficult for them to resist or escape.

International Response and Accountability

The international community has intensified its efforts to address Yemen's child soldier crisis through diplomatic initiatives, legal frameworks, and targeted programs. A key milestone was the **2022 action plan** between the United Nations and Houthi forces, aimed at protecting children.

UN Intervention Programs

The United Nations has implemented comprehensive measures to combat child recruitment. The 2022 action plan includes commitments from the Houthis to:

1. Identify and release all child recruits within six months.
2. End all recruitment practices, including non-combat roles.
3. Safeguard health and education facilities.
4. Provide reintegration support for former child soldiers.

However, implementing these measures has proven challenging. The UN Secretary-General continues to list the Houthis in annual reports for severe violations against children in armed conflict.

Legal Measures Against Recruiters

Yemen ratified the **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child** in 2007, which explicitly bans the recruitment of anyone under 18 by non-state armed groups. Despite this, enforcement faces significant obstacles:

Challenge	Effect
Lack of monitoring mechanisms	Weak accountability for violations
Insufficient political will	Delayed implementation of reforms
Resource constraints	Reduced enforcement capacity

Sanctions and Preventive Programs

International organizations, such as the **International Labor Organization (ILO)**, have initiated programs like **CRUCSY** in key regions. These programs focus on:

1. Preventing child recruitment.
2. Supporting the reintegration of former child soldiers.
3. Promoting community-based interventions.

CRUCSY also provides specialized mental health support and trains government officials, youth groups, and local leaders to prevent child recruitment.

Human rights organizations advocate for:

- Including child protection measures in peace negotiations.
- Establishing robust monitoring systems.
- Imposing targeted sanctions on those responsible for recruitment.
- Supporting rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives for affected children.

Breaking the Cycle: Positive Progress

Despite significant challenges, international efforts are beginning to show results. For example, the **King Salman Humanitarian Aid & Relief Center (KSrelief)** launched a new program that assists 2,000 former child soldiers and their families, focusing on rehabilitation and reintegration.

While much work remains, these combined efforts represent critical steps toward ending the recruitment and exploitation of children in Yemen's conflict.

Prevention Strategies to Combat Child Recruitment

Preventing child recruitment in Yemen begins with raising awareness about its dangers. Organizations like **K.Srelief** conduct education programs in regions such as Ma'rib, Al-Jawf, Sana'a, Dhamar, and Amran. These programs focus on:

1. Educating parents about their legal responsibilities.
2. Teaching methods to protect children at risk.
3. Highlighting children's rights and the importance of education.

The **International Labor Organization's CRUCSY Program** has also developed a robust community-based framework to address the issue. The program has trained 46 at-risk youth in social skills and established three safe spaces, providing a safe environment for 937 children to gather and engage in positive activities.

Community-Based Interventions

Local communities play a critical role in helping former child soldiers reintegrate into society. Various programs have achieved the following results:

Program	Component Impact
Career Counseling	200 former child soldiers received guidance
Mental Healthcare	98 youth accessed psychological support
Literacy Training	168 youth achieved functional literacy skills
Apprenticeships	200 youth completed vocational training

Youth clubs and safe spaces are integral to this process, offering fun activities, mental health services, and a sense of belonging. These programs also connect children with specialized mental health care, enabling them to heal and re-enter society.

Economic Alternatives to Recruitment

Since financial hardship often drives families to accept child recruitment, creating alternative sources of income is crucial. **KSrelief** addresses this issue through programs that:

1. Provide job training to 200 former child soldiers.
2. Support small business startups.
3. Distribute food aid to families to alleviate economic pressure.

This support extends beyond immediate relief. Families who choose alternatives receive monthly assistance packages, including food and education support. This approach addresses the root causes of recruitment, as many child soldiers come from impoverished backgrounds where monthly payments of 15,000–30,000 Yemeni rials (approximately \$28–\$57) are highly tempting.

To further discourage recruitment, teachers are offered additional pay to dissuade them from joining armed groups. This not only ensures the continuity of education but also keeps children in school. Programs also provide opportunities for students who have dropped out to return to classes or learn vocational skills that prepare them for employment.

Measuring Impact and Future Recommendations

These prevention and reintegration programs have been effective in the communities where they are active. The **Wethaq Civic Foundation**, in collaboration with **KSrelief**, evaluates the success of these initiatives and recommends

strategies to prevent future recruitment. This comprehensive approach, combining awareness, community support, and economic alternatives, is key to breaking the cycle of child recruitment in Yemen.

School-Based Indoctrination Programs

In Yemen, schools have become a central part of recruitment efforts by armed groups, particularly the Houthis. They run approximately 6,000 summer camps, each accommodating at least 100 children. These camps combine religious indoctrination with military training, turning educational institutions into recruitment hubs.

The indoctrination process includes:

1. Enforcing sectarian teachings and exposing children to propaganda.
2. Organizing visits to military facilities for combat exposure.
3. Providing hands-on training with firearms and other weapons.

Financial Incentives and Forced Recruitment

Armed groups use both financial rewards and coercive methods to recruit children. Child soldiers are paid a monthly stipend ranging from 15,000 to 30,000 Yemeni rials. However, many are also recruited through intimidation and threats.

Common coercion tactics include:

- Threatening to exclude families from humanitarian aid programs.
- Forcing local leaders to meet recruitment quotas.
- Denying essential services to families who refuse to cooperate.

Despite these pressures, the financial rewards attract many families struggling with poverty. Recruits are offered a package that includes:

Benefit	Details
Monthly Salary	20,000–30,000 Yemeni Rials
Additional Benefits	Food rations, lodging, and basic supplies
Family Support	Food aid and public recognition of fallen soldiers

Armed groups take advantage of Yemen's economic hardships, using networks of brokers, teachers, community elders, and local leaders to identify and recruit children. These networks operate continuously, relying on local connections to expand their influence.

Inside the Training Camps

Conditions in Yemen's child soldier training camps reveal a deliberate system designed to militarize and indoctrinate children. The Houthis oversee roughly 6,000 camps, each housing at least 100 children at a time.

Daily Life in Training Camps

Children in these camps follow a rigid daily schedule that combines military drills with ideological and religious instruction. Activities are structured to instill discipline and loyalty.

Time	Activity
Dawn	Prayers and Quranic studies
Morning	Weapons training, drills, and physical exercises
Afternoon	Ideological sessions and combat practice
Evening	Religious lessons

Military Training

The military training program typically lasts about a month, though some children stay longer. It includes:

1. Basic firearms handling and maintenance.
2. Training in combat tactics and planting landmines.
3. Operating checkpoints with live ammunition.
4. Preparing for frontline combat roles.

Recruits also learn to clean and use AK-47 rifles, and many rural children arrive with some familiarity with weapons, which accelerates their training.

The systematic exploitation of children through these camps highlights the deep impact of Yemen's conflict, trapping the youngest generation in a cycle of violence and manipulation.

II. FINDINGS

The analysis of the data reveals several significant findings regarding the recruitment of children by the Houthis in Yemen:

- **Educational Factors:** Among the five categories examined, factors related to education emerged as the most influential in driving child recruitment. Economic factors ranked second, while social factors were the least effective, largely due to the weak role played by families, communities, human rights organizations, and social activists. These findings align with Gates and Reich's observations in *Child Soldiers in the Age of Fractured States*, which highlights low education levels, poverty,

family absence, peer influence, and the prevalence of war as key drivers of child recruitment.

- **Economic Impact:** A significant portion of respondents identified Yemen's deteriorating economic conditions as a primary contributor to the crisis. Children are often forcibly conscripted by Houthi rebels, tasked with carrying ammunition and supplies to frontlines, while their families receive financial compensation due to their dire economic situations.
- **Cultural Factors:** Cultural influences were found to be a major factor in child recruitment. Long-standing traditions of weapon carrying among Yemeni tribes have been exploited by militias to encourage children to join the conflict. The Houthis often use brainwashing techniques to instill corrupt ideologies, making children more susceptible to recruitment. Children are viewed as inexpensive, obedient, and easier to control compared to adults, making them an attractive target for militias.
- **Destruction of Education Systems:** Many respondents strongly agreed that the failure to reopen schools and pay teacher salaries has significantly contributed to child recruitment. The systematic destruction of educational institutions, including schools, colleges, and universities, has left children more vulnerable to being drawn into armed conflicts.
- **Lack of Awareness and Weak Social Structures:** The study revealed that families, communities, media, and human rights organizations have failed to adequately warn against the short- and long-term dangers of child recruitment. International conventions and treaties, while legally binding, are often described as ineffective "paper protections" due to their lack of implementation.
- **Accountability and State Failure:** Respondents highlighted the absence of state authority and accountability, as well as the lack of enforcement of child protection laws within Yemen's constitution, as significant contributors to child recruitment. History shows that state failure often leads to the exploitation of children in armed conflicts. The recruitment of children by Houthi militias, which comprises an estimated 25,000 fighters aged between 12 and 17, has been widely condemned by organizations such as Human Rights Watch, though enforcement of international conventions remains inadequate.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed for families, communities, and national and international stakeholders:

1. **For Yemeni Children:** Protect children from extremist and sectarian groups that exploit them for their agendas. Children need awareness programs to recognize the dangers of recruitment.
2. **For Families:** Parents must take responsibility for safeguarding their children from recruitment by fanatics and militias. Parental vigilance and active involvement in children's lives are crucial.
3. **For Yemeni Society:** Recognize that today's children are the future of Yemen. Society as a whole must play a role in preventing child recruitment and ensuring a safer and more secure future.
4. **For the Yemeni Government:** Stabilizing the state, rebuilding the economy, and extending government authority across the country are fundamental to addressing child recruitment. The government must prioritize education, health, and security, ensure regular payment of teacher salaries, and reopen educational institutions.
5. **For International Organizations:** Strengthen enforcement of child protection laws, hold militias accountable through international mechanisms, and ensure compliance with conventions and treaties that prohibit child recruitment. Humanitarian efforts must focus on providing essential services such as food, shelter, and healthcare to reduce families' reliance on recruitment payments.
6. **For Cultural and Social Reforms:** Community leaders and activists must challenge cultural norms that normalize child recruitment. Awareness campaigns should emphasize that all religions and international conventions prohibit child recruitment and stress the importance of protecting children.

The study underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to tackle the root causes of child recruitment in Yemen. Collaboration between families, communities, governments, and international organizations is essential to protect Yemen's children from exploitation and ensure they have a chance to contribute to a peaceful and prosperous future.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study represents a critical effort to identify the most significant factors driving child recruitment by Houthi militias in Yemen's ongoing conflict. Based on the opinions of intellectuals, activists, and politicians, the findings highlight that a combination of factors including educational, economic, cultural, social, and political drivers has led to the widespread recruitment of children. Of these, educational factors were found to be the most influential, followed closely by economic challenges. Social factors, while less prominent, remain important due to the absence of effective family and community support systems. The results emphasize the devastating role of poverty, the destruction of educational infrastructure, and cultural norms that facilitate the use of children in warfare. The systematic brainwashing of children and the lack of accountability for those who exploit them exacerbate the issue. Addressing this crisis requires urgent interventions at multiple levels, including education, economy, and governance. The study concludes that drastic measures are needed to prevent child recruitment and protect Yemen's children. Education infrastructure must be rebuilt, and teachers must be paid regularly to ensure children remain in school. Economic reforms are also essential to alleviate the financial hardships that force families to accept recruitment offers. Culturally and socially, efforts must focus on changing traditional norms and empowering communities to resist child recruitment. Furthermore, the Yemeni government must enforce child protection laws, and international laws must be activated to hold militias accountable for recruiting children. Yemen's child soldier crisis represents one of the most tragic consequences of the country's ongoing conflict, with thousands of children recruited, exploited, and subjected to unimaginable hardship. The scale of the crisis is staggering, as armed groups systematically target vulnerable children through advanced recruitment networks, exploiting poverty, weak infrastructure, and limited accountability to perpetuate their operations. The establishment of 6,000 training camps in Houthi-controlled territories exemplifies the depth of this exploitation, combining military drills with psychological manipulation to control and indoctrinate young minds. Despite the severity of the situation, there is hope. Programs such as those led by KSrelief and the International Labor Organization have demonstrated that rehabilitation and prevention are possible. Through initiatives providing job training, mental healthcare, educational support, and economic assistance, thousands of former child soldiers and their families have begun to rebuild their lives. These efforts highlight the importance of addressing the root causes of recruitment, including poverty and lack of opportunity, while ensuring that communities have access to support

systems that can disrupt the cycle of exploitation. Moving forward, it is critical for international organizations, local communities, and governments to work collaboratively to strengthen prevention strategies, enforce accountability, and expand support programs. Stronger sanctions, improved monitoring, and comprehensive reintegration initiatives are essential to protecting Yemen's children and safeguarding their future. Without sustained global attention and coordinated action, Yemen risks losing another generation to the devastating impacts of war. The time to act is now, to ensure that these children have a chance to reclaim their childhood and contribute to a more stable and hopeful Yemen.

Yemen is enduring one of the most severe humanitarian crises of 2024, with thousands of children forced into roles as soldiers. While international organizations have made progress, significant challenges remain. Armed groups continue to exploit children across the country, operating advanced recruitment networks that target schools and leverage social media. These groups prey on families struggling with poverty, offering monthly payments of 15,000 to 30,000 Yemeni rials to entice recruits. The scale of these operations is staggering. Armed groups have established 6,000 training camps in Houthi-controlled areas, where children undergo military training and psychological manipulation. These methods create significant barriers to helping children escape and reintegrate into society. However, there is hope. Programs like **KSrelief** have made a meaningful difference, helping 2,000 former child soldiers rebuild their lives by providing job training, mental health support, and assistance for their families. The success of these initiatives highlights the importance of collaboration between local communities and international organizations. Prevention programs have also shown promising results, demonstrating that child recruitment can be curtailed when communities are supported with economic opportunities and robust safety nets. To sustain progress, stronger enforcement measures and constant international pressure on armed groups are essential. Without these efforts, Yemen risks losing thousands more children to the devastating cycle of exploitation and war.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Transcripts with Former Child Soldiers.

Appendix B: Data Tables on Child Recruitment Statistics



From Home to Warfront: Women in World War II Narratives

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Abstract— *The narratives of war often overvalue masculine power over female capacity. Women's contribution goes unacknowledged, unnoticed and unnamed. Wars valorize men's valiance as soldiers and decision makers while women take the backseat as mere survivors amidst chaos. This paper focuses on the gendered narratives around war and throws light on what it is to be a woman in the times of war. It brings women on the frontline and rethinks War narratives including the experiences and contributions of a number of women who came out of their cocoon and took the challenges head on. The issues like Anti-Semitism, rape, mother-child relationship, and trauma that the war results in forms the base of the study. It showcases women as rebellious and passionate, having a steel exterior, and protecting a candyfloss heart. They are a testament of hope and resilience. The present paper underscores the narratives' depiction of women strength amidst three kinds of violence- psychological, physical and sexual and their complex societal re-entry. It is a voice against hyper masculinity and celebrates the 'invisible women' in war.*



Keywords— *Anti- Semitism, Hyper masculinity, Rape, Trauma, Violence, War*

I. INTRODUCTION

"To you who'd read my songs of War
And only hear of blood and fame,
I'll say (you've heard it said before)
'War's Hell!' and if you doubt the same"
(“A Dead Boche” Lines 1-4)

-War narratives are full of man's valor, their physical and mental strength, their bravery and sacrifices. Women's role is either sidelined or restricted to one who cares and one who needs to be protected. They remain invisible, incessantly waiting for the men folks to return and provide. History doesn't see them as heroes or survivors; they are merely dependents and caregivers. This paper is an attempt to radically and fundamentally question and revise the way we view women's role in war. It reiterates the fact that it is not bullets alone that win the battle. The paper takes a more feminist and humanitarian

approach to war narratives and disentangle the stories of women war heroes who left no stone unturned.

The stories of war often project men as decision makers while women take the backseat. The distrust on a woman's physical strength is to the extent that in Afghanistan, when women decided to confront the Taliban and took up arms in combat, the reports were not believed. In this regard, Zabinullah Mujadih made the statement, "Women will never pick up guns against us. They are helpless and forced by the defeated enemy. They can't fight." (qtd. in "The Faces of War: Reintroducing Women's Narratives in War" 7-8) Hence, violence is not something that is believable when it comes to women. Peterson in "The Faces in War: Reintroducing Women's Role in War" presents Sjoberg's and Gentry's views that describe violent women as "mothers, monsters, or whores. The mother narrative describes women's violence as a way of taking care of men and a form of nurturing. The monster narrative eliminates blame from women by casting them as

insane and denying them as ‘real’ women or even human. Finally, the whore narrative describes women’s violence as driven by a sexual dependence on men and an erotic dysfunction... By portraying violent women as a flaw in humanity, it protects the peaceful woman image and prevents accountability for violent actions.” (24)

The traditional narratives of war coincide with this notion of woman being a meek receiver to a great extent. But the modern narratives have drastically changed the power dynamics and woman no longer fall on the weaker side of spectrum. While writers like Khaled Hosseini and Toni Morrison present a nuanced feminist approach to the war, Charlotte Perkin Gilman and Anne Frank present the psychological repercussions of the same. Hence the narrative has seen a paradigm shift and war literature has expanded in horizon.

II. WOMEN AS MOTHERS

“And from my mother’s writings, I was understanding for the first time what ultimate sacrifices women made for the war. While women were not usually the ones killed in combat, they were the ones who bravely had to endure the news, and keep going after husbands, sons, and brothers were killed.” (Yellin 12)

Femininity is often associated with the emotions of love, care, sacrifice and selflessness. But being a mother or sister is in no way synonymous with being weak. If we look back in history, mothers often sent their sons to fight in the war which is an ultimate example of a woman’s strength. Those who remained at home did everything they could to support the national cause- some helped raise funds, while others took drastic steps to take care of their children back home in dearth of food and compromised security. Joy Damousi in *History and Theory* writes, “A focus on mothers and maternity redirects our analysis to gendered aspects of a history of violence and war that do not concentrate solely on bodily violent acts of physical inflictions upon women—crucial as these remain to histories of violence—but shifts the attention to examining women and violence within another aspect: as active agents negotiating violent contexts.” (qtd. in Godvin, “Mothers and War”) Kristin Hannah in her famous novel *The Nightingale* beautifully showcases the strength of a mother during the times of war through her character Vianne who being caught up in Nazi occupied France first submits to the atrocities and finally realizes the need to speak up. The reason she gives for this transformation is quite appealing as she says, “I want to protect Sophie [her daughter]... but what good is safety if she has to grow up in a world where people disappear without a trace because they pray to a different God?” (Hannah 262) Her patience is tested when

her best friend is taken to a Jewish concentration camp leaving her in charge of Ari, a Jewish child. This incident in the novel is the height of maternal strength as Vianne starts forging identity papers for thousands of Jewish children, without thinking twice of her own well being. And this is just an example. History is full of examples of women who have taken huge risks at the cost of their life and safety of their children trying to save both.

However, a woman’s war story doesn’t end with the end of war. No matter how hard the situation is, she cannot get weak. After the war is over, she has to wait for the men folks to return from the warfront as behave as if nothing has happened, nothing has changed. It becomes her responsibility to return to her husband and brothers the home they left behind. While men have the liberty to tell stories and showcase strength, women’s contributions often go unnoticed. Their invisibility in the war is so much so that when Vianne’s grown up son (in *The Nightingale*) sees an invitation in his house addressed to a war veteran; he automatically believes it to be for his father. When he realizes it was actually for his mother he looks amazed and asks, “What did you do in the war, Mom?” (Hannah 436) to which Vianne simply replies, “I survived.” (Hannah 436).

Apart from mothers supporting war, there have been cases where women have run anti-war campaigns as they did not want their future generations to suffer what they went through. This activism dwindled the support for the war and makes us question the gender biasness that has engulfed war narratives since times immemorial. Such examples make the gendered narratives of war fall flat.

III. RAPE DURING WAR

Sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war throughout history in order to showcase dominance, military indiscipline, hatred, or gender superiority. Being deliberate, it terrorizes individuals, alarms the opposite party and destroys families and communities. It brings shame, social stigma and sexually transmitted diseases. During World War II, millions of women were sexually abused while the actual numbers remain unrecorded. It was rampant in concentration camps especially while one cannot ignore the cases in areas under German occupation. Even after 79 years of World War II, we do not have true reports of sexualized violence that occurred. The violence continues to impact the survivors and generations resulting into transgenerational trauma. Jennifer Turpin in “Many Faces, Women Confronting War” talks about how the torture of political prisoners was gendered. (5) Mass rape was used as genocide for ethnic cleansing where women belonging to the so called racially inferior ethnic group

were systematically raped by the enemy soldiers to wipe off the inferior race. According to the records, at least 34,140 European women were forced to prostitution during the German occupation of their countries, along with concentration camp female prisoners.” (*The Blessed Abyss* 33-34)

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines sexual violence as “any sexual act that is perpetrated against someone’s will. Sexual violence encompasses a range of offenses, including a complete nonconsensual sexual act, an attempted nonconsensual sexual act, abusive sexual contact, and non-contact sexual abuse.” (“Sexual Violence” np) Webster’s Dictionary also defines sexual assault as being “illegal sexual contact that usually involves force upon a person without consent or is inflicted upon a person who is incapable of giving consent or who places the assailant in a position of trust or authority.” (“Sexual Assault” np). There have been multiple personal accounts of these ‘lived realities’ that failed to procure justice but has managed to find a vent in literature. The diary *A Woman in Berlin: 8 Weeks in the Conquered City* by Anonymous is a moving account of repeated sexual violation and forced prostitution in order to procure food. J. Robert Lilly in *Taken by Force: Rape and American GIs in Europe in World War II* “examines the social ramifications for these sexual crimes. It focuses on the rape and similar sexual violence forced on European women between 1942 and 1945. Lilly focuses on the U.S army’s rape of British, French, and German women estimating that 14,000 civilian women were victims.” There was another concept of ‘comfort women’ prevalent where the Japanese army forced thousands of women into forced prostitution. (Soh 12.) The women never received full compensation for what they suffered and many cases went unreported due to shame associated with physical violation. This brings to light a very important aspect of rape culture- the social stigma associated with it and the blame always falling on the victim for not opposing enough. In this regard, Vianne in Kristin Hannah’s *The Nightingale* says after she suffers the same fate: “it wasn’t her fault, what had happened to her. She believed that but she didn’t think fault mattered in a thing like this.” (Hannah 394) Hence as invisible as women’s contribution in war were, the violence against their body went unnoticed, almost invisible.

IV. WOMEN AS WARRIORS

Thousands of women joined war in various capacities, challenging the traditional gender roles imposed on them by the society. They worked as tank drivers, spies, pilots, snipers, radio operators, etc. In 1941, the 588th Night

Bomber regiment that consisted of female pilots and were known as ‘Night Witches’ hit a number of targets, “flew more than 30,000 missions and dropped more than 23,000 tons of bombs on the Nazis; 30 of them were killed and 24 received the Hero of the Soviet Union medal, the nation’s highest award for valor.” (Pruitt np) By the end of 1945, almost 74,000 British women were engaged in anti-aircraft units. Pile commented, “These girls lived like men, fought their lights like men and, alas, some of them died like men.” (Pruitt np)

Keeping in mind the challenges involved in the battlefield, direct combat remained inaccessible to women for a long time. If we look at the current military numbers in U.S, we find it a lot more integrated. But back then (during World Wars), women participated in different forms. There are many novels that talk about women working as women operators some of them are worth mention. Erika Robuck’s *An Invisible Woman* beautifully captures Virginia Hall, an American woman, working as a wireless operator in Nazi occupied France coordinating supply drops to help arm and organize the Resistance forces, the ‘Maquis’. She showcases undeterred spirit and resilience and Steve Berry called her “an alpha female heroine” (Robuck i), the description being absolutely apt. *All the Lights We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr is another narrative of a woman taking up the matter in her own hands instead of waiting to be saved. Here a blind woman sends top secret messages through radio signals and thus participates in French Resistance. If we move to history, there have been many hidden warriors who went unnoticed as history did not acknowledge them. There have been memoirs and interviews available which validate their contribution though.

V. ANTI SEMITISM IN WAR

“For seven weeks I’ve lived in here,

Penned up inside this ghetto

But I have found my people here.

The dandelions call to me

And the white chestnut candles in the court.

Only I never saw another butterfly.

That butterfly was the last one.

Butterflies don’t live in here,

In the ghetto.”

(“The Butterfly” lines 9-17)

Anti- Semitism is defined as prejudice or hatred or unfair discrimination towards the Jews. It can be

broadly divided into racial anti-Semitism and religious anti-Semitism. The prejudice towards Jews has existed throughout history and it gained murderous momentum during Hitler's rule. He did not only consider them as subhuman, rather they were presumed to be cancerous and detrimental for the society, hence Hitler wanted to wipe out their very existence from the face of earth. "In Nazi ideology that perceived Jewishness to be biological, the elimination of the Jews was essential to the purification and even the salvation of the German people." ("Nazi anti-Semitism and the Holocaust" 2.) Between 1939 to 1945, about 5.7 million Jews were exterminated in Nazi concentration camps through overwork or prolonged starvation. They were forcibly expelled from jobs, not allowed to on bicycles, banned from all public places, children could not attend schools, and the list is endless. Writers like Kristin Hannah, Erika Robuck, and Markus Zusak touch upon this subject and poignantly describe their predicament in Nazi occupied France. Anne Frank's diary is a moving account of what Jews had to go through and is not for the soft hearted.

After the Nazi defeat, Anti-Semitism dwindled and gradually the acceptance increased. The obstacles were fewer, opportunities were greater and America became more integrated. However in Soviet Union the war went longer and Poland saw Anti-Jewish purges in 1956-57. However, gradually the hate has dwindled and society on the whole has become more integrated.

VI. CONCLUSION

War narratives throughout history have magnified man's role but the role women played during World War II cannot be ignored. They are present everywhere- from homes to hospitals to battle fields. They fought not only political battle but social and emotional battle too. Hence they deserve a place in war narratives not just as mere dependents but as warriors and survivors. They proved themselves at every step, uncaring of their own predicament. They very subtly challenged the existing dominating powers, raising voice as and when required. They were perfect mothers, daughters, lovers, sisters, warriors and winners. Hence the stories of war are incomplete without acknowledging their contribution.

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Anxieties as Determinants of ESP Students' Performance Towards English Language Learning at Ho Chi Minh University of Banking

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Abstract— Classroom anxiety has become a huge concern in second and foreign language and foreign language learning and a never-ending research in several of the recent decades. Theoretically, this research is supported with Horwitz, and Cope's theory of anxiety and Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis in learning foreign language. Statistically, the data were gathered from 149 participants enrolled in the grades of ESP course at Ho Chi Minh University of Banking, and then analyzed by SPSS with using Pearson to highlight the correlation between anxiety and performance. In addition, Multiple regression was also used to identify the most powerful factor in contribution. The findings shown that there was moderately significant negative correlation between anxiety and academic performance at the level of .001. Furthermore, emotional anxiety was the most powerful contribution in performance, this means that if the students get higher anxiety, they will head for the poorer performance in their learning process.



Keywords— foreign language classroom anxiety; academic performance; ESP students.

I. INTRODUCTION

The growth of concerns of classroom anxiety is so more and more devoted to English language learning that several studies conducted by different researchers. These researches conducted to fondly seek the relationship between learners' foreign language classroom anxiety and academic performance (Bailey, 1983; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Nowadays, anxiety becomes challenges and threats to learners of foreign language in all level of grades; e.g., anxiety is experienced by different types of younger children (Talebinejad & Nekouei, 2013), and young adolescents (Majunggi & Abdul Halim, 2021), primary school pupils (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009; Phillips, 2017), secondary school students (Estari et al., 2019; Eddraoui & Wirza, 2020; Xiang, 2024), senior school students (Wong, 2009; Kamarulzaman et al., 2013; Estari et al., 2019; Liu & Chen, 2015), and university students (Toth, 2007; 2011).

No more doubts, anxiety is a major catalyst, which makes learners loosely self-confident, demotivated, insufficient, negatively attitudinal in their learning performance. Consequently, these students are facing with fear of failure, stress in the real-world tasks in the classroom. In the same vein, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) believed that anxiety is one of the factors which affects and undermines students' foreign language learning outcomes. Most of the researchers, educators, and psychologists totally agreed that foreign language anxiety raised in language learning process has been debilitating student's academic performance (Alrabai, 2014). In plus, Horwitz (2001) ensured that different students of foreign language suffered negative factors like stress, fear, depression, tension, sinking mood from language anxiety in the different levels and situations. Horwitz and Young (1991) pointed out that increasing number of students, who really felt anxious in their foreign language classroom was alarming. Some

researchers strongly believed that anxiety in relation with a foreign language learning might be the greatest barrier which hinder explicit and implicit learning in their brain. Students with high degree of anxiety in foreign language will always have negatively influences their achievement and performance. So, one of the most important affective factors that has a strong influence on the students' academic performance in second language learning or foreign language leaning is anxiety (Ting & Sunarti, 2022). Anxiety causes big problems for students in which can undermine their performance and achievement in their learning record and portfolio, it may cause a big gap between student learning outcome record. Plenty of studies were conducted on foreign language anxiety stressed that language learners, who experience anxiety in their foreign language learning might not be really enjoyable, just keep in mind that the opposite is true. This state is negatively affecting upon learners' performance and achievement (Krashen, 1982; MacIntyre, 1999; Riasati, 2011; Amiri and Ghonsooly, 2015, Binter, 2022).

As a part, this research aims at exploring the correlation between the students' anxiety and performance that they obtained while they were involving into going-on-learning and doing classroom based-tasks. This research on foreign language classroom anxiety and performance simultaneously in English language learning context seems to be relatively scant and far-beyond.

Thus, more research is called for in this area in order to determine how and to what extent foreign language anxiety affects students' academic performance in foreign language learning. Especially in English learning context, at which students often have access and exposure English language as an EFL rather than L2. In this context, they acquire such a language for ESP, attaining mainly concrete purposes like school requirement, and getting a better job in the future. Here is the case study at Ho Chi Minh University of Banking, Vietnam. The current study is situated at the specific context of grades of finance and banking, business administration, and accounting. Mainly, the purpose of this current study is to test the correlation and to measure the affects ESP students' anxiety on performance in their learning at Ho Chi Minh University of Banking, as well as hopefully to seek answers for the following questions:

Q. 1: Is there any a statistically significant correlation between ESP student's anxiety and performance in English language learning at HUB?

Q. 2: To what extent does anxiety have an impact upon ESP students' academic performance towards English language learning?

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To help recognize foreign language anxiety in the classroom, the models of well-known theory of SLA used to anchor this study in order to provide in-depth insights into the theoretical background for the concept are Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986) theory, and Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982) of foreign language anxiety.

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's theory of foreign language anxiety, this theory is shortly described foreign language students' state and perception at a specific situation when they really involved. Also, the core of this theory is used to anchor study's background by plenty of the facts and supports. For instance, MacIntyre and Gardner's (1989) study tested anxiety dimensions in relation with various measures of learning. They found that foreign language anxiety is closely allied with foreign language proficiency and performance. Likewise, Chen and Chang (2004) proved that foreign language anxiety is a perspective of three types, that is state, emotional and situation anxiety. In their article widely published. The findings revealed that anxiety associated with foreign language learning is aroused by different causes and different learners. More importantly, one of the most major contributions of this theory was the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) used to measure the levels of anxiety as evidenced by negative attitudes, subjective perceptions, beliefs, and feelings toward foreign language classes. The FLCAS is a self-report instrument that consists of 33 items aiming to assess a learner's level of foreign language anxiety and to measure whether language anxiety is a specific form to language learning or not. The FLCAS items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale numbered from 1 to 5, which are ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This scale has been widely accepted and valid, reliable from language researchers like Horwitz (1991); MacIntyre and Gardner (1989); Yan (2003); Liu (2006); Sengkey (2022); Liu (2024) and used by many others in their going on researches.

Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982) is a theory of background used to platform in second language acquisition (SLA). This theory strongly focused on how affective factors concerned with route, rate and success in second language acquisition process. Krashen (1982) explained that the affective factor may be as the affective filter for learners' psychology which may be classified into three sub-states: 1. motivation; 2. self-confidence; 3. anxiety. Three these very different mentioned factors can have either indirectly or directly influences on learning by preventing input (i+1 well developed, or underdeveloped i+2 or far-beyond developed i4-0). To be more precise,

this theory actually explains partly the relationship between emotional variables and success or failure of second language acquisition (route, rate, and success). For example, when the affective filter increases, students may be anxious, tensed, and unconfident which may be strongly believed that these negative feelings will prevent route and success. On the contrary. Low filters may lead to anxiety at all. Instead, it helps students get

comprehensible input a lot more easily and quickly. Overall, this theory is extremely important in pedagogy because it helps language lecturers, who can effectively facilitate comprehensible input and make it understandable in a low anxiety classroom environment. By utilizing this theory, English language leaning will be completely expected to be improved this is because comprehensible input will be much more gained. It sure is.



Fig. 1: Flowchart of relationship between Anxiety and Performance

III. METHODOLOGY

Participants and Instrument

The sample of the study consisted of 149 students, being of between 20 and 23 years of age, who enrolled in the course of "English for Specific Purposes" as a part of program arrived from various economic fields: Finance, Banking, Business Administration, and Accounting in the second semester of the academic school year 2024-2025.

To carry out this study, the authors used the foreign language anxiety scale (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986) for a questionnaire with 60 items, 30 items for Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and 30 other ones for academic performance, was designed and completed a survey. As detailed below. All the items except the questionnaire items of background would be marked on a four-point Likert scale ranging as standard level gradual grading system from "5=strongly disagree- SD" to "1=strongly agree-SA". Therefore, in calculation, the lowest score on the scale 1 is 1, while the highest score was 240 on the scale 5. However, to constructively validate the empirical validity of each item in the

questionnaire before addressing, four English experts developed their own comments on and verify items in terms of relevance, appropriateness. Besides, Cronbach Alpha formula was applied to calculate an overall value of $\alpha \leq .80$ ($\alpha \leq .80$) generated that the instrument has been reasonably reliable and indicate a good internal consistency (Sedgwick, 2012; Bonett & Wright, 2015; Piniel, 2024). So reliability of foreign language anxiety and academic performance was measured by being computed by IC (Internal consistency). Cronbach's α for the anxiety was .904 (items number in total=29) and Cronbach's Alpha for academic performance was .875 (items number in total=10).

Data analysis

Data were coded and analyzed using the SPSS with a priori set Alpha level of 0.01. The relationship of study anxiety affecting academic performance toward English language learning at HUB was examined by Pearson (r) correlation. Furthermore, the significant coefficient and coefficient correlation are examined to find out the research results based on the parameter of David's Index (see table 1)

Table 1. David's Index Table (DIT)

Coefficient of Correlation (r)	Relationship Explanation	Description	Coefficient of Correlation (r)
0.70 or more (0.7 or >)	Very strong	(+)Highly significant (-)	-0.70 or -> (0.7 or >)
0.50 to 0.69 (0.5 -0.69)	Strong	(+)Distinctively significant (-)	-0.50 to -0.69 (0.5 -0.69)
0.30 to 0.49 (0.3-0.49)	Moderate	(+)Slightly significant (-)	-0.30 to -0.49 (0.3-0.49)
0.10 to 0.29 (0.1-0.29)	Low, weak	(+)Less significant (-)	-0.10 to -0.29 (0.1-0.29)
0.01 to 0.09 (0.00-0.09)	Ignore/zero	(-)No significant (-)	-0.01 to -0.09 (0.00-0.09)

IV. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Table 2. Correlations between of anxieties and Achievable performance performance toward ELL

Measured Variables-Anxiety		Achievable Performance	Personal Anxiety	Emotional Anxiety	Situational Anxiety
Personal	r	-.469**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
Emotional	r	-.515**	.473**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
Specific	r	-.481**	.469**	.406**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
Population (N)		149	149	149	149

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

As stated earlier, the current study first tried to discover potential relationship between the ESP students' anxiety and their academic performance in examinations. In terms of the first research question. Table 2 reveals that there is statically significantly negatively correlated between the three (3) types of anxiety and student's achievable performance: personal anxiety ($r = -.469$; $p < .001$); emotional anxiety ($r = -.515$; $p < .001$); specific anxiety ($r = -.515$, $p < .01$). Based on David's Index Table, the relationship between (two) 2 variables anxiety and performance weigh about moderate to strong (level: M to T). Particularly, they are correlated negatively slightly significant to distinctively significant. Deductively, this means that if a student who is more anxious in English language class, s/he will be likely to get more negatively performed and obtain poorer and poorer achievement. Meanwhile, with coefficients ranging from 0.10 to 0.29 ($p < .001$). This means that the more anxious students raised about the English language class, the worse they performed in English language learning.

The negative effect of foreign language anxiety on academic performance and language learning is also confirmed through the current findings. Furthermore, we observed a negative relationship between anxiety and academic performance. This current finding is consistent with those of the different periods of time (Aida, 1994; Cheragian et al., 2008; He, 2018; Alnuzaili & Uddin, 2020; Agustina Hananingsih, 2023; Xiang, 2024; Zhang, 2024). Plus, the finding also is closely allied with those of some other studies (Spielberger; 1983; Horwitz, 1986; Trylong, 1987; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Aida, 1994; Horwitz, 2001; Horwitz, 2001; Pappamihel, 2002; Awan et al., 2010; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012; Chen, Cheng & Chuang, 2022; Zhu, 2024; Mierzwa-Kamińska, 2025; Ibrahim & Elhabashy, 2025). As oppose to abovementioned ones, some studies reported a positive relationship between language anxiety and language performance in learning foreign language. (Liu, 2006).

Table 3. Predictors of achievable performance in English language learning

Coefficients									
Model 1		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R ²	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta				Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4.424	.182		24.276	.000	.380		
	Personal Anxiety	-.153	.061	-.198	-2.508	.013		.685	1.461
	Emotional Anxiety	-.246	.059	-.316	-4.139	.000		.733	1.364
	Situational Anxiety	-.242	.071	-.259	-3.405	.001		.736	1.358

a. Dependent Variable: Achievable Performance
b. Predictors (constant): personal; emotional; situational anxiety.

Table 3 indicates that the regression coefficients of independent variables: x_1 , x_2 , and x_3 reveal that the R^2 which equalizes to 0.380 obtained percentage contribution of only 38% to the variability of Y (achievable performance). This means that 62 % may be attributed to other variables not included in the regression analysis. More over, the value of significance of independent variables (personal, emotional, situational anxiety) is less than 0.05 level (Sig $x_1=.013$; $x_2=.000$; $x_3=.001 < \alpha=.05$).

The obtained resulting regression equation was stated thus:

$$Y = (\text{Constant}) - X(x_1)(x_2)(x_3), \text{ equals } Y = 4.424 - .153 - .246 - .242$$

Based on the results, the following conclusions were withdrawn as under:

On the basis of the above equation it can be said that every unit increase of x_1 corresponds to an increase of -0.153 in Y holding x_1 constant, similarly every unit increase of x_2 is matched by an increase of -0.267 in Y , holding in x_2 constant. Likewise, the obtained regression coefficient shows that Y increases by -0.242 every unit of x_3 increases by -0.242 for every unit increase of Y . Deductively, regards to trait or personal anxiety, the more personally anxious the respondents feel, the more decreased they obtain at the level of .153 or higher score at 15.3% in achievable performance. In connection to equivalently emotional anxiety, the more emotionally anxious the respondents involve in, the more decreased they obtain at the level of .246 or higher score at 24.6% in achievable performance. With respect to situational or specific anxiety, the respondents with the more specifically anxious aspect will have decreased achievable performance at the level of .242 or score at 24.2%. it can be said, therefore, that among variables considered in this sample, emotional anxiety is the best predictor of achievable performance. Therefore, the results of the tests indicated that the above regression model employed satisfactorily adequate.

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Drawing on the abovementioned results and discussions, we inferred the following statements for foreign language anxiety and performance in English language learning. Anxiety has got a strong influence on performance. Undoubtedly, ESP students, who get more and more anxious may perform worse and worse in their learning English. According to this study, anxiety is not only the main factor, which entirely affects student's performance on learning, as just few parts approximately over one third of impact index found in this study, too.

The knowledge of university lecturers in the teaching classroom might be useful to boost up students' performance and renew E & I learning (explicit and implicit learning), not used for cut off student's anxiety but reducing anxiety should be lots carefully cares and their responsibilities. Teachers are advised that a safe, friendly and relaxed classroom atmosphere should be created to cool up their mind so that students feel secured to express themselves most confidently and comfortably (Mierzwa, 2019; Mierzwa-Kamińska, 2025). In some words of the writers, if we cool your students successfully, we win their mind, if we inspire students successfully, we win their whole heart of ease. This means that teachers should avoid evaluating negatively students' manners if their performance lies beyond our expectation, do not upset them in front of the whole class (e. g., student's accent, pronunciation and others), remember that making mistakes makes students perfect. To be able to avoid negativity and debilitations, students should be provided with some best ways heading for anxiety-provoking situations appropriately. As a choice, cooperative learning is one of the good examples in this case, because "one problem shared is a problem halved, no man is an island alone". Of course, not many single results are perfect at all in any researches. With its complexity and controversy, it seems to be likely that foreign language anxiety and performance should be encouraged and continued to be a key area of research interest.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

Data and materials are available.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Narrating Loss, Ecology, and Resistance: Refiguring Indigenous Voices in Odia Tribal Short Stories

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Abstract— This article undertakes a critical exploration of selected Odia tribal short stories—Abani Kumar Baral’s “The Bamboo Queen,” Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi’s “Jungli,” Durga Madhab Mishra’s “Buda Kirisani,” Pranabandhu Kar’s “The Vanquished” and “Two Friends,” Rajat Mohapatra’s “The Daughter of Niyamagiri,” Bhubaneswar Behera’s “The Flying Fringe,” and Gayatri Saraf’s “The Burning Mountain.” These stories, while situated within the socio-geographical milieu of Odisha’s tribal heartlands, transcend the realm of ethnographic reportage to emerge as aesthetic articulations of indigenous epistemologies, affective registers, and resistant subjectivities. This article interrogates the inadequacies of conventional historiographic and sociological discourses that often instrumentalize tribal existence as a static and legible category within the developmentalist grammar of the nation-state. In contrast, it posits literature—particularly fiction—as a counter-discursive site which articulates the ontological realities, emotional topographies, and political anxieties of tribal lifeworlds.



Keywords— Indigeneity, Odia literature, Odia tribal short stories, Translation, Tribal stories.

I. INTRODUCTION

The translated tribal stories from Odisha analysed in this article span divergent authorial voices and temporal contexts, thereby constituting a heteroglossic archive of tribal imaginaries in Odia literature. The stories selected for discussion foreground figures traditionally consigned to the peripheries of mainstream cultural representation—tribal individuals, nomadic communities, women, children, and the socio-economically disenfranchised—voices from the margin. In so doing, it not only recuperates excluded voices but also destabilizes the literary canon’s entrenched hierarchies of representation. Stories such as Abani Kumar Baral’s “The Bamboo Queen,” Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi’s “Jungli,” Durga Madhab Mishra’s “Buda Kirisani,” Pranabandhu Kar’s “The Vanquished” and “Two Friends,” Rajat Mohapatra’s “The Daughter of Niyamagiri,” Bhubaneswar Behera’s “The Flying Fringe,” and Gayatri Saraf’s “The Burning Mountain” delineate the entanglements of tribal communities with histories of colonial extraction, capitalist incursion, ecological

dispossession, and the symbolic violence of developmentalist ideology. These texts eschew homogenizing tropes of the tribal as either idyllic primitive or pathologized deviant, opting instead for nuanced portrayals rooted in cultural specificity and narrative intimacy. It thereby invites a shift in perspective in how tribal stories are read and theorized—no longer as an object of anthropological curiosity, but as a legitimate site of literary production and critical inquiry.

II. SUBALTERN SENSIBILITIES AND GENDERED EMBODIMENTS

The story, Baral’s “The Bamboo Queen” (“Baunsa Rani” in the Odia original), exemplifies the convergence of aesthetic form and subaltern thematics. The narrative renders visible the precarity of itinerant acrobat communities, with particular emphasis on the corporeal labour and spatial dispossession experienced by women performers. The protagonists, often suspended mid-air on bamboo poles,

inhabit a liminal position—literally and metaphorically—between rootedness and flux, visibility and erasure, embodiment and objectification. The spectral homelessness that pervades the narrative gestures toward a deeper ontological instability experienced by nomadic women, whose performative labour is simultaneously fetishized and excluded within the hegemonic spatial order of the sedentary society. The editorial insights of Samrat Sengupta, Editor-in-Chief of *Sanglap: Journal of Literary and Cultural Inquiry*, in which an earlier version of my translation of the story appeared (July 2023), further illuminate the story's embedded critique of caste, gender, and the performative residues of pre-literate cultures. Sengupta remarks,

The story deals with the complex question of caste, class, gender, and the crisis of subaltern women belonging to the community of nomadic acrobats, performing feats on the streets and roaming from place to place. The women playing on bamboo sticks and swinging freely above the ground, as represented in the story, suggest the ambiguous spatial relationship they share with mainstream society and their precarious existence. The game is supposedly a surviving trace of performative cultures that predates literacy and connects with other nomadic communities of the world, like the gypsies who roam from place to place and lack a permanent foothold in the mainstream sedentary society. The homelessness of this community in the story takes a more complex turn when we see the predicament of women from this community.

Panigrahi's "Jungli" (originally "Jungli" in Odia) constructs an allegorical landscape where the forest operates not merely as a spatial backdrop but as a constitutive site of ontological freedom and unmediated relationality. The male protagonist, a solitary figure shaped by his organic upbringing in the wilderness, encounters a lost Shabar maiden, initiating a fleeting yet affectively potent relationship that emerges outside the structures of kinship and sanctioned desire. The abrupt rupture of this fragile bond—through the intervention of the father of the maiden and the protagonist's consequent death—functions as a narrative allegory for the incursion of patriarchy and coercive social codes into the domain of instinctual love. The story's lyrical evocation of solitude and its tragic denouement render it a melancholic meditation on the violence of domestication and the loss of primordial connection, wherein the forest stands as both sanctuary and witness to ephemeral freedom.

In contrast, Mishra's "Buda Kirsani" elaborates a culturally embedded temporality through its evocation of *Chaita Parab*, a festival whose cyclical recurrence becomes

the narrative's affective spine. It recounts the day when Buda Kirsani, amidst the festivities, encountered and pledged eternal companionship to Lachchami, only to lose her after fourteen years, on that very same day. Embedded within the narrative are profound insights into the customs and traditions of Kirsani's tribal community, offering a glimpse into their way of life. The interplay of desire, promise, and eventual bereavement inscribes the Chaitra celebration with a dual valence—ritualistic exuberance and private mourning. Mishra's narrative thus transcends mere documentation of tribal custom, offering instead a phenomenological rendering of how festivals serve as both cultural enactments and affective repositories, wherein the rhythms of nature and community coalesce into deeply personal experiences of loss and longing.

Pranabandhu Kar's "The Vanquished" ("Parahata" in the Odia original) marks a radical departure from the conventional victimology associated with subaltern female figures by centering on the sexually autonomous Sunti, a paana Christian woman. Sunti's deliberate erotic address to an itinerant stranger becomes a transgressive gesture that destabilizes normative gender scripts and bourgeois moralities. Her subject position—both hyper-visible as an object of clandestine male desire and simultaneously marginalized as socially expendable—unmasks the hypocrisies of upper-caste, urban respectability. The male gaze, typically assumed to be agentive and dominant, is here inverted: Sunti's observational detachment renders her suitors impotent, stripped of performative masculinity and laid bare in their furtive, almost desperate, pursuit of illicit intimacy. Kar's narrative operates as a trenchant indictment of the patriarchal double standards that valorise female chastity while covertly exploiting women rendered vulnerable by caste and class. The dissonance between Sunti's sexual self-possession and the performative fragility of male desire gestures toward a more profound critique of power, one that implicates the very scaffolding of social legitimacy and its complicity in erotic disenfranchisement.

Pranabandhu Kar's "Two Friends" and Rajat Mohapatra's "The Daughter of Niyamagiri" articulate, in divergent yet resonant registers, a literary praxis that simultaneously reclaims the emotional interiority of indigenous women and reinscribes their communities' epistemic sovereignty over land, ecology, and cultural memory. Both stories resist the instrumentalization of tribal narratives for anthropological curiosity or nationalist romanticism, instead constructing them as critical loci of affective, ecological, and political enunciation. Kar's "Two Friends" undertakes a delicate cartography of grief and feminine solidarity, centring on the lives of Basali and Mudani, two Kondh women whose affective worlds are irreversibly ruptured by the conscription and death of their

male companions in war. Eschewing the overtly rhetorical register of nationalist wartime narratives, the story privileges the experiential over the declarative, foregrounding the unspoken tenacity of women whose suffering lies outside the visible frames of political history. The text articulates a form of gendered mourning that does not seek redress or visibility, but instead cultivates intimacy, resilience, and silent endurance as counter-hegemonic forms of relationality. The shared sorrow of Basali and Mudani becomes a metaphorical and affective commons, wherein friendship functions as both a mode of survival and a critique of masculinist ideologies of sacrifice and heroism. Kar's refusal to spectacularize their grief or aestheticize their poverty reinforces the ethical gravitas of the narrative, situating tribal womanhood as a site of quiet resistance to both patriarchal violence and statist indifference.

In contrast, Rajat Mohapatra's "The Daughter of Niyamagiri" enacts a more overtly political and ecotheological narrative, one that sutures myth, environmental justice, and Indigenous cosmology into a potent literary intervention. Set against the contested terrain of the Niyamagiri hill range—a geocultural site at the intersection of biocapitalist extractivism and indigenous resistance—the story mobilizes a symbolic register to challenge dominant paradigms of development and modernity. Mohapatra's deployment of the figure of Niyama Raja, the ancestral patriarch and spiritual guardian of the Dangaria Kondh, serves not merely as an allegorical anchor but as an epistemological counterpoint to neoliberal logics of resource exploitation. In his vision of a non-alienated world, where sustenance and reverence for the land are axiomatic rather than aspirational, the story delineates an ecocentric ethic that disrupts the anthropocentric and commodified ontology of the state-corporate nexus.

The narrative's mythic scaffolding does not dilute its political urgency; rather, it deepens its resonance by invoking oral traditions and spiritual grammars that have historically been erased by colonial and capitalist cartographies. The referential grounding in the 2013 Supreme Court verdict—an unprecedented recognition of tribal autonomy via the gram sabha mechanism—underscores the juridico-political stakes embedded in the story. Yet Mohapatra transcends the juridical register, presenting the forest not merely as a legal territory but as a sacred cosmos, a lifeworld animated by reciprocity and interdependence. This ontological paradigm—radically at odds with the logic of extraction—recasts the Dangaria Kondh not as passive custodians of biodiversity but as sovereign epistemic agents whose knowledges are indispensable to the future of sustainable coexistence.

The culmination of "The Daughter of Niyamagiri" in the figure of Jhumki—an orphaned tribal girl symbolically adopted by the ethical authority of Niyama Raja—operates as a potent allegorical register through which the trauma of developmental intrusion is rendered legible. Her entanglement with Bideshi, the metonymic outsider whose machinations precipitate her death, literalizes the corrosive incursions of extractivist modernity upon the epistemological sanctity of Indigenous lifeworlds. Jhumki's drowning is a polyvalent event: a corporeal obliteration, a ritualized sacrifice, and a metaphorical submergence of tribal sovereignty beneath the inundating tide of neoliberal capitalism masked as benevolent progress. Her demise, staged within a narrative space charged with elegiac temporality and mythopoetic resonance, foregrounds the ontological stakes of contemporary indigeneity, caught between ancestral continuity and systemic erasure. In this sense, Mohapatra's tale becomes a dirge for a vanishing world and a speculative fiction of resistance, wherein ecological reverence collides with state-sanctioned violence in the crucible of tribal femininity.

In a markedly different yet thematically consonant register, Bhubaneswar Behera's "The Flying Fringe" ("Phara Phara Ude Panata Kani" in the Odia original) probes the moral fissures and socio-economic asymmetries that infiltrate the affective economies of tribal existence. The narrative's apparent simplicity—centring on the quotidian struggles of Tulu and Bhainri—conceals a deeply stratified critique of the patron-client relationality that undergirds tribal marginalization. The sahuakar emerges not simply as a character but as an ideological apparatus: the embodiment of parasitic capitalism, predatory monetization, and coercive dependency. In positioning the sahuakar's manipulation against Tulu's ungarded trust, Behera enacts a symbolic drama of epistemic dispossession, where knowledge asymmetry becomes the locus of systemic control. The "flying fringe," possibly an allusion to ornamental vulnerability or transient hope, encapsulates the paradox of tribal aspiration suspended between mobility and entrapment. The narrative thus articulates a sophisticated critique of internal colonization, where economic 'aid' camouflages extractive subjugation, and tribal innocence becomes the very condition of its exploitation.

Gayatri Saraf's "The Burning Mountain" ("Jali Jali Jauthiba Pahada" in the Odia original) extends this critical genealogy by situating the female tribal body at the intersection of labor, gender, and migration. Ukia's trajectory—marked by coerced mobility, sexual violence, and the commodification of her reproductive and productive capacities—renders visible the gendered cartography of postcolonial capitalism. The brick kiln functions as a

dystopic topos of industrial feudalism, where state absence facilitates private tyranny, and the laboring woman is doubly disarticulated—from land and from autonomy. Samara's death, the failure of masculine resistance, and Ukia's survival invert the gendered heroism trope, positioning female endurance not as passive suffering but as embodied testimony. Saraf's decision to frame Ukia's appeal to Sarojini—an urban writer who represents the metropolitan intelligentsia—imbues the narrative with a meta-critical reflexivity. It problematizes the ethics of ethnographic representation and foregrounds the necessary tension between voice and ventriloquism, narrative empowerment and epistemic appropriation.

Taken together, these stories collectively articulate a counter-archive of tribal experience—gendered, ecological, and economic—wherein literature emerges as a critical technology of memory, mourning, and resistance. They summon a politics of attentiveness that confronts the silences of developmentalist historiography and reclaims the epistemological richness of Odisha's tribal lifeworlds.

III. A CRITICAL EXPLORATION OF COMMON TRIBAL ISSUES

The corpus of Odia short stories under consideration—spanning works by Bhubaneswar Behera, Gayatri Saraf, Rajat Mohapatra, Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi, Durga Madhab Mishra, and Pranabandhu Kar—constitutes a significant literary intervention that engages with the lived realities of Odisha's tribal communities. These narratives, diverse in aesthetic form and thematic thrust, converge around a cluster of recurring issues that critically reflect upon the socio-political marginalization, cultural displacement, and epistemic erasure of Indigenous lifeworlds within dominant national and capitalist discourses.

3.1 EXPLOITATION AND ECONOMIC SUBJUGATION

A recurring motif across these stories is the insidious exploitation of tribal communities under the pretext of economic development or social assistance. In Behera's "The Flying Fringe," the character of the sahuakar epitomizes the predatory forces of rural capitalism that prey upon the innocence and socio-economic vulnerability of tribal individuals like Tulu. This asymmetrical dynamic is emblematic of a broader pattern where Indigenous communities are dispossessed of their agency through debt cycles, false promises, and manipulative patronage. Similarly, Saraf's "The Burning Mountain" powerfully foregrounds the exploitative labour conditions endured by tribal migrants in the brick kilns—spaces that serve as metaphors for industrial modernity's extractive logic. Here,

economic migration does not lead to social mobility; rather it deepens precarity, especially for tribal women like Ukia who are doubly marginalized by class and gender.

3.2 DISPLACEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE

Rajat Mohapatra's "The Daughter of Niyamagiri" anchors its critique within the ecological and cultural disruptions faced by the Dangaria Kondh due to large-scale mining projects. The sacredness of the Niyamagiri hills for the Dangaria Kondh transcends mere ecological attachment and is embedded in a cosmology that G.N. Devy calls a "non-textual epistemology"—a mode of knowing grounded in oral traditions, ritual, and landscape. The incursion of mining projects is not only a threat to territory but a form of what Devy labels "epistemicide," the annihilation of Indigenous knowledge systems. The narrative brings to the fore the contestation between Indigenous ecological cosmologies and neoliberal developmental paradigms. The hills, for the Kondh, are not just territorial spaces but sacred geographies—repositories of ancestral memory, ecological wisdom, and spiritual sustenance. Their threatened displacement thus represents not only a loss of land but also a dismemberment of identity and epistemic continuity. This conflict echoes real-world environmental justice movements, positioning literature as a counter-discursive site that challenges state-corporate hegemonies and asserts Indigenous sovereignty over land, resources, and knowledge systems.

3.3 GENDERED VIOLENCE AND THE SUBALTERN WOMAN'S VOICE

Gender emerges as a critical axis of oppression in these stories, most forcefully in Saraf's "The Burning Mountain." Ukia's narrative exposes the gendered violence embedded in migration, labour, and poverty, highlighting how tribal women's bodies become sites of systemic violation and silenced resistance. Her narrative foregrounds what Spivak has provocatively termed the "epistemic violence" inflicted upon the subaltern woman, who is often rendered unheard within the hegemonic scripts of modernity, development, and nationalism. Saraf's deployment of meta-narrative, wherein Ukia directly appeals to a writer to narrativize her trauma, serves as a radical intervention into the politics of voice and mediation. It simultaneously invokes and subverts the ethnographic impulse that has historically objectified tribal women's bodies as sites of anthropological curiosity. In this, Saraf's narrative strategy aligns with the feminist subaltern critique advanced by scholars like Lata Mani, who argue that the subaltern woman is "produced through a regime of visibility that paradoxically occludes her as a historical subject" (1990). The insistence on telling Ukia's story, and her self-reflexive

awareness of her narrative erasure, thus exposes the ethical dilemmas inherent in speaking for—and speaking about—the subaltern woman.

In “Two Friends,” Pranabandhu Kar offers a subtler meditation on gendered grief through the emotional bond between Basali and Mudani, two tribal women coping with the loss of their lovers to war. The story illuminates how militarization and political conflict reverberate through the intimate and emotional lives of tribal communities, especially women, who are often the silent bearers of collective trauma.

3.4 CULTURAL EROSION AND THE CRISIS OF IDENTITY

Several of the stories articulate a deep anxiety about cultural erosion and the encroachment of external value systems. In “The Daughter of Niyamagiri,” the death of Jhumki serves as an allegorical warning against the seductive but ultimately destructive influence of urban modernity, represented by the outsider Bideshi. The collapse of tribal moral codes under external influence marks the beginning of cultural fragmentation and identity loss.

In Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi’s “Jungli,” the titular character’s tragic end illustrates a similar theme—the disruption of a natural, unselfconscious life by societal norms of possession, patriarchal control, and communal boundaries. The jungle, once a space of emotional and existential freedom, becomes a site of violence and exclusion.

3.5 RESISTANCE, AGENCY, AND INDIGENOUS EPISTEMOLOGIES

Despite the narratives’ sombre tone and tragic trajectories, they are not devoid of resistance. The collective decision of the Kondh villagers to reject urban interventions in their life in “The Daughter of Niyamagiri” affirms a form of grassroots, eco-political agency grounded in Indigenous knowledge systems. Similarly, Sunti’s subversive sexual agency in “The Vanquished” destabilizes normative power relations and asserts an embodied form of resistance against caste and class hierarchies.

IV. CONCLUSION

These stories collectively resist the anthropological and sociological reduction of tribal life into objects of study; instead, they reposition tribal subjectivity at the centre of literary and political discourse. In doing so, they call for a rethinking of modernity’s universalist claims, emphasizing the plurality of human experience and the legitimacy of Indigenous worldviews. Also, the selected Odia short stories offer a poignant and politically charged exploration of tribal realities in Odisha, foregrounding themes of

exploitation, displacement, gendered violence, cultural erosion, and resistance. These narratives not only depict the multilayered oppressions faced by Indigenous communities but also critique the systemic forces—capitalist, patriarchal, and state-driven—that perpetuate such marginalization. The stories reclaim tribal voices and lifeworlds from epistemic invisibility, restoring their agency through literary representation.

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Echo of the Past: Nostalgia in *Ancient Futures* by Helena Norberg-Hodge

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Abstract— *The present paper explores how the journey of Helena Norberg Hodge to Ladakh evokes nostalgia. Throughout the book, the author shows her fascination with the Ladakhi culture, which is deeply rooted in ancient tradition. It also shows how her fascination and curiosity about Ladakhi culture is a result of her modern world. It also reflects on how traditional societies were a universal element that was and is part of the ever-evolving modern societies.*

Keywords— *Travel, Past, Nostalgia, Ladakh and Simplicity.*



INTRODUCTION

In an era dominated by rapid technological advancements and ever-changing social landscapes, there exists a palpable yearning for the simplicity and authenticity of bygone eras. This yearning for the past, often tinged with a sense of nostalgia, manifests itself in various forms, from a rekindled interest in vintage fashion to a fascination with historical periods predating the modern age. In particular, the allure of the pre-modern era holds a unique grip on our collective imagination, prompting many to explore and romanticize the customs, aesthetics, and lifestyles of bygone epochs.

At the heart of our fascination with the pre-modern lies a desire for authenticity and a perceived simplicity that seems to elude us in the complexities of contemporary life. The pre-modern world, with its agrarian societies, close-knit communities, and reliance on traditional craftsmanship, is often idealized as a time when life was slower-paced and more grounded. There is a certain charm in imagining a life without the constant buzz of digital devices, where interactions were face-to-face and communication was more personal and deliberate.

The term “nostalgia” was coined by a 17th-century Swiss physician, Johannes Hofer, to describe the homesickness experienced by Swiss mercenaries. The term is derived from the Greek words “nostos”, meaning home, and

“algos”, meaning pain. Originally started as yearning for home, categorized as a disease, the term over the period has evolved to a yearning for prelapsarian times when things were better. Dr. De Witt C. Peters defines nostalgia as “a species of melancholy of a mild type of insanity, caused by disappointment and a continuous longing for home” (Wilson, 1999, p. 297). With the increased technology and rapid transformation, nostalgia today is defined by its yearning for a bygone period that can be personal and universal simultaneously.

Travel is often associated with its tendency to take individuals to a world that is culturally and geographically different to theirs. Helena’s journey fit into the definition of travel writing. There, she encounters a world that is fundamentally different from her world. According to Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, “travel writing, just like tourism, generates nostalgia for other times and places” (Holland & Huggan, 2004, p. 8). Indeed, most precisely to a time when things were very simple and innocent.

Helena Norberg, a traveller by profession, travelled to Ladakh in the wake of the opening of the region after decades of restriction. Known for its Buddhist culture and unique traditions, Ladakh fascinated Helena in every aspect of life. A place which she had never heard of, and showing her reluctance to go at first, changed Helena

completely. Being one of the few outsiders to reach Ladakh, Helena arrived with very little or no knowledge of the region. In the Preface, Helena says;

“In Ladakh, I encountered a landscape that was more beautiful than anything I’d ever seen and a people who were happier and more peaceful than any I had ever met. Ladakh captured my heart, and I have remained involved with the region until this day”(Hodge, 2016, p. 13).

Helena begins her writing by giving a brief description of the wild landscape of the region. Seeing the barren and rugged landscape of the region, she wonders how “people could prosper in such desolation, yet all the signs are that they do” (Hodge, 2016, p. 43). The author’s comment on traditional life reflects her interest in the region and its people. Her confession, “I was becoming increasingly fascinated by the people, by their values and the way they saw the world. Why were they always smiling? And how did they support themselves in relative comfort in such a hostile environment?” (Hodge, 2016, p. 48) shows her astonishment and wonder. This is not surprising as she is essentially a product of modern industrial society, whose perspectives and values are very distinct from a fundamentally different society.

Ancient Futures represents a world that lies at the periphery of modernity. Contrary to the other parts of the country and due to its geographical position, the region was in total oblivion of progress and development. Due to this backwardness, the region becomes an embodiment of an ideal past that was free of the complexities of the present. Helena depicts the region as a manifestation of an ideal world that is contrary to the mediocrity of the modern world. This ancient world also becomes a shelter for Helena, seeking refuge from the modern complexities and problems.

The absence of the influence of the modern world allowed Helena to experience a different world. As she says in the Prologue, “In Ladakh I have had the privilege to experience another saner way of life” (Hodge, 1991, p. 7). This lack of modernity allowed Helena to engage with nature personally and realize her essential human being. The author, a product of the modern cosmopolitan world, was fascinated with the region and its lifestyle, which was in total contrast to her industrial world. Helena’s description of the region reflects a ‘cosmopolitan vision’ that allows space for difference. Rather than judging it negatively, she shows her admiration for the distinctiveness and authenticity of the culture and encourages a traditional system of living over a modern. Helena’s ‘cosmopolitan vision’ is not only limited to

embracing and celebrating the differences of the world, but also the encouragement of heterogeneity and diversity.

Nostalgia is prominent in contemporary travel writing, and *Ancient Futures* by Helena Norberg Hodge is not indifferent to it. The nostalgia in *Ancient Futures* implores images of the past when life was free and good. According to Raymond Williams, the tradition of yearning for the past has been a subject of every period. Helena is taken aback by the culture of the region that is deeply rooted in its ancient tradition. Due to its geographical and physical isolation, Ladakh is stuck in the innocence of the pre-modern era. Helena’s celebration of the ancient life and her departure from the modern world show and reflect the love for a pre-modern culture in the modern world. As Holland and Huggan argue, “the nostalgic urge of travel writing derives in part from its reaction against those modernizing forces that are felt to compromise the specificity and authenticity of the world’s different cultures” (Holland & Huggan, 2004, p. 139).

Helena’s depiction of Ladakh offers a compelling illustration of how nostalgia can serve as a cultural reflection, preserving the essence of a society’s past. In the early chapters, she describes Ladakh as a place where traditional practices and communal values were not merely remnants of a bygone era but the very fabric of daily life. The Ladakhi way of life, characterised by self-sufficiency and a deep connection to the natural environment, stood in stark contrast to the Western notions of progress and development that were beginning to infiltrate the region.

This nostalgia, however, is not portrayed as mere sentimentality. Rather, Helena argues that it serves as a vital force in maintaining cultural identity in the face of the homogenising influences of globalisation. She suggests that the reverence for tradition observed in Ladakh is a form of resistance against the erosion of cultural distinctiveness, a way of holding onto the values that define the community even as it confronts the pressures of modernity.

Ancient Futures is not just a book; it is a testament to the power of preserving traditions and embracing the wisdom of the past in the face of modernisation. Helena’s intimate account of her time spent in Ladakh paints a vivid picture of a society deeply rooted in its cultural heritage, living in harmony with nature and each other. Helena’s admiration for the golden period of the past is not only an invocation for a stable present, but rather for the promise of an imagined future. As the title *Ancient Future* suggests, it suggests that the ancient culture holds the key to a stable and sustainable future.

The drive for nostalgia currently fueling contemporary travel writing is shaped by two

temporal projections – on the one hand, dreams of a future multicultural utopia, and on the other hand, nostalgic memories of innocent and uncorrupted destinations. (Lisle, 2006, p. 207).

The nostalgia evoked by *Ancient Futures* is not a longing for a bygone era of technological primitivism, but rather recognition of the value inherent in traditional knowledge and ways of life. Helena highlights the profound sense of community and interconnectedness that permeates Ladakhi society, where every action is imbued with meaning and reverence for the natural world.

For Helena, Ladakh became an epitome of the pre-modern past in its innocence and in oblivion of the complexities of the present world. Juxtaposing the two, she advocates for the past for its freedom, peace and virtue, which, according to her, are lacking in the modern world. She criticises the modernisation in the West through the book by contrasting it with the primitive culture of Ladakh. The development in the West was very concerning, according to her, and she finds many faults with the modern world. Notably this complexity and chaos of the modern world leads to a yearning of the “Nostalgia is a means of grappling with modernity’s consequences, a subjective response to the spectacle of change, a prerogative of cultures that consider themselves advanced, a practice intrinsic to modern life: to “have” nostalgia is to “be” modern”(Burton, 2014, p. 87).

Helena’s nostalgia is not a personal longing for a home but an inherent “relationship between humankind and the natural environment” (After Nostalgia 56). The story reconstructs the past and expresses nostalgia for a time when universal values like unity, goodwill, brotherhood and humanity were the norm. “Recalling past splendours as a precedent, it naturalises and legitimatises” (Zhou, n.d.) the connection between humankind and the natural world and desires a return to a diverse and indigenous world.

Helena’s nostalgia is also a result of her awareness of the late twentieth-century environmental and ecological crisis. The changing world and the impact of modernity on society and the environment are the dominant themes of the book. Instead of a world with an exotic culture and mystic behaviour, Helena describes a world of beauty and potential with minimal human interference. However, Helena also showed her concern with the changing world and its impact on the future of Ladakh. The book’s “reverberation between the observer and the observed, the self and world, allows the writer to celebrate the local while contemplating the universal” (Blanton, 2002, p. 5).

Jared Diamond, in his book *The World Until Yesterday: What We Can Learn from Traditional Societies*, argues that the contemporary world is shaped by traditional societies. Following their ancient traditional lifestyle,

Ladakh reflects how human civilization lived centuries ago. The Ladakhi society also demonstrated how cultures are shaped by their geographical and physical environment. In the words of Jared Diamond, “the importance of traditional societies is that they retain features of how all of our ancestors lived for tens of thousands of years, until virtually yesterday. Traditional lifestyles are what shaped us and caused us to be what we are now” (Diamond, 2012, p. 278).

The act of documenting travel is inherently intertwined with the nostalgia of reminiscing. Helena is taken back in time through her journey, when she caught a glimpse of what life was like for thousands of generations. Away from the modern urban world, Ladakh was strongly anchored in the traditional ancient culture that had remained unchanged for centuries; everything was a reflection of the past. Far from the complexities of the modern world, the story of Ladakh is a reminiscence of “more genuinely innocent tender recollections of what is at once an earlier epoch and a previous phase of life” (Rosaldo, 1993, p. 70). Despite being a product of the modern world, Helena nevertheless feels a connection when she explains,

“For those few days at the phu, I glimpsed what life must have been like for thousands of years. The closeness between the people and the land and animals they depended on was deeply touching, something that had never been part of my life, yet something that felt familiar” (Hodge, 2016, p. 63).

indicating a kinship between humans and the natural world. This connection also illustrates the thread of unity between humans and the earth, even in this diversity. It also reveals how nostalgia is inherently reactionary, and it exists in counter to modernity.

Nostalgia embedded in travel writing is multifaceted. It is not just about a yearning for the past but also a celebration of the enduring elements that persisted despite the ever-evolving landscapes. *Ancient Futures* reflects the glory of the past with its simplicity, harmony and kinship that shaped its identity. Helena is fascinated by the way of life people live there. Coming from a modern technological world, where life is fast and convenient, Helena expresses her deep respect and reverence for the innocent and ancient way of life, which Debie Lisle referred to as “cosmopolitan vision” (Lisle, 2006, p. 4). Ladakh convinces Helena of the existence of an idealised past that was better than the contemporary world. Being a product of the modern Western world, Helena does not view the region as backwards; instead, she appreciates and embraces it. Deeply rooted in its ancient tradition, Helena

depicts a world that is innocent and uncorrupted. "On a deeper level, this desire for what is posited as a more essential, direct experience is a symptom of the larger cultural yearning for what is perceived to be a less complicated existence" (Tim Youngs, 2013, p. 92). The encounter with the people was more fascinating as they treated her like their own family, and she was surprised at the respect and the humbleness they showed towards her. The region becomes an epitome of a perfect past world where harmony and humility dominate every other element.

Nostalgia in travel writing is not just limited to the portrayal of idyllic memories or romanticised past; it is also a tool to analyse contemporary society. Raymond Williams argues that the nostalgic longing for a past often reflects reactions to the disorienting changes of contemporary society. According to Renato Rosaldo, "Nostalgia is a particularly appropriate emotion to invoke in attempting to establish one's innocence and at the same time talk about what one has destroyed" (Rosaldo, 1993, p. 70). It captures the bittersweet reality of the transition the world is undergoing. For Helena, it was a reminiscence of a pleasant past, a pre-industrial world that no longer exists. A reminder of a diverse and vibrant culture of the world that was collapsing with the advent of the homogenous industrial culture. Through the book, Helena attempts to protect and, at the same time, enlighten her readers about the diversity and wisdom of the past. We can say, "Travel writing, in this sense, serves to protect the idea of cultural diversity from the threat of homogenisation" (Holland & Huggan, 2004, p. 139) and the eradication of the vibrant culture.

Helena gives us a first-hand account of a pre-modern world steeped in ancient culture, a world that was marked by tradition, simplicity, freedom, harmony and a deep connection to the natural world. Given its geographical isolation, Ladakh was remote in both space and time, oblivious of the modern complexities and chaos, a world lying at the end of the "historical queue". For Helena, it is not only a place of primitive innocence but also an epitome of salvation.

Interestingly, Helena does not advocate for a complete rejection of modernity but rather calls for a balanced approach that integrates the wisdom of the past with the innovations of the present. She envisions a future where nostalgia is not merely a longing for what has been lost but a guide for what can be preserved and adapted in the face of inevitable change. This future-oriented nostalgia is what she sees as the key to building sustainable societies that honour their cultural heritage while also embracing necessary advancements.

CONCLUSION

Helena Norberg-Hodge's *Ancient Futures* offers a profound exploration of nostalgia, not as a mere emotional response but as a powerful tool for cultural preservation and future sustainability. Through her portrayal of Ladakh, she illustrates how nostalgia can serve as both a mirror reflecting the past and a compass guiding the future, helping societies to retain their identity in an ever-changing world. The nostalgia is not just an idealization of the past but also an anticipation of a utopian future.

Ancient Futures is both a lament and a beacon of hope. The book calls for a reassessment of the true definition of progress and what it really means and motivates for a future that is progressive, simultaneously honouring the wisdom of the past. In this sense, the book serves as a rallying call for meaningful and attentive action rather than a retreat into recollection.

In essence, *Ancient Futures* serves as a poignant reminder of the timeless wisdom embedded in traditional ways of life. It challenges us to reconsider the relentless pursuit of progress at the expense of our collective well-being and the health of the planet. As we navigate an uncertain future fraught with environmental and social challenges, Helena's message resonates more strongly than ever: The answers to many of our problems may lie not in the pursuit of novelty but in the embrace of ancient wisdom and the reclamation of our interconnectedness with each other and the Earth.

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History from the Margins: Literary Representation of Leaders in Partition Narratives

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Abstract— *The Partition of the Indian Subcontinent in 1947, which resulted in the creation of two separate dominions, remains one of the most tragic and complex events of the twentieth century. Even after the lapse of more than seven decades, the memory of partition trauma not only throbs in the veins of the victimized people but also torments the collective psyche of India and Pakistan. Each country has its own thesis and theory to prove that it was only the 'other' who was responsible for the catastrophic division. The macro narratives of both the countries prioritize the accounts of their policy makers extolling their leaders as heroes. The viewpoints and opinions of those who were affected are often ostracized and elided from the dominant discourses of partition history. The present paper explores the portrayal of political leaders in fictional narratives as perceived by ordinary men and women. It aims to amplify the often-overlooked voices of Partition history. The study examines how these narratives construct the reality of political leaders—whether they critique, condemn, or idealize them. Ultimately, the paper offers a broader perspective on the roles of key political figures in the history of Partition.*

Keywords— *Partition, political, leaders, marginalized people, chief actors, small, history.*



INTRODUCTION

The story of independence and nation-building in the Indian Subcontinent is inextricably associated with the tragedy of Partition. This momentous event is often portrayed as a grand drama, with key figures like Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah, Mountbatten, Sardar Patel considered its principal actors. The role of these leaders has been a focal point of debate in the historiographies of India and Pakistan. In both countries, the dominant national narratives prioritize the accounts of policymakers and elevate their leaders to heroic status. However, the historical records of each country offer limited perspectives on the leaders of the other side. For example, Pakistan's history books provide scant coverage of Gandhi, Nehru, and the Congress leadership, while Indian textbooks downplay Jinnah and the Muslim League leaders. A clear consensus on why Partition occurred and who was responsible—whether it was Jinnah, Nehru, Gandhi, or the British—remains elusive. In each nation's history, their own leaders are often eulogized, while the

voices of those who were directly affected by the event are marginalized and overlooked.

There has long been a need to critically examine and reassess the history of the Partition. Many writers have challenged long-established images of political leaders and have tried to understand the roles of the key figures who played central roles in the Partition process. Works such as Stanley Wolpert's *Jinnah of Pakistan* (1984), Ayesha Jalal's *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (1985), and M. A. K. Azad's *India Wins Freedom* have provided fresh perspectives, offering a more nuanced understanding of the leaders' roles during this pivotal moment in history.

Unlike traditional historical accounts, literary narratives have not only represented the sufferings of the general masses, they have tried to assess the role of the Indian national leaders and have positioned them as opposite to the common people. They have evaluated, blamed, critiqued, defended and revisited the chief actors

of the partition drama and have brought in forefront their nature and intentions.

This paper investigates the portrayal of political leaders as presented in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* and Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*. It seeks to amplify the often-muted voices of ordinary men and women who lived through the trauma of Partition. The study examines how these narratives construct the reality of political leaders—whether they critique, condemn, or idealize them. Ultimately, the paper offers a broader perspective on the roles of key political figures in the history of Partition.

Representation of political Leaders in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*:

Cracking India stands as one of the most significant contributions to Partition literature. Through the child narrator Lenny and other marginalized characters, Bapsi Sidhwa gives voice to those whose experiences are often absent from the pages of history.

The *Cracking India* is a politically motivated novel as Sidhwa admits this in a conversation with David Montenegro:

The main motivation grew out of my reading of a good deal of literature on the partition of India and Pakistan.... What has been written has been written by the British and the Indians, Naturally, they reflect their bias. And they have, I felt after I'd researched the book, been unfair to the Pakistanis. As a writer, as a human being, one just does not tolerate injustice. I felt whatever little I would do to correct an injustice I would like to do. I don't think I have just let facts speak for themselves, and through my research I found out what that facts were. (Sidhwa 4)

In *Cracking India* Sidhwa argues how British favoured India over Pakistan. She interrogates the British and pro-Hindu Indian versions of history and claims that great injustice was done to Pakistan: Sidhwa clearly mentions that during division Muslims and Pakistan have suffered.

"Within three months seven million Muslims and five million Hindus and Sikhs are uprooted in the largest and most terrible exchange of population known to history. The Punjab has been divided by the icy cards- sharks dealing out the land village by village, city by city, wheeling and dealing and doling out favors.....For now the tide is turned- and the Hindus are being favored over the Muslims by the remnants of the Raj. Now that its objective to divide India is achieved, the British favor Nehru over Jinnah. Nehru is Kashmiri; they grant him Kashmir.....they grant Nehru Gurdaspur and Pathankot, without which Muslim Kashmir cannot be secured." (CI 130)

While historical narratives often glorify leaders like Jinnah, Nehru, and Patel as champions of freedom and national identity, Sidhwa presents a counter-narrative through common people showcasing that the concerns of the elite rarely aligned with the suffering of these marginalized people. The novel *Cracking India* offers insights into both local and national politics, depicting key political figures such as Gandhi, Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, the Mountbatten, Tara Singh and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, presenting them in a distinctive and thought-provoking way.

Jinnah has remained a central figure in discussions surrounding Partition. As a Pakistani writer, Sidhwa challenges the biased portrayals of Jinnah by Indian historians and others, who often blame him for the division of the subcontinent.

In many of her interviews Sidhwa has grieved over the way Indian and British writers represent Jinnah. In an interview with David Montenegro, Bapsi Sidhwa asserts that she was deeply hurt to the portrayal of Jinnah in novels written by Indian and western writers. She wanted a redressal of this mistake by presenting Jinnah as an intelligent leader of his community. Sidhwa retorts:

'.....I was just redressing, in a small way, a very grievous wrong that has been done to Jinnah and Pakistan by many Indian and British writers. They've dehumanized him, made him a symbol of the sort of person who brought about the Partition of India ---- whereas in reality he was the only constitutional man who didn't sway crowds by rhetoric. (Sidhwa, Point of Departure, 50)

Jinnah is caricatured as: "Jinnah was brilliant, elegantly handsome." (CI 131) Jinnah considers Jinnah as a man of knowledge:

"His training at the Old Bailey and practice in English courtrooms has given him faith in constitutional means, and he puts his misplaced hopes into tall standards of upright justice." (CI 130)

Sidhwa saw the film of M. K. Gandhi in which Gandhi was presented as a saint, a Mahatma and a great leader whereas Jinnah's portrayal had been negative; Gandhi was adored whereas Jinnah was caricatured as villain responsible for partition in Indian films and the biased accounts of the British and Indian historians.. The author critiques the way Jinnah has been treated in films and in books by British and Indian scholars:

And today, forty years later, in films of Gandhi's and Mountbatten's lives, in books by British and Indian scholars, Jinnah, who for a decade was known as "Ambassador of Hindu- Muslim Unity" is caricatured and portrayed as a monster." (CI 131)

Sidhwa's praise of Jinnah is typical of a Pakistani, as if a national duty to defend him. Sidhwa tries to undercut the sublime image of Gandhi constructed by British and Indian historian and tries to redefine the role Jinnah. She stresses the role of Jinnah and takes side of him. When her mother tells her that Jinnah's wife, a Parsi, died heart broken, Lenny avers: But didn't Jinnah too die of a broken heart? (CI 131)

Taking a passage from Sarojini Naidu's tribute to Jinnah, Sidhwa admires the mental and moral qualities of Jinnah much misappropriated by the critics, historians and writers:

.....the calm hauteur of his accustomed reserve masks, for those who know him, a naïve and eager humanity, an intuition quick and tender as a woman's a humour gay and winning as a child's – pre-eminently rational and practical, discreet and dispassionate in his estimate and acceptance of life, the obvious sanity and serenity of his worldly wisdom effectually disguise a shy and splendid idealism which is of the very essence of the man (CI 131).

The writer defends Jinnah and quotes Jinnah's speech announcing Pakistan as a secular country:

You are free. You are free to go to your temples. You are free to go to your mosques or any other place of worship in the state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed, that has nothing to do with the business of state....etc..etc. Pakistan Zindabad!" (CI 154)

The writer draws a comparison between Nehru and Jinnah, portraying Jinnah in a more favourable light while being critical of Nehru. Jinnah is not one for flattery:

"Jinnah is incapable of compliments. Austere, driven, pukka-sahib accented, deathly ill: incapable of cheek-kissing. Instead of carnations he wears a karakuli cap, somber with tight, gray lamb's-wool curls: and instead of pale jackets, black *achkan* coats. He is past the prime of his elegant manhood. Sallow, whip-thin, sharp-tongued, uncompromising. (CI 130)

Sidhwa even mentions Lady Jinnah with striking admiration: Lady Jinnah is portrayed as a strikingly beautiful and courageous woman. Through the narrator's vivid description, she emerges as a symbol of grace, intelligence, and quiet defiance. Her large, expressive eyes and confident demeanor hint at both her inner strength and compassionate nature. The photograph of Lady Jinnah captures not only her physical charm but also her bold spirit.

The woman in the photograph is astonishingly beautiful. Large eyes, liquid-brown, radiating youth, promising intelligence, declaring innocence, shining from an oval

marble-firm face. Full lipped, delighting in the knowledge of her own loveliness: confident in the knowledge of her generous impulses. Giving ---like Ayah. Daring ---like Mother. "Plucky!" Mother says. (CI 131)

Her qualities are further illuminated:

For the lady in the photograph is daring: an Indian woman baring her handsome shoulders in a strapless gown in an era when such unclothing was considered reprehensible. Defying her wealthy knighted father, braving the disapproval of their rigid community, excommunicated, she marries a Muslim lawyer twenty two years older than her. (CI 131)

In contrast to Jinnah's portrayal, Sidhwa presents Gandhi with certain feminine characteristics, and this representation sometimes seems to mock his personality and undermines his political role.

When Lenny first meets Gandhi, she describes him as:

"Gandhiji visits Lahore. I am surprised he exists. I almost thought he was a mythic figure. Someone we'd only hear about and never see" (CI 75).

When Gandhi visits Lahore, Lenny and her mother find him knitting, surrounded by women. Gandhi politely puts aside his knitting when they approach and casually recommends a medical enema to Lenny. Gandhi is presented satirically as a politician consumed by continuous dieting programs, obsessed with bowel movements and enemas:

"Flush your system with an enema, daughter," says Gandhijee...'Look at these girl'', says Gandhijee, indicating the lean women flanking him. I give them enemas myself-- there is no shame in it- I am like their mother you can see how smooth and moist their skin is look at their shining eyes!"(CI 75)

Sidhwa's depiction of Gandhi overshadows his importance as a great national leader.

My brain, heart and stomach melt. The pure shaft of humour, compassion, tolerance and understanding he directs at me fuses me to everything that is feminine, funny, gentle, loving. He is a man who loves women. (CI 76)

Sidhwa manipulates the story of Gandhi's visit to Lahore to cast him in an unflattering light, comparing him to the gardener Hari:

"He is small, dark, shriveled, old. He looks just like Hari, our gardener, except he has a disgruntled, disgusted and irritable look, and no one'd dare pull off his dhoti! He wears only the loincloth and his black and thin torso is naked." (CI 75)

Gandhi is portrayed as a cunning figure who bears responsibility for the Partition violence. Sidhwa also uses

the phrase “ice lurking” (CI 76) to describe the volatile nature of Gandhi’s politics. Lenny reflects:

It wasn’t until some year later – when I realized the full scope and dimension of the massacres – that I comprehended the concealed nature of the ice lurking deep beneath the hypnotic and dynamic femininity of Gandhi’s non-violent exterior (CI 76).

Jawaharlal Nehru is caricatured in an unfavourable manner. The writer shows Nehru as Lady Mountbatten’s lover.

“Nehru, he’s a sly one... He’s got Mountbatten eating out of his one hand and the English’s wife out of his other what-not... He’s the one to watch!” (CI 109)

Nehru is shown as a shrewd politician who in spite of all the efforts of Jinnah will take his share:

Jinnah or no Jinnah! Sikh or no Sikh! Right law, wrong law, Nehru will walk off with the lion’s share... And what’s more, come out of it smelling like the Queen- of-the-! Ice- candy-man speaks with an assurance that is prophetic (CI 109)

However, Sidhwa is not too hard with Nehru like she is with Gandhi. She suggests that Nehru’s charm and sophistication played a key role in his success with the British and in the consistent praise he received as a statesman:

Nehru wears red carnations in the buttonholes of his ivory jackets..... He is charming, too, to Lord Mountbatten. Suave, Cambridge-polished, he carries about him an aura of power and a presence that flatters anyone he compliments tenfold. He doles out promises, smiles, kisses-on-cheeks. He is in the prime of his Brahmin manhood. He is handsome: his cheeks glow pink. (130)

In *Cracking India*, Sidhwa has given enough space to even working class people to present their viewpoints on politicians involved in partition. The discussion of politics among these people in Queen’s Park and later at the Wrestler’s restaurant voices their feelings and impressions towards politicians. They curse the politicians in whose hands their destiny lies. The butcher’s comments on Gandhi are crucial to understand the mindset of Muslims in the pre-Partition context:

That non-violent violence monger -- your precious Gandhijee -- first declares the Sikhs fanatics! Now suddenly he says: “Oh, dear, the poor Sikhs cannot live with the Muslims if there is a Pakistan!” What does he think we are - some kind of beast? Aren’t they living with us now? (CI 79).

The Masseur’s reply is equally sarcastic: “He’s a politician, yaar. It’s his business to suit his tongue to the moment (CI 79).

Ice-candy-man talks about Germans and tells they, “have developed a deadly weapon called the V-bomb that will turn the British into powdered ash.” (CI 34) He also quotes Subas Chandra Bose and informs “Bose says the Japanese will help us liberate India from the *Angrez*,” Ice-candy-man says. “If we want India back we must take pride in our customs, our clothes, our languages ... And not go mouthing the got-pit sot-pit of the English!” (CI 34)

As a child, Lenny, the protagonist, destabilizes the importance of powerful politicians by saying, “..... I’m fed up with hearing about them. Mother, Father and their friends are always saying: Gandhi said this, Nehru said that. Gandhi did this, Jinnah did that. What’s the point of talking so much about people we don’t know?” (CI 34)

Ayah’s remark reflects the sense of disconnection and helplessness ordinary people might have felt from their political leaders: “What’s it to us if Jinnah, Nehru and Patel fight? They are not fighting our fight,” (CI 67)

The impact of the struggle for power between the Congress and the Muslim League on the common man rightly visualized by Sharbat Khan when he cautions Ayah: “These are bad Allah knows what’s in store. There is big trouble in Calcutta and Muslim trouble. The Congress-wallahs are after Jinnah’s blood. . .” (CI 75). When Ayah remarks casually that Jinnah, Nehru and Patel are not fighting their fight, Sharbat Khan says, “That may be true but they are stirring up trouble for us all” (CI 75- 76) and reports to her some stray incidents of violence and arson taking place in parts of the old city.

The friendly discussion in the Queen’s Park takes on a communal colour. When the Government House gardener reveals that Lord Wavell has been sacked at the instance of Gandhi, Nehru and Patel:

“Gandhi, Nehru, Patel... they have much influence even in London,” says the gardener mysteriously, as if acknowledging the arbitrary and mischievous nature of antic gods. “They didn’t like the Muslim League’s victory in the Punjab elections.” (CI 78)

Masseur, who is a Muslim calls them “The bastards” (CI 78) and says bitterly:

“The bastards!” says Masseur with histrionic fury that conceals a genuine bitterness. “So they sack Wavell Sahib, a fair man! And send for a new Lat Sahib who will favor the Hindus!” (CI 78)

Ice-Candy-Man remarks that this is not something unexpected and in a contemptuous tone asks the gardener, “but aren’t you Hindus expert at just this kind of thing?

Twisting tails behind the scene ... and getting someone else to slaughter your goats?" (CI 78)

The butcher, who has been listening to them in silence, suddenly snorts and says: "That non-violent violence-monger— your precious Gandhijee—first declares the Sikh fanatics! Now suddenly he says: "Oh dear, the poor Sikhs cannot live with the Muslims if there is a Pakistan!" What does he think we are—some kind of beast? Aren't they living with us now?" (CI 79)

The Government House gardener tries to assuage their bitterness by holding the English responsible for the rift between the Hindus and the Muslims: "It is the English's mischief ... They are past masters at intrigue. It suits them to have us all fight" (CI 79). Not subscribing to the gardener's views, the butcher remarks:

Haven't the Hindus connived with the Angrez to ignore the Muslim League, and support a party that didn't win a single seat in the Punjab? It's just the kind of thing we fear. They manipulate one or two Muslims against the interests of the larger is times – Delhi: Hindu- community. And now they have manipulated Master Tara Singh and his bleating herds of Sikhs! (CI 79)

The Sikh zoo attendant, Sher Singh, shifts uncomfortably and, looking as completely innocent of Master Tara Singh's doing as he can, frowns at the grass. Ayah stands up and says that she'll stop coming to the park if they all talk of nothing but Hindu-Muslim business. To placate here Ice-Candy-Man says: "Such talk helps clear the air ... but for your sake, we won't bring it up again" (CI 80).

The vivid description of Sikhs' attack on Muslim villages in Punjab is also part of Sidhwa's authorial intentions. She believes that the Sikhs perpetrated the much greater brutality -- they wanted Punjab to be divided:

In fifteen minutes the village was swamped by the Sikhs— tall men with streaming hair and thick biceps and thighs, waving full –sized swords and sen-guns, roaring, " Bolay so Nihal! Sat Siri Akal!"...(CI 111)

The image of Master Tara Singh is also depicted with in a biased way. She represents Sikh as a militant and troublesome persona in white kurta with kirpan. Sidhwa gives importance to the words of Akali leader expressing his determination of frustrating the Muslim dream for a homeland:

Master Tara Singh, in a white kurta, his silken beard flowing creamily down his face, appears on the top steps of the Assembly Chambers. I see him clearly. His chest is diagonally swathed in a blue band from which dangles a decoratively sheathed kirpan. The folds of his loose white pajamas fall about his ankles: a leather band round his

waist holds a long religious dagger. He gets down to business right away. Holding a long sword in each hand, the curved steel reflecting the sun's glare as he clashes the swords above his head, the Sikh soldier-saint shouts: " We will see how the Muslim swine get Pakistan!" (CI 111)

Sidhwa goes on to mention how the speech of Sikh leader invokes violent protests from the Muslims, conscious of the butchering of their Muslim predecessors in Punjab from Ambala to Amritsar, century ago, they decide to make the Sikhs and Hindu festivals of Holi as a festival of blood. In this way, Sidhwa exemplifies the Parsee perspective which affixes Sikh leaders responsible for initiating the communal trouble.

One of the chief concerns of Sidhwa in *Cracking India* seems to be to justify Jinnah's role in the history of the subcontinent. Her account is revisionist in its depiction of Jinnah and she clearly manifests her grief at the biased work of the British and Indian scholars. Though as a novelist Sidhwa represents Partition horrors unbiased, as being Pakistani she caricatures Jinnah above other politicians.

Sidhwa's novel is significant for its revisionist approach, especially in re-examining the roles of key political figures. Her perspective challenges macro historical narratives, and suggest an alternative version to understand the roles of the leaders in a more critical and reflective manner.

Representation of political leaders in Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*:

Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* is one of the most significant novels on Partition. The novel not only portrays the devastating consequences of Partition but also captures the reactions of ordinary people towards their leaders.

Nahal offers a balanced portrayal of the key political figures involved in the Partition. He critiques the policies of the Congress Party and holds Nehru and Gandhi responsible for fuelling Jinnah's desire for Pakistan. The idea of allocating a separate section for Muslims in both the East and West of India, Nahal suggests, was what made Jinnah fully realize his vision. As he writes, "Until then, Jinnah had talked of Pakistan, but he did not quite know what he meant by it. Gandhi, by going to him, not only gave Pakistan a name, he gave Jinnah a name too" (*Azadi* 27).

The confusion and inner turmoil of Lal Kanshiram, the protagonist of the novel, not only reveal the dilemmas faced by innocent people during Partition but also reflect the common people's bafflement over the leadership of that time. Like Lala, many were trapped in a

web of uncertainty, filled with doubts and conflicting ideas about the political figures guiding the nation.

Mountbatten Sahib had so far said he would hold by the cabinet mission plan, and that did not suggest a division. What had passed in the meetings the Viceroy had been having last month in Delhi with the Indian Leaders? Those leaders too were speaking this evening over the radio, weren't they? What formula had they cooked up between themselves?" (Azadi 28)

Nahal powerfully portrays the anger of the people when they feel betrayed by their leaders. The common people had hoped that their leaders would take action to protect them, but instead, they were left to face the consequences of Partition alone. Nahal conveys this anger through the voices of the people, who feel their leaders "had neither the power nor the intention of maintaining in their homes" and should have devised means of mass migration to being with, before rushing to partition." (Azadi 211)

The people were so overwhelmed with confusion and grief over the idea of Partition that they longed to confront their leaders, to question them. As Lala puts it, they wanted to catch their leaders and interrogate them:

What had happened to his Akal, his mind?... And why the partition in the first place? What of your promises to us, You Pandit Nehru?"

Nahal depicts the inner turmoil of people entangled in the vortex of confusion at the time of partition :

Jinnah and Liakat Ali Khan were coming into estate; as was Nehru. Why else would they rush into Azadi which would ruin the land and destroy the unity? For the creation of Pakistan solved nothing. (Nahal 96).

However, he critiques their indifference and lack of foresightedness:

"Had neither the power nor the intention of maintaining in their homes and should have devised means of mass migration to being with, before rushing to partition." (Nahal 211)

He also accuses the Britishers who had "the biggest hand in butchery." (Nahal 148) He does not accuse Gandhi for the partition in the initial part of the novel:

For the last thirty years since that wizard Gandhi came on the scene it had taken the stand that India was a single nation not two. And Gandhi was not only a politician he was a saint. He had an inner voice to satisfy too And Gandhi was shrewd surely he saw it all He wouldn't give into such butchery. If nothing else worked his fasts unto death always did,"

Through a number of events and situations of the life in the Ashram, Nahal has projected Gandhiji's single mindedness, honesty, sincerity, his transparent thinking, his ability to persuade people, instil confidence in them and his freeness of mind to consider all religions similar.

For some characters in the novel, Gandhiji was a man who, in just ten years, had transformed the spirit of the nation. To others, he was a Mahatma. People did not come merely to listen to his speeches; they came to pay homage to him. They bowed their heads to him with folded hands and then quietly left.

Chaman Nahal provides a balanced portrayal of Gandhiji, refraining from blaming him for the Partition. Unlike *Cracking India*, Nahal contrasts Gandhi with other national leaders, presenting him in a different light. Through the character of Lala Kanshi Ram, Nahal reflects the confidence and faith that ordinary people had in Gandhi. Kanshi Ram is convinced that Gandhi would never allow Partition to occur. He expresses his belief with these words:

The Congress had a promise to keep with the people. For the last thirty years, since that wizard Gandhi came on the scene, it had taken the stand that India was a single nation, not two. And Gandhi was not only a politician, he was a saint. He had his inner voice to satisfy, too. Would that nagging voice of his let him accept the slaughter of so many? That's what it would mean, if Pakistan did come into existence. And Gandhi was shrewd-surely he saw it all. He wouldn't give in to such butchery. If nothing else worked, his fasts unto death always did (Azadi 35).

In a meeting of merchants at Lala Kanshi Ram's store, both Hindu and Muslim merchants express their faith in Gandhi. Alongside others like Lala Radhey Shyam, Lala Banarsi Das, and Lala Shamsheer Bahadur, Lala Kanshi Ram have strong faith that Gandhiji will save them with his 'Shakti.' Some, however, hold trust in the British and believe that British kept India united for a long period: He remembers how these leaders promised:

.. No, ji, Mahatmaji would never let that happen.....And the English are afraid of him!. ... Bapu has a shakti, an inner power, which no one else can dream of. ...

However, Lala Kanshi Ram is critical of the Congress party and accuses Congress Party of planting the idea of Pakistan in Jinnah's mind. The discussion of allocating a separate region for Muslims in both the East and West of India made Jinnah more determined to realize his dream. Although this plan spoke of a common defence and foreign policy, it ultimately gave Jinnah a clearer vision for a separate state: "Until then, Jinnah had talked of Pakistan, but he did not quite know what he meant by it.

Gandhi, by going to him, not only gave Pakistan a name, he gave Jinnah a name too.” (Azadi 27)

He recalls how leaders like Gandhi had promised:

Gandhi had... asserted he would never accept *that*. Over our dead bodies alone, the congress leaders said. We would shed the last drop of our blood, but we would not allow India to be partitioned” (Azadi 28)

Like Lala Kanshi Ram, Chaudhari Barkat Ali is another character profoundly influenced by Gandhiji and deeply impressed by his thoughts. He has been filled with a sense of nationalism ever since he first encountered Gandhi. Barkat Ali is captivated by Gandhi’s personality. Nahal writes about Mahatma Gandhi:

After the Champaran agitation of 1917, there was not a city in India where Gandhi’s name was not known. And he talked of peace in place of war and he talked of non-violence in place of violence, and yet he also talked of fights with the British on his own special terms” (Azadi 84)

Though Chaudhary Barkat Ali was a rebel at heart—a strong, tall man with broad shoulders and powerful arms—Gandhiji’s philosophy of non-violence transformed him into a lamb.

Gandhi never distinguished between Hindus and Muslims, believing in the unity of all. Similarly, Barkat Ali and Kanshi Ram do not see themselves as belonging to different castes. They embody Gandhi’s ideology of brotherhood between Hindus and Muslims.

The dilemma of ordinary men and women comes to the forefront when Lala, who holds Gandhi in the highest regard and believes that through his fast, Gandhi will save the country from Partition, is devastated to witness the partition. He is perturbed by the thought that why Gandhi did not observe a fast to prevent Partition:

“how could it happen? For the last thirty years, since that wizard Gandhi came on the scene, it [Congress] had taken the stand that India was a single nation not two. And Gandhi was not only a politician, he was a saint.... He wouldn’t give in to such butchery. If nothing else worked, his fasts unto death always did.... that’s what Gandhi would do.” (Nahal 48-49)

In Indian-nationalist accounts, Jinnah appears as the villain of the story; for Pakistanis, he is the Father of the Nation. Unlike Sidhwa who portrays Jinnah as “Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity,” Nahal depicts him as a communally minded leader who brought about much harm to India and its people.

Nahal not only blames Jinnah for Partition, but also questions Gandhi’s role through the character of Amar Vati who feels relief over the news of Gandhi’s murder:

“It’s good he is. He ruined us. . . . He brought nothing but misery to us” (Azadi 362, 366).

“The novel also incorporates the women’s perspective. Nahal clearly mentions that women showed little interest in politics or political figures, instead preferred to focus on their homes and children.”:

Before Gandhi could say a word, before he was even properly introduced, half the gathering at Ramtalai got up to leave. It was the women who were leaving. They had started collecting here since six in the morning and many of them had made special arrangements for the care of their children... For the women it was particularly hard, used as many of them were to the sheltered life of their homes. When Gandhiji showed up and they had seen him, they felt no need to stay there longer. They were not interested in Politics, nor in Gandhi’s speeches. For them Gandhi was a mahatma, a religious figure, and they had come only to pay homage to a saint. (Azadi 85)

Azadi ends with the unfortunate death of the great Mahatma. The news came on the All India Radio:

Gandhiji that evening died at the hands of an assassin. He was walking to the prayer meeting from his room in Birla House, when a man approached him and fired three shots. Gandhiji’s last words were Hey Ram before he fell. The assassin, the announcement said, was a Hindu. To remove any misgivings, it was repeated the assassin was not a member of a minority committee” (Azadi 320)

Nehruji declared after his assassination that a light has gone out of their lives:

“...he spoke of a light going out of their lives. It was no ordinary light, he said, it was a most extraordinary flame. It was now gone and India was plunged into darkness”(Azadi 320)

Through his novel, Nahal seeks to expose the conspiracy behind the Partition, revealing the intentions of Indian politicians. While he holds Jinnah accountable for the ensuing violence, he is equally critical of the Indian national leaders for their role in the tragedy.

Concluding Remarks:

The selected texts shed light on the mindsets of ordinary men and women who directly experienced the trauma of Partition. These narratives, in fact, create a space for unheard voices, offering alternative versions of the mainstream historiography surrounding the tragic event of Partition.

In most nationalist accounts of Indian history, the Muslim League and Jinnah are often blamed for the Partition. Sidhwa’s *Cracking India* intervenes in the nationalist historiography of Partition. The novel offers a

platform to present the perspectives of those who were the true victims of the tragedy. In contrast to Nahal, Bapsi Sidhwa's portrayal of Jinnah is markedly different and more nuanced. Her post-modern, revisionist approach to history is evident throughout *Cracking India*. The novel provides an alternative image of Jinnah, attempting to humanize and de-vilify a figure traditionally accused of causing the rift. This revisionist approach, especially regarding Jinnah's role, is echoed in the works of scholars like Ayesha Jalal and Jaswant Singh, who also challenge the demonization of Jinnah.

On the other hand, Chaman Nahal objectively presents all the leaders. The image not only of Jinnah but of Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and other depicted by Nahal are faithful to the history of Indian freedom movement. They are not only appreciated but also critiqued for their roles. Nahal also has tried to expose the conspiracy of the Indian politicians and their intentions behind the partition. He not only holds Jinnah responsible for the tragedy and the violence occurred but he is equally critical of the Indian national leaders as well.

These literary texts emphasize that Partition was primarily a human tragedy rather than a purely political one—a perspective often overlooked in historical discourses. By unraveling the varied, individualized experiences of different people and regions, these texts offer an alternative reading of the dominant narratives surrounding the traumatic event of Partition. Literary responses such as these can be treated as significant archives for understanding the roles of political leaders during Partition.

In conclusion, it can be said that the historiography of Partition remains an unfinished agenda, one that holds immense potential for further exploration. While we cannot undo the past, the complexity of the Partition event demands that it be examined from multiple perspectives. The division of the country was a shared responsibility, with all major political leaders contributing to the decision. Partition historiography needs an unbiased, impartial approach—one that offers a balanced view, so as future generations can access a more truthful understanding of history.

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Decoding Culinary Power: Discourse Historical Analysis of Instagram Food Trends in the United States

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Abstract— This paper aims to explore how language and visuals in Instagram posts reflect power dynamics in the food world, focusing on three American foods: burgers, hotdogs and chicken wings as they are deeply ingrained in American culture, reflecting cultural values and preferences. Their popularity cuts across different groups in the U.S. By studying how they're depicted on Instagram, we can uncover hidden power dynamics in food culture. Hence, the paper will dig into how these foods are shown and discussed on the platform using the discourse historical analysis method. Instagram posts to be analyzed will be selected from 2020 onward, including those from chefs, restaurants, and food influencers. The paper shall contend that Instagram content is essentially ideological, reflecting societal beliefs and norms. Language, whether spoken or visual, can reinforce existing power structures. This paper will examine the language in these Instagram posts, focusing on power, history, and ideology. It will also delve into the intricate mechanisms of counter-discourse, exploring how activists strategically design, deploy, and orchestrate digital narratives to challenge prevailing socio-political ideologies. It also underscores the role of Instagram in advocating for justice and amplifying voices in democratic societies.



Keywords— Power Dynamics, food posts, Instagram, Discourse Historical Analysis, United States

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the linguistic and visual elements of these Instagram posts, with a focus on power dynamics, historical contexts, and ideological implications. Food influencers on Instagram can confuse people about food and affect what they buy and eat (Von-Polheim, Cano-Orón & Vengut-Climent, 2023). A study by YouGov in 2023 found that 25% of people worldwide think that famous people are good at promoting food products (YouGov, 2023). Since many young people under 18 follow popular figures on Instagram, it's important to think about whether it's right for these influencers to endorse products, especially considering how persuasive they can be (Herrero Ruiz & Navarro-Beltrá, 2021, pp. 526-554). There is not much research yet on how technology affects our traditional ways of eating and looking at food, even

though sharing food pictures is popular worldwide (Hudders, De Jans & De Veirman, 2021, pp. 327-375).

1.1 Instagram as a discursive system

There are several ways to look at Instagram's function as a discursive platform. The text's type or the communication activity's goal is the first dimension. Popular text types on Instagram are debate, education, and self-expression. These kinds reflect the social norms and communication scenarios that the platform facilitates. Self-expression, for example, frequently takes the form of captions and longer text posts that resemble opinion pieces or microblogging. Instagram can be used for both private and public statements, as seen by well-known instances like Naomi Osaka's announcement that she was withdrawing from a tournament because of mental health issues (Schreiber, 2024, pp. 146).

The second dimension concerns the form of (re-)mediation, focusing on whether the poster is the original content creator or is resharing existing content. This dimension also highlights Instagram's participatory intensity, which helps explore authorship and authorization issues (Jenkins & Carpentier, 2013 p. 265). It allows for examining how accounts position themselves within a discourse, differentiating between affirmative or critical stances toward reshared content. The third dimension involves the tone of voice and visual design of text posts, including typography and color choices that reinforce the post's communicative purpose and signal the user's positioning. Instagram posts often integrate self-expression and educational content, particularly on influencer accounts that also engage in activism.

Instagram's use for activism and awareness-raising has also been significantly influenced by its emphasis on visual content. In contrast to offline events and rallies, the platform allows for accessible and affordable strategic activism (Neumayer & Rossi, 2018, pp. 4293-4310). This has been made even more apparent during the pandemic, as Instagram has become a springboard for new political and social initiatives that combine influencer culture, activism, and PR. The platform's ability to encourage sociopolitical engagement is demonstrated, for instance, by the posts made by @queerlexikon on the use of inclusive language in German.

Instagram has shaped modern visual and textual communication in a big way, as seen by the development of its interactive and communicative features and its growing intricacy as a discursive platform. Instagram has been chosen as the field of study for this paper because of its unique ability to facilitate nuanced discourse, making it an increasingly relevant and important subject for academic research.

1.2 Applying Discourse Historical Analysis to Contemporary Food Narratives on Instagram

Discourse Historical Analysis (DHA) is particularly apt for examining Instagram food posts as it contextualizes the interplay between historical and contemporary food narratives. Unlike Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which focuses on power dynamics and ideological structures, DHA allows a nuanced exploration of how cultural and historical trajectories influence modern culinary practices. For instance, the first two posts exemplify this dynamic, with one tracing the hamburger's evolution as a cultural icon in NYC's diverse foodscape, while the other reflects contemporary concerns like sustainability and health-conscious eating. Instagram's multimodal nature, combining visuals, text, and hashtags, aligns with DHA's capacity to analyze communication in

broader sociocultural and historical contexts. By situating these posts within their historical trajectories—celebrating traditional values while addressing modern challenges like malnutrition and food waste—DHA bridges the gap between tradition and innovation, offering a holistic approach to decoding contemporary food discourse.

CDS looks at language use beyond just sentences, including visuals and sounds, to understand how society is reproduced through communication. It questions how language influences social structures and challenges unequal power dynamics. The DHA is characterized by being interdisciplinary, teamwork-oriented, using triangulation as a key method, and being focused on application (Datondji & Amousou, 2019, pp. 70-80). DHA also integrates knowledge about historical sources and social and political backgrounds to understand discourse events. The DHA follows a critical theory perspective, which involves three types of critique: text-immanent critique, which uncovers inconsistencies in discourse structures; sociodiagnostic critique, which reveals persuasive or manipulative aspects of discourse; and future-related critique, which aims to improve communication (Wodak, 2001, pp. 63-94).

Ideology in the DHA refers to one-sided worldviews shared by social groups. It's seen as a tool for establishing and maintaining power imbalances through discourse. The DHA aims to demystify hegemonic discourses by uncovering underlying ideologies. According to the DHA, power is about exerting one's will within social relationships (Reisigl, 2017, pp. 44-59). Instagram, as a social media platform, reflects ideological struggles for dominance. Analysing Instagram posts through the DHA will reveal how linguistic forms are used to wield power. Context is crucial in the DHA, which considers four levels: immediate language context, intertextual relationships, extralinguistic social variables, and broader sociopolitical and historical contexts (Wodak, 2015, pp. 1-4). These levels help us understand how discourse is shaped and influenced by its surroundings. Specifically, it will delve into the hashtags and captions accompanying these posts to elucidate potential cultural, economic, and social dynamics within American society.

The concept of counter-discourse, rooted in the theories of Foucault (1970) as elaborated by Moussa and Scapp, highlight the empowerment of marginalized voices to resist oppressive power structures by articulating their own narratives (Moussa & Scapp, 1996, pp. 87-112). Such acts of political resistance through counter-discourse can take various forms. As discussed, counter-discourses often emerge from individuals or groups feeling marginalized or misrepresented by dominant discourse.

1.3 Justification for the Choice of Fried Chicken, Hotdogs, and Burgers in the Analysis of American Food Discourse

This study focused on Instagram food posts from three specific food groups: burgers, hotdogs, and fried chicken. This selection was made due to their cultural, socio-economic, and discursive relevance in contemporary U.S. culinary narratives. These items represent American fast-food culture and are central to discussions on globalisation, class dynamics, and health discourse. Their extensive use and strong connections to corporate food chains, street food culture, and regional culinary differences render them suitable for analysing power dynamics, branding approaches, and consumer interaction on social media. These foods are often central to discussions regarding industrial food production, cultural appropriation, and food activism, especially in the post-2020 digital context, where online discourse has increasingly examined labour ethics, environmental sustainability, and dietary inclusivity. The selection of these three categories facilitates a focused and analytically rich examination of how Instagram users and influencers construct narratives surrounding mainstream, highly commercialised food products, despite the contributions of other food items to food-related discourse.

II. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK: INSTAGRAM FOOD POST DISCOURSE-HISTORICAL APPROACH (DHA) APPLIED

Overview of the Framework: Using the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) inside Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this paper investigates how Instagram posts including four classic American foods—burgers, hotdogs, chicken wings, and pancakes—construct and reflect power dynamics in the food industry. These foods are ingrained in American society; thus, their appearance on Instagram offers insights on ideological narratives, power systems, and society views. This framework methodically reveals the interaction between discourse, history, and ideology in forming food-related power relations by examining textual and visual aspects in posts from chefs, restaurants, and food influencers (2020 onwards).

2.1 Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) justification:

Because of its interdisciplinary character, emphasis on real-world problems, and methodological rigour in contextualising debate historically, DHA is especially appropriate for this study (Datondji & Amousou, 2019, pp. 70). Originally designed to investigate anti-Semitic stereotypes during Kurt Waldheim's 1986 presidential campaign, DHA has since developed into a thorough method covering identity development, discrimination, and

power relations in many spheres (Wodak, "The discourse of politics in action," 2009, p. 65). DHA offers a strong analytical tool for examining how Instagram food narratives either support or subvert current power structures given its capacity to triangulate many sources of data—including books, images, and contextual history. Applying Wodak's (2015, p. 10) multi-stage process, the study uses DHA in a recursive way to methodically examine Instagram food discourse:

- (i) Theoretical knowledge activation and literature review: Theoretically, orienting the study is informed by a review of past studies on food discourse, power dynamics, and Instagram as a digital platform. Important discussions in CDA and DHA offer the basis for methodological decisions and analytical categories.
- (ii) Methodical Data and Contextual Gathering: Verified accounts or famous accounts of chefs, restaurants, and food bloggers provide Instagram posts including the chosen American foods. Along with the visual components of the posts, metadata—including captions, hashtags, and user involvement measures—is noted. Furthermore, recorded are contextual elements including the sociopolitical environment of food movement post-2020.
- (iii) Analysis Data Selection and Preparation: By means of a purposive sampling technique, one guarantees that the chosen postings reflect several points of view within the American food sector. Engagement levels, content themes, and the presence of explicit or implicit power-related language form criteria for choice. Posts are arranged according to genre—e.g., promotional, narrative-driven, advocacy-related—for additional study.

DHA's three dimensions of critique help one to understand findings:

- (i) Text or discourse-immanent critique points up contradictions and inconsistencies in Instagram food narratives.
- (ii) Contextualises convincing and ideological strategies using historical and social knowledge in the sociodiagnostic critique.
- (iii) Future-Related Prospective Criticism: Suggests strategies to question negative images and advance more fair communication.

The revelations of the study support debate on food justice, cultural representation, and digital impact in the gastronomic scene. Suggestions for inclusive social media discourse practices and ethical food marketing abound.

2.2 Representation, Power, and Ideology in Instagram Food Discourse: According to DHA, images and words

acquire power when powerful social actors use them to shape conversation (Reisigl, 2017, p. 44). Within Instagram, food stories are moulded by: Corporate and Culinary Elites: Taste preferences and food trends are under control by restaurants and famous chefs. Food bloggers and influencers show well-chosen aesthetics that could either support or challenge popular narratives. Social Media Audiences: User interactions and engagement patterns support either a challenge to or validation of prevailing food discourses. Fairclough (1989) contends that language and visual techniques either acquire consent or enforce compliance, so acting as a tool of social control. This paper investigates Instagram food posts as sites where power relations are negotiated—by means of branding, cultural narrative, or advocacy campaigns. Future research avenues could delve deeper into the impact of influencer partnerships on shaping consumer perceptions of food brands, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate web of power dynamics at play in the digital realm of food discourse. Additionally, exploring the intersection of gender, race, and class within these narratives could unveil further layers of complexity in how power is constructed and contested in the American food sector.

2.3 Why Discourse Historical Analysis

Due mostly to its methodical emphasis on historical context and its methodological flexibility, the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) has been chosen above other Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theories. Van Dijk, as quoted by Wodak (2009, pp. 13–14), noted that critical discourse studies sometimes fell short in completely clarifying the link between text and context. Context, he defined as a mental picture of pertinent social and situational elements influencing the production and understanding of speech (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 417). DHA is a particularly useful analytical tool since historical continuity is a fundamental concept of CDA and DHA fits this idea rather well. Reisigl (2017, p. 44) backs up this point even more by pointing out DHA as among the most often used and flexible critical techniques for discourse analysis.

DHA's inclination over other CDA approaches stems mostly from its clear inclusion of historical viewpoints. DHA expands Van Dijk's (2008) contention on the need of contextual awareness in discourse analysis by stressing that language is always historical—connected synchronistically to present events and diachronically to past ones. Wodak (2001, p. 65) emphasises that DHA methodically combines a lot of historical knowledge on the sociopolitical settings in which discursive events take place. DHA therefore not only looks at past and present

discourse structures but also takes future consequences into account, so guaranteeing a complete analytical framework (Wodak, 2009, p. 11).

Although DHA shares some traits with other CDA techniques, it has several unique qualities that make it more efficient for examining speech in challenging sociopolitical settings. First, although it conforms with Critical Theory, DHA treats context essentially as historical rather than just situational and stresses historical analysis over broad social theory. Second, by combining several empirical observations, theories, approaches, and contextual data, DHA uses triangulation more methodically than other CDA techniques—especially in large-scale studies. Third, DHA stresses the useful application of discourse analysis, supporting non-discriminatory language use and criticising repressive discourses, such those supporting patriarchal social structures that disadvantage women while privileged men.

Furthermore, DHA stresses rhetoric differently than both Fairclough's Dialectical-Relational Approach and Van Dijk's Social-Cognition Approach. In DHA, rhetoric is especially important, especially in argumentation which draws on observational, descriptive, and explanatory phases in discourse analysis (Datondji, André Cocou, and Franck Amousou, 2019, p. 77). DHA also uses a multi-perspectival approach to communication, weighing several points of view on several social levels. This runs counter to Fairclough and Van Leeuwen's mono-perspectival approach, which reads social reality from one point of view. Ultimately, DHA emphasises historical grounding and contextual anchoring more than other discourse analysis techniques since it draws more especially from Functional Pragmatics.

These special theoretical and methodological strengths have made DHA the preferred method over others CDA techniques. Particularly useful for examining power, ideology, and discourse in historical and modern settings, its methodical integration of historical context, dedication to methodological triangulation, emphasis on rhetorical argumentation, and multi-perspectival outlook. Its practical orientation also helps researchers to apply analytical insights to real-world problems, so supporting its relevance in critical discourse studies.

III. DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLING

This study systematically collected and sampled Instagram data utilising Traackr, an extensive influencer marketing and analytics tool. Traackr allows researchers to monitor influencer activity, engagement metrics, and content trends, rendering it especially useful for investigations into digital influence and cultural discourse.

This platform facilitates data sampling according to defined keywords, geographic location, and audience engagement metrics, thereby providing a systematic method for analysing food-related discourse on Instagram in the United States after 2020.

The data collection process entailed filtering Instagram accounts according to geographic location (United States) and selecting posts from 2020 onwards. The selection process was informed by specific terms pertinent to the study, including "Burgers of Instagram," "Best Burgers in NYC," "Street Food Hot Dogs," "Hot Dog Lovers," "Crispy Fried Chicken," and "Fried Chicken Lover." The identified keywords enabled the recognition of accounts that significantly influence food discourse on Instagram. The ultimate selection of accounts comprises:

- (i) Hamburger America has 99.2K followers.
- (ii) Uptown CLT has 92,000 followers.
- (iii) She Likes Milk (Verified, 204,000 followers.
- (iv) Mercy for Animals is an organisation focused on animal welfare and advocacy. Verified account with 508,000 followers.
- (v) Species Unite: Non-profit organisation with 22,900 followers.
- (vi) Eater (Verified account, 104,000 followers)

The selection of these accounts was based on their substantial influence on public opinion and discourse surrounding food on Instagram. The integration of verified influencers, substantial follower counts, and content relevance guaranteed that the sampled data accurately reflected prevailing narratives in digital food culture. The study employs a methodological framework that combines quantitative big data techniques with qualitative cultural analytics. Traackr's capability to gather extensive social media data, encompassing engagement metrics, follower counts, and content performance, is consistent with big data analytics, which is crucial for assessing digital influence. The study integrates aspects of digital humanities by analysing the cultural and social significances inherent in food-related Instagram narratives. This hybrid approach, which combines computational analysis and interpretive techniques, facilitates a detailed examination of the representation, discussion, and engagement with food on social media platforms. This approach increases the research's credibility by emphasising content that both mirrors digital food trends and plays a role in shaping consumer perceptions and engagement. This multi-faceted methodology effectively captures the intersection of digital influence, cultural representation, and audience engagement in the evolving landscape of food-related Instagram content.

IV. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Zeena Feldman's study from 2021, "'Good Food' in an Instagram Age: Rethinking Hierarchies of Culture, Criticism and Taste", looked at how London's restaurant scene was shown on Instagram and in the Michelin Guide. This study created the idea of the "Instagram gaze." Even though Instagram makes food criticism more open to everyone, Feldman discovered that it often reinforces existing food hierarchies by showing images that favour certain foods and dining experiences. In "Savoring Sundanese Food: A Discourse Analysis of Instagram's Powerful Promotion of Bandung's Culture and Culinary", Rosaria Mita Amalia et al. (2023) looked at the official Instagram account of Bandung's Department of Culture and Tourism and found that it promoted Sundanese food traditions. The study found that Instagram posts that use different language to highlight traditional foods and drinks are a good way to get people to follow you and promote a wide range of foods. Kwok Yingchen et al. (2023) looked at how contradiction is used in Filipino Instagram food posts to show how users deal with the neoliberal dilemma of indulgence and discipline in, "Navigating Discipline and Indulgence: The Performance of Contradiction on Instagram Food Posts in the Philippines". According to the study, privilege is shown by the ability to code-switch between these two extremes, which is affected by history and culture. Gwynne Mapes studied how celebrity chefs use normative language that aligns with elite authenticity to talk about sustainability on Instagram in her 2023 work "Making Privilege Palatable: Normative Sustainability in Chefs' Instagram Discourse." This makes privilege seem acceptable. The purpose of this study is to show how language can reinforce social hierarchies in digital food discourse.

Discourse and digital practises: Doing discourse analysis in the digital age (2015) by Rodney H. Jones demonstrates how critical tools can be used to analyse everything from video games and social networking to apps and photo sharing. A novel framework for discourse analysis is developed by Norman Fairclough in his 2007 book, *Discourse and Contemporary Social Change*. This framework integrates text analysis, the study of text production and interpretation processes, and the social analysis of discourse events to firmly place discourse within a larger context of social relations. *Discourse and Power in a Multilingual World*, by Adrian Blackledge, developed a theoretical and methodological framework that drew on critical discourse analysis to reveal the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures. G. Bouvier's paper, "What is a discourse approach to Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and other social media: connecting with other academic fields?" (2015),

delves into the complexities of multicultural discourse within the rapidly evolving landscape of social media. It explores how language, identity, cross-cultural social relations, and power dynamics are manifested and negotiated in various social media platforms. Additionally, "Principles, theories and approaches to critical discourse analysis" (2018) provides a concise historical overview of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and demonstrates its application in a wide range of studies. The SAGE handbook of social media research methods (2022) covers the process of research, from data collection to analysis and interpretation. It focuses on platform-specific analysis, analytical tools, critical social media analysis, ethics, privacy, and the politics of social media data, and includes a range of new case studies and data sets that exemplify the methodological approaches. A succinct summary of the main arguments surrounding the impact and impacts of social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, is given in *The Social Media Debate: Unpacking the Social, Psychological, and Cultural Effects of Social Media* (2022). "Social media critical discourse studies (SM-CDS)" is a chapter in the book *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies* (2017), written by Majid Khosravi Nik, that discusses how fundamental questions of power and conceptual frameworks may be anticipated for a critical discourse studies approach to social media. *Digital Food Cultures* (2020), edited by Deborah Lupton and Zeena Feldman, highlights the wide range of food cultures accessible through the internet and other digital platforms. In their work, *Talking about Food: The Social and the Global in Eating Communities* (2020), Sofia Rüdiger and Susanne Mühleisen delve into the relationship between language and food from various angles. In her book *The Insta-Food Diet* (2020), nutritionist Pixie Turner explores the influence of social media on our eating habits, the restaurant industry, and food policy. This insightful volume sheds light on how platforms like Instagram have shaped the way we approach food. *Culinary Linguistics: The Chef's Special* (2013) delves into the field of food and food-related studies from a linguistic perspective and covers various topics, including historical and ethnographic approaches, literary studies, the teaching of English as a foreign language, psycholinguistics, and the study of computer-mediated communication.

V. ANALYSIS OF THE POSTS

5.1 Post 1:



Fig.1: Image of a hamburger representing NYC's cultural diversity. Short interview with George Motz, Burger scholar) (screenshot from the reel) Available at:

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C1rkLdud1f?igsh=eXVrdzJicW9ud2s4>

5.1.1 Description

This Instagram post (see Figure 1) from welovenyc offers a glimpse into Hamburger America, a prominent NYC restaurant. The dynamic reel features an interview with an owner, showcasing signature burgers and the restaurant's cultural significance. Behind-the-scenes footage reveals meticulous burger preparation and hints at a diverse menu, while shots of a bustling day convey a vibrant atmosphere. The post concludes with a declaration of love for NYC.

5.1.2 Discourse Historical Analysis

The conversation about hamburgers in the given post places the food as both a cultural artefact and a site of conflicting interpretations. Viewed historically, George Motz, owner of Hamburger America and self-described "hamburger expert," presents a story of authenticity and tradition that fits prevailing themes in American cooking history. Motz's focus on "really doing it right" captures a more general ideological dedication to maintain hamburger historical integrity. This is consistent with the opinion of McDonald's founder Ray Kroc on the cultural and aesthetic worth of the hamburger bun since, as he famously said, "It takes a certain mindset to see the beauty of a hamburger bun" (Haig, 2006). Invoking Kroc, a person connected with the worldwide fast-food sector, the post subtly supports the historical continuity of the hamburger's importance and implicitly legitimises Motz's power. From a discourse-historical standpoint, intersecting traditions, modernism, and national identity shapes the development of hamburgers (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017). Reflecting larger socioeconomic changes in American consumer culture, Andrew F. Smith (2008) positions the hamburger's path from street food in the 19th century to a restaurant staple.

Though first stigmatised following World War I, Smith notes that by the 1930s the hamburger had become a staple of American cuisine. This historical path shows how food discourse functions inside hegemonic systems, where once-marginalized foods acquire cultural validity by mass acceptance and commercialisation.

Motz's recognition of New York's function as a culinary melting pot helps to further situate his speech within more general conversations of hybridity and cultural negotiation (Holliday, Hyde & Kullman, 2010). Motz creates a dynamic picture of New York as an always changing environment reflecting its cosmopolitan residents by characterising the city as "alive." This is consistent with conversations about food as a means of expression of cultural identity, in which the variety of burger forms represents the several cultural scene of New York (Bell & Valentine, 2013). Motz's claim that onion is "the original, first condiment" also serves as a historical intertext, tying modern burger culture to its gastronomic beginnings and so supporting his authenticity as a food historian. David Gerard Hogan (1997) builds on the hamburger's evolution into a fast-food icon by placing it in line with capitalist logic of mass production and efficiency. The post's citation of Motz's 33-year tenure in New York supports the idea of ingrained knowledge by tying historical power to personal experience. By presenting his story as anchored in lived experience rather than abstract theorising, such a tactic enhances Motz's ethos (Fairclough, 2003).

5.1.3 Analysis of Hashtag and Caption

The expressive use of the heart emoji in reference to NYC implies a strongly rooted emotional connection, so supporting the city's position as a symbol of cultural inclusiveness and diversity. This fits symbolic ideas of New York as a welcoming gastronomic venue where several culinary customs coexist (Zukin, 1991). Moreover, the reference to websites like Travel Channel and First We Feast strengthens Motz's reputation in the field of gastronomy and helps him to be positioned inside popular food media. Using hashtags like #nycrestaurants, #burgers, and #georgemotz strategically serves as a digital indexing mechanism, raising the visibility of the post and embedding it within pertinent online discussion communities (Page, 2012). This fits the larger digital conversation about food, where consumer involvement and ideological engagement are facilitated by classification using hashtags (Abidin, 2016).

5.2 Post 2



Fig.2: Zucchini turkey burger featured by Shelikesmilk. (screenshot from the reel)

Available

at: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CvI53tcNghc/?igsh=eTVIY25sZHM0ZW5w>

5.2.1 Description

This selected Instagram post (see figure 2) from the account of Hailey Piper, an entrepreneur residing in New York City provides a step-by-step demonstration of the preparation process for zucchini turkey burgers. Each recipe stage, from gathering the ingredients to cooking the burgers, is visually depicted. Accompanying the reel is a detailed caption, listing all the necessary ingredients and providing a thorough recipe for making the zucchini turkey burgers

5.2.2 Discourse Historical Analysis

Hailey Piper, a New York City-based entrepreneur, chose Instagram post (see Figure 2) that best illustrates the junction of modern health-conscious eating trends and digital food discourse. In order to captivate her readers, Hailey Piper's post offers a detailed step-by-step tutorial of zucchini turkey burgers combining visual and textual components. The allusion to "more pumpkin than I know what to do with" connects with more general seasonal conversation in which local produce availability and food consumption are related with natural cycles (Patel, 2013). Reflecting a larger ideological commitment to organic and environmentally friendly food systems, the focus on fresh, garden-grown foods fits the growing trend towards sustainable eating practices (Guthman, 2003). This trend speaks to modern issues about industrialised food production and the shift towards local and seasonal eating (Pollan, 2006).

The historical background of food security shapes this article even more inside international discussions on dietary health and malnutrition. Although food systems have developed to help to reduce food insecurity over the past century, the continuation of chronic malnutrition

afflicting over 800 million people (FAO, 2021) highlights the disparities in access to wholesome food. Piper's contribution to spreading knowledge about healthy cooking shows how social media influencers help to shape modern food habits, especially in high-income countries where better nutrition has greatly lowered cardiovascular disease (FAO, 2021). This conversation does not, however, fully explain differences in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where diet-related diseases remain increasing (Popkin, Adair & Ng, 2012). Thus, the post subtly expresses privilege in food discourse since access to fresh ingredients and time-consuming home cooking is not always possible (Carolan, 2011).

Linguistically, Piper's thorough caption serves as a kind of instructional dialogue, elevating her as a culinary authority by leading her audience through the cooking process. The language is clear and directive, so supporting her position as an expert by democratising cooking knowledge (Gee, 2014). The focus on "eating an extra serving of vegetables" reflects modern nutritional debate, in which vegetable intake is positioned as a key to health and well-being (Nestle, 2002). This fits more general public health campaigns encouraging plant-based diets to fight obesity and associated disorders (Willet et al., 2019). Moreover, the zucchini turkey burger itself stands for a synthesis of conventional and contemporary culinary techniques.

5.2.3 Caption Analysis

First, several discourses intersect in the caption: Words like "healthy," "easy," and "extra serving of veggies" are part of a larger neoliberal wellness culture that promotes self-control, individual accountability, and efficiency in all aspects of life, including food. In terms of sustainability and home gardening, the idea of courgette "taking over your garden" alludes to current discussions about growing one's own food, being self-sufficient, and being environmentally sensitive. Concerns about food security and home gardening in the wake of a pandemic are congruent with this. Subtly establishing a tone that associates cuisine with culture, jazz, and comfort—building an idealised domestic scene—the musical allusion ("Benny Goodman. Stompin' at the Savoy") recalls a vintage, romanticised America. The author, Hailey, is positioned as an approachable peer or trusted friend by using direct address, which establishes an intimate and warm tone. As is customary in influencer branding, the last "Enjoy! xo Hailey" statement emphasises a friendly, feminine persona. "S&P" stands for salt and pepper; its use of ampersands, acronyms, and minimum punctuation exemplifies the casual, efficient, and aesthetically appealing character of Instagram's digital discourse. The staged casualness that characterises influencer culture is

also reflected in this. Even though the caption doesn't say anything about gender, it fits within feminised narratives about housework, caregiving, and nurturing through food. The art of healthful vegetable sneak-ins delicately evokes conventional maternal metaphors. The caption also engages in soft-branding even though no products are advertised directly: Just by using the handle @shelikesmilk, the poster fits into a certain lifestyle niche that is probably associated with dairy, health, or homesick nostalgia. Important for Instagram's social capital is the option to share a precise recipe with measurements and "hacks" (such freezing patties for grilling) since it adds practical value that increases engagement and credibility. Mentioning home gardens and ground turkey in passing suggests that the speaker has time and resources that others do not. It embodies a stratified discourse in which the economic and time affordances of "healthy" and "simple" cooking are still relevant. The gentrification of food culture on Instagram and similar platforms involves the aestheticization, photography, and narrativization of regular meals for social consumption. This caption is in line with this trend.

5.2.4 Comparison of the two posts

Despite their shared subject matter—burgers—the two Instagram posts reveal very different worldviews and cultural narratives. There is a lot of cultural symbolism and historical discourse in Post 1, which features George Motz and Hamburger America. It shows the hamburger in a new light, highlighting its symbolic value as a symbol of urban diversity, industrial heritage, and American identity. Motz's focus on tradition and authenticity is in line with larger discussions regarding the preservation of culinary heritage. With a focus on New York City as a dynamic, multicultural centre, the post places food within power structures, cultural legacies, and national pride. Post 2 by Hailey Piper, on the other hand, is a symbol of how digital domesticity, influencer branding, and contemporary wellness culture all come together. The neoliberal logic of self-care and individual responsibility is framed within her zucchini turkey burger tutorial, which emphasises health-conscious living, sustainability, and seasonally eating. The gentrification of social media food discourse is emphasised by the caption's informal tone, friendly language, and aestheticized portrayal of everyday cooking. Piper portrays herself as an approachable colleague, providing advice that presumes access to time, fresh ingredients, and home-cooking facilities, in contrast to Motz, who embodies culinary authority grounded in personal experience and historical knowledge. Post 2 is concerned with the individual's wellness and care practices, while Post 1 is more focused on the public's historically informed portrayal of food heritage. Despite this, both posts establish

food as an important cultural practice. Doing so exemplifies how online discussions about food can honour the past while also advancing values informed by the modern social, economic, and technological landscape.

5.3 Post 3



Fig.3: Instagram post about @the_chili_man, a hot dog vendor in Uptown Charlotte. (screenshot from the reel). Available: https://www.instagram.com/reel/CjSwp1JD_ozC/?igsh=d3JjOXVlem15Zmdk

5.3.1 Description

This Instagram post (see Figure 3) curated from the Uptown Charlotte handle, presents a captivating reel featuring the renowned Chili Man in action. The reel provides a compelling glimpse into the culinary artistry of the Chili Man as he skilfully prepares a variety of delectable hot dogs at his vibrant stall. From the sizzle of the grill to the artful assembly of toppings, each scene offers a tantalizing peek into the vibrant street food culture of Uptown Charlotte.

5.3.2 Discourse-Historical Analysis

The examined Instagram reel from the Uptown Charlotte account highlights the cultural and sociological importance of the Chilli Man's hot dog cart. The post situates the Chilli Man within the broader context of American street cuisine, bolstering his reputation by citing Yelp's designation of his hot dogs as "#1 in America." The historical aspect of street food culture is fundamentally embedded in urban environments, where mobile vendors have offered accessible and economical food to varied people for millennia (Farrer, 2015, pp. 7-19). The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) characterises street food as food that is cooked and sold in public areas, enhancing urban food security and promoting social connections (Joint FAO, 2001). Street food vendors, exemplified by the Chilli Man, significantly influence local culinary landscapes. Their presence is frequently associated with cultural history and authenticity, as seen by the Chilli Man's enduring establishment in Uptown Charlotte since 2005. This historical reference corresponds with scholarly discussions that regard food vendors as key contributors to

the preservation of culinary traditions and community identity (Pappalardo, Allegra & Pecorino, 2014, pp. 83-92). Nonetheless, despite their cultural significance, street food vendors frequently encounter obstacles with food safety and regulatory adherence. Privitera (2014, pp. 1-10) emphasises that cleanliness issues and irregular implementation of health rules might affect the viability of street food enterprises. The utilisation of hashtags like #uptownclt, #explorecit, and #charlottesgotat demonstrates a calculated approach to enhance digital interaction and captivate local audiences. Hashtags serve as digital indicators that classify information and enhance its visibility within online communities (Page, 2012, pp. 181-206). The post not only chronicles the Chilli Man's culinary expertise but also engages in the internet narrative of Uptown Charlotte's urban culture. Visual components, like photographs of hot dogs and the Chilli Man's cart, collaborate with verbal descriptions to provide an immersive experience. Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) assert that multimodal communication improves audience engagement by stimulating several sensory impressions. This hybrid narrative technique renders the Chilli Man's legacy accessible to a broader audience, including individuals unacquainted with his oeuvre. The post serves as a conduit for cultural translation, rendering local food culture comprehensible to wider audiences. This coincides with current discourse on the globalisation of food culture, wherein traditional cuisines are reinterpreted through digital and commercial perspectives (Johnston & Baumann, 2015, pp. 55-77). Social media platforms not only record culinary culture but also significantly shape consumer views and economic dynamics (Abbots & Lavis, 2013).

5.4 Post 4



Fig.4: (Reel on reasons to avoid meat-based hot dogs) (screenshot from the reel)

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C9iAuY2xCct/?igsh=ZWl3ZWNoZTZtNmtw>

5.4.1 Description

This Instagram [post](#) selected from the posts of the Instagram handle [mercyforanimals](#) sheds light on the dark realities behind hotdog production. "Mercyforanimals" is a non-profit organization dedicated to animal protection in the United States and Canada, focusing on raising awareness about the consequences of food choices. The video showcases the process of hotdog production and highlights the ambiguous ingredients, including animal trimmings such as skin, blood, liver, and other slaughter by-products.

5.4.2 Discourse-Historical Analysis

This Instagram post, created by Mercy For Animals, contests prevailing narratives on hot dog eating and highlight the ethical issues associated with meat production. This perspective attacks industrial food production while simultaneously engaging in broader discussions on vegetarianism, ethical consumerism, and internet activism. The introduction of the post characterises hot dogs as a prevalent and culturally important food, especially within North American customs. This perspective illustrates the normalisation of meat consumption in Western diets, frequently disconnecting people from the realities of food production (Loughnan, Haslam & Bastian, 2010, pp. 156-172). Meat is frequently intertwined with national and cultural identities, rendering challenges to its consumption especially contentious (Potts, 2018, pp. 45-63). By revealing the components and methods involved in hot dog manufacture, the post challenges the prevailing narrative that depicts meat as a nutritious and indispensable part of the diet. Rather, it offers a contrasting viewpoint, highlighting the ethical and environmental ramifications of meat consumption. This method corresponds with the concept of "counter-hegemonic discourse" articulated by Almiron, Cole, and Freeman (2018), wherein media contests prevailing power structures, namely the meat industry's representation of its goods. The post identifies with Rüdiger and Mühleisen's (2020) concept of the evolution of veganism from a "marginal radical movement" to a widely accepted mainstream lifestyle. Veganism has historically faced stigmatisation in media narratives, frequently portrayed as radical or unfeasible (Turner, 2020). Increased celebrity endorsements and rising environmental concerns have facilitated its normalisation, altering public view towards a "eco-chic" and ethically aware lifestyle (Consumerism, 2019, p. 157). The post connects with broader societal developments by emphasising "hard veganism," which underscores moral responsibility and the ethical imperative of plant-based diets, framing veganism as an activist position (Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018, p.

55). The language in the essay frames veganism not merely as a dietary choice but as a moral obligation, attributing responsibility to individuals for the repercussions of their food selections. This discourse mirrors extensive debates in food ethics, wherein consumers are progressively encouraged to contemplate the environmental, social, and ethical ramifications of their dietary choices (Singer, 2011). The post's call to action—urging individuals to "advocate for animals" and adopt plant-based diets—demonstrates the function of digital media in modern activism. Social media has emerged as a potent instrument for social movements, facilitating swift distribution of information and interaction with worldwide audiences (Poell & van Dijck, 2015, pp. 527-543). Hashtags like #mercyforanimals and #plantbasedfoods function as tools for online community formation and visibility, linking individuals with analogous ethical concerns (Page, 2012, pp. 181-206). Furthermore, the incorporation of visual narrative in the reel amplifies its persuasive efficacy. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) contend that multimodal speech, which integrates visual and textual components, may more effectively shape public perception than conventional text-based arguments. The post juxtaposes familiar visuals of hot dogs with disturbing footage of meat manufacturing, creating cognitive dissonance that compels viewers to reevaluate their ideas about food. This method corresponds with the notion of "shock advocacy," wherein emotive and graphic material is employed to enhance awareness and induce behavioural modification (Cole & Morgan, 2011, pp. 134-149).

5.4.3 Comparison of the Two Instagram Posts

Both Instagram posts—one from Uptown Charlotte highlighting the Chilli Man's hot dog cart, and the other from Mercy For Animals revealing the ethical issues of hot dog production—contribute to the dialogue on food culture from markedly divergent viewpoints. The Uptown Charlotte post idealises the act of consuming hot dogs by highlighting artistry, nostalgia, and regional culinary traditions. The Chilli Man is depicted as an expert in his field, while the street food culture is presented as a dynamic component of Uptown Charlotte's cultural character. This corresponds with wider cultural discourses that honour food as a fundamental component of place-making and shared experiences (Pappalardo, Allegra & Pecorino, 2014). Conversely, the Mercy For Animals piece dismantles the ostensibly benign pleasure of consuming hot dogs, revealing the industrial mechanisms that underlie their production. It compels the audience to examine the ethical and environmental ramifications of meat consumption, promoting plant-based alternatives. A fundamental distinction between the two postings lies in their portrayal of the consumer. The Uptown Charlotte

post presupposes a passive customer who enjoys street cuisine without scrutinising its sources. It characterises food intake as an act of enjoyment and cultural engagement, so promoting dominant narratives regarding food as a source of individual and collective pleasure (Potts, 2018). The Mercy For Animals post, however, presupposes an engaged consumer capable of ethical reasoning and transformation. It portrays consumption as a political act, wherein individuals are accountable for the ethical ramifications of their food decisions (Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018). The post's call to action—"speak up for animals"—positions consumption as a kind of activism, consistent with the principles of ethical consumerism (Singer, 2011). Both posts strategically utilise Instagram's features—hashtags, reels, and visual storytelling—to influence public perception. The Uptown Charlotte post utilises social media to advertise a business and improve local involvement, illustrating the growing significance of digital platforms in food marketing (Page, 2012). Simultaneously, the Mercy For Animals post utilises social media as an advocacy instrument, including strong imagery and emotive appeals to enhance interaction. This corresponds with the notion of "shock advocacy" (Cole & Morgan, 2011), wherein digital activism depends on impactful graphics to provoke emotional reactions and stimulate behavioural transformation.

5.5 Post 5

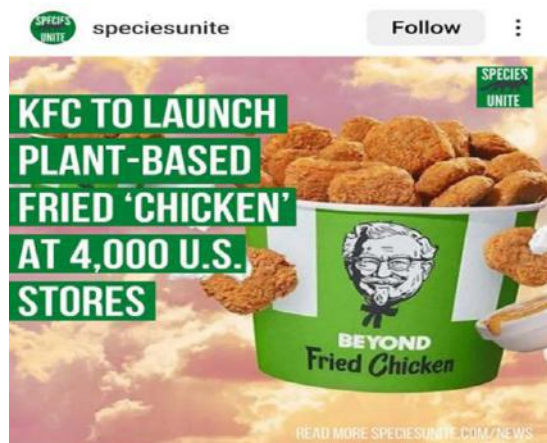


Fig. 5. (KFC's Launch of plant-based chicken) (Photo by author)

(<https://www.instagram.com/p/CYbOmSXqAMG/?igsh=MXAyYW11YTZhZj10Q%3D%3D>)

5.5.1 Description:

This Instagram post, sourced from the account "Species Unite," features a bold green caption announcing KFC's groundbreaking move to introduce plant-based fried chicken at 4000 of its U.S. stores. The visual component of the post showcases a basket of chicken wings adorned with

the iconic KFC logo, set against a backdrop of a white and green painted bucket. This imagery serves as a striking representation of the fusion between traditional fast-food aesthetics and the innovative shift towards plant-based alternatives.

5.5.2 Discourse-Historical Analysis

The Species Unite Instagram post regarding KFC's launch of plant-based fried chicken illustrates how fast-food companies adapt to evolving consumer preferences and ethical concerns. The post highlights the shifting power dynamics within the food sector, namely the increasing impact of plant-based food movements on prominent fast-food corporations. KFC, traditionally linked to industrial poultry production, is increasingly adopting plant-based alternatives, indicating a strategic transition in response to increasing consumer demand for sustainability and ethical consumption. This corresponds with research indicating that large firms embrace plant-based products not primarily due to ethical considerations but as a market-driven reaction to evolving consumer tastes (Potts, 2018). The collaboration between KFC and Beyond Meat exemplifies the interaction between established fast-food brands and burgeoning plant-based food enterprises, highlighting the normalisation of alternative proteins (Bryant, 2020). The contextualisation of this transition within an animal welfare framework—emphasizing the millions of chickens slaughtered each year by KFC—introduces an additional dimension to the conversation. It contrasts corporate accountability with consumer autonomy, prompting viewers to view the initiative as advancement while concurrently questioning the overarching industrialised beef system (Almiron, Cole & Freeman, 2018). This dual stance allows the post to attract both ethically driven consumers and broad audiences who may prioritise novelty or health-oriented dining. The post engages with the discourse of soft veganism, which presents plant-based diets as accessible, visually appealing, and health-focused rather than explicitly political (White, 2018). This corresponds with corporate marketing techniques that reposition veganism as a conventional, consumer-oriented option rather than an anti-capitalist or radical ideology (Harper, 2012). The promotion of plant-based fried chicken targets meat-eaters interested in veganism, thereby reinforcing a hybrid consumer identity that allows for gradual dietary changes without necessitating full commitment to veganism (Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018). This perspective on veganism differs from conventional ethical veganism, which condemns systemic animal abuse and advocates for a fundamental re-evaluation of food production (Cole & Morgan, 2011). The narrative behind plant-based diets highlights choice, individual health, and sustainability, rendering it more

appealing to broader audiences. This reflects trends in "flexitarian" consumption, wherein plant-based products are promoted to omnivores instead of hardcore vegans, so enhancing market penetration without explicitly confronting prevailing dietary patterns (Bryant, 2020). The post illustrates the hybrid marketing tactics employed to launch plant-based products to mainstream consumers. KFC, a company traditionally associated with animal consumption, incorporates plant-based alternatives while maintaining its fundamental fast-food identity. The visual components of the post—a basket of plant-based fried chicken adorned with KFC's recognisable branding—emphasize this hybridity, presenting the product as a seamless addition to the current menu rather than a significant divergence. This corresponds with studies on how firms manage ethical consumerism by implementing sustainability measures while maintaining their existing economic strategies (Gunderson, 2021). Furthermore, the utilisation of Instagram as a platform exemplifies the digital techniques that corporations and advocacy organisations implement to influence culinary discourse. Hashtags and visual storytelling augment participation, enabling ethical consumerism storylines to penetrate varied audiences outside conventional activist realms (Page, 2012). The post functions within the wider framework of social media-influenced food politics, where visual culture significantly influences ideas of sustainability and ethical consumption.

5.6 Post 6

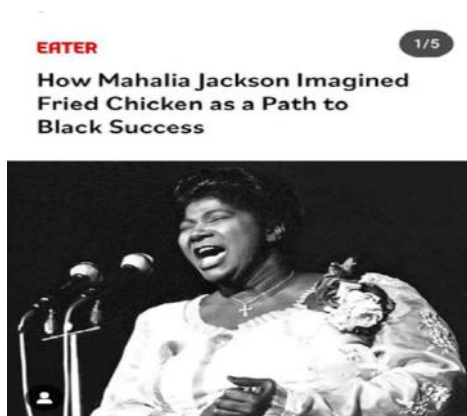


Fig.6: (*How Mahalia Jackson Imagined Fried chicken as a path to black Success*) (Collage of the pictures by the author:

https://www.instagram.com/p/ChfgUeduSGG/?igsh=NXV2MzRoZXdmMnc0&img_index=5)

5.6.1 Description:

The Instagram [post](#) features an image of Mahalia Jackson delivering a speech on stage, accompanied by a series of text posts. The text discusses Mahalia Jackson's

perspective on fried chicken as a pathway to success for Black Americans. It highlights the historical context following the Civil War, where African American women, known as "waiter carriers," established fried chicken businesses at train stations across the American South. The narrative delves into the appropriation of Black success by opportunistic white individuals, including Harland Sanders, also known as Colonel Sanders, who founded Kentucky Fried Chicken in 1930. The post explores the contrast between Jackson's vision of fried chicken as a means of financial empowerment for Black communities and the challenges faced due to systemic racism and white supremacy

5.6.2 Discourse-Historical Analysis

The examined Instagram post underscores the convergence of cuisine, ethnicity, and economic exploitation, utilising Mahalia Jackson's perspective on fried chicken to investigate Black entrepreneurship and white appropriation. The post highlights the historical significance of fried chicken as a vehicle for financial autonomy among Black entrepreneurs, especially African American women after the Civil War. The account of "waiter carriers" vending fried chicken at Southern train stops corresponds with historical studies on Black entrepreneurship during Reconstruction, a time when previously enslaved folks pursued economic independence despite pervasive racism (Hunter, 2017). Fried chicken, a dish originating from African American culinary traditions, evolved into an accessible and lucrative enterprise, enabling Black women to establish economic autonomy in a racially divided society (Twitty, 2017). The discussion transitions to demonstrate how Black achievement in the food industry has been systematically subverted by white appropriation. The case of Harland Sanders, who established KFC in 1930 and developed a worldwide enterprise based on a cuisine traditionally linked to Black culinary traditions, underscores how racial capitalism facilitates the commodification of Black culture while sidelining its original inventors (Robinson, 2020). This corresponds with extensive critiques of cultural appropriation within the food industry, wherein white entrepreneurs capitalise on the culinary inventions of marginalised communities while frequently disregarding their contributions (Nkrumah, 2021). The piece addresses the racial politics surrounding fried chicken, recognising the entrenched racist prejudices linked to Black individuals and the cuisine. Fried chicken has historically been utilised as a racialised stereotype, perpetuating anti-Black narratives that portray African Americans as indulgent or uncultured (Miller, 2017). These prejudices obfuscate the historical importance of the dish among Black communities and disregard its culinary hybridity, which

amalgamates African, European, and Indigenous traditions (Twitty, 2017). Moreover, the post views food as an indicator of gentrification, broadening the discussion from physical environments to digital realms. Alkon and Agyeman (2011) contend that food justice movements must confront the influence of racial and economic disparities on food accessibility and representation. Digital platforms, particularly social media, perpetuate power disparities, since algorithms, visibility, and monetisation frequently advantage white creators over Black food entrepreneurs and historians (Noble, 2018). Researchers like Benjamin (2019) and Zukin (2010) have analysed the parallels between digital dynamics and offline gentrification, wherein Black cultural contributions are commodified while Black communities are uprooted or excluded from mainstream narratives. The examination of fried chicken's origins underscores the hybridity intrinsic to American culinary traditions. Fried chicken, frequently linked to Southern cuisine, is a result of transatlantic cultural interchange, amalgamating African seasoning skills, European frying processes, and Indigenous ingredients (Twitty, 2017). The post's recognition of these influences challenges the prevailing narrative that depicts Southern food exclusively as a product of white Southern traditions, instead highlighting the vital contribution of Black cooks in the formation of American cuisine. The phrase "waiter carriers" illustrates linguistic reappropriation among Black communities. Language develops within cultural frameworks, frequently functioning as a tool for resistance and self-identification (Rickford & Rickford, 2000). The employment of historically specific vocabulary in the post demonstrates an endeavour to recover and emphasise Black culinary labour that has been neglected or omitted in predominant historical accounts. Hashtags like #friedchicken and #blackhistory serve as a mechanism of digital activism, enhancing the post's visibility and contextualising it within current dialogues on race, food justice, and cultural appropriation. Hashtags function as discursive instruments that link users to extensive dialogues, promoting community involvement and alternative narratives to prevailing histories (Brock, 2018). The post connects fried chicken to Black history, challenging simplistic preconceptions and prompting audiences to perceive food as a locus of cultural resilience and structural oppression.

5.6.3 Comparison of the two posts

The two analysed Instagram posts—one about KFC's introduction of plant-based fried chicken and the other depicting Mahalia Jackson's perspective on fried chicken as a means of Black economic empowerment—both address food as a cultural and political construct. The former investigates corporate transitions to plant-based

diets, while the latter analyses the historical erasure and appropriation of Black culinary contributions. The post regarding KFC's plant-based fried chicken underscores the adaptability of fast-food firms to evolving consumer preferences, especially the increasing popularity of plant-based diets. This signifies a transformation in the power dynamics between conventional meat businesses and plant-based alternatives, illustrating a wider trend of ethical consumerism (Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018). KFC's partnership with Beyond Meat is framed as a corporate strategy rather than a significant ethical overhaul, enabling the corporation to sustain its supremacy in the fast-food sector while attracting new populations. Conversely, the post regarding Mahalia Jackson and fried chicken emphasises historical power disparities within the food business, wherein Black entrepreneurship was systematically subverted by white appropriation. Fried chicken is not simply a culinary choice, but a historical artefact influenced by racial capitalism and Black resistance (Twitty, 2017). The portrayal of food as a mechanism for economic empowerment and racial justice contrasts with the apolitical depiction of plant-based fast food in the KFC advertisement. This contrast highlights the divergent implications of food discourse: veganism as a personal or consumer decision versus food as a historical locus of oppression and resistance. The KFC announcement introduces plant-based fried chicken as a novel offering, merging conventional fast-food visuals with contemporary plant-based options. This corresponds with trends in food marketing, wherein plant-based diets are promoted as fashionable and progressive rather than extreme or restrictive (White, 2018). In contrast, the Mahalia Jackson piece condemns the appropriation and commercialisation of Black culinary traditions, which did not help the original inventors. KFC's plant-based push indicates a corporate rebranding of fried chicken; however, the Jackson post underscores that historical power relations continue to influence who benefits from culinary trends. Both posts employ internet activism, however their techniques diverge. The KFC article employs hashtags such as #plantbasedfoods to connect with a worldwide audience focused on ethical consumerism, whilst the Mahalia Jackson post utilises #blackhistory to frame the historical challenges faced by Black businesses. This contrast underscores the distinctions in digital discourse, as corporate narratives promote brand engagement, whereas activist narratives cultivate historical reflection and resistance (Brock, 2018).

VI. CONCLUSION: THE IDEOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF DIGITAL FOOD DISCOURSE

This paper has illustrated through discourse-historical analysis of diverse Instagram posts that no post exists in isolation; each embodies ideological significance, mirroring extensive socio-political, economic, and cultural frameworks. These posts serve as vehicles for certain narratives, influencing public perception and consumer behaviour, whether by promoting plant-based fast food, highlighting the exploitation of Black culinary traditions, or challenging industrialised meat production. Social media, commonly regarded as a platform for informal interaction, operates as a battleground for conflicting ideas, where corporate branding, historical revisionism, ethical consumerism, and social justice movement converge. Posts that seem neutral—like an announcement of plant-based fried chicken—are integrated into corporate methods that use ethical movements for profit. Likewise, blogs that recover Black culinary history contest prevailing power systems, exposing the erasure and appropriation that have historically influenced food markets. Content promoting animal rights, although presented as an impartial ethical position, is fundamentally anchored in a certain worldview that contests conventional eating practices and scrutinises industrialised agriculture. This investigation highlights the unavoidable presence of ideology in digital discourse. Social media posts are not simply reflections of reality; they are creations that influence reality, deliberately selected to reinforce, contest, or redefine prevailing power dynamics. Through corporate rebranding, activist storytelling, or historical reclamation, each post contributes to the preservation or challenge of prevailing narratives. Understanding this ideological role is essential for media literacy, promoting critical interaction with digital content instead of passive consumption. Ultimately, the discourse-historical method demonstrates that food—rather than being a neutral topic—remains

profoundly intertwined with issues of power, identity, and justice. In a time when digital platforms are central to cultural discourse, comprehending the ideological foundations of ostensibly trivial posts is crucial for navigating the wider social and political contexts they embody.

List and References of the figures:

Figure 1: America H. We ❤️ that NYC is America's melting pot for everything, including hamburgers) [Instagram] 2024 Jan 4. Available from: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C1rkLdud1f/?igsh=eXVrdzJicW9ud2s4>.

Figure 2: Shelikesmilk. "ZUCCHINI TURKEY BURGERS 🍔." Instagram. 2023 July 26. Available from: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CvI53tcNghc/?igsh=eTVIY25sZHM0ZW5w>

Figure 3: uptown.clt. "Do you know @the_chili_man?! 🌯🌮🥘." Instagram. 2022 October 4. Available from: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CjSwp1JDozC/?igsh=d3JjOXVlemI5Zmdk>

Figure 4: Mercyforanimal. "There are SO many reasons to avoid meat-based hot dogs. 🌯🌮 What's yours?." Instagram. 2022 July 17. Available from: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C9iAuY2xCct/?igsh=ZWl3ZWNoZTZtNmtw>

Figure 5: Speciesunite. "@kfc, one of the world's most famous chicken brands, is launching plant-based fried 'chicken' at 4000 restaurants across the United States." Instagram. 2022 January 7. Available from: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CYbOmSXqAMG/?igsh=MXAyYw11YTVhZHU1OQ%3D%3D>

Figure 6: Eater. "Despite being universally loved and devoured, fried chicken has long been, in the United States, a topic fraught with racist stereotypes and politics." Instagram. 2022 August 21. Available from: https://www.instagram.com/p/ChfgUeduSGG/?igsh=NXV2MzRoZXdmMnc0&img_index=5

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Enduring the Crisis: Stoic Figures in Shakespearean Tragedies

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Abstract— Stoicism, a Hellenistic philosophy primarily originating in ancient Greece, emphasizes the buildout of virtue, modesty, and self-control as key components of a fulfilling life. Its principles guide one on the path of tranquillity and eternal happiness. Stoic philosophy believes that extraneous occurrences and mundane or sublunary assets are not the key to acquiring true happiness. Instead, stoics believe that the path to true happiness primarily lies in cultivating inner resilience and a disciplined mind. William Shakespeare's works often reflect elements of Stoic philosophy, primarily and particularly underscoring nous, discipline, and virtue crucially and decisively in the face of adversity. Characters in his plays frequently grapple with emotions and fate, illustrating the Stoic belief in accepting things beyond our control. The paper explores elements of stoic philosophy like- the victory of reason over passion, the struggle between action and inaction, the endurance of suffering, and the acceptance of fate in two major tragedies: *Hamlet* and *Julius Caesar*. The paper aims to study the beliefs rooted in stoicism through closely reading the characters and plot.



Keywords— Stoicism, Philosophy, Virtue, Self-control, Nous, Anti-stoic, Shakespeare

Introduction

Stoicism is the school of ancient Greek philosophy founded around the third century BCE by Zeno of Citium, Epictetus, and Chrysippus. Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius was also one of the staunch followers of Stoicism. Christianity and divinity significantly influenced it. Various fields revived the stoic philosophy, including literature, during the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. Sixteenth-century Renaissance witnessed a rise in Stoicism in the works of Justus Lipsius. The philosophy was the amalgamation of Stoicism and Christianity, known as Neostoicism. Montaigne, Shakespeare, and John Donne, among others, drew inspiration from stoic philosophy.

Stoicism teaches the lessons of virtue, rationality, and self-control to achieve eternal happiness. A man cannot control everything. Fate, death, suffering, and others' actions are not in our authority, so it is better to accept and focus on our actions. Stoicism guides us to relinquish complaining about pain and distress as they are

inevitable. A stoic seeks virtue, is unaffected by emotions, and does not make decisions in haste. According to Stoicism, a wise person follows the rules of natural order and accepts natural events rationally. As we cannot control everything, it is better to take and react wisely. Epictetus teaches, "It is not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters" (*Enchiridion* 5).

Aristotle, Plato, Seneca, and Cicero were some of the famous Renaissance writers. Cicero and Seneca were the most famous stoics of their time, inspiring Shakespeare to reflect the stoic teachings in some of his characters. Interestingly, not all the heroes of Shakespeare have stoic qualities. Rather, in some plays, minor characters are bestowed with idealistic characteristics.

Lucio, a comic character from *Measure for Measure*, encourages the anxious Isabella to leave behind any self-doubt: "Our doubts are traitors, / And make us lose the good we oft might win / By fearing to attempt" (*Measure for Measure* 1.4.77–79). Lucio's character was employed

for comic relief, but here, with these lines, he acts out as a believer in stoic ideology.

In Henry IV Part II, Feeble remarks lucidly on death: "A man can die but once; we owe God a death" (*Henry IV, Part 2* 3.2.243). Here, he considers the inevitability of death, reflecting his impressive philosophical attitude towards death, a significant tenet of the Stoic school of philosophy.

The Reasoned Voices: Stoic Echoes in *Hamlet*

When one's emotions entirely guide a person, it becomes difficult to conclude the right and the wrong. Shakespeare introduces Hamlet as a brilliant university student whose life is ordinary until he gets the news of his father's death. He felt betrayed to learn about his mother's wedding to his uncle Claudius. This incident left him tormented, and his ability to make decisions was significantly affected. In his first soliloquy, Hamlet expresses his grief: "O, that this too too solid flesh would melt, Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!" (*Shakespeare Hamlet* 1.2.129–130). His life centres around revenge to the extent that he starts questioning his existence and the uncertainty of life and death, "How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable / Seem to me all the uses of this world!" (*Hamlet* 1.2.133–134). Most of these unfortunate incidents are not in his control; still, he lets the grudges against the culprits overpower him. Even Ophelia, his love, became the victim of his cruelty. He harshly told Ophelia, "If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny" (*Shakespeare Hamlet* 3.1.138–140). Hamlet's deeply wounded soul ruined everyone around him. Tragedy befalls him not because he was the victim of circumstances but because he could not deal with the events that were not within his reach.

Horatio, a loyal and dedicated friend of Hamlet, is also a university student. Shakespeare managed to bring stability and calmness through his character in the chaotic episodes of Hamlet's life. Horatio remains Hamlet's companion and becomes his voice of reason, incurring his impulsive behaviour. He warns him against his rash decisions. He warns Hamlet when he irrationally decides to follow the ghost,

What if it tempts you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
And there assume some other horrible form
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
And draw you into madness?" (*Shakespeare Hamlet* 1.4.69–74).

He forewarns Hamlet against the duel with Laertes, which resulted in multiple deaths. Horatio is undoubtedly a stoic character who guides Hamlet through hardships and adversities. Towards the end, describing his beloved friend dying, he, on the verge of emotions, tries to kill himself but is stopped by Hamlet as he wishes Horatio to remain alive. With his serene demeanour and rationality, the character Horatio successfully steers even the most onerous times. Considering the core stoic values, Polonius confidently succeeds in ushering his children through any difficulties they encounter.

While offering fatherly advice to his son to act judiciously, he advises, "Give thy thoughts no tongue, / Nor any unproportioned thought his act. / Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar" (*Hamlet* 1.3.59–62).

The Struggle between Ambition and Idealism

The philosophy of Stoicism advocates apatheia- a state void of passion. Julius Caesar, a historical figure, is portrayed as an ambitious, valiant and confident ruler. He wears confidence as his second attire. Caesar is so conceited that he compares himself to a northern star, "I am constant as the northern star" (*Julius Caesar* 3.1.60). His towering figure, though, was disapproved by the members of the Senate as they were afraid he might become a tyrant. A stoic never cares for other's perception, but Julius worked on his war commentaries so that he always remains an object of veneration:

*Shall Caesar send a lie?
Have I, in conquest, stretched mine arm so far,
To be afraid to tell graybeards the truth?* (*Shakespeare, Julius Caesar* 70–72).

Most of his policies were politically self-driven. After losing the title of Governor, he crosses the Rubicon, a river, breaking an ancient law where any General was forbidden from entering Italy with his army. He was also responsible for instigating civil war. Stoicism adheres to the service for the greater good, which was not in Caesar's policies. His haughtiness brings forth his downfall; he is remembered as a colossal figure in history, but he could never be among the great tragic heroes of Shakespeare.

One of the significant principles of Stoicism is to dedicate oneself to the common good of society; it disapproves of any selfish act and teaches us to fulfil our duties honestly. Horatio's killing of Julius has no selfish motive or jealousy but a duty towards his nation, "*It must be by his death... I know no personal cause to spurn at him, / But for the general.*" (2.1.10–11). For Brutus, every relationship was secondary to his patriotism. He sacrificed his friendship with Caesar, "It is not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more" (*Julius Caesar* 3.2.21);

he faced political turmoil with a firm determination, and though filled with grief, he encountered the news of Portia's demise with controlled emotions, "With meditating that she must die once,/ I have the patience to endure it now", (*Julius Caesar* 4.3.190–191). The said character even steadily accepted the possibility of his demise, as stoics believe in fate. His suicide does not symbolize his pusillanimity because, for him, submitting to captivity was more tormenting than dying. Stoics believe that suicide could be an acceptable act rather than leading a miserable and unbearable life. Therefore, Brutus's unwavering idealism secures him a significant place in history. He is thus undoubtedly the preeminent stoic character.

Cassius, one of the conspirators, persuades Brutus to act and join the conspiracy to kill Caesar, who is guilty of lust for power by declaring, "Men at some time are masters of their fates. The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings" (*Julius Caesar* 1.2.139–141). Here, the character of Cassius repudiates the role of destiny and accentuates the rightful choices framed by the people in their lives.

Thus, the present paper concludes that William Shakespeare enlightened the principles of Stoicism through his rich characterization and celebrated quotations. Hamlet is a well-known tragic hero, but his indecisive attitude and off-the-cup actions lead him to his downfall. The Senecan dramatic power, rebelliousness, and vindictive acts Shakespeare documents very well in Hamlet's character; however, it is Horatio, Cornelia, and Polonius who justify the noble qualities of humans through stoic principles. Similarly, Julius Caesar's lust for power led him to fall from grace. Brutus acted wisely, and despite being amongst the conspirators, he reasoned his actions for a noble cause. He efficiently differentiates between what actions are in his control and what are not. Towards the end, he embraced his death, signifying the traits of a true stoic. By incorporating stoic themes in his plays, Shakespeare teaches how chaotic events are handled wisely and that our virtuous and rational actions can change even the most challenging situations.

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A Study on Socio-Political Dynamics in Ngugi wa Thiongo: *The River Between*

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Abstract— *The majority of African authors' books are reflections of their diverse societies or groups. Similarly, Ngugi eloquently depicts the culture and traditions of his rural Kenyan society in The River Between. The book takes place in Central Kenya in the 1930s, a time before the country became independent from colonial rule. The novel's themes—a fight for leadership and the impact of European culture and religion on Africans—are described in a very realistic manner. One may argue that the novel could have been set in any other African nation because tales of power struggles and cultural and religious conflicts are typical of European settlers in Africa. To critically examine, analyse, and evaluate Ngugi's work's values and contribution to literature is the primary goal of selecting to critique it for study. African writers and critics have differing opinions on what exactly constitutes African literature. Most African authors search for appropriate definitions of "African Literature" because of this. The quest for a new national narrative is what may be called the story of The River Between. The conflict in The River Between occurs between the various members of a community when they come into contact with a new, foreign philosophy. This foreign ideology quickly interferes with the society's main ideological paradigm as it makes its way into the intellectual fabric of the society, upsetting its equilibrium. We can see how the tribes and villages in the story were living in a state of social harmony and stability because everyone wholeheartedly accepted one particular set of beliefs and practises and adhered to it, even though we may not be able to read it explicitly in the text.*



Keywords— *Socio political dynamics, European settlers, social harmony, Ideology.*

INTRODUCTION

Ngugi wa Thiongo's book "*The River Between*" chronicles the first white European settlers in Kenya. The ancient ways of life of the Kenyan people were put to the test by the revolutionary upheaval that their arrival sparked. The novel uses the fact that the two populations whose lives were impacted by the presence of the Europeans reside on opposite banks of the same river to highlight the rift that was produced by their arrival. The colonizers' imposition of a new way of thinking caused a major paradigm shift in the indigenous communities' brains. Either they embraced the "modern world" or they rejected it to preserve the purity of their traditional Kenyan culture. On one side of the river, a

community welcomed the Europeans and their kind of religion. Another community fought to keep their tribe's autonomy. Therefore, even though the river connected the two communities that were situated along its banks, it also represented a gulf between them and their divergent views of European colonialism.

In his novel, Ngugi narrates the story of a girl whose family decided to convert to Christianity. The young lady had made the decision to have her circumcision performed ceremonially, which the tribe believed would mark her entry into womanhood and indicate that she was prepared for marriage. She eventually passes away as a result of surgical complications, and even her passing is perceived in

two very different ways. Some believed it to be a sign that the spirits were upset because of the new faith. Others said circumcision should be banned because they saw it as the inevitable outcome of an outdated belief system. The girl's passing also stood for the denial of the notion that these two opposed points of view could ever be reconciled. Another key character in Ngugi's narrative is a young man by the name of Waiyaki. He was already regarded as having extraordinary abilities at a young age. One time, Waiyaki saw two youngsters fighting and intervened to end the altercation. Despite being the youngest of the three, he managed to stop the fighting. According to Ngugi, the three boys, Waiyaki, Kamua, and Kinuthia, are all destined to attend a nearby missionary school and eventually become teachers. Eventually, Waiyaki enrolls at the school at his father Chege's request. The mythology of a messiah who would be born in their community and do great things for his people is explained to young Waiyaki by him. The father of Waiyaki thinks he is that Savior. Despite his scepticism of such a fantasy prophecy, Waiyaki does exceptionally well in school and is on the right track to contributing significantly to the advancement of his people. Chege's enthusiasm to send Waiyaki to the mission school is significant because the boy would be able to absorb colonists' knowledge there. With this information, he would be better prepared to fight the colonial authorities. Waiyaki must take care to avoid accepting the colonial system despite the freeing possibilities of this knowledge because doing so would betray the aim of his training.

The conflict between the two villages widens as the narrative goes on, and the community is greatly divided over the proposed circumcision of the little girl Muthoni. Her passing prompts the missionary school, where Waiyaki is a student, to take drastic measures, even kicking out kids whose parents still practise circumcision. Waiyaki is one of the students expelled from the institution. He decides to accept the challenge of constructing a school for the expelled kids in retaliation. He gradually comes to understand that his goal is to make it possible for the village youngsters to have an education, even though he is still unsure of the leadership position his father foresaw him assuming. He becomes so focused on achieving this objective that he neglects to acknowledge and take care of the other needs of his people, such as regaining the areas that the colonists had taken over. A few peasants start plotting behind closed doors, eventually creating the clandestine Kiama organisation, whose sole goal is to maintain the tribe's integrity. This turmoil causes Waiyaki to gain enemies. One of them is Kabonyi, who starts to incite local dissidents to undermine and demolish Waiyaki. Waiyaki eventually falls victim to Kabonyi's deception. He wants nothing more than to calm the village's escalating

turmoil and ease the tension among the populace, but colonialism's polarizing effects are beyond his control. Waiyaki holds himself accountable for not addressing the lack of unity promptly. The narrative comes to a foreboding conclusion. The Kiama must inevitably decide the fate of Waiyaki and his new love interest Nyambura because they are in their care.

The 1950s in Africa saw the rise of a large number of writers who produced their creative works to benefit African literature. In their writings, Achebe and Ngugi discuss the impacts of colonization. Ngugi, who shares the same perspective of attributing the colonizer's domination for upending the traditional system of African tribes in general, intended to struggle against how the new African leaders were governing. Because of this, the historical setting in which *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* were written marks the end of White colonialism.

In his book, Ngugi discussed the ethnic conflicts and fractures among the tribes brought on by the colonizers' eagerness to replace the traditional rituals. His viewpoints hold that colonization continues to be the root of many issues, including the new rulers' exploitation of African people, the split of tribes, the loss of identity, and the corruption of the new political order. In this regard, Ngugi shares Achebe's objective of increasing public awareness and educating the populace about the realities of a deceitful government. Ngugi also strived to alleviate and resolve every issue that Africans in Kenya and elsewhere faced during and after the cruel colonial system.

When read analytically, the novel has a relatively straightforward structure that is based on the Gikuyu creation myth, folklore, and visual patterns. These themes—culture clash and the battle for leadership—are at the centre of the story. The novel's first sentence serves as a microcosm of its whole structure:

The Kamen and Makuyu ridges were adjacent to one another.

There was a valley between them.

The valley of life was there.

Numerous further valleys and ridges lay aimlessly behind Kamen and Makuyu. (TRB, Xiii)

They resembled numerous dormant lions that will never awaken. They simply dozed off during their creator's long, deep sleep.

The reader is simply given an understanding of how calm the Gikuyu country and Kenya were before the arrival of the Europeans by the description of geographical elements.

The two ridges, Kamen and Makuyu, were engaged in a power war. The inhabitants of these two ridges arrived

intending to colonize the locals after settling among them and bringing missionary activities. Some Gikuyus converted to Christianity and established Makuyu as their stronghold, while those who chose to uphold their traditional ways remained Kameno as their focal centre. Two young shepherds fighting in the fields is how the book begins. Both of them were from Makuyu; one was from Kameno. They are divided by the main character Waiyaki, a fellow shepherd, who reminds them of the oath they had made to be allies:

“Kamau, halt this immediately. Didn't we pledge that we were allies from the hills?”(5)

After Waiyaki gave birth to his second child, not long after, his father Chege brought him to the sacred grove. He read to him the prophecy of the revered Gikuyu prophet Mugo wa Kibiro concerning the promise of a savior:

“From the hills shall come salvation. I declare that a son will emerge from the same tree from the blood that flows through me. His responsibility will be to guide and protect the populace.”(20)

Later, Chege sent Waiyaki to Siriana Mission School so the missionaries could educate her. He is cautioned not to depart from the tribe's customs, nonetheless. This became the essential component for the prophecy's fulfilment:

“Arise. Respect the warning. Visit the mission and discover the white man's knowledge and secrets. But don't imitate his bad habits. Stay true to your culture and the traditional rituals.”(25)

During one of the school holidays, Waiyaki made a trip home to undergo circumcision alongside his friends, both males and females. Mathoni, the pastor's daughter in Makuyu, fled away from her Christian family to Kameno to undergo circumcision as well. In the process, she perishes. The antagonism between traditionalists and Christian converts grew, and everyone found to still follow tribal practices was ejected from Siriana School.

Mushroom schools started to appear in the area with Waiyaki's assistance as a teacher to educate and improve the ridge people. The first independent schools in Gikuyu were established as a result. While Waiyaki worked diligently to educate the ridges, Kabonyi and a small group of others who had similarly rejected the new faith returned to the ridges and established the Kiama to safeguard the ridges' cultural purity. Waiyaki garnered notoriety and the public's admiration as he rose to stardom. Ngugi claims that his celebrity spread like a bushfire:

“So his fame grew from ridge to ridge and spread like fire in a dry bush”(89)

While observing Waiyaki's fame, Kabonyi—the only person who was also aware of the ancient prophecy of a savior—felt that if nothing was done, he would lose. As a result, he enraged Waiyaki, and Ngugi says:

“A young guy who becomes a leader is constantly the object of envy from those who are on par with him, from those who are older than him, and from those who believe they could have been greater leaders.”

The main character, Waiyaki, ignored the pressing issues of his people because he was preoccupied with his mission to educate the ridges. He initially joined the Kiama but left soon after. Little did he realize that by leaving the Kiama, his rivals Kabonyi and Kamau, his son, would have a chance to outsmart him. Waiyaki was replaced as the Kiama's secretary by Kamau. Despite all of the opposition from his people, Waiyaki fell in love with Nyambura, Joshua's older daughter.

Instead, he continued to travel to Joshua's church and Makuyu. After rising against his father's strict religious mistreatment of her, Nyambura ultimately decided to wed him. Waiyaki and Nyambura were both sentenced to stand trial before the Kiama at the assembly of the elders and residents of the ridges. Kabonyi, the adversary, was aware too clearly that he would have an advantage over Waiyaki, his opponent. Waiyaki departs the ridges for the city with his beloved, Nyambura, after being declared a traitor by the elder council.

Ngugi wrote *The River Between* in 1965 as a depiction of Kikuyu life during colonialism. He made explicit reference to the effects of the arrival of the white man and all the changes that resulted. Ngugi challenges the idea of history in this book as he seeks to reclaim the suppressed African history that existed before colonialism by drawing on Gikuyu traditional practices.

The novel is scattered across "the two peaks that lay side by side. One was a Makuyu, and the other was a Kameno (Ngugi, 1965: 1). In fact, Ngugi's description of both ridges in the first chapter may show how the tribes are connected because they are in each other's faces. However, as the plot moves in different directions, we realize that the connecting factor is that both ridges developed into antagonists for the first time. In Ngugi's words, which emphasize the clash between the two philosophies and focus on issues like circumcision, which is required in Kameno and detested in Makuyu, the division between the two ridges gave rise to far too many disputes.

It can be seen from this chapter how colonialism affected the social, political, and religious life of Joshua's tribe. Therefore, this latter rejects the outdated culture and customs of the second village, whose residents seek to preserve the tribe's independence in favor of embracing

white men and the Christian world. Instead, the river that formerly symbolized unification, healing, and joining, since it runs between Kamenno and Makuyu, is now the river that separates under colonial powers because of the arrival of white people. Ngugi once more identifies change and split as the most significant effects of colonialism in these communities. They joined it.

The collision that occurs between Kamenno and Makuyu is a powerful example of how colonialism succeeded in isolating each town from the others. As of now, colonialism's impacts are not limited to creating such oppositions of other and self between the colonizer and the colonized, but it also sows a grain of conflict among the colonized tribes themselves. Additionally, the Gikuyu seers like Mugo Wa Kibiro, who predicted the arrival of the white men, disavowed Makuyu practices such as girls' circumcision, witchcraft, and fortune telling. Ngugi writes, "There shall come a people with garments like butterflies." The phrase "These were the white men" also establishes a conflict zone for the other tribes. In this setting, colonialism imposes the idea that the first tribe, the Makuyu, has a superior culture and civilization, while the Kamenno, whose customs and ceremonies are highly venerated by the clansmen, are considered primitivists.

In *The River Between*, the attempt to outlaw what the Christian missionaries viewed as the barbarous practice of female circumcision is explored. As a result, it makes it impossible for both towns' existence to be based on the two clashing beliefs. Both sides were blinded by jealousy, hatred, and resentment because these conflicts highlight how Ngugi's characters reject foreign culture. Joshua believed that Christianity was the only way to gain authority and wisdom. When he first heard these words: "This tribe's life is in deep darkness," he realised how much and gave up his tribe's rites.

Those who reject him are the offspring of darkness, and they will spend eternity in Hell as the sons and daughters of the devil. More, end of the world. (28)

It learns about colonialism's huge blending of religions and beliefs as the personalities are gradually introduced to us. As a result, people are caught in a broader context of customs and behaviour with which they may or may not agree. Again, colonialism has a significant impact on both tribes' ideology and divides the tribespeople into two rival groups, the Kamenno and the Makuyu. The difficulties brought on by colonialism are implied by the conflicting characters, according to Ngugi.

Waiyaki establishes a hybrid subject for himself by having a dual understanding of both his ancestral culture and that of the white man. Despite being the main character in Ngugi's story, the mixture that holds the character represents his whole perplexity. Waiyaki bases his belief in his ability to save his people on an old tribal prophecy that Chege told him: "Salvation shall come from the hills." I assert that a son should arise from the same tree from whose blood drips on me. Remember that you are the last person in this line, as he has the responsibility of leading and saving the populace. For Waiyaki to comprehend that salvation is required to bring both tribes together, the prophecy helped him develop his mind from an early age. Waiyaki, therefore, strives to mend the wound caused by the battles between the two tribes. In addition, the protagonist wants to use education to raise awareness among the next generation to end colonialism.

Waiyaki did heed his father's advice to learn from him rather than toe the path of the white men. As a result, he blended elements of both worlds because the Siriana School had an impact on his thinking. Waiyaki was able to comprehend that education might be the key to the two tribes' redemption as a result. His father, Chege, who is from the same tribe as him and whose culture is closely bound to tradition, has a significant influence on him.

In *The River Between*, the author advocates for the portrayal of a core view that would always be true to their people's culture. The perception that they were losing the elements that make up their identity is one of the key factors that led colonized peoples to revolt against colonial powers. He continued by portraying how simple and traditional life was in earlier times before the coming of the white men to accomplish a goal that Ngugi fully shares. As a result, the story also addresses the issue of change brought about by colonialism; in other words, the transition from traditional life to the axis of modernity was not easy. However, it experienced catastrophic periods, marked by rejection from some, acceptance from others, and a potential desire for establishing rapprochement between the two cultures from others. Additionally, if we consider how myths and traditions are used in both pieces, we must comprehend how crucial it is to use these elements to strengthen the precolonial identities of those who will later be impacted by colonization.

As we investigate the ideas of tradition and modernity, we learn that tradition is the lens through which we interpret the past, whereas modernity is the lens through which we view the present and the future in a way that is independent of the past and tradition. Therefore, tradition is "a belief of behavior transmitted from one generation to the next and accepted as Authoritative, or differed against, without

justification," according to British philosopher H.B. Acton. As a result, tradition can be seen as a tool to enhance modernity, as modernity cannot exist without first being introduced to tradition. As modernity is the application of oppressive forces that appear to impose a change-bringing ideology that would unquestionably reject the fundamental canons of tradition.

We must first understand that Africans are primarily rural, village-conscious, and tradition-oriented people who are locked in a state of transition between tradition and modernity, and to analyse the significance of utilizing myths and oral traditions that are invoked in the work. The clash between tradition and modernity is only imposed with the arrival of white missionaries, which is why it is thought that the dualism of the two forces is a result of colonialism. Tradition in African art represents the pre-colonial eras of African nations, when the native culture rose to be the tribes' respect for themselves and their dignity. Modernity, on the other hand, stands in for the post-colonial period when the native culture has finally been tainted and polluted by the Western one. We can observe some ambivalence in people's attitudes toward alien culture and behavioural patterns when the purity of African culture is exposed to contemporary metropolitan society. In this instance, the cultural divide serves to highlight yet another effect of colonialism in a country where tradition and modernity coexist to spark a contentious argument.

The story offers realistic depictions of African life, including the rituals and traditions that Gikuyu people once practised. Considering this, it is crucial to remember that African culture was predominantly oral, with stories used to pass along historical information to younger generations. Songs, myths, folktales, and proverbs are frequently employed throughout Ngugi's book to describe the characters and the current state of the African countries.

Ngugi builds *The River Between* on the events that result from cultural preconceptions to highlight the negative effects of such prejudices and how they can sabotage the peaceful togetherness that a particular culture values. Because of the differences and conflicts that developed among the indigenous, we can observe different positions held by the Gikuyu people toward those distinct civilizations by evaluating the attitudes and reactions of the characters.

The River Between's narrator appears to connect the rhythms of the natural world to those of the human world at key points, as he seems to be implying that the human world draws its founding legitimacy and authority from nature. As an illustration, the portrayal of the two tribes in the beginning implies a complementary duality between nature and humanity. Ngugi illustrates this sarcastically by

depicting the effects of colonization as geographic divisions, with Kameno and Makuyu standing in for a real conflict and the Honia River representing the harmony and reconciliation between the two opposed tribes, as follows:

"The two ridges were next to one other. Both were named Makuyu, and one was Kameno. There was a valley in between them. The valley of life was its given name."

There were numerous additional valleys and ridges lying randomly behind Kameno and Makuyu. They resembled several dozing lions that never stirred. The two ridges stopped being sleeping lions bound together by their common source of life when you were standing in the valley. They developed a rivalry(1).

In this context, telling some mythical stories from Ngugi's *The River Between* would also help to clarify how, during the pre-colonial era, identity was inextricably linked to local culture, traditions, and beliefs. For instance, when we introduce the character of Chege, we creatively depict him as being such a wise old guy because of the numerous legends that surround him, such as "some people thought that he had the gift of magic. Others claimed he was a seer and that Murungu, who would rescue people in their hour of need, frequently communicated to him. They claimed he could see future visions like Mugo wa Kibiro, the famous seer.

A key idea in *The River Between* illustrates how the most prominent characters transition from the security of their conventional society to the new one that the colonizer develops. Such characters' hybridity in this work is only conceivable if an outside force forms a wave of transformations. Both Achebe and Ngugi's novels can be analysed from the same literary standpoint when colonialism is taken into consideration.

Most of the time, Waiyaki, the main character, appears to live in both the new world created by colonialism and the ancestral world of tradition. He leans on the expertise of the white world, even if he eventually stays true to his own tribal culture and history. In contrast to Waiyaki, whose father advised him to acquire the wisdom of the white men without completely following their tracks, he was destined to study under the Reverend Livingstone of Siriana Mission along with his pals Kamau and Kinuthia. Characters like Waiyaki struggle to combine characteristics of the two cultures to which they belong and run the risk of being rejected by both communities as a result, which highlights how colonialism causes a significant uncertainty in identity.

Waiyaki, the main character, also gets a description of a picture that resembles Christ. He comes from a long line of prophets, including Mugo wa Kibiro. Because of this, Waiyaki has popularity among his people and is compared to Christ. A further quality that draws him nearer to Christ

is the prophecy his father gave him, which states that he will be the Savior of his people and that "Salvation shall come from the hills. I declare that a son will emerge from the same tree as the blood that flows through me. And he has a responsibility to guide and defend the populace (Ngugi: 20). The mystery of Chege's son becoming a Savior is revealed to him in poetic lines and Biblical terminology, which lends the prophesy purity and increases its veracity. Furthermore, the use of such a biblical allusion promotes a deeper comprehension of how Ngugi himself alludes to the dualism of both his culture and Christianity, which may ultimately reflect his linguistic, cultural, and religious hybridity.

Waiyaki becomes known as "Teacher" and "Shepherd of his people," underscoring his similarities to Christ in the story as his character development progresses. As a result, to honour and respect the person they are waiting to lead them, people have begun to refer to him as a teacher or a shepherd, with the capitalization of these terms appearing to be necessary in the same way that Christ's name is always capitalized.

Waiyaki decides to go a different route to unite the two clans. He has a strong belief in the ability of education to improve the unfortunate situation of cultural clash. As a result, he establishes a school in Kamenio called Mariosioni, the first one since Siriana broke off its relationship and refused to accept students who were "children of darkness, whose parents had not forsaken the whole concept of circumcision." His education in self-help strengthens his desire to serve his country because he is seen as the savior of his people. Therefore, Waiyaki believes that building education through a process will provide a middle ground where salvation can be attempted. Waiyaki was initially educated in Siriana, but he was never able to give up the customs of his clan. He does not like to be associated with either side as a result, and he is now dedicated to reconciliation. Due to his alienation and perception by his people, Waiyaki chooses to forge his world, one of "reconciliation" with tradition and bearing of the new identity, rather than attempting to fit in with any of the tribes.

Waiyaki is also rejected by his companion Kinuthia, who "sought to hide himself in the crowd as though he did not want to be connected with the instructor," as it is stated in the last chapter, when he is discovered in "the great hour of need." As Christians believe, this circumstance is comparable to the account of Jesus in which his companion Peter betrays him. When Waiyaki compares himself to Christ in the book, he acknowledges that similarity. When he meets Nyambura beside the river, for instance, he imagines that it is like "if she and he were together standing

on an altar ready for a sacrifice," which is comparable to Christ's offering of himself. Additionally, he admits that "[a]fter all, he appreciated certain Christian teaching," which demonstrates his identity with Christ by saying that "the anguish of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane and His agony on the tree had always impacted him." Finally, Waiyaki and Christ both suffer judgement from their followers towards the novel's conclusion, with Waiyaki being subject to the Kiama's judgement. Ngugi then goes on to describe Waiyaki as being like Christ, continuing to use a blend of biblical allusions in his vocabulary, such as by predicting the tale of Christ within Waiyaki's life.

In *The River Between*, other major characters also have a sense of identity disorientation. For example, Muthoni, Joshua's little daughter, encounters enormous difficulty since she identifies with both her tribe and Christianity, which her father considers to be wholly incompatible. Her willingness to undergo circumcision is evidence that she will always have a conscience that is connected to the customs of the opposing tribe. Despite being mostly forewarned by her strict father, a Christian preacher, Muthoni feels that circumcision is necessary. In Ngugi's words:

Father, however, will not permit it. He's going to be furious with you. You are a Christian, therefore how can you even consider it. By now, both of us are knowledgeable in white people's customs. Father has been imparting to us the knowledge he gained at Siriana. And as you may already be aware, missionaries dislike when girls are circumcised. Jesus said it was sinful and improper. (Ngugi, 1965)

Since both African and non-African readers are intended for the book, Ngugi writes in English. In both his narrative and dialogue, he employs very straightforward and clear language. Ngugi has his characters speak in straightforward English. They don't use proverbs when speaking. The vocabulary of a young, educated individual like Waiyaki or Joshua and that of a village elder like Chege is quite similar. Proverbs are replaced with symbols, imagery, and biblical language in Ngugi. The phrase "two lions" is used to describe the two ridges. The ridges appear to be at odds with one another when seen from the valley, as if they are staring each other in the eye. This creates an undercurrent of sarcasm. The Honia River, whose name means "cure" and is described to as the "soul of the ridges," bringing life to everything in the narrative, is another sarcastic unity-in-division symbol. The church in Makugu derives inspiration from Honia when the two ridges separate, and on its bank, traditional religion is practiced. The Whiteman are also referred to as butterflies by Chege. The novel's mix of Christian and Gikuyu mythology by Ngugi is yet another

important ironic metaphor. The novel serves as a poignant commentary on the impacts of colonialism, importance of cultural heritage and the ongoing struggle for social cohesion in the face of external pressures.

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Voices of the Language Teachers in Teaching Indigenous Students in the IPed-Implementing Schools

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Abstract— Teaching the English language to indigenous students can be both rewarding and challenging. This study examines the experiences of English teachers in Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) schools in Kalamansig, Philippines. It investigates the difficulties they encounter while teaching English to Indigenous learners in multicultural and multilingual settings. By emphasizing teachers' perspectives, the study provides insights for enhancing ESL instruction, curriculum development, and teacher training in Indigenous environments. Employing a qualitative, transcendental methodology, the research explored how teachers describe their teaching experiences, frame their challenges, and envision their professional futures. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six purposefully chosen public school educators from Datu Bak Bak Apang and Datu Etang Integrated Schools. The thematic analysis of the information resulted in fourteen (14) emerging themes derived from 165 identified meanings, 50 initial themes, and 21 clustered themes. Six themes captured teachers' lived experiences: From Necessity to Calling, Professional Resilience and Flexibility, Instructional Downshifting and Adaptability, Silent Classroom Struggle, Reciprocal Language Learning, and Finding Purpose and Fulfillment. Five themes depicted contextual difficulties: Multicultural Classroom Challenges and Adaptations, Adapting and Thriving in Teaching, Adaptive Teaching for Cultural Learning Styles, Curriculum Modification for Meaningful Learning, and Navigating Language Barriers. Three themes sought future perspectives: Commitment, Uncertainty, and Aspirations, Becoming Part of the Community, and Gradual Progress and Future Hope. The results indicate that English teachers in indigenous classrooms act as cultural mediators and language facilitators while dealing with resource limitations and systemic challenges. Despite these obstacles, they show exceptional commitment to their professional advancement and community involvement. Their experiences highlight the need for improved institutional support, focused professional development, and comprehensive policy measures to ensure culturally relevant education is accessible to marginalized indigenous students.



Keywords— English Teachers, Lived Experiences, Indigenous Education, Opportunities, Voices.

I. INTRODUCTION

English is considered a universal language, vital for global interaction and job prospects. Nonetheless, Indigenous learners in isolated regions of the Philippines still encounter obstacles in mastering and utilizing English proficiently. Factors like insufficient resources, large class

sizes, and inadequate teacher training contribute to this persistent issue (Leaño et al., 2019).

In 2019, the Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) Program was initiated across 117 divisions in the Philippines, including Sultan Kudarat, to promote inclusive education. The program seeks to incorporate

Indigenous culture into the curriculum while ensuring that quality education is accessible (Verdida et al., 2024).

Although prior research has thoroughly looked into the difficulties faced by Indigenous students, there has been a lack of attention to English teachers' experiences and challenges in schools implementing IPed.

This study intended to investigate teachers' voices when teaching English to Indigenous students, gather teachers' viewpoints on the practical application of the IPed curriculum within classroom environments, and suggest developments for teacher training and curriculum development in the context of Indigenous education.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

This study used a multi-theoretical approach that integrated Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST) (1979), Vygotsky's Social Constructivism (SC) (1978), and Gay's Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) (2018). These theories attempted to analyze English teachers' lived experiences interacting with Indigenous learners. The combination of teachers' experiences provided a strong foundation for comprehending the intricacies of the teaching experience.

1.2 Research Questions

This study addressed the following questions: (1) What are the lived experiences of English teachers in teaching Indigenous students? (2) How do English teachers describe the context of their experiences in teaching indigenous students? and (3) How do English teachers view themselves in the future in the context of language teaching to indigenous students?

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Research involving educators in indigenous communities uncovers intricate professional experiences. Copland and Yonetsugi (2016) discovered that bilingual English teachers established important linguistic links despite facing challenges in cultural understanding. Alfulaila et al. (2019) pointed out that curriculum requirements limited cultural representation for Indonesian educators teaching indigenous Islamic students. Hammine et al. (2019) documented how Sámi language teachers navigate complicated identity negotiations, balancing traditional knowledge with contemporary educational frameworks. Francis-Cracknell et al. (2022) highlighted the emotional changes teachers undergo when addressing their knowledge gaps while teaching indigenous topics, alongside Li and Lv's (2022) findings on the significance of emotional intelligence in cross-cultural instructional settings. Matthews (2020) reinforced the critical role of emotional intelligence.

Even though indigenous students are eager to engage, they encounter significant hurdles when expressing their

thoughts in written English. According to Cosepe and Motus (2023), specific challenges include inadequate sentence construction, spelling issues, limited vocabulary, and difficulties with word translation. These linguistic challenges present major barriers for students and educators in fostering effective communication and facilitating academic advancement.

III. METHODOLOGY

The Transcendental Phenomenology was the research design. Husserl and Moustakas established transcendental phenomenology, a qualitative research approach that seeks to capture the core of human experiences (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). This method was used in the formulation of the research question, participant selection, and the conduct of in-depth interviews (Bugnos et al., 2022; Protacio, 2022; Tacogue et al., 2022; Felongco et al., 2022; Bingco et al., 2022).

This was conducted in the municipality of Kalamansig, where the IPed-implementing schools of Datu Bak Bak Apang and Datu Etang Integrated Schools had a high percentage of students with below-average grades in English. 63% of the population from Grades 1 to 12 had a grade point average of 79 and below in English (DMEPA, 2023).

Six (6) language teachers were purposively chosen for this study. The inclusion criteria included elementary or secondary teachers teaching English in the IPed school, at least three years in service with firsthand experience teaching in the IPed school, and willingness to participate in the interview.

This study used researcher-made individual in-depth and semi-structured interviews tailored from Moustakas (1994) as the primary data sources. Using the validation form, the researcher asked three (3) qualitative researchers from the Commission on Higher Education to validate the instrument for data gathering. This structure gave the interviewer a guide to choose and order questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The participants were selected based on purposive sampling using inclusion criteria that met the study's objectives and the participants' ability to significantly contribute to the analysis of language teachers' experiences in teaching English to indigenous learners (Crossman, 2020; Creswell, 2021).

The participants were presented with informed consent and given the interview protocols. Then, the researcher conducted an in-depth interview using a semi-structured interview guide questionnaire. Lastly, the interviews were verbatim transcribed to ensure no data would be biased using the transcription writing guide.

The study used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The data were familiarized, and initial codes were created. Then, the codes were collated and grouped to create potential themes. The themes were compiled and refined to come up with relevant themes. After modifying data-related themes, the researcher examined each theme and its description and created a final thematic map. The Thematic analysis was also employed in local studies in the Philippines (Gasan et al., 2023; Sanda et al., 2023).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Fourteen (14) emerging themes were articulated through difficult procedural data analysis and interpretation. They were all synthesized from 165 formulated meanings, 50 initial themes, and 21 clustered themes.

The relevant themes are *From necessity to calling, professional resilience and flexibility, instructional downshifting and adaptability, silent classroom struggle, reciprocal language learning, and finding purpose and fulfillment. Five themes depicted contextual difficulties: multicultural classroom challenges and adaptations, adapting and thriving in teaching, adaptive teaching for cultural learning styles, curriculum modification for meaningful learning, and navigating language barriers. Three themes sought future perspectives: commitment, uncertainty and aspirations, becoming part of the community, and gradual progress and future hope.* These themes were characterized by the experiences of language teachers teaching IP students.

1: From Necessity to Calling

This theme effectively conveys educators' deep journey when assigned to Indigenous Peoples (IP) communities. Research indicates that placements within Indigenous communities can shift initial uncertainties into a heightened sense of responsibility and adaptability among educators. Williams and Morris (2022) stress the importance of creating culturally aware job opportunities in Indigenous settings, observing that collaborative placements encourage genuine engagement with the community.

However, Cherubini (2023) notes that insufficient preparation for understanding local traditions can be daunting for teachers, which may obstruct their ability to derive meaning from their roles. Oloo and Kiramba (2019) further highlight that numerous Indigenous educators encounter systemic obstacles that diminish their sense of purpose, emphasizing that placements alone do not suffice without continuous support and resources.

2: Professional Resilience and Flexibility

The theme offers important insight into teachers' ability to adjust when confronted with various simultaneous

challenges. The findings show that educators need to manage unfamiliar locations and uncertainties in teaching methodologies within their professional roles.

The results of this study correspond with more current research regarding teacher adaptability in difficult situations. According to Mansfield et al. (2018), teacher resilience should not be viewed solely as an individual characteristic but as a dynamic process shaped by personal and contextual influences. The experiences recounted by the participants illustrate what Vance et al. (2021) call adaptive expertise, in which educators continuously modify their practices in reaction to unpredictable circumstances and contextual limitations. Additionally, the participants' experiences reflect what Tait (2018) identifies as an essential component of teacher resilience: the capability to overcome differences between ideal educational goals and actual practical scenarios. This ability to adapt is especially vital in situations where resource constraints or geographical obstacles hinder the straightforward execution of the curriculum (Ainley & Carstens, 2018).

As highlighted in recent studies, the EST effectively illustrates how interactions within various environmental systems influence teachers' adaptability (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2018; Mansfield et al., 2016). The experiences of the participants indicate that their professional resilience evolves at the convergence of microsystems (new classroom experiences), mesosystems (relationships within the school community), and macrosystems (educational policy frameworks). EST offers a thorough framework for understanding teacher resilience as a standalone personal characteristic and a fluid reaction to complex contextual challenges. It recognizes that teachers' adaptive methods arise from their ongoing engagement with various environmental systems that frequently impose conflicting demands and resource constraints.

3: Instructional Downshifting and Adaptability

This theme highlights how skilled educators in culturally and linguistically diverse environments practice instructional downshifting, intentionally adjusting teaching methods to align with students' understanding levels while progressing toward academic objectives. Teacher 3 showcases linguistic adaptability through translanguaging pedagogy, transitioning between Filipino, English, and native languages to facilitate comprehension (Karabon & Johnson, 2020). Insights from Teacher 5 underscore the significance of cultural-linguistic knowledge, resonating with Acevedo and Solís's (2020) argument that effective instruction necessitates an awareness of linguistic nuances. Teacher 1's method of meeting them at their level illustrates the concept of responsive pedagogical

positioning, emphasizing student understanding over strict instructional timelines (Sharma & Nga, 2022). These practices are consistent with Gay's (2018) CRT, which employs cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to improve learning effectiveness through cultural competence and responsiveness.

4: Silent Classroom Struggle

The findings indicate that educators are more attuned to nonverbal signals when language disparities create obstacles to communication. Teacher 3's observation of students taking longer to respond aligns with Puzio et al.'s (2017) concept of processing latency, implying that silence frequently signifies cognitive processing rather than lack of engagement. Teacher 5's description of blank expressions during English lessons relates to González-

Howard and McNeill's (2021) phenomenon of linguistic intimidation necessitates that teachers be aware of subtle facial cues that indicate difficulties in comprehension. Teacher 2's observations regarding the varying patterns of student interactions with teachers compared to peers reflect Nguyen et al.'s (2020) concept of dual interactional repertoires, whereby genuine engagement may be obscured in teacher-led activities due to cultural norms or language obstacles.

These insights are further understood through the lens of SC, which stresses the development of knowledge through social interactions influenced by cultural and linguistic contexts. This underscores the idea that learning is a shared process that requires scaffolded support within students' zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978; Palincsar, 2018).

5: Reciprocal Language Learning

This theme underscores the dual role of teachers as not only providers of knowledge but also as learners within the educational sphere, particularly in contexts involving Indigenous populations.

The results illustrate various vital aspects of reciprocal learning within educational settings. Cultural awareness is crucial, as research indicates that educators who engage deeply with Indigenous cultures enhance their cultural proficiency and foster more inclusive classroom atmospheres (Jacob et al., 2019; Kühn et al., 2020). This involvement with Indigenous communities allows teachers to develop more respectful teaching practices that address conventional educational obstacles.

Moreover, teacher growth and adaptability are important, especially in terms of emotional intelligence. According to Öz and Kiris (2018), emotional intelligence equips teachers to respond empathetically to the diverse

needs of learners. Matthews (2020) elaborates on this by showing that educators with high emotional intelligence can better accommodate students' backgrounds and experiences, fostering genuinely inclusive learning environments.

Language Development and Communication highlights the mutual advantages of linguistic diversity. Integrating Indigenous languages supports preservation initiatives and enhances English language teaching (Wilson, 2024; Galla, 2016). Jesus and González (2022) further demonstrate that reclaiming language acts as a means of cultural revival, benefiting individual students and their larger communities.

Theoretical analysis indicates that Social Constructivist Theory offers the most compelling explanatory framework for the theme Learning goes both ways. This viewpoint underscores that knowledge is constructed through social interactions and collective experiences, emphasizing that effective education is a dynamic and shared journey of growth and understanding rather than a one-way transmission of knowledge (Norton & Toohey, 2011; Morcom, 2021).

6. Finding Purpose and Fulfillment

This theme explores the internal drivers and emotional benefits that educators experience from establishing meaningful relationships with students and observing their growth. The grouped themes, *motivation, fulfillment, inspiration, and building meaningful connections*, demonstrate how solid teacher-student relationships improve educators' job satisfaction and students' educational experiences.

Research backs this link: Morales (2022) shows that transformational leadership cultivates settings where teachers feel appreciated, connect supportive academic environments with teacher happiness (Villavicencio-Aguilar et al., 2020). Ahmed et al. (2020) indicate that motivational activities enhance educator self-efficacy. Bronfenbrenner's EST (1979) offers a theoretical framework, suggesting that a teacher's growth is influenced by environmental interactions, especially within educational communities. This viewpoint underscores how personal and professional satisfaction is intertwined with the social and educational ecosystems in which educators function, highlighting that nurturing learning environments promote greater motivation and fulfillment among teachers.

7: Multicultural Classroom Challenges and Adaptation

This theme explores educators' intricate obstacles when instructing linguistically and culturally diverse indigenous students across three areas: *language*

challenges, literacy growth, and sociocultural participation. Teacher 1's focus on exercising patience in dealing with language obstacles aligns with Jiménez-Silva and Olson's (2017) idea of pedagogical patience, while the ongoing necessity for translation illustrates what Carjuzaa and Ruff (2020) call the linguistic mediation burden. Literacy difficulties are highlighted by the asymmetrical literacy development found between different languages, complicating lesson planning. Sociocultural elements affecting student participation include cultural withdrawal when students become disengaged, subsistence-education tension as economic demands conflict with educational goals, and educational timeline disjuncture among older learners (Rivera & Valdez, 2020; McInnes, 2017; Tran et al., 2020; Arasaratnam-Smith, 2021).

Bronfenbrenner's EST (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2017) offers a framework for understanding these challenges across interconnected environmental systems from immediate language issues at the microsystem level to wider economic and cultural factors at the exosystem and macrosystem levels that together influence indigenous students' educational engagement and success.

8: Adapting and Thriving in Teaching

This theme explores teachers' ability to overcome challenges through flexibility and resilience, particularly regarding the needs of Indigenous students. Based on four interrelated concepts: *emotional resilience*, *understanding student learning pace*, *pedagogical adaptation*, and *instructional innovation*. It underscores that educators need to nurture resilience to foster inclusive educational environments for Indigenous students facing unique challenges. Han (2022) illustrates that CRT boosts the engagement of Indigenous students and enhances teachers' confidence in their abilities. Pitama et al. (2018) emphasize that educational modifications tailored to Indigenous contexts improve learner outcomes by incorporating cultural elements into teaching practices. Wilson et al. (2023) point out that the obstacles Indigenous students encounter, particularly during crises such as COVID-19, necessitate ongoing innovation in teaching. Li and Lv (2022) demonstrate that educators who effectively regulate their emotions more successfully support student learning processes. EST supports this theme by highlighting that successful adaptation is influenced by cultural and social networks, indicating that effective teaching requires understanding the wider systems that impact Indigenous education (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

9: Adaptive Teaching for Cultural Learning Styles

This theme explores how educators modify their instructional approaches when teaching indigenous

students, moving from one-size-fits-all methods to more culturally relevant practices. Teachers exhibit pedagogical cultural responsiveness by acknowledging the impact of cultural frameworks on student learning, as shown by Teacher 2's dismissal of rigid standards (Gonzalez et al., 2020). They regularly engage in critical pedagogical reflection, assessing their teaching effectiveness through student input and cultural context, resulting in changes such as incorporating translation and technology (Robinson & Clardy, 2021). Educators apply culturally sustaining engagement strategies through incentive systems and create enjoyable learning atmospheres while highlighting linguistic mediation through translanguaging to enhance content accessibility. They also employ collaborative scaffolding approaches through mixed-ability groupings and tutoring programs (Haynes & Smallwood, 2021; Butvilofsky et al., 2020; Toppel, 2021).

These strategies are consistent with Gay's (2018) framework for culturally responsive teaching, which stresses the importance of instruction to and through cultural diversity by incorporating cultural knowledge into teaching decisions instead of relying on standardized methods.

10: Curriculum Modification for Meaningful Learning

The theme illustrates how educators actively adjust standardized curriculum expectations to foster genuine learning experiences for indigenous students. The findings reveal that teachers strategically emphasize student comprehension over rigid adherence to prescribed curriculum timelines and content.

Teacher 1's insights regarding the need for extended timelines and simplification underscore what Klenowski (2019) calls temporal flexibility, the readiness to modify instructional pacing based on student comprehension rather than administrative schedules. This adaptable method values depth of understanding more than breadth of content coverage, even if it requires extending learning periods beyond curriculum guidelines.

Teacher 2's recognition of purposefully straying from curriculum guides showcases what López and Arif (2022) define as responsive curriculum mediation. It is the process by which educators interpret, adapt, and occasionally bypass standard curriculum requirements to better cater to their students' educational needs. This teacher's awareness that sticking to standardized curriculum expectations would only exacerbate student challenges reflects advanced professional judgment that places student learning above compliance.

Teacher 3's situation of revisiting lessons despite curriculum guide limitations illustrates what Ramirez-Tudela and Webber (2020) characterize as principled

deviation, a conscious departure from mandated pacing or sequencing when assessment data suggests students have not yet grasped crucial concepts. This emphasis on learning over pacing indicates educators' recognition that artificial deadlines cannot confine genuine learning.

Bronfenbrenner's EST offers the most suitable framework for comprehending the curriculum modification practices outlined in this data. This theory views human development as shaped by various environmental systems, ranging from micro to macro levels (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2017). The curriculum modification practices exhibited by the teachers highlight their ability to maneuver through conflicting influences across a diverse environment. They address students' learning requirements at the microsystem level by simplifying and repeating.

11: Navigating the Language Barrier

Navigating the Language Barrier encapsulates the multifaceted challenges faced in teaching English within a multilingual context, particularly when learners encounter English as a third or fourth language. Teachers grapple with persistent language barriers in this environment, necessitating dynamic strategies to facilitate comprehension among diverse student populations. This context is compounded by the necessity for continuous translation across languages, which can be cognitively taxing for educators and students (Rasheed et al., 2017). They highlight the difficulties teachers face in multilingual classrooms when students lack proficiency in English, underscoring the need for effective pedagogical strategies.

The theme is characterized by three clusters: Language Challenges and Strategies, Teaching Challenges and Classroom Dynamics, and Fostering Student Engagement and Interaction. These subthemes arise from initial discussions around classroom interactions and the unique dynamics present in multilingual settings. Garcia and Schleppegrell (2021) advocate for a translanguaging approach, which recognizes and utilizes students' full linguistic repertoire, fostering an inclusive environment. This approach is echoed by Pierson et al. (2021), who argue that embracing multiple languages in scientific modeling activities can significantly enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Similarly, Copland and Yonetsugi (2016) elucidate that valuing both the English and native languages of students creates a supportive learning atmosphere that may mitigate language barriers.

Fostering student engagement in multilingual classrooms is further explored in the literature, where studies underscore the importance of peer-assisted learning strategies and teacher facilitation. For instance, effective

multilingual teaching strategies not only incorporate peer interactions but also emphasize the role of teachers in facilitating meaningful conversations (Omidire, 2020). This is critical, as Myklevold and Speitz (2021) note that teacher perceptions of multilingualism significantly affect how they implement educational strategies. Their work suggests that being attuned to students' linguistic and cultural contexts leads to better classroom dynamics and interactions.

Social Constructivist Theory strongly supports this theme, emphasizing that learners construct knowledge through social interactions within their cultural contexts. This perspective aligns with findings highlighting how effective learning in multilingual settings occurs through collaborative practices and the negotiation of meaning among peers and educators (Garcia & Schleppegrell, 2021; Duarte, 2016). Moreover, using students' native languages to scaffold understanding aids in language acquisition and fosters a culturally responsive classroom that values diversity (Omidire, 2020; Bisai & Singh, 2020).

12: Commitment, Uncertainty, and Aspirations

This theme explores educators' long-term dedication to teaching in Indigenous communities, their professional ambitions, and the factors influencing their decisions to stay or leave. This theme underscores the complexities of teachers' commitments, shaped by personal aspirations and the distinct challenges of working in Indigenous educational settings.

Educators often navigate a landscape of uncertainty, facing inadequate institutional support, cultural misunderstandings, and systemic barriers. For instance, Hammime et al. (2019) examine the experiences of educators involved in Indigenous language revitalization initiatives, revealing how these roles foster a sense of belonging and purpose. Their findings suggest that commitment is not solely intrinsic but also shaped by the communities educators serve and the meaningful roles they adopt.

Similarly, Francis-Cracknell et al. (2022) highlight that a lack of support for professional development can lead to disillusionment among educators in Indigenous health education, ultimately influencing their long-term aspirations and retention. This aligns with Pidgeon (2016), who discusses the transformative potential of indigenization in educational institutions and its impact on teachers' commitment, particularly in response to how Indigenous knowledge and practices are integrated. Furthermore, Docherty et al. (2023) explore educators' journeys toward indigenization, emphasizing that their motivation often stems from a genuine desire to contribute meaningfully to their teaching communities.

Moreover, SC Theory most effectively underpins commitment, uncertainty, and aspirations. This theory posits that learning is a collaborative process, with knowledge constructed through social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). The interplay of commitment, uncertainty, and aspirations aligns with the principles of SC, demonstrating that educational outcomes are shaped by communal efforts and shared cultural meanings (Francis-Cracknell et al., 2022).

13: Becoming Part of the Community

This underscores the significance of teacher engagement with the cultural and social fabric surrounding Indigenous students, emphasizing how this engagement influences both personal growth and academic success.

Engaging with cultural traditions and local knowledge helps teachers develop a more inclusive perspective, leading to higher self-efficacy and a stronger commitment to their role (LaFromboise et al., 2016). Additionally, community involvement has positively influenced students' academic motivation, reinforcing the importance of CRT strategies (Teufel-Shone et al., 2016).

This approach fosters emotional engagement, strengthens student-teacher relationships, and facilitates critical thinking and academic success (Vass, 2012). However, studies also indicate that teachers' lack of cultural competence can hinder their effectiveness, underscoring the need for professional development programs focused on Indigenous pedagogies (Flavell et al., 2013).

Moreover, teachers who incorporate Indigenous knowledge and community-based practices into their instruction enhance student achievement and find greater professional fulfillment (Chen, 2016). Teaching strategies incorporating storytelling, traditional practices, and community collaboration have enhanced classroom engagement and cultural understanding (Han, 2022). Studies indicate that educators who embrace Indigenous perspectives develop a greater sense of purpose, ultimately leading to more meaningful and impactful teaching experiences (Mackinlay & Barney, 2012).

Furthermore, EST is a strong foundation for becoming part of the community. This theory posits that individual development is influenced by interactions within various interrelated systems, including family, school, and community contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Teachers who actively engage with Indigenous communities contribute to an educational ecosystem where cultural knowledge and academic learning are interconnected, fostering student success and professional growth.

14: Gradual Progress and Future Hope

This theme illustrates how educators perceive obstacles within a timeline, sustaining professional optimism while recognizing the gradual nature of educational transformation in indigenous contexts. The evidence shows that educators regard present challenges not as enduring barriers but as shifting circumstances that will enhance over time.

Teacher 3's optimistic outlook illustrates what Mansfield and Beltman (2019) describe as temporal resilience, framing a cognitive method of placing current difficulties within a broader professional timeline. This viewpoint enables educators to maintain psychological stability by considering current issues as transient rather than permanent aspects of their professional reality. The anticipation that challenges will slowly diminish reflects an awareness of teaching as a developmental journey rather than a fixed task.

Despite recognizing challenges, teacher 4's current pleasure exemplifies what Fives et al. (2021) call present-moment professional gratification, the capacity to find fulfillment from small signs of progress rather than waiting for all challenges to be fully resolved. This educator finds encouragement in students' evident enthusiasm for English class and their independent vocabulary expansion efforts, which prove that their teaching is making an impact despite ongoing difficulties.

Teacher 5's optimistic view of technology corresponds with Johnson and Altowairiki's (2021) observations on technological optimism among educators in challenging educational environments. This outlook envisions future advancements by incorporating digital tools and modern teaching methods, implying that embracing technology may eventually alleviate the challenges faced in language instruction.

At the core of SC is the notion that learning and development happen through gradual, socially mediated interactions that occur over time with the guidance of more knowledgeable individuals (Vygotsky, 1978; Powell & Kalina, 2017). The teachers' insights into gradual progress exemplify this theoretical concept. Teacher 3's belief that challenges will disappear gradually instead of instantly highlights the constructivist idea that growth is stepwise and progressive, both in their professional journey and in their students' language development.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following conclusions are based on the synthesized emerging themes and the participants' experiences.

The experiences of English teachers highlighted a transformative journey in their profession. Many participants who initially took on teaching out of necessity described how their roles evolved into a profound calling. These educators exhibited remarkable resilience and adaptability when facing difficult situations, continually adjusting their teaching methods to meet the distinct needs of their students.

The instructional downshifting and adaptability theme underscored the teachers' capacity to tailor standard practices to align with their students' skill levels and cultural backgrounds. Numerous participants spoke of dealing with a silent classroom struggle, marked by communication hurdles that demanded exceptional patience and creative teaching techniques.

A notable discovery was the rise of reciprocal language learning, where teachers immersed themselves in indigenous languages, fostering a mutual exchange that benefited both groups. Despite the obstacles, teachers found deep purpose and fulfillment in observing the growth of their students and contributing to the development of indigenous communities.

Moreover, educators described their teaching environment as one that demands ongoing adjustments to multicultural classroom challenges. They discussed creating targeted strategies to adapt and thrive within these varied linguistic and cultural settings. The theme of adaptive teaching for cultural learning styles highlighted teachers' awareness that indigenous students often had unique learning preferences requiring modifications to traditional teaching approaches. Curriculum modification for meaningful learning surfaced as an essential approach, with teachers frequently altering standardized curricula to include culturally relevant materials and examples. Moreover, participants shared their experiences navigating language barriers, using different methods to connect English instruction with the students' native languages.

The meaning derived from their efforts by educators was characterized by commitment, ambiguity, and aspirations. Despite various challenges and self-doubt, participants stayed profoundly committed to their students' achievements and fostered hopes for their future successes.

Many teachers shared a significant experience of connecting with the community. This experience led to the evolution of their professional identities as they built stronger personal bonds with indigenous groups. This connection enriched their cultural understanding and enhanced their effectiveness as teachers.

Consistent growth and positive perspective represented educators' perceptions of meaningful accomplishments. While acknowledging that progress often required time, participants derived great significance from witnessing slow

advancements and held an optimistic view regarding their students' educational journeys.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teacher Preparation Programs. School heads may create targeted training that addresses the distinct challenges of teaching English in indigenous settings, focusing on cultural awareness, language acquisition methods, and flexible instructional approaches.

Professional Development. School leaders may initiate continuous learning opportunities that enhance teachers' adaptive techniques and tackle the specific obstacles identified in this research.

Resource Development. Teachers may produce and disseminate educational materials that are both culturally relevant and linguistically suitable for indigenous students.

Support Networks. Teachers may set up mentoring initiatives and collaborative communities where educators can exchange experiences and strategies for effective teaching in indigenous education.

Curriculum Enhancement. The school leaders may update English language curricula to integrate indigenous knowledge systems and cultural relevance, making education more significant and accessible.

Community Engagement. Teachers may strengthen collaborations between schools and indigenous communities to promote reciprocal learning and ensure the educational experience is pertinent.

Future Research. Researchers may undertake further studies to investigate effective assessment methods within Indigenous education and monitor the enduring effects of CRT practices.

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Religion and Human in Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*: Critical Outlook

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Abstract— The present research is about a critical analysis of religion and human in Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*. In fact, the Christianity is one of the biggest and important religions in the world. Therefore it mainly deals with speech of God, based on the holy Bible. Despite the holiness of the Bible, It's not understood the same way by every reader. So, verbally, we talk about the same Christianity but with of different point of view. That difference between the predication of the same God's speech makes the believers to adopt different principles in the work of the Lord. All in all, several contradictions occurred. To clarify this fact, we have used an exploratory research. This analysis reveals that Christianity is universal and it is only the way and the means we use to benefit from the grace of God. Believers should recognize that God is one and the only one for all.



Keywords— Religion; Human ; Jeanette Winterson ; oranges are not the only fruit ; God , Christianity

Résumé— La présente recherche porte sur une analyse critique de la religion et de l'humain dans *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit* de Jeanette Winterson. En fait, le christianisme est l'une des religions les plus grandes et les plus importantes au monde. Il s'agit donc principalement de la parole de Dieu, basés sur la sainte Bible. Alors que, malgré le caractère sacré de la Bible, elle n'est pas comprise de la même manière par tous les lecteurs. Ainsi, verbalement, nous parlons du même christianisme mais avec un point de vue différent. Cette différence entre la prédication de la même parole de Dieu amène les croyants à adopter des principes différents dans l'œuvre du Seigneur. Au total, plusieurs contradictions sont apparues. Pour clarifier ce fait, nous devons utiliser une recherche exploratoire. À partir de cette analyse, il faut montrer que le christianisme devrait normalement être comme le même Dieu, la même parole dans un seul monde.

Mots clés— Religion; Humain ; Jeanette Winterson ; oranges are not the only fruit ; Dieu, Christianisme

I. INTRODUCTION

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit by Jeanette Winterson is a semi- autobiographical novel published in 1985 by Pandora Press. The current work focused on Critical Analysis of Religion and Human so, It explores the importance of the religion for the human and makes a

critical analysis of the way religion is misunderstood sometimes by people, who will bad inform and form the coming generations.

The present study is divided into three chapters. Section one is about the theoretical background of the study. It presents the way we have organised the work. More

precisely, it states out the problem, the significance of the study, the research purposes, the research methodology, the limit of the study. Finally, it gives details on the literature review. Section two presents a general overview on the novel. Clearly, it gives details on the author, the novel with an emphasis on the characters and their relationships, presents the general conceptions in the novel and finally presents the results of the different analysis performed. Section three lastly, not only makes an analysis of the novel by laying emphasis on an exploration of the critical analysis of religion and human in the novel but also, a general critical analysis has been drawn out and it presents the perspectives of the study.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

2.1. Introduction to the Study

2.1.1. Problem Statement

The problem that this research raises is to know the different reasons behind the choice of the Christianity like the mean focus although other unwished, crappies practices are occurred widespread in the novel. Think to some wise advices, the sharpening of this wonder brought us to engage in a decryption of the important of religion and its limits toward the development of human.

2.1.2. Significance of study

The present project is significant in the logic that it can serve as a literary source for scholars and may be as an inspiration for some students while in search of writing their dissertation in the area of the British literature or civilization.

2.1.3. Research purposes

This work arises the conscious of readers on religions, mainly the Christianity as a fact which can not only be spiritually a strong power to the personal and professional development when used positively but also, a catalysis of destruction for the human and the human psychology when used spuriously and hypocritically. The best way to take profit from it is in using of that religion wisely. For the professional reason, this work will help friends and British literature's lovers to enlarge their knowledge about other aspects of *Oranges Are Not Only Fruit*, which is certainly one of the best novel tackling religious problems and as a matter of fact, providing them with elements to debate and discuss more vividly on British literature and civilization.

2.1.4. Research Methodology

To gather the needed data, we made an online research to have access to information on the author, the book and to

identify the different works that have been previously done on the subject. Secondly, we also used Literature research to broaden the data we had from the online research. After gathering the needed data, some analysis has been performed on the basis of the novel. The first analysis we performed is the stylistic analysis. The second analysis we performed is the Gustav Freytag's analysis.

2.1.5. Limit of the study

The work is a personal view on religion and human that has been described in the novel. As such they still have many other aspect of the book that can be emphasized.

2.1.6. Littérature review

The present study has to deal with the building roman genre mainly the semi-autobiographical category. The choice of this literary genre is not for free. But *Orange Are Not The Only Fruit* is neither a full aubiographical novel nor a full fictional novel. In fact, it deals apart with the life of the Jeanette Winterson and also some mythical intuitions have occurred that have no link with the Autor's real life. So, the the choice of the Semi-autobiographical genre for it's decryption.

III. GENERAL OVERVIEW ON THE NOVEL

3.1. The author

Born on August 27, 1959 in Manchester, Jeanette Winterson is an English writer whose fame came with her first book, *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*, a semi-autobiographical novel about sensitive teenage girl rebelling against convention. Other novels explore gender polarities and sexual identity and later ones the relations between humans and technology. She broadcasts and teaches creative writing. She has won a Whitbread Prize for a first novel, a BAFTA Award for Best Drama, the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize, the E.M Forster Award and the St. Louis Literary Award, and the Lambda Literary Award twice. She holds an Official of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) and a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE), and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Jeanette Winterson is not only a feminist writer but also, she is a great personality, leader in the British Empire as an OBE and CBE. This political function helps her to contribute in the development of the country. The fact here is to know how was she raised, formed, and educated since her childhood to be able to undertake this function as a woman that even a lot of British men didn't do.

3.1.1. Childhood and school

Jeanette Winterson was born in Manchester and adopted by Constance and John William Winterson on January

1960. She grew up in Accrington, Lancashire, and was raised in the Elim Pentecostal Church. She was raised to become a Pentecostal Christian missionary, and she began evangelising and writing sermons at the age of six. By the age of 16, Jeanette Winterson had come out as a lesbian and left home. She soon after attended Accrington and Rossendale College, and supported herself at a variety of odd jobs while reading English Oxford University.

3.1.2. Early career

After she moved to London, Winterson wrote her first novel, *Oranges Are Not The Fruit*, which won the 1985 Whitbread Prize for the First Novel. Jeanette Winterson adapted it for television in 1990. Her novel „The Passion’ was set in Napoleonic Europe.

3.1.3. Personal Life & legacy

Jeanette was raised to be a missionary. This did and didn't work out. Discovering early the power of books, she left home at 16 to live in a Mini and get on with her education. After graduating from Oxford University, she worked for a while in the theatre and published her first novel at 25. *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit* is based on her own upbringing but using herself as a fictional character. Jeanette has also written children's books, non-fiction and screenplays. She is professor of New Writing at the University of Manchester. Jeanette lives in the Cotswold in a wood and in Spitalfields, London. She believes that art is for everyone and it is her mission to prove it.

Contrary to some children who earn legacies from their parents, Jeanette Winterson was not so lucky except the faith in Jesus Christ from her mother.

3.2. The Novel

3.2.1. General Conceptions in the Novel

Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit is a novel that tells many stories, but ultimately concerns itself with the very act of telling stories. The juxtaposition of legends and myths with the life of the main character, Jeanette, questions the reality of the stories told by the narrator. None of the stories can be verified with any fact; therefore they must all equally be accepted as fictions. "Oranges is the document, both true and false, which will have to serve for my life until I went to Oxford, and after that I daresay that whatever I tell you will be another document, one that is both true and false". She must both leave her home and leave her assumptions of how the world and she are defined.

3.3. Characters and their relationship

Generally, two main characters like Jeanette's mother and Jeanette are used to play the tale all other the novel plus 16 Other major characters

3.4. Structural and Stylistic Analyses of the Novel

3.4.1. Gustav Freytag's Analysis

Freytag's Pyramid is one of the oldest dramatic structures. Developed by Gustav Freytag in the mid-19th century, this structure has become so ubiquitous; many of the best writers have used it to write their own stories, even if they didn't know it was called Freytag's Pyramid. The Gustav Freytag's analysis is the analysis of the structure of the novel. This analysis is based on five elements, namely: the beginning, the rising action, the climax, the falling action and the resolution. Applied to seven parts of the novel plus introduction and resolution.

3.4.2. Stylistic Analysis of *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*

Stylistic analysis of a novel involves the analysis of various styles used in language to drive the desired meaning or theme of given texts. It involves identifying the various ways in which authors of literary works or poets convey their message. The important object of the writing: Homosexuality in Christianity. This event is quiet enough to be analysed.

3.4.3. Figure of speech

A figure of speech is a word or phrase that possesses a separate meaning from its literal definition. In the book of Jeanette Winterson we have a lot of figure of speech so we we just enumerated some like: allegory, repetition, metaphor, irony, hyperbole, simile.

IV. DISCUSSING RELIGION AND HUMAN AND PERSPECTIVES

4.1. Critical Exploration of Religion and Human.

The decryption of religion and human in the present novel involves first of all an

exploration of it. The opening of the novel starts with the Geneses, whose corpse will be used to illustrate the Christianity as the main focus in the novel. Winterson titles the eight chapters of her book after the first eight chapters of the Old Testament. Winterson's appropriation of the titles relates to her desire to illustrate the relativity and the subjectivity of various texts. At the same time, the themes of Winterson's chapters roughly correspond with the themes of the biblical books.

Based on that exploration, *Oranges* focused mainly on the Christianity and human. Even if some imaginary skid have been occurred as fictions in the book, the keys factors that well illustrate this aspect of the novel are not only its chapter's names and their contents comparatively to the messages of the holy Bible but also, the community's faith

in the Lord. Whereas, regarding to some characters attitude, all critic cannot be escaped.

4.2. Religion and Human

Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit by Jeanette Winterson is one of the most popular British semi-autobiographical book. The novel is mainly about a lesbian girl who grows up in an English Pentecostal community. The present critical analysis is focused on the religion and human. *Oranges Are Not The only Fruit* started with Human life in society under the domination of Christianity. The unholy in Christianity is the core problem to be solved. The religion should be a root of the peace, the love, the compassion of each other among Human but the story illustrates the evils of both, first of all Jeanette's mother and who leads mistakenly Jeanette herself in the same kind of ungodliness. In fact, Jeanette's mother is a very dogmatist woman who "had never heard of mixed feeling" (Page17), except the holy speech of God. Whereas, Jeanette's mother is characterized by hypocrisy, unlovely toward her neighbors, disrespectful for the men and their valor in the society. She is the one of the most devout members of her congregation, but a close examination of her actions shows her religiousness does not parallel her sincere goodwill to others. Most obviously the lack of charity in her heart can be seen in the way that she treats Jeanette.

4.2.1. Personal Stand on Religion and Human

Christianity is an important religion in which the world have to trust because it deals with the speed of God based on the holly Bible. See all the miracles that God has been doing so far, there is no efficient argument anywhere to contradict his goodness. Whereas, there is no complete union among Christianity's churches. What is the source of several ambiguities.

4.3. Perspectives

As perspectives, we have to behave due to God's speech and principles in the Bible, objectively and no subjectively. It's to mean that Human beings have to keep the speech of the God in the holy Bible original without any modification as personal stand that can be published as an hypocritical truth. In the Bible of God, things have been already said down and that was that so, what we have just to do as Human beings is to meditate them well and behave correctly like it is recommended otherwise, our faith today will destroy the world later and from our generation to the next generations, the Christianity will become an important root of sin and evil in the World because it may totally focus on lies, personal stands and hypocrisies. The important f religion can be clarified in several domains so, social, intellectual and professional domains are mentioned.

4.3.1. Social domain

In social domain, the religion performs the compassion, the love, the moral to form a good human society to the humanity. Removing these concepts, the world will face a serious problem of racism, of situations of war frequently so that too much destructions may occur. It teaches also the general union among human beings. Judicially, Christianity is about to defend the human right.

4.3.2. Intellectual domain

Religion gives people something to believe in, provides a sense of structure and typically offers a group of people to connect with over similar believers. These facets can have a large positive impact on mental health. Religiosity reduces suicide rates and toxicomania. It contributes to the education of the children from childhood up to teenage age. Ritually, it helps people to cope with difficult life situation. Religion provides structure, regularity and predictability.

4.3.3. Professional domain

Concerning the professional domain, religion helps numerous human to define their carrier due to the role they play in the church so that they become famous singers, guitarists, middlemen.

V. CONCLUSION

We use literature to explore the novel. After exploring and analyzing the novel, we discover that religion has numerous positives effects on human. The problem is that the recommendations on which the religion is based to be so important to human are bad predicted and understood. Otherwise, all the Christianity is worshiping the same God while the principles and the manners of viewing the world of each are sometime different. So, we assist some bad behavior from the members of the church of God. Through the study of the novel, the realities we perceived are the religion and human as root. The first root found in the book is hypocrisy in faith, and then followed other source, we identify from researches. The second root is the ineptly assignment on which Jeanette's mother rises Jeanette that will finally conduct her to lesbianism contrary to the church's goals and recommendations. Sometimes, religion appeared difficultly to be handled by human. So, we found wise to recommend some actions to be taken in the framework of handling it. The first action to be taken is to try to maintain the speech of God throughout the holy Bible safe, original and have a full faith in God. The second action is the to cultivate for the general love, compassion, help of each other and avoid the racism, the jealousy, the hypocrisy all other the world by knowing that the world is only one like the Bible recommended.

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Social Expectations and Stigmas: Unveiling the Gendered Face of Discrimination: *Based on True Events of Life*

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Abstract—While societal discourse often focuses on female discrimination, men also face social stigmas and gender-disparity in various aspects of life. This paper explores the often-overlooked realities of male disadvantage, focusing prevalent social expectations and discrimination against men in the society.

Keywords— *Discrimination, Social expectations, Male stigma, Mental health*



I. INTRODUCTION

While the fight for gender equality has always been focused towards women, the conversation often neglects the realities of gender-based challenges faced by men. This paper aims to shed light on the often-overlooked issue of discrimination against men in society.

Despite progress towards gender equality, men continue to encounter social stigmas and harmful stereotypes that limit their opportunities and well-being. These community expectations and biases become evident in various aspects of life, from emotional expression and mental health to caretaking roles and workplace dynamics.

II. METHODOLOGY

This paper has been written after conducting several social experiments on both men and women in the society also interviews of various teens have been taken in which teens were asked about their past traumas, their experiences, and the pressure of being a man or woman.

2.1 Taking interviews was the first preference as it helps to understand the mental state of people better and helps to analyse the state of society also, the paper has been written after talking to various people

2.2 An extremely comfortable ambience was created so that the subjects can relax and explain better

2.3 Interview format was unstructured

2.4 The identity of the subjects has been kept hidden for privacy purposes

III. MENTAL HEALTH

Mental well-being of an individual depends upon many factors as told below:

3.1 Family: Family can be the comfort zone for an individual or become the place from where all mental health problems start to occur saying only family is very vague there can be many problems related to family as said below:

3.2 Communication gap: Lucid communication is the key to avoid misunderstandings but many a times there is a lack of communication between the family members which further leads to family stress which kills the spirit of family well-being and makes everyone in the family go through tough times including teens making them suffer from depression and anxiety

3.3 Being orthodox: Conservative mindsets of the family make men and women suffer in the family who have modern thoughts this also becomes the reason for miscommunication between the people in family this mindset affects the other way too by destroying the society as, if kids grow up by learning from this orthodox mindset, they will teach the same to their kids.

3.4 A critical Jointure : During a pivotal phase of human development, a sense of isolation can arise. Individuals may yearn for unwavering familial support.

However, when this support is inadvertently lacking, a cascade of negative emotions can ensue. Depression and anxiety may take root, fuelled by a perceived lack of understanding from the very people one expects to be a constant source of solace.

3.5 Intergenerational Disparity: The divergence in values and perspectives across generations can sometimes lead to a sense of dissonance within families. This is particularly evident when it comes to evolving social norms, such as the roles of men and women. Steering these differences can be a challenge, as each generation seeks to reconcile their own experiences with the changing world around them.

IV. TRADITIONALLY GENDERED EXPECTATIONS AND THE BURDEN OF RESPONSIBILITY

Socially constructed roles have historically defined a rigid division of labour within families. This has often manifested in the undue pressure placed upon men to serve as the sole bread providers. This phenomenon transcends age demographics, impacting not only adult males but also adolescent boys, particularly those who hold the distinction of being the only child of their gender within the family structure. However, a crucial disconnect exists. These individuals, both young and old, frequently lack awareness of the societal underpinnings that perpetuate this pressure. They misinterpret it as an inherent responsibility, an intrinsic character trait rather than a learned behaviour. Consequently, when faced with the unpreventable challenges of fulfilling these delusional expectations, they may internalize blame and experience feelings of failure.

V. THE WORK ENVIRONMENT: A FOUNDATION OF WELL-BEING

The workplace, encompassing both professional and academic settings, serves as a primary space for individuals to dedicate a significant portion of their time. The prevailing atmosphere within this environment exerts a profound influence on mental well-being. A positive and supportive work environment fosters a significant reduction in anxiety and stress, ultimately contributing to a more fruitful and rewarding experience.

VI. THE ONSET OF ADOLESCENCE AND ITS IMPACT

The onset of adolescence marks an essential period in human development, characterized by significant hormonal fluctuations. These biological shifts can exert a profound

influence on a teenager's mental health. Mood regulation becomes a more intricate process, potentially leading to heightened emotional instability. This increased vulnerability can create fertile ground for the disproportionate emotional triggers.

VII. ADVERSITY AND THE ADOLESCENT MIND

Adversity and the Adolescent Mind: Adolescents who have gone through trauma, such as abuse, neglect, or the loss of a loved one, have more vulnerability to mental health challenges. These experiences can exert profound influence on the developing brain, potentially hindering its capacity for emotional intelligence and regulation.

VIII. PROBLEMS FACED BY MEN

Men have always been a victim to discrimination, but the society only acknowledges the problems faced by women in the society. Not only men but also boys are victim to social expectations and stigmas.

8.1 Emotional restrictions: Men are usually told not to express their emotions openly from an early age which later makes them feel overwhelmed and emotionally tiered they start to believe that expressing emotions make them weak

8.2 The Breadwinner complex: Often in society men are taken as the bread winners and they experience a lot of pressure to earn a living society makes them believe that taking any financial help from their female counterpart makes them weak which is not true, men have to struggle a lot to prove themselves and become sufficient for the family alone

8.3 The career expectations: Men are usually told to do the "Manly Jobs" medical professions, engineering, etc are considered as manly jobs which is not true. Being a chef or being in hotel management is not bad but society makes men believe that these jobs are feminine and are not meant for men, hence men are discouraged from pursuing their dream careers.

8.4 Physical health: Men tend to engage in riskier behaviors and avoid preventive healthcare, leading to higher rates of preventable health problems. The reason to avoid medication is the pressure to look strong

8.5 The Stoic Ideal: Redefining Masculinity: Men are usually trained to resist any emotional connect or any sort of confrontation about trauma or difficulties, this is how masculinity is defined in the society and going the other way around is considered feminine

8.6 Manipulation: Men tend to fall for a manipulation more than women do as they are not used to love and care so they cannot differentiate between the real and fake care making them vulnerable to manipulation in relationships both personal and professional.

IX. THE PSYCHOLOGY CREATED

9.1 While facing the challenges of life, men are expected to elegantly hide the pain behind a mask of silence and strength. Society conditions them from a young age and frowning emotions as 'unmanly' as weakness. This pressure over time shapes how men view themselves, making them bury any hint of vulnerability within. Even when struggling, most feel that projecting an appearance of being calm is paramount, leading to emotional detachment from people around them. Many want to connect, but the burden of unexpressed feelings creates walls, making it more difficult for partners to comprehend them.

9.2 This form of emotional restraint has the potential to create a gap in understanding. Women tend to assume that men require no assistance and are always strong. Men's silence does not express any emotion which can easily be misconstrued as distanced affection. In reality, numerous men do yearn for comfort and connection but lack the capacity to vocalize this necessity. Such lack of expression can frustrate women, further cultivating emotional voids between both parties.

9.3 These same expectations follow men into the workplace. Regardless of whether they are dealing with mental or physical issues, they tend to push through for fear of appearing weak or inadequate. Their attempts often seem futile and result in loneliness and invisibility. They smile through pain, laugh when they're hurting, and carry hidden burdens because they feel no one would like to listen to a man who is cribbing about issues all the time

9.4 Somewhere along the way, society convinced men that tears are shameful. Many grew up hearing that "real men don't cry." As a result, many learned to hold it all in—to tough it out, no matter what. But emotions don't disappear; they pile up. And when grief or sadness comes, they don't know how to let it out. Behind the stoic front often lies someone longing to be seen, to be heard, and to simply be allowed to feel.

9.5 Men also get wrongly accused sometimes by a woman at their workplace for any sort of thing but we never try to investigate the case fully before being prejudice that if he is a man he must be wrong and girl must be right just because she is a girl we never try to see the situation from the man's perspective. It is crucial to acknowledge that accusations within the workplace, regardless of the parties involved,

require thorough and unbiased investigations. Unfortunately, there can be instances where preconceived notions may influence the initial perception of a situation. This can lead to a predisposition towards one party's narrative, potentially hindering a fair and accurate resolution. To ensure a just outcome, a comprehensive investigation that considers all perspectives is essential. By prioritizing impartiality throughout the process, we can safeguard the rights of both the accused and the accuser.

X. THE EMBEDDED VICTIM MENTALITY

10.1 Women are considered soft delicate and sometimes weak because men are believed to be the strong and tough gender this starts giving men the superiority complex and women start to believe that they are weak or not as capable as men which is biologically true but not socially.

10.2 People start to give sympathy to women even if it is not needed and make them believe that they need pity.

10.3 Some women revolt against this discrimination, but get hate for not accepting the societal norms and going against it. When women accept their fate and start to believe that they are the weaker section they get exploited.

10.4 Everywhere women are encouraged to take male validation in every decision of their life, when they grow up in such atmosphere they get trained to believe that they are not worthy of taking their own decisions. This makes them mentally weaker and dependent on male counter parts.

10.5 At the end this up-bringing fosters a sense of victim hood in women which at last forces them to accept injustice

XI. THE MALE EGO AND IT'S INFLATION

11.1 The concept of a prevalent "male ego" has been a topic of discussion for some time. This notion suggests a psychological proneness in men that fosters a sense of superiority. It's further associated with justifications for anger management issues and unilateral decision-making.

11.2 It can be argued that certain societal norms contribute to a sense of inflated male ego. While men may not be solely responsible for this phenomenon, their growing years spent within a framework where female members of the family traditionally accept the superiority complex of men and start to justify it can undoubtedly create an environment where such an attitude is normalized. This, in turn, reinforces the notion of male dominance.

11.3 While it may be true that some individuals can suppress their ego around loved ones, this ability is often

limited. There may be instances where deeply ingrained self-importance manifests, creating dissonance within strong relationships that value equality. When faced with such behaviour, partners who are unwilling to tolerate such a dynamic may struggle to find understanding in the moment...

11.4 The potential for true gender equality hinges upon the fostering of positive masculinity from a young age. This involves instilling a clear understanding of appropriate conduct within boys, emphasizing respect for all individuals regardless of gender. By emphasizing the biological distinction between genders, rather than perpetuating artificial social constructs, we can cultivate a society where self-respect, not ego, is the driving force.

11.5 The development of resilience in men can be fostered through a collaborative effort with women. This requires women to embody steady strength and reject victim-hood. By challenging the outdated notion of women as delicate roses in need of male protection.

11.6 Moving beyond the inflation of egos, a truly balanced society thrives on mutual respect. By nurturing a foundation of love, providing emotional and physical support tailored to individual needs, and demonstrating genuine consideration, women can empower men without seeking dominance. Only through this collaborative approach can we create a society free from the shackles of gender-based discrimination.

XII. CONCLUSION

Through all-inclusive analysis of various viewpoints, a captivating argument emerges: societal expectations have often placed disproportionate burdens on men. This pressure manifests in the form of emotional suppression, and the dismissal of their experiences.

Historically, the narrative surrounding gender roles has focused on the challenges faced by women. However, this half-told story neglects the emotional tax on men expected to be stoic providers, suppressing vulnerability and neglecting their own needs. This ingrained expectation has led to a situation where men are perceived as incapable of experiencing pain, a prejudice that reduces emotional expression and fosters a sense of silent suffering.

Furthermore, the society often overlooks the sacrifices made by men. The responsibility to fulfil familial aspirations while neglecting personal needs and desires becomes a normalized behaviour. On the other hand, women's sacrifices are readily acknowledged, highlighting a double standard.

This imbalance is evident in how societal judgment swings based on decisions. When a woman prioritizes living with her husband's parents and taking care of them, she is known as "duty conscious" and "caring". However, a man making the same choice for his wife's parents is deemed "weak" or sometimes a "Wife's Slave." This hypocrisy exemplifies the need for a shift in our understanding of gender roles.

12.1 Seeking Harmony Through Mutual Understanding

Moving forward, achieving true equality requires a collaborative effort. Men must acknowledge and appreciate the contributions women make, both emotionally and professionally. Also, women need to recognize the emotional burdens men carry and the sacrifices they make.

A crucial step is for men to re-evaluate their perception of women. Women are not fragile beings in need of constant protection. Instead, they are strong and capable individuals seeking partnership and support, not dominance. By having mutual respect and understanding, men and women can empower each other to reach their full potential.

Ultimately, a future free from the barriers of rigid societal expectations requires a collective effort. When we recognize the value of both genders and celebrate their contributions, we pave the way for a more harmonious, loving and equitable society for our future generations.

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- [2] No secondary sources such as books, academic journals, websites, or reports were consulted or cited.
- [3] The findings and interpretations reflect the authors' direct engagement with the subject matter.
- [4] All insights were developed independently without the influence of existing published literature.



Writing English through the lens of the senior high school students: A phenomenological inquiry

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Abstract— Writing is an indispensable skill in various life contexts. Improving students' writing skills is necessary for effectively communicating ideas, persuading others, and self-expression. However, writing is considered the most difficult skill, requiring massive effort and mastery of the rules. Students should possess knowledge of grammar, structure, meanings, vocabulary, and other prerequisites for effective writing. Hence, this study used the transcendental phenomenological research design to describe the lived experiences of Grade 12 students in writing English at Kapingkong National High School. The researcher collected data through criterion sampling, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Content experts validated interview questions. Thematic analysis revealed relevant themes: Positive outlook, Goal-oriented writing, Writing proficiency, Self-assessment in writing, Grammar problems, Disheartening organizational skill, Scarcity of time, Inevitable ambiguity, Problems on highfalutin terms, Age and learning gap, Technology and communication, Language barrier, Negative outlook, Academic help-seeking behavior, Learning and writing styles, Language resource, Writing routines, English writing competence, Learning and writing styles, and Teacher's feedback. The research findings suggested that many Grade 12 students struggled to compose grammatically accurate English paragraphs. The study revealed that students' English writing was mostly hindered by a lack of proficiency in English tenses, grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and other related factors. Furthermore, the primary factors contributing to students' inadequate writing skills in English included a lack of imaginative concepts, anxiety related to writing, insufficient structural organization, and an overreliance on peers. This highlighted the need for a learning and development program for students who required assistance enhancing their writing skills.



Keywords— Creative Writing, Students, Experiences, Phenomenology, English.

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is undeniably an indispensable talent in a variety of contexts. As one of the language abilities, writing is crucial for communicating a person's thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and attitudes. People are adept at sharing and communicating with others through writing. Individuals may write for their pleasure or other reasons.

The purpose of writing for students is to familiarize them with English. Writing is one way to talk to someone.

Students' writing skills are very important to how well they do in school because they must write most of their assignments, tests, reports, and study papers. In the same way, writing is an ability that can help students improve not just their English writing but a variety of other skills.

English is used worldwide as a lingua franca among people from different cultures, ethnic, and social backgrounds (Dewi, 2017). One of the most crucial skills for English teachers is the ability to effectively teach

writing in primary schools, an essential component of English language instruction. Writing lessons have been provided to pupils throughout their early childhood when they were only beginning to learn how to form letters properly.

The ability to write well is a crucial linguistic proficiency. Teaching writing focuses mostly on the process rather than the result. Writing encompasses more than the mere organization of letters to construct words, phrases, or paragraphs; it presents a formidable challenge to acquire proficiency in this skill. The academic domain encompasses various components, such as lexical and syntactic choices, structural arrangement of text, lucidity of meaning, and coherence of concepts (Keller et al., 2020; Yeh, 2020). Acquiring writing proficiency necessitates extensive practice and regular engagement to develop and refine this valuable ability. It is suggested that to generate high-quality written work, the author must undergo an extensive procedure, according to Martarini et al. (2020). The production of a proficiently written work necessitates utilizing a minimum of four procedures by the writer, namely prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing.

Writing is essential to effective English and speaking, reading, and listening. Writing involves numerous processes at once (Ling, 2016). School writing assignments foster better penmanship and greater intellectual progress via problem-solving and critical thinking. Getting better at writing is a struggle. However, the task itself is usually interesting. Focus is an issue for some kids, especially when writing. Quality writing requires much background knowledge; therefore, students should be interested in the subject. The student's command of English grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, spelling, and sentence structure is essential for effective writing.

More students' English writing abilities could improve at Kapingkong National High School (KNHS). Based on the observation data, students have certain writing challenges. Consequently, they needed more vocabulary mastery, struggled with tenses, struggled with acceptable grammar and sentence structure mastery, and struggled to organize their thoughts, especially in academic writing.

Based on the interview with the English teachers in KNHS, it was evident that most students struggled to master vocabulary. Students still required additional vocabulary and assistance to comprehend the meaning of challenging words used in English lectures. Additionally, students must work harder to commit the words they read or heard in the book to memory. The inability of students to employ the words in various circumstances is the other contributing element.

Language students may focus on developing their vocabulary, the foundation for language proficiency. In teaching English, especially at an early age, there are many things to be concerned about, including vocabulary (Katemba, 2020). Vocabulary is several words a language has (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, 2017). Megawati and Mandarani (in Megawati, 2016) argue that students' frequent struggles with speaking English result from their lack of vocabulary proficiency. Their ability to speak and write is low because they need more vocabulary. Sometimes, the students were less motivated to learn English, or the teacher, the media or method used by the teacher could have been more attractive (Saputri, 2020).

Various research on writing English skills only centered on upper secondary education, impacts of video making and blended learning, challenges faced by students and teachers on writing, use of Plotagon, the effect of Canva, process approach, using Facebook to develop grammar discussion and writing skills in English for university students, the problems faced by the teachers in developing English writing, students' assessment in writing, and integrated approaches to improve students writing skills for students majoring English (Keller et al., 2020; Yeh, 2020; Quvanch & Na, 2020; Moses, & Mohamad, 2019; Guzmán et al., 2019; Yundayani et al., 2019; Durga & Rao, 2018; Ahmed, 2016; Bilal et al., 2013; Javed, 2013; Tangpermpoon, 2008).

However, research on students' real experiences, including their happiness, contentment, and difficulties while learning English through writing, is sparse. As a result, an empirical study has been conducted to investigate and characterize the writing experiences of Grade 12 students. Furthermore, this study aimed to explore and understand the challenges the Grade 12 students encountered and the adaptive strategies they utilized in the challenges they faced in writing English.

Research Questions

This study's central question was: *How do Grade 12 students describe their lived experiences in writing English at Kapingkong National High School (KNHS)?* It also sought to answer the following sub-questions:

1. How do the Grade 12 students describe their joys, satisfaction, and fulfillment in writing English?
2. Do Grade 12 students encounter challenges in writing English?
3. What are the adaptive strategies the Grade 12 students utilized for writing English?

II. METHODS

Research Design

This study used a Transcendental Phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of Grade 12 students at Kapingkong National High School in writing English. Phenomenology investigates what is experienced and how it is experienced (Neubauer et al., 2019), aiming to describe and understand these lived realities (Morley et al., 2017). Data were collected through criterion sampling, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The researcher focused on identifying key themes and adaptive strategies students used to overcome challenges in writing English based on their narratives.

Participants of the Study

The participants were ten (10) Grade 12 students of KNHS taking Creative Writing subject for the School Year 2022-2023. The names of the participants were coded or undercovered to protect their confidentiality.

Research Instrument

The study used a semi-structured interview to gather personal experiences, attitudes, and perceptions related to the research topic (DeJonckheere et al., 2019). The researcher developed the interview questions, checked them with the adviser, and validated them by four Master Teachers and one School Head to ensure content validity. With participants' consent, the interviews were audio-recorded for transcription and analysis, with assurances of confidentiality. Additional tools included a questionnaire validation form, interview protocols, an informed consent form, and a transcription guide.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher secured approval from the School Principal and obtained informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality. Interviews were scheduled with health protocols observed, and responses were audio-recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed.

To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher established credibility through consistent participant responses and continuous data analysis. Dependability and confirmability were ensured by aligning analytical processes with research standards and maintaining neutrality in interpretation (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). An audit trail, field notes, color coding, and code names were used to document and organize data accurately.

Validity was enhanced by seeking alternative perspectives, conducting peer debriefing with the research adviser, and clustering interpretations. Member checking was used during interviews to verify participants'

responses. Data saturation was achieved when no new insights emerged, including from a participant with a unique perspective.

Data Analysis Method

The researcher used thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke (2006) to identify and interpret patterns within the data. This involved transcribing and reviewing interviews, generating initial themes from grouped codes, and refining them to align with participants' responses and the research framework. Each theme was clearly defined, with saturation reached when no new insights emerged. The final report highlighted key themes, and member checking ensured the accuracy of participants' perspectives.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the study's results and discusses the implications of data gathered through an interview guide questionnaire during the interview conducted with the participants. Twenty (20) relevant themes were articulated through difficult procedural data analysis and interpretation. They were all synthesized from 189 formulated meanings, 66 initial themes, and 36 clustered themes. The identified relevant themes are as follows:

Theme 1: Positive Outlook

This theme characterizes the participants' enthusiastic and emotionally connected perceptions of writing in English. It showed how students viewed writing as not merely an academic exercise but a personally meaningful and fulfilling activity promoting emotional well-being and self-growth.

The participants' reflections demonstrated their strong emotional ties to the writing process. For instance, one student shared: *"Yes, I feel joyous while writing English. I feel satisfied while writing English. Knowing that I can put my thoughts and feelings into words makes me satisfied with my capability. Yes, I feel fulfilled while writing English. Writing in English increases my joy to the point that I want to write more and more using the language."* – S3. This utterance reflected a deep sense of joy, satisfaction, and personal accomplishment, emphasizing how writing became a vehicle for *self-expression* and emotional fulfillment.

Another participant expressed a sense of achievement in overcoming challenges: *"Yes, most of the time, I experience writing fulfillment rather than the feeling of satisfaction. I feel fulfilled whenever I can surpass a challenging academic requirement that needs intensive skill and effort in writing or establish a foundation from the knowledge I produce, which needs to be maintained at*

the end of writing or discussion.” – S5. This illustrated how academic demands served as motivational forces, encouraging students to improve their skills and gain a sense of pride in their accomplishments.

Research supported that writing fostered creativity, emotional health, and cognitive development (Nikutowski, 2019; Jose, 2019). It helped reduce stress, enhanced memory and brought joy through expressive freedom. Moreover, Purwanti (2019) emphasized that a supportive and engaging classroom environment contributed to students’ satisfaction and motivation, making them more open and confident in writing. Most participants reported being either highly satisfied or satisfied with their writing experiences, reflecting only slight differences in satisfaction levels. This reinforced the idea that a positive attitude toward writing in English enriched the learning experience and promoted personal and academic growth.

Theme 2: Goal-oriented Writing

This theme describes the Grade 12 students’ strong sense of purpose and determination in their writing practices. Their motivation extended beyond merely completing academic tasks—they were driven to improve their skills and gain validation through their accomplishments.

One participant shared: *“Yes. Writing in English can also bring a sense of accomplishment, especially when I have completed a difficult writing assignment or essay.”* – S2. This response indicated that the student experienced a sense of achievement when completing challenging writing tasks, suggesting that overcoming academic difficulties brought personal satisfaction and pride.

Another student reflected on the internal fulfillment that came from meeting writing objectives: *“Fulfillment in English writing comes to me when I have determined that I have reached my goal and purpose to convey a certain message.”* – S3. This response demonstrated a clear, purpose-driven mindset. For this student, effectively communicating a message through writing was key to feeling fulfilled, showing a mature approach to writing centered on intentional expression.

Praise also played a vital role in motivating students to write by reinforcing specific strengths in their work, which boosted confidence and encouraged persistence (George, 2018). According to the Emotional Response Theory (Peng, 2021), positive teacher feedback fosters student happiness and engagement. Intrinsic motivation was likewise essential, driven by factors such as interest in the topic, relevant knowledge, and consistent feedback (Akyol & Aktaş, 2018). However, students’ willingness to write could decline if writing felt dull or burdensome,

making motivation a key element in sustaining growth and success in writing (Sugumlu et al., 2019).

Goal-oriented Writing reflected students’ views of writing as a means of accomplishing personal goals and a tool for meaningful communication. Their drive to reach specific writing outcomes enhanced their performance and deepened their emotional investment in the process.

Theme 3: Writing Proficiency

This theme encapsulates the students’ reflections on their current skill level in English writing, their awareness of growth, and their ongoing journey of improvement. Their responses showed a recognition of their capabilities and a forward-looking mindset focused on continued development.

One participant acknowledged a sense of uncertainty and a desire to improve: *“I was not too confident or quite uncertain about some of my work because I was still a high school student and could learn more at my future tertiary level.”* – S1. This response reflected an honest self-assessment and highlighted the student’s openness to growth. It showed that writing proficiency was a process and confidence would likely come with more experience and education.

In contrast, another student shared a more confident perspective, describing satisfaction with their writing accomplishments: *“It was great to see my ideas and thoughts come to life on paper cohesively and entertainingly. It was satisfying to watch my thoughts come together and know I had produced something worthwhile. Writing in English also allowed me to hone my language skills and expand my vocabulary, which was a rewarding experience.”* – S2. This narrative illustrated how writing was a creative outlet and a tool for academic growth. The student recognized the joy of expressing ideas clearly and appreciated the opportunity to enhance their vocabulary and linguistic precision.

The students’ reflections supported the idea that writing proficiency was vital to their academic development. Competence in writing enabled them to construct clear, coherent texts and articulate their ideas effectively—skills essential for academic success. According to Alahmadi and Foltz (2020), vocabulary acquisition is a critical component of communicative competence and is central to mastering the four language skills. However, vocabulary learning remained one of the most difficult areas for learners, often requiring deliberate strategies to support retention and use.

Furthermore, Erenler and Cetin (2019) defined “written achievement” as the ability to express thoughts clearly and accurately in a second or foreign language.

Beyond its technical aspects, writing proficiency also contributed to critical thinking and meaningful communication, empowering students to engage with others and participate in academic discourse more effectively.

Writing Proficiency underscored the students' evolving relationship with English writing—from initial uncertainty to growing confidence and skill. Their experiences highlighted the dual role of writing as a measure of academic capability and a means for self-expression and intellectual development.

Theme 4: Self-assessment in Writing

This theme reflects how students used reflection and evaluation to improve their writing performance. The participants recognized the value of reviewing their work, identifying weaknesses, and applying effective strategies to strengthen their writing skills.

One participant emphasized the importance of revisiting and refining their work: *"I could make any reexamination of all the words or inputs that I extracted."* – S5. This response reflected the student's awareness of the need for continuous improvement through careful review. The act of reexamining their output demonstrated an effort to enhance clarity and accuracy in writing, which was crucial for academic success.

Another student described how self-assessment enabled them to recognize areas of weakness and apply targeted strategies for improvement: *"As a student, I utilized those strategies through self-assessment. Those things or points where I was weak, I tried to help myself to make my learning process effective, particularly in writing English. And the moment I identified the effective way for me, then that was what I focused on to retain my learnings."* – S7. This statement showed a strong sense of self-awareness and responsibility for learning. The student used self-assessment to evaluate outcomes and refine their writing process based on what worked best for them.

The use of self-assessment aligned with the concept of independent learning, where students took an active role in directing their academic growth. Comert and Omer (2018) state that self-assessment helps learners evaluate their performance and shape future learning decisions. Banli (2014) found that writing classes incorporating self-assessment were more effective than traditional approaches, empowering students to take ownership of their learning.

Moreover, Houda (2018) noted that self-assessment fostered critical thinking and reflective skills, allowing students to become more autonomous and intentional in their learning. As students became more aware of their

progress and learning habits, their ability to write more effectively and independently improved.

Self-assessment in Writing underscored the importance of reflection as a tool for self-improvement. The participants demonstrated that, through ongoing evaluation of their writing practices, they could take meaningful steps toward becoming more capable, confident, and independent writers.

Theme 5: Grammar Problems

This theme reveals one of the most common and persistent challenges faced by Grade 12 students in English writing—the struggle to apply correct grammar consistently and confidently. Participants expressed their frustrations with grammar rules, which resulted in difficulty producing clear and coherent written output.

One participant shared their struggles with basic grammar components: *"I struggled with tenses and the correct choice of words. Then, with the spelling. The most challenging part for me was constructing those sentences and paragraphs."* – S1. This response illustrated the student's difficulty in organizing grammatically accurate content. It reflected the interconnected nature of writing challenges, where issues with vocabulary, structure, and sentence construction compounded the difficulty of writing effectively.

Another student described how the complexity of grammar rules and limited practice created barriers in their writing: *"For me, grammar in writing English was challenging due to its complicated rules, numerous exceptions, and variations between spoken and written English. Furthermore, many people did not have enough practice utilizing proper English grammar, making it difficult to write in English."* – S2. This comment emphasized how grammar was inherently complex and demanded consistent exposure and application for mastery.

Grammar-related difficulties were a significant concern in English writing classes. Students often encountered issues with subject-verb agreement, tenses, pronoun usage, articles, and sentence structure. These challenges led to confusion, anxiety, and reduced confidence in their writing abilities. As Moses and Mohamad (2019) pointed out, poor grammar—such as tense inconsistencies or incorrect spelling—undermines students' ability to convey meaning clearly.

Common problems included the misuse of tenses within sentences or across paragraphs, where students were often unsure which verb form matched the intended message. Spelling errors also occurred frequently, especially when students relied on phonetic spelling rather than learned conventions.

Improving grammar and spelling proficiency was essential for clarity and building writing confidence. According to Fareed et al. (2016) and Nyang'au Benard (2014), strengthening grammar knowledge helped reduce student anxiety and improve writing competence.

Grammar Problems captured the fundamental linguistic challenges that hindered student progress in writing. Addressing these issues through targeted instruction, frequent practice, and constructive feedback remained crucial in supporting students' journey toward proficient and confident English writing.

Theme 6: Disheartening Organizational Skill

This theme describes students' significant challenges in organizing their ideas and structuring their written work. Participants expressed frustration with translating their thoughts into a coherent and logically arranged composition.

One student participant pointed out the difficulty of arranging their ideas logically: *"How to organize my thoughts and ideas."* – S1. This brief yet insightful response highlighted the student's awareness of a critical challenge in writing: the need to present ideas in a clear, structured form. The difficulty in organizing ideas hindered the student's ability to craft well-structured essays and communicate effectively.

Another participant emphasized the importance of coherence in writing: *"Organization and coherence."* – S2. This comment underscored the struggle with sequencing ideas and ensuring that the flow of sentences and paragraphs made sense to the reader. Coherence was essential for maintaining the logical progression of an argument or narrative, and students struggled with this aspect, affecting their overall ability to write clear and effective essays.

The challenge of organizing ideas was a common issue among students, often leading to essays that lacked cohesion and clarity. The research found that nearly 69% of student essays showed a poor connection between sentences and paragraphs, reflecting a struggle with paragraph structure, topic development, and distinguishing between broad generalizations and specific details (Rahman & Sarker, 2019; Alfaki, 2015). Such organizational issues disrupted the writing flow and made it difficult for readers to follow the intended message.

Academic writing, which demands clarity, proper structure, and vocabulary, poses particular challenges for second-language learners (Ashrab & Rubab, 2020; Lebowitz, 2016). The difficulty of organizing thoughts into cohesive arguments or narratives often led to

frustration, reducing students' overall effectiveness in written communication.

Disheartening Organizational skills highlighted how the inability to organize ideas impacted students' writing performance. Addressing these organizational challenges through focused instruction and practice was essential to improving writing coherence and overall effectiveness.

Theme 7: Scarcity of Time

This theme highlights students' challenges in managing time effectively during the writing process. Participants expressed how time constraints affected their ability to plan, write, and revise their work, leading to stress and compromised quality.

One student explained the difficulty of managing time during writing activities: *"Time management in writing was difficult because it involved setting priorities, creating a schedule, and sticking to it. Time management did not require complex rules or years of practice to master. Good time management skills could have made writing easier and more efficient by reducing stress, increasing focus, and ensuring deadlines were met."* – S2. This response emphasized the crucial role of time management in writing. The student recognized that poor time management led to unnecessary stress and difficulty completing tasks on time, affecting both the quality and efficiency of their writing.

Another participant reflected on the negative impact of limited learning time on retention: *"The least effective was if we learned English in just a little period. Most likely, we forgot what we had learned. We learned in a little period."* – S4. This statement highlighted the consequences of insufficient instructional time, which hindered the students' ability to retain and apply what they had learned in writing. The lack of time affected their learning process and diminished their ability to master key skills and concepts.

Time constraints in writing are a common challenge for students, particularly when unprepared or do not have enough time to revise and refine their work. According to Foster (2015) and Winarso (2016), physical and mental readiness is vital for success in writing. Without adequate time, students struggle to engage meaningfully in the writing process, often rushing through tasks without the opportunity to reflect, revise, or experiment with different approaches.

Sufficient time is essential for developing ideas, revising drafts, and improving overall writing quality. When students are pressed for time, they may be unable to fully explore their thoughts or ensure their writing is clear

and cohesive, which can undermine the effectiveness of their communication.

Scarcity of Time revealed how limited time for writing tasks impacted students' ability to engage in the writing process fully. Addressing time management skills and ensuring sufficient time for learning and revision were crucial to improving writing quality and reducing stress.

Theme 8: Inevitable Ambiguity

This theme highlights how students grappled with ambiguity in writing, particularly when interpreting words in different contexts and dealing with inconsistent guidance. It revealed how uncertainty about word meanings and conflicting advice challenged students' writing clarity.

One participant discussed the difficulty of understanding the meaning of words in various contexts: *"This was not to say that making context clues was the least effective, but sometimes it was not easy to process because of the intention in writing and other factors. Sometimes, the meanings of the words got mixed up when used in various scenarios."* – S3. This response highlighted the challenge of interpreting or using words with multiple meanings, especially in writing that serves diverse purposes. The ambiguity of words in different contexts created confusion and hindered students' ability to convey their intended message.

Another student reflected on the confusion caused by inconsistent advice found online: *"Data and information acquired on the online platform were less applicable when not properly guided by an English writing expert; many trials and errors happened as I was trying to determine what strategy would be compatible and effective in my writing skill, and due to a multiplicity of writing advice found within online platforms, I was not able to arrive at any finality in terms of what strategy would be utilized and applied."* – S5. This comment revealed how the abundance of conflicting suggestions online contributed to confusion, making it difficult for students to adopt a clear, consistent approach to their writing. The overwhelming amount of advice led to a lack of resolution on the most effective strategies, further complicating the writing process.

Ambiguity in writing is a known issue, as it can lead to multiple interpretations that confuse the reader and disrupt the flow of communication (Nwala, 2015). Misunderstandings are common when ambiguous words or phrases are misinterpreted, which results in miscommunication and undermines the clarity of the writing. Studies have shown that many English terms are inaccurately translated or misused (Eddington, Degani, & Tokowicz, 2014), impacting the text's intended meaning.

Furthermore, students, particularly in secondary school, face ongoing challenges with grammar and vocabulary, which hinder their ability to write clearly and effectively (Adams & Keene, 2000). These issues are especially prominent in academic writing, where punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors contribute to ambiguity and comprehension difficulties (Hajar, 2019; Ahmed, 2017).

Inevitable Ambiguity revealed students' difficulties in overcoming word ambiguity and inconsistent guidance. Addressing these challenges requires focused instruction on vocabulary and context and the application of consistent writing strategies to improve clarity and reduce confusion.

Theme 9: Problems with Highfalutin Terms

This theme underscores students' difficulties encountering expressions beyond their literal meaning, such as idiomatic phrases and figurative language. Participants highlighted how such terms posed significant challenges in their writing and comprehension processes.

One student pointed out how idiomatic expressions and pronunciation contributed to their struggles: *"Idiomatic expressions and confusing pronunciation added to the difficulty."* – S2. This response reflected the frustration students felt when encountering phrases that could not be interpreted by looking at the individual meanings of the words; the difficulty in understanding idioms or phrases with non-literal meanings created barriers to clear communication and comprehension.

Another participant emphasized the abstract nature of figurative language, saying: *"Understanding certain figures of speech was the hardest because you could not take the meaning of each word in the phrase. Another was that other parts of the language, such as figures of speech, were difficult to understand. Also, you had to familiarize yourself with various references and the history of these figures of speech."* – S3. This statement illustrated the added complexity of interpreting figurative language, which required understanding the meaning of the phrase itself and having cultural and contextual knowledge to interpret it accurately. Students struggled with understanding the deeper meanings of metaphors, proverbs, and other figurative expressions, which often required familiarity with cultural references and historical context.

Students face difficulties with vocabulary acquisition, especially highfalutin terms and idiomatic expressions. These terms can be particularly challenging because students often struggle to select the correct meaning of words in context and interpret non-literal language. For example, idioms, metaphors, and proverbs require students

to make pragmatic inferences—considering the context, their knowledge of the world, and the speaker’s intent to understand the implied meaning (Sundaray et al., 2020). This process is cognitively demanding as it simultaneously balances the literal and implied meanings.

Despite the challenges, many speakers can interpret non-literal language quickly. However, understanding highfalutin terms and figurative speech can be especially difficult for learners with declining cognitive abilities or limited exposure to certain expressions.

The theme highlighted students' obstacles when encountering idiomatic expressions and figurative language. These challenges were linguistic and cultural, requiring broader knowledge and cognitive skills to decode the intended meaning.

Theme 10: Age and Learning Gap

This theme explores how students perceived the impact of age and developmental stages on their writing skills, particularly in spelling and vocabulary. The participants reflected on how their age influenced their learning experiences and writing performance.

One student shared that spelling mistakes were often minor and attributed them to their age and the hurried nature of academic tasks: *“The spelling, I think, because it was just a minor problem for my age at that time—just those difficult and unfamiliar words. Sometimes, I forgot the spelling. Sometimes, because I was in a hurry, I wrote the wrong words, like ‘great’ instead of ‘greet.’”* – S2. This response suggested that occasional errors were viewed as natural for their stage of learning, with time pressure and unfamiliarity contributing to mistakes. The student recognized these lapses as typical for their developmental phase rather than significant writing deficiencies.

As students aged, the complexity of writing expectations tended to increase, requiring accurate spelling and advanced sentence structures, expanded vocabulary, and the ability to self-regulate through planning, drafting, and revising (Belsky, n.d.). While younger learners typically excelled in pronunciation and fluency (Georgiou, n.d.), older learners often faced more cognitive demands in writing.

Beirovi and Huri-Beirovi (2017) found that younger students were more motivated and tended to achieve better language learning results than their older counterparts. On the other hand, Ozfidan and Burlbaw (2019) noted that while younger learners performed better in pronunciation and morphosyntax, older learners were stronger in reading and writing skills. Nevertheless, factors such as motivation, language exposure, and socioeconomic

background often play a more influential role in language learning than age alone (Hyland & Hyland, 2019).

Age and Learning Gap captured students’ self-awareness of the developmental challenges in writing. They recognized that age-related factors like cognitive maturity, exposure, and motivation influenced their writing fluency and accuracy. The theme also emphasized the importance of understanding these age-related differences to support learners effectively at every stage.

Theme 11: Technology and Communication

This theme signifies how technological limitations, particularly unstable internet access, fully affected students’ ability to engage in writing-related tasks and online learning environments. It underscores the challenges of relying on digital platforms for academic communication, instruction, and writing support.

One student explained their difficulty staying connected during critical learning periods: *“Sometimes, we could not access the internet due to intermittent connection. It made it hard to access the online environment.”* – S2. This statement highlighted the impact of unreliable internet connectivity on their ability to participate in writing activities, conduct research, and communicate effectively within virtual classrooms.

Although technology has the potential to enhance writing development by providing access to online tools, feedback, and research materials, poor internet access limits these advantages. Many students struggle with connectivity issues and distractions from non-academic websites, making it difficult to stay focused on educational content (Olatokun, 2016; Siraj, 2015). While mobile technology expanded learning opportunities (Ellore, 2014), its effectiveness was often compromised by barriers such as unstable access, lack of digital literacy, and minimal guidance.

Sahin (2010, as cited in Affum, 2022) argued that students may not fully benefit from online resources without proper supervision and direction. Therefore, educators play a crucial role in guiding learners toward credible academic platforms and fostering responsible use of technology for educational growth.

Technology and Communication shed light on the intersection between infrastructure and education, showing how limitations in connectivity could disrupt students’ writing development and overall learning experience. It also emphasized the importance of digital inclusion and structured guidance in online academic environments.

Theme 12: Language Barrier

This theme stresses how students’ reliance on translation from native dialects to English hindered their

writing development. It reflects the challenges of translating thoughts into another language, particularly when the translation process does not support personal understanding or internalization of English writing skills.

One participant expressed the difficulty of depending on others for translation: *“For me, the least effective is writing first in our dialect and letting someone translate it because it is not like finding my way how to learn.”* – S6. This statement highlighted the participant’s belief that relying on translation did not facilitate authentic learning, as it removed them from the direct cognitive process of thinking and composing in English.

Students often faced struggles with English due to limited vocabulary, rapid speech patterns, and the mental effort required to shift between languages. While translation served as a bridge to understanding, it was not merely a mechanical process but required sensitivity to cultural and contextual nuances (Simanjuntak, 2019; Bharathi, 2014).

Research supported that effective translation could improve communication and comprehension in multilingual learning environments (Napu & Hasan, 2019; Langga & Alico, 2020). However, successful translation demanded more than linguistic accuracy. It required sociocultural knowledge and the ability to adapt meaning between two languages.

Language Barrier revealed how indirect learning through translation could delay students’ writing fluency and independence. It underscored the need for instructional approaches that encourage students to think and write directly in English, fostering a more intuitive and confident use of the language.

Theme 13: Negative Outlook

This theme describes how students’ adverse experiences and lack of interest affected their engagement with writing and reading in English. It emphasizes the emotional and motivational barriers that limit their active participation and overall progress in language learning.

One participant shared their lack of fulfillment when writing about unfamiliar topics, stating, *“However, if the subject or topic is something I am not familiar with, I did not feel any fulfillment.”* – S9. This response illustrated how unfamiliar content reduced the student’s motivation and made writing a less satisfying experience, underscoring the importance of relevance and personal connection to writing prompts.

Another participant expressed how reading could become tedious and uninspiring, indicating, *“Writing was challenging. Also, reading books because sometimes I felt sleepy reading books.”* – S10. This statement reflected

how a negative attitude toward reading led to disengagement, likely impacting their writing ability.

Students commonly lack interest in writing when foundational skills—such as grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary—are weak (Anyiendah, 2017). Without these basic competencies, students often struggle to express their thoughts clearly, resulting in frustration and a loss of confidence. Writing, which requires both technical proficiency and critical thinking (Pratiwi, 2015), becomes a source of anxiety for many.

Motivation emerged as a crucial factor in overcoming these negative outlooks. Supportive environments, including encouragement and teacher praise, could rekindle student interest and promote perseverance (Gbollie & Keamu, 2017). Addressing emotional and motivational challenges, alongside skill development, was key to helping students develop a more positive and productive relationship with writing in English.

Theme 14: Academic Help-Seeking Behavior

This theme characterizes how students actively sought assistance from teachers, tutors, and peers to improve their writing skills and overcome academic challenges. It emphasizes students’ willingness to seek academic guidance and emotional encouragement, demonstrating self-awareness and resilience.

One participant explained how they turned to their teachers, especially those with English expertise, for clarification and support: *“The adaptive strategies that I used, sir, were by asking teachers, especially those who majored in English. If something were missing from the information I got from an acquaintance, I would ask my teacher, the subject teacher, or the adviser for information.”* – S1. This response showed how students recognized and addressed gaps in their understanding by consulting credible sources such as subject experts.

Another participant described how feedback from teachers and peers helped refine their writing skills: *“Seeking assistance from my teachers, tutors, or peers was frequently a highly beneficial method since it allowed me to obtain personalized comments and coaching on my writing. As a student, I could use adaptive strategies by identifying my weak points and getting assistance from teachers, tutors, or peers.”* – S2. This highlighted the importance of tailored feedback in the learning process and the student’s proactive approach to addressing their areas for improvement.

Help-seeking behavior was portrayed not as a weakness but a strength—a sign of students’ commitment to growth and improvement. According to Kwaah and Essilfie (2017), emotional support helps learners manage

stress, while Guevarra and Cimanés (2017) emphasized that social support, especially during academic pressure, is an essential coping mechanism. Participants affirmed that guidance from peers and educators helped them complete tasks and boosted their confidence in writing, underscoring the value of a supportive academic community.

By acknowledging their limitations and turning to others for assistance, students demonstrated autonomy and a positive learning disposition—crucial for long-term academic success.

Theme 15: Learning Concepts and Preference

This theme emphasizes how students developed their understanding of English writing through reflective learning, conceptual analysis, and wide reading. It emphasizes the importance of individual learning preferences and strategies in mastering language use and improving writing competence.

One participant explained how they made sense of unfamiliar vocabulary and incorporated it into their writing: *“The easiest to deal with was the changing meaning of words and their usage in the sentence because I could still comprehend them through their root words and nature. I simply had to incorporate them with my thinking abilities in order for me always to apply them in my writing. By doing so, I had programmed myself to convey what I wanted and needed using the necessary languages and intentions without being hampered by the challenges.”* – S3. This response reflected a logical and metacognitive approach to language learning, showing how students applied analytical thinking to overcome linguistic challenges.

Another participant emphasized the role of reading in refining their writing skills: *“I practiced how to gather ideas and inputs by being a wide reader. I utilized those adaptive strategies by making my strengths and weaknesses in writing more visible or identifiable and by ensuring that those adaptive strategies were put into actualization.”* – S5. This statement underscored how exposure to various texts enriched vocabulary and style and enabled self-evaluation and strategic application of learning methods.

Research supports the interdependence of reading and writing in second language acquisition. Extensive reading equips students with vocabulary, sentence structure, and content ideas, which they can transfer into their writing (Foster, 2015). Fareed et al. (2016) noted that students who regularly read gain more access to ideas and expressions, making writing more effective. Moreover, Murray (2020) argued that reading comprehension depends on decoding skills and background knowledge, vocabulary, and

awareness of linguistic patterns—skills that are equally essential for competent writing.

This theme highlighted how students’ learning strategies—whether through morphological analysis, conceptual reflection, or extensive reading—shaped their writing development. Encouraging such preferences and adaptive behaviors helps foster independent learners capable of constructing meaning through input (reading) and output (writing).

Theme 16: Language Resource

This theme stresses the diverse tools students utilize to enhance their English writing skills. Without immediate teacher support, students turned to digital and traditional resources to facilitate their learning. Their responses underscored a growing sense of autonomy and adaptability in acquiring and applying language knowledge.

One participant described their reliance on readily available search tools and dictionaries: *“Using those search engines, just like Google and Chrome. Because Google is mostly used because almost all students have mobile phones, and there is a Google application on their cellphones installed, it is more effective to use search engines like Google because not all the time teachers are available to ask them what is correct. Sometimes I use dictionaries when cell phones are prohibited and read articles on various topics.”* – S1. This response highlighted students’ practical use of technology and their resourcefulness in navigating academic challenges independently.

Another participant shared how multimedia resources blended entertainment and education, stating: *“For me, the most effective is watching English movies with subtitles because I can check the meaning of the words from the scene or action of the actors, and at the same time, I can hear the proper pronunciation and correct spelling. I use it whenever I have time at home.”* – S6. This illustrated an innovative learning strategy where visual and auditory cues supported language acquisition, particularly in vocabulary development and pronunciation.

These practices reflect what Alhatmi (2019) emphasized as essential for ESL learners—developing vocabulary and improving grammar through formal and informal means. The use of dictionaries, online platforms, and varied reading materials reinforced students’ understanding of language rules and fostered independence and confidence in writing. Furthermore, reading English texts for leisure and academic purposes helped students reduce errors, as consistent exposure to proper language structures solidified their writing competencies.

The findings suggested that access to digital and print resources empowers students to take ownership of their learning, especially in environments with limited instructional support. Encouraging the effective use of language tools—ranging from dictionaries to media content—can enhance self-directed learning and support long-term language development in writing.

Theme 17: Writing Routines

This theme captures the student participants' consistent and deliberate efforts to improve their writing proficiency through habitual practice. Regular writing emerged as a key adaptive strategy that fostered gradual yet meaningful language development.

One participant concisely stated, "*Writing regularly.*" – S2. Although brief, this response conveyed the importance of establishing a writing routine, emphasizing that consistent engagement in the writing process contributed to increased fluency, confidence, and overall familiarity with English.

Scholarly literature supports this view, noting that writing routines are critical in enhancing cognitive clarity, linguistic structure, and communicative competence (Hyatt, 2021; Sulak, 2018). Daily writing practices—such as journaling or free writing—expose learners to sustained language use, facilitating the acquisition of vocabulary, internalizing grammatical forms, and developing syntactic accuracy (Amelia, 2020; Nurmalasari, 2019). Such routines create a low-pressure environment where students can freely express their thoughts, experiment with language, and gradually improve their writing skills.

Furthermore, when complemented by regular reading, writing routines improve technical writing skills and reinforce comprehension and critical thinking, which are essential to academic success. The findings suggest that encouraging students to write consistently—even outside formal classroom settings—can be a powerful tool for cultivating long-term writing competence and self-assurance in English as a second language.

Theme 18: English Writing Competence

This theme emphasizes the student participants' capacity to apply effective strategies for organizing and articulating their thoughts in written English. It reflected their growing ability to navigate the complex academic writing process with increasing autonomy and structure.

One participant shared a practical approach that supported their writing development: "*Breaking down writing projects into smaller, more manageable portions and using outlines or graphic organizers to arrange thoughts were all good ways to get started.*" – S2. This statement demonstrated the student's strategic awareness

of initiating and structuring writing tasks, reflecting a foundational competence in managing writing demands.

Writing was recognized as a multifaceted cognitive process that required the coordination of several linguistic and metacognitive skills. It involved the clear organization and expression of thoughts through structured language, demanding attention to grammar, punctuation, syntax, and coherence (Tuba et al., 2019; Harmer, 2016). Moreover, writing served multiple communicative purposes—such as expressing ideas, informing, persuading, and reflecting—and was a core skill in academic contexts, where students were expected to produce essays, reports, and research outputs (McMahan et al., 2016).

The development of writing competence was best understood through its process-oriented nature, typically progressing through distinct but interconnected stages: *prewriting*, where ideas were generated; *organizing*, through outlining or diagramming; *drafting*, where initial versions were created; *revising*, to improve content and structure; and *editing*, where grammatical and mechanical accuracy was addressed. The student's use of outlines and graphic organizers aligned closely with this model, indicating a deepening understanding of writing as an iterative and strategic endeavor.

The participant's ability to break down tasks and employ prewriting tools reflected a maturing approach to writing that balanced creativity with control. It demonstrated a meaningful step toward academic literacy in English.

Theme 19: Learning and Writing Styles

This theme underscores the student-participant's strategies as they worked to overcome challenges in English writing. The theme reflected how students adapted their learning and writing approaches to enhance their proficiency, suggesting a growing awareness of their writing styles and needs.

One participant emphasized the importance of comparing linguistic structures to strengthen understanding, stating, "*Going back to the basics of language learning was the most effective since you could always have a comparative point of view from your mother tongue and vernacular to the English language.*" – S3. This approach underscored a metacognitive strategy based on cross-linguistic awareness. By leveraging their knowledge of their native language, the student used a comparative method to facilitate their learning of English, highlighting the role of linguistic structures in understanding writing. This approach allowed the student to connect new concepts in English with their existing language skills, reinforcing their understanding of the target language.

Another participant focused on self-directed learning and review as a key to their writing development, stating, *"I just wanted to be committed to learning such things as writing using English. Self-learning and self-study were also effective for me since we had little time to teach them step-by-step. I thought the most effective was reviewing for myself. Sometimes, we forget the rules of grammar due to circumstances. So, reviewing what I had learned was effective."* – S4. This statement revealed the student's commitment to maintaining and enhancing their writing skills through independent study. The approach reflected a personalized, individualized strategy for learning, where the student took ownership of their progress and used review to reinforce grammar rules and writing techniques. This method emphasized the importance of self-motivation and the ability to assess one's strengths and weaknesses in writing.

These two strategies demonstrated that effective writing development often required a combination of metacognitive, cognitive, and social strategies. The first participant's cross-linguistic approach relied on understanding language structures, while the second participant's focus on self-review involved ongoing reflection and practice. Both approaches aligned with the idea that successful writers engaged in continual learning and adaptation.

Furthermore, the strategies mentioned by the participants also aligned with research showing that effective writers typically used a mix of cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies (Maharani et al., 2018). Studies indicated that expert writers tended to use a broader range of strategies, with some demographic differences, such as women employing more strategies than men (Penuelez, 2017). These findings suggested that writing skills were not only about the technical aspects of writing, such as grammar and structure but also about the learning processes and strategies that writers developed and used to manage and improve their writing.

The theme demonstrated that learning and writing styles are deeply individual and could significantly influence how students approach and improve their writing. The student participants reflected on the importance of developing personalized approaches to enhance writing skills over time by utilizing various strategies, including cross-linguistic comparisons and self-directed review.

Theme 20: Teacher's Feedback

This theme highlights the importance of timely and constructive teacher feedback in enhancing students' writing abilities. The significance of feedback in guiding students' development was clearly expressed by one

participant, who stated, *"After these group activities, our teachers provided feedback as a group and individually, and through this, we could know where to improve our writing skills."* – S8. This statement emphasized how immediate and personalized feedback helped the student participants identify specific areas for improvement, allowing them to refine and strengthen their English writing skills.

Feedback plays a crucial role in the writing process, allowing students to recognize their strengths and weaknesses. Research supports the idea that effective feedback can significantly improve students' writing skills, as it helps them understand what they are doing well and where they need to focus more effort (Education Endowment Foundation, 2020a). However, the relationship between feedback and learning is complex; some studies show mixed results. For instance, feedback has had detrimental effects in some cases, suggesting that the mechanisms through which feedback influences learning are not entirely understood (Handley et al., 2017).

Despite these complexities, the importance of feedback remains clear, especially in the context of writing, where students need guidance to improve their skills. The constructive and personalized nature of the feedback provided in this study—whether individually or in groups—served as a powerful tool for guiding students toward writing proficiency. It allowed students to focus their efforts on specific aspects of writing, such as organization, clarity, or grammar, thereby promoting focused improvement.

The study also highlighted some challenges students and teachers face in writing instruction. Teachers are tasked with not only delivering feedback but also ensuring that students are able to engage with and apply it effectively. School administrators play a role in supporting teachers to enhance the effectiveness of their feedback. Educators can improve writing instruction and student outcomes by creating an environment where feedback is meaningful and actionable.

The theme emphasized that teacher feedback is a vital component of the writing process when timely and constructive. It helps students identify areas for growth and refine their skills. However, the challenge remains in ensuring that feedback mechanisms are fully understood and implemented to maximize their impact on student learning.

IV. CONCLUSION

Writing challenges can significantly impact a student's academic career. Effective writing requires both strong

language skills and critical thinking. Students who neglect foundational writing skills struggle with more advanced tasks, affecting their motivation. This research explored Grade 12 students' experiences with writing in English, highlighting the joys and difficulties they faced. Despite challenges, students maintained a positive attitude and were motivated to improve. Predefined writing topics helped them organize their ideas, leading to greater writing success.

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A Study of the Challenges Faced by English Major Students (from Tabuk University) When Speaking English

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Abstract— To enhance second language acquisition, it is essential to develop an understanding of the issues faced by English major students; therefore, the primary objective of this study concerns the identification of the challenges faced by second language learners as perceived by English major students from the Department of Languages and Translation at Tabuk University. Developing fluency in English and speaking confidently in public is rapidly becoming an essential skill for students: it is fundamental to both their studies and when seeking employment following graduation. Increasingly, employers are seeking applicants who can speak English fluently and confidently; therefore, English language acquisition is increasingly perceived as one of the most challenging elements of the teaching and learning process. Via the inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative data, this study analysed the factors that impede the efficacy of public speaking among undergraduate students at Tabuk University. The findings of this study highlight that several elements can impact a student's use of English in public (such as psychological factors, learning environment, educational system, educational facilities, faculty members, and the curriculum).



Keywords— Tabuk University, public speaking, undergraduate students

I. INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of English and the ability to use it fluently poses several challenges for learners. Kurniawan (2014) reported that the focus placed on written English by tutors can make it challenging for students to use the language orally. This focus on the grammatical aspects of language learning, combined with a lack of opportunities to develop their oral skills results in significant challenges and students will avoid engaging with native English speakers for fear of making mistakes which limits their opportunities to practice their oral skills. Therefore, the factors related to students' inability to master oral skills as they learn English need to be identified and resolved.

Typically, students engaged in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) study the four micro-skills of language acquisition (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Although some students may be skilled at reading and

writing, Taval (2010) reports that they may face challenges when engaging with the remaining aspects (listening and speaking). Conversely, Alaraj (2017) noted that EFL learners are more challenged by the development of productive skills (writing and speaking) than receptive skills (reading and listening) because they are required to adapt their language use when applying their productive skills and engaging in actual performance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The contemporary literature contains many examples of research which has analysed the challenges encountered by EFL students when applying their speaking skills. Alyan (2013) reported that learners' hesitation to apply their knowledge in an oral context arises from their anxiety about making mistakes. In other words, if a learner fears that their

language use is incorrect, they will avoid opportunities to interact in conversation.

Al-Jamal and Al-Jamal (2013) conducted a study consisting of Jordanian EFL students which revealed that overuse of the first language (L1), overcrowded classes, and insufficient time to practice speaking can inhibit the effective acquisition of English. Al Hosni (2014) reported that EFL students encountered several challenges that hindered their proficiency in oral English. Additionally, Zhang (2009) noted that speaking was the most challenging aspect of language learning and that many learners lacked the ability to orally communicate in English.

The aforementioned research emphasises that speaking is a fundamental aspect of language acquisition; therefore, this area requires additional analysis to develop a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by EFL learners. By identifying these challenges and creating effective solutions, educators can enhance learners' abilities to communicate orally in English.

A lack of fluency in spoken English can be attributed to learners' inhibitions and their lack of confidence in public speaking. Senel (2012) noted that these attitudes, combined with teacher and peer group evaluations, could be a contributing factor to students' lack of ability to communicate effectively in their language class. Hamad (2013) analysed the challenges posed by learning spoken English (as experienced by female EFL students in Saudi colleges for girls) which revealed that the excessive use of L1, a lack of time devoted to speaking in class, inefficient teaching practices, absence of effective teaching strategies, anxiety, and not employing L1 to clarify issues were the primary contributors to English-speaking skill issues.

Several psychological factors have been identified as inhibiting students' willingness to participate in spoken activities. Juhana (2012) reported that a fear of making mistakes, anxiety, shyness, and a lack of confidence and motivation were some of the psychological factors that may inhibit a student's performance. Therefore, educators should take these factors into account when attempting to understand why some students fail to participate in spoken activities. This study sought to identify the challenges encountered by English major students studying at Tabuk University when speaking English.

III. METHODOLOGY

To identify and analyse the English-speaking challenges encountered by English major students from the Department of Languages and Translation at Tabuk University, this research adopted a survey methodology. The survey was distributed to 113 English major students and contained 30 open-ended questions (covering nine separate areas) concerning the challenges posed by acquiring spoken English language skills.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Quantitative data analysis

After quantitative data were collected it was revised, coded, and fed to statistical software IBM SPSS version 25. The reliability of the tools was determined by Cronbach's alpha. Frequency tables and cross-tabulation were used to illustrate the results. Quantitative data were summarized by the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and mean score per cent. All statistical analysis was done using two-tailed tests and an alpha error of 0.05. A P-value less than or equal to 0.05 was considered to be statistically significant.

Table 1: Validity and reliability of the students' questionnaire

	Cronbach's Alpha	Spearman-Brown
Reliability	0.785	0.850
Validity	0.89	0.92

It is clear from Table (1) for the Validity and reliability of the students' questionnaire that the value of the coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha (0.785) and the value of Spearman-Brown (0.850) and these values greater than 0.70, which indicates the Reliability of the questionnaire, and the value of Validity ranged between (0.89, 0.92), which indicates the Validity of the questionnaire.

Table 2: Reasons Related to Psychological Factors

Questionnaire items	Test Value =3					Reality of 0.05	Predication
	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)		
1 Low self-confidence affects the development of speaking skills.	4.35	0.89	15.98	110	0.00	Function p<0.05	Significant

2	Feeling anxious when asked by the professor to speak or present affects the development of your speaking skills.	4.08	0.94	12.18	110	0.00	Function $p < 0.05$	Significant
3	Feeling shy is an obstacle to developing speaking skills.	4.12	0.92	12.77	110	0.00	Function $p < 0.05$	Significant
4	Fear of making mistakes while speaking English negatively affects the development of speaking skills.	4.33	0.91	15.47	110	0.00	Function $p < 0.05$	Significant
5	Having motivation to improve speaking skills impacts the progress made by students.	4.25	0.86	15.38	110	0.00	Function $p < 0.05$	Significant

It is clear from Table (2) that Reasons Related to Psychological Factors there are statistically significant differences in all items, where the value of (T) ranged between (12.18 and 15.98) and these values are greater than the tabular value (T) at the level of 0.05 and with a significance level less than 0.05($p < 0.05$)

Table 3: **Reasons Related to Classroom Environment**

Questionnaire items		Test Value =3					Reality of 0.05	Predication
		Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.(2- tailed)		
6	The lack of opportunities to speak in the classroom hinders the development of students' speaking skills.	3.85	1.13	7.90	110	0.00	Function p<0.05	Significant
7	The lack of cooperation among students to practice English in the classroom negatively affects the development of speaking skills.	3.88	1.10	8.44	110	0.00	Function p<0.05	Significant
8	The reluctance of your classmates to speak English outside the classroom slows down your mastery of speaking skills.	3.73	1.26	6.11	110	0.00	Function p<0.05	Significant
9	A relatively large number of students in the class negatively affects the development of speaking skills.	3.58	1.11	5.48	110	0.00	Function p<0.05	Significant

It is clear from Table (3) that Reasons Related to Classroom Environment there are statistically significant differences in all items, where the value of (T) ranged between (5.48 and 8.44) and these values are greater than the tabular value (T) at the level of 0.05 and with a significance level less than 0.05($p < 0.05$)

Table 4: Reasons Related to the Education System

	Questionnaire items	Test Value =3				Reality of 0.05	Predication
		Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	
10	The education system may impact language skills, for example, the department does not emphasize improving speaking skills.	4.05	1.06	10.47	110	0.00	Function p<0.05 Significant

It is clear from Table (4) that Reasons Related to the Education System there are statistically significant differences in all items, where the value of (T) (10.47) and this value is greater than the tabular value (T) at the level of 0.05 and with a significance level less than 0.05(p<0.05)

Table 5: Reasons Related to Educational Facilities

	Questionnaire items	Test Value =3				Reality of 0.05	Predication
		Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	
11	Having adequate facilities (e.g., phonetics labs) in the department helps in developing speaking skills.	3.71	1.26	5.95	110	0.00	Function p<0.05 Significant
12	Teachers use all available facilities effectively to improve students' language skills.	3.75	1.07	7.33	110	0.00	Function p<0.05 Significant
13	The language club in the department creates a comfortable environment for students to practice speaking outside the classroom.	3.09	1.18	0.80	110	0.42	No Function p>0.05 Not Significant

It is clear from Table (5) that Reasons Related to Educational Facilities there are statistically significant differences in items (11-12), where the value of (T) ranged between (5.95, 7.33) and these values are greater than the tabular value (T) at the level of 0.05 and with a significance level less than 0.05(p<0.05), It is also clear that there are no statistically significant differences in item (13) where the value of (T)(0.80) and this value is less than the tabular value (T) at the level of 0.05 and with a significance level bigger than 0.05(p>0.05)

Table 6: Reasons Related to Faculty Members (Teachers)

	Questionnaire items	Test Value =3				Reality of 0.05	Predication
		Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	
14	Speaking skills are greatly influenced by listening skills and how we receive language from teachers.	3.77	1.17	6.91	110	0.00	Function p<0.05 Significant
15	Teachers' mispronunciation of vocabulary sometimes affects students' speaking skills.	4.08	0.96	11.81	110	0.00	Function p<0.05 Significant

16	Teachers' lack of concern about embarrassing students for their pronunciation errors negatively affects students and hinders their speaking development.	4.03	1.07	10.07	110	0.00	Function $p < 0.05$	Significant
17	Teachers ensure mastery of speaking skills through some classroom exercises such as reading sentences and texts.	3.59	1.10	5.61	110	0.00	Function $p < 0.05$	Significant
18	Forcing students to speak in class negatively affects the development of speaking skills.	3.50	1.19	4.47	110	0.00	Function $p < 0.05$	Significant
19	Ignoring students in class and not giving them the opportunity to speak or participate affects the development of speaking skills.	4.14	0.95	12.61	110	0.00	Function $p < 0.05$	Significant

It is clear from Table (6) that Reasons Related to Faculty Members (Teachers) there are statistically significant differences in all items, where the value of (T) ranged between (4.47 and 12.61) and these values are greater than the tabular value (T) at the level of 0.05 and with a significance level less than 0.05($p < 0.05$)

Table 7: Reasons Related to Program Curriculum

Questionnaire items		Test Value =3					Reality of 0.05	Predication
		Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.(2- tailed)		
20	The courses or activities related to speaking skills are appropriate in terms of level.	3.27	1.17	2.44	110	0.02	Function p<0.05	Significant
21	Students can build a sufficient vocabulary repertoire by studying various courses in the department.	3.75	1.16	6.77	110	0.00	Function p<0.05	Significant
22	Grammar courses help refine speaking skills by providing adequate knowledge of language rules.	3.83	1.16	7.53	110	0.00	Function p<0.05	Significant
23	There are enough courses and classroom activities to help students improve their speaking skills.	2.99	1.25	0.08	110	0.94	No Function p>0.05	Not Significant
24	There are enough extracurricular activities to help students improve their speaking skills.	2.53	1.26	3.91	110	0.00	Function p<0.05	Significant

It is clear from Table (7) that Reasons Related to the Program Curriculum there are statistically significant differences in most items, where the value of (T) ranged between (2.44 and 7.53) and these values are greater than the tabular value (T) at the level of 0.05 and with a significance level less than 0.05($p < 0.05$), It is also clear that there are no statistically significant differences in item (23) where the value of (T)(0.08) and this value is less than the tabular value (T) at the level of 0.05 and with a significance level bigger than 0.05($p > 0.05$)

Table 8: Reasons Related to the Impact of the Native Language

Questionnaire items	Test Value =3					Reality of 0.05	Predication
	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)		
25 My native language (Arabic) significantly slows my mastery of speaking skills.	2.83	1.27	1.42	110	0.16	No Function $p>0.05$	Not Significant
26 Listening to English outside the classroom intensively (e.g., watching movies or programs) positively affects language development.	4.60	0.70	23.99	110	0.00	Function $p<0.05$	Significant
27 Speaking English for extended hours outside formal study times positively impacts refining your language skills.	4.47	0.77	20.03	110	0.00	Function $p<0.05$	Significant

It is clear from Table (8) that Reasons Related to the Impact of the Native Language there are statistically significant differences in items (26-27), where the value of (T) ranged between (20.03, 23.99) and these values are greater than the tabular value (T) at the level of 0.05 and with a significance level less than 0.05($p<0.05$), It is also clear that there are no statistically significant differences in item (25) where the value of (T)(1.42) and this value is less than the tabular value (T) at the level of 0.05 and with a significance level bigger than 0.05($p>0.05$)

Table 9: Reasons Related to Other Factors

Questionnaire items	Test Value =3					Reality of 0.05	Predication
	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)		
28 The time allocated for phonetics and speaking courses is appropriate.	3.63	1.09	6.07	110	0.00	Function $p<0.05$	Significant
29 The lack of encouragement from your family, relatives, or society negatively affects your speaking skills.	3.60	1.22	5.23	110	0.00	Function $p<0.05$	Significant

It is clear from Table (9) that Reasons Related to Other Factors there are statistically significant differences in all items, where the value of (T) ranged between (5.23 and 6.07) and these values are greater than the tabular value (T) at the level of 0.05 and with a significance level less than 0.05($p<0.05$)

4.2 Qualitative data analysis :

The interview data were analysed using an inductive-thematic analysis: identifying natural units of meaning, labelling, categorizing, and organizing them, constructing narratives, and interpreting the findings. The following section details the challenges encountered by the participants when speaking English.

4.2.1 Psychological Factors

Several students reported that self-confidence, anxiety, and a fear of making mistakes prevented them from communicating orally in English. One student noted that "Self-confidence and linguistic abilities play a significant role in mastering the skill of conversation in English," while another student reported that "One of the psychological factors that affect the development of English conversation skills is the fear of making mistakes and the feeling of embarrassment when committing an error." Additionally, students revealed that "Anxiety leads to discomfort and, consequently, stress and worry hinder the development of the skill."

4.2.2 Classroom Environment

The students reported that the classroom environment had negatively impacted their development of linguistic skills and their ability to converse in English. For example, the substantial number of students in a classroom reduces the amount of time available for practising their speaking skills: one student noted “I want to improve my conversation skills, but there isn't enough time due to the large number of students in the classroom.” Additionally, the respondents reported that they had experienced an uncollaborative atmosphere among students which had limited their opportunities to practice their oral skills and improve their proficiency in this aspect of language acquisition: one participant reported that “Everyone speaks Arabic outside the classroom, so how can I improve my English language skills?”

4.2.3 Education System

Due to the constraints of the education system, several participants noted that the department's approach was specialised (rather than skills-based); therefore, the curriculum follows the same approach. One of the students stated that “The subjects focus on literature and linguistics, rather than language skills.”

4.2.4 Educational Facilities

The participants reported the provision of phonetic labs and student clubs to facilitate their language learning; however, due to the lack of extra-curricular study time, these facilities are rarely utilised effectively.

4.2.5 Faculty Members

Typically, the participants responded that the faculty members were extremely cooperative. However, they noted that the lack of time available to practice their oral skills, combined with significant class sizes and the students' inhibitions and anxiety about making mistakes, had negatively impacted the development of their spoken language skills. One participant reported that “the faculty members are cooperative, but we need time to practice the language.”

4.2.6 Program Curriculum

The participants reported that some of the course activities placed an additional emphasis on writing (rather than speaking) skills. Additionally, it was noted that the curriculum relies entirely on written assessment. Although certain activities (such as oral presentations for some subjects) emphasise students' conversational skills, their duration is limited. One of the students stated, “I wish there was a course dedicated solely to conversation.”

4.2.7 Impact of the Native Language

The acquisition and development of English language skills (particularly conversation) necessitates extensive practice, repetition, and a significant amount of time. The native language of the students (Arabic) plays a pivotal role for all students, particularly those in non-English-speaking environments. The use of the native language, whether domestically, in university, or outside of the classroom significantly impacts the progress of EFL students. One student noted, “I can only practice English inside the classroom for a limited time, and I wish I could practice for a longer period.”

V. CONCLUSION

The findings of this research reveal that anxiety, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, and shyness, combined with a lack of creative teaching approaches, practice, and attention from teachers, can hinder the public speaking proficiencies of EFL students. These factors may result in students experiencing elevated levels of anxiety when speaking in public. Additionally, this research found that insufficient time to practice, large class sizes, the structure of the curriculum, and a lack of encouragement from family members inhibit the language acquisition of EFL students. This research provides valuable insights to educators for overcoming the challenges faced by undergraduate EFL learners and enhancing their learning outcomes.

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Negotiating the Masculinities: Reading the Marginal Worlds in Nalini Jameela's *Romantic Encounters of a Sex Worker*

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Abstract— This paper explores the constellation of masculinities portrayed in the memoirs of Nalini Jameela, with a particular focus on her work *Ente Aanungal*, translated into English as *Romantic Encounters of a Sex Worker* (2018). Her negotiation with the complex landscape of masculinities is analysed to understand how life writing as a genre has the potential to present a counter-public discourse that enables the subaltern worlds to assert their voices. Her memoirs also disrupt the hegemonic constructions of gender, sexuality and morality, although there are strategic compromises with the established patterns during many instances. By portraying her experiences with a wide range of masculinities, her narrative brings out the fluid and often contradictory masculinities at play, which are often missed from the regular analysis of mainstream Kerala society. Her autobiographical accounts thus present an alternative perspective on masculinity studies in the context of Kerala. The paper tries to understand how different masculinities are performed and how they are negotiated and resisted within the transactional sexual economies. Her ethnographic-like exploration of her relationships helps us to understand the dualities embedded in Kerala society from a fresh perspective, which can present a cogent critique of the social hierarchies and the moral geographies of this region.



Keywords— Masculinities, Kerala Studies, Life Writing, Sex Work, Gender Studies

INTRODUCTION

The genre of autobiography and life writing has been the preserve of the elites shaped by the hegemonic consciousness of their time. However, as in any other genre, it has the subversive potential to challenge the hegemony. In fact for the subaltern, the literary genre of life writing offers immense opportunity to stamp his/her story as part of the public discourse and history. Unlike other genres, it does not require the training and the cultivated finesse to pass the barrier of classical notions of literariness to enter the highly selective public domain of literary works.

The genre of life writing and autobiography has developed adequate techniques in its repertoire to emerge as a flexible genre. In this genre, subaltern lives can be encoded to challenge the normality and stability of any contemporary perceptions.

It is equally applicable to the territory of Kerala, where autobiographies and life writings have been active agents in the making of consciousness of modern Kerala. It was through autobiographies and biographies about the public personalities that the history of Kerala came to be internalized by Keralites. As Udaya Kumar notes in his work *Writing the First*

Person: Literature, History, and Autobiography in Modern Kerala (2017), those Life writings were more or less an amalgamation of macro-narrative of public history and childhood events. It carried the public history of their times forward and documented it forever as it was these titans of Modern Kerala history whose critical interventions shaped the public consciousness of a Modern Malayali. However, once the location of the author starts displacing from the hegemonic centre, the level of subjectivity and the not so 'public' life experiences, starts increasing and life writing practically becomes a project to carve a new space in the public domain, articulating the unspoken realities in the life of Malayali. As we move further towards the margins, this effect and usefulness of the genre of life writing become highly prominent.

Sex Work and the Reframing of the Agency

In this context, the life writings of Nalini Jameela were path-breaking with the effect of speaking the 'unspeakable' and forcing into the public domain the reality that remained out of the public discourses in Kerala. Her first Life writing, *Autobiography of a Sex Worker (Oru Laingikatozhilaliyute Atmakatha)* (2011), created a huge uproar in the public discourse in Kerala over sexuality and the institution of Sex Work. Sex workers, as a special category of labour, asserted their space, denying the hitherto categories of Prostitution, which carried with it the notions of exploitation and crime. Not only in making the change in the ontological category in labour terms but her complete immersion into the private life and making the public out of it marked the arrival of a new subjectivity and in itself provided a means to write back to the centre. In her first life writing, writing was her profession as well as her subject, which was in the margin. Her no-holds-barred approach brought out the then subterranean domain of 'Veshya' into the public category of 'Sex Work'. Her own subjectivity was placed in the public domain, challenging the intersectional marginalities in terms of gender, class and caste.

As J Devika (2011) notes in her Translator's Foreword to the English Translation of the above work, "Jameela chose to reclaim her autobiography by producing a second version which she felt was satisfactory" (p. 11). She never wanted to place her

work anywhere in the spectrum of fiction, but boldly in the category of life writing. As Devika further notes "it challenged dominant images of decay as the inevitable culmination of a 'sinful life'. Instead, it highlighted the ordinariness of sex work in the lives of the poorest women, its place alongside other strenuous, exploitative and demeaning work — situations quite invisible to Kerala's educated elite" (p. 12). Devika summarizes, "Jameela's autobiography rejects dominant Womanhood not only by relating the hitherto-untold story of the marginalized labouring woman-subject, but also by not seeking to be defined within the home-centred category of Women" (p. 14). Carmel Christy (2019) in her work *Sexuality and Public Space in India: Reading the visible* analyses *Autobiography of a Sex Worker* and finds "her refusal to be the feminine 'other' (p. 101). Carmel Christy also notes, "She seeks her emancipation through her work rather than depending on a male protective figure" (p. 101).

In her second work, *Ente Anungal* (2018) (literal translation - *My Men*), translated to English by Reshma Bharadwaj as *Romantic Encounters of a Sex Worker* (2018), she returns to recollect her life and, as the Malayalam title indicates, presents her memory about the selected men in her life. This work, by the title itself, presents possibilities to study the masculinities of Malayali society, which may not come to the surface in the public domain otherwise. In fact, this work becomes a speaking back to the Centre in two ways. First, the social location of the author and her views present a unique perspective from the margin. Second, the masculinities that interact with women in sex work present another category of masculinities, which are normally not portrayed in other literature- fiction or non-fiction. Thus, the work presents a unique window to have an analytical view of a particular transactional dimension of Malayali masculinity, which is not possible elsewhere.

Mapping the Masculinities

In the preface itself, Nalini Jameela identifies the hypocrisy of Malayali men in this category and links the same with the geography of Kerala, which permits them to satisfy their 'needs' which they cannot openly satisfy in Kerala. "Those from Northern Kerala usually prefer going to Mangalore.. there is a phrase in Tulu for this- 'Kudappanakkil', which means a

runaway....Men from Kozhikode prefer Mysore. Those from Thrissur leave for Pazhani...Thirunelveli is the preferred location of those from Kottayam and Kanyakumari for Thiruvananthapuram dwellers”(p.10). This observation of the author places the actual geography of Kerala as the territory of hypocrisy and the place outside the Western Ghats as that liminal space of unleashing their desires without restraint. She notes, “Our geography plays an accomplice to the sexual deceit of Malayali men” (p. 10).

A glimpse of this hypocrisy can be seen when she narrates the incident during a bus travel. She felt someone grazing her hand from behind by mistake and she gave a stare at him. The other passengers mistook this for him groping Jameela. When he tried to explain what really happened, the other passengers turned against him, paradoxically not in a mood to side with her. “Our wives would never react against like this. It is doubtful whether she is a good woman!” (p. 12). This has links with the perceived ‘characterlessness’ of a woman travelling alone on a long route at odd hours. Or even asserting a lesson by the public masculinity that “a good wife is one who suffers such groping and pinches in silence” (p. 12). She also points out in her preface the quality demanded by men in a feminine body of being perceived as a respectable wife – “fair-skinned women”. If so, without hesitations, he can rent a room publicly with such a woman in broad daylight. But the darkness of the night obliterates all such differences in skin colour, she notices quirkily. She also notes that in this union of bodies, the craving for a virgin remains another haunting characteristic for these adventurous men. She sarcastically comments that even the moaning of a woman due to the pain of some Sexually Transmitted Diseases will be enjoyed by such men.

However, she says that 25 per cent of such male clientele remain exceptions from the above generalization and the chapters in her new book *Romantic Encounters of a Sex Worker* (2018) are about such men in her life as a sex worker. Even though she takes them as exceptions to the general masculinity dabbling as clientele of sex work, even those masculinities recounted in this book can be studied for the peculiarities they exhibit while performing the role of clientele. But again, it must be

underlined that the masculinities portrayed in this book are those engaging with a sex worker who can exercise her agency. The exploitative conditions that feature in scenarios like human trafficking and modern slavery are absent here and hence, insights from the analysis of the text of Jameela cannot be applied as such to other such categories.

When the text *Ente Aanungal* (2018) was translated from Malayalam to English, two special chapters were excluded. One is an interview with her, and the other is a chapter which has references from her previous life writing. This omitted chapter has significance in terms of presenting an ideal masculinity or, in other words, a hegemonic masculinity represented by a Police Officer, her first client. She says, “A man in a gold-bordered dhoti, with a sandal mark on his forehead” (p. 127). I was an Ezhava, and our community respected Nairs and Nambutiris who carried themselves in this manner. His behaviour towards me that night was very tender. It lasted just one night....This was the person I’d dreamt of, the lover who appeared in my fantasies” (p. 126). But this ideal, hegemonic masculinity, betrays her the very next day. She was thrown into jail just like any other ‘prostitute’. This chapter is crucial in understanding the diffractive analysis she applies to other masculinities. In other words, she suffered badly from the perceived ideal of masculinity, and hence, her reminiscences rarely find such masculinities.

In Chapter Three, titled “The Chittilanjari Story”, she presents a variety of masculinities for deeper study. The most interesting is that of Balan. He is a part-time henchman and supervisor of a wealthy landowner. Though half-goon, he has the malleability to shift to any sort of masculine type. He presents himself in the life of Jameela first as a sort of thug trying to scare the new ‘whore’ out of his neighbourhood. Jameela effectively denoises him using her charm and her command over the consumption of liquor when compared to him. Here, throughout the narrative, Jameela brings up the trope of drinking liquor to intimidate certain types of masculine figures and to tame them by establishing her command over the consumption of liquor. In several episodes of her memory, she suggests her fondness for liquor and her ability to drink it even without diluting, which many of her men found too hard. Thereafter,

Balan is an aspiring client who tries to appease her by running errands for her. Once, with a hard-earned, soiled 5 Rupee note, he becomes her client, and thereafter, he always acts effectively as a manager for her. But his is not the classical pimp masculinity with its authority over the body of a woman in a site of transaction. He makes his intention clear about bringing richer clients to her: "Don't ask for money from me; free for me" (p. 56). His performance of the role of a pimp is to earn the right to be her client for free. However, his aspiration never materialises and thereafter remains just as her manager of sorts. While taking Nalini to a place where an aspiring client, a forest Officer, is sitting, Balan tries to get the Officer's attention to Nalini by saying, "I have ordered your food" (p. 58) that too, as Nalini describes it "in sixteen different ways – he was showing me off" (p. 58). He is remembered as being scared of his wife, Lakshmi, and when she goes to her house, leaving Balan, it is his friend and a client of Nalini who goes to her house and convinces her to come back. This client convinces the wife of Balan and makes her believe that Balan was only an arranger for Nalini for his sake and not a lover of Nalini. Thereafter, Lakshmi, too, behaves affectionately towards Nalini. Nalini concludes her chapter by saying, "Nobody would accuse me of corrupting Balan" (p. 88). Balan aspires to become a symbol of hegemonic masculinity and utterly fails in this endeavour. Instead, he becomes a kind of colluding masculinities in a transactional nature in sex work. It is not exactly complicit masculinity, which Connell identifies as "masculinities constructed in ways that realise the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy" (p. 79)

Researcher Max Besbris while studying the gender attitudes in sex work management identifies a type of masculinity termed Revanchist Masculinity to describe the pimp-like characters "to account for this reclamation of rights and specific powers from sex workers, clients, and women more broadly... Revanchist masculinity is, then, a way of doing masculinity by disparaging women's abilities, being suspicious of women's motives when they do work, and claiming certain work-related tasks as inherently masculine" (p. 712). But pimp figures which are recounted in the memoir whether it be 'Cricket Abu'

or Aseez from Chavakkad whom she meets in Vijaya Lodge, cannot quite perform their masculinity to reclaim this lost masculine space as revanchist masculinity. Instead, they become collaborators or even work in subordination to Jameela's authority. Her agency denies the space to the collaborators to assert their authority over her.

In the Third Chapter itself, she sketches her relationships with other clients as well. Another interesting character is Rajan, also known as 'Rajanmuthalali'. Her first encounter with him is taken as an act of irreverence by him. Nalini dared to enter the tea shop adjoining Rajan's grocery shop, through the front door and talk publicly when 'Officer' was there. He openly expresses his disgust, "Those sluts from Thrissur, they are not bothered about anything" (p. 59). These comments of Rajan reached Jameela's ears upon which Jameela decided to fix his scorn. Strangely, Rajan becomes her first client whom Balan arranges. In private space, Rajan transforms into a soft-mannered gentleman with great understanding and respect! He always seeks her consent even for the first act of sex, his transformed self brings into light the flux in masculinity which takes the diverging shapes as per the public-private dichotomy. However, after the first encounter, he remains considerate of Nalini Jameela, at times even at the cost of negligence towards other customers at his shop.

Among male clients, there is a hierarchy in which a steady client stands at the top from the perspective of Nalini Jameela. Sunil, a character from the Chapter "Cricket Abu and the Friendship Group" (p. 105-131) fits this typology. For a sex worker, being a winner means having a steady client with higher standing which can cause other clients to be ignored. As Jameela explains such a client has certain rights as well. "He had a certain right over us...an authority that may be held by a sister-in-law or mother-in-law, but which falls short of the authority held by a husband" (p. 109). Apart from the upfront payment of a relatively higher charge, the rest of the transactions will be on terms decided by this client. As described by Jameela, the personalities of these men seem mild-mannered and of sufficient integrity. They would take the Sex worker to cinema theatres and travel around publicly. This is almost similar to the status of a lover but at a payment.

Another type of Masculinity discussed in her memoir as a sex worker is that of guardian-type goon masculinity. Her work constantly requires such physical protectors as there are chances of rough encounters with some clients. Her recollections regarding Manikka in her previous work detail such masculinities. In *Romantic Encounters of a Sex Worker* (2018), she casually refers to people like Swaraj whom she encounters during her stint in Mangalore whom she could tactically use to push back against the goon Mathews who tried to intimidate her (p.132-146). However, she had to acquire such rowdy masculinity garb on herself to make sure her life goes smoothly wherever she is. As described earlier, her consumption of liquor and bold words to her detractors are masculine strategies she relies upon in this cause. At shops, she will be served first, at arrack shops no one will frown upon her. But this could also be because of her liminal identity as a sex worker which takes her outside the domain of 'normal' femininity, that she remains unquestioned.

Another set of masculinities among the clients is those on the verge of identifying themselves as the lovers or husbands of the sex worker and failing to understand the transactional relationship with her. The anecdotes about Hameed in Mangalore describe such a type of masculinity. They imagine themselves to be in love with the sex worker and behave as if they are husbands, providing for their daily means. In the case of Hameed, even her proclamation of being a lover of 'rowdy' Leila (Jameela was known so in Mangalore) was a means to project his masculinity. Nalini Jameela shares his words "She used to be with Koyakka earlier. Now she is with me! So, see you, *keto*" (p. 145). But being a sex worker, she couldn't afford to have an intimate relationship with a man for a prolonged period. Naturally, she leaves for Thrissur from Mangalore.

Then, another vulnerable masculinity among her clients is represented by Babu, the mirror salesman in Thrissur. His love is often expressed through Masala Dosas which he buys for her. But by the time it reaches her, it would become "stale smelly mish mash" (p. 97). His relationship with her also becomes like this. His body lice become a matter of concern thereafter as it infests both of them. Finally, as his client's relationship with Nalini Jameela is revealed,

his relationship with his 'real' lover is ruined. Out of despair, he blames it all on Jameela. Yet he declines to break ties with Jameela and to escape from this infestation and over-dependence, Jameela slyly goes away from him. However, this episode throws light on another set of masculinities which border on fragility while trying to aspire for dual worlds of pure and impure romantic worlds.

CONCLUSION

Overall, if we analyze the masculinities represented in her recollections in *Romantic Encounters of a Sex Worker* (2018), the absence of hegemonic masculinities is really conspicuous. It goes in tandem with sociological findings regarding clients of Sex Work that "demand for sexual services coexists with less oppressive and more gender-egalitarian forms of masculinities—flexible, inclusive, or hybrid masculinities that are not entirely dependent upon the negation or exclusion of women (and gay men) in certain leisure spaces" (Brents, et al., 2020, p. 16). In Jameela's work, the masculinities she recounts fit into these flexible types. However, such generalization cannot be applied to the general population in the sex work market as it can operate in coercive environments as well. An empowered individual like Nalini Jameela who can exercise her agency in her work domain may have the wherewithal to manipulate the masculinities around her to navigate her way through. However, she also expresses her desire to leave the job on the streets which is torturous for her too. This can be attributed to the more toxic masculinities she can face on the streets where she is equally vulnerable as any other woman. Instead, she carves a space around her comfortable zones leveraging the masculinities around her and employing her own strategies to survive in this hypocritical Malayali society.

Nonetheless, the life writings of people like Nalini Jameela living in the margins of Kerala's "enlightened" public domains provide a unique opportunity to understand the varieties of masculinities that exist in Kerala society which transact as clients in the not-so-public domain of sex work. Such writings cannot be degraded as trash pulp fiction meant to satisfy their voyeuristic desires and thereby corrupting the public domain, as some

intellectuals criticize. Instead, such life writings from the margins offer immense scope for a social analyst to understand society using new materials and fresh perspectives.

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Transformations in Art and Literature in Hyperreal Era: A Philosophical Exploration

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Abstract— *This paper aims to explore the journey of art and literature from the early impressions of creativity and imagination i.e. prehistoric cave paintings to current scenario i.e. use of technology and NFT. While tracing the evolution of art, the influence of economy and technology on how an art object /work is produced or presented and perceived is also discussed. It contends that in the age of hyperreality, not only the distinction between real and simulated is getting blurred, rather the demarcation between physical and virtual is also collapsing as can be noted in the works of contemporary creators like Damein Hirst and Lans King.*



Keywords— *Art, Literature, Symbolism, Hyperreality, NFT, Technology, Illusion, Simulated Reality.*

The human race had been creating imitations of reality long before the inception of urban civilization. The oldest cave art as discovered by archaeologists is a life-sized picture of a wild pig that was painted at least 45,500 years ago in Indonesia. In northeast Brazil, Serra da Capivara National Park, human figures and animals are depicted. It also includes complex scenarios of supernatural beings, hunting, dancing, combats and sexual activities. The Lascaux Cave paintings, that are estimated to be around 17,000 years old are most famous and impressive cave paintings worldwide. Some paintings are trying to tell a story, others are peeps into then existing wildlife and animals they hunted for food. As per the archaeological records, the civilization which existed in Europe between 35,000 and 10,000 years ago, is the earliest, or among the earliest civilizations that produced the first complex visual representation. But, by that time, the early civilization wasn't producing only visual arts but also started performing rituals. A such instance is found un another caves Les Trois Freres, in which there is a 13,000-year-old wall painting of what appears to be a shaman from this same civilization, pulling a ritual role, in which he is seeming to depict an animal spirit. It depicts what we consider as fictional characters. The figure in Les Trois freres, stares at you from stone wall. It looks a bit odd by

contemporary standards, presenting a man wearing an animal costume and a tail, with antlers on his head. He seems to be bouncing, possibly in some sort of trance, representing animal spirit.

The most interesting thing about the formations is that they were ancestors of the symbolic and sensory realm of art, drama and literature, which intensified intricately with the progress of civilization. Each creation has provided the humanity to escape the bareness of its external world in different ways. It helped the mankind to raise itself and produce vision of other ways of living and to convince other possible worlds.

As we walk through the history of civilization, it can be concluded that we have used these forms of representation to create a 'human world' which is more interesting and lavish than the natural world. We have used our utilitarian tools and recreated future into surroundings which are safer, comfortable and mirrored our environment on the lines of our grandiose imagination. This is what the cave paintings depict, a world that presents our fears, desires and consciousness. Since the era of cave paintings, these "replica realities" have taken all kinds of forms, from board games, taletelling, paintings and theatrical productions, to funfair carnivals and fantasy saturated celebrations.

Transformations in Art & Literature

Long before the advent of high technology and complicated expressions of replica, human civilization sort its nature of imitation into board games and sports combats. The board games were a kind of sign employing its players in a kind of simple immersion. Imitation, as human nature can be seen from the very childhood, as child, we tend to imitate the routine of parents and tasks of household with the help of miniatures or toys including burner, cookies, vegetables and utensils. From toys, as children we tend to leap towards simulations in the form of art and literature, as adults. It is human tendency to mould surroundings according to their wish and likeness. In the words of Northrop Frye, a literary critic, that its human nature to turn nature into 'human world' and we create it in two ways. The first way to do so is by reconstructing our physical surrounding, changing it into designs of our like and comfort by constructing roads, farms, cities etc. the other way is by composing literature. Northrop Frye, in his book "The Educated Imagination" tries to state the importance of literature toward life. In literature, we try to examine the possibilities of different human worlds by inventing fictional genre of reality that lets us see the glimpse of the mankind as the way we can visualize it and the way we want it. Same applies to art, we try to manipulate the reality by recreating it in accordance to our fears, dreams and anxiety. From the time of cave painting, art has gone tremendous change. Simulating through art is practically identical to recreating reality, e.g., for the hunter who painted bison in the Lascaux is convinced of evoking them and making them materialize outside the cave. Art holds a significant part of mythology and imagination, as according to ancient Greeks, Pygmalion carved a statue, portraying a girl so beautiful that he fell in love with her and pleaded the gods to turn her into woman of flesh and blood, suggesting the idea that man can imbue a part of his spirit into formless matter: blowing the animus, the breath of life. Another wonderful aspect of art was considered its propensity to simulate Nature by imitating it and its indistinguishability from the real object was sort of parameter of brilliance of art. Tietze, Viennese art historian, pointed that "Art helps us understand reality... the artists who provided humanity with the first conventions of visual perceptions were of no less use than those geniuses of prehistoric times who formed the first words". The famous example in relation to it is of Grape so well painted by Zeusi that even the birds tried to peck the berries. If we take a moment here to consider Plato's opinion that all sensible reality is an imperfect image of the world of ideas; the artist, by producing simulacrum or shadow copies, are thus besmirched with double delusion. With the rise of technology, art itself felt betrayed. When a mechanical means of accurate reproduction in the form of camera has

been invented, the need and motive of painting a portrait with realistic intentions stood in question. Art once again examined the invisible, the void of the psyche and the imagination, the innovation of photography, was in some way, the beginning of transformation from modernism to hyperreality.

Gisele Freud's study *La Photographie en France au dix-neuvième siècle* traces the rise in photography with the rise in middle class. The author pointed out various procedures which played an important role in making portrait production easy and affordable. With the invention of camera, dispute of photography being an art arose. She pointed out that its claim to be an art was basically raised by those who were turning it into a business, means it is directly related to itself emerging as a commodity with all the products of society, in simple terms painting is also a commodity. He earned a great fortune with his idea of representation of works. As stated by Marx commodity has sensuous yet extrasensory properties and these act precisely as do fetishes. The Walter Benjamin is of the opinion that the nature of physical environment in which we move and character of historical moment in which we live – are in fact denied to us. He often described the world as 'phantasmagoria' and is of the opinion that we live in the optical illusion, points precisely to photography that has power to identify phantasmagoria. Benjamin in his above stated essay states the crises sensed by art. He also stated that with the invention of photography, the art becomes a mechanical process, that now we are able to develop a variety of prints from a single photographic negative. Photography not only threatened the originality of subject, but also puts it in the danger of adding malicious deception, which is an alluring attribute of hyperreality. Given the concept of hyperreality, another important aspect is the introduction of editions, which also leads to devaluation of art. Though the editions aren't something distinctively new to artwork, but contemporary technological properties truly decrease the noteworthiness of the original. In 2011, Harry Blain, introduced the online platform Sedition Art, which provides its customers various services of buying and selling editions of digital art. The primary idea behind this was really brilliant, providing the opportunities to bourgeoisie class to purchase a work of art created by giants of the contemporary art scene including Damein Hirst, Jenny Holzer and Tracy Emin. The mechanical produced editions are a spoilsport to the original work art. It not only overshadows the original piece but renders it unknown, which, as we already know, is the main sign of simulacra. Christiane Vleugels has taken the hyper realistic game to next level. Her paintings have an uncanny resemblance with the help of techniques, for e.g., she paints hair strokes using real hair. Talking about Damein Hirst, he is of the opinion

that art should be like that no one can differentiate between art and normal affair of things. Once a time, where his art was displayed in the museum the cleaning crew wiped the art thinking it, a sort of waste. He's got different and controversial style of art. Many of his artworks include real animals presented in glass wall tanks, well preserved. Some of his artworks are presented in totality, as works of art related with pharmacy. He explored this topic through different types of artworks such as his spot and remedy painting, the 13-print series, "The Last Supper" and the medicine cabinets. Alastir Sooke, an art critic, while visiting his exhibition "Schizophrenogenesis" which holds the surreal art of medicines in large sizes explains that artist is trying to interrogate the great void at the heart of contemporary life about the decline of religion and what have we collectively as a society replaced it with? It is somewhat compared to spirituality in two aspects. Firstly, medicines soothe pain to some extent, though not for long time and second is that art is therapeutical in itself. People often go to galleries to relax themselves. Hirst's work is deeply related with the attribute of Memento Mori. The ever-changing aspects of this world bought another form of digital art referred as NFT (Non-Fungible Token). NFTs are digital collectibles that can relate to the arts, like paintings, photos and songs and are based on blockchain technology which renders them unique and encrypted. NFTs are unique possessions in the digital world that can be traded like any other piece of property, but NFTs are intangible. Except digital art is easily subjected to duplicity. The NFTs can be bought and sold easily can be tokenised to generate a digital certificate of ownership. Last year, Hirst presented his project "The Currency" in two forms – physical and virtual. The first is 10,000 one-of-a kind hand painted A4 sheets covered in colourful dots. The second is the NFTs of these sheets. Hirst, after a year burnt the physical paintings of which the owner decided to keep in digital form. Though the ownership of a digital art over physical form baffles the majority of people. Hirst states that this confusion can be sorted by recognising two types of communities i.e., one who values traditional physical pieces and the one interested in NFT pieces. He points that the value of any art is ascribed by the cultural communities and each community is mystery to the other. But still, for most people, the mystery relies with NFT community. Many criticised Hirst for destroyed his own precious artwork. Eddy Frankel of Time Out, an art critic, stated that, "It's almost like Damein Hirst is so out of touch with the real world that he's basically transcended to another plane of existence, populated only by oligarchs and the once – edgy artists they collect"ⁱ. However, NFTs formed a great hype in the virtual world and were deemed to be answer for collectors as cryptocurrency was to cash (currency). These products have symbolic value, rather than

the immediate one and reminds Baudrillard's work, "For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign": "Far from the primary status of the object being a pragmatic one which would subsequently come to overdetermine a social value of sign, it is the sign exchange value which is fundamental"ⁱⁱ. Another piece of art "Themis", is an evolving NFT that shows the inequality on a global scale.

Another noteworthy artist in the scene is Lans King. He is a British American contemporary interdisciplinary artist who is blurring the lines between virtual and real. His notable art work series, "The Hyperreality Show" integrates visual aesthetic components that are organic and synthetic, offline and online, analog and digital. His paintings in this series combines algorithms and digital printing with manual painting on canvas and are framed with an animation video/NFT on a bespoke video screen. He surgically implanted NFC microchip in his hand (This is my Body) to which all his works are connected to through NFTs, called digital capsules. His artworks are displayed on various leading virtual and physical platforms. When the King tokenized himself i.e., in his "This is my Body" project, he received a spectacular response from crypto market and his NFT sold within first minute. Further, he is interested in interweaving interactive brainwave patterns from his thoughts in collaboration with Institut, and an emotion detector to communicate how he's feeling at any given moment. EPOCH, an artist run virtual experiment is displaying King's artwork in its LIFELIKE edition along with various astonishing virtual artworks of some iconic artists. We can't basically address them as artworks, as they are thought generated virtual objects. The virtual sculpture was generated by King using a brain computer interface device that captures brain activity data. The figures are fed into generative algorithm and parametric software, and each channel is mapped to a specific parameter. The software transfigures a primary geometry into various new forms that are distinctive. This work was generated precisely for the Ocean Biome of Biosphere 2 based on Taoist philosophy about living in a state of flow. He began with the form of a water droplet and the final sculpture is generated as Lans meditated on the phrase "be like water", attributing Bruce Lee. This thought generated artwork also serves a prototype for a performance – generative artwork called The Cyborg Manifesto. In 2023, Lans will generate virtual sculptures in real time whilst wearing a brain computer interface device, on the lines of performance series.

"I want to capture data that is physical, emotional and maybe somehow spiritual, and feed it all into this capsule (chip) that will perhaps become a collection of the rest of my life. Every data point I can possibly offer." – Lans Kingⁱⁱⁱ

As mentioned earlier, Northrop Frye thinks literature as another way of constructing a customised reality, according to one's desires and dreams. There are various important factors related to fiction. Fiction is a disguised version of either reality or dreams. One can always co-relate to fiction by either storytelling or movies. It tends to relate to and free a person from both external i.e., literal and internal i.e., metaphorical exile. Any tale takes both the protagonist and self from unjust to a just world and from dull and down self to a confident one. The ending of any story leaves a far-reaching impact on us as we can strongly relate to characters and feel immense pleasure or pain throughout its journey because either it is our real-life journey or the fabricated and dreamy one. The effect on any story depends on the precise description of these elements – identification, imagined interaction and observation from outside the boundaries of action. The fiction not only caters our identification with love and altruism but it also relates to our sadistic side that drives to symbolic and physical violence. The authors have to play very carefully with sadism as the negation of it will render the movie dull and boring, and on the other hand the excess of it will imply the invitation to recreational evil and soulless society. Along with happy endings, sad ones also play important role as it provides one with the relief that all those hurtful experiences are only fictional and you are leading a prosperous life. Not only this, it also tries to evoke a resolve in us to never let the monstrosity depicted, happen in us to never let the monstrosity depicted, happen in real life. The portrayal of morality is also an important aspect of fiction. However, it is not necessary that idea of morality or good delivered by fiction is actually good, it can also present a distorted state of morality. It can provide us opportunities to act out rigid and malicious desires that are excuses against disturbing truths. For e.g., if any member of audience, as a child felt any sort of demeaning, manipulation and castration symbolically; he/she will be very likely to enjoy observing being done some to others in both disguised and open ways. There are various works of fiction that doesn't thrive by just picturing the morality but instead it presented the fallacious, feeble and rational version of ourselves, manipulated by events and shows us to love the imperfect version itself endeavouring for something more.

It is interesting to note that, every work of fiction no matter how progressive is always set in primary emotions and fantasies. It never is only a disguised childhood story, but also portrays social, cultural, political, psychological, mythical and scientific developments, thus giving us opportunities to symbolically resolve all dilemma and conflicts within personal and social sphere. Fiction gives us peep into various probabilities. Frye puts fiction as something that shows us the world as we want it and fear

what it might be, in which the possibilities of life are symbolically represented by heavens and hells. He also believes that through fiction we try to reverse the fallen state and restore our identity with nature and the world.

Marcuse, also like Frye thinks that through fiction we express our desire for liberation but instead of identification, he talked about the requirement of modification of our relation with nature, i.e., a shift from attitude of exploitation to that of love and passion. According to him, fiction is isolated expression of our authentic nature and our craving for a pleasing and hedonistic life, which is repeatedly denied by society. Undoubtedly, fiction has changed and developed over time. We can see history itself as a story of millions of selves, abandoned in nature, society and their own psychodynamics; but these aren't merely stranded. Referring back to the concept of hyperreality, there are various fictional stories that tend to merge the real and fictional plot in the story itself. Most of such stories are based on the futuristic worlds governed by science and technology. One such short story is 'The Veldt' written by Ray Bradbury in 1950. In this, author tries to depict the narrowing gap between real and simulations because of advancements in science. He also portrays the damage that simulations are doing and the damage that is already done. It is set in an automatic house referred as "Happy life Home" which does every household chore from cooking and cleaning to raising their kids. They also set a 'nursery' for their children which is room with 3D walls that display situations according to one's thoughts and feelings and is designed to help them with development of their neurosis. Their parents didn't like the appearance of nursery which was presenting South African forest infusing raw smell of grass in the room and sensation of hot day with all the wildlife roaming there. Parents get concerned about the psychological state of their children. Both of them felt replaced by automated house as they were unable to communicate and understand their children's emotions. They decide to shut the nursery and whole house on the advice of a psychologist who points out that children are in dire need of help and they are fixated on destruction and violence. The children threw tantrums and threatened their father on his decision of shutting down both nursery and house. At the end the story describes both the parents being eaten by lions and vultures while kids enjoy their meals. Ray tried to paint the picture of our growing dependence on technology and how it is blurring the difference between real and simulations.

In the same way, author Stanislaw Lem tries to portray the same blurriness in a short novel, "The Futurological Congress", published in 1971, under the effect of 'functionality' drugs. The novel starts with Ijon Tichy, the

main character, goes to the Eighth World Futurological Congress in Costa Rica. The novel is set in the wild hallucinogenic trips, which starts when he drinks tap water in his hotel room. The next day, he realizes that water supply has been drugged by the government with a drug that makes its users kind. Ijon finds himself in various unbearable hallucinations but relaxes every time when he comes to senses. He felt trapped in a world, where he is unable to distinguish between the real and illusion, as the psycho-chemical drugs can induce the realistic hallucinations. He also realizes the problems posed by this unreal set of experiences. He panics at the thought that what humanity has bought on itself: the ability to imitate the look and feel of reality. As the novel goes, there is increase in character's confusion and doubts. Ijon, at the end finds out that the reality as it appears, is not real at all. There is a pharmaceutical giant who is subjecting everyone with a set of drugs to induce a shared delusion. It lets people to perceive a utopic state with advanced technology, but in actual, everything is in chaos and at the verge of collapse. It turns out that, Symington, another character is the director of this false paradise in order to hide the end of the world.

Symington – “We keep this civilization narcotized for otherwise it could not endure itself. That is why its sleep must not be disturbed”^{iv}.

“The year is 2098...with 69 billion inhabitants legally registered and approximately another 26 billion in hiding. The average annual temperature has fallen four degrees. In fifteen or twenty years there will be glaciers here. We have no way of averting or halting their advance... we can only keep it secret”.

Tichy – “I always thought there would be ice in hell” ... “and so you paint the gates with pretty pictures”^v.

The author tried to point out television as a drug, which is not only confined to screen but tries to simulate the experiences of life itself. It bounds people in fantasy lands and fades its touch to reality. Most of the stories in movies and television shows, like in literature are based on someone's thoughts of what world should or could be.

CONCLUSION

The journey that we have undergone as society shows profound and intricate relationship between real and reality. Human beings have not only the desire but also potential to influence and change their surroundings according to need, which is beyond mere survival desire. All forms of art represent fears, desires, intensities, dilemmas, dystopic aspects of our reality and utopia of our collective consciousness. The desire to recreate and modify reality is a key aspect of human consciousness. With the advent of technology, there is a profound shift in not only what art is and how we view it, but also the production, preservation and originality of art. The story-tellers also have a crucial role in analysing the role of simulations and illustrate repercussions of it. In the age of advanced technology, there is dire need to understand possible threats of simulated reality. As the gap between real and representations is abridging, it is important to ascertain how to navigate in the world of simulations and how to differentiate between technological counterfeits and real human experiences.

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Unveiling Patriarchal Chains: A Feminist Analysis of Women's Struggles in Purabi Basu's *The Stories of Women*

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Abstract— This research explores the feminist themes in Purabi Basu's *The Stories of Women* (Narir Kotha), emphasizing the representation of women's struggles, resilience, and agency within patriarchal Bangladeshi society. By examining Basu's narratives through a feminist lens, the study identifies key themes such as internalized patriarchy, gender-based oppression, and female solidarity. The paper compares Basu's work with global feminist literature, situating it within the broader discourse of Third World feminism. Ultimately, this research highlights how Basu's storytelling contributes to the on-going fight for gender equality and women's empowerment.



Keywords— *Feminism, Patriarchy, Gender Oppression, Third World Feminism, Purabi Basu, Bangladeshi Literature, Women's Struggles, Female Agency*

I. INTRODUCTION

Feminist literature has long served as a vital medium for challenging entrenched patriarchal structures and amplifying the voices of marginalized women. Across cultures, women writers have sought to reclaim narratives historically dominated by male perspectives, offering alternative insights into gender-based oppression and resilience. Purabi Basu, a distinguished Bangladeshi feminist writer, stands out in this tradition, using her literary craft to illuminate the struggles and agency of women within a conservative societal framework. Her collection, *The Stories of Women* (Narir Kotha), presents a compelling examination of the gendered experiences of women in Bangladesh, exploring themes of oppression, resistance, and solidarity. Basu's work is deeply rooted in the socio-cultural realities of South Asian women, where patriarchal traditions often dictate the trajectory of their lives. Women are expected to adhere to rigid gender norms, fulfilling roles as daughters, wives, and mothers, while their autonomy and aspirations remain secondary to familial and societal expectations. Within such a framework, feminist literature becomes an essential tool for resistance, challenging the normative structures that govern women's lives. Through her vivid storytelling,

Basu portrays the complexities of women's existence—not merely as passive victims but as individuals who navigate their struggles with resilience and agency. This research examines *The Stories of Women* through a feminist lens, situating Basu's work within the broader discourse of Third World feminism. Unlike Western feminist literature, which often focuses on individual autonomy and gender equality within developed societies, Third World feminism addresses the intersection of gender with class, colonial history, and cultural constraints. Basu's narratives reflect this layered reality, capturing the unique struggles of South Asian women who must contend with both patriarchal oppression and socio-economic limitations. Her work underscores the importance of recognizing localized forms of resistance and empowerment, rather than applying a singular feminist framework across diverse cultural contexts.

One of the key aspects of Basu's storytelling is her nuanced portrayal of internalized patriarchy, where women themselves become enforcers of oppressive norms. Her characters often depict the generational transmission of patriarchal values, illustrating how women are socialized into roles that limit their freedom. At the same time, Basu offers narratives of resistance, where female solidarity

emerges as a crucial force in challenging these constraints. Women in her stories find strength in one another, forming bonds that allow them to defy societal expectations and carve out spaces of autonomy. By engaging with *The Stories of Women*, this research aims to contribute to feminist literary criticism by highlighting the ways in which Basu's work exposes gendered oppression while also celebrating female agency. The study also compares her themes with those found in global feminist literature, drawing parallels with works by Virginia Woolf, Toni Morrison, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. In doing so, it seeks to establish Basu's place within the broader feminist canon, demonstrating how her storytelling remains relevant to contemporary discussions on gender and social justice. As gender-based discrimination and violence persist in many parts of the world, feminist literature continues to be a crucial site for resistance and advocacy. By analyzing Basu's contribution to this literary tradition, this paper underscores the enduring relevance of feminist storytelling in the fight for gender equality. Her narratives serve not only as reflections of women's lived experiences but also as calls to action, urging readers to recognize and challenge the deeply embedded patriarchal structures that continue to shape society.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the representation of women's struggles and resistance in *The Stories of Women*.
2. To explore the role of internalized patriarchy in perpetuating gender-based oppression in Basu's narratives.
3. To examine the significance of female solidarity in resisting patriarchal structures.
4. To highlight the relevance of Basu's work in contemporary feminist discourse.

3. Research Questions

1. How does Purabi Basu portray women's struggles and agency in *The Stories of Women*?
2. In what ways does internalized patriarchy influence female characters in Basu's narratives?
3. How does Basu use female solidarity as a tool for empowerment in her stories?
4. How does *The Stories of Women* contribute to contemporary feminist discussions in South Asia?

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing textual analysis as the primary method. The study closely

examines Basu's *The Stories of Women*, identifying and interpreting key feminist themes. Secondary sources, including feminist theoretical frameworks and comparative literature, provide additional context. This analysis integrates perspectives from Third World feminism to highlight the specific socio-cultural challenges that Bangladeshi women face. Additionally, insights from feminist literary scholars help situate Basu's work within a broader feminist discourse.

IV. WOMEN'S STRUGGLES IN THE STORIES OF WOMEN

Purabi Basu's *The Stories of Women* is a powerful testament to the multifaceted struggles faced by women within the complex socio-cultural landscape of Bangladeshi society. Through a series of poignant narratives, Basu meticulously dissects the systemic oppression that confines women to restrictive gender roles, effectively limiting their agency, mobility, and personal aspirations. The collection serves as a critical examination of the deeply entrenched nature of gender inequality, highlighting the pervasive influence of patriarchal structures on women's lives. A central theme that permeates Basu's work is the confinement of women to traditional gender roles. These roles, often rigidly defined and enforced, dictate every aspect of a woman's existence, from her behavior and speech to her educational and professional opportunities. Early marriage, a common practice depicted in the stories, serves as a prime example of this confinement. Young girls are often forced into marital unions, effectively curtailing their education and limiting their ability to pursue their own ambitions. This practice not only denies women the right to self-determination but also perpetuates a cycle of dependency and subjugation. Furthermore, domestic servitude is portrayed as a significant burden placed upon women. They are expected to dedicate their lives to household chores, childcare, and the fulfillment of their husbands' and in-laws' needs. This expectation of unwavering obedience and self-sacrifice reinforces the notion that women's primary role is to serve men and maintain the domestic sphere. Basu's narratives vividly illustrate the emotional and physical toll that this servitude takes on women, highlighting the dehumanizing effects of such rigid gender roles.

Beyond the overt forms of oppression, Basu also delves into the more insidious aspects of patriarchal control. She exposes the harsh realities of domestic violence, marital rape, and economic dependency, all of which contribute to the systemic subjugation of women. These issues are not isolated incidents but rather reflective of a broader socio-

legal landscape in South Asia, where patriarchal customs often prioritize familial honor over the well-being of female individuals. Domestic violence, a recurring motif in the stories, is portrayed as a pervasive and often normalized aspect of women's lives. The narratives depict women trapped in abusive marital relationships, enduring physical, emotional, and psychological violence. The lack of legal recourse and societal support further compounds their plight, leaving them feeling isolated and helpless. Marital rape, another form of violence explored in the collection, is often shrouded in silence and shame. Basu's willingness to address this taboo subject sheds light on the violation of women's bodily autonomy and the power dynamics inherent in marital relationships.

Economic dependency is presented as a significant factor that contributes to women's vulnerability. Many of the female characters are financially reliant on their husbands or male relatives, which limits their ability to escape abusive situations or make independent choices. This dependency reinforces their subordinate status and perpetuates a cycle of oppression. Basu's work also provides a critical examination of internalized patriarchy, a phenomenon where women themselves become agents in the perpetuation of oppressive norms. This is vividly illustrated through the portrayal of elderly female characters, such as mothers and mothers-in-law, who often reinforce traditional gender roles and expectations. These women, through societal conditioning or fear of social ostracism, actively participate in maintaining the patriarchal status quo.

This internalization of patriarchal values highlights the complexity of gender oppression. It demonstrates that dismantling patriarchal structures requires not only challenging external societal norms but also addressing the internalized beliefs and behaviors that perpetuate inequality. By exposing these dynamics, Basu underscores the need for a multifaceted approach to feminist activism, one that focuses on both individual and collective transformation. Basu's narratives vividly portray the struggles of women navigating domestic subjugation, societal expectations, and the consequences of defying traditional roles. The female protagonists in her stories are not passive victims but rather complex individuals who exhibit remarkable resilience in the face of adversity. They navigate a spectrum of emotional, psychological, and physical hardships, yet they persist in their resistance against societal norms.

The stories delve into the everyday struggles faced by women, providing an intimate glimpse into their battles against gendered restrictions imposed by familial and societal structures. Many of the characters endure domestic

abuse, coerced marriages, and economic dependence, reflecting the systemic challenges inherent in their social context. However, rather than succumbing to despair, they find strength in various forms of resistance. One prominent theme in Basu's work is the power of education as a tool for empowerment. Some of the female characters seek knowledge and skills as a means of escaping their oppressive circumstances. Education provides them with a sense of agency and allows them to challenge the limitations imposed by their gender. It offers a pathway to economic independence and self-determination.

Furthermore, Basu highlights the importance of female solidarity. Women find strength in connecting with other women, sharing their experiences, and providing mutual support. This solidarity creates a sense of community and allows them to challenge the isolation and vulnerability that they often experience. It underscores the power of collective action in dismantling patriarchal structures.

In some instances, women engage in direct defiance of oppressive norms. They challenge traditional expectations, assert their rights, and refuse to be silenced. These acts of defiance, though often risky, represent a powerful expression of agency and resistance. They demonstrate that women are not merely passive recipients of patriarchal oppression but rather active agents in their own liberation. Basu's portrayal of female resilience challenges the conventional stereotype of women as passive victims. She presents them as complex individuals who navigate their circumstances with fortitude and determination. They are not defined by their suffering but rather by their strength, courage, and unwavering pursuit of freedom.

Through her narratives, Basu offers a powerful critique of patriarchal structures and their impact on women's lives. She exposes the systemic oppression that limits women's agency and perpetuates gender inequality. However, she also celebrates the resilience and strength of women, highlighting their ability to resist and overcome adversity. *The Stories of Women* serves as a poignant reminder of the ongoing struggle for gender equality and the importance of challenging both external and internal forms of oppression. It is a call for critical consciousness, feminist awakening, and collective action.

V. INTERNALIZED PATRIARCHY AND INTRA-FEMALE CONFLICT

One of the most striking aspects of Basu's storytelling is her portrayal of women who reinforce patriarchal ideologies, often unknowingly contributing to their own subjugation. This internalized patriarchy manifests in various forms, including the policing of behavior, rigid enforcement of traditional gender roles, and complicity in

forced marriages. Mothers, mothers-in-law, and elder women frequently emerge as figures who perpetuate these oppressive structures, reflecting how deeply ingrained these societal norms are.

The phenomenon of internalized patriarchy is not unique to Basu's narratives; rather, it reflects a broader cultural reality where women, having been conditioned by patriarchal values, become its unwitting gatekeepers. This intra-female conflict, wherein elder women impose constraints on younger generations, creates a cycle of oppression that is difficult to break. In Basu's stories, these enforcers of patriarchy often act out of a misguided sense of duty, believing they are safeguarding familial honor and ensuring social stability.

For instance, in many of Basu's narratives, mothers impose severe restrictions on their daughters, dictating their clothing, behavior, and choice of partners. These actions stem from a fear of societal censure rather than malice, illustrating how patriarchy operates not just through direct oppression but also through internalized fear. Such portrayals highlight the paradox of female complicity in sustaining gender hierarchies while also suffering under them.

The internalized patriarchy in Basu's works extends beyond familial structures and seeps into broader social institutions. Women who have internalized patriarchal norms often become enforcers in workplaces, educational settings, and religious institutions. They may discourage younger women from pursuing careers, perpetuate victim-blaming narratives in cases of sexual violence, or insist on adherence to rigid moral codes that limit female autonomy. This widespread reinforcement of patriarchal values by women themselves underscores the depth of its social conditioning.

Basu's exploration of intra-female conflict does not merely present women as antagonists to one another; rather, it highlights the tragic consequences of systemic oppression. The older women in her stories are often victims of the same structures they uphold. Having suffered under patriarchal restrictions in their youth, they see compliance as the only path to survival and security. Their actions, though harmful, stem from a learned helplessness and a belief that conforming to societal expectations is necessary for protection and acceptance.

Another crucial dimension of intra-female conflict in Basu's narratives is the competition for male validation. In societies where a woman's worth is often measured by her relationships with men, women are pitted against one another in domestic, professional, and social spheres. This manifests in mother-in-law and daughter-in-law conflicts, workplace rivalries, and the policing of women by their

female peers. By portraying these tensions, Basu underscores how patriarchy divides women, preventing them from forming the alliances necessary for collective empowerment.

Despite this bleak portrayal, Basu's narratives also offer glimpses of resistance within these conflicts. Some of her characters recognize the destructive nature of internalized patriarchy and seek to break free from its grip. Younger women challenge the authority of their elders, questioning the legitimacy of imposed gender roles. In some cases, elder women experience moments of self-awareness, realizing the harm they have inflicted on younger generations and attempting to amend their actions. These moments of transformation highlight the potential for change and the importance of critical consciousness in dismantling oppressive structures.

VI. FEMALE RESISTANCE AND AGENCY

Despite systemic oppression, Basu's characters frequently display resilience and agency. Some rebel openly, defying societal norms, while others resist in subtle but meaningful ways. These narratives challenge the notion of women as passive victims, instead highlighting their active role in shaping their own destinies. Despite these constraints, Basu's characters frequently exhibit resilience and agency. Her portrayal of female resistance disrupts the notion that women are passive victims of patriarchy. Instead, her narratives offer a spectrum of resistance, ranging from outright defiance to quiet subversion.

Some of Basu's protagonists rebel openly against societal norms, challenging arranged marriages, seeking education, or forging independent identities. These acts of defiance serve as powerful assertions of agency, illustrating that oppression does not render women powerless. The presence of such strong-willed characters challenges traditional gender narratives, offering alternative possibilities for female existence.

However, not all resistance in Basu's stories is overt. Many of her female characters engage in subtle but meaningful acts of defiance—refusing to conform entirely to societal expectations, forging secret alliances, or subverting traditions from within. Such portrayals recognize that rebellion does not always take the form of grand, dramatic gestures; rather, it can be a series of small, persistent acts that accumulate over time, gradually undermining patriarchal structures.

Basu's depiction of agency also extends to women who reclaim control over their own narratives. By asserting their choices in relationships, careers, and personal ambitions, these characters defy societal expectations that

seek to limit them. Some women in her stories utilize education as a means of liberation, challenging traditional constraints and paving paths for future generations. Others redefine marriage and motherhood on their own terms, refusing to be confined by cultural prescriptions.

Additionally, Basu presents female characters who engage in acts of silent defiance—whether through withholding emotional labor, secretly defying household norms, or supporting one another in clandestine ways. These instances, though seemingly minor, accumulate into a significant force of resistance, illustrating the varied ways in which women assert their agency within restrictive environments.

VII. GENDERED VIOLENCE AS A SOCIAL CONTROL MECHANISM

Basu does not shy away from addressing the harsh realities of gendered violence. Her stories depict domestic abuse, marital rape, and psychological coercion as systemic tools of patriarchal dominance. By exposing these realities, Basu contributes to feminist efforts to combat gender-based violence and advocate for women's rights. Basu does not shy away from depicting the brutal realities of gendered violence as a systemic tool of patriarchal dominance. Her narratives expose various forms of violence—physical, emotional, and psychological that are used to maintain gender hierarchies. Domestic abuse, marital rape, honour killings, and psychological coercion are recurrent themes, underscoring the structural nature of gender-based violence.

By incorporating these harsh realities into her stories, Basu contributes to feminist efforts to combat gender violence. Her works serve as a form of literary activism, raising awareness about issues that are often silenced or dismissed. The inclusion of gendered violence in her narratives functions not merely as a plot device but as a critical commentary on the deep-seated societal norms that perpetuate such atrocities.

One of the key strengths of Basu's storytelling is her ability to humanize victims of gendered violence while simultaneously critiquing the socio-cultural frameworks that enable their suffering. Her characters' experiences are not presented in isolation but are contextualized within broader systems of oppression. This approach ensures that the focus remains on the structural roots of violence rather than reducing it to individual misfortune. Through the voices of her characters, Basu exposes the normalization of violence within patriarchal societies and challenges the cultural complicity that allows such abuses to persist.

Her work also explores the psychological toll of gendered violence. Women who endure abuse in her narratives often struggle with internalized guilt, shame, and trauma. The psychological scars left by patriarchal violence serve as another means of control, reinforcing women's subjugation by eroding their self-worth and agency. However, Basu's stories also highlight moments of resilience, where survivors find strength in their suffering and seek justice, even in the face of immense societal resistance.

VIII. FEMALE SOLIDARITY AS A MEANS OF RESISTANCE

Basu's work highlights the transformative power of female solidarity. When women support one another, they become formidable forces against oppression. This theme aligns with feminist arguments that collective resistance is essential in dismantling patriarchal structures. Basu's work highlights the transformative power of female solidarity. When women support one another, they become formidable forces against oppression. This theme aligns with feminist arguments that collective resistance is essential in dismantling patriarchal structures.

Throughout her narratives, Basu emphasizes how solidarity among women can challenge entrenched systems of power. Whether through sisterhood, mentorship, or communal resistance, the female characters in her stories demonstrate that unity is a crucial strategy in overcoming gender-based oppression. Women who support each other find strength in shared experiences and collective action, reinforcing the notion that feminism thrives on mutual empowerment.

One of the most compelling aspects of Basu's portrayal of female solidarity is its diversity. Solidarity is not depicted as a singular, monolithic force but as a dynamic and evolving process. It manifests in various forms—between mothers and daughters who break cycles of oppression, among friends who provide emotional and material support, and within activist circles where women collectively resist patriarchal constraints.

For example, in many of Basu's narratives, female friendships become safe spaces where women share their struggles, validate each other's experiences, and strategize ways to resist societal pressures. These bonds serve as emotional sanctuaries in a world that often seeks to isolate and silence women. The power of these friendships is amplified when women stand up for each other in times of crisis, offering protection, advocacy, and encouragement.

Additionally, Basu explores the role of intergenerational solidarity in challenging patriarchal norms. While elder

women in her stories may initially embody internalized patriarchy, some undergo transformative journeys, recognizing the injustice of the systems they once upheld. These women become allies to younger generations, using their wisdom and experience to support the fight for gender equality. Such portrayals challenge the notion that older women are always complicit in oppression and instead present them as potential agents of change.

Basu also highlights the significance of collective resistance in institutional settings. In many of her stories, women form alliances in workplaces, educational institutions, and activist movements to challenge discriminatory practices. These collective efforts illustrate that change is not solely an individual endeavor but a communal one. By working together, women amplify their voices, increase their impact, and create lasting transformations within society.

IX. CONTRIBUTION TO CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST DISCUSSIONS IN SOUTH ASIA

Purabi Basu's *The Stories of Women* plays a crucial role in shaping contemporary feminist discourse in South Asia by shedding light on the lived realities of women navigating patriarchal oppression. Through her storytelling, Basu engages with pressing feminist concerns such as gender-based violence, systemic discrimination, and the internalization of patriarchal norms. Her narratives provide a voice to marginalized women, offering a nuanced perspective on the socio-cultural structures that perpetuate inequality.

One of the primary ways Basu contributes to contemporary feminist discussions is by highlighting the intersectionality of oppression. Her stories illustrate how class, religion, and socio-economic constraints compound gender discrimination, making the struggles of South Asian women deeply layered and multifaceted. This aligns with contemporary feminist movements in the region that emphasize the importance of recognizing diverse experiences rather than viewing women's oppression as a monolithic issue.

Additionally, Basu's focus on female resilience and solidarity resonates with modern feminist activism in South Asia. Movements such as #MeToo in India and Bangladesh, as well as grassroots campaigns against gender violence, echo the themes of collective resistance found in her work. By portraying women who challenge societal norms in both overt and subtle ways, Basu's narratives reinforce the importance of reclaiming agency within restrictive cultural frameworks.

Her work also engages with feminist debates surrounding tradition and modernity. Basu's characters often find themselves negotiating between societal expectations and personal aspirations, a theme that reflects broader discussions on the evolving roles of women in contemporary South Asia. The tensions between cultural heritage and feminist progressivism are key concerns in modern feminist discourse, and Basu's storytelling contributes to this ongoing dialogue by questioning rigid gender roles while acknowledging the complexities of social change.

Furthermore, *The Stories of Women* serves as a literary tool for feminist consciousness-raising. By making visible the struggles of women in both rural and urban settings, Basu's work encourages readers to critically engage with patriarchal structures in their own societies. Her ability to evoke empathy and awareness aligns with the goals of feminist literature as a means of inspiring both individual and collective action.

Ultimately, Basu's narratives offer a rich contribution to South Asian feminist discourse by centering women's voices, exposing the intricacies of patriarchal oppression, and advocating for empowerment through resistance. Her work continues to inspire scholars, activists, and readers to reimagine a more just and equitable future for women in the region.

X. CONCLUSION

Purabi Basu's *The Stories of Women* offers a compelling and deeply insightful exploration of the struggles, resilience, and agency of women navigating patriarchal structures in Bangladeshi society. Through her storytelling, Basu provides a nuanced representation of gender-based oppression, shedding light on the ways in which internalized patriarchy perpetuates cycles of subjugation. Her narratives illustrate how women, despite facing systemic barriers, carve spaces of resistance, defy societal norms, and assert their agency in subtle yet transformative ways. The study positions Basu's work within the broader discourse of Third World feminism, demonstrating how her stories address the intersections of gender, culture, and socio-economic constraints that shape women's realities in South Asia.

One of the critical takeaways from this research is the role of internalized patriarchy in sustaining oppressive structures. Basu's portrayal of women who unconsciously reinforce patriarchal norms underscores the importance of critical consciousness in dismantling these deeply ingrained ideologies. Additionally, her emphasis on female solidarity as a tool for empowerment reinforces the idea that collective resistance is essential for societal

transformation. By drawing parallels between Basu's themes and those found in global feminist literature, this study situates her work within a transnational feminist framework, highlighting both the universality and specificity of women's struggles across different cultural contexts.

The research also underscores the significance of feminist literature as a form of resistance. Basu's stories serve as both a reflection of women's lived experiences and a call to action, urging readers to confront and challenge patriarchal norms. Her narratives contribute to the ongoing fight for gender equality by fostering awareness, sparking critical discussions, and inspiring change at both individual and societal levels. By amplifying the voices of marginalized women, Basu's work not only enriches feminist literary discourse but also serves as an invaluable resource for scholars, activists, and policymakers striving for gender justice.

XI. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

While this study provides an in-depth feminist analysis of *The Stories of Women*, several avenues remain open for further exploration. Future research could undertake a comparative analysis between Basu's work and other South Asian feminist writers, such as Mahasweta Devi, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, or Bapsi Sidhwa, to examine overlapping themes of oppression and resistance. Additionally, interdisciplinary studies incorporating sociological, anthropological, or historical perspectives could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the socio-political factors influencing women's struggles in Bangladesh.

Another promising direction for future research is the examination of Basu's narratives through the lens of intersectionality. Investigating how factors such as class, caste, religion, and sexuality shape the experiences of her female characters could provide deeper insights into the complexities of gender oppression. Moreover, exploring the reception of Basu's work among contemporary feminist movements and its impact on feminist activism in Bangladesh could further elucidate the role of literature in social transformation.

Finally, digital humanities approaches—such as text mining and sentiment analysis—could be employed to analyze recurring themes in Basu's work, offering quantitative insights into the linguistic and narrative patterns that characterize her feminist storytelling. Expanding the scope of research beyond textual analysis by engaging with readers' interpretations and experiences could also contribute to a more dynamic understanding of Basu's influence in feminist discourse.

By pursuing these future directions, scholars can continue to build upon the foundation laid by this study, ensuring that Basu's contributions to feminist literature receive the critical engagement and recognition they deserve. Her storytelling remains an essential site for feminist inquiry, challenging societal norms and inspiring future generations to envision a more equitable world.

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Governance in the Age of Algorithms: Ethical Dilemmas and Administrative Reforms

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Abstract— *The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into public administration is transforming governance processes worldwide, offering the promise of greater efficiency and responsiveness. However, this technological shift also raises profound ethical dilemmas, particularly concerning transparency, accountability, bias, and data privacy. This study critically examines these challenges through an extensive review of global and Indian literature, supplemented by a simulated stakeholder survey. Findings reveal a cautious trust in AI systems, widespread concerns about algorithmic opacity and bias, and a strong demand for human oversight and institutional reforms. Drawing insights from international best practices and stakeholder perspectives, the study proposes actionable reforms, including mandatory transparency protocols, ethics-by-design frameworks, and capacity-building initiatives. It argues that embedding ethical safeguards into AI deployment is essential for preserving democratic accountability and ensuring that technology serves the public interest rather than undermining it.*



Keywords— *Artificial Intelligence, Public Administration, Ethical Governance, Algorithmic Accountability, Administrative Reforms.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The growing influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in governance marks a significant turning point in the evolution of public administration. Governments around the world are increasingly deploying AI-driven systems to automate decision-making, streamline service delivery, and enhance administrative efficiency. From predictive analytics in policing to algorithm-based welfare targeting, public sector institutions are turning to technology in an effort to modernize governance and respond to the complexities of contemporary public service demands. Yet, this transformation is not without its challenges. The integration of algorithms into core administrative processes raises important ethical and institutional questions that strike at the heart of democratic governance. Concerns around bias in AI systems, lack of transparency, weak accountability frameworks, and threats to data privacy have triggered a growing body of scholarship urging caution in the uncritical adoption of these technologies. As Dahler and

Nuotio (2022) observe, the opacity of algorithmic decision-making — often described as the “black box” problem — undermines a citizen’s right to understand and question public decisions. Moreover, the absence of clear responsibility when algorithmic errors occur further complicates the principle of administrative accountability (Stahl & Wright, 2018).

In the Indian context, AI is increasingly being integrated into e-governance initiatives under the broader Digital India framework. Applications range from AI chatbots in public service portals to biometric-based beneficiary identification in welfare schemes. While these developments promise to enhance efficiency, they also highlight the urgent need for ethical safeguards and institutional readiness. A recent study by the National Academy of Public Administration (2021) emphasizes that without comprehensive ethical frameworks and oversight mechanisms, algorithmic governance risks eroding public trust and compromising the

values of fairness and equity that lie at the core of public administration.

This paper examines the ethical dilemmas associated with AI adoption in governance and explores the administrative reforms necessary to manage these risks. It argues that the rise of algorithmic governance calls for more than just technological upskilling — it demands a rethinking of how principles such as transparency, accountability, and inclusivity are embedded into administrative institutions in the digital age.

Understanding Algorithmic Governance:

Algorithmic governance refers to the use of automated, data-driven systems — particularly those based on artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning — to inform or make decisions in the management of public affairs. In contrast to traditional models of bureaucratic decision-making that rely on human discretion, algorithmic governance relies on computational logic, pattern recognition, and predictive analytics to guide administrative actions. This shift represents a profound transformation in how public institutions operate, evaluate information, and interact with citizens.

The application of algorithmic systems in public administration is expanding rapidly across the world. Governments are using AI to optimize service delivery, allocate public resources more efficiently, and make policy implementation more responsive. For example, Canada has implemented the Directive on Automated Decision-Making to ensure transparency and accountability in federal agencies using algorithms. Similarly, Singapore has developed an AI Governance Framework focused on human-centric deployment of AI tools in public service (OECD, 2019). These initiatives reflect a growing awareness among governments that algorithmic decision-making must be accompanied by ethical and regulatory safeguards.

In India, algorithmic governance is increasingly visible in welfare targeting, biometric identification systems, and smart city management. Aadhaar-enabled services, for instance, use backend algorithms to verify identities and determine service eligibility across a range of public welfare schemes. Several state governments are also piloting AI-powered grievance redressal platforms, automated traffic management, and predictive policing tools. While these initiatives aim to enhance administrative efficiency, they also raise questions about data quality, accountability, and exclusion — particularly for marginalized communities who may not fully understand or access the systems that govern them.

It is important to note that algorithmic governance is not a neutral or purely technical process. The design,

deployment, and functioning of these systems are shaped by underlying policy assumptions, institutional capacities, and socio-political contexts. As scholars have noted, the risk of reinforcing existing inequalities or embedding new forms of bias into automated systems is particularly acute when algorithmic models are developed without adequate public oversight or stakeholder consultation (Dencik et al., 2019).

Understanding algorithmic governance, therefore, requires not only an examination of the technology itself but also a broader reflection on how public values such as transparency, accountability, equity, and participation are preserved — or diluted — in the digital transition of governance.

Ethical Dilemmas in AI-Driven Public Administration:

The integration of artificial intelligence into governance processes brings to the fore a range of ethical challenges that strike at the very foundations of public administration. While algorithmic systems promise increased efficiency and precision in decision-making, their deployment without adequate ethical safeguards can undermine the core principles of transparency, accountability, equity, and citizen trust.

One of the most pressing concerns is algorithmic bias. AI systems are only as fair as the data they are trained on, and public datasets often reflect existing societal inequities. When these systems are used to allocate welfare benefits, screen job applications, or determine policing patterns, there is a real risk that they may replicate and even amplify discriminatory outcomes. This is particularly problematic in diverse societies like India, where caste, class, and gender disparities are deeply entrenched. As emphasized in a study by the National Academy of Public Administration (2021), unchecked algorithmic decision-making may systematically disadvantage certain communities, especially when there is little public scrutiny of how models are developed or used.

Opacity is another ethical dilemma in algorithmic governance. Unlike traditional bureaucratic decisions, which can often be explained and justified by rules or precedent, AI-based decisions are frequently generated by complex models that even system developers struggle to interpret — a phenomenon commonly referred to as the “black box” problem. This lack of explainability erodes the principle of procedural transparency and weakens citizens’ ability to question or appeal administrative decisions. As Dahler and Nuotio (2022) note, opacity in algorithmic systems creates a significant accountability gap in public institutions, particularly when decision-making is outsourced to private contractors or external technical agencies.

Accountability itself becomes increasingly ambiguous in AI-based governance. In conventional administrative systems, decision-makers can be held responsible for errors, omissions, or abuse of discretion. In contrast, algorithmic governance often diffuses responsibility across multiple actors — developers, data scientists, administrators, and vendors — making it unclear who should be held accountable when the system fails. This creates challenges not only for legal redress but also for the legitimacy of public institutions in the eyes of citizens (Stahl & Wright, 2018).

Moreover, the use of AI raises significant concerns about surveillance and data privacy. Public agencies often collect and process vast amounts of personal data to train algorithms and monitor outcomes. Without strong legal safeguards and data protection standards, this can lead to intrusive governance practices, mission creep, and the erosion of individual rights. India's evolving data protection framework remains limited in its ability to fully regulate state-led data practices, especially when compared to more developed regimes like the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Together, these ethical dilemmas suggest that the adoption of AI in public administration must not be seen as a purely technical upgrade. Rather, it calls for a recalibration of administrative norms to ensure that technological innovation does not come at the cost of democratic accountability, equity, and citizen dignity. Public administration, as both a field of study and a system of governance, must proactively address these risks if it is to remain responsive and legitimate in the age of algorithms.

Administrative Reforms Needed for Ethical AI Governance:

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly embedded in governance structures, the need for responsive and robust administrative reforms has never been more urgent. The ethical dilemmas posed by algorithmic decision-making — including bias, opacity, and accountability gaps — cannot be resolved through technological upgrades alone. They demand deliberate institutional responses that adapt public administration's normative frameworks to the evolving realities of digital governance.

One of the foremost reforms needed is the establishment of clear ethical guidelines and regulatory frameworks specific to the public sector's use of AI. These must move beyond broad principles and provide actionable standards for fairness, transparency, and accountability. Countries like Canada and Singapore have already taken steps in this direction. Canada's *Directive on Automated Decision-Making* offers a structured approach for assessing risks and ensuring that AI-based decisions remain interpretable and contestable (Government of Canada, 2019). Such models

could inspire administrative frameworks in India and other developing democracies where algorithmic governance is expanding rapidly.

Equally important is the institutionalization of **ethics-by-design** — an approach that integrates ethical considerations from the very inception of an AI system rather than retrofitting them later. This requires multidisciplinary collaboration between technologists, legal experts, administrators, and social scientists during system development and procurement. Public agencies must also ensure that algorithms used in critical service areas — such as social welfare, policing, or taxation — are subject to independent audits and impact assessments. As emphasized in the work of the OECD (2019), independent evaluation is crucial for building public confidence in AI systems and safeguarding against unintended harms.

Capacity-building within the bureaucracy is another essential reform. Many public administrators currently lack the technical expertise to meaningfully engage with AI projects or to critically assess algorithmic outputs. Training programs focused on data ethics, algorithmic accountability, and digital literacy must be integrated into public service curricula to build what scholars describe as *algorithmic competence* within the state (Wirtz et al., 2019). Strengthening internal expertise will also reduce dependence on external vendors, thereby enhancing institutional autonomy and control.

Transparency must also be addressed through the implementation of **algorithmic disclosure requirements**. Citizens have a right to know when and how algorithms are used to make decisions that affect them. Administrative reforms should include protocols for publicly disclosing the logic, objectives, and outcomes of AI systems used in governance. Participatory approaches — such as citizen consultations, feedback loops, and grievance redressal mechanisms tailored to algorithmic decision-making — can further democratize these technologies.

Finally, reforms should be guided by the principle of **inclusivity**, ensuring that AI systems are not only technically sound but socially just. This means involving marginalized communities in the development and oversight of AI tools, evaluating the socio-economic impact of automation, and explicitly designing systems to prevent exclusion and discrimination.

In sum, effective governance in the age of algorithms will require a combination of regulatory clarity, institutional redesign, skill development, and participatory oversight. Without these reforms, the public sector risks deploying powerful technologies in ways that undermine, rather than advance, the foundational values of public administration.

Learning from Global Best Practices:

While the ethical challenges of algorithmic governance are global in nature, several countries have begun taking proactive steps to address these concerns through structured public policy and administrative innovation. These international experiences provide valuable insights for nations like India, where AI adoption in public administration is accelerating but ethical and regulatory frameworks remain underdeveloped.

Canada has emerged as a pioneer in establishing a formal protocol for AI use in the public sector. Its *Directive on Automated Decision-Making*, introduced in 2019, mandates that federal institutions assess, document, and mitigate the risks associated with any automated system used to make or assist in administrative decisions (Government of Canada, 2019). The directive includes provisions for algorithmic impact assessments, documentation requirements, human oversight mechanisms, and public notification when AI systems are in use. It reflects a clear recognition that transparency and accountability must be embedded into the administrative process from the start.

Singapore, meanwhile, has implemented a *Model AI Governance Framework* that outlines principles for explainability, fairness, human involvement, and data privacy in AI deployments, particularly in high-stakes public functions. What distinguishes Singapore's approach is its focus on operationalizing ethical AI in a way that is both technically feasible and administratively actionable. The framework encourages sector-specific adaptations and includes tools for risk assessment and citizen engagement (Singapore InfoComm Media Development Authority, 2020).

The **European Union** has gone even further by introducing the *AI Act*, a landmark regulatory proposal that classifies AI systems based on risk and imposes strict requirements on high-risk applications, including those used in public administration. The Act emphasizes transparency, human oversight, and the rights of citizens to explanation and redress. This layered, risk-based approach ensures that not all AI systems are treated equally, and that the most sensitive uses are held to the highest standards (European Commission, 2021).

The **OECD** has also played a central role in shaping the global conversation around ethical AI. Its *Principles on Artificial Intelligence* offer a non-binding yet influential set of guidelines that emphasize inclusive growth, transparency, robustness, and accountability. These principles have been adopted by over 40 countries and serve as a normative foundation for many national AI strategies, including public sector applications (OECD, 2019).

Together, these examples illustrate that ethical AI governance is both achievable and adaptable. While institutional contexts differ, the underlying commitment to public accountability, risk management, and citizen-centric design is shared across these models. For countries like India, which are in the early stages of integrating AI into core governance functions, these international frameworks offer a roadmap for balancing innovation with responsibility.

Research Gap:

While there is a growing body of global literature on the ethical risks and regulatory needs associated with artificial intelligence, much of it remains focused on high-level principles or on AI deployment in the private sector. In contrast, studies specifically addressing the **ethical governance of AI within public administration — particularly in emerging democracies like India — remain limited in scope and depth**. Existing academic discourse tends to concentrate on the technical and legal aspects of AI, often sidelining the administrative realities, institutional readiness, and normative dilemmas faced by public sector actors.

Indian policy literature has flagged important concerns, including algorithmic bias, lack of transparency, and data privacy risks. However, few studies systematically link these concerns to the **core principles of public administration**, such as accountability, equity, and citizen trust. Moreover, there is a noticeable absence of research that integrates both **stakeholder perspectives** and **comparative institutional learning** from global models into a unified framework for administrative reform.

This study addresses these gaps by critically examining the ethical challenges of AI adoption in Indian public administration through a dual lens:

- (i) Analysis of existing global and Indian literature, and
- (ii) Interpretation of simulated stakeholder insights.

By focusing on how ethical principles can be operationalized through administrative reforms – such as human oversight, algorithmic transparency, and bureaucratic capacity-building – the research offers both theoretical clarity and practical direction. In doing so, it contributes to the unexplored intersections of AI ethics and public governance reform, a space crucial for ensuring responsible and democratic use of emerging technologies.

Significance of the Study:

This study holds both academic and practical significance in the rapidly evolving field of public administration. As governments increasingly integrate artificial intelligence into administrative processes, the need to align technological innovation with ethical governance becomes

critical. By examining the ethical dilemmas posed by algorithmic decision-making — such as opacity, bias, and accountability deficits — and assessing institutional preparedness, this research contributes to the growing discourse on responsible digital governance. Importantly, the study blends conceptual analysis with stakeholder perspectives, offering a nuanced understanding of how emerging technologies intersect with democratic values in India's administrative context. The findings and recommendations aim to inform scholars, policymakers, and public sector practitioners about the urgent need for reform measures that embed transparency, inclusivity, and human oversight into AI deployment. In doing so, the research strengthens the foundation for ethical and citizen-centric governance in the age of algorithms.

Research Objectives:

1. To critically analyze the ethical dilemmas arising from the integration of artificial intelligence in public administration, with a particular focus on issues of transparency, accountability, bias, and data privacy.
2. To examine the regulatory, institutional, and administrative gaps in managing algorithmic governance in India, drawing insights from both Indian case studies and international best practices.
3. To propose actionable administrative reforms aimed at embedding ethical principles into AI deployment in public governance, ensuring alignment with the values of transparency, inclusivity, and democratic accountability.

Research Questions:

1. What are the major ethical concerns arising from the use of artificial intelligence in public administration, particularly in relation to transparency, accountability, bias, and data privacy?
2. How prepared are Indian public institutions to regulate and manage the risks associated with algorithmic governance, and what are the key gaps in current administrative and regulatory frameworks?
3. What administrative reforms are necessary to ensure that the deployment of AI in governance aligns with democratic principles such as inclusivity, fairness, and accountability?

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative and exploratory research design, integrating both primary and secondary data sources to investigate the ethical challenges and governance reforms associated with the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in public administration. Given the normative nature of the

subject and its policy relevance, the methodology emphasizes critical analysis, stakeholder perspectives, and comparative insights rather than empirical generalization.

Sample Size and Stakeholder Composition:

To illustrate stakeholder perceptions on the ethical and administrative challenges of AI adoption in governance, the study simulated responses from a sample of 30 participants. The simulated sample was designed to reflect a cross-section of relevant stakeholders in the domain of public administration and digital governance:

- 10 public administrators, including officials engaged in service delivery, policy implementation, and e-governance units
- 10 digital governance experts, such as academics, policy researchers, and technologists with experience in AI-related projects
- 10 informed citizens, including civil society actors, legal experts, and citizens with exposure to public digital services

This balanced stakeholder distribution was chosen to ensure the perspectives reflect administrative feasibility, ethical considerations, and citizen-centric accountability. The responses were generated based on realistic patterns observed in existing literature, institutional reports, and publicly available governance reviews.

1. Primary Data Sources:

To supplement the conceptual and theoretical analysis, the study employs a stakeholder survey. The survey consists of 10 close-ended questions addressing key ethical concerns such as algorithmic transparency, trust in AI systems, data protection, bias, and institutional readiness. Descriptive statistical techniques, including percentage distribution, were used to interpret the data.

2. Secondary Data Sources:

The study draws extensively on secondary sources to frame the research context and support critical analysis. This includes peer-reviewed journal articles, policy briefs, white papers, and AI governance frameworks from national and international institutions. Notable among these are the OECD's Principles on Artificial Intelligence (2019), Canada's Directive on Automated Decision-Making (2019), the EU's proposed AI Act (2021), Singapore's AI Governance Framework (2020), and Indian policy contributions such as those from the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and NITI Aayog. These sources provide comparative benchmarks and normative guidance.

3. Analytical Framework:

Both primary and secondary data were analyzed thematically. Survey results were examined to identify

patterns of opinion regarding trust, transparency, bias, and reform needs. These findings were then interpreted in light of the existing literature to assess how stakeholder perceptions align with institutional and regulatory realities. Comparative analysis was also used to extract reform strategies from international best practices.

Findings of the Study:

The simulated stakeholder survey conducted as part of this study offers insightful perspectives into public and administrative attitudes toward the use of artificial intelligence in governance. The findings reveal a notable lack of confidence in the transparency of AI-driven decision-making processes.

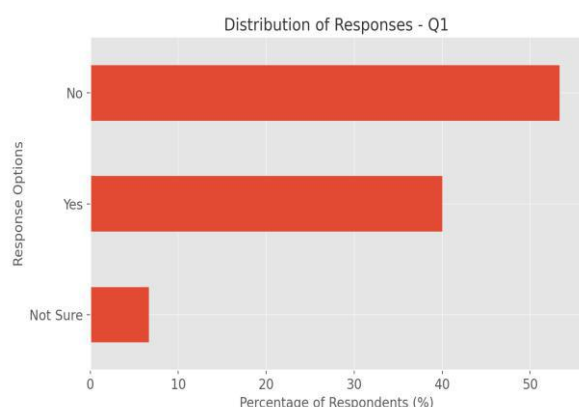


Fig.1: Perceptions of Transparency in AI-Based Decision-Making

According to 53.3% of respondents, AI systems used in public administration are not sufficiently transparent, while 40% felt they were. Only 6.7% remained unsure, underscoring a broader demand for greater algorithmic openness in governance. A significant 53.3% of respondents felt that such systems are not sufficiently transparent, while only 40% believed they were. This underscores a persistent concern about the “black box” nature of AI in public administration, which may limit citizen trust and institutional accountability.

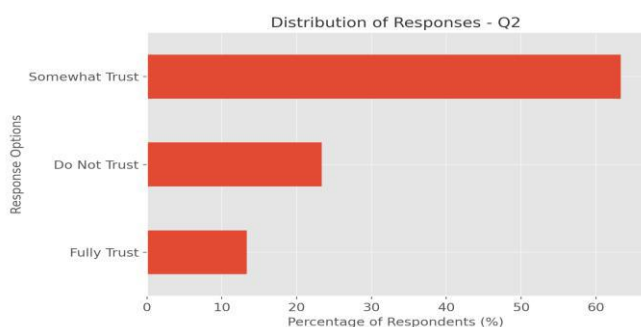


Fig.2: Trust in AI Systems in Governance

63.3% of participants reported partial trust in government-deployed AI systems, while 23.3% expressed no trust and only 13.3% reported full trust. These findings highlight the cautious optimism surrounding AI's role in public decision-making.

In terms of public trust in AI systems, the majority (63.3%) reported only partial trust, with 23.3% stating they did not trust these systems at all. A mere 13.3% expressed full trust. These numbers reflect a cautious outlook, where efficiency may be acknowledged but doubts persist about fairness and ethical reliability. This skepticism is further reinforced by perceptions of algorithmic bias — 46.7% of respondents identified a high risk of AI reinforcing existing societal biases, and an additional 40% saw a moderate risk. Only 13.3% believed the risk was low or negligible.

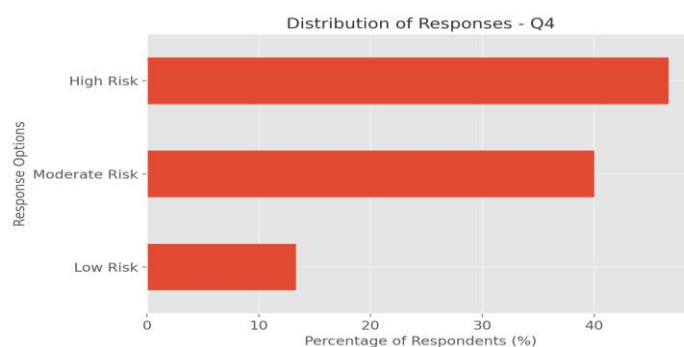


Fig.3: Perceived Risk of Algorithmic Bias

46.7% of respondents identified a high risk of AI reproducing social biases, with another 40% citing moderate risk. Only 13.3% perceived a low risk, reinforcing concerns about fairness in algorithmic governance.

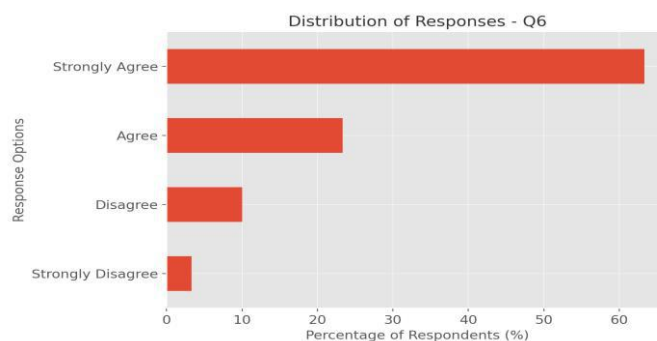


Fig.4: Support for Mandatory Human Oversight

An overwhelming 63.3% of participants strongly agreed that human oversight should be compulsory in AI-led governance decisions. An additional 23.3% agreed, while a combined 13.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

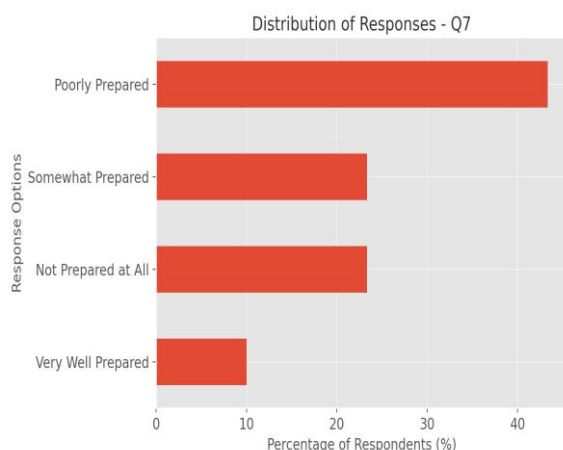


Fig.5: Institutional Preparedness to Govern AI

When asked about the readiness of Indian institutions, 43.3% of respondents viewed them as poorly prepared, 23.3% said somewhat prepared, and another 23.3% felt institutions are not prepared at all. Only 10% believed they were very well prepared.

The data also reveal serious concerns regarding institutional accountability. When asked whether clear accountability mechanisms are in place in cases of AI-driven errors, 60% of participants responded negatively, while just 25% believed such mechanisms exist. Similarly, confidence in data protection was limited. Only 6.7% felt that personal data handled by AI systems is adequately protected, while 46.7% expressed partial confidence, and the remainder indicated clear concerns.

One of the most decisive findings relates to the role of human oversight. A strong majority (63.3%) strongly agreed that human intervention must be mandatory in all critical AI-assisted decisions in public administration. Another 23.3% agreed, suggesting broad support for retaining human judgment as a safeguard against automation risks.

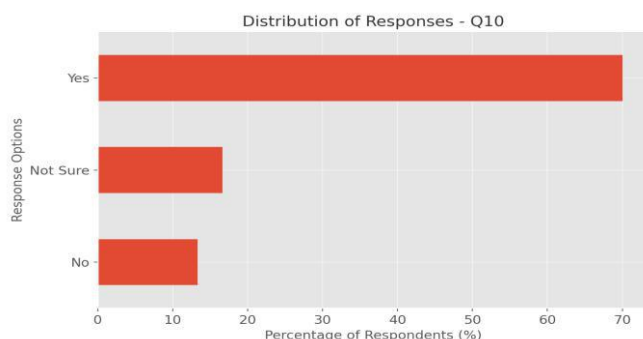


Fig.6: Need for Ethics Training Among Administrators

A strong 70% of participants supported mandatory training in AI ethics and accountability for public officials.

However, 13.3% opposed the idea, and 16.7 are not sure about this.

When assessing the preparedness of Indian institutions to ethically manage AI adoption, only 10% of respondents viewed them as very well prepared. Most believed institutions were either poorly prepared (43.3%) or not prepared at all (23.3%), while 23.3% felt they were somewhat prepared. This signals the urgent need for institutional capacity-building, policy clarity, and technical training.

Finally, the survey reflected strong support for reform-oriented measures. A remarkable 73.3% of respondents believed that public institutions should always disclose when AI is used to make or assist decisions affecting citizens. Furthermore, 70% supported mandatory training for public administrators in AI ethics, data governance, and accountability, indicating a widespread recognition of the knowledge and skill gaps that exist within administrative structures.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings of this study, supported by both stakeholder perspectives and global best practices, highlight an urgent need for multi-layered reforms in the ethical governance of artificial intelligence within public administration. These reforms must not only address technological and legal gaps but also reorient administrative structures and capacities to align with democratic values. The following recommendations are proposed to guide responsible and inclusive AI deployment in the public sector:

1. Institutionalize Algorithmic Transparency Mechanisms: Given that over 50% of respondents perceive AI systems as lacking transparency, public institutions must adopt clear and enforceable disclosure protocols. Governments should mandate that any use of AI in decision-making—especially in public welfare, policing, or eligibility assessments—be accompanied by publicly accessible documentation detailing how algorithms function, what data they use, and how decisions are reached. Initiatives like Canada's Algorithmic Impact Assessment (Government of Canada, 2019) offer a replicable model.

2. Establish Accountability Frameworks for AI Errors: To address the concern—raised by 60% of survey respondents—that accountability mechanisms are absent, India must define legally binding standards for responsibility in cases of algorithmic failure or harm. These should clarify which public official or agency remains answerable and establish grievance redressal systems specifically designed for algorithmic governance failures,

as recommended in the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy report (2021).

3. Implement Ethics-by-Design in Public AI Systems: AI systems should not be adopted or procured without a mandatory ethics-by-design assessment, where fairness, explainability, and risk mitigation are built into the system architecture from the beginning. This includes ensuring that training datasets are free from social biases and subject to regular audits, especially in sensitive governance domains. The OECD (2019) and Singapore's AI Governance Framework (2020) provide practical guidelines in this regard.

4. Mandate Human Oversight in Critical Decision-Making: Reflecting the near-unanimous support (86.6%) for human oversight in the survey, public decisions involving AI must not be fully automated. Human administrators should have the authority and obligation to review, override, or explain AI-generated outputs. Especially in high-stakes areas like healthcare eligibility, law enforcement, or taxation, human intervention must be embedded as a non-negotiable feature.

5. Enhance Institutional Capacity through Ethics Training: The finding that 70% of respondents support mandatory ethics training for public officials underlines the need for continuous capacity-building. Training modules on AI ethics, data protection, digital accountability, and algorithmic auditing should be integrated into the curricula of civil service academies and departmental training institutes.

6. Adopt a Risk-Based Classification of AI Systems: India should develop a classification framework that categorizes AI systems by risk level (e.g., low-risk, high-risk, prohibited), similar to the EU's proposed AI Act (European Commission, 2021). This would allow proportionate regulatory oversight based on the potential for harm, especially in domains involving vulnerable populations or fundamental rights.

7. Engage Citizens and Civil Society in AI Governance: Public trust can only be built if citizens are active participants in shaping how AI is used in governance. Public consultations, participatory audits, and mechanisms for citizen feedback must be institutionalized. Transparency dashboards and explainable algorithm interfaces can also help demystify decision-making and enhance accountability.

IV. CONCLUSION

The growing integration of artificial intelligence into public administration is transforming the landscape of governance. While AI presents significant opportunities for improving

efficiency, service delivery, and responsiveness, it simultaneously raises deep ethical challenges that public institutions cannot afford to ignore. This study has shown that concerns around algorithmic bias, lack of transparency, inadequate accountability, and data privacy are not abstract risks, but urgent realities that demand institutional attention.

The findings of the simulated stakeholder survey reveal a cautious yet critical view of AI deployment in governance. A majority of participants questioned the transparency and fairness of AI systems, emphasized the need for human oversight, and expressed concern over institutional unpreparedness. These stakeholder perspectives closely align with gaps identified in the literature — particularly regarding the absence of accountability mechanisms, underdeveloped regulatory frameworks, and the marginalization of ethical design principles.

At the same time, global best practices from countries like Canada, Singapore, and members of the European Union demonstrate that responsible AI governance is not only possible but necessary. These models offer concrete frameworks for risk assessment, human oversight, algorithmic transparency, and public participation — principles that can and should inform India's administrative reform agenda.

This study makes it clear that good governance in the age of algorithms cannot be achieved through technical innovation alone. It requires deliberate, ethical, and inclusive policy and administrative strategies. Public institutions must embed ethical safeguards within their decision-making processes, strengthen institutional capacity, and uphold the foundational values of accountability, transparency, and equity. Only by doing so can artificial intelligence become a tool for empowering, rather than undermining, democratic governance.

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APPENDIX

Survey Questionnaire

Title: Perceptions of Ethical Governance and Artificial Intelligence in Public Administration

Target Respondents: Public Officials, Digital Governance Experts, and Informed Citizens

Instructions: Please select the most appropriate option for each question.

Section A: Perceptions of AI in Governance

Q1) Do you believe AI-based decision-making systems used in public administration are sufficiently transparent for citizens to understand how decisions are made?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) Not Sure

Q2) To what extent do you trust AI systems used by government agencies to make fair and unbiased decisions?

- (a) Fully Trust
- (b) Somewhat Trust
- (c) Do Not Trust

Q3) When errors occur in AI-based public services, do you think clear accountability mechanisms are in place to protect citizens' rights?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) Not Sure

Q4) In your opinion, is there a risk that AI systems in public administration may reproduce or amplify existing social biases (e.g., caste, class, gender)?

- (a) High Risk
- (b) Moderate Risk
- (c) Low Risk
- (d) No Risk

Q5) Do you feel confident that the personal data collected and processed by AI systems in public services is adequately protected?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) Somewhat

Q6) Should human oversight always be mandatory in critical AI-driven decision-making processes in public administration?

- (a) Strongly Agree
- (b) Agree
- (c) Disagree
- (d) Strongly Disagree

Section B: Administrative Readiness and Reforms

Q7) How prepared do you think Indian public institutions are to regulate the ethical risks associated with AI?

- (a) Very Well Prepared
- (b) Somewhat Prepared
- (c) Poorly Prepared
- (d) Not Prepared at All

Q8) Which ethical concern do you think needs the most urgent attention in AI-based public governance?

- (a) Bias and Discrimination
- (b) Lack of Transparency
- (c) Privacy and Data Protection
- (d) Absence of Accountability

Q9) Should public institutions disclose when AI algorithms are used to make or assist public service decisions affecting citizens?

- (a) Always

- (b) Sometimes
- (c) Rarely
- (d) Never

Q10) Do you believe public administrators should receive mandatory training in AI ethics, data governance, and digital accountability before deploying AI systems?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) Not Sure



Challenges and Opportunities of Local Pharmacies in Talavera, Nueva Ecija: A Basis for an Operational Plan

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Abstract— *Local pharmacies play a vital role in delivering essential healthcare services in Talavera, Nueva Ecija, particularly in providing access to medicines and basic health consultations. Despite their importance, these establishments face several operational challenges such as increasing competition from large pharmaceutical chains, financial constraints, regulatory compliance issues, and evolving customer expectations. This study aims to assess the current operational landscape of local pharmacies by identifying key obstacles and opportunities in areas such as location, branding, pricing strategies, and technological adaptation. Utilizing a quantitative research design, data were collected through structured survey questionnaires administered to pharmacy owners, managers, and staff. The results of the study serve as the basis for proposing an operational plan aimed at enhancing sustainability, improving service delivery, and promoting long-term growth. Recommendations derived from the findings are intended to help local pharmacies adapt to industry demands, strengthen their market position, and continue serving the healthcare needs of their communities effectively.*



Keywords— *Local pharmacies, Talavera Nueva Ecija, healthcare access, pharmacy operations, pharmaceutical industry challenges, pharmacy sustainability, regulatory compliance, technological advancements, customer service, business strategy.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Local pharmacies play a crucial role in the healthcare system, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas like Talavera, Nueva Ecija. These establishments provide essential medicines, health consultations, and sometimes even basic diagnostic services. In areas where access to healthcare facilities is limited, local pharmacies often serve as the first point of contact for healthcare needs. However, these pharmacies face various challenges and opportunities that can impact their effectiveness and sustainability.

The business environment for local pharmacies is becoming increasingly competitive. They are under pressure from multiple external threats, including the rise of online pharmacies and mail-order services, as well as internal challenges such as reimbursement issues and labor shortages. In this context, the role of pharmacists becomes

even more critical, as they are healthcare professionals responsible for ensuring the proper use, storage, preservation, and dispensing of medicines.

Local manufacturers/traders note their difficulty in competing with bigger ones. Only few products manufactured locally have economies of scale; hence local production is costlier. Reyes, Celia M. and Tabuga, Aubrey D. 2020

While the demand for pharmacists is strong and continues to grow, there are significant challenges associated with their training, development, and integration into the broader healthcare system. As pharmacists become more actively involved in healthcare delivery, their role faces both opportunities and obstacles that shape the future of pharmacy practice.

Statement of the Problem

Local pharmacies in Talavera, Nueva Ecija, play a crucial role in providing healthcare services to the community. However, they face several challenges that hinder their growth and sustainability. These challenges include competition from larger pharmaceutical chains, limited access to capital, fluctuating customer demand, regulatory compliance, and the rapid pace of technological advancements in the industry. Conversely, there are also opportunities, such as the potential for expanding services, increasing customer engagement through digital platforms, and leveraging partnerships with healthcare providers.

This study aims to assess the challenges and opportunities faced by local pharmacies in Talavera, Nueva Ecija, with the goal of developing an operational plan. The following key aspects will be explored:

1. What are the primary challenges hindering the growth and sustainability of local pharmacies in Talavera, Nueva Ecija?

1.1 Location

1.2 Competition

1.3 Operational Costs

2. How do local pharmacies perceive and respond to competition from larger pharmaceutical chains?

2.1 Branding and marketing

2.2 Availability of Medicine

2.3 Price

3. What are the financial, regulatory, and operational constraints faced by local pharmacies?

3.1 Licensing and Compliance

3.2 Financial Constraints

3.3 Staffing Challenges

4. What opportunities exist for local pharmacies to expand their services and enhance customer engagement?

4.1 Customer Service

4.2 Convenient Location

4.3 Technological Advancements

5. What operational plan can be proposed to enhance the sustainability and growth of local pharmacies in Talavera, Nueva Ecija, based on the findings of this study?

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research design was adopted to systematically collect and analyze numerical data. The study was conducted in Talavera, Nueva Ecija, chosen for the accessibility of pharmacy respondents. The respondents

included pharmacy owners, managers, and staff selected through purposive sampling to ensure the accuracy and relevance of information gathered. The primary research instrument was a structured survey questionnaire, designed with both closed- and open-ended questions to capture operational practices, marketing strategies, and challenges. The survey included a brief introduction to inform participants about the study's purpose, enhancing response quality and participation. The data gathering procedures included obtaining approval from academic authorities, selecting pharmacies, administering the survey in person or via email, securing informed consent, and ensuring confidentiality. Data collection spanned approximately two months to capture a comprehensive picture of pharmacy operations. Upon completion, the data was securely organized, anonymized, and prepared for analysis. The study employed quantitative techniques using simple percentage formulas to interpret the data and draw meaningful insights. To maintain research integrity, the study strictly adhered to ethical considerations, including integrity, social responsibility, patient confidentiality, and transparency. These principles guided the researchers in fostering trust and respect among participants while ensuring that the findings would benefit the local pharmacy sector and healthcare services in Talavera. Overall, the methodological framework was designed to ensure reliability, ethical compliance, and relevance to the research objectives.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Primary Challenges

1.1. Location

Table 1.1.1 Frequency of Location Accessibility

Location Accessibility	Frequency	Percentage
Very Accessible	32	64%
Accessible	18	36%
Neutral	0	0%
Not Accessible	0	0%
Very Inaccessible	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Table 1.1.1 shows that 64% of the respondents (32 participants) rate their pharmacy location as "Very Accessible", while 36% (18 respondents) find it "Accessible". This suggests that location is generally perceived as easy to access, with no respondents reporting the location as difficult to reach. This highlights that the local pharmacies in Talavera, Nueva Ecija, are favorably located in terms of accessibility.

Community pharmacists are the most accessible in the community. They can be found managing and/or supervising community pharmacies or drugstores all over the Philippines ranging from urban, rural and rurban (combination of rural and urban) areas. (Karina Marie S Batu 2024)

Table 1.1.2 Frequency of Affects Sales Performance in location

Affects Sales Performance	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	60%
No	15	30%
Not Sure	5	10%
Total	50	100%

As shown in Table 1.1.2, a majority of respondents (60% or 30 respondents) believe that location affects sales performance. This indicates that the location of a pharmacy plays a crucial role in influencing factors such as visibility, foot traffic, and access to potential customers. However, 30% (15 respondents) disagree, stating that the location does not impact sales, and 10% (5 respondents) are unsure.

This suggests that while location is generally considered a key factor in sales, other elements like product offerings, pricing strategies, or customer service could also play significant roles in determining a pharmacy's overall performance. Graham Pampel (2019) suggests that to determine if location affects profitability, various factors must be analyzed individually to establish correlations.

Table 1.1.3 Frequency of Location Challenges

Location Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Limited Foot Traffic	10	22.2%
High Rent/Operating Cost	8	17.8%
Distance From Hospitals or Clinics	15	33.3%
Inadequate Parking Space	12	26.7%
Other	0	0%
Total of Multiple Respondent	45	100%

In Table 1.1.3, various location-related challenges were identified. The most significant challenge, cited by 33.3% of respondents (15 individuals), is distance from hospitals or clinics, suggesting that proximity to medical facilities is highly valued in the pharmacy business.

Pharmacies located far from hospitals or clinics may struggle with fewer customers or lower visibility.

Another challenge highlighted by 26.7% of respondents (12 participants) is inadequate parking space, which could make it difficult for customers to access the pharmacy, especially in areas with limited or congested parking. 22.2% (10 respondents) noted limited foot traffic as a challenge, indicating that low pedestrian activity may affect sales and visibility. 17.8% (8 respondents) mentioned high rent or operating costs as a concern, which could add financial strain on pharmacy operations.

These challenges are consistent with the findings from Ken Research Pvt. (2024), which notes that pharmacies located near hospitals tend to attract higher foot traffic due to the convenience of the location. The segmentation of pharmacies into hospital-based and standalone models is important, as standalone pharmacies generally benefit from higher footfall and more diversified product offerings

The market is segmented into two type of stores Hospital Based Pharmacies and Standalone Pharmacies. Standalone Pharmacies dominated the market in 2019, both in terms of revenue and number of pharmacies. These pharmacies attract greater footfall due to the convenient locations and wider product assortments. Ken Research Pvt. 2024

1.2. Competition

Table 1.2.1 Frequency level of competition in large Pharmaceutical Chains

Competition Level	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	0	0%
High	16	32%
Moderate	33	66%
Low	0	0%
No Competition	1	2%
Total	50	100%

In Table 1.2.1, a majority of the respondents (66% or 33 respondents) reported a moderate level of competition with large pharmaceutical chains. Only 32% (16 respondents) perceive the competition as high, and 2% (1 respondent) feel there is no competition at all. No respondents reported very high or low competition.

This indicates that, overall, the competition with large pharmaceutical chains in Talavera, Nueva Ecija, is moderate, with most respondents experiencing some degree of competition but not overwhelming pressure. The local pharmacies appear to be managing well in a competitive

environment, with a healthy level of competition contributing to the industry's dynamism

According to research, 68 percent of people opt to enhance their self-care, 38 percent use medication for better health, 35 percent make sure they buy their medications, and 60 percent are already preparing to improve their wellbeing. As a result, the number of pharmacies open for business in the country is rapidly increasing. (Ken Research, 2021).

Table 1.2.2 Frequency of effects of larger Pharmaceutical Chain in Market Shares

Affected by Larger Pharmaceutical	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, Significantly	15	30%
Yes, Moderately	34	68%
No Impact	0	0%
Not Sure	1	2%
Total	50	100%

As shown in Table 1.2.2, 68% (34 respondents) of participants believe that larger pharmaceutical chains affect the market shares moderately, while 30% (15 respondents) feel their impact is significant. Only 2% (1 respondent) were unsure about the influence of larger chains, and no respondents indicated that there was no impact.

This suggests that while larger chains do affect the market, their impact is generally seen as moderate rather than overwhelming, with a significant portion of local pharmacies feeling that larger players have a noticeable, but not dominating, influence on market share.

Kong (2019) also notes that the market share of the brand-name product also plays an important role in the price differential of generic and brand name products.

Table 1.2.3 Frequency of competing with larger Pharmaceutical Chains

Compete With Larger Pharmaceutical	Frequency	Percentage
Offering Lower Prices	36	49.32%
Providing Personalized Customer Service	24	32.88%
Offering Additional Services (e.g., health consultations, delivery)	10	13.70%
Stocking Niche Product	0	0%
Other: Presence Of Registered Pharmacist	3	4.10%

Total of Multiple Respondent	73	100%
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Table 1.2.3 presents the strategies used by local pharmacies to compete with larger pharmaceutical chains. The most common strategy is offering lower prices, with 49.32% of respondents (36 participants) using this approach. 32.88% (24 respondents) focus on personalized customer service, and 13.70% (10 respondents) add additional services such as health consultations or delivery. Only 4.10% (3 respondents) emphasize the presence of a registered pharmacist as a competitive advantage, and none reported competing through niche products.

This data suggests that price competition and personalized service are the primary tactics for local pharmacies, while offering additional services and leveraging the expertise of registered pharmacists are also seen as valuable, though less commonly used. These strategies highlight the efforts of local pharmacies to differentiate themselves from larger chains by offering more individualized service and value beyond just selling pharmaceuticals.

According to [Republic Act No. 9502] AN ACT PROVIDING FOR CHEAPER AND QUALITY MEDICINES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8293. It is the policy of the State to protect public health and, when the public interest or circumstances of extreme urgency so require, it shall adopt appropriate measures to promote and ensure access to affordable quality drugs and medicines for all. Pursuant to the attainment of this general policy, an effective competition policy in the supply and demand of quality affordable drugs and medicines is recognized by the State as a primary instrument. In the event that full competition is not effective, the State recognizes as a reserve instrument the regulation of prices of drugs and medicines, with clear accountability by the implementing authority as mandated in this Act, as one of the means to also promote and ensure access to quality affordable medicines.

1.3 Operational Cost

Table 1.3.1 Frequency of Operational cost affecting the pharmacy

Key Operational Cost	Frequency	Percentage
Rent	34	23.61%
Employee Wages	30	20.83%
Inventory Management (stocking medicines)	31	21.53%
Utilities (electricity, water, etc.)	23	15.97%
Licencing and Permits	23	15.97%
Marketing and Advertising	3	2.09%

Others	0	0%
Total of Multiple Respondent	144	100%

In Table 1.3.1, 68% (34 respondents) identified rent as the most significant operational cost, followed by employee wages (60% or 30 respondents) and inventory management (62% or 31 respondents). Other costs, such as utilities and licensing, were also highlighted by 46% of respondents, while marketing and advertising were considered a minor cost by 6% (3 respondents).

The data suggests that rent, wages, and inventory management are the most pressing operational expenses for local pharmacies, with these areas likely consuming a significant portion of their budgets. In contrast, marketing costs are relatively low, indicating that local pharmacies may rely more on word-of-mouth, customer relationships, or other low-cost marketing strategies.

High fixed costs (rent and personnel costs), few recruitment possibilities, and a reduced space took much work to organize screening and vaccination. Par Geoffroy d'Argenlieu 2021

Table 1.3.2 Frequency Operational Cost Impact

Operational Cost Impact	Frequency	Percentage
Significantly Impact	19	38%
Moderately Impact	31	62%
Slightly Impact	0	0%
No Impact	0	0%
Total	50	100%

As shown in Table 1.3.2, 62% (31 respondents) report that operational costs moderately impact their business, while 38% (19 respondents) feel that these costs significantly impact their operations. No respondents indicated that operational costs had only a slight or no impact.

This highlights that managing operational costs is a critical issue for most pharmacies, with the majority feeling that these expenses play a significant role in their overall business performance. Effective management of costs, particularly rent, wages, and inventory, will be key to ensuring financial stability

In our experience, inventory and payroll and DIR fees are the three biggest expenses that a pharmacy incurs. With payroll, it's important to understand how to schedule your staff for maximum efficiency. Sykes & Company, P.A 2022

2. How do local pharmacies perceive and respond to competition from larger pharmaceutical chains

2.1. Branding and Marketing

Table 2.1.1: Frequency of Branding Strategy

Branding Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	45	90%
No	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Table 2.1.1 shows that the majority of respondents (90%, or 45 respondents) use a branding strategy, indicating its high popularity. A small proportion (10%, or 5 respondents) does not use a branding strategy

Thus, branding is key to marketing as it creates a perception of added value linked to the brand image thus steering a continuous competitive advantage. (Davis, 2007; Haigh, 2014; Fahy and Jobber, 2015; Munyoro and Gorejena, 2020)

Table 2.1.2 Frequency of Branding Strategies Used

Branding Strategies Used	Frequency	Percentage
Logo and Pharmacy Design	30	28.30%
Customer Loyalty Programs	35	33.02%
Promotions and Discounts	23	21.70%
Social Media Marketing	7	6.60%
Community Outreach/Health Campaigns	11	10.38%
Others	0	0%
Total of Multiple Respondent	106	100%

Table 2.1.2 reveals that Customer Loyalty Programs (33.02%) are the most commonly used branding strategy, followed by Logo and Pharmacy Design (28.30%) and Promotions and Discounts (21.70%). Social Media Marketing and Community Outreach/Health Campaigns are less common but still employed by a significant portion of respondents. This indicates that while traditional methods like loyalty programs are highly valued, digital marketing and community engagement remain secondary strategies.

Brand loyalty is more critical than ever in the highly competitive pharmaceutical industry. With countless medications battling for the attention of healthcare professionals and patients alike, fostering a loyal customer base can significantly impact a company's market position and long-term success. Teodora Corbu 2024

2.2. Availability of Medicine

Table 2.2.1 Frequency of Shortage in Medicine

Face Shortage	Frequency	Percentage
Very Often	6	12%
Occasionally	27	54%
Rarely	17	34%
Never	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Table 2.2.1 shows that 54% of respondents experience occasional shortages of medicine, with 34% reporting rare shortages. Only 12% report frequent shortages, suggesting that while shortages are a common concern, they are not pervasive.

Unlike high-income countries, low-middle income countries (LMICs) have several new causes for drug shortage, including licensing of manufacturers/products, shortage of raw material for a local manufacturer, drug smuggling, and lodging tax government policies (Khan, 2019).

Table 2.2.2 Frequency of competition affect the ability to maintain stock of essential medicines

Affect the Ability to Maintain Stock	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Affects	18	36%
Moderate Affects	31	62%
Does Not Affects	0	0%
Not Sure	1	2%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.2.2 indicates that competition has a moderate to strong effect on the ability to maintain stock of essential medicines, with 36% of respondents strongly agreeing and 62% moderately agreeing.

Competition in the pharmaceutical industry is shaped by a complex interplay among market exclusivity, the entry of generic competitors, and ongoing innovation. Unfortunately, the current pharmaceutical patent system has been increasingly exploited in ways that stifle competition and keep drug prices artificially high rather than living up to the patent system's original promise of promoting innovation. Wayne Brough 2024.

2.3. Price Strategy

Table 2.3.1 Frequency of Adjusting Price to competition

Adjust Prices	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	45	90%
No	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Table 2.3.1 reveals that 90% of respondents adjust their prices in response to competition, indicating a strong market sensitivity to competitive pricing.

Competition-driven prices are often market-oriented and are set based on how others are pricing products and services in the marketplace. So, the seller makes a decision based on the prices set by its competitors. Prices between competitors may not necessarily be the same; one competitor may end up lowering its price. Will Kenton 2024.

Table 2.3.2 Frequency of Adjust Pricing Strategy

Adjust Pricing Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Lower Prices On Popular Product	36	66.67%
Offer Bundle Discounts	12	22.22%
Provide Seasonal Promotions	2	3.70%
Other (Demands of Sale, Availability of Stocks)	4	7.41%
Total of Multiple Respondent	54	100%

Table 2.3.2 shows that 66.67% of respondents lower prices on popular products as a pricing strategy, while 22.22% offer bundle discounts. Seasonal promotions and other adjustments related to demand and stock availability are less commonly used.

According to Research by Jose Cielito Reganit 2024, Wilbert Lee filed a resolution asking the appropriate House committee to look into the implementation of Republic Act (RA) No. 9502, or the Cheaper Medicines Act of 2008, and RA 6675, or the Generics Act of 1988. Lee said this is to help Filipinos make informed medical purchases and improve access to affordable and effective medications for all.

3. Financial, Regulatory, and Operational Constraints

3.1 Licensing and Compliance

Table 3.1.1 Frequency Face Challenges with Maintaining Regulatory Compliance

Face Challenges with Maintaining Regulatory Compliance	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, Frequently	12	24%
Yes, Occasionally	14	28%
No	19	38%
Not Sure	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.1 shows that a significant proportion of respondents (52%) face challenges with maintaining regulatory compliance, either frequently or occasionally.

According to Taylor Armerding. That doesn't mean organizations don't care about compliance. The recent 2019 Cloud Security Report by Cybersecurity Insiders and supported by Black Duck found that organizations during cloud migration felt a top challenge was maintaining regulatory compliance.

Table 3.1.2 Frequency of Regulatory Challenges Faced

Regulatory Challenges Faced	Frequency	Percentage
Obtaining and Renewing Licenses	13	32.5%
Health and Safety Regulations	14	35%
Taxation and Accounting Requirements	13	32.5%
Others	0	0%
Total of Multiple Respondent	40	100%

Table 3.1.2 highlights that health and safety regulations (35%) and obtaining and renewing licenses (32.5%) are significant regulatory challenges faced by pharmacies.

This guarantees that pharmacy staff members may concentrate on providing the best possible treatment for patients without sacrificing their health. Fostering a culture of occupational health and safety that is by the particular issues faced by pharmacy professionals in the region requires the implementation of safety rules and guidelines that are specifically designed for the pharmacy setting (Abuosi et al., 2022)

3.2 Financial Constraints

Table 3.2.1 Frequency of Financial Challenges

Financial Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Cash Flow Issues	30	50.85%
Difficulty Accessing Capital	14	23.73%
Low Reimbursement Rates From Insurance Companies	5	8.47%
High Inventory Cost	10	16.95%
Others	0	0%
Total of Multiple Respondent	59	100%

Table 3.2.1 indicates that cash flow issues (50.85%) are the primary financial challenge faced by pharmacies, followed by difficulty accessing capital (23.73%) and high inventory costs (16.95%).

For independent pharmacies, cash flow has become a huge point of concern. Pharmacy cash flow problems might be long term, or short term. Caused by low profits, high expenses or just the timing of when you receive money from your insurances compared to the due dates on your bills. Karen Deckard 2021

3.3 Staffing Challenges

Table 3.3.1 Frequency of Staffing Challenges

Staffing Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, Often	24	48%
Yes, Occasionally	15	30%
No	8	16%
Not Sure	3	6%
Total	50	100%

The table presents the frequency of staffing challenges faced by a group of 50 respondents. Almost half of the respondents (24 out of 50) indicated that they frequently face staffing challenges. 15 respondents mentioned that they sometimes encounter staffing challenges. A smaller group of respondents (8 out of 50) reported that they do not face staffing challenges. 3 respondents were uncertain about whether they experience staffing challenges or not. Overall this data suggests that staffing challenges are a significant concern for a large proportion of the group, with nearly 78% (48% + 30%) facing these issues either often or occasionally.

According to Jones et al. (2021) shows that the high turnover of employees in the health care workforce affects the quality of care provided. Studies estimate that nearly 50% of behavioral health care providers feel overburdened due to high job stress, lack of leadership support, low salaries, and high caseloads.

Table 3.3.2 Frequency and Percentage of Staffing Challenge Faced

Staffing Challenges Faced	Frequency	Percentage
Difficulty Finding Qualified Staff	23	58.97%
High Employee Turnover	1	2.56%
Lack of Employee Training	6	15.38%
Staff Absenteeism	9	23.09%
Other	0	0%
Total of Multiple Respondent	39	100%

Table 3.3.2 highlights that difficulty finding qualified staff (58.97%) is the most common staffing challenge.

According to Keith Loria. (2023) During the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses started to experience labor issues due to an increased number of workers wanting to work from home, and pharmacies were no exception. Things haven't changed much since then, as people have grown accustomed to this new way of working. This has made finding qualified people to work in a

pharmacy difficult. After all, working at a pharmacy requires in-person work for practically every component of the job.

4. Opportunities exist for local pharmacies to expand their services and enhance customer engagement

4.1. Customer Service

Table 4.1.1 Frequency of Importance of Customer Service

Importance of Customer Service	Frequency	Percentage
Very Important	43	86%
Important	7	14%
Neutral	0	0%
Not Important	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Table 4.1.1 shows that 86% of respondents view customer service as very important, emphasizing its role in business success.

According to Shamsah Noorani 2024. In the world of healthcare, pharmacies play a crucial role as the frontline of patient care. They are not just places where medications are dispensed but also environments where patients seek advice, information, and reassurance. The nature of pharmacy work involves daily interactions with individuals who may be dealing with various health challenges, making customer service an essential component of the overall experience. High-quality customer service in a pharmacy environment can significantly impact patient outcomes, satisfaction, and the overall reputation of the pharmacy.

Table 4.1.2 Frequency of Improve Customer Service

To Improve Customer Service	Frequency	Percentage
Staff Training	36	43.90%
Personalized Service	16	19.51%
Online Consultations	3	3.66%
Providing Health Educations	25	30.49%
Other (Patient Counselling)	2	2.44%
Total of Multiple Respondent	82	100%

Table 4.1.2 suggests that staff training (43.90%) is the most common strategy to improve customer service, followed by providing health education (30.49%).

Due to the evolution in the healthcare sector, the role of pharmacy staff goes beyond traditional dispensing; it extends to ensuring patient safety, regulatory compliance, and efficient operations. One key element that underscores success in these areas is comprehensive staff training. According Virtual Rx 2024.

4.2 Convenient Location

Table 4.2.1 frequency and Percentage of Accessibility

How Accessible	Frequency	Percentage
Very Accessible	40	80%
Accessible	9	18%
Neutral	1	2%
Not Accessible	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Table 4.2.1 shows that 80% of respondents consider their pharmacy to be very accessible, indicating good geographic location as a factor in business success.

A pharmacy located in a high-traffic area, near hospitals, clinics, or shopping centers, is more likely to attract walk-in customers. Easy accessibility for both foot and vehicle traffic is crucial for growth. Evcor 2023

Table 4.2.2 Frequency of Changes Pharmacy Location

Changes Pharmacy's Location	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	32	64%
No	15	30%
Not Sure	3	6%
Total	50	100%

Table 4.2.2 shows the sixty for percent (64%) which is thirty two respondent says Yes. While the thirty percent (30%) of fifteen (15) respondent response to No. Somehow the three (3) respondents of six percent (6%) response Not Sure. Overall, this data suggests that a majority of pharmacies are actively evaluating or planning to change their locations, while a smaller group is content with staying where they are, and a very small percentage remains uncertain.

According to FDA Circular No 2014-028 , Transfer of Location should need the approval of LTO (License to Operate) as drug RONPD (Retail Outlets Selling non Prescription Drug)

4.3 Technical Advancement

Table 4.3.1 Frequency and Percentage of Using Technology

Using Technology	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	60%
No	20	40%
Total	50	100%

Table 4.3.1 shows that online ordering systems, electronic medical records, digital marketing, inventory management software, automated dispensing machines, and

others are widely recognized in pharmacy operations. However, automation dispensing is underemphasized. This highlights the need for comprehensive digital transformation to improve operational efficiency.

In the pharmacy industry, a number of significant factors are hastening this digital transition. Important concerns include the desire for cost-effectiveness, enhanced patient care, and more transparency and efficiency in medication development and manufacture. This change has been made even more rapid by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has highlighted the necessity for digital solutions to address the difficulties associated with providing healthcare in emergency situations. Pharmaceutical Technology 2021.

Table 4.3.2 Frequency of Using Technology

Used Technology	Frequency	Percentage
Online Ordering System	13	23.64%
Electronic Medical Records	13	23.64%
Digital Marketing (social media, website)	23	41.82%
Inventory Management Software	5	9.09%
Automated Dispensing Machines	1	1.81%
Others	0	0%
Total of Multiple Respondent	55	100%

The table presents the frequency and percentage of the use of various technologies in the pharmacy business. This indicates that 23.64% of the pharmacies surveyed or analyzed use an online ordering system. The same percentage (23.64%) of pharmacies are using electronic medical records (EMRs). This suggests that many pharmacies are utilizing EMRs for better record-keeping, patient management, and compliance with healthcare regulations. Digital marketing tools, such as social media platforms and websites, are the most widely used technology in the pharmacy business, with 41.82% adoption. This suggests that nearly half of the pharmacies are leveraging digital marketing to promote their services, products, and engage with customers online. Only 9.09% of the pharmacies use inventory management software. This indicates that the adoption of such software is less common. Automated dispensing machines are used by just 1.81% of the pharmacies. This is the least adopted technology in the pharmacy business. Overall, pharmacies are most invested

in customer engagement through digital marketing, followed by online ordering and patient record management systems. However, more specialized technologies, such as inventory management and automated dispensing, are less commonly used. Digidotes- Healthcare Digital Marketing Co. 2023

Pharmacies can use digital marketing tools and techniques such as search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, email marketing, online advertising, and content marketing to reach their target audience and promote their products and services.

5. Operational Plan Strategies

5.1. Future Business Strategies

Table 5.1.1 Frequency of Strategies to Enhance Growth

Strategies To Enhance Growth	Frequency	Percentage
Expanding Service Offerings (e.g., health screenings, vaccinations)	36	38.29%
Investing In Marketing and Branding	18	19.15%
Leveraging Technology To Improve Customer Service	15	15.96%
Strengthening Partnerships With Healthcare Providers	25	26.60%
Other	0	0%
Total of Multiple Respondent	94	100%

Table 5.1.1 indicates that expanding service offerings (38.29%) is seen as the most promising strategy for growth, with strong emphasis also placed on strengthening partnerships (26.60%) and investing in marketing and branding (19.15%).

Health screenings are an important tool for pharmacists to provide as part of medication therapy management (MTM) services. Screenings pharmacists can offer as part of preventive care, include those for blood glucose and pressure readings, cholesterol levels, opioid use disorder (OUD), and mental health (Figure¹⁻⁵). Using technology can also alert pharmacists to look for risk factors.¹ Pharmacists are in a unique position to provide screenings in their MTM practice settings to improve patient health outcomes and reduce racial disparities. Jennifer Gershman, PharmD, CPh, PACS 2022.

Operational Plan

Focus Area	Objectives	Strategies and Action Plan	Responsible Unit	Timeline	Resources Needed
Location Optimization	Ensure seamless operations by meeting legal requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a pharmacy near in the hospital and clinics. -Maintain a regulatory checklist and schedule for renewing licenses and permits. 	- Business Owner Operator, Local Government Unit	-Q1 2025	Location Survey/s, Government Agencies.
Improvement in Staffing and Employee Training	Resolve staffing challenges by finding qualified personnel and enhancing customer service skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Partner with local universities/colleges to recruit pharmacy graduates. -Provide regular training sessions for employees on customer service and health education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pharmacy owners, HR managers -Pharmacy owners, HR managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Q1 2025 Q1 and Q2 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Partnership agreements, recruitment materials. -Training materials, external trainers, budget.
Addressing Financial and Regulatory Challenges	Overcome cash flow issues, reduce operational costs, and ensure compliance with regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Implement financial management tools to improve cash flow tracking and inventory management. -Negotiate rental agreements to reduce rental costs or seek co-located spaces. -Conduct regular audits to ensure regulatory compliance with health and safety standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pharmacy owners, Accountants -Pharmacy owners, Landlords -Pharmacy owners, Auditors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Q2 2025 -Q1 2025 -EVERY QUARTER 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Financial software (e.g., QuickBooks), IT support. -Negotiation skills, contracts. -Audit checklist, external audit support.
Enhancing Customer Service and Expanding Offerings	Improve customer satisfaction and create new revenue streams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Introduce health education programs and workshops (e.g., diabetes management, vaccination awareness). -Launch additional services such as health screenings, vaccinations, and minor diagnostic services. -Collect regular customer feedback to identify areas for service improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pharmacy owners, Healthcare trainers -Pharmacy owners, Healthcare providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Q1 2025 -Q1 2025 ONGOING 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Educational materials, venue setup. -Medical equipment, trained personnel. -Feedback forms, customer surveys.

			-Pharmacy staff, Customers		
Leveraging Technology for Operations and Marketing	Enhance operational efficiency and customer outreach through technology adoption.	-Utilize digital marketing platforms (e.g., social media, Google Ads) to promote services. -Develop online ordering systems for customers to increase accessibility.	-Pharmacy owners, Marketing team -Pharmacy owners, IT developers	-Q1 2025 -Q1 2025	-Digital marketing budget, content creation -E-commerce platform, IT resources
Strengthening Competitive Strategies Against Larger Chains	Mitigate competition by focusing on affordability and personalized customer care.	-Offer competitive pricing strategies for key products to attract price-sensitive customers. -Enhance personalized services such as free consultations and medication reminders.	-Pharmacy owners, Suppliers -Pharmacy staff, Pharmacists	-Q2 2025 ONGOING	-Price analysis tools, supplier negotiations -Training, customer relationship management tools.

Fig.3. A basis for enhance business development plan

This figure provides a structured approach to address the strategies for maximizing the opportunities and sustainable growth of the Local Pharmacy Business in Talavera, Nueva Ecija.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, several important conclusions were drawn regarding the operational landscape of local pharmacies in Talavera, Nueva Ecija. Firstly, location accessibility plays a vital role in customer engagement. While many pharmacies are conveniently situated for general access, those located far from hospitals and clinics face challenges in attracting consistent foot traffic, which may negatively impact sales performance. Competition from larger pharmaceutical chains exists at a moderate level, but it remains a persistent concern for smaller local players. Secondly, branding and marketing efforts are essential in establishing a unique identity. Personalized services, customer loyalty programs, and competitive pricing—especially for commonly purchased medicines—are key strategies currently employed by local pharmacies. Thirdly, regulatory compliance, cash flow management, and staffing remain significant operational hurdles. The lack of qualified personnel and the burden of maintaining compliance standards hinder efficiency and growth. However, notable opportunities exist in enhancing

customer service, upgrading staff training, and adopting modern technologies such as digital platforms and online ordering systems. These initiatives offer potential for increased market reach, customer retention, and improved service quality. Lastly, local pharmacies can achieve sustainable growth by expanding their service offerings, building stronger partnerships with healthcare providers, and executing effective, tech-driven marketing strategies.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Strategic Location Planning: Pharmacy owners should prioritize establishing branches near hospitals, clinics, or health centers to maximize visibility and customer convenience. Competing with large pharmaceutical chains can be achieved through unique, personalized services that foster customer loyalty.
2. Branding and Digital Marketing: A strong, recognizable brand identity is crucial. Marketing managers are encouraged to develop a distinct brand name, logo, and value proposition. Incorporating digital marketing tools such as social media advertising, SEO, and online customer engagement will significantly enhance brand visibility.
3. Financial and Human Resource Solutions: To overcome cash flow and staffing issues, owners should consider

implementing cost-efficient strategies, exploring alternative funding sources, and investing in staff recruitment and professional development. Offering competitive compensation and maintaining a supportive work environment will help attract and retain competent employees.

4. **Technology Integration:** Embracing technological innovations such as online ordering systems, mobile apps, and e-commerce platforms will allow pharmacies to serve customers more efficiently. Leveraging digital tools not only improves operations but also strengthens customer relationships.
5. **Expanded Services and Partnerships:** Pharmacies should consider offering value-added services such as health screenings, medication counseling, vaccination drives, and wellness programs. Establishing collaborative partnerships with local healthcare providers will not only improve service quality but also increase referral opportunities and customer trust.

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Beyond the Order: A Study of “The Vulture and the Little Girl” and Mulk Raj Anand’s *Coolie*

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Abstract— The photograph, ‘The Vulture and the Little Girl’, also known as the ‘Struggling Girl’, taken by renowned photographer Kevin Carter, first appeared in the New York Times on 26 March 1993, which depicts a young girl in Sudan, crouching on the ground in a state of malnutrition while a vulture stands nearby. This stark and haunting image encapsulates the grim realities of hunger, poverty and death that affect millions across the globe. Mulk Raj Anand’s *Coolie*, a seminal work of Indian literature, shares similar themes of exploitation, suffering and the brutality of societal systems. The novel, set in pre-independence India, explores the life of Munoo, a young boy who faces the harsh realities of poverty, child labour and an oppressive social hierarchy. This research paper will delve into the connections between the photograph and the themes portrayed in *Coolie*, drawing parallels between the image of the little girl and the tragic journey of Munoo, in Anand’s novel. The paper brings out how life across art, history and real world go hand in hand regardless of time, clime and space. This paper aims to explore the different facets of predation in human society, analyzing how these “predators” operate within a framework of power, influence, and survival.

Keywords— malnutrition, oppressive hierarchy, predator, struggling girl, vulture



Kevin Carter's [Pulitzer Prize](#)—winning photograph of a starving [Sudanese](#) child and a vulture waiting in the background

Life is a series of orderly charted events. This proposition seems fictional when we closely observe real life. Hardships, misfortune, even failure are hard bound in everyone's life. The juxtaposition of strong and weak, happy and sad, rise and fall and a lot more have always co-exist in real life. Just as one way leads on to other, existence too is to balance ourselves amid contrasts. But the grim realities exist in this world despite the fact that such things teach harsher lesson of life. A predator does not always hunt in the wild. Sometimes, it sits in big offices, factories and controls who suffers and who survives. A predator does not always kill with teeth – it hunts with hunger, with work, with silence.

This picture won the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography award in 1994. This photo question the authorities, system and humanity at large. The vulture in the paragraph is not just a bird. It represents the employer who like a master waits for a servant to serve him. The girl on the ground is not starving; she is being hunted by something bigger than the bird (vulture) – famine, war, a world that has already left her behind.

Munoo in *Coolie* is very close to the girl in the picture. He runs from one place to another, but the predator follow him everywhere. They take his breath, his sweat, his life. They feed on him without bloodshed. They don't need weapons; they have power to oppress others.

The girl in the photograph represents Munno, the vulture represents other characters like the Uncle, Daya Ram, masters – Babu Natho Ram and his wife, Ganpat, Chimta Sahib and those who harass Munoo. The photographer, Kevin Carter represents the society who silently sees everything but doesn't do anything to control such events in the life of helpless poor people.

Being a realistic Mulk Raj Anand depicts the stark realities of life through Munoo's journey. He gives voice to the voiceless and marginalized class through his works. Munoo and the girl both are children and at such early age they both face contrasting situations. At last both Munoo and the girl meet their end.

Both Munoo and the girl are not merely victims of the circumstances but of a structure that continuously sacrifices the weak for the benefit of the powerful. In Munoo's life the vultures like his uncle, his aunt, Babu Nathu, and Ganpat are always keeping an eye on him. This kind of disorder among the human beings can be clearly seen. All works of Mulk Raj Anand are deeply rooted in social realism, humanism and ideology which can be seen in every aspect of this novel too. Humanism, a positive philosophy which centers on the dignity of man, his individuality, his suffering, is missing from the world in general. Pain and suffering are part of human life but

when it becomes unbearable to see an individual facing overwhelming adversity. Munoo does not suffer because of his fate or chances but because of man-made laws and theories which continuously exploit others. Munoo and the girl both are born free but the society and the circumstances make them their slave. As Jean Jacques Rousseau states

"Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains." ("The Social Contract" 1762)

Anand writes this novel in 1936 and the photograph "The Vulture and the Girl" (The Struggling Girl) is taken in 1993. The most striking thing is that from 1936 to 1993 the circumstances don't change only the spheres of exploitation differ. A poor has to suffer his entire life. The scenario is very clear where rich are becoming richer and the poor are becoming poorer. In *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, characters like Tom Buchanan and Gatsby himself illustrate predatory behavior, either through their manipulation of others' desires or the way they use people to achieve their own ends. Such kinds of events are widely found in the society and literature.

Munno is born in Bilaspur, a small village in the Kangra Hills, where his early life is shaped by the poverty and deprivation. Orphaned at a young age, he lives with his Uncle Daya Ram and his Aunt Gujri, who regard him as an economic burden. Munoo has big dreams. He wanted to live a better life. Munoo's first encounter with urban life comes in Sham Nagar, where he is employed as a servant in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram, a Govt. officer. Both Nathoo Ram and his wife treat him harshly and they treat him with a feeling of predator. Even his Uncle and Aunt want him to earn money. This form of predation is widespread across the globe, yet it often goes undocumented and unnoticed by governments.

This phase of Munoo's life shows that in this harsh world, the exploiters change and he remains a victim to someone or the other. Munno's next destination is Daultapur, an industrial town where he finds employment in a pickle factory owned by Prabha Dayal and his business partner Ganpat. Here, Munoo experiences temporary relief under the care of Prabha and his wife. The cruelty of human can be seen when Seth Prabha Dayal is deceived by Ganpat. Due to the betrayal Munoo once again become jobless and is left to wander in the streets.

Munoo's journey leads him to Bombay, where he becomes a coolie at the railway station. In Bombay, Munoo witness the stark contrast between the affluent British rulers and the improvised Indian labors. He befriends Ratan, a fellow coolie, who helps him navigate across the ruthless urban government. Later he finds work at a cotton mill, where he encounters the most dehumanizing conditions of his

journey.

Munoo's journey takes him to Shimla where, he becomes a rickshaw puller for Mrs. Mainwaring. In the beginning she shows some love towards her but she too harasses him. She tries to stalk him sexually. Later she torments him mentally and physically as well. She offers him the job of a rickshaw puller, but the price of her exploitation is steep and relentlessly demanding.

By analyzing the image through the lens of literature, especially *Coolie* by Mulk Raj Anand, it becomes evident that the vulture can be seen as a representation of systemic structures that prey upon the weak. Munoo and "the little girl" in the photograph are not mere individuals but they are presented as type. The vulture in the photograph is waiting for the girl's death in order to fulfill his starvation similarly his uncle, Babu Nathoo Ram and his wife etc. nurture themselves. The vulture has hunger of food but the characters in Anand's novel has hunger of dominance and Munoo is a victim to them. Anand writes;

"Bibiji" said Daya Ram with joined hands, 'I have brought my little nephew to serve you. Here he is.' Then he flashed an angry glance at Munoo and said: 'Join your hands, you pig, and say "I fall at your feet" to Bibiji' (P. 12)

Both Munoo and the girl seems objects of malnutrition. During 1993, the circumstances are not familiar, famine, civil war, conflict are taking place. Munoo too fights a war against his circumstances every day. Challenges seem inevitable in the life of Munoo as Northrop Fry writes in the essay, "Theory of Myths", "Tragic heroes are wrapped in the mystery of their communion with something beyond which we can see only through them..." (P. 208). The symbolism behind the vulture as a representation of death and impending doom signifies that the world in which we are living gives unending suffering and trauma to an individual. Munoo in the end meets a tragic end and dies due to Tuberculosis (T.B.). Anand describes,

"But in the early hours of one unreal, white night he passed away - the tide of his life having reached to the deeps." (P. 282)

Anand's novel *Coolie* and Kelvin's photograph can be analyzed through different aspects like social, economic and psychological as well. Psychological in the sense because Munoo's tragic life and the condition of the girl makes the reader emotional. In reader's psyche a number of emotions arise. GDP, Infrastructure, development etc. are the aspects on which the economic stability of mankind depends. In relation to *Coolie* and The Struggling Girl all

these aspects can be related. If the economic stability of Munoo and the girl is good then they don't have to suffer in their life. Somehow the economic stability related to social, political and legal stability etc. In the world money is everything all the aspects of human life are affected by an individual's economic condition.

The future of a country depends on the children of that country. If their present is not secure than how can they be able to run the country. Munoo and the little both suffers. If the Munno's uncle and aunt take care of him and educate him and the photographer, Kevin Carter helps the girl, give her food and look after her then in future both the children become pillar of the country.

The St Peterburg Times (Florida), condemned Kevin Carter, the photographer, saying; **"The man adjusting his lens to take just the right frame of her suffering might just as well be a predator, another vulture on the scene."**

This reflects political aspects also, if the govt. takes proper step then miserable condition of millions of downtrodden can be solved. Government as well as all the humans should show humanity in order to work out on the situation.

Munoo's journey in *Coolie* is more than a personal tragedy, it serves as a powerful critique of colonial exploitation and social injustice. Economic Exploitation, Class and Caste Oppression, illusions of hope, colonial capitalism are the themes of Anand's novel. The novel serves as both a social document and a literary masterpiece, offering an unflinching critique of the forces that dictate the lives of the underprivileged. Munoo's tragic fate is not just an individual misfortune but a symbol of the countless lives crushed by an unjust system, making *Coolie* one of the most powerful indictments of the colonial exploitation in Indian literature.

From a Marxist perspective, the vulture is the ruling class, and the girl is the exploited class. The girl's suffering is not an accident – it is an outcome of economic system that creates wealth by creating starvation. Munno's fate is sealed the moment he is born poor. No matter where he runs, the vultures follows him, each feeding on his labour, each waiting for him to collapse.

It is not just a story or a paragraph. It is the structure of society. Slums, child labour, unpaid workers – modern vultures still wait, still watch, still feed. The predator never disappears. It only changes shape.

CONCLUSION

"The Vulture and The Little Girl" and *Coolie* serves as powerful critiques of societal structures that perpetuate poverty, exploitation and suffering. By drawing parallels

between the photograph and the novel, this study highlights the universality of human suffering and the role of society in perpetuating or alleviating it. Munoo's tragic journey and the haunting image of the starving girl both compel in order to address social injustice and oppression of poor. The close observation of the psychological and social dimensions of predation, bring out its impact on individuals and also suggests that human societies need to mitigate its negative effects. Through this exploration, light is thrown on the dark undercurrents of human behavior that often go unnoticed but play a significant role in shaping our world.

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Employee Satisfaction and Its Influence on Operations in Food and Beverage Establishments

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Abstract— The study was conducted in the province of Nueva Ecija, an emerging hospitality and tourism industry hotspot, to investigate how employee satisfaction affects the operational performance of food and beverage establishments. In this regard, employee satisfaction is discussed as an independent variable focusing on four essential factors: compensation, work environment, career growth opportunities, and management support. These factors affect service delivery performance indicators like productivity, service quality, or global performance. A structured survey was implemented in 30 establishments, collecting data from 120 employees. The strongest operational performance predictors were the work environment and the opportunity to access management support. A clean, safe workplace and practices carried out in management, like clear communication and acknowledgment, helped improve employee morale and productivity tremendously. Career paths had a moderate effect on long-term engagement. At the same time, salary was more relevant to retention than ongoing daily engagement, though it was considered a given in all aspects of the job. Correlation and regression methods found Positive relationships between satisfaction dimensions and performance indicators. The strongest correlations were found between workplace conditions and management support. The study adds that improving employee satisfaction starts with holistic attention to employee needs. These recommendations include reassessing compensation structures, cultivating a supportive work environment, managing support priorities, and investing in employee development opportunities. Well-functioning service providers create unique customer experiences and greater employee satisfaction, which leads to higher employee satisfaction—resulting in seamless operations, higher service quality, and sustainable competitive advantage. The study offers practical implications for managers and restaurant owners and highlights that enhancing employee well-being is essential for the sustained success of food and beverage companies.



Keywords— Career Growth Opportunities, Employee Satisfaction, Food and Beverage Establishment, Management Support, Work Environment.

I. INTRODUCTION

One important aspect of food and beverage places is employee satisfaction, which helps ensure seamless running. Minor changes in the level of satisfaction of people working in the service sector significantly impact service quality, operational efficiency, and overall business performance in this sector, characterized by union levels of customer service and high levels of interaction with customers. Like any growing industry, especially in Nueva Ecija in the tourism and hospitality sector, employee satisfaction is vital to sustaining the competitive edge of an

establishment. The literature suggests that employees' happiness substantially impacts service delivery and the customer experience, which are fundamental elements of successful operations in the hospitality industry (Smith & Johnson, 2020).

Employee satisfaction consists of fair compensation, a supportive work environment, opportunities for growth, and effective management. These factors are directly related to employees' morale, motivation, and job roles, such as fair compensation and a positive workplace environment, which have increased

retention rates and lower turnover in hospitality-oriented areas (Perez & Villanueva, 2021). Employees in food and beverage operations work long hours, on their feet, and in constant customer interaction, so establishments must meet their needs and expectations. According to a study by Garcia and Cruz (2019), happy employees are likelier to offer better customer service, leading to good customer reviews and repeat business.

Employees tend to perform, contribute positively in the workplace, and provide outstanding customer service when these factors are present. Many things cannot be said enough about the impact of employee satisfaction on operational performance. When employees are satisfied, they can be very engaged and productive, which usually results in smoother operations, fewer mistakes, and better customer interaction. On the other hand, dissatisfaction can result in lower productivity, high attrition, and poor service delivery, degrading establishments' image and bottom line. According to Mendoza and Santos (2022), improved employee satisfaction is crucial for industries like food services in Nueva Ecija, where competition and demand for quality service are rapidly increasing.

Although the significance of employee satisfaction is well known, there is limited research on its effect on food and beverage operations within Nueva Ecija. This study fills this gap by examining essential satisfaction drivers and their impact on operational efficiency. According to Lee and Kim (2018), employees' productivity and service quality can be significantly enhanced by making working conditions comfortable and opportunity for career advancement. This research will yield information that can help inform managers and business owners' strategies to direct employee satisfaction and operational effectiveness. By pinpointing these factors, the aim is to improve service quality, sustain the workforce within the company, and contribute to the sustainable development of Nueva Ecija's food and beverage businesses.

Objectives

1. the demographic profile can include the following elements:
 - a. Age
 - b. Gender
 - c. Educational Attainment
 - d. Civil Status
 - e. Position in the Establishment
 - f. Length of Service in the Current Establishment
 - g. Monthly Salary Range
 - h. Work Schedule Type

- i. Nature of Employment
2. How do these factors impact employee satisfaction?
 - a. Compensation
 - b. Work environment
 - c. Career growth opportunities
 - d. Management support
3. How does employee satisfaction influence these establishments?
 - a. Operational efficiency
 - b. Service quality
 - c. Overall performance
4. What strategies can be implemented to enhance employee satisfaction and improve operational outcomes in the food and beverage sector?

II. METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study is about Employee Satisfaction and its effect on the operational performance of food and beverage establishments in Nueva Ecija. The dependent variable (DV) assesses employee satisfaction through four significant compulsory components: compensation, work environment, career growth opportunities, and management support. It is theorized that these factors affect the dependent variable (DV), which is operational performance, measured through operational efficiency, service quality, and overall performance indicators. We focus on construct validity, which postulates that employee satisfaction is the basis for more excellent operational performance and, therefore, forms the foundation of what ultimately contributes to the hospitality industry.

The effect of employee satisfaction in food and beverage hospitality improvement on operational performance. Several studies reinforce that factors like pay, working conditions, career advancement, and management support are substantially linked to employee satisfaction and, thus, to operational efficiency, service quality, and performance. They further illustrate similar findings in food and beverage environments that a helpful workplace and management interest drive operational competence and financial performance (Abbas et al., 2024). Similarly, Xin and Zulkipli (2024) found that providing employees with growth job opportunities increased employee satisfaction and translated directly into customer loyalty and service quality, which are important to sector success.

Outcomes are also closely tied to employee relations. According to Harshani and Prabuddhini (2024), satisfied employees produce greater efficiency and commitment at work, resulting in tangible operational standards and production benefits. Furthermore, Katsoni and Cassar (2024) advocate for a workplace in which

creativity and adaptability can be woven into the fabric of organizational excellence, citing the role of management recognition and equitable remuneration in driving this success. This is supported by Nguyen (2024), who found that employee satisfaction, which can be achieved through strategic initiatives, is critical for operational excellence and successful business models in the service sector.

Based on the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model, the study identifies the demographic profile of respondents and satisfaction factors as input variables. For example, a more quantitative approach can gather data using structured survey questionnaires and then perform analyses such as correlation and regression to analyze how the two variables form or differ. Based on the output, key drivers of satisfaction are identified, their impact on operational performance is analyzed, and actionable recommendations for improvement are given. This research uses a quantitative descriptive and correlational design. It employs a stratified random sample of 120 employees from 30 food and beverage establishments in Nueva Ecija. “We use a Likert-scale-based survey to collect data and apply descriptive and inferential statistics in our analyses to extract valuable insights. Ethics guide rules for informed consent, confidentiality, and responsible data usage. The results are intended to assist establishments in improving employee satisfaction through increased operational effectiveness and service quality.

Table 1 Frequency and Percentage of Demographic Profile

Demographic Variable	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age		
26-35	42	35.0
18-25	41	34.2
36-45	26	21.7
46 and above	11	9.2
Gender		
Female	61	50.8
Male	59	49.2
Educational Attainment		
College Graduate	54	45.0
High School Graduate	43	35.8
Vocational Graduate	20	16.7
Postgraduate	3	2.5

Civil Status		
Single	76	63.3
Married	44	36.7
Position		
Frontline Staff	56	46.7
Kitchen Staff	43	35.8
Supervisor	12	10
Manager	9	7.5
Length of Service		
1-3 years	54	45.0
<1 year	36	30.0
4-6 years	17	14.2
>6 years	13	10.8
Monthly Salary		
Below 10,000	18	15
10,000-20,000	83	69.17
20,001-30,000	16	13.33
Above 30,000	3	2.5
Work Schedule		
Fixed	81	67.5
Rotational/Shift	39	32.5
Nature of Employment		
Regular	69	57.5
Contractual	36	30.0
Part-time	15	12.5

Almost 69.2% of the respondents are Young adults (the age of 18 to 35). Of these, 35% belong to the 26–35 age group and 34.2% to the 18–25 age group. You have comparatively less representation in older age groups, with only 21.7% aged between 36 and 45 and 9.2% aged 46 and above.

The male-to-female ratio is approximately 50-49, with slightly more females than males. 49.2 % of the respondents were male, and 50.8% were female.

Over 45% of the population have received a university degree, 35.8% of graduates are high school graduates, and 16.7% are vocational graduates. Just 2.5% of respondents have done postgraduate education. 63.3% of respondents are single, and 36.7% are married.

The most significant, 46.7%, are frontline staff (the gut-level responders). Kitchen staff comprise 35.8%,

with supervisory and managerial positions less common, at 10% and 7.5%, respectively.

Most employees in this sample have short tenure: 45% have been employed for 1–3 years, and 30% for less than a year. Those on the longer side are rarer, with 14.2% serving 4–6 years and 10.8% over a decade. Most respondents (69.17%) have a monthly income of 10,000–20,000. Apart from that, 15% are getting less than 10,000, 13.33% are getting between 20,001 and 30,000, and only 2.5% have a salary of more than 30,000.

Most respondents, 67.5% of the total, have fixed working hours. 32.5% of employees follow a rotational or shift schedule.

57.5% of respondents are regular employees. Also, 30% of workers are on a contract basis, and 12.5% are part-time workers.

Hopenhayn et al. (2022) explore labor market demographics, examining aggregate population growth and firm-level employment dynamics. Their findings also reveal grainier demographic shifts, such as changes to labor concentration and employment characteristics.

Table 2 Means and Weighted Means of Compensation

Statement	Mean	Verbal Description
My salary is fair for the work I do.	2	Disagree
I receive additional benefits and incentives.	2.2	Disagree
I feel financially secure in my job.	2.3	Disagree
Weighted Mean	2.2	Disagree

Legend: 3.5–4.0 – Strongly Agree, 2.5–3.49 – Agree, 1.5–2.49 – Disagree, 1.0–1.49 – Strongly Disagree

The mean score for “I feel financially secure in my job” (the highest) is 2.3. While this is the highest score, it still falls within the disagreement range, suggesting that respondents do not feel financially secure in their positions overall.

The lowest average score is 2, corresponding to “My salary is fair for my work.” This means that respondents strongly disagree with the fairness of their pay for their work.

The weighted average of 2.2 indicates respondents disagreed with the statements about salary, benefits, and financial security. This indicates a broad discontent among the respondents regarding financial payment and work motivation.

Kökuti (2024) talks about the various aspects that affect employee satisfaction, especially the need for financial security in competitive fields. The study also highlights that improved economic incentives and job security, among others, can improve workers/job satisfaction.

Table 3 Means and Weighted Means of Work Environment

Statement	Mean	Verbal Description
My workplace is clean and safe.	3.4	Agree
I feel valued and respected by my colleagues.	3.2	Agree
My workplace promotes a positive work-life balance.	3.3	Agree
Weighted Mean	3.3	Agree

Legend: 3.5–4.0 – Strongly Agree, 2.5–3.49 – Agree, 1.5–2.49 – Disagree, 1.0–1.49 – Strongly Disagree

The mean score is highest at 3.4 for “My workplace is clean and safe.” This means that respondents most closely agree with their workplace being clean and safe.

The lowest mean score, 3.2, relates to the statement, “I feel valued and respected by my colleagues.” This statement shows slightly less consensus than the others while still being optimistic. Although the mean is 3.3, which indicates an overall agreement with the statement, it slightly disagrees with others who think that workplace conditions are clean and safe and promote a healthy work-life balance.

Peña-Casas and Ghailani (2023) discuss the effects of digitalization on job quality across sectors. However, they note that work and safe environments are important for high job satisfaction, even in technologically sophisticated workplaces.

Table 4 Means and Weighted Means of Career Work and Opportunities

Statement	Mean	Verbal Description
I have opportunities to improve my skills.	2.64	Agree
I feel supported in achieving my career goals.	2.54	Agree
My establishment provides regular training and development programs.	2.54	Agree
Weighted Mean	2.57	Agree

Legend: 3.5-4.0 – Strongly Agree, 2.5-3.49 – Agree, 1.5-2.49 – Disagree, 1.0-1.49 – Strongly Disagree

The highest mean score is 2.64 for "I have opportunities to improve my skills." This means that respondents most agree with the availability of opportunities to skill up.

Among the responses again at the lower end of the mean, "I feel supported in achieving my career goals" and "My establishment provides regular training and development programs" had the lowest mean scores, both at 2.54. These statements reflect a slightly lower satisfaction level, though agreement is still high compared to the opportunity to practice your skills.

The weighted mean of 2.57 tells that most respondents agreed that the establishment they belong to supports their career growth, skill development, and training opportunities.

Yulianti and Fitriansyah (2024) examine skill enhancement programs for the labor market in Indonesia and Thailand. Their study illustrates how structured training programs can improve promotion prospects.

Table 5 Means and Weighted Means of Management Support

Statement	Mean	Verbal Description
My manager/supervisor listens to my concerns.	2.72	Agree
I receive clear instructions and guidance from my supervisor.	2.52	Agree
My manager/supervisor recognizes and appreciates my contributions.	2.62	Agree
Weighted Mean	2.62	Agree

Legend: 3.5-4.0 – Strongly Agree, 2.5-3.49 – Agree, 1.5-2.49 – Disagree, 1.0-1.49 – Strongly Disagree

The highest mean score of 2.72 is recorded against "My manager/supervisor listens to my concerns." They agreed most: "I feel my supervisors listen to me."

The mean lowest score is 2.52, corresponding to the statement, "I receive clear instructions and guidance from my supervisor." Of the areas of managerial support evaluated, this item shows the least degree of agreement, but the results are still positive.

The overall agreement suggests that respondents feel their supervisors support them, recognize their work, and communicate well, with a weighted mean of 2.62.

Internal communication, feedback, and recognition are key to fostering employee satisfaction (Romero-Rodríguez & Castillo-Abdul, 2024). Maintaining a clear line of communication and providing managerial support is a valuable asset to a healthy workplace.

Table 6 Means and Weighted Means of Operational Efficiency

Statement	Mean	Verbal Description
My satisfaction impacts my performance at work.	3.73	Strongly Agree
Satisfied employees contribute to efficient daily operations.	3.53	Strongly Agree
Satisfied employees enhance the quality of customer service.	3.63	Strongly Agree
My satisfaction improves the overall performance of the establishment.	3.82	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	3.68	Strongly Agree

Legend: 3.5-4.0 – Strongly Agree, 2.5-3.49 – Agree, 1.5-2.49 – Disagree, 1.0-1.49 – Strongly Disagree

The mean score with the highest value of 3.82 corresponds to the statement: "My satisfaction increases the establishment's performance." Respondents strongly agreed that the establishment's performance depends on customer satisfaction.

The lowest mean score is 3.53 for "Satisfied employees contribute to efficient daily operations.". This statement is slightly less emphasized than others but still falls into the category of strong agreement.

The weighted mean of 3.68 implies a solid total agreement, implying that studying, regardless of hands-on experience, is pivotal to worker proficiency, functional productivity, client administration, and hierarchical accomplishment.

Celestin & Sujatha, (2024). (CITE: The impact of remote work on employee satisfaction and productivity) Their results show that satisfaction plays a substantial role in individual and organizational performance in remote contexts.

Table 7 Means and Weighted Means of Service Quality

Satisfaction Dimensions	Mean	Operational Performance Correlation
Work Environment	3.3	Strong positive correlation with operational performance (Mean: 3.68).
Compensation	2.2	Weaker or moderate positive correlation with operational performance.
Career Growth Opportunities	2.57	Moderately correlated with operational performance, emphasizing the value of growth opportunities.
Management Support	2.62	Moderately correlated with operational performance, emphasizing the importance of support.

Key satisfaction drivers refer to key areas that contribute to and drive significant aspects of employee satisfaction and influence performance within the food and beverage industry in Nueva Ecija). Such drivers would be compensation, work environment, career growth opportunities, and management support.

Compensation, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction play significant roles in the food and beverage sector (Widjaja, 2024). Skilled and engaged staff are the keys to operational success.

While compensation is a key factor, employees indicated disappointment with the fairness and financial

stability associated with their salaries and benefits. This highlights the necessity of establishments to evaluate their payment systems to boost fiscal gratification. Clean and safe workplaces, as well as positive work-life balance, were some of the aspects respondents emphasized as key satisfaction drivers when working. These share a strong correlation with enhanced operational efficiency and service quality.

Harshani, Khushbhoo, and Prabuddhini (2024) examine the relations between employees in the food and beverage industry, particularly their role in operational efficiency in hotels and the effect of job satisfaction on job performance.

Though not highly rated, career growth opportunities emphasize improving skills, supporting career goals, and providing training programs. While such matters may not directly impact turnover rates, they have proven essential for the long-term engagement of employees. Management support is another key driver, as well as positive perceptions of supervisors listening to concerns, providing guidance, and recognizing contributions. Such support boosts the morale and productivity of employees, leading to improved operational results.

In summary, the work environment and management support (both associated with controlling and using human resources) were the strongest predictors of operational performance (with career growth opportunities playing a moderate role). Conversely, compensation had a weaker impact on daily operational success, although it was crucial to retention. Focusing on these aspects of satisfaction in an integrated manner can yield better employee engagement, efficient processes, and improved service quality across the industry.

Table 8 Correlation Analysis

Predictor Type	Satisfaction Dimensions	Significance (p-value)	Impact on Operational Performance
Strong Predictors	Work Environment	$p < 0.05$	High impact, supporting efficient operations and service quality.
Strong Predictors	Management Support	$p < 0.05$	Employees with supportive managers likely perform better.
Moderate Predictors	Career Growth Opportunities	$p < 0.05$	Important but may not directly influence daily operations.
Weak Predictors	Compensation	$p > 0.05$	Does not significantly predict outcomes but impacts employee retention.

In food and beverage establishments, employee productivity and operational results depend heavily on

employee satisfaction. Happy workers are more invested in their work, more productive, and more dedicated to their

jobs, leading to greater operational efficiencies, fewer mistakes, and a better quality of service to customers. Common factors contributing to satisfaction include fair compensation and a supportive work environment, opportunities for career growth, and good management.

Oliveira et al. (2024) recognize organizational culture and employee commitment as significant factors in operational efficiency for food and beverage establishments, highlighting the importance of job satisfaction.

Make no mistake: the work environment and management support are among the best predictors of operational performance. Workers who think their workplaces are sanitary, secure, and balanced do better, and workers who feel backed up by management have additional morale and productivity. While career growth opportunities have a medium effect on daily operations, they are crucial for long-term Employee retention and engagement. Letting satisfaction with compensation—things like unequal salaries or insufficient financial security—sour morale and undermine performance at work can cause declines in momentum, even if compensation does not directly affect operational outcomes.

The effects of training were also shown to positively impact operational outcomes, such as job satisfaction and performance in the food and beverage kitchen departments (Kartini & Adhyatma, 2024).

Establishments must address these factors holistically to build employee satisfaction and further their positive impact on operations. Improving compensation systems, developing a good and safe work culture, and increasing workplace career and management support will yield better operational results. These features create efficient movement, improved service quality, and an accepted competitive advantage for a company specializing in food and beverage.

To enhance employee satisfaction and operational results, intervention must be multilevel and focus on the major drivers of satisfaction in the research. To begin with, plans to pay should be evaluated and modified so that you should be fair and enable greater financial security, as unhappiness with compensation harms morale and retention. Create transparent and competitive reimbursement and P&L-based incentives.

Nehme et al. (2024). These strategies encompass effective communication, recognition, and equitable compensation, directly influencing job and customer satisfaction.

The benefits of changes in the work environment can be huge. Maintaining safe, clean narcissism and

employers can help improve family and consumption overall in quiescent for employee efficiency. It is also dependent on management support. To strengthen their relationship with staff and increase productivity, managers should communicate active listening and clear communication and recognize employees' contributions to their new tools of the trade.

Nurhayati et al. (2024) explore the link between employee satisfaction, financial performance, and motivation. Increased satisfaction increases productivity, operational efficiency, and corporate financial performance.

Career growth opportunities are key to retaining motivated employees and keeping them engaged in the long run. Establishments' experiences must align with employees' aspirations, and investing in training programs, skill development initiatives, and clear pathways for career advancement can help with this. While these factors might not directly translate into daily operations, they lead to a well-maintained and loyal workforce in the long run.

If addressed comprehensively by food and beverage establishments, these factors must ensure employee satisfaction, resulting in optimum efficiency, good service quality, and a successful business. While these approaches aid operational performance in the present, they will also allow organizations to better prepare for future growth and competitiveness in the industry.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that employee satisfaction plays a significant role in the operational functioning of food and beverage establishments in the Nueva Ecija region. The results of this study highlight that all aspects of satisfaction (salary, working conditions, opportunities for promotion, and support from management) are so closely related to measures descriptive of operational performance (efficiency, quality of service, and productivity) that it makes for the best of all worlds. Those whose needs and expectations are met go on to operate at better levels, supporting operational continuity, greater customer satisfaction, and long-term organizational success.

Of the satisfaction drivers, work environment and management support were the most significant predictors of operational performance. A healthy and balanced office can be maintained by maintaining a safe and clean office, which will strengthen employee morale and help productivity and customer interaction. Likewise, promising managerial approaches like listening to employees' concerns, showing them direction, and making them feel that their efforts have been recognized go a long way in

ensuring the staff's zeal and creating a work environment for excellence.

Career growth opportunities moderately impact daily operations and are crucial to sustaining employee engagement and loyalty in the long run. Providing opportunities for skill development, training programs, and career advancement pathways fulfills employees' professional aspirations and helps create a more competent workforce capable of meeting the industry's evolving needs. Conversely, although compensation is crucial for financial safety and retention, its intrinsic drive only moderately influences operational efficiency, implying that establishments should consider incentivizing beyond monetary value.

Food and beverage venues must take a holistic approach to improving team well-being and achieving better operational results. This includes arms-length and fair compensations, workplace supportive conditions, managerial support, and professional growth opportunities. These satisfaction dimensions are vital as they enable establishments to foster a motivated workforce, facilitate operational excellence, and build a competitive advantage in the hospitality and tourism sector.

It is a massive sustainable growth factor, not just an operational strategy to build employee satisfaction. Restaurants and drink shops in Nueva Ecija that prioritize their workers' well-being and satisfaction will likely flourish in their service delivery and become the best in the region, hastening the province's development.

Key drivers of satisfaction must be addressed thoroughly through developmental programs to improve employee satisfaction and overall operational performance in food and beverage establishments in Nueva Ecija. Here are some strategies the establishments should focus on:

- **Rethink Compensation Models:** Compensation dissatisfaction requires adjusting salary scales and benefits. Creating transparent and trend-competitive pay structures and performance-based incentives will be essential in maximizing the potential for financial security and morale while aligning compensation incentives with industry demands and expectations.
- **Improve Work Environment:** A clean, safe, and supportive work environment is critical for employee satisfaction. Keeping your workplace safe, fostering a better work-life balance, and creating a sense of togetherness among employees are all factors that can enhance operational efficiency and the quality of service.
- **Provide Management Support:** Managers are key players in employee experiences. They must be active listeners, communicate clearly, and acknowledge employee contributions. This will help you ensure your managers receive adequate leadership training to manage and motivate their teams.
- **Invest in Development Opportunities:** Long-term employee engagement is often linked to growth and development opportunities. Regular training, skill development programs, and a clear professional growth pipeline will enhance employee competency and nurture loyalty.
- **Adopt a Balanced Satisfaction Paradigm:** When an organization focuses on the holistic well-being of its employees, it caters to their varied needs, ranging from intrinsic motivators such as personal career development and manager support to extrinsic rewards such as remuneration.

This is how food and beverage establishments can improve employee satisfaction, operations, and customer experiences. This holistic approach will enhance immediate business outcomes and support the sustainable growth of hospitality and tourism in Nueva Ecija.

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Uncovering Self-discovery, Belongingness and Cultural Dynamics in Anita Desai's *Rosarita*: A Thematic Analysis

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Abstract — This paper elucidates a variety of themes such as identity, self-discovery and gender disparity coupled with the role of memory and cultural past in shaping Bonita's journey. Bonita, who embarks on unearthing her Mother's intriguing past not only discovers her hidden artistic talents but also her perpetual struggle to find her place in a male-driven household. The story also unravels the interwoven similarities between the lives of the protagonist and her mother in their relentless determination to forge their own paths. Desai also highlights Bonita's continuous efforts, with the help of the Stranger, to resolve the challenges of understanding one's place in the society while reconciling with a fragmented past. The striking imagery, symbolic elements and second person narration help in comprehending Bonita's emotional and psychological state. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the Mexican Revolution and Partition highlights the constant struggle between different cultures and individual lives. Desai skilfully digs into gender roles, lack of feminine agency and societal obligations to mark the woman's journey. The unresolved conflicts between familial duties and individual desires urge both Bonita and Mother to carve out a niche for themselves. In this way, *Rosarita* deals with multiple themes, emphasising the never-ending pursuit of self-awareness by referencing Desai's interviews, autobiographical elements and comparisons with her other works.



Keywords— Belongingness, Cultural displacement, Gender Roles, Identity, Memory, Past, Self-discovery

I. INTRODUCTION

Anita Desai, renowned for her three Booker Prize nominations, makes a remarkable comeback after a long hiatus with her evocative novella *Rosarita*. The clarity and conciseness of this short but delectable piece of writing not only sheds light on the interplay of identity, memory and alienation but also exhibits a quest for self-discovery and human connection. The protagonist's migration and cultural shift further broaden our understanding of the intermingling of personal and cultural overtones.

Bonita, a student of the Spanish language, comes to the city of San Miguel, Mexico, and embarks on the journey of discovering the mysterious past of her Mother as unravelled by a Stranger, named Victoria. This woman insists on knowing her Mother as an artist and starts creating an image of her Mother by drawing parallels to

their identical features. She says, "But you have her looks, her manner- what to say, her comportment. The mouth, the eyes. You cannot not be my dearest amiga's daughter" (2)! This baffling revelation emboldens Bonita's efforts to give certainty to the past about which she had now till been ignorant. And, this itch for belongingness and self-realisation compels Bonita to believe "Trickster's" side of the story and undertake the meandering path of secrets and surprises.

An introspective journey marked by the use of powerful imagery and emotions, urges Bonita to collect pieces of her fragmented self. Accosted by the stranger, who claims to have known her Mother when she had come to San Miguel de Allende, Mexico to practice art, Bonita tries to avoid the conversation, "It makes you press your sandals together and wish you could draw your dark glasses out of your bag

so as to screen yourself from her and hide. But hide from whom- this stranger or your Mother" (4)?

She resists any discussion on remembering her and the baffling questions of how, when and why she would ever have traversed into this foreign land and met this foreign woman. To conceive of Mother as an artist is an unimaginable reality which impels Bonita to recall her childhood memories in which a sketch of a woman seated on a park bench with a child playing in the sand at her feet was hung on the wall. Nobody takes notice of this faded painting: it is just there. But this encounter with the Stranger, discloses the complexities of a parent-child relationship, and Bonita feels compelled to discover the hidden self of her Mother as well as her artistic life. In this undertaking of a journey of self-awareness, she portrays her Mother's experiences through the lens of her subjectivity and her own escape from the mundanity of life.

Also, marriage to a dominating Father in a patriarchal household suppresses the Mother's desire to realise her true potential as an artist. Her continuous visits to the Mexican embassy and the appreciation of art help Bonita not only in understanding her Mother's yearning to forge her own path of self-discovery but also her own struggles in another country. Their interconnected paths of self-reflection help them navigate the intricacies of personal growth and understand their true selves.

In *Clear Light of Day*, the four Das siblings also reflect on the role of memory in shaping their sense of self and belonging.

II. A SEARCH FOR THE PAST

When Bonita recalls her childhood memories, the expansive images of her grandparents' bungalow in the old, obsolete Delhi are fading away. The premium collection of objects such as carpets from Kashmir, silver filigree fingerbowls, lithographs in foxed browns and greys, framed in gilt, Moghul, Rajasthani, Pahari paintings, etc., are moved to a new dwelling (New Delhi) in order to preserve the richness of the past and stamp the authority of a successful legacy. All these artefacts have a strong connection to the British, from where these must have been transported back to India to represent colonial history. In addition, she also tries to gather evidence for her Mother's artistry by looking at all these pieces of marvel but finds no trace except that faded sketch as mentioned, "that pastel sketch of the woman on a bench in a park with a child playing at her feet, was the most recent, the only unimportant, valueless item amidst all the elaborately framed artwork, collected specifically to create an effect of success" (17-18).

Amidst nature in the grove of dusk, she imagines her Mother's deplorable condition of being neglected and her artwork packed in the old battered boxes. She ponders, "What had they contained? Her own artwork, sketches, pastels, remnants of it? And if so, what happened to them when the boxes were needed for a move" (24)? All these daunting speculations driven by the past provide an impetus to her journey with the Trickster to the artists' commune, Colima, and ultimately to La Manzanilla for unfolding the present.

Bonita continues to search for the mystery of the past, which seems totally elusive, as also delineated by Supriya Chaudhuri in her review, "*Rosarita* remains out of reach, a shadowy figure who will never yield to the curiosity of posterity, while her daughter must cope with the increasingly psychotic behaviour of her eccentric friend, and with the obscurity and intransigence of the past."

III. ALIENATION, ISOLATION AND CULTURAL CONFLICT

The avoidance of encounter with the Stranger and anything that halts Bonita, only deepens her state of isolation and estrangement. Even ordering a meal at a restaurant becomes a herculean task because of the sense of loneliness experienced at having lost the touch of reality. The constant struggle to find the truth about her Mother's enigmatic past takes a toll on her physical and mental well-being. "Out on the street you find yourself still in a state of agitation. You hesitate, not wanting to return to your room; its emptiness will only oppress you..." (26).

Her sense of isolation also comes from the mix of her cultural identities, as she is looking for answers both from her life in India and her present life in Mexico, but is unable to find any. Also, there is an absolute desire to feel a human connection with her Mother as she waits eagerly, "Stay, sit, you tell yourself. Wait, here, now, she will appear and you will see her as she had never shown herself and you had never seen" (27).

Commonalities can also be drawn with Anita Desai's life in America which she describes as, "America is alien, too. It's just not my country. And other people here see me as a stranger, too. It suits her, somewhat, as a background condition – always being apart. Perhaps that is being a writer. One is always an observer rather than a participant" (Desai).

This displacement of hers can be realised significantly in the novella itself, which reveals a similar disconnect between two disparate cultures of India and Mexico.

IV. IDENTITY AND BELONGINGNESS

The concept of identity has always played a pertinent role in Desai's novels as well as her personal life. Born to a German Mother and Bengali Father, she has delved into this enigma of identity in a detailed manner. In an interview with PTI, she asserts, "I am still a foreigner here, I am still an outsider here, and I have accepted it. Well, that's what a writer's life is: to be the outsider. India has changed so much. I don't understand those changes. There are many occasions where I feel I don't belong in India" (Desai).

In the same way, Bonita persistently tries to weave the threads of her mythical Mother's identity into a tangible reality as a Mother, wife, daughter-in-law, and, essentially, a woman. "You had resisted her fantastical tale but now find you would like to believe it. Could she like a wizard or a magician, bring your Mother to life again even if it is a life you never knew or suspected" (40)?

She cannot let it go now and is on fire to unravel the truth- or the falsehood of what she's being told.

Even in the Indian household, *Rosarita*, name given by the Stranger to her Mother, searches for her identity in an oppressive and patriarchal environment. Also, her family was never mentioned except a brief reference of "railway people", with no fixed address, constantly moved from one 'railway colony' to another, entered in one school for one term, in another the next." Everything about the family was "transient- like railway carriages" (21). They had no address and a place to call their own. Only after taking the plunge to move to Mexico, her individuality and emotional resonance with her Mother's family begin to take a distinctive form. And in this pursuit of identity, Bonita finds herself deeply connected to her Mother than ever before.

Desai's parents also experienced an identity crisis when they relocated to India, highlighting the autobiographical elements woven into *Rosarita*, "My Father was from what was then East Bengal, says Desai. And when he came back from Germany, East Bengal became Bangladesh; so, he lost his ancestral land too. Both my parents had a sense of starting strange new lives in north India, which belonged to neither of them. A strange place to both" (Desai).

V. GENDER ROLES AND SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS OF WOMEN

While listening to the murmur of bees and observing the gardener sweeping dead leaves off the street, Bonita recalls scenes of household activities in the presence of grandparents. Grandmother is the matriarch of her own appointed territory and takes pride in setting, "her household on wheels and letting it run by itself" (14). Her domestic placidity is in complete contrast with Mother's

unwillingness to sacrifice her own desires in a house dominated by an authoritarian husband. Described as a 'company wife' (18), she feels stifled by the mundane routine of domestic life. On the other hand, men exude "power, possession and defiance- who would dare challenge them" (17)? In this gender powered and patriarchal structure, Mother gets totally subsumed by the obligatory duties of a wife imposed by a callous and domineering husband. "If there was a god, it could only be The Husband" (15).

Her "unsuitability as a wife" (20), as defined by the rigid norms of society, induces feelings of disappointment, distress and failure in her. She feels smothered by the traditional gender expectations and silencing of her feminine agency.

The invitation to a cultural event at the Mexican embassy provides her with an opportunity to stimulate her curiosity and cultivate it. After witnessing the turmoil and relatable patterns between the violence of the Mexican Revolution and the Partition, she flees. Nevertheless, this ignites her buried desire to follow her artistic ambitions and explore new avenues, defying all the barriers. "Her relief so keen she almost moans aloud at a thrust at her ribs of revelation. Every moment of her life so far has been removed, wiped out, allowing this moment. The rest of her life will be a pursuit of the recovery of it" (36).

The subjugation of rights and authority can also be witnessed in the author's life as well where she was not allowed to be vocal about her opinions. "I had to train myself to express my thoughts and opinions. I wasn't used to that. I was never asked my opinion in India; I just kept quiet and listened to others. And then I'd go back to India and start expressing my thoughts and they'd all look at me and say, what's happened to her? She laughs. Why is she telling us what she thinks?! That still happens, frankly. After all these years. When we go back, Kiran and I, we have to be very careful not to express too much of our thoughts" (Desai).

This denial of agency makes a palpable connection amongst the characters and the author where they are perpetually trying to blaze their own trail.

Manjira Majumdar notes a similar portrayal of the unhappy wife in *Cry the Peacock* who is mentally obsessed with a terrible astrological prediction that has a surprise ending.

VI. PARALLELS BETWEEN MEXICAN REVOLUTION AND PARTITION

The novel *Clear Light of Day* also touches upon the central theme of Partition and its brutal impact on both Muslims

and Hindus. Here, Desai draws a poignant picture of atrocities committed in the Mexican Revolution and the freedom movement and Partition. The artworks of Mexican muralists, inspired by the violence and killings of the Revolution, were showcased at the cultural event. The depiction of tableau where scenes of carnage: “a knife-thrust here, a skull smashed open there-guts ripped from living bodies, drawing more and more blood” (31) jolted Mother and made her confront the dark chapter of her past. It was her face-off with what she has always known and lived with. “Some wound that had been stitched up had split open then. Were those trains she saw on the screen with their unspeakable cargoes, the ones that could have carried the Muslims of India to Pakistan and the Hindus of Pakistan to India, also the ones that carried her family across some savage new border from which few arrived alive” (32)?

Was it the acceptance of her own history which was so “carefully guarded” (32)? Bonita deliberates over the never-mentioned family of hers. Why was the permission denied to share her ancestral history? Her Mother never uttered a word about her family, home and location. All these disturbing questions make Bonita feel culturally displaced and alienated and become a driving force in uncovering her Mother's expeditionary venture. Confronted with horrific images of violence, including of trains oozing more and more blood (31), she flees from the event.

Desai keeps coming back to Mexican life as also seen in the novel *The Zigzag Way* where Eric unfolds impact of history and memory on human relationships. She has a deep connection with the place as told in The Guardian interview, “When she got off the plane in Oaxaca, she practically squealed with delight. Everything about it was Indian; the dust, the smells, the bougainvillea. The small houses. It was so familiar to me. It's a very Indian country: the family life, the religious life. All of it. Mexico, she says, is a country that gets me writing, always” (Desai).

VII. FROM WILDERNESS TO SELF NATURE AS A MIRROR

The natural elements play a central role in Desai's works in reflecting the moods and conditions of the characters. In *Rosarita*, Bonita tries to conjure up and believe in her Mother's ‘flowering’, “in this great abundance of light that makes the leaves of the laurel trees shimmer, the pigeons murmur and coo in the expression of mounting ecstasy...” (9). The unveiling of her Mother's talents resonates with the natural beauty that validates her worthy pursuit of becoming an artist.

The journey to the town of La Manzanilla covers mountain ranges, forests, plunging cliffs and exotic birds which are described in great poetic detail. Graphic descriptions of flora and fauna and landscapes mirror Bonita's constant quest for finding autonomy and meaning in her life. The symbols of sea and waves depict the inner chaos in their lives and the absolute need for identity and belongingness. The wilderness serves as an intense reflection of the emotional breakthrough and the psychological states of both the characters.

VIII. SYMBOLIC ELEMENTS

The evocation of symbols exhibits the human predicament and the emotional states of both Mother and daughter. The sea serves as a metaphor for inner turmoil and loss of connection. Its secrets are revealed through the unearthing of the artistic talents of the Mother. “You stay, pondering the question as you collect a handful of shells, shake them free of sand and toss them out to sea: the remains. You have come as far as you can, you tell yourself: you can go no further” (94).

This encapsulates the reconciliation between the fragments of the past and the inner conflict of the present. There is an acceptance of boundaries and unresolved dilemmas, which may or may not be real, yet it makes room for embracing the promise of growth and transformation.

The Pacific Ocean at La Manzanilla opens up new horizons, and Bonita starts gathering pieces of the fragmented self. “You want to throw out your arms, run like a bird across the sand, cry out with relief, the relief that feels like joy. You have arrived, in one instant you have recovered what you thought was lost: clarity, clarity, the promise of clarity” (79).

The ominous arriving of trains, “some carrying troops and their arms, others packed with passengers slaughtered along the way, blood oozing out of carriages when they are opened, then more blood and still more” (31) opens up a darker chapter of history in Mother's life. It reminds her of the days of Partition and may be the transportation of her family from one border to the other.

Even the passage of life moving through various trials and tribulations is represented by, “an endless train journey, with never a stop and no place of arrival” (32). It represents a never-ending cycle of finding certainty and meaning in life.

The waves bring out the concealed and vibrant human emotions to the forefront and initiate a meditative communication between humans and nature.

IX. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN FAMILIAL OBLIGATIONS AND PERSONAL GROWTH

Desai illustrates how family relationships are always in conflict with an individual's life. The entrapment of familial duties becomes an obstacle for the Mother in exploring her true self. She feels suffocated by her monotonous routine life, which stifles her individuality and personal growth. On the other hand, Bonita is constantly searching for her Mother's family by recalling her childhood days. "And what of family? Father had family, dominant, domineering. But what of hers? Presses lips, guarded eyes, leading to a suggestion that there was something disreputable about it" (21-22).

The persistent efforts fuelled by the stranger's emphasis on her Mother's artistic adventure in Mexico, help in discovering troubled family relationships shared among grandparents, Father, Mother and children. The absence of Motherly love continues to torment Bonita, creating an intense emotional chasm. The complexity of human relationships observed since childhood makes Bonita feel disconnected and distrustful of all the other characters in the novella.

Desai's intricate exploration of familial bonds not only shapes Bonita's understanding of herself, but also her place within the broader framework of society.

X. SECOND PERSON NARRATION

The experimentation with the second person, provides Desai a unique way of storytelling. It establishes a direct connection with the readers where they participate in untangling the enigmatic mysteries of the Mother's and daughter's life. She writes, "Your Mother never lived in San Miguel, never even visited Mexico. You know that – the absurdity of such a suggestion" (5)!

By using this narrative technique, Desai universalises the need of belonging and identity which transcends any boundaries between fictional and real life.

On the contrary, it also reflects the sense of displacement and alienation where the protagonist wishes to escape from her confrontation with the truth and unpleasant memories of the past as described by Desai in the interview with the Guardian, "If you keep describing people as 'you', you are distancing yourself. In other words, not getting too involved, yes. She wanted to get at the tenuousness of life, a deceptively modest ambition within which lies a much greater truth: that we are not as bound to our circumstances as we may like to believe. Well, what does one have? Just a few threads to hold one. After that, memories. Which may or may not be quite true".

XI. CONCLUSION

Rosarita is a testament to Desai's enduring brilliance not only as a writer of human relationships but also as a profound explorer of the dilemmas of the inner self. This novella offers a contemplative examination of the psychological states of the characters, emotional upheavals and their perpetual yearning for belonging. The blending of elements of fact and fiction raises questions about the fickleness of memory, the creation of identities and the blurred boundaries between reality and imagination. In the end, Desai's tour de force goes beyond the intertwined journeys of the Mother and daughter and becomes a successful exploration of cultures, histories and places that harbour more secrets than any one individual can comprehend. It also reflects that the construction of meaning is invariably shaped by the cultural influences, interpersonal relationships and the indelible weight of the past that we carry within ourselves.

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From “Kabuliwala” to “Bioscopewala”: Adapting Tagore into a modern day cinema

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Abstract — *Stories have the power to cut through the barriers of culture, language and time. But not all writers survive the challenges and threats posited by the constantly evolving dynamics of time and all that it encompasses. Some stories wither and fade away like flowers during winter. Only a few are retained in the memories of readers and viewers alike- as stories can be narrated in both the audio-visual form (such as cinema) or in printed manuscripts. Such tales continue to rejoice people even decades after their conceptualization and execution. Rabindranath Tagore is a writer of such many tales which never cease to take readers by surprise irrespective of the age they belong to. In this paper, I shall be focusing on one of his short-stories titled “Kabuliwala” and its screenplay adaptation “Bioscopewala” with undue emphasis upon all those elements that have been remodelled and refashioned to fit a modern day story better. This, in turn, would facilitate a multi-layered understanding of the genius that Tagore was which makes him relevant even to date. This paper shall also seek to explore the possible causes triggering so many movie adaptations of popular novels and stories.*



Keywords— *adaptation, culture, language, modern, screenplay.*

India has been a land of story-tellers since time immemorial. Whether in painting, or in pottery making, or songs and anecdotes, stories permeate every aspect of an individual's life living in this diverse land of art and culture. The thirst for both narrating as well as listening to stories might've reduced in the present times yet it would be a long time till it dies out completely. Consequently, this land has also birthed prolific writers who have restored belief in the power of storytelling whenever the need arose. The pluralistic nature of this country along with the fundamental desire to tell a tale to the truest of intentions and merit has resulted in the publication of uncountable books in an abundance of languages.

There've been many awe-striking writers who greatly contributed significantly towards shaping the literary scenario of India even after India had achieved her independence. Out of them, one name that can never be forgotten is Rabindranath Tagore. Any discussion on the

Indian literary panorama is incomplete without giving Tagore his due. Tagore had don multiple hats in his lifetime- a poet, a dramatist, a visionary, a philosopher, a patriot and a humanitarian. But succumbing to a fate similar to many other eminent literary figures, Tagore was subjected to the kind of acclamation and praise that is befitting to the merit and genius that he is several years succeeding his death. In one of his interviews given to a renowned Bollywood veteran Gulzar commented upon how it took a thousand years for the stories of Tagore to surpass the confining walls of Shantiniketan. He indebted his joy and love for writing to Tagore reminiscing on how it was one of the latter's stories that opened the doors of literature for him at a young age.

What adds to the brilliance of Tagore is a kind of simplicity in which all his stories are ensconced. He doesn't talk of the extra-ordinary or grand things. Neither his language is bombarded with an unnecessary dosage of

ostentatiousness. He writes simple stories of people who are rooted in a reality of the most humble of natures. This trait enables discussion on Tagore as a Romantic writer as well. Wordsworth, the father of Romanticism, outlined the necessity of bringing literature closer to the commonplace and the mundane to make it more realistic and relatable. In "Preface to Lyrical Ballads" -which is hailed as the Romantic manifesto- Wordsworth outlines his poetic vision in clear and simple terms sparking a huge debate in the literary world. Expounding upon his vision he states "how the principle objects" of poetry was "to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them throughout, as far as possible, in a selection of language really used by men."

Tagore's poetic inspiration is not in complete digression to that of the viewpoint established by Wordsworth. In *Galpaguchchha*, Tagore attributes the innumerable visits he undertook to villages as well as the consequent exposition to rural life those visits facilitated to be the impetus of his countless short-stories. Although he doesn't call himself a Romantic for his writing differed in both quality, tone as well as content from that of Bankimchandra-who was perceived as an emblem of Romanticism during his active years of writing- yet his love for the rural atmosphere when studied under the borrowed lenses of Wordsworth's philosophy paves the path for a Romantic approach in relation to his writings. One interesting thing that is to be noted here, is Tagore's fascination towards the "other" world. The concept of "other" is very popular in literature courtesy to the struggle for independence on a global scale after years of slavery that the British empire had subjected almost the entire world to.

The "other" was used by the British in a derogatory manner to draw a sharp and unmistakable line of contrast between themselves viz the colonizer and the colonized. And such a practice of judging all who are different as less than fully human is called *othering*, and it divides the world between 'us' (the 'civilized') and 'them' (the 'others', the 'savages') (Tyson 401). And it was upon the British to bring necessary reforms to educate and civilize the "other". Prior to the colonial era, the "other" reclaimed their identity through the medium of literature. The "other" in the modern times can also be used to draw attention towards an artificial/man-made world consisting of machines, weaponry and other scientific inventions and exploits. Under this definition of "other", genres such as science-fiction gain a whole new perspective. As such stories primarily seek to explore "the abnormal, non-human or less-than-human behavior" (Vidalepp 26). This kind of othering has been the point of focus in Satyajit Ray's "Anukul" that was adapted into a movie bearing the similar title by acclaimed director Sujoy Ghosh.

The concept of "other" has also been a constant space of exploration in Tagore's world. A wide array of his short-stories/dramas ranging from "Kabuliwala" to "Chandalika" have focused upon the gap created by a society that can be best categorized under the binary forces of have(s) and have not(s). Such a gap is academically referred to as "other". Tagore emphasizes upon feelings of void, yearning and suffering as pointers to this gap. "Chandalika" is a musical play in two acts featuring an untouchable girl named Prakriti and seeks to explore the gap created by caste based discrimination in a Hindu society. Prakriti yearns for a Buddhist monk who had once sought water from her to quench his thirst. This yearning combined with the thirst that brings the monk at Prakriti's doorstep symbolizes a deep-seated yearning which every victim of caste based discrimination experiences and wishes to break free of.

"Kabuliwala", on the other hand, probes an inquisitive inquiry into gaps/fissures caused by estrangement (both voluntary as well as involuntary) from one's homeland and everything else it stands for. Written in the year 1892, "Kabuliwala" is the story of Rahmat- the titular character-who comes to Calcutta every year to see dry fruits from Kabul. Rahmat comes across little Minnie (the daughter of the narrator) one fine morning and seems to work past the reserved demeanour with natural charm and is able to befriend her easily. Rahmat meets Minnie several years later on the day of her wedding and the latter is unable to recognize him. Her father takes pity on the Kabuliwala who has spent many years in prison owing to a string of ill-fortuned events and gives him some money so that he could return to his homeland.

Rahmat's story is that of dispersion and dislocation from his ancestral home (Kabul) to that of a foreign land (Calcutta). Although he made the transition voluntarily for economic reasons, he had no control over the time spent in his chosen foreign territory owing to the circumstances he had fallen prey to. On Minnie's wedding day, Rehmat realizes the gap that was created by the cruel hands of time between himself and his daughter. His daughter was around the same age as Minnie which makes Rehmat ponder over many painful questions. Minnie's total lack of recognition triggers fear inside him. He is now made aware of the possibility that his little Parbati might also act in a nonchalant manner upon meeting him following his prolonged absence from her life. His situation is not entirely different from people who suffer from cultural divorce from their native land after having spent many years in an alien land. They neither belong here nor there. What he experiences in those moments succeeding the stings of rejection from Minnie is an insurmountable amount of grief resulting from a complete dislocation from culture and everything it encompasses. The realization that he is a mere intruder in a house of

celebration dawns upon him and he collapses upon its weight.

Cultural bereavement of such nature can lead to severe mental trauma in a person. Schreiber mentions the significance of culture in discussing ideas pertaining to grief by referring to a particular case report of *bereavement* in an Ethiopian female refugee. He highlights how “her symptoms of grief were complicated by her inability to perform her culturally sanctioned purification rituals because of her relocation. Compounding her problem, she was erroneously diagnosed at various times due to the use of Western derived diagnostic criteria and a lack of appreciation of the cultural differences in the presentation of grief by clinicians”.

The story ends on a note of a possible future reconciliation between Rehmat and Parbati without digging deep into the psyche of Rehmat. Taking advantage of being a full-length movie “Bioscopewala” picks up this unutilized element following Rehmat’s (enacted beautifully by Danny Denzongpa) release from prison. Rendering an appropriate usage of creative liberty, the script makes necessary adjustments to be remodelled into a modern day story. Bhattacharya speaks of all such creative liberties taken by different directors while adapting Tagore for a cinematic experience in his book titled “Tagore’s Vision of Cinema: Aesthetic and Cultural Reflections”. Bhattacharya talks at length on Tagore’s role in shaping up the modern cinematic experience. He also sheds light on how certain aspects have always to be adjusted for the transition into moving pictures (viz cinema) as opposed to print media (viz books).

The concept of adaptation is not a novel one and dates back to the times of the origin of moving pictures. From Chaucer to Shakespeare, and Stephen King to Ian Fleming, all have been translated and transcribed into movies at some point or other. And there are several factors triggering adaptations of a story from one medium(such as books) to another (preferably a novel). Some of these factors are listed below:

- a) An inability to read or understand the language in which the book was written.
- b) Dyslexia: a kind of disability which renders an individual incapable of reading.
- c) A total lack of interest in reading

Under the presence of all above listed factors, movies become the only medium through which stories can be circulated widely among people obliterating boundaries of language, culture and vested interests and aptitudes. However, adaptations are subjected to a diversified range of criticism based on how well the stories could be moulded to suit a specific atmosphere. Renowned Indian filmmaker Vishal Bhardwaj was able to model Shakespeare into a

rustic Indian backdrop in his famous Shakespearean trilogy comprising of *Maqbool* (2003), *Omkara* (2006), and *Haider* (2014). This aforementioned trilogy has garnered praises from **The Times of India**, **The Guardian**, **The New York Times**, alike. On the other hand, the report drafted by The New York Times called ‘**The Color Purple by Steven Spielberg**’ highlights how the characters fail to resemble Miss Walker despite being richly decorated.

Such disparities in criticism are common across borders and make the entire business of adapting books into movies a tricky one. When the 2015 best-seller “The Girl on the Train” by Paula Hawkins was made into a Bollywood flick starring Parineeti Chopra, it received the worst kind of criticism possible from both critics as well as regular cinema goers. Bluestone had designed a specific term called *fidelity* to discuss this very phenomenon in which a certain group of people is more inclined towards one form as opposed to the other and vice versa. In this regard, a cartoon once featured in **The New Yorker** is worth mentioning. It featured two goats consuming a stack of film cans. They seem to be engaged in a conversation in which one opines to be liking the book better. The word “fidelity” itself points towards a sense of loyalty; perhaps a sense of moral obligation a reader feels towards the book that came before the movie.

Despite the risk involved, the practice of adapting art from one form to another remains a popular practice till date. Many of Tagore’s dramas and plays have also been tailored into movies. Some of his familiar works that have been adapted into movies are *Gora*, *Ghore Baire*, *Chokher Bali*, etc. From fervent nationalism to love and betrayal, these stories have explored every human emotion known to mankind. And because of the universal appeal of emotions such stories could be very well adapted into movies dating even to the modern period. Seasoned directors such as Satyajit ray, Ritupono Ghosh have had managed to adapt these stories to situations aligning with the taste and appetite of the cinema goers of their age without altering or tampering with those very sensibilities and sensitivities which lied at the very core of such stories; shaping and moulding them into timeless masterpieces.

And it is this particular quality of remaining true to the original in terms of both ingenuity of emotions and depth of character which adds to the success of “Bioscopewala” as a paper to screen adaptation alongside such aforementioned movies . On meditated observation, the real intention of the movie seems to emerge out of an inquisitive string of what if(s). Due to their nature of construction w.r.t length and space constraints short-stories often end on a note of incompleteness raising a plethora of questions and “Bioscopewala” utilizes artistic liberty and unparalleled

imagination to explore the life of Rehmat Khan following his release from prison.

In “Bioscopewala” Minnie (played by Geetanjali Thapa) is shown to be suffering from a state of divorce where she lacks a genuine connect with her own father and this turmoil is brought out poignantly in an informal get together following her father’s death (played by Adil Hussain) where everyone is encouraged to speak a few words in the loving memory of the deceased. Minnie is shown to be struggling as the acute understanding of how little is known by her in relation to her own father strikes her like a blue from the thunder bolt. Minnie is reluctant to say anything; she is extremely unsure about everything. She struggles like many other children who find it extremely difficult to forge emotional bonds with their parents owing to factors such as generational gap, difference in attitude, lack of common interests, etc. Minnie is as lost as the freshly released Bioscopewala a.k.a Rehmat Khan who has lost all his memories and doesn’t know what to make of his newfound freedom.

As mentioned earlier, “Bioscopewala” fiddles around with a stream of innovative ideas and doesn’t borrow entirely from the text by Tagore. The influence of the original story is unmissable but the screenplay incorporates sufficient variations to give it a modern touch. The role of the bioscope in the movie is an original idea and acts as a symbol of that very modern world in which movies are the most favored way to tell a story. Unlike the Rehmat Khan of “Kabuliwala” Danny’s interest lies in movies which makes him carry around his colorful world on his shoulders through a bioscope. Due to political turmoil in his ancestral home, Kabul, he is to take refuge in India. He connects with Minnie through the help of his bioscope and takes her on a tour to a different world every time they interact.

This *bioscopewala* shares an uncanny resemblance with the *kahaniwala* in the 2015 Imtiaz Ali directed “Tamasha”. His role is of utmost importance in Ved’s (played by Ranbir Kapoor) life as he taps into Ved’s unseen potential and brings out the true artist that thrives to create. The *kahaniwala* is Ved’s muse; his inspiration to mount the stage and make it his own. Minnie, in a manner somewhat similar to Ved, later chooses a camera as her device of choice to tell the kind of stories she is interested in. From bioscope to camera, and through fiction to reality “Bioscopewala” creates an enthralling tale that strikes a chord with every cinephile who prefers a profound cinematic experience over unnecessary glamour that comes with certain cliché storylines Bollywood seems to flourish on.

The political turmoil in Afghanistan is also captured effectively without any unnecessary melancholy and

heightened sensationalism that Bollywood has shown a penchant for at repeated intervals of time. The exact reason for Rehman’s migration from his Afghani homeland is the sharp disdain demonstrated towards cinema as shown in one of the scenes where Rehman’s bioscope is shattered into pieces mercilessly. The vandalized camera can be interpreted also in terms of a collapse of that very era to which Rehmat belonged. The current times belong to Minnie who uses her camera—a symbol of the modern age against which the movie is set to tell real stories of people across borders, culture and religion. It is up to Minnie now to reconcile Rehmat to whatever modicum of sanity can be achieved at his age.

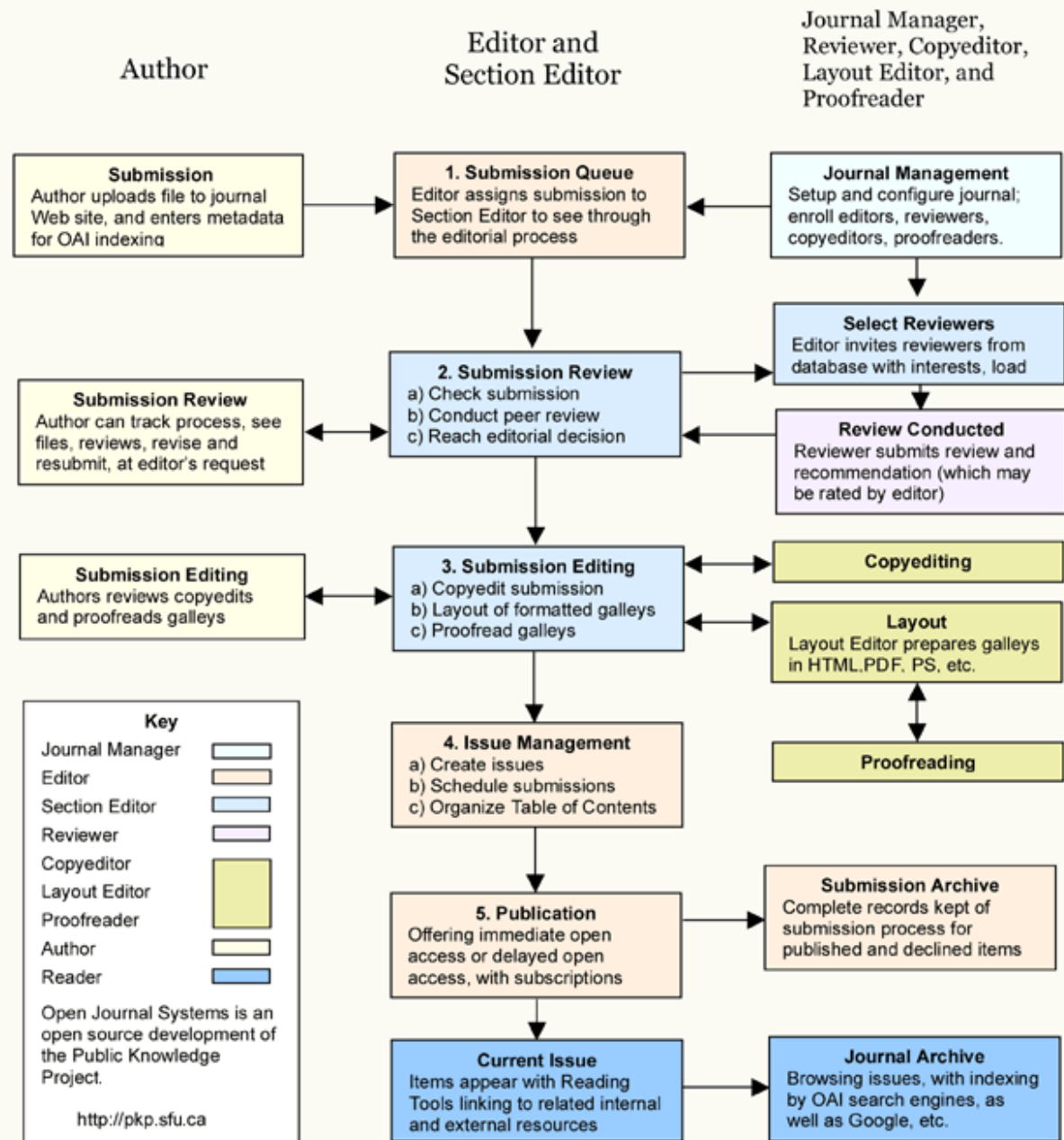
Despite being a commercial failure, “Bioscopewala” shouldn’t be discarded entirely as it evokes emotions most *masala* movies fail to address and portray in a sensible and sensitive manner. It is brilliant not only in terms of storytelling but also in terms of its captivating cinematography. For any cinephile advocating for quality over quantity “Bioscopewala” is bound to be a one of a kind experience. It upholds the integral values of Tagore’s writing both in terms of characterization as well as evocation of humane emotions and feelings.

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