

EMERGING PRACTICES IN LANGUAGE, LITERATURE & SOFT SKILLS

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Emerging Practices in Language, Literature & Soft Skills

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Preface

In an era marked by rapid technological advancements, evolving communication paradigms, and the growing interdependence of global societies, the domains of language, literature, and soft skills are experiencing profound transformations. Language continues to be a powerful medium of shaping human experience, culture, and identity. At the same time, literature remains a reflective space where socio-political, psychological, and philosophical narratives are interrogated and reimaged. In today's knowledge economy, soft skills—ranging from communication and emotional intelligence to adaptability and teamwork—have become essential for personal growth and professional success. This convergence of linguistic competence, literary sensibility, and interpersonal effectiveness represents a holistic vision for education in the 21st century.

The chapters selected for inclusion in this volume reflect the thematic diversity and academic rigor. They span a wide array of topics, including but not limited to: digital humanities, indigenous narratives, eco-criticism, translation studies, gender perspectives, employability skills, cross-cultural communication, and the integration of technology in language teaching. Each contribution adds a unique voice to the ongoing conversation on how we engage with texts, technologies, and each other in increasingly complex and mediated environments. We believe that the ideas and insights presented here will inspire future research, enrich classroom practices, and contribute meaningfully to policy discussions in higher education and professional development.

We wish to thank our contributors, not only for waiting patiently throughout the process but also for making this book possible. We also extend my heartfelt gratitude to Natal's Publication for their unwavering support and commitment in bringing this work to fruition.

Editors Bio

Dr. K. Shaheen is currently working as an Assistant Professor at Madanapalle Institute of Technology & Science, Madanapalle. She is a distinguished author, editor, and generous patron. In recognition of her outstanding contributions to literature and education, she has been honoured with the Inspiring Teacher of English Award, the Eklavya Literary Award, both conferred by the Eklavya Literary Research Foundation and Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan National Pratibha Award 2025 presented by the Southern Lecturers Teachers Organisation. She obtained her M.A. from S.V. University Tirupathi and Ph.D. from Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University Anantapur. She has 14+ years of teaching experience. She has qualified UGC NET, Telangana State Eligibility Test (TSSET), Andhra Pradesh State Eligibility Test (APSET) and also Andhra Pradesh Teacher Eligibility Test (APTET) underscoring her academic credibility and dedication to scholarly rigor. She has presented many research papers in National and International Conferences, Seminars and published a number of research papers in National and International Journals including Scopus, and UGC Care list etc. She published edited books of international repute and also serving as an editor and reviewer for many national and international peer-reviewed journals. She filed and published thirteen patents and also published twelve book chapters. She is Editorial Member of Q1 Scopus Journal of English Language, Sciedu Press. She is known for her innovative and student-centric teaching methods; Dr. Shaheen has consistently inspired learners to engage deeply with literature and language. Her research interests include British Literature, Indian writing in English, Feminism and Gender studies, with a special emphasis on human relationships.

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Table of Contents

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Author (s)</i>	<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page No.</i>
1.	Dr. Monika Duggal	Engineering Empathy: A Comparative Study of Technical vs. Interdisciplinary Classrooms through Literary Narratives	1-11
2.	Dr. Amit Yograj Kapoor	Digital Humanities: Transforming the Literary Landscape	12-20
3.	Dr. Twinkle Dasari	The Spectrum of Marginalization: Interpreting Transgender Experiences in India through the lens of Kalki's 'We Are Not The Others'	21-30
4.	Gayathri B	From Silence to the Second Bloom: Menopause, Bodily Autonomy, and Liberation in Alice Walker's <i>The Color Purple</i>	31-38
5.	K. Jyothi Rani	Tools and Techniques for Students' Engagement	39-43
6.	Kritika	Home, Hearts and Healing: Understanding Emotional Growth through Realistic Fiction for Children	44-50
7.	Sikha Nandakumar	"This Barbie Is Not Real": Greta Gerwig's Barbie as Post Modern Performance and Consumer Myth	51-57
8.	Yashavantha M P	Films and Literature: A Symbiotic Cultural Dialogue	58-63
9.	Harsha.V ¹ , Dr. M.N.V. Preya ²	The Unspoken and the Unseen: A Multimodal Analysis of Emotional Subtext in Cross-Cultural Short Fiction	64-70
10.	Pooja S Ajith	Mystery of the East: Echoes of Orientalism in Selected Short Stories by Agatha Christie	71-78
11.	Dechen Wangmo	Eco Literature as a Pedagogical Tool: Bridging Language, Ethics, and Empathy	79-90

12.	S. Mubeena Tabassum	The Vision of Gender Identity in Githa Hariharan's novel The Thousand Faces of Night and Anita Nair's Ladies Coupe	91-99
13.	Chitra V R	A Comparative Study of the Representation of Trauma and Suicide in the Malayalam movies Kadhavasheshan and Utharam	100-107
14.	Dr. Kapila Vishwasrao Mhaisane	Voices of Resistance: The Evolution of Feminist Thought in Literature	108-115
15.	Sini K A ¹ , Dr. P. Suria Thilagam ²	Grammar and Vocabulary Accuracy in Spoken English Among Regional Language Higher Secondary Students: A Theoretical and Empirical Study	116-127
16.	Indrani Sengupta	Colonial Legacies and the Silencing of Storytellers: Indigenous Literary Forms and the Human Rights Gap	128-139
17.	Usharani ¹ , Dr. P. Suria Thilagam ²	Alienation and Identity Crisis in William Gibson's <i>Neuromancer</i> : A Cyberpunk Exploration of the Posthuman Self	140-148
18.	Dr. R. Abeetha ¹ , Dr. A. A. Jayashree Prabhakar ²	Unveiling the Shadows: The Mystery of Dual Identity in Stevenson's <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	149-157
19.	A. H. Parvin	Sweetness and Subjugation: Gendered Labour, Patriarchal Economy, and The Exploitation of Women's Bodies in Saudagar (1973)	158-172
20.	Dr. Nareshkumar A. Parmar	Unveiling Cultural Traditions and Moral Wisdom: A Deep Dive into Sudha Murthy's Children's Short Stories	173-182
21.	Garima Oberoi	Gender, Memory and The Spatial Legacies of Slavery: A Digital Humanities Approach to Yaa Gyasi's Homegoing and Solomon Northup's 12 Years A Slave	183-193

22.	Bharath G C	Indian English Detective Fiction: Themes, Evolution, and Cultural Contexts	194-197
23.	Dr. Yagani Haribabu	Language Skills -Centered Education	198-203
24.	Dr. K. Shaheen	AI and Soft Skills Integration in Business Communication: A Strategic Perspective	204-210
25.	Dr. P. Basheer Khan	Bridging the Gap Between Academia and Industry: English Language Teaching as a Tool for Employability Enhancement	211-220

ENGINEERING EMPATHY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TECHNICAL VS. INTERDISCIPLINARY CLASSROOMS THROUGH LITERARY NARRATIVES

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Abstract

This study investigates how literary tales help students in technical and transdisciplinary settings develop empathy. Interdisciplinary settings use the humanities to foster emotional intelligence and critical thinking, whereas technical education frequently prioritizes reason, objectivity, and skill-based results. This study examines the effects of literature-based interventions on students' reflective thinking, ethical awareness, and empathy in both learning environments. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating textual analysis, classroom observations, and surveys conducted before and after the intervention. Over a semester, a few chosen stories from a variety of literary genres were included in the course modules. The results show that compared to their peers in technical-only settings, students in multidisciplinary courses had noticeably greater progress in sympathetic thinking and perspective-taking. However, when the literary readings were supplemented by contextual analysis and guided discussions, technical students demonstrated quantifiable gains. In order to humanize engineering education and encourage socially conscious learning, the article makes the case for incorporating narrative-based

pedagogy into the technical curriculum. This study offers useful tactics for teachers to close the gap between STEM and the humanities and adds to the expanding conversation on empathy as a teaching objective.

Keywords: Empathy, Literary Narratives, Interdisciplinary Education, Technical Classrooms, Narrative Pedagogy

1. Introduction

Empathy is becoming more widely acknowledged in the field of education as an essential element of whole student development. Building emotional intelligence, encouraging moral behavior, and improving interpersonal communication all depend on empathy, which is the capacity to comprehend and experience another person's emotions. Emotional intelligence, of which empathy is a fundamental component, has long been stressed by educational theorists and psychologists like Daniel Goleman as being just as important for both personal and professional success as cognitive skills (Goleman 43). But even with this acknowledgment, technical and engineering education frequently places too little emphasis on empathy as the major goals are to foster critical thinking, accuracy, and problem-solving skills.

A significant gap in technical education is caused by this mismatch; although students may graduate with excellent technical proficiency, they may not have the social and emotional skills necessary to handle obstacles in the real world. Lack of emotional training, according to academics, might result in a mechanistic education that is disengaged from the human contexts in which technology functions (Nussbaum 95). One method to reduce this gap is through the incorporation of humanities, especially through narrative genres like literature. Readers are inspired to engage in perspective-taking, moral reasoning, and emotional contemplation by the complex human experiences that are presented in literary storytelling. Literature "cultivates humanity" by enabling pupils to see the lives of others and nurture empathy and ethical consciousness, claims Martha C. Nussbaum (Nussbaum 29). This strategy is

consistent with narrative pedagogy, which holds that stories are effective teaching instruments that have the capacity to alter students' emotional and cognitive perceptions (Charon 862).

The aim of this study is to investigate descriptively how students' development of empathy in technical and transdisciplinary educational contexts is impacted by the incorporation of literary tales. Technical education frequently ignores the emotional and ethical aspects of learning, even though it has historically placed a strong emphasis on cognitive abilities, reasoning, and problem-solving. Through the use of chosen literary texts and facilitated discussions, this study seeks to monitor and record the effects of narrative-based classroom interventions on students' capacity for understanding diverse viewpoints, reflective thinking, and emotional engagement. The study aims to give educators useful insights on the function of storytelling as a humanizing force in education by emphasizing reflective diary entries, group interactions, and natural classroom behaviors. Finding out how narrative pedagogy might aid in bridging the emotional gap in STEM education and producing more socially conscious, sympathetic graduates across academic fields is the ultimate objective.

2. Literature Review

In order to create inclusive, emotionally intelligent learning environments, empathy is essential. It improves pupils' comprehension of other people's thoughts and feelings, which is an essential ability for moral reasoning and social cohesiveness. In her work on the ethics of care, Nel Noddings argues that relational responsiveness should be the main focus of education, with instructors serving as role models for empathy and building trust in learning communities (Noddings 22). Deeper participation is encouraged in classrooms with empathy, especially when students are exposed to a variety of various environments and worldviews. Zembylas goes on to

say that when emotional literacy and empathy are combined, it develops students' ability to face prejudices and have meaningful conversations, which promotes critical democratic citizenship (Zembylas 47). Based on learner-centered theory, narrative pedagogy provides a potent method for fostering empathy. According to Jerome Bruner, narrative cognition is a basic way of seeing the world that encourages moral reflection and emotional understanding (Bruner 13). Students who interact with stories do more than just take in facts; they also explore alternate realms and lived experiences. By encouraging readers to "imagine the world as if it could be otherwise," Maxine Greene highlighted that literature stimulates moral imagination, a process necessary for moral and sympathetic participation (Greene 39). These teaching strategies are not just found in the humanities; in technical education as well, tales can elicit critical thinking about human values and professional ethics (Charon 1899).

The teaching philosophies and results of technical and multidisciplinary classrooms are very different. Technical education frequently ignores the emotional and ethical aspects of learning in favor of problem-solving, standardization, and objective evaluation. Although technical skills are important, Crawley et al. contend that they are not enough to prepare students for the intricate social duties of their careers (Crawley et al. 41). Interdisciplinary education, on the other hand, integrates the humanities and pushes students to view difficult, morally charged topics from a variety of angles. According to Repko and Szostak, interdisciplinary approaches foster integrative thinking, empathy, and uncertainty management skills—qualities essential for overcoming obstacles in the real world (Repko and Szostak 16). Student involvement reflects these variations, with multidisciplinary learners frequently demonstrating a greater level of comfort with emotionally nuanced and introspective debates. Additionally, Wilhelm's classroom-based research demonstrates that teenagers who are immersed in narrative reading develop greater empathy and self-awareness, particularly when reflective journaling and peer discussion are

incorporated (Wilhelm 35). These conclusions are supported by research showing that guided literary analysis raises students' awareness of ethical complexity and minority viewpoints in teacher education and health science settings.

Reader-Response Theory and Transformative Learning Theory serve as the foundation for this study's conceptual framework. According to Rosenblatt's Reader-Response Theory, reading is an emotionally charged activity in which meaning is actively created rather than passively received (Rosenblatt 137). This is consistent with the study's use of group discussions and reflective notebooks to learn how students internalize narrative experiences. According to Jack Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory, learners experience profound changes in perspective when they are faced with perplexing problems that contradict their fundamental beliefs (Mezirow 7). Narratives that portray moral ambiguity or human suffering might function as such challenges, encouraging students to reconsider their beliefs and develop greater empathy. When combined, these theories provide a strong framework for examining the effects of narrative-based instruction on students' ethical and emotional growth in both technical and multidisciplinary settings.

3. Research questions

- How does exposure to literary narratives affect the development of empathy in students within technical and interdisciplinary classrooms?
- What differences in empathetic engagement can be observed between students in technical education and those in interdisciplinary programs?
- How do guided discussions enhance the emotional and ethical impact of literary texts on technical students?

4. Research Methodology

To investigate how literary tales affect the growth of empathy in two different educational contexts—technical classes and multidisciplinary classrooms—the study

used a descriptive qualitative research approach. These settings were chosen to illustrate two opposing instructional philosophies: one that is based on developing technical skills and the other that incorporates humanistic components. In order to comprehend how students interacted emotionally and thoughtfully with the narrative content offered during the semester, the emphasis was on gathering naturalistic data without the use of experimental manipulation.

Undergraduate engineering students as well as those studying multidisciplinary courses that blended technical and humanities areas were among the participants. Students who were enrolled in classes that permitted the incorporation of literature-based treatments were chosen. In order to observe emotional reactions across ethnic and academic backgrounds, demographic variety was guaranteed. Three main methods were used to gather data: group discussions, reflective journals, and classroom observations. Nonverbal clues, student involvement, and emotional reactions during literary sessions were the main areas of observation. Group conversations promoted shared interpretation and group reflection on narrative themes, while reflective notebooks offered insights into students' inner workings.

The intervention lasted for a whole academic semester, with weekly sessions incorporating chosen literary readings into the curriculum. These books were selected for their depth of emotion and morality, and in order to increase participation, they were complemented by facilitated discussions. By guaranteeing free participation, preserving anonymity in journal analysis, and fostering an accepting classroom environment to promote candid emotional expression, ethical issues were meticulously taken care of.

5. Results and Descriptive Findings

Student engagement with literary texts varied significantly between the two classroom environments, according to observational data. During readings and discussions in interdisciplinary courses, students often kept eye contact, offered

perspectives, and displayed open body language. They showed a natural tendency for empathic interpretation in their spontaneous and emotionally expressive answers. In contrast, students in technical classrooms showed little emotional commitment and a hesitancy to participate at first, approaching the narratives with a task-oriented perspective. Subtle effects did, however, start to manifest by the middle of the intervention; technical students started paying attention, asking questions, and participating more freely in group discussions. These results support Noddings' claim that when relational trust is built between instructor and student, sympathetic learning settings promote meaningful involvement (Noddings 23). The following recurrent themes emerged from the rich qualitative data produced by reflective diary entries and group discussions: internal ethical conflict, emotional self-awareness, acknowledgment of underrepresented voices, and an increasing understanding of human diversity. These observations are consistent with Wilhelm's research, which showed that adolescents who were exposed to narrative texts showed a greater capacity for emotional comprehension (Wilhelm 38). One recurring issue was the awareness of emotional repression in the workplace; engineering students frequently mentioned that they had never studied literature in school and expressed surprise at their own emotional reactions. Contrarily, interdisciplinary students felt more at ease expressing their feelings and often connected personal experiences to more general societal problems like gender bias, injustice, or cultural norms.

Both the volume and caliber of sympathetic reactions highlighted the groups' inherent disparities. Students from interdisciplinary settings demonstrated cognitive and affective empathy—the capacity to comprehend and emotionally relate to the experiences of others—by absorbing perspectives with ease. They frequently used statements like "I felt her grief" or "I understand why he acted that way" in their discussion comments, which demonstrated an internalization of narrative perspective. This is consistent with Rosenblatt's transactional reading theory, which highlights

how individual context shapes meaning (Rosenblatt 138). Technical students, on the other hand, initially maintained their distance and concentrated on superficial analysis. But as time went on, their notebooks revealed a shift from critical summaries to deeply felt musings. One engineering student said, "This reminded me of when I neglected someone in college," after reading a story about social exclusion. I had no idea it could cause pain. These instances signal a change from emotional understanding to cognitive detachment.

One important element in this shift was the emergence of guided conversations. Students were able to relate abstract ethical quandaries to their personal and professional lives because to the facilitators' use of focused prompts in technical lectures to promote introspection and emotional expression. Charon's work in narrative medicine, where guided dialogue helps learners access moral imagination and empathy, supports the idea that these structured sessions helped students overcome their first uneasiness and gain emotional vocabulary (Charon 1899). As students started answering one other's interpretations, they practiced active listening and group meaning-making, which further strengthened the learning. Through these facilitated interventions, technical students' comprehension of empathy was successfully changed from an abstract idea to a practical and essential professional skill.

6. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that, even in technical education environments that are often skill-oriented, literary narratives can have a transforming effect on students' empathy. Instantaneous and persistent engagement with narrative texts was demonstrated by students in interdisciplinary classrooms, demonstrating naturally formed sympathetic insight. On the other hand, when given controlled talks and reflective exercises, technical students gradually and measurably showed emotional growth after initially exhibiting a more guarded response. This

development demonstrates that, although initial susceptibility to emotional information is influenced by disciplinary background, the ability to develop empathy is present across domains when properly fostered.

There are significant ramifications for technical education. The need for experts who can think about the human consequences of their work is expanding as engineering and technological sectors deal with more complicated societal issues, such as sustainability and AI ethics. However, technical proficiency is sometimes given precedence over emotional intelligence in traditional STEM programs, resulting in graduates who are highly skilled but emotionally unprepared. A way to bridge this gap is by including literary tales, which develops analytical abilities as well as moral consciousness and introspective thinking. This is in line with the larger educational movement toward holistic development, which aims to grow students into not merely problem-solvers but also compassionate decision-makers who can comprehend a range of human experiences.

It becomes clear that the teacher's involvement is essential to this change toward empathy. Teachers who actively promoted conversation, exhibited sympathetic interpretation, and promoted reflective inquiry established emotionally safe venues for students to examine moral complexity and vulnerability in both technical and multidisciplinary contexts. In addition to being subject matter specialists, teachers served as human experience mediators, assisting students in connecting literary discoveries to social and personal realities. This supports the idea that teaching empathy involves more than just information; it also involves the pedagogical relationship between the teacher and the student (Noddings 25).

There are drawbacks to incorporating literature into STEM education despite its advantages. Time restraints in densely packed curricula, institutional opposition to curriculum change, and the belief that literature is "non-essential" can all make implementation difficult. Furthermore, a lack of preparation or discomfort with non-

technical subject may make many technical educators feel unprepared to lead talks about emotions or ethics. These obstacles show that in order to advance narrative pedagogy as a valid and significant part of technical education, multidisciplinary cooperation, professional growth, and institutional support are required. If we want to equip STEM graduates to be compassionate, socially conscious members of society in addition to engineers and scientists, we must overcome these obstacles.

7. Conclusion

The study comes to the conclusion that, regardless of a student's academic field, literary narratives have a great deal of potential to help them develop empathy. Students from both technical and interdisciplinary classrooms showed varied but favorable levels of emotional and ethical development over the course of a semester-long intervention utilizing chosen literary texts. Technical students also shown quantifiable improvement when led through reflective discussions and assisted by careful facilitation, even though transdisciplinary students naturally had a propensity for empathic participation. In technical education, where emotional intelligence is sometimes undervalued, this study emphasizes the benefits of using narrative-based learning. Teachers may humanize STEM curricula and help create more morally conscious professionals by using stories that encourage moral reflection and perspective-taking. The teacher plays a critical part in this process since their capacity to promote candid communication and emotional security has a direct impact on students' readiness to tackle difficult subjects. The successful application of literary interventions in technical settings points to a potential future despite pedagogical and institutional obstacles. Promoting empathy in literature is not just a way to improve education; it is a vital step in developing socially conscious students who can comprehend and react to the human aspects of their work. This study makes a significant addition to the ongoing discussion on how the humanities will influence schooling in the future.

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DIGITAL HUMANITIES: TRANSFORMING THE LITERARY LANDSCAPE

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Abstract

The present article examines the significant influence of digital technologies on literary studies, emphasising the ways in which digital platforms and computational tools have changed the production, interpretation, and distribution of literature. The idea of distant reading, which uses computers to examine vast text collections and find patterns and trends that conventional close reading techniques would miss, lies at the heart of this shift. This method has produced fresh perspectives on the creation of genres, linguistic evolution, and cultural changes across time. Literary analysis has been further enhanced by the incorporation of data visualisation tools, which enable researchers to depict complex data using geolocation maps, network graphs, and heatmaps. These visual aids make it easier to examine topic developments, narrative frameworks, and emotional landscapes in literary works. Furthermore, the creation of novel tools and platforms has resulted from interdisciplinary partnerships among archivists, computer scientists, and literary scholars. The digital gap, data privacy issues, and the necessity of critical interaction with technological tools remain obstacles in the sector despite recent developments.

The article does, however, suggest that digital humanities present literary studies with revolutionary opportunities, promoting a more dynamic, inclusive, and data-driven approach to literary analysis in the digital era.

Keywords: Digital Humanities, Distant Reading, Digital Archives, Data Visualization, Semantic Analysis

1. Introduction

The multidisciplinary area of *Digital Humanities (DH)* combines digital technologies with conventional humanities disciplines including philosophy, linguistics, literature, and history to improve public involvement, education, and research. From digitising texts and artefacts to using computational techniques for analysis and interpretation, it covers a broad range of activities. The methodical application of digital resources in the humanities and the examination of their use are characteristics of *DH*. It includes teaching, publishing, and research that is cooperative, interdisciplinary, and computationally engaged. This method acknowledges that the written word is no longer the primary medium for knowledge generation and dissemination and introduces digital tools and methodologies to the study of the humanities. The field critically investigates the ways in which digital technologies affect culture and knowledge production, going beyond simply integrating technology into conventional humanities themes. While examining the effects of these technologies on society, *DH* researchers also look at how digital tools might change how we study and understand human culture.

2. Distant Reading: A Paradigm Shift in Literary Analysis

Franco Moretti first proposed the concept of *Distant Reading* in the early 2000s. By promoting the study of literature using statistical and computational techniques and emphasising broad trends rather than specific texts, distant reading marks a substantial shift from conventional literary analysis.

2.1. Defining Distant Reading: The goal of *Distant Reading* is to find broad trends, structures, and patterns in large text corpora that are not immediately visible through close reading. Scholars can examine how genres, themes, and literary forms have changed across time and space by using this method, which processes and visualizes data using computer tools. Moretti highlights that by reorienting the attention from personal interpretations to more general literary processes, this approach enables a more empirical and scientific understanding of literature.

2.2. Theoretical Foundations: Cultural analytics, evolutionary theory, and cognitive science are just a few of the fields that are incorporated into the theoretical foundations of distant reading. According to Fabio Ciotti, a strong framework for remote reading can be created by combining theories of cultural evolution with cognitive narratology. This will allow literary studies researchers to go beyond simple interpretation to explanation.

2.3. Integration with Close Reading: *Distant Reading* has drawbacks even if it provides a wide viewpoint. It might ignore the subtleties and complexity present in individual texts, according to critics. In order to overcome this, academics support a hybrid strategy that blends near and remote reading. A thorough analysis is made possible by this integrated methodology, in which broad trends found through remote reading can guide and improve the in-depth investigation of particular texts.

2.4. Enhanced Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Collaboration between specialists in disciplines like computer science and data science and literary academics is facilitated by the incorporation of computational tools.

This shift underscores the evolving nature of literary analysis in the digital age, highlighting the potential of computational approaches to enrich our understanding of literature.

3. Text Mining and Semantic Analysis

Text mining and semantic analysis have become essential techniques in the field of digital humanities (DH), allowing researchers to glean valuable insights from enormous textual data sets. By making it easier to find themes, patterns, and connections in texts, these computational methods are revolutionising literary analysis.

3.1. Text Mining: Unveiling Patterns in Textual Data: The practice of gleaning valuable information from unstructured text is known as text mining. It uses a variety of methods, including:

3.2 Word Frequency Analysis: Counting the occurrences of words to identify key themes. By using these techniques, researchers may quantify textual data and make it suitable for statistical analysis. To help with the analysis of big text corpora, Voyant Tools, for example, offers visualisations like word clouds and frequency distributions.

3.3. Word Embeddings: Algorithms such as Word2Vec and GloVe represent words in continuous vector spaces, capturing semantic similarities.

These techniques enable scholars to analyze the underlying themes and concepts within texts, providing a richer understanding of the material.

3.4. Applications in Digital Humanities: In literary studies, data visualisation is the process of analysing and interpreting literary texts using graphical representations like charts, graphs, and interactive maps. By using this method, academics can find patterns, connections, and trends in big corpora, leading to a better comprehension of the themes and structures of literature.

Addressing these challenges requires a balanced approach, combining computational methods with traditional scholarly expertise. Because they offer tools for analysing and interpreting vast amounts of text, text mining and semantic analysis

have completely transformed the field of digital humanities. Although these techniques provide valuable insights, it is crucial to use them carefully, taking into account both their limitations and the larger study context. These approaches will probably become even more crucial to humanities studies as technology develops further.

4. Digital Archives and Preservation

Documents, photographs, audio, video, and other multimedia items can all be found in digital archives. In the digital age, they are essential resources for conserving intellectual publications, historical documents, and cultural heritage. These archives guarantee that knowledge is both accessible and shielded from physical degradation by transforming tangible objects into digital versions. The tactics and measures used to preserve and safeguard digital assets throughout time are referred to as *digital preservation*. Because technology is changing so quickly, digital formats may become outdated and storage medium may deteriorate, which could result in data loss. By ensuring their long-term accessibility, digital materials can be preserved for use by future generations.

5. Data Visualization in Literary Studies

In literary studies, data visualisation is the process of analyzing and interpreting literary texts using graphical representations like charts, graphs, and interactive maps. By using this method, academics can find patterns, connections, and trends in big corpora, leading to a better comprehension of the themes and structures of literature.

5.1 Voyant Tools: A web-based, open-source program that offers a number of text analysis tools, such as keyword-in-context displays, frequency distribution charts, and word frequency lists. It facilitates academic reading and analysis of texts or corpora,

especially for researchers working in the field of digital humanities. Voyant Tools is frequently utilised in digital humanities study and has a sizable, global user base.

5.2. *ClioVis*: A visual aid that lets users make interactive timelines and story maps for study and education. Exploring literary works in their historical contexts is made easier by *Clio Vis*'s ability to visualise historical events and narratives.

5.3. *RAW Graphs*: An open-source program that lets users choose and alter pre-loaded designs, export finished visualizations, and enter data from CSV files. It is helpful for turning structured data into intricate visualisations that may be used for literary interpretation.

5.4. *Tableau*: An effective tool to use little or huge amounts of data to create dashboards and visualisations. It makes its downloadable software available to literary scholars interested in data visualization by providing a free academic version to students.

5.5. *Emotional Mapping*: Analyzing emotions and thematic aspects by mapping emotional tones across texts or locales. *The Emotions of London* project investigates how London's physical locations relate to how they are emotionally portrayed in 18th- and 19th-century English-language fiction.

6. Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Tools

The field of *Digital Humanities (DH)* flourishes when several academic fields come together to create cooperative projects that transcend conventional boundaries. By combining methods and viewpoints from disciplines including media studies, computer science, linguistics, literature, and history, this interdisciplinary approach broadens analytical horizons and enhances research.

6.1. *Cross-Sectoral Partnerships*: Collaborations between museums, libraries, archives, and academic institutions make it easier to share resources and knowledge.

One example of cross-sectoral involvement is the British Library's collaboration with Oxford and London universities.

6.2. *International Cooperation:* International collaborations increase DH projects' reach and influence. Aarhus University in Denmark and UK institutions have collaborated to build frameworks for analysing online data that has been stored.

6.3. *Interdisciplinary Teams:* Teams of historians, linguists, computer scientists, and designers, among others, frequently work on projects. A Swiss-Luxembourgish project called *Impresso* brings together historians, digital humanists, and computational linguists to examine old newspapers.

Challenges and Ethical Considerations

7.1. *Data Privacy and Consent:* A key consideration in digital humanities research is gaining informed consent, particularly when using personal information from online archives or social media. Participants must be informed about the use of their data and have the option to revoke consent at any moment, according to researchers. When working with publicly accessible data, this is especially difficult because it can be difficult to distinguish between private and public information.

7.2. *Bias and Fairness:* Algorithms and digital tools may unintentionally reinforce biases in the data they handle. Predictive models trained on historical data, for example, could produce distorted conclusions because they reflect prior biases. In order to ensure that a variety of viewpoints are represented and that their studies do not perpetuate preexisting preconceptions, researchers must critically evaluate their methods and work towards inclusion.

7.3. *Ownership and Access:* There are serious ethical conundrums when deciding who owns digital data and who can access it. Open access may violate the rights of people or groups whose data is being utilised, even while it encourages openness and

cooperation. These intricacies require researchers to strike a balance between the advantages of accessible data and the requirement to safeguard private information.

7.4. Transparency and Accountability: The underlying algorithms and data processing techniques of many digital humanities applications are *black boxes*, meaning that users cannot see what is going on. Inadvertent misunderstandings or the spread of mistakes may result from this lack of openness. Disclosure of methods, data sources, and tool constraints is a duty of researchers in order to maintain accountability and promote confidence in their conclusions.

7.5. Cultural Sensitivity and Digital Repatriation: Cultural artefact digitization brings up issues of representation and ownership. Communities may want control over how their heritage is portrayed online or object to the digital replication of holy items. Working with these communities, honouring their desires, and making sure that digital repatriation initiatives are carried out with tact and consent are all components of ethical digital humanities practices.

8. Conclusion

Through the introduction of new techniques, resources, and cooperative activities, digital humanities has significantly changed the literary environment. By means of interdisciplinary cooperation, digital archives, text mining, data visualisation, and remote reading, DH has broadened the scope of literary studies and allowed academics to interact with literature in novel ways. Even though there are still difficulties and moral dilemmas, DH's further advancement and use have enormous potential for the field of literary studies and academia.

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THE SPECTRUM OF MARGINALIZATION: INTERPRETING TRANSGENDER EXPERIENCES IN INDIA THROUGH THE LENS OF KALKI'S 'WE ARE NOT THE OTHERS'

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Abstract

The exploration of marginalization within literary studies occupies a pivotal position, offering insights into power dynamics, societal structures, and the narratives of individuals or groups relegated to society's margins. This field critically analyses how dominant societal forces marginalize certain communities based on factors such as race, gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, and disability, among others. Through the lens of literature, this field, illuminates marginalized groups overlooked voices and experiences, fostering understanding and visibility for these narratives often absent from the mainstream discourse. Transgender individuals often address as Hijras in India confront multifaceted marginalization stemming from deep-seated societal prejudices and systemic discrimination. Social stigma and discrimination permeate their lives, leading to exclusion from familial, educational, and employment spheres.

Despite legislative strides, legal protections for transgender rights often lack effective implementation, perpetuating disparities in healthcare access, education, and employment. Moreover, transgender individuals face heightened risks of violence, family rejection, and homelessness. Activists like Kalki Subramaniam champion advocacy efforts, striving to challenge societal norms and foster inclusivity. Addressing transgender marginalization necessitates comprehensive reforms spanning legal, educational, healthcare, and societal realms to promote equality and safeguard the rights of all gender identities. This paper investigates the societal marginalization faced by transgender individuals in India through a critical analysis of Kalki Subramaniam's seminal work, "We Are Not The Others: Reflections of a Transgender Artist."

Keywords: Gender, Transgender, Trans-activism, Transgender marginalization, Gender Equality

Introduction

Kalki Subramaniam, a prominent transgender activist, and artist, provides a poignant and insightful portrayal of the challenges, discrimination, and systemic injustices experienced by the transgender community in India. She was born as a boy Sabari in Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, India. Kalki has an MA in Journalism & Mass Communication and another in International Relations. Kalki is an entrepreneur, writer, actor, artist and motivational speaker rolled into one. Kalki became prominent for her advocacy work for the rights of transgender individuals in India. She is also known for her contributions to art and literature, often using her platform to raise awareness about the challenges faced by transgender people. In Tamil Nadu, Kalki Subramaniam initiated a non-profit organization - the Sahodari Foundation in 2008. This organization works for the social, economic, and political empowerment of transgender people. Through her foundation, she has been actively involved in various initiatives such as providing support services, advocating for policy changes, and

conducting awareness campaigns to fight discrimination and promote acceptance of transgender individuals in Indian society.

In addition to her activism, Kalki is also a talented artist and poet. She has showcased her artwork in numerous exhibitions and has published several collections of poetry that explore themes of identity, gender, and social justice. Kalki shares that poetry and art enrich her life by adding beauty, strength, and hope. For her, they are a therapy that heals her wounded heart and mind. She states, “I couldn’t have survived my tormented teenage years without them.” (Subramaniam 9) Kalki Subramaniam's work has garnered national and international recognition, and she continues to be a prominent voice for transgender rights in India. She has been featured in various media outlets, participated in conferences and panels, and received awards for her advocacy efforts.

Kalki’s book *We Are Not The Others: Reflections of a Transgender Artist* is a collection of poems, articles, illustrations, monologues, and some real conversations that have happened in her life. Here in this book, one can read Kalki’s original English poems as well as her translations from Tamil. Some of the poems were self-translations whereas many others were translated by N. Elango – Kalki’s great friend and mentor. It is a bundle of Kalki’s emotions of pain, anger, fury, distress, hope, and joy. Although this book is autobiographical, her intention behind writing it is not purely personal but political. She chose the medium of writing not just to let her voice be heard out but to let the voices of her community – transgenders, to be heard out. In her words, “You will hear their voices through me.” (Subramaniam 9) “I Speak because we need to be heard, I write because we need to be understood, I dare because we need to survive.” (Subramaniam 17) As Anil commented in her article, “Her poetry captures not just her own angst but that of other members of her community, who have been psychologically mauled by a callous society and left emotionally and mentally scarred for life.” Thus, this book strikingly moves the readers by touching

their hearts and taking them on a furious and empathetic journey into the personal lives of transgender people in India. As Laura Sherwood shares in the special notes for the book,

This book challenges the cis-privilege narrative, Kalki poetically weaves the complexities and struggles transgender people experience and pours her heart and soul into every page of this book, permitting the reader to grasp the anguish, anger, and injustices that transgender people endure in their daily lives. (Subramaniam 15)

By examining Subramaniam's narratives, this study delves into the multifaceted dimensions of marginalization, encompassing social, cultural, economic, and legal aspects. By employing a qualitative research approach, this paper explores the lived experiences and struggles of transgender individuals, shedding light on the entrenched prejudices, unfathomable atrocities, faced by this marginalized group. Furthermore, it examines Subramaniam's advocacy efforts and artistic expressions as powerful tools for social change, challenging societal norms and advocating for the rights and recognition of transgender individuals in India. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of transgender marginalization in India and to advocate for inclusive policies and social frameworks that promote equality, dignity, and acceptance of all gender identities.

Lived experiences and struggles of transgender individuals

Kalki penned intricate poems and essays that personifies the lived experiences and struggles of transgenders in different facets of their lives. In the poem *Ravens*, Kalki personifies the helplessness of a transgender kid who struggles with his gender identity and recognition. It looks like a simple poem, but it stresses the fact that humans are blind to the emotions of young transgender kids which are prominent for

even ravens to notice. The poem describes the trans boy - lonely, sad, sobbing, and wailing with his beautiful face buried in his palms, every time he comes to the park. The ravens sympathize with the boy who shares his food generously with them whenever he goes to the park. Ravens shares the turmoil of the boy by quoting him “Why me, why me?” (Subramaniam 131) This phrase alone speaks volumes about the young boy's suffering and anguish. The poem narrates how the young boy confesses to the ravens when no one is around.

When no one around
he spoke to the ravens,
“I feel this way
I tell this to you,
I don’t want
to be a man,
what can I do?” (Subramaniam, 133)

These lines depict the turmoil the young mind is under and his cowardice to share his feelings with any other human fearing rejection and punishment. They depict the confusion that the trans boy has been burdened with. Studies show that the agony and crisis the trans kids undergo are more dangerous than any crisis faced by cis kids. The results of Ankur Srivatsav’s study to examine whether health risks among youth differ by Gender Identity, emphasizes that transgender and non-binary youth are at higher risk of suicide attempt, depression and PTSD in comparison to their cisgender peers. The poem highlights such inner turbulence of a trans kid who wishes to declare his identity openly and freely.

Piece by Piece, another poem from the anthology, reflects on the lives of transgenders. Through this poem, Kalki wants to show the readers what it is to be a transgender. The poem shows how she stood strong in the face of ridicule and shame, and how she wrote her own script to success. The poem reveals how transgenders work all through their life to reclaim their honour, prove their dignity, and gain respect. Kalki shares towards the end of the poem that she fears no one anymore nor cries for anything. "She no more fears and doesn't do tears." (Subramaniam 81) Kalki ends the poem by bidding adieu to the boy in her and welcoming her new self. "Farewell to the boy who was she, Welcome to the joy for all new Me." Through these lines, she metaphorically says that all the struggles and anguish she faced till that point of time are linked to her identity as a 'boy'. Once she gets rid of her identity as a 'boy' she grows strong and is hoping for all joy. Thus, her new identity as a 'girl' or 'woman' is the source of her joy and happiness.

In India, transgender individuals have limited options for generating income. They often rely on three primary means of sustenance: begging, earning through performing at weddings or celebrations, known as "Dol-Badhai," and engaging in prostitution. ". . . social rejection leads to limited survival opportunities compelling them to indulge in occupations such as badhai, begging and sex work." (Kaur, 176) Of all the three professions sex work proves to be very dangerous for them. "Hijra who work as sex workers often face sexual harassments by forceful unprotected sex. The hijra sex workers were exploited by clients, mugged, and beaten by hooligans but never received any police support. They hardly reported any incidence to police because of fear of further harassments." (Khan, 446)

In her poem *Arise My Precious* Kalki addresses a transgender engaged in prostitution and revolutionizes her to break the clutches of prostitution and free herself. Kalki shares the struggles faced by transgenders in prostitution to the readers. She uses strong metaphors throughout the poem to portray their anguish and agony.

The opening lines “My Precious, were you driven to the street to be the vent for the perverts who search for strange gutters to duct their sperms?” (Subramaniam, 47) imply that the transgenders are not into prostitution of their own will and concern but are forcibly driven to as they were deprived of other means of livelihood. She refers to the men who come to have sex with the transgenders as ‘perverts’, ‘debauchees’, ‘morons’, and “agents of insults” (Subramaniam, 47,49, 50). She calls out for the transgenders to realize how pathetically they are being preyed upon to feed themselves. And ironically, they are feeding their flesh and body to those who mutilate and humiliate them through discrimination. She strongly criticizes them saying why should transgenders sell their body and honour and ‘live like a walking corpse’ just to earn a little money – which is a paper currency with ‘Father of Nation’ fixed on it. By referring to the father of the Nation, Kalki wants to stress the incapability and inability of even great personalities in helping and empowering transgenders in the country.

Kalki questions the transgenders engaged in prostitution “Did you become a woman for this?” and she urges them to ‘Arise!’ and ‘reveal your Kali-face’ (Subramaniam 50). Kali is the goddess of time and death according to Hindu Mythology and is known for coming to the rescue of virtue by slaying evil. She motivates them that a lot is waiting for them “to topple, battle, and get started in the world!” (Subramaniam 50) and encourages them to ‘metamorphose as Shakthi incarnate’ (Subramaniam 51). She asks them to look for men who don’t wait to devour their bodies and hurt their hearts but for those who genuinely search for bliss in their company and then search for a firm-rooted life. She also assures them that she too stands on the battlefield fighting a war against the stupidity of the cis-gendered society. Thus, Kalki shares that she is not preaching them for the sake of preaching, but she is saying what she does. She calls for the celebration of life, assures them not to fear, and invites them.

Entrenched Prejudices, Unfathomable Atrocities

If You Don't Mind is the opening poem of the book and it presents the prejudices of the public about transgender anatomy. It depicts the conversation between a transgender who is the speaker and a heterosexual male. They both address each other as friends. The man tries to ask his queries politely, but they are too evident of his queer curiosity. He sounds so polite when he asks, "If you don't mistake me shall I ask you a question?" (Subramaniam 19) But when the speaker encourages him to ask assuming something decent, he quickly asks "Are your breasts real?" (Subramaniam 19) for which the speaker remains silent awkwardly. But her friend continuously asks her prerogative questions like "Do you have a vagina? Does it look like a woman's?" (Subramaniam 21) Unable to bear his volley of prejudiced queries she in turn asks him in retaliation "Do you have a prick?" and intentionally she starts her poem with the comment that she hopes he didn't mind. While normative people may find it quite common or normal to ask such inquisitive questions to trans people, they find them rather upsetting and uncomfortable. According to Advocates for Trans equality, "Asking personal and intimate questions of transgender people can make them feel like they're being put on the spot, pressured to justify themselves, having their privacy invaded, or worse." ("Questionable Questions About Transgender Identity")

In another poem *Don't Tell That to Me*, Kalki lashes against bigotry and vents her distress. She vehemently repeats the phrase "I am tired of you telling me. . ." (Subramaniam, 31), throughout the first half of the poem. In this part of the poem, Kalki rejects the comments passed by cisgenders on her. She says she is tired of others telling her how she doesn't look like a transgender woman or look just like a real woman or how she is perfect except for her voice which could be more feminine. The second half of the poem intensely repeats the phrase "I am tired of you asking me . . ." (Subramaniam, 32) Kalki then lists how she is fed up with the unwanted curiosity

and sympathy that the heteronormative society tries to showcase. She is tired of their stares and whispers and probing questions about her family and gender identity. While curiosity and openness are instinctive, “it is important to consider what questions should and should not be asked of people in the trans community.” (Toseland) Kalki shares that she is even tired of the cultural role she is bestowed upon – “I am tired of you asking me to bless you.” (Subramaniam, 33) Towards the end of the poem Kalki addresses all those millions of others who are blinded by bigotry saying that she too is a human like them and that she was made of “flesh and blood, of fear and hope, of joy and pain.” (Subramaniam, 34)

In her poem “A Mutilated Vagina Called Eezham” Kalki grieves the agony and scars of her Tamil race. In this poem, Kalki draws a parallel between the atrocities inflicted upon transgenders by the society and the atrocities faced by Tamils during the Sri Lankan Civil War. She exhibits her proud Tamil patriotism in this poem. She uses her mutilated vagina as a motif to ‘Eezham’ - the area of Sri Lanka that the Tamil sovereignty movement considers as the homeland of the Tamil people. To establish her identity as a transgender woman Kalki went under the scalpel and shed blood and the scars on her vagina remain as her identity. Through this poem Kalki projects her identity as a Tamilian rather than as a trans person, by exhibiting her solidarity towards her sister in Eelam and her little ones who died in the riots. She wails for the loss of many Tamilians in Sri Lanka.

Conclusion

In conclusion, "The Spectrum of Marginalization: Interpreting Transgender Experiences in India through the Lens of Kalki's 'We Are Not The Others'" throws light on the complex challenges faced by the transgender community in India. Kalki Subramaniam's evocative narrative stands as a testament to the resilience and strength of transgender individuals facing systemic discrimination and social exclusion. Her

work highlights the tenacious necessity for comprehensive policy reforms and societal changes to promote inclusivity and equity. By bringing attention to the struggles and aspirations of the transgender community, Kalki's 'We Are Not The Others' amplifies marginalized voices and confronts prevailing prejudices, nurturing a deeper and more empathetic understanding of gender diversity in India.

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**FROM SILENCE TO THE SECOND BLOOM:
MENOPAUSE, BODILY AUTONOMY, AND
LIBERATION IN ALICE WALKER'S *THE COLOR
PURPLE***

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Abstract

The literary canon has largely overlooked menopause and the studies associated with it. Menopause was often deemed unworthy of discussion, but now women in academia and other fields are being vocal about it, highlighting the pressing need for greater awareness and understanding of menopause. There is a plethora of studies on Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982) that centre around themes of race, trauma and empowerment. However, the topics of bodily transitions and aging narratives remain overlooked. This paper seeks to attempt a careful reading of the character Celie, who is at the natural menopausal age towards the latter half of the novel. The paper tries not to project menopause onto the character of Celie but instead explores the possibility of re-imagining the narrative of her bodily changes as mirroring a shift towards menopause. From being portrayed as a reproductive vessel or object of abuse, Celie evolves into a character who demonstrates a marked

disinterest in men, channeling her rage which can be a potential reflection of the menopausal transition.

Keywords: Menopause, Resistance, Bodily autonomy, Lived experience, Rage

Introduction

The studies on and narratives surrounding menopause have been historically neglected. Women going through menopause were considered hysteric and were even pathologised, which reflects the extent to which the cultural narratives on women's bodily changes seem to be twisted instead of being studied and understood. Women themselves had been drawn to be dubious, finding it difficult to comprehend and understand this biological transition. Emily Martin in her *The Woman in the Body* (1987), has emphasised that there is an innate tendency to employ a language that pathologizes menopausal bodies, often framing the phenomenon as a process of failure even though other similar biological processes that affect both men and women are described with positive terminology (Martin qtd in Agee 75). She further claims menopause as "a contested terrain in which social inequalities and power relations are produced, reproduced and challenged" (75). It is to be noted that the so-called "classical" signs of menopause, such as hot flashes, night sweats, vaginal dryness, and memory loss, are not experienced by women equally. Some studies argued that Mayan women experienced little or no physiological change during menopause, and that the form of physiological changes that Greek women experienced is different from that of American women.

Menopause has been deemed unworthy of study due to societal constraints, which calls for an urgent need for an academic exploration. A study of menopause literature opens room for reimagining ageing and femininity. The physiological changes in women are studied, but there seems to be a lack of representation in the literature. Famila observed that a discourse on understanding menopause fosters

contemporary discussions leading towards the possibility of reframing misinterpretations and wrong narratives, thereby challenging societal taboos. It becomes significant to trace how menopause has been associated using certain cultural, social and symbolic meanings across literary texts. This angle of study will enable us to correct the historical absence of academic writing on women's menopause experiences.

Review of literature reveals that relevant studies have been done on the novel, which include key thematic analysis of race, trauma and empowerment. Research has been undertaken extensively from various other perspectives, such as feminism, but the themes of bodily changes and ageing narratives are yet to be explored. The present attempts a careful reading of the character Celie in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, who is at a natural menopausal age towards the latter half of the novel. The protagonist of the novel, Celie, is 14 years old at the beginning and is later married off to Albert, with whom she lives for decades. There is an episode in the novel when Nettie, Celie's sister, resurfaces through the recovery of her letters by Shug Avery, and Celie contains roughly 30 years of correspondence that had been hidden by Albert. Towards the end of the novel, the character Nettie returns along with Celie's grown children- Adam and Olivia, who are now adults, which also suggests a considerable year gap since Celie last met them as infants. Without any speculative stretch, the character can be roughly around 45-50 years by the end of the novel, which is the average menopausal age.

Discussion

Early in the novel, Celie is no less than a sexual object, bereft of agency. Even when Nettie pushes her to fight against the injustice inflicted upon her and gain an upper hand, Celie feels helpless and says, "But I don't know how to fight. All I know how to do is stay alive" (Walker 17). Celie's trauma recurs when she sees Albert tuck

his chin over the paper, which reminds her of her abusive Pa. Celie feels emotionally and physically numb when she faces domestic abuse, "It all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie, you a tree. That's how come I know trees fear man" (Walker 22).

Celie's silences and reticent nature are reflective of how the desire to pursue an illusory wholeness of selfhood could be suppressed by those who try to elide the mirror stage as posited by Jacques Lacan. The mirror stage, as explained by Lacan, proffers only an illusion of whole selfhood to the child. However, Lacan's view of the unattainability of whole selfhood takes a positive spin in *The Color Purple*. Daniel W. Ross observes that the novel endorses a different view in modern thought that such illusions of selfhood are not always destructive and can sometimes serve as safe spaces that eventually make room for one to find meaning and purpose in life (73). Through logical analysis, we are compelled to argue that we lack centring, but most of us choose to think of ourselves as leading significant and meaningful lives.

We can understand Celie, as a child who hasn't been able to undergo a normal passage through the mirror stage, is likely to be trapped in the initial stages of development (Ross 74). Ross argues that speech is one area of development that gets arrested with the elision of the mirror stage. Celie's inability to speak her mind and to find a listening audience for herself is suggestive of her retard (74). It is through and sparked by a network of female relationships, such as with Nettie, Sofia and most importantly with Shug Avery, that Celie begins to navigate her path towards independence. Celie is influenced by Sofia when she talks boldly about her past experiences with men, fighting her way through life, and how hard it is for a woman to be safe in a family of men. Sofia also points out how Celie reminds her of her mother, who was under her father's control and failed to stand up for herself.

Celie realises the power of words, which help her voice against male brutality, and eventually mould an identity of her own. The coherent use of language and the

development of aggressivity can be identified as the end of Lacan's mirror stage (Ross 79). Shug Avery plays a crucial role in Celie's realisation of the importance of speech. Her words are the guiding force for Celie to articulate her thoughts, as Elizabeth Fifer observes, "each piece of Shug's advice changes Celie's language and becomes part of Celie's progress" (Fifer qtd in Ross 79). It is with the help of Shug that Celie stops writing to God and instead writes to herself, awakening from her oppressive silence. Shug also validates her rage, which is discussed in the latter half of the study. Celie's aggressiveness takes shape in sinister forms as she develops her ego and even reaches a point of seeking revenge when she and Shug discover Nettie's letters that Albert has been hiding. After reading Nettie's letters, Shug tries to reassure Celie about whether she can handle it. Celie's response to this, "How I'm gon keep from killing him, I say" (Walker 144), reflects the betrayal of the stagnant rage.

Germaine Greer argues that we cannot expect the male-centred medical establishment to understand the changing shifts in menopause or to encourage women to express their rage or resentment in middle age, as such feelings are often deemed inappropriate for women (127). She claims that the antisocial behaviour of older women might be "an expression of justifiable rage too long stifled and unheard" (127). Her marked disengagement from the roles of a wife and mother aligns with the ideas put forward by Greer. Celie evolves into a woman who outlives her husband and children, defying societal standards and slipping into an identity that society considers an anomaly. Greer argues that there seems to be a dearth of literary critiques by women directed at men, even while the opposite holds for attacks on women by men. This discrepancy is to such an inexplicable extent that we are bound to think of women's rage, like women's sexuality, as "too vast and bottomless to be allowed any expression" (Greer 129). It is impossible to ignore the failure to channel women's anger and translate their hostility into a force for positive social change.

Celie's initial docility towards Albert and her reticent nature reveal the rage that simmers quietly. This internalised rage reflects how women carry the pain quietly as they age. This is emphasised when Celie states, "He beat me like he beat the children" (Walker 22). Over time, Celie gradually begins to assert herself; for instance, when Albert asks for water, she bangs the door shut behind her. Celie's paradigm shift from being in an emotionally dead space to an independent woman standing against the male brutality can be understood through the idea of the witch as conceptualised by Greer. Greer's perspective on the witch aligns perfectly with Celie's journey. In a pivotal moment, Celie decides to avenge Albert when she shaves for him, as she represents any women once released from their bondage to their fathers, husbands and sons after a lifetime of being told that they are unstable, unreliable, irrational creatures, should avenge themselves by making a principle out of instability and unreason, working through the superstition and credulity of beings weaker than themselves to positions of real power... (Greer 400) By imitating Sofia and dreaming of revenge against Albert, Celie starts to establish her dominance. Her repressed rage surfaces, and the emotional burden and exhaustion she carries manifest in her physical body. Celie loses all her voice by nightfall, and when she opens her mouth, "nothing come out but a little burp" (Walker 186). This seemingly little burp foreshadows the turning point of crisis – a menopausal rupture - that leads to her liberation.

Celie delves into the realm of witchcraft, propelled by a momentum that she has not generated. Her rage reaches its peak when Albert belittles her about her looks and talent and compares her to Shug upon hearing her plans to leave for Memphis with Shug-"You a lowdown dog is what's wrong, I say. ... And your dead body just the welcome mat I need" (Walker 199). She experiences an emotional "hot flash" of power when she utters "You better stop talking because all I'm telling you ain't coming just from me. Look like when I open my mouth the air rush in and shape words" (Walker 206). This is symbolic of a powerful menopausal energy, supported by an inexplicable force. From Greer's perspective, Celie's words begin to unleash deeper

rage, marking a phase of awakening and paving a path towards liberation. This rage fully manifests when Celie curses Albert, echoing Greer's concept of a witchy curse. Her long-unexpressed rage is finally hurled at Albert, "Until you do right by me, everything you touch will crumble... Until you do right by me, I say, everything you even dream about will fail. ... The jail you plan for me is the one in which you will rot" (Walker 206).

The enunciation of this curse marks a ceremonial point in the novel in which Celie completely detaches herself from Albert. This curse arises from years of enduring abuse, betrayal and maternal loss. This moment of intense outburst signifies the climactic release of menopausal rage, which is an emotional, hormonal culmination of years of feeling silenced. She embraces the age-old tradition of witchcraft in her middle age, a time after she has ceased being sexually used but before she becomes independent. This reinforces the connection between rage, liberation and bodily autonomy. Celie experiences a profound assertion shaped by her lived experiences, bodily transitions and feminine wisdom as she reclaims the power that once rendered her invisible: "I'm pore, I'm black, I may be ugly and can't cook... But I'm here" (Walker 207). This echoes Greer's idea that an older woman, who has come to realise her perceived irrelevance in the world of men, can become radically self-sufficient and turn into a threat to the very system that depends on her submissiveness. After this confrontation, she finds peace as she begins to live on her terms. Her transition into menopause attains a spiritual level when she starts to embrace solitude, sisterhood, and creation. Celie's rage is not erased but transformed into making pants, writing letters, and loving other women.

Conclusion

Celie finds liberation when she decides to embrace life as it is, and no longer bears the burden of being subservient to Albert or her family. Shug and Celie start to

give each other emotional support, and Shug encourages Celie to pursue her artistic sewing endeavors. Their friendship blooms into a deep, sisterly bond which, as Greer observes, might be “less interesting to a modern mind but more durable and hardly less deep than the passionate attachments of younger women” (433). Celie's creative endeavour of sewing pants becomes a feminist act, subverting gender roles. Celie's transformation is highlighted by her love for Chinese food and the encouraging fortune cookies she receives. As Celie embraces her newfound freedom, the element of liberation is evident in her journey, which is consistent with Greer's redefinition of menopause. She also refutes Greer's argument that post-menopausal women are often misrepresented as irrelevant, as her life becomes economically and emotionally empowering, and rooted in sisterhood. Shug catalyses Celie's self-exploration and reclamation of her body, culminating in her assertion to Albert that they were never truly husband and wife.

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TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

‘Education’ doesn’t just include teaching. It is complete if teaching is complemented by learning. It is only possible if the teacher is capable enough to engage the students in the class. Scientifically it’s proven that when students are motivated and engaged, their brains release dopamine, which enhances attention, memory. This means motivation engages the brain for learning! With the shift in the teaching learning pattern to technology based, the situation is more demanding to keep the students connected with the teacher throughout the class. Increased engagement of students reaps good educational experiences. When the students are motivated and involved in the class, they perform better and they also do good in the real-world situations. They are prepared to face any kind of challenge they encounter. The students develop critical thinking; problem solving skills and collaborate well with the fellow people.

Keywords: Education, Critical thinking, Problem solving, Motivation, Engagement

Introduction

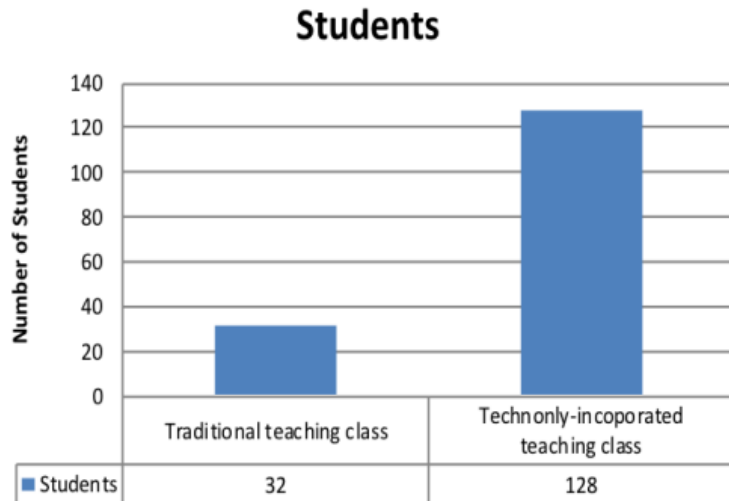
When students are made partners in the teaching – learning process, they grasp more content than being passive listeners in a teacher dominant class. Every facilitator would want their classes to be lively and interactive. Student engagement also

supports lifelong learning. Engaged students cultivate habits that contribute to their personal and professional success beyond the classroom. The prime responsibility of a teacher to raise the inquisitiveness of students and to do so the teacher must make use of simple techniques. Educators should prioritize strategies that promote student-centered learning and holistic development. A study found that active interaction and modular organization of content significantly influenced student engagement.

Online Tools and AI Enabled Platform

Amidst the plethora of advice on using technology to engage students, a crucial point often goes unmentioned: the focus should be on engaging students with technology, not merely relying on the allure of technology. The wise usage of technology can ease out the pressure of teachers and contribute to the growth of students. A few tools have been mentioned -

- Gamification – Use of the terminology and the pattern of games like the levels, hurdles, badges etc motivates the students to finish the task
- Google Classroom – Helps in creating and assigning differential worksheets as per the learning needs of the students. Personalised feedback system helps students to improve
- PowerPoint Add-ins – Creating presentations with animations and videos helps to get the attention of the student, as a result the students grasp things better.
- Interactive Platforms – Making lessons more engaging with tools like Mentimeter, Padlet, White boards etc
- Visual Display – Using graphs, images enhance understanding and retention



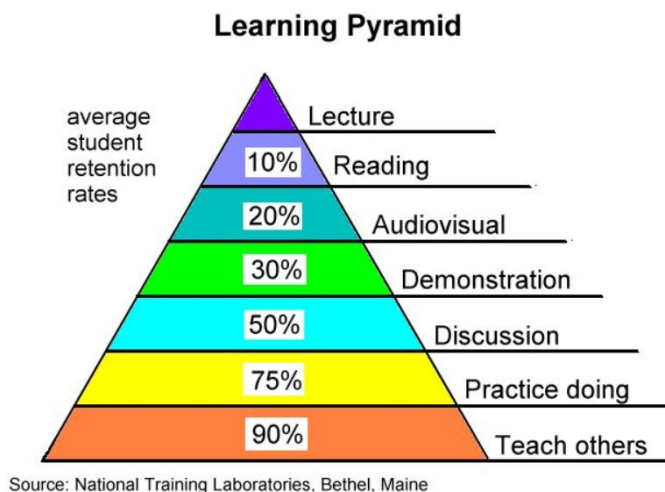
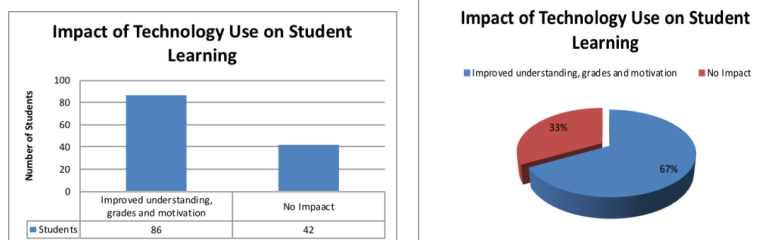
Techniques and Strategies

- Collaborative learning – Planning group discussions and projects develops the students’ skill of working in a team
- Structured discussion – activities like THINK – PAIR, discussion in small groups engage and involve students in active learning.
- Open ended questions – Giving questions to promote critical thinking and problem solving
- Case studies: Specific cases or scenarios can be given to students to apply their knowledge to analyse and solve complex issues. This technique enhances their ability to think critically and make evidence-based decisions.
- Brain Breaks - Brain breaks are short pauses in instruction that optimize student engagement and cognitive performance by alleviating mental fatigue and enhancing overall well-being. This time gives students the opportunity to rest and recharge, enhancing concentration and lowering stress levels.

- Goal setting and Positive feedback –Making the students aware of the connection between the assignments and the learning goals and guiding them to reach them.

Surveys

Approximately two thirds of the students who took the survey indicated that their motivation, understanding and grades improved due to the incorporation of technology in teaching and learning science and other subjects. The remaining third were of the opinion that the inclusion of technology in teaching and learning made no difference inference in their understanding and performance, that is, it neither improved nor hindered them.



The pyramid shows the retention percentage of students in a classroom. This clearly reflects that when students are engaged actively their retention levels are high.

Conclusion

We can summarize that students learn well when they are engaged in the teaching learning process. The teacher should focus on engaging the students than keeping them busy. The teachers should be well equipped with the tools and techniques to fulfill their role as facilitators. Since the students spend their major time in the school, the teachers should be responsible for the development of the child. Learning can be a fun if the right tools and techniques are used and the students are engaged well.

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HOME, HEARTS AND HEALING: UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONAL GROWTH THROUGH REALISTIC FICTION FOR CHILDREN

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Abstract

Children's literature represents emotional journey of growing up young readers which offer them representation and reassurance. Various literature's including *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo, and *Ramona and Beezus* by Beverly Cleary are the acclaimed works having realistic fiction which involve emotional growth of children. Grief, loneliness and familial shifts are shown in these literatures through various childhood experiences like losing a friend, bonding with pets, or navigating sibling tension during the process of emotional growth of the children. Present study explores how children analyse the situation, attach their emotional feelings, build their inner strength and become emotionally strong to overcome adversaries. Real fiction stories help young readers to develop meaningful relationships with friends, family and community and consequently they emotionally attach with them. Grounded in realism

and emotional truth, these texts illuminate how healing is embedded not in fantasy, but in the everyday bonds and spaces children inhabit.

Keywords: Emotional Growth, Realistic Fiction, Childhood, Resilience, Children's Literature.

Introduction

Children's Literature has long reflected the social, emotional, and psychological world of young readers. Among its many genres, realistic fiction stands out for its ability to mirror real-life experiences, emotions and dilemmas. In a world where children are increasingly exposed to complexities and challenges, literature becomes a safe for exploration and understanding. Stories grounded in realism help children comprehend and process their own feelings, enabling them to recognise that they are not alone in their struggles.

The aim of this paper is to explore how emotional growth is portrayed through realistic fiction in children's literature. It examines how literature serves as a medium through which children understand grief, develop resilience, and form strong emotional connections. By focusing on there popular novels- *Bridge to Terabithia*, *Because of Winn-Dixie*, and *Ramona and Beezus*- this study delves into the representation of emotional challenges and the subtle ways through which characters model emotional intelligence. The texts are not only literary works but tools for guiding readers through personal development, especially during formative years.

Literature Review

Several scholars have emphasised the psychological and emotional significance of children's literature. Perry Nodelman, in *The Hidden Adult*, argues that children's books are layered with meanings that support emotional and moral development, often addressing issues that young readers cannot yet verbalize. Maria

Nikolajeva also notes that young readers offer a nuanced exploration of power, voice and subjectivity, all of which are essential to emotional identity.

Realistic fiction, in particular, has been praised for its pedagogical and therapeutic value. These stories usually involve characters facing real-world problems- death, loneliness, sibling rivalry or friendship issues. By witnessing these experiences through literature, children learn coping mechanisms in a non-threatening environment. The novels selected for this paper are well-regarded not only for their storytelling but also for their psychological depth.

Previous research suggests that literature can play a critical role in shaping children's emotional responses and attitudes. Literature circles, storytelling and guided discussions around realistic fiction have shown to increase empathy, communication skills, and emotional intelligence. Therefore, this paper draws from both literary analysis and psychological studies to evaluate how the chosen texts promote emotional growth.

Methodology

The present study is a qualitative literary analysis focusing on thematic and character development in these novels: *Bridge to Terabithia*, *Because of Winn-Dixie*, and *Ramona and Beezus*. Each text was analysed to identify recurring emotional themes such as grief, loneliness, family dynamics and resilience. The character arcs were closely examined to observe how the protagonists evolve emotionally throughout the story. This comparative approach highlights not only individual growth but also common patterns in realistic fiction aimed at young readers.

Analysis

Grief and Healing in *Bridge to Terabithia*

In *Bridge to Terabithia*, Jesse Aarons experiences profound emotional transformation after the death of his best friend Leslie. Initially, Jesse is portrayed as a lonely boy with limited emotional expression, confined within a conservative rural community. The magical kingdom they create, Terabithia, serves as a symbolic space for freedom and emotional exploration. Leslie's sudden death shatters Jesse's world, thrusting him into a cycle of denial, anger and guilt.

The novel portrays grief in its rawest form, but it also emphasises healing. Jesse eventually returns to Terabithia, not to forget Leslie, but to honour her memory and pass on her legacy to his younger sister. Through this journey, the novel teaches that grief is a personal process, yet emotional growth comes from acceptance, remembrance and new connections.

Loneliness and companionship in *Because of Winn-Dixie*

Kate DiCamillo's *Because of Winn-Dixie* introduces us to Opal, a young girl dealing with the absence of her mother and a distant relationship with her father. Her encounter with a stray dog, Winn-Dixie, marks the beginning of her emotional transformation. Through this canine companion, Opal learns the values of empathy, forgiveness and social interaction. The novel is rich in secondary characters, each carrying emotional wounds of their own. From Miss Franny Block to Otis and Glory Dump, Opal gradually builds a supportive network, learning that everyone has hidden sorrows. The emotional growth depicted here is incremental but deeply impactful. Opal's ability to empathise with others enhances her understanding of herself and brings her closer to her father. This story beautifully demonstrates how emotional healing can stem from unexpected relationships and mutual understanding.

Family Dynamics in Ramona and Beezus

Beverly Cleary's *Ramona and Beezus* may seem light-hearted at first glance, but beneath the humour lies a deep exploration of sibling rivalry and family bonds. Ramona, with her impulsive actions and vivid imagination, constantly tests her older sister Beezus's patience. Yet, these interactions are crucial to their emotional development. The novel emphasises that conflict within a family, especially among siblings, is a natural part of growing up. Ramona and Beezus learn to navigate their differences, and through small moments of care and cooperation, their bond strengthens. The emotional growth here lies in learning to understand the perspectives of others and building tolerance. The realistic portrayal of family life allows readers to relate and reflect on their own family experiences.

Implications for Educators and Parents

Educators and parents can utilize these novels as tools for discussing complex emotions. Realistic fiction can act as a catalyst for conversations about feelings that children may struggle to articulate. In classrooms, these stories can be incorporated into activities such as reflective journaling, role-playing, or group discussions, encouraging students to express and manage their emotions effectively. Furthermore, reading these stories aloud or discussing them in family settings can help adults understand the emotional world of children better. Books like these create opportunities for bonding and emotional learning that go beyond the pages of the story.

Conclusion

Realistic fiction in children's literature serves a significant role in the emotional development of young readers. The three novels explored in this paper—*Bridge to Terabithia*, *Because of Winn-Dixie*, and *Ramona and Beezus*—highlight how children encounter, process, and emerge from emotional challenges. These stories

offer more than escapism; they serve as blueprints for resilience, empathy and inner strength. By engaging with such literature, children are not just entertained-they are emotionally educated.

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“THIS BARBIE IS NOT REAL”: *BARBIE* AS POSTMODERN PERFORMANCE AND CONSUMER MYTH

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Abstract

Greta Gerwig's *Barbie* (2023) dramatizes the postmodern condition by reimagining an iconic toy as a vehicle of philosophical and cultural inquiry. This paper examines *Barbie* through Jean Baudrillard's concepts of simulacra, arguing that the film is a multilayered consumer myth. The character of Barbie embodies a convergence of signs—beauty, femininity, liberation—that function independently of any referent. Rather than rejecting this myth, the film reflexively plays with it, highlighting how contemporary identity is constructed through layered performances. Barbie's disillusionment reveals the hollowness beneath the myth but also its enduring appeal. As a product that critiques itself while reinforcing its cultural power, *Barbie* becomes a self-aware simulacrum: a sign that knows it's a sign. The paper suggests that the film exemplifies postmodern performance in its inability to escape its own ideological frameworks, demonstrating how contemporary myths persist not by concealing the truth, but by aestheticizing their own artificiality.

Keywords: Postmodern myth, Performative identity, Self-aware simulacrum, Feminism, Fourth-stage simulation

Introduction

Greta Gerwig’s *Barbie* (2023) offers more than a playful reimagining of a classic doll—it stages a complex meditation on identity, representation, and consumer culture in the postmodern age. By blending satire, fantasy, and cultural critique, the film transforms the familiar figure of Barbie into a site of philosophical inquiry. Central to this transformation is the film’s engagement with Jean Baudrillard’s theory of simulacra, which suggests that in a hyper-mediated society, signs no longer refer to reality but to other signs in an endless loop of self-reference. In *Barbie*, this concept plays out through the character’s journey from a pristine symbol of femininity to a self-questioning figure caught within the layers of her own artifice. Rather than dismantling the Barbie myth, the film reveals its persistence and allure, even as it exposes its artificiality. The paper aims to explore how *Barbie* operates as a self-aware simulacrum—an image conscious of its own status as an image—illustrating how contemporary identity is not grounded in authenticity but in performative surfaces and commercial narratives that acknowledge their own fictions.

Ruth Handler, who was an executive partner at Mattel, came up with the concept for the Barbie doll. With her husband Elliot Handler as the designer and her coworker Matthew Maatson as the producer, she started working on the concept of making a lifelike doll for girls in 1945. The business began in the garage of the Handlers’ home and later grew create dollhouses, picture frames, and eventually five toys. When the television was invented, the market for toys shifted from being seasonal to being in demand all year round, and the company took off. Since its inception, the doll has been the site of criticism, both positive and negative, ranging from it being a reinforcement of the feminist view that women are equally capable to facing backlash for its lack of representation with regards to body types and skin

colours. The first edition of the doll received massive backlash for its hypersexualized portrayal of a doll aimed for a target audience that comprised primarily of young girls and preteens. From the time she was first created, Barbie was advertised as a doll with an actual human persona, under the name Barbara Millicent Roberts. Hannah Tulinski writes:

Although Barbie was placed at the height of fashion, her status and conception into American culture quickly revealed a multidimensional personality with emotions, careers, and interests, all constructed to personify the All-American girl...Her dead white skin became a more even tone after 1959 in her second, third, and fourth revisions, and her hairstyle changed to the iconic bubble cut in 1961, fit for a more general audience. (12)

Barbie's evolving skin tone, attire, and occupations over the years represented efforts to upgrade her personality while preserving her symbolic role of projecting idealized, performative representations of womanhood. Barbie is an ideal example of Baudrillard's theory that signs change independent of reality and eventually become simulacra, or copies without an original, because of her constant symbolism.

Barbie is set in a matriarchal society named Barbieland where the titular, stereotypical Barbie resides with other variants and Kens. In a reversal of tradition, the Kens spend their days playing at the beach while the Barbies are all women in executive positions, employed in a variety of fields such as medicine, business, law and politics. Barbieland firmly exists under the impression that they have managed to solve problems relating to gender inequality. The movie is centred around an existential crisis that Barbie experiences with regards to mortality. Overnight, she transforms from a pristine, flawless, cellulite-devoid plastic figurine into a figure that is overwhelmingly human with halitosis and flat feet that are no longer capable of

magically cramping itself into heels eternally. Barbie flees the only life and world she has ever known to step into actual society and for the first time, realises the folly of Barbieland's existence.

According to Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulation and simulacra, representations (simulacra) have replaced reality in modern society, resulting in a "hyperreal" where the lines separating the artificial from the real are either non-existent or blurred. In essence, signs and symbols have taken on greater significance than the genuine objects or experiences that they stand for, creating a world in which simulations come before and ultimately shape our perception of reality. Baudrillard outlines a progression of simulacra in his work: First Order Simulacra (faithful copies of the real), Second Order Simulacra (begin to distort or mask the real), Third Order Simulacra (the stage of hyperreality, where simulations are no longer connected to a real referent and become self-referential) and the final stage, Fourth Order Simulacra (simulations become indistinguishable from reality and have no referent at all).

Athena Bellas argues that this setting is a "dazzling, brand-saturated consumer landscape" that activates both pleasure and a "gentle critique" (Bellas 775). Barbieland embodies Baudrillard's third-order simulacrum where signs no longer refer to the real-world (gender equality) but to other signs (of progress): Barbie as doctor, Barbie as judge, Barbie as president. In Barbieland, feminism becomes a set of images that lacks evidence of actual, material struggle. This is especially evident when Barbie says: "Thanks to Barbie, all problems of feminism and equality have been solved!" The absurdity of the line underlines the hyperreality Gerwig constructs—a world of feminism without patriarchy, identity without history, and paradise without conflict. The film's turning point is Barbie's existential breakdown: "Do you guys ever think about dying?" Spoken during an iconic dance number by Dua Lipa, the line shows the first break in the simulation. Baudrillard suggests that

such moments of crisis reveal the cracks in hyperreality, where the real can be seen but never reclaimed.

As Yosi Yulia's analysis reveals, Barbie begins to show signs of stereotypical femininity as seen in the real world—flat feet, cellulite, and halitosis—showcasing how reality imposes itself upon simulation (Yulia 2). Barbie's transition from symbolic perfection to flawed, yet human womanhood weakens the closed system of signs in Barbieland, marking a descent from simulation toward what Baudrillard calls the "desert of the real." Barbie enters the Real World expecting to be praised, only to encounter disillusionment. Sasha, a teenage girl, tells her: "You've been making women feel bad about themselves since you were invented." This highlights the idea that simulations can misrepresent or replace social reality. Barbie lived her life believing she was the representation of ideal empowerment; instead, she realizes she is a hyperreal object of critique.

Meanwhile, Ken begins to absorb and recreate the aesthetics of patriarchy in the Real World—suits, horses, CEOs—and returns to Barbieland as a changed man to impose a basic, rough simulacrum of real-world patriarchal dominance. As La Porte and Cavusoglu note, Ken's misinterpretation of patriarchy turns it into a cartoonish parody, revealing the hollowness of simulated masculinity (La Porte and Cavusoglu 1). His version of power lacks depth because it is constructed entirely from symbols, not structures. The Mattel boardroom—an all-male space attempting to contain Barbie's disruption—further lends weight to Baudrillard's fourth-order simulacrum. The company promotes empowerment while sustaining itself through surveillance and control. As Amy La Porte writes, the film critiques the concept of "faux feminism" masked by pastel aesthetics and corporate slogans (La Porte and Cavusoglu 2). Mattel is not interested in changing the world but rather in maintaining the illusion that Barbie already has.

This is highlighted when the CEO claims: "We had a female CEO... in the nineties!" The emphasis on past progress replaces current accountability, enacting what Baudrillard would call a simulation that "no longer even pretends to be real" (Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*). In the film's final act, Barbie meets Ruth Handler who explains that Barbie's story has no set ending and her ever-evolving history exceeds her roots. Handler tells her: "Ideas live forever. Humans, not so much." Barbie responds: "I want to be the one who makes meaning, not the thing that is made." This appears to signal a turn toward authenticity. Barbie's decision to become human might suggest an escape from simulation, but according to Baudrillard's theory, even this "realness" is part of the system. Her journey from doll to woman is a narrative trope—a performance of selfhood. Genevieve Graessle notes, Gerwig's strength lies in portraying the "impossibility of womanhood" without succumbing to despair (Graessle 12). Barbie does not escape her status as a sign; she simply embraces a new sign system.

Conclusion

Barbie does not deconstruct the myth of Barbie; it emphasizes it through self-reflexive criticism. The film is a simulation that knows its status as a simulation, a product that plays with its own fictionality. It exemplifies hyperreality: a world where signs multiply without referents and performance replaces substance. Barbie's evolution—from plastic icon to existential being—is not a move from illusion to truth but from one form of simulation to another. The film's brilliance lies in its aesthetic seduction: inviting us to window shop feminism while "subtly exposing the shop's scaffolding" (Bellas 778). Ultimately, Barbie demonstrates that contemporary myths do not die by being revealed. They survive by incorporating their own critique—and selling it in a box.

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FILMS AND LITERATURE: A SYMBIOTIC CULTURAL DIALOGUE

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Abstract

The relationship between films and literature has long been symbiotic, evolving from early cinema adaptations of classic novels to contemporary intertextual storytelling in modern media. This research article examines the interplay between film and literature, emphasizing how they complement, adapts, and transforms one another. Using case studies, theoretical frameworks, and historical analysis, the article explores the mutual influence of these two cultural forms. It also discusses the creative liberties and constraints inherent in adapting literature to film and vice versa. The paper concludes by asserting the cultural significance of this dialogue in shaping public perception, aesthetics, and narrative traditions.

Keywords: Film adaptation, Intertextuality, Narrative, Literature, Cultural studies.

Introduction

Literature and film have occupied parallel yet intersecting spaces in the cultural imagination. As two dominant narrative forms, they are often engaged in a dynamic conversation with one another. Literature, with its roots in ancient oral

traditions and written texts, provides rich material for cinematic representation. Film, as a comparatively modern art form, has borrowed, translated, and transformed literary works to suit visual storytelling. This interplay between the written word and the moving image creates a fertile ground for academic inquiry, particularly in understanding how narratives evolve across mediums, cultures, and audiences.

Literary Adaptations in Cinema: A Historical Overview

The early years of cinema were deeply indebted to literature. Silent films often used well-known literary texts to attract audiences, as they brought with them an already established narrative and fan base. One of the earliest recorded literary adaptations is Georges Méliès' *Cinderella* (1899), a short film based on Charles Perrault's fairy tale (Lanzagorta). As the film industry evolved, so too did the complexity and fidelity of adaptations. Throughout the 20th century, literary adaptations remained a staple of cinematic production. Hollywood regularly turned to canonical works such as *Wuthering Heights*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Moby Dick*, while also engaging with contemporary literature. These adaptations often walked a fine line between faithfulness to the source and the demands of cinematic expression.

Intertextuality and Narrative Exchange

Julia Kristeva's notion of intertextuality posits that all texts are shaped by other texts (Kristeva). This framework is particularly useful when examining the relationship between films and literature. Film adaptations are not merely visual translations of written texts; they are reinterpretations that reflect new cultural, political, and artistic contexts. A novel may provide a detailed psychological insight through internal monologue, whereas a film might convey the same emotions through visual symbolism or performance. The dialogue between the two forms often produces new meanings that neither medium could achieve alone.

Adaptation as Interpretation

Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* emphasizes that adaptation is a form of interpretation rather than reproduction. She argues that "adaptations are not copies, they are creative and interpretive acts of appropriation/salvaging" (Hutcheon 8). This perspective liberates adaptation from the burden of fidelity and allows scholars to appreciate film adaptations as autonomous works of art. For instance, Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980), while based on Stephen King's novel, diverges significantly in tone and character. Kubrick's vision explores psychological horror through visual composition and pacing, transforming the narrative into something uniquely cinematic.

Case Studies in Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Hollywood and Canonical Literature

Films such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* (dir. Robert Mulligan, 1962) and *The Great Gatsby* (dir. Baz Luhrmann, 2013) exemplify how American cinema has adapted national literature to reflect both historical and contemporary concerns. These adaptations serve as cultural touchstones, often reaching broader audiences than the books themselves. Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* offers a hyper-stylized version of Fitzgerald's novel, set to modern music and visuals that resonate with contemporary viewers while preserving the original's themes of decadence and disillusionment.

Indian Cinema and Literary Texts

In Indian cinema, adaptations have ranged from faithful renditions to radical reinterpretations. Notable examples include Vishal Bhardwaj's Shakespeare trilogy: *Maqbool* (*Macbeth*), *Omkara* (*Othello*), and *Haider* (*Hamlet*). These films transpose Shakespeare's plays into Indian socio-political contexts, demonstrating how literature can be culturally and geographically reimagined. Bhardwaj's *Haider* situates *Hamlet* in conflict-torn Kashmir, layering the narrative with commentary on human rights,

nationalism, and personal grief. This adaptation not only revitalizes Shakespeare's text but also serves as a critique of contemporary political realities.

Challenges in Adapting Literature to Film

Medium-Specific Constraints

One of the most significant challenges in adaptation arises from the fundamental differences between literature and film. Literature thrives on introspection, detailed exposition, and internal dialogue. In contrast, film is a visual and temporal medium that communicates through imagery, sound, and performance.

Adapting stream-of-consciousness writing (e.g., James Joyce's *Ulysses*) or non-linear narratives (e.g., William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*) can prove especially difficult. Filmmakers must often invent cinematic equivalents for literary devices or abandon them altogether in favor of narrative clarity.

Audience Expectations

Adaptations are also bound by the expectations of their audiences. Readers may expect fidelity to beloved characters and scenes, while directors and producers may prioritize commercial viability or artistic innovation. Balancing these competing demands can result in either praise or criticism from both literary and cinematic communities.

Adaptation in the Digital Age

In the 21st century, the rise of streaming platforms and transmedia storytelling has further complicated the relationship between films and literature. Contemporary adaptations often span multiple formats: film, television, web series, and even interactive experiences. For example, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* was adapted into a critically acclaimed television series that expanded beyond the book's original scope. Similarly, J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series has generated an entire

media franchise, from films to video games, illustrating how literature can evolve into multimedia universes.

Theoretical Frameworks for Analysis

Adaptation Theory

Adaptation studies have emerged as a distinct field within literary and film criticism. Scholars such as Robert Stam, Thomas Leitch, and Deborah Cartmell explore adaptation as a negotiation between source and medium. They advocate for evaluating adaptations on their own terms rather than using the original text as a benchmark.

Fidelity Criticism vs. Intermediality

While early adaptation studies focused on fidelity (how “faithful” a film is to its source), more recent approaches emphasize intermediality—the interaction between different media forms. This shift allows for a more nuanced appreciation of adaptation as a creative act that transcends medium-specific boundaries.

Cultural and Educational Implications

The relationship between films and literature extends beyond academia. Film adaptations play a vital role in education, often serving as entry points for students encountering complex literary texts. They also contribute to cultural literacy by making stories accessible to wider audiences. Moreover, adaptations offer opportunities for reinterpretation and resistance. Marginalized voices can use adaptation as a platform to reclaim and reframe canonical narratives, challenging dominant ideologies and offering alternative perspectives.

Conclusion

The dialogue between films and literature is rich, complex, and continually evolving. Rather than viewing adaptation as derivative or inferior, it is more fruitful

to understand it as a form of cultural conversation—an interplay of text, image, voice, and interpretation. As technologies advance and storytelling platforms diversify, the symbiosis between these two art forms will only deepen, offering new avenues for creativity and critique.

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THE UNSPOKEN AND THE UNSEEN: A MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS OF EMOTIONAL SUBTEXT IN CROSS-CULTURAL SHORT FICTION

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Abstract

Going beyond a typical linguistic assessment, this paper applies the multimodal approach in order to discuss how the authors use non-verbal and paralinguistic devices (e.g. spatial setting, pauses in a dialogue, body stance, visual imagery) to create a sense of mental tension, an inner conflict, and an existential angst. The main focus of this analysis is on how the emotional subtext that exists in these texts cuts across cultural borders and hence reveals the common sets of human experiences despite the variation in social-political and lingual backgrounds. The comparative readings of a handful of stories allow exploring literary minimalism, the use of silences as a carefully developed strategy, and the source of implicit didactic

hints in the very choice of the ideal reads of the stories to create their possible interpretations. By applying the ideas of semiotics, phenomenology, and visual narratology, the paper presents the work that questions the multimodal aspect of telling stories and emphasizes the fact that most eloquently often done unrevealed. The cross-cultural focus of this question is also a part of the study of World Literature, as it demonstrates the rhetorical strength of the non-verbal means of narrative construction in creating affective response to works across the linguistic and geographical differences. Finally, one would argue that Tagore and Chekhov stories are multimodal experiences, where the emotional vividness is achieved through an advanced work of silence and hints

Keywords: Multimodality, Emotional Subtext, Cross-Cultural Literature, Tagore and Chekhov, Non-Verbal Narratives.

Introduction

This is why I would like to propose an idea that storytelling, in its most fundamental form, has gone beyond the boundaries of both written and spoken language. Take such acclaimed works by Rabindranath Tagore and Anton Chekhov, for example. The commentary is often elaborate in their corpus, such things being left unsaid is far more psychologically weighted as compared to what it might have otherwise been said. So, the two writers with their geographic and cultural background that are radically different, meet at the same level of thematic scope and philosophic sharpness, resorting to subtle forms of narration to reveal the inner lives of the characters. What I intend to do here is to discuss such multimodal techniques in detail, such as the calculated use of silence, the manipulation of spaces, the persuasive power of gestures and the economy of symbolism. In this way it will be seen how it is possible not merely to determine the affective strands which bind together these

works, but also to observe the methodological approaches which allow one to formulate the inarticulate.

Theoretical Framework: Multimodality and Emotional Subtext

First, we can accept the fact that the term multimodality refers to a coordination of several modes or channels of meaning delivery. In literary contexts, this orchestration extends not just in the textual but also the visual, the spatial, and the symbolic too. According to Kress and van Leeuwen, we should understand that communication is always multimodal and the meaning is relational, which is determined by dynamic interaction between the modes (Kress and van Leeuwen 2). As applied to literary analysis, this insight provokes a deeper exploration of how emotional subtext is rendered. Particularly crucial in this is semiotics, the dyadic concept of de Saussure of signifier and signified. The model gives us the tools to interpret how either a silence or a gesture can reveal complex emotions. The introduction of the phenomenology of perception developed by Merleau-Ponty further enhances our ability to understand how readers handle the sensory and the emotional assets present in a body of a narration.

Tagore's Multimodal Storytelling

The short fiction by Rabindranath Tagore that is deeply rooted in the Indian socio-cultural setting, often expresses deep emotional truths by employing wise use of narrative elements. Just as in *The Postmaster*, the elusive relationship of the postmaster and the orphan girl named Ratan takes emotional overtones more by persistent silence, routine living together, and the physical absence, which becomes increasingly present. The poignancy of emotional impact of the story peaks as it builds in the diligent waiting of Ratan on her missing postmaster, and this punch is achieved

not by the expression of verbal mourning but by an extraordinary contrast between her hopes and her quiet observation and continuous silence of her world around her.

Similarly, the use of the trope of a storm (both natural and figurative) as an expression of a mental tempest in the short story *The Child Returns* by Tagore is used. The changing weather is similar to the nature of the internal conflict of the main character and will demonstrate how nature serves as a multimodal sign, the persuasion of which seems intangible at the first sight. The visual symbolism is also a characteristic feature of the Tagore creative work. The worn-out diary and the stale fruit are a metonym that signifies fatherly love and time in *Kabuliwala*. These visuals embellish the story, take the reader much further in the realm of emotion and interest.

Chekhov's Art of the Unspoken

In modern literature, Anton Chekhov can be regarded as an author of the modest emotional undertone. Whatever is not stated outright but implied is fertile ground to his narratives. Take into account the example of *The Lady with the Dog*: the sentimental relationships between Gurov and Anna Sergeyevna are developed in small stages, mostly without explicit verbal support. Their inner dialogues, body language and long moments of silence all say much more than an utterance does. Analogous processes take place in the story *Misery*, where a cabman tries to tell the passengers one after another about his grief connected to the death of his son. Every conversation (over which the indifference reigns) provides an additional stratum of denial. It has the strands of missed connection as the center of the narrative and ultimately it will culminate into the cabman confessing his sorrow towards his horse. These two concepts diminish the functions of silence and opposition and render them than a pause in the narration but a means of emphasis of the theme. Spatial dimension also supports the theme agenda of Chekhov. In the *Bet*, the cellular isolation of the

person leads to the spiritual growth, as well as the soul-searching of the character. His mental development takes place not in the form of the theatricization of the dialogue but as a result of the material separation, extended reading and, finally, a conscious shutdown in the outside world by a motionless meditative posture.

Cross-Cultural Emotional Convergences

Even though these two writers existed in different continents of the world, Rabindranath Tagore and Anton Chekhov remove their narrative practice and have the similar tendencies. Both are based on an economic and hinting manner that places a stronger emphasis upon evocation than exposition, and each structures his stories around existential issues--loneliness, lack of fulfillment, the search of meaning.

A prominent parallelism is witnessed when the two authors present cases of the silent martyrdom. The emotional needs of the characters portrayed in Ratan, by Tagore, and Iona (described in Misery) by Chekhov have not been given much attention in a cold external world. But it hurts them, and we feel the pain in their whispered words, their timely silences, and it is a pain that expresses their inner selves, in words spoken, unspoken, with unrivaled accuracy, with accuracy that shows also in the telling details of the surrounding scenes and surroundings.

Another area of intersection is imagery of nature. Another way in which ambiguity is created in a scene is on the use of shadowed contact between the lovers as observed in Chekhov The Kiss and the consuming darkness as the backdrop, creating a confusion in the story that stays long even after the scene has been concluded. Similarly in Tagore, The Homecoming, the stream that flows sinuously through the family garden is a metaphorical statement of the change of time as loss of innocence.

Implications for World Literature and Literary Pedagogy

The paper explores the pedagogical possibility of multimodal reading when suggested that the introduction of silence, gesture, and visual symbolism to close textual analysis will add much value to the classroom experience. This manner of interpretation does not only expand the interpretive scope of the students, but also enables them to develop an epitome of the literary works at an interdisciplinary level and, therefore, combines the textual understanding with emotional literacy.

A comparative study based on Tagore and Chekhov in World Literature throws light on the overlaps in the narrative strategies in the two authors, and therefore, challenges a Eurocentric view of literary history. The comparison shows that emotional realism is a cross-cultural literary modality, and it is valuable, vis-a-vis comparative approaches, to call attention to the commonality of human experience across cultural borders. These frequent aspects of silence, minimalist execution, and suggestive and natural symbolism, all together help us to show how disparate literary traditions, can, yet, coincide with each other due to far-flung similarities of humanity.

Conclusion

An immediate side-by-side contrast of the short fiction of Rabindranath Tagore and Anton Chekhov is that a given literary expression is as reliant on an unspoken representation as it is to spoken discourse itself. With the aid of the multimodal device of coordination of silence, signs, the spatial determination, and the visual symbolism the writers can invoke the affective undertexts which can be heard beyond cultural misgivings. To take such a cross-cultural, multimodal approach is to not only increase the level of interpretive engagement we can bring to bear on their narratives, it is also to broaden the analytic repertoire that literary scholars can consult. Sentimentally, then, you enjoy both Tagore and Chekhov, because they get us to

acknowledge that the deeper level of emotion is often in what we cannot see or hear, but we nonetheless keep on it as whatever is experienced internally but profoundly.

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MYSTERY OF THE EAST: ECHOES OF ORIENTALISM IN SELECTED SHORT STORIES BY AGATHA CHRISTIE

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Abstract

Agatha Christie (1890-1976) was a British writer who is regarded as one of the pioneers of detective fiction. Her works, especially those with Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple, played a vital role in shaping the conventions of the genre. The paper explores the ideology of Orientalism embedded in three of her short stories: “The Adventure of the Egyptian Tomb”, “The Adventure of 'The Western Star'” and “The Idol House of Astarte”. The study aims to examine how the author constructs East as a symbol of mystery and danger through mythic settings, objects and references in these stories. The stories also reinforce the perceived necessity of Western influence. The objective of this paper is to reassess how imperial ideology is reflected in these popular works of Agatha Christie. Although Christie wrote during the twentieth century, her works remain widely read and adapted into films and television series thus making it important to engage with them critically.

Keywords: Crime, Whodunit, Detective Fiction, Postcolonialism, Imperial ideology.

Introduction

“The Orient was almost a European invention and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences”(Said 1). This observation of Edward Said emphasises the construction of East as space and symbol for fascination, mystery and danger within Western imagination. The construction positions East and West as two parallel worlds that can never merge, forming one of the foundations of colonisation that justifies the colonial mission of the West. In *Orientalism*, Said discusses the inorganic binary of the West and East, stating it as a catalyst used by Europe to establish their own identity and superiority. Said offers three interrelated definitions for Orientalism: as a study about the Orient that is carried out by various academicians and writers, as a style of thought based on ontological and epistemological differences that separates the Orient from the Occident and as a corporate institution that establishes the inferior position of the Orient by creating and producing an image of the Orient that is entirely different from the rational and enlightened West (2-3). In short, he calls Orientalism a “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (3).

The analysis of Orientalism as a discourse reveals its role in satisfying colonial interests by shifting the purpose of the Oriental study from an innocent and sympathetic mission aimed at understanding and preserving the East into a weapon to assert imperial power. This dominance of power is achieved through the declaration of the Empire as the cultural and political centre against the East, which is the portrayed as the exotic, irrational and dangerous Other. In this newly re-presented reality of the Orient generated by the West, the voice of the Orient is substituted by the voice of the Occident (Said 3). The systematic process of alienating yet romanticising the East is sustained by various institutions such as art and literature. “Visions of the Orient were highly selective, creating oriental archetypes through which the ‘Otherness’ of eastern peoples could be readily identified. Tyranny, cruelty,

laziness, lust, technical backwardness, languid fatalism and cultural decadence generally offered a justification for imperial rule and a programme for its reforming zeal” (MacKenzie 46). Literature, like art, becomes a vehicle for the West to propagate and stabilise its authority by generating and circulating stereotypes about the East. By embedding these stereotypes within seemingly neutral narratives, popular and canonical texts sustain Orientalist discourse and cultural hegemony (Bhabha 94-95). Thus, literature implicitly promotes the cultural uneasiness of the West along the binary construct it has created.

The works of Agatha Christie, often hailed as the “Queen of Crime” of the Golden Age of Detective Fiction, contribute to this propaganda. In many of her intricate narratives featuring her iconic detectives Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple, Christie employs eastern settings, artefacts, and characters as exotic and mysterious backdrops. Though her novels such as *Appointment with Death*, *Death on the Nile* and *Murder in Mesopotamia* gained scholarly recognition for their Oriental tropes, her short stories remain underappreciated despite sharing a similar ideological essence. Thus, this paper explores Christie’s three short stories, “The Adventure of the Egyptian Tomb” and “The Adventure of 'The Western Star'” from her *Poirot Investigates* and “The Idol House of Astarte” from *The Thirteen Problems*. The study aims to analyse how popular literature amplifies the political and cultural supremacy of the West by facilitating the perception of the East as the Other.

Christie’s “The Adventure of the Egyptian Tomb” paints Egypt as a location of death and superstition, alluding to the Orientalist trope of the East as a space of fear. The term “adventure” in the title symbolises the thrill and obsession of the West with the East as a site for exploration, as discussed by Said (2). In the story, Poirot investigates a series of mysterious deaths linked to the excavation of the tomb of King Men-her-Ra. Here, the tomb functions as a tool to portray Egypt as an exotic space shrouded in mystery and secrets. The story is divided into two parts. The first part is

set in England, where Poirot is asked to investigate the murders and the second in Egypt, where the actual investigation takes place. This division detaches the West from the East, where Western logic is tested against Eastern irrationality, indicating a widening of the literal and metaphorical chasm between the West and the East(Christie, “Egyptian Tomb” 69).

The story opens with the narrator calling the case “one of the most thrilling and dramatic of the many adventures” which foreshadows the exoticisation of the East (Christie, "Egyptian Tomb" 69). The excavators symbolise the burden and responsibility felt by the whites to explore and discover secrets of the “dreadful” Oriental space, embodying the colonial ideology of entitlement over the land and treasures of the Orient, where these resources are used to expand colonial power(Said 36). The story also reveals how Western media aids in commercialising fear of the East by taking “the opportunity of reviving all the old superstitious stories connected with the ill luck of certain Egyptian treasures. The unlucky Mummy at the British Museum, that hoary old chestnut, was dragged out with fresh zest, was quietly denied by the Museum, but nevertheless enjoyed all its usual vogue” (Christie, "Egyptian Tomb" 69).

When the plot shifts to Egypt, the depiction of “golden sand” and “hot sun” reiterates the hostile image of the East, with Poirot calling it a “cursed land” because of his discomfort (Christie, “Egyptian Tomb” 72-73). This aligns with the quintessential space of the romantic yet harsh Other derived from the Western imagination. Poirot’s invocation of the Virgin Mary and saints during the uncomfortable travel on a camel illustrates the cultural dislocation and Western dependence on Christianity when confronting the East. The words “evil”, “subtle” and “menacing” that the narrator uses to describe the atmosphere reveal the anxiety of being in an unfamiliar and alien space (Christie, “Egyptian Tomb” 74).

The ambiguous attitude of Poirot towards the supernatural creates further tension in the plot. Lady Willard calls him “a man of original views”, which positions him as a rational being against the occult influences of the East (Christie, “Egyptian Tomb” 70). He acknowledges “the terrific force of superstition”, which he uses as a mere tool to catch the criminal (Christie, “Egyptian Tomb” 80). This reinforces the argument that the colonial authority is upheld by maintaining the binary and denial of the Oriental identity and culture (Bhabha 119).

The plot of “The Adventure of 'The Western Star'”, though set in England, revolves around a fabricated tale of twin diamonds from the East. The term “adventure” again reflects the fascination of the West with the exotic East, while the narrative reveals how the West deals with the East outside the geographical space of the Other. The name “Western Star” symbolises the exploitation and appropriation of Eastern treasures by the West. According to Said, this act of renaming erases its identity rooted in the East and gives it a new identity linked to the West (86). Though the diamond still carries the name “The Star of the East”, the ownership of the East and its cultural heritage are dismissed. The result of the erasure and West’s ignorance becomes evident when Lord Yardly states the diamond in his possession is from India, yet he is unaware of the “Chinese god stuff”, establishing its uncertain origin (Christie, “Western Star” 13).

The story begins with the meeting of Miss Mary Marvell and Poirot, where she reveals the threatening letters delivered by a “Chinaman” (Christie, “Western Star” 13). This perpetuates the stereotype of the Orient as a danger to the West. The letter calls the diamond the “eye of god” and threatens the owner with its theft for failing to return it to its original place, reflecting colonial anxieties regarding the legitimacy of the possessions looted from the Eastern spaces (Christie, “Western Star” 6). Miss Marvell’s reluctance to give her diamond to Poirot and Lady Yardly’s exhibition of her diamond amid the threats expose the narcissistic attitude of West in

enjoying the benefits of the loot. The gossip article mirrors the ways of Western media in “The Adventure of the Egyptian Tomb”, which commercialises the East and portrays the tension between Eastern superstition and Western rationality (Christie, “Western Star” 6). The event involving the attack on Mrs. Yardley by a presumed “Chinese” thief further legitimates the stereotype of an “immoral” Orient. The racial profiling through the piece of cloth reduces the thief to an epitome of the Western dread towards the East (Christie, “Western Star” 16-17).

“The Idol House of Astarte” attacks and discredits the Eastern culture and identity by showcasing its interference within an English setting as a compromise of Western ideals and sanity. The story features Miss Marple as the detective who unravels the truth behind the murder of a man in a grove dedicated to the Egyptian goddess Astarte, regarded as the goddess of the moon, beauty, love, sexuality and fertility. The term “idol” carries negative connotations within Christian discourse, which preaches against idolatry. The use of the term “house” rather than “temple” denies its religious sanctity and legitimacy, turning it into an eerie domestic setting that can be orchestrated as a murder site, aligning with Bhabha’s statement about the West construing the East, through colonial discourse, as degenerate to establish its own dominance (101).

Dr. Pender’s description of the incident as a “very strange and tragic experience” and his use of words such as “oppression”, “silence”, “desolation” and “horror” while describing the groves of Astarte illustrate the gothic element attributed by the West to Eastern mythology (Christie, “Astarte” 16,18). This atmosphere feeds the European imagination of the Other, while the name and description of The Silent Groove, which remained unpurchased for years, aligns with the Oriental trope of Eastern presence as eerie and haunting (Christie, “Astarte” 17). The narrator’s discomfort reflects the West’s unease when encountering spaces associated with the East.

The portrayal of Diana Ashley as “dark and tall, with a beautiful skin of an even tint of pale cream, and her half-closed dark eyes set slantways in her head gave her a curiously piquant oriental appearance. She had, too, a wonderful speaking voice, deep-toned and bell-like” exemplifies the Western exoticisation of the Orient women as mysterious, sensuous and dangerous (Christie, “Astarte” 17). Her bewitching appearance allures Richard Haymond, who becomes the victim of the murder, while her fascination with sacred rites reflects the Western romanticisation of the East and foreshadows her link to the Eastern goddess (Christie, “Astarte” 20 - 21). The difference between the narrator’s costume of the monk and Diana’s shapeless black domino positions Christian morality and austerity against Eastern sensuality, echoing Said’s assertion of the inorganic binary established by the West (Said 2). Diana’s self-identification as “the unknown”, embodies the Western definition of East as the uncontrollable and unknowable (Christie, “Astarte” 20). Although Miss Marple reveals the human intervention behind the murder, the story ends with shifting the blame onto Diana for enticing the Hayden brothers while attributing the crime to the external evil forces of the East within the British soil (Christie, “Astarte” 26-27).

Conclusion

The essay “*The Simple Art of Murder*”, describes detective fiction of the Golden Age as “too contrived, and too little aware of what goes on in the world” (Chandler). Although he makes this observation about the genre’s closed narrative spaces, this cannot be said about the dominant ideologies, such as Orientalism, embedded within these works. The selected short stories of Agatha Christie deal with the mystery of the crimes and the mystery of the East simultaneously. Though the detectives succeed in revealing the former, they leave the latter unresolved, which reinforces the suspicion surrounding the East. These stories portray the culprits’ association with Westernised images of the East and show how they manipulate these

negative attributes for their own ends, yet none of them are legally punished for causing social disorder.

The truths of these crimes are revealed in intimate settings, which establishes Poirot and Miss Marple as representatives of Western interests. The detectives and other white characters try to be interpreters of Eastern mystery, but their reliance on stereotypes becomes evident when they decide not to reveal the reality behind crimes linked to the Orient. This reassessment of detective fiction is significant in the twenty-first century, since scholars still often regard popular detective fiction as ideologically neutral.

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ECO LITERATURE AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL: BRIDGING LANGUAGE, ETHICS, AND EMPATHY

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Abstract

Eco-literature, due to its rich perspective on nature and environmental awareness, is more than just environmental awareness—it can be a powerful instructional tool that fosters unity in language learning, moral reasoning, and the development of empathy. The paper addresses the potential of the eco-critical primary literature to be incorporated in the educational systems and develop linguistic competence as well as a sense of moral and emotional accountability towards the planet. By working thematically with ideas of human-nature relationships, the students can not only acquire interpretive and communicative skills, but can also learn reflectively and learn values. The analysis identifies the effectiveness of eco literature in developing soft skills, which include empathy, cultural sensitivity, and emotional intelligence, skills that are helpful in confronting real-life ecological and social problems. Based on interdisciplinary constructs, educational classroom experiences, and some of the literature used, this paper states that eco-literature can empower learners to think critically, feel ethically, and act responsibly, making it a transformative feature in holistic learning.

Keywords: Eco Literature, Empathy, Human-Nature Relationships, Holistic Education

Introduction

The intersection of literature and environmental consciousness has emerged as a vital pedagogical approach in contemporary education, offering unprecedented opportunities for holistic learning that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries. Eco-literature, characterized by its profound engagement with nature and environmental themes, serves as more than merely a vehicle for ecological awareness. It functions as a powerful instructional tool that cultivates unity across language learning, moral reasoning, and the development of empathy. This multifaceted approach to education addresses the growing need for educational frameworks that prepare students not only for academic success but also for ethical engagement with the complex environmental and social challenges of the twenty-first century. Rachel Carson's seminal work, *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, stands as a cornerstone of ecological literature that exemplifies the transformative potential of eco-critical texts in educational settings. Carson's masterful blend of scientific rigor, lyrical prose, and moral urgency provides an ideal foundation for exploring how eco-literature can simultaneously develop linguistic competence and foster ethical and emotional accountability toward the planet. Through its compelling narrative of environmental destruction and its call for responsible stewardship, *Silent Spring* demonstrates how literature can catalyze critical thinking, ethical reflection, and transformative action.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The field of ecocriticism has established a robust theoretical foundation for understanding the relationship between literature and environmental consciousness. Cheryll Glotfelty defines ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment," emphasizing that this approach "takes an

earth-centered approach to literary studies" (xviii). This earth-centered perspective provides the theoretical groundwork for understanding how eco-literature functions as an educational tool that extends beyond traditional literary analysis to encompass moral and environmental education. Lawrence Buell's concept of "environmental imagination" offers crucial insights into how literary texts can reshape readers' understanding of their relationship with the natural world. Buell argues that "environmental crisis involves a crisis of the imagination, the amelioration of which depends on finding better ways of imaging nature and humanity's relation to it" (2). This imaginative function of literature becomes especially relevant in educational contexts where the aim is not only to transmit knowledge but also to cultivate environmental awareness and ethical reflection. The pedagogical potential of eco-literature aligns with Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, which emphasizes education as a "practice of freedom" that enables students to "deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world" (34). When this method is employed in environmental literature, it changes reading from a passive activity to an active way to interact with social and ecological issues that call for critical analysis and ethical response.

Studies of environmental education have begun to appreciate the relevance of emotions in developing environmental awareness. David Sobel's work on place-based education demonstrates that "emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens" (7). Eco-literature functions as a medium for this place-based approach by engaging students emotionally and intellectually with environmental concerns through narrative engagement.

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* as Pedagogical Foundation

Carson's *Silent Spring* exemplifies the pedagogical potential of eco-literature through its masterful integration of scientific information, moral argument, and literary artistry. The work's opening chapter, "A Fable for Tomorrow," immediately establishes the text's capacity to engage students on multiple levels. Carson begins with a pastoral vision of an American town where "all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings" before revealing the devastating effects of pesticide use (ch.1). This narrative strategy demonstrates how eco-literature can employ literary techniques to make complex environmental issues accessible and emotionally resonant for students.

The linguistic sophistication of Carson's prose provides numerous opportunities for language learning and development. Her use of metaphor, symbolism, and imagery creates rich textual material for literary analysis while simultaneously conveying scientific information and moral arguments. For instance, Carson's description of the "silent spring" itself—where "no birds sang"—functions simultaneously as a powerful metaphor for environmental destruction and a literal description of pesticide effects on bird populations (2). This dual function demonstrates how eco-literature can develop students' interpretive skills while fostering environmental awareness.

The *Silent Spring* by Carson is a prime example of the pedagogical power of eco literature because it harmonizes scientific data, ethical appeal, and the art of literature. The first chapter of this work, titled "A Fable for Tomorrow," is sufficient evidence that this piece of text has the power to impress and attract the attention of students on several levels. Carson sets the stage by painting a picture of a pastoral American town in which, all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings, and then proceeds to narrate the impact of using pest control methods systematically (ch.1). This narrative approach explains how the eco literature can use the literary

devices and tactics to turn the complicated environmental subjects much more approachable and emotional to students. The prose used by Carson is of a linguistic sophistication that produces many a language learning and development opportunity. Carson uses a row of strong metaphors to explain the harmful effects of chemical pesticides. Such figurative expressions as “still the song of birds” and “the leaping of fish in the stream” occasion the removal and even death of the colorful life in nature. The visual of “coat the leaves with a deadly film” creates a choking atmosphere, and the expression, “a barrage of poisons”, relies on the imagery of hostilities, bringing out the element of violence done to ecosystems. Carson insists on referring to them as “biocides” instead of “insecticides”, which emphasizes their death-dealing nature to all life, not just the desired pests (Ch. 2). Moreover, this double function reveals the way eco literature can improve interpretative competences in the students and, in parallel, prompt environmental consciousness.

Throughout *Silent Spring*, she presents detailed scientific data about pesticide effects while simultaneously questioning the moral implications of chemical use. Her assertion that “the control of nature is a phrase conceived in arrogance” challenges students to examine underlying assumptions about human relationships with the natural world (Ch. 17). This combination of empirical evidence and ethical reflection provides a pattern of how to think critically, which is what modern teaching aims to instill in its students. The interdisciplinary nature of *Silent Spring* expresses how eco-literature can bridge traditional academic divisions. Carson draws upon biology, chemistry, ecology, history, and economics to construct her argument, demonstrating students that the issues of the environment need interdisciplinary knowledge. Such a practice nurtures what David Orr describes as “ecological literacy”—the ability to understand the principles of ecology and how to live as nature does (85). David further emphasizes, “The failure to develop ecological literacy is a sin of omission and of commission. Not only are we failing to teach the basics about the earth and how it

works, but we are in fact teaching a large amount of stuff that is simply wrong. By failing to include ecological perspectives in any number of subjects, students are taught that ecology is unimportant for history, politics, economics, society, and so forth" (85).

Developing Linguistic Competence Through Eco-Literature

The integration of eco-literature into language learning curricula offers unique opportunities for developing linguistic competence through meaningful content engagement. Carson's *Silent Spring* provides rich material for vocabulary development, particularly in scientific and environmental terminology, while maintaining literary quality that enhances reading comprehension and critical analysis skills. The text's sophisticated sentence structures and rhetorical strategies offer models for student writing development, demonstrating how scientific information can be presented through compelling narrative techniques.

The argumentative structure of *Silent Spring* provides an excellent foundation for teaching persuasive writing and critical analysis. Carson's systematic presentation of evidence, her anticipation and refutation of counterarguments, and her strategic use of emotional appeals demonstrate effective rhetorical techniques that students can analyze and apply in their own writing. Her ability to translate complex scientific concepts into accessible language models the communication skills necessary for effective environmental advocacy and public engagement. Research in second language acquisition supports the view that content based language learning, as defined by Crandall and Tucker (1990) as instruction that integrates subject matter topics with language teaching, often leads to more meaningful engagement and, in many cases, superior outcomes compared to traditional language focused instruction (qtd. in Met). Eco-literature provides ideal content for this approach, as environmental themes possess universal relevance that engages students' interest while providing authentic contexts for language use. The urgency and relevance of environmental

issues create natural motivation for communication, supporting the development of both oral and written language skills.

The multicultural dimensions of environmental literature further enhance its pedagogical value for language learning. Works such as Wangari Maathai's *Unbowed*, Vandana Shiva's *Staying Alive*, and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* expose students to diverse cultural perspectives on environmental issues while providing opportunities for cross-cultural communication and understanding. This exposure develops cultural sensitivity and global awareness alongside linguistic competence.

Fostering Moral Reasoning and Environmental Ethics

Eco-literature's capacity to develop moral reasoning stems from its inherent engagement with ethical questions about human relationships with the natural world. Carson's *Silent Spring* exemplifies this capacity through its systematic questioning of anthropocentric attitudes and its advocacy for more responsible environmental stewardship. The text challenges students to examine fundamental assumptions about human dominion over nature and to consider alternative ethical frameworks that recognize the intrinsic value of non-human life. The development of environmental ethics through literature engagement aligns with Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development, which emphasizes the importance of moral reasoning in ethical decision-making. Carson's presentation of environmental dilemmas requires students to engage in the kind of moral reasoning that Kohlberg identifies as essential for advanced ethical development. Students must weigh competing interests, consider long-term consequences, and develop principled positions on complex environmental issues. Aldo Leopold's notion of "the land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land" provides a framework for understanding how eco-literature can expand students'

moral imagination (Ch. The Land Ethic). Carson's work embodies this expanded ethical vision by consistently presenting environmental issues in terms of community responsibility and moral obligation. Her famous assertion that "in nature nothing exists alone" challenges students to recognize the interconnectedness of all life and to accept moral responsibility for environmental protection (Ch. 4). The case study method that is built into *Silent Spring* offers tangible ways in which moral reasoning can be developed. Carson offers us a lot of examples of how pesticides damaged certain communities and ecosystems and the students need to examine the ethical side of making decisions about the environment. Such case studies give students insight into how abstract ethical principles can be applied to real scenarios and how individual and collective behavior carries ethical implications.

Cultivating Empathy and Emotional Intelligence

The development of empathy through eco-literature engagement occurs through multiple mechanisms that distinguish environmental texts from other literary forms. Carson's *Silent Spring* demonstrates particular effectiveness in fostering empathy through its presentation of environmental destruction from the perspective of affected organisms and communities. Her vivid descriptions of bird deaths, fish kills, and human illness create emotional connections that transcend traditional anthropocentric boundaries. The narrative techniques employed in eco-literature facilitate what Suzanne Keen terms "narrative empathy"—the sharing of feeling and perspective-taking induced by reading narratives (4). The emotional effects set into play by Carson because of her specific, detailed examples of environmental destruction touch on the emotional side of the students, appealing to their ability to empathize, at the same time as telling scientific facts. Her account of robins poisoned by DDT, for instance, is both factually accurate and emotionally persuasive in its use of imagery to create knowledge and some emotional engagement.

Research in neuroscience has demonstrated that reading literary fiction enhances theory of mind—the ability to understand others' mental states—more effectively than reading non-fiction or popular fiction (Kidd and Castano 377). Eco-literature possesses unique advantages in this regard because it requires readers to consider the perspectives of non-human entities, thereby expanding empathetic capacity beyond traditional human boundaries. Students reading Carson's work must consider the experiences of birds, fish, and other organisms affected by chemical contamination, developing what Val Plumwood terms "ecological animism"—the recognition of agency and subjectivity in non-human nature (173). The development of emotional intelligence through eco-literature engagement occurs through the complex emotional responses that environmental texts evoke. Students reading *Silent Spring* experience a range of emotions including anger, sadness, hope, and determination. Learning to recognize, understand, and productively channel these emotions develops emotional intelligence skills that prove valuable in addressing environmental challenges and other life situations.

Practical Applications and Classroom Integration

The implementation of eco-literature in educational settings requires thoughtful pedagogical approaches that maximize the transformative potential of environmental texts. Project-based learning provides an effective framework for integrating *Silent Spring* and other eco-literature into curricula across disciplines. Students might research contemporary pesticide issues, analyze current environmental policies, or develop advocacy campaigns based on principles derived from Carson's work. Collaborative learning approaches enhance the social dimensions of environmental education by encouraging students to work together on environmental projects and discussions. Literature circles focused on eco-literature enable students to explore different perspectives on environmental issues while developing communication and collaboration skills. These approaches mirror the

collective action necessary for addressing environmental challenges while providing authentic contexts for language and literacy development. Service-learning connections between eco-literature study and community environmental projects provide opportunities for students to apply their learning in real-world contexts. Students might partner with local environmental organizations, conduct environmental monitoring projects, or develop educational materials for community audiences. These connections help students understand how literature can inspire action and how individual engagement can contribute to collective environmental solutions.

Assessment strategies for eco-literature integration should reflect the multidisciplinary nature of environmental education. Portfolio-based assessment allows students to demonstrate learning across multiple domains including literary analysis, scientific understanding, moral reasoning, and communication skills. Performance assessments that require students to address authentic environmental challenges provide opportunities to demonstrate the kind of integrated learning that eco-literature promotes.

Addressing Contemporary Environmental Challenges

The relevance of Carson's *Silent Spring* to contemporary environmental issues demonstrates the enduring value of eco-literature for environmental education. Current challenges including climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental justice issues share common themes with the pesticide problems Carson addressed, making her work a valuable foundation for understanding contemporary environmental challenges. The precautionary principle that Carson advocates—the idea that potential environmental harm should be prevented even in the absence of complete scientific certainty—remains highly relevant to current environmental debates. Students can apply this principle to contemporary issues such as genetically modified organisms, nanotechnology, and climate engineering, developing the kind

of critical thinking skills necessary for informed environmental citizenship. Environmental justice themes in eco-literature help students understand how environmental problems disproportionately affect marginalized communities. Works such as Sandra Steingraber's *Living Downstream* and Robert Bullard's *Dumping in Dixie* complement Carson's analysis by examining how environmental hazards intersect with social inequality. This perspective helps students develop awareness of environmental justice issues while fostering empathy for affected communities. The integration of traditional ecological knowledge with scientific approaches in contemporary environmental literature provides opportunities for students to understand diverse ways of knowing about environmental issues. Authors such as Robin Wall Kimmerer in *Braiding Sweetgrass* demonstrate how indigenous knowledge systems can complement Western scientific approaches, helping students develop more comprehensive understanding of environmental challenges and solutions.

Conclusion

The analysis presented in this paper demonstrates that eco-literature, particularly as exemplified by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, possesses unique pedagogical properties that make it a powerful tool for transformative education. The integration of environmental themes with literary artistry creates learning experiences that simultaneously develop linguistic competence, moral reasoning, empathy, and critical thinking skills. These outcomes extend beyond traditional academic achievement to include the kind of holistic learning that contemporary education seeks to promote. The interdisciplinary nature of eco-literature makes it particularly valuable for developing the integrated understanding that complex environmental and social challenges require. Students engaging with environmental literature learn to synthesize information from multiple disciplines, think systemically about

interconnected problems, and develop the kind of ecological literacy that David Orr identifies as essential for sustainable living.

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THE VISION OF GENDER IDENTITY IN GITHA HARIHARAN'S NOVEL *THE THOUSAND FACES OF NIGHT* AND ANITA NAIR'S *LADIES COUPE*

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Abstract

The female body can be made docile, submissive, erotic, usable and productive. The Thousand Faces of Night represents a variety of female characters, mythological and real with varied wishes and frustrations, desires and agony searching for self-identity and self – liberation. Hariharan's female characters revolt against considering marriage and motherhood as ultimate goals of an ideal woman. They truly represent contemporary Indian Women who are bringing about a silent revolution. The vision Hariharan has for woman kind is of empowerment. The protagonist finally disowns her status and returns to her mother to rediscover her true identity. Through the study of women characters, Gitsha Hariharan provides us a peek into the Indian tradition and culture and the position of a woman in the Indian society. In Ladies Coupe, Anita Nair explores gender identity by challenging traditional, patriarchal norms imposed on women in Indian society. The novel uses the train journey of the protagonist, Akhila and her interactions with other women to expose

how societal expectations dictate women's roles and limit their self – discovery. Through these narratives, Nair highlights the struggle for personal agency and self-fulfillment beyond prescribed gender roles, advocating for women's empowerment and the right to define their own identities.

Keywords: Woman, Self- identity, Culture, Tradition, Male domination

Introduction

Indian Writing in English has become significant with the arrival of literature in the last two decades. The change in Indian Writing in English is marked from 1980 onwards with the arrival of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. *The New York Review of Books* claims Salman Rushdie's novel as an important novel to arrive in this era. Three prominent writers- Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan ruled the world of Indian fiction in English until the 1970s. The publication of Rushdie's *Midnight's children* has torn the veil, to allow men and women writers to enter boldly into the area of Indian Writing in English. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* exhibits the post- independence voice of Indian writing in English. The writers like Arundhati Roy who have written after him have carved a niche in Indian writing and also authors like Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Chandra, Upamanyu Chatterjee, achieved international recognition.

Apart from the contribution made by the male novelists, women's writing too occupies a distinct place in enriching this genre. In Indian context the first woman novelist of this genre was Toru Dutt who wrote both English and French. Some of the early women novelists include Raja lakshmi Debi (*The Hindu Wife*), Krupabai sattianandhan (*Kamala , A Story of Hindu Wife*). In recent years we have a series of novelists who made their mark in this field; they include Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Rama Mehta, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Sina, Manju Kapur, Arundathi Roy and Namita Gokhale, to name a few. The

major themes explored by these women novelists include the gender issues, female exploitation and oppression, the concept of being other in a patriarchal society, the theme of growing up from childhood to motherhood, liberation through self-quest, sexual autonomy, human relation, realism, magic realism, fantasy, the image of new women Indian culture, Urbanization, Indianness, Migration, East-West confrontation clash between tradition and modernity, struggle for independence and partition. Indian women novelists in English have created a position for themselves which became clear from the distinguished critical awards like Booker Prizes, commonwealth writers Prizes for the best book and the esteemed Sahitya Academy award which unquestionably established that women novelists are no longer 'other' in Indian English literary scenario. Most of the writers, the new and the young, are creative enough to hold on to writing style of their own generation and contemporaneity.

The contemporary Indian writers chosen for the present study are Gita Hariharan and Anita Nair. Hariharan, an epoch-making star in Indian fiction in English and a celebrated expatriate writer is rather unique with her sensitive portrayal of characters. She is preoccupied with the inner world of sensibility and no longer remains satisfied with women's passive role as women and wife. Hence "She expresses her angry protest and erodes the age-old wisdom of saying proverbs, stories, myths and beliefs" (Kathiresan 24). Her writings express itself through the mode of satire, irony and sarcasm. Her vision encompassed the whole history of a woman's role and edifies the emergence of new woman who is true to her own self. Such a writer born into a societal enterprise is moulded by the social structure and distinguishes and individual's want, cognitions, interpersonal response traits and attitudes. She is very clear about what she writes. In an interview with Arnab Chakladar, she answers confidently that she is a writer particularly concerned with women's issues and that she is a feminist.

Hariharan was born in 1954 in Coimbatore, South India to a Tamil Nadu Brahmin family. She grew up in Bombay and Manila. Her father was a journalist for a leading Indian newspaper "The Times of India". She worked in Bombay, Madras and New Delhi as an editor. She had a happy childhood. She was a voracious reader and grew up in the intoxicating company of books. Hariharan's published books include novels, short stories, essays, newspapers, articles and columns. Her first novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992) won the commonwealth writers prize in 1993. Her other novels are *The Ghost of Vasu Master* (1994), *When Dreams Travel* (1999), *In Times of Siege* (2003), *Fugitive History* (2009) and *I Have Become the Tide* (2019). Her fiction has been translated into a number of languages including French, Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch, Greek, Urdu and Vietnamese.

Like Hariharan, Anita Nair is also a Committed and bold novelist who explores female psyche. She exposes the conditions of women with wit and humour. Nair, a socially committed writers, portrays her women protagonists and their encounter of trials and tribulations under the impact of the conflicting influence of social issues. She projects her characters response to the emerging situations in life so as to fit them in the contemporary society. Nair's novels and writings include cook books, deal with all facets of female life. Born on 26th January, 1966 in a place called Mundakottakurissi near Shoranur in Kerala, she grew up in Chennai. She moved to an obscure little college in Kerala-NSS Ottapalam, where she did her B.A., in English Language and Literature. Her career as a writer began in the beginning of the 1990s with the publication of novels and articles in newspapers, previously, she has worked as a journalist and copywriter.

Nair is an emerging novelist, who writes with great energy and creates amazing works at ease. Her style is modern and her views are universal in appeal. Nair's novels include *The better Man*, (1999) *Ladies coupe* (2001) has turned out to be a greater success to her and have been translated into twenty-one languages.

Review of Literature

- As the critic C. Vijayasree states in her article, “Revisionist Myth – Making “, A woman is not primarily a wife or a mother but an individual with her own work world cut out for her”. (Vijayasree 180)
- As an Indian Book critics (2020), Aditya Shankar states Akhila takes the centre stage in the novel and becomes the symbol of women trapped in the male dominated ‘Indian Society ‘
- Anita Myles (2006) states in her book, “Feminism and the Post Modern Indian Women Novelist in English” that woman whether she is America, Canada and Africa or India the problems of women is still remains the same in this patriarchal society, to overcome the pain she has started writing about herself. Many of the Indian women novelist had dealt with issues which are related to women, they are of women’s perspective or the flora and fauna. Today, they are enjoying an increasing appreciation and reputation.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the brief historical development of Indian English Novel with the emergence of Indian English women Novelists on the literary horizons.
- To examine the portrayal of women in Indian society, particularly their struggles for identity and freedom with in a patriarchal framework.
- To explore themes of subjugation, self- realization, and the search for individuality.

Research Methodology

The methodology of research for this paper is descriptive, analytical, critical, and interpretative. The researcher has studied various papers of the other scholars and based on that; the characters themes and identity crises are analyzed.

Theoretical Framework

Each chapter of the book carries unique theme with itself, as one chapter cater to certain concept while the other one had completely different thought around which the chapter is represented. The central theme of Githa Hariharan's novel "The Thousand Faces of Night" revolves around the marriage. The author talked about the issues that the protagonist, Devi faced in dealing with the men and society, problems and inner tensions that a woman had to face in her life. It was the story of a girl, Devi who studied abroad in the modernized and westernized society, came back to India and got arranged marriage with in the social structure in male dominating society where she cannot identify herself and felt miserable and indifferent.

The text portrays the lives of other female characters that faced similar kind of problems as Devi because of their gender and come out to be strong women at the end of their life. Basically, the author described how well those women faced challenges and develops their own unique identity during the course of their life.

The author elaborated on the idea of gender as the cause of women suffering and positioning in the society. Due to their gender, the life of woman changes after her marriage because now the husband and the male dominating society demands totally different role and responsibilities to be performed by them. Now their only duty remains is to look after their husband, in-laws, household work, and producing son. Now here in the text, has the word daughter been used for referring to the birth of the new child in the family. Throughout the text, it was seen that the women has to do all the sacrifices in her life beginning from the very birth to adapting the culture of

her husband's home. After marriage, there remain no self-identity of the woman expect being as the vehicle of carrying household load and performing the role of pure and complete wife. Satisfying the needs of her husband both physical, social and emotional become the only job of the women. Her wills are nowhere taken into consideration. All the characters are presented in the story became the victim of their own gender and lose their sense of self and identity.

Anita Nair through her novel *Mistress* touches the theme of Man-Woman relationship and introduces the mood of love that shapes the bond of marriage. The three corner of the triangle shared by Shyam, Radha, and Chris and their acts signify the aspect of search for true love. Koman's live showcases the plight of an artist who finds himself in a piquant situation, as he could not balance the two instincts as a performer and as a husband. Fear, Secrecy and the feeling of betrayal play havoc in marriage as they uproot the very essence of true love.

In the words of Nair, "Fear makes one do things one would never do otherwise. Fear lets you compromise. Fear will even let you seduce your husband so that he thinks he imagined your betrayal, and that you still are his" (253). The notion that children symbolizing reflections of understanding act as building blocks in sustaining the relationship between a husband and a wife is being showed, as Shyam tries to relieve himself from the doom of impotency and becomes frustrated in taking control of his life and makes attempts to bring Radha from the influence of Chris.

In *Mistress* there is a dominant male ideology about the nature, role, and characteristics of women. In Nairs' novel the male characters like Shyam, Stewart, Sethu, Vapa represent the male ideology that women are like nature and they have to be explored. This article discusses how women like Radha and Saadiya in the novel face the predicament and subjectivity and identity crises in the male dominated society.

Nair presents the inner state of women who tried to be an obedient partner for their husband in the ego of male dominated society hurt their feelings and desire which convert into tragedy of dissatisfaction of married life. And also, she explores the vision of gender identity in the patriarchal society. Radha is not happy with Shyam, she does not want to get married with Shyam, but her family compels her in the name of society and ritual. Evenly Saadiya is not allowed by her father Vapa to go out of home and venture in the alley. Sethu is another person with strong male ideology, who dominates Saadiya being lover and husband time and again. Saadiya remains in the four walls of her house that have become her world as mentioned by her father vapa. She just knows about her real place from the books "Nadira's house" where she is living. Only she is allowed to read about the Arab by her tutor. Thus she knows where she is living and how is her living place from the book! The both Radha and Saadiya are treated like passive nature reflected through Nila in the novel. They both longing to know the reality and want to escape from the chain of male dominated society and they resist in their own way ahead somehow.

Conclusion

In her novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*, Hariharan has tried to tackle the problem of the suppressed and oppressed women who are searching for self-identity in India. She has given this malady a new dimension. The question of female identity has become a real, palpable, human problem in our modern Indian Society. Her vision for women is to be resilient and get positivity. In *Mistress*, Nair presents a wife being raped by her husband. Men think that their wives are their possessions. Indian husbands believe that the status of a husband gives him the license to assault his wife or to treat her in whatever way he wants. Nair is excellent in depicting the inner furies of women and their rising tone for emancipation and empowerment. Life yields self-knowledge which imparts them the strength of accepting that a woman desires to

succeed like an individual is not incompatible with her desire for love or small pleasure of domesticity.

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE REPRESENTATION OF TRAUMA AND SUICIDE IN THE MALAYALAM MOVIES *KADHAVASHESHAN* AND *UTHARAM*

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Abstract

It is rather rare to find nuanced and sensitive depictions of trauma, suicide and mental health in commercially successful movies. The lack of awareness and the stigma attached to mental health only make matters worse. In a discourse where trauma or a mental health anomaly is immediately equated with madness, it is appreciable that at least some depictions look past this dominant narrative of either the monstrosity or the haplessness of a victim, and instead showcase a humane, empathetic side of such characters whose faults are mere vulnerabilities, not signs of a decaying core. The two movies chosen for study were helmed by critically acclaimed directors and the lead roles are played by prominent actors of the Malayalam film industry, and they managed to catch the interest of the average movie goer as well as the critics. There are a lot of parallels in the selected movies, especially in terms of the narrative technique and the way the plot is structured, but they both convey very different notions, which the researcher seeks to unpack through this paper. The paper explores how these movies handle the concepts of trauma and

suicide, while also examining how these concepts work differently when viewed through the lens of gender. Through this, the researcher has attempted to offer a comparative analysis of the portrayal of trauma and suicide in the chosen movies.

Keywords: Trauma, Suicide, Gender politics, Movies, Stigma.

Introduction

Trauma theory has made rapid inroads into the literary discourse in the last two decades or so, with its origin often traced to the publication of Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience* in 1991. This reinterpretation of Freud's repetition compulsion lays emphasis on the recursion of the traumatic memory, which was barely registered during the actual event, but continues to haunt the traumatic subject, forcing them to claim it. Narratives of trauma are often scrutinized because of the unreliability of the traumatic subject, as they are unable to perceive the tragedy or violence that befell them as it transpires, they only experience it belatedly through flashbacks that retain the visual and affective intensity of the traumatic event.

The medium of film offers a conducive canvas to adequately showcase trauma, with its visual and auditory cues mapping the silences and gaps in memory of the traumatic subject. The victims of trauma in the movies chosen for analysis are dead right at the onset, and have no narrative voice except as sceptres of their past shown in flashback sequences. One of the protagonists is a victim of an intensely personal trauma while the other, a victim of social and political trauma. But both suffer, if briefly, from "a mania for memory...likely to arise at moments of crisis, at times when memory comes to be felt as fragile and threatened- a frequent after-effect of trauma" (Schönfelder 2). This maniacal rush of the traumatic memory overwhelms the protagonists, shattering assumptions of their own competence and control. It makes them question their trust in justice, a sense of order and the benevolence of the

universe. Almost instantly, they are overcome with feelings of shame, guilt and helplessness, and seek to escape their suffering by ending their lives.

The Malayalam movie *Utharam*, directed by V.K. Pavithran, was released in 1989, and the screenplay, which is an adaptation of Daphne du Maurier's short story *No Motive*, was penned by M.T. Vasudevan Nair. The movie has Mammooty playing the role of journalist Balu, who sets out to seek answers to a personal tragedy. He is asked by his friend and mentor Mathew to investigate the reason behind the sudden, inexplicable suicide of his wife, Selina Joseph, who is a budding poetess. Balu is perplexed because Selina seems to have lived in perfect harmony with her surroundings, basking in marital bliss and settling into the comforts of an affluent life, pursuing her literary ambitions. Balu wants to figure out what triggered such an extreme reaction in the relatively serene and peaceful life of Selina, so he sets out to collect more information regarding her childhood and upbringing. A major part of the movie is an homage to the sleuthing skills of Balu, who is able to dig out buried truths and piece together the puzzle of Selina's troubled past. What he does with the findings is also interesting, as it threatens to topple the supposed normalcy of their lives.

Kadhavasheshan, written and directed by T.V. Chandran, was released in 2004 and is the first movie in the trilogy of movies on the Gujarat riots of 2002 by the director. The movie starred Dileep in the lead role as Gopinath Menon, a man with a seemingly 'normal' life, an engineer who has travelled widely as part of his job and is about to get married to Renuka, an aspiring writer played by Jyothirmayi. The audience bears witness to Gopi's suicide right at the beginning of the film, and the rest of the movie is Renuka's search for the unexpected turn of events that led to the death of Gopi. The movie opens with a quote by Albert Camus, and sets out to paint a picture of the existential angst of the protagonist. Renuka meets Gopi's family, friends and acquaintances, trying to get to know her dead fiancée through their anecdotes. She finds him to be a sensitive and kind man with a strong will, who has

weathered a breakup and the loss of his mother rather bravely and was always willing to help someone in need. Her journey in search of the reason that prompted Gopi's suicide gives her lots of insights into the kind of person that he was but does not yield any conclusive answer. Finally, she meets another of his devastated friends who has come to offer his condolences and is able to arrive at the conclusion that Gopi was ashamed of being alive in a world that is capable of inflicting immense pain and grave injustice.

The parallels in both the movies are noteworthy, given that they are more than a decade apart and tackle different stories. Both movies have suicide as the central event, and what drives the narrative forward is the hunt for the cause of this untimely tragedy. The people who set out to search for answers have a close, personal bond with the deceased and feel obligated to establish this causality so as to make sense of the sudden loss they are left to deal with. A sense of mystery is induced because of the apparent 'normalcy' in the lives of the deceased, the fact that they were well-integrated into the folds of society, following norms and leading lives that were approved by the society. Both movies follow a non-linear style of narration, hopping back and forth between the past and present through flashbacks, and there is a sense of uncertainty lingering throughout. Since the protagonists are already dead and all of the unravelling happens posthumously through anecdotal episodes, there is also a feeling that the narration may not be entirely reliable. While this unreliability is inevitable in most trauma narratives, the director pointedly includes a sequence in *Kadhavasheshan*, where Gopi's ex-girlfriend narrates a tale of their platonic love, whereas what is shown on screen is entirely different, to further cement the notion that there really is no way of knowing what truly happened and one could always question the veracity of every reason uncovered, every twist in the tale but no confirmation could be achieved as trauma had already consumed its victim, depriving him of his life and voice.

The defining parallel that is to be discussed in this paper is how these movies portray the trauma of the protagonists. In her introduction to the volume of essays titled *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Caruth notes, “trauma is not a simple or single experience of events but that events, insofar as they are traumatic, assume their force precisely in their temporal delay” (9). In both movies, Balu and Renuka embark on their investigative journey, looking for one extreme event or reason that led to the death of their beloved. Instead, what they uncover are instances of trauma accumulated over periods of time and stifled within, lurking just beneath the surface, ultimately triggered by one instance to which the victims succumb. In the case of Selina, it is the traumatic memory of her rape, which had completely skipped her consciousness and of which she had no idea at all, even as she got pregnant and delivered a child. Her defences prompt her to think of it as an immaculate conception, and she at no point ventures to look beyond this fantasy for reasons or explanations. Caruth talks about a similar lack of memory in her work as she quotes Henry Krystal from his essay, saying “No trace of registration of any kind is left in the psyche, instead, a void, a hole is found” (6). Selina explores this void, this darkness, in her poetry, which Balu initially misinterprets to be her mourning the loss of her mother, who died when she was just a child. But the fact that the return of her abandoned child as a beggar, whose facial features identify him as belonging to a certain ethnic group, brings back an onslaught of her traumatic and painful past signifies that on some subconscious level, she was mourning the void left by her trauma. This confrontation with her traumatic past broke all her defences and she was too shaken to regain her composure. If the sight of her illegitimate son was the immediate trigger that made her shoot herself, it was but the tip of her traumatic iceberg. It brought back memories that she didn’t know she possessed, and it must have overwhelmed her, filling her with shame and terror, forcing her to re-evaluate her entire life within a span of seconds.

Gopi has had his tryst with death, first of his mother and then, rather unexpectedly, the death of his colleague's little daughter, whom he was particularly fond of. He accompanies his friend on his journey back to his remote hometown to bury his dead child. This journey is riddled with inconveniences, and Gopi's sensitive nature almost breaks his spirit, spending a whole night alone with the corpse of the little girl whom he dearly loved. This incident almost serves as a precursor to the final collapse of Gopi's consciousness. On the fateful day of his suicide, Gopi happens to see the picture of a dead girl in the newspaper. One look at the picture and Gopi is heartbroken, as he recognizes the girl as his neighbour in Gujarat, a shy, young girl whose mellifluous voice resonated with him long after he left the place. The news that she was brutally gang-raped and left in a ditch to die breaks Gopi, and he is unable to come to terms with how the world chooses to carry on with its business while a young girl was robbed of her life so cruelly. He is ashamed of his own existence as a helpless human leading a comfortable life while something so brutal and ugly unfolded. His privilege upsets him and he chooses to relinquish his life as a protest. His suicide is his statement against the supposed normal lives of his contemporaries, whose lives go on unaffected as long as the tragedy did not personally strike their homes.

Even though the motives behind the suicides of Selina and Gopi are completely different, it is apparent that they both succumbed to a trauma that they were carrying from much earlier. To quote Caruth once again, "For those who undergo trauma, it is not only the moment of the event, but of the passing out of it that is traumatic; that survival itself, in other words, can be a crisis" (9). The belatedness of their trauma also means that they did not have anybody to share their truths with. There is a collapse of witness, their personal truths do not have a receiver. Their death is shown as a mystery to be solved by those who are left behind. They succumb to their trauma, bogged down by the entire weight of their traumatic memory.

Though both movies belong to the genres of mystery, thriller and drama, there is a significant difference in the narrative technique. While *Kadhavasheshan* treats its protagonist's suicide as an almost heroic act of existential anger and angst, *Utharam* views Selina's suicide as a device to further the plot, even if it is the pivotal point of the whole narrative. Both movies venture beyond the stereotype of a suffering, hapless victim who takes to suicide as the last resort and instead portray the protagonists as intelligent, creative individuals who were sensitive and inclined to literature and poetry. A moment of collapse, an unexpected trigger that let loose an avalanche of hidden trauma is what led to the untimely death of these individuals. The fact that Balu chooses to divulge the fact that they were raped to Selina's friend Shyamala, despite knowing that the memory of rape pushed Selina to kill herself, is problematic, particularly because later he chooses to withhold this information from his friend Mathew to save him from further pain and desperation. Shyamala, who had also lost her memories of the gruesome event, is rudely handed this piece of devastating information which serves her no purpose at all except to send her down a spiral. The fact that the writers expected her to handle this trauma and even venture into a married life with Balu while telling the viewers that the same trauma killed Selina seems antithetical, even if one were to argue that everyone processes trauma differently. It could also be noted that when the protagonist succumbs to a personal tragedy, it is usually a female, whereas the heroic, existential and almost sacrificial suicide is committed by a male protagonist.

Conclusion

Despite these inconsistencies, it could be said that both movies were much ahead of their times in the way they handled the topics of trauma and suicide. The movies succeeded in portraying the intensity of the trauma experienced by the protagonists without reducing them to mere caricatures of suffering, and instead as outliers of a dysfunctional, traumatogenic society.

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VOICES OF RESISTANCE: THE EVOLUTION OF FEMINIST THOUGHT IN LITERATURE

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Abstract

The domain of Feminist Literature is a broad subject advocating women's welfare in society. The main task of the feminist writers seems to stand guard against the curbing patriarchal norms. The marginalization of women, their predicament, struggle for identity, finding their own space is the theme. The most prominent names among such pioneers are Simon de Beauvoir, Mary Wollstonecraft and Virginia Woolf. And like others Julia Kristeva, Helen Cixous, Elaine Showalter and Sandra Gilbert. After the end of World War-II the history of Indian women novelist got a new track and new vision. In this period Kamala Markanday, Ruth Prawar Jhabvala are the most outstanding ones. Then comes Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, who herald a new era in the realm psychological portrayal of the women characters. Shashi Deshpande, Shobha Dey, Manju Kapur, Bharati Mukherjee, Arundhati Roy, Rama Mehata. The conflict between tradition and modernity finds a prominent place in the Portrayal of women by novelists. In their novels, one could sense the authors urge for way of living which would responds to the inner most yearning of the Indian women for self-emancipation and self-dignity in the society.

Keywords: Struggle, Conflict, Self-dignity, Self –emancipation, Search for identity

Introduction

Human Rights gives equal right to men and women. But women are not fair treated in the real affairs of life. They are discriminated and deprived of human rights by the society. They are discriminated from the birth to the end of their life. Though, the post-modern age has changed the old concept of women's sub-ordination and subjugation, they are still forced to be servile in spite of their ability to lead their male partners. Daughters are considered less important than sons. The mother is not considered in the family and the society unless she becomes the mother of a son. These are the cases of depriving of the human rights and exploitation of women's in the family. Many women writers have raised the voices against such discrimination and tried their best to establish the identity of women. During the last decades of twentieth century, there was a spurt in feministic outlook and search for women's identity. A number of women writers came on the fore front to raise their voices against ages-old prejudiced bias of patriarchy system against women in all social and economic affairs of life.

The society we live in is a patriarchal society, where often the child-father relationship is given more attention and revered rather than mother daughter relationship. But there is an issue of poor mother-daughter relationship which is rarely discussed openly in mainstream culture as it appears to be more "dysfunctional" because women are believed to be more nurturing, emphatic and social which prevents them from having any serious conflicts with their children. The fact is that broken mother-daughter relationships are more common than most are aware. It feels that this complex relationship can be taken similar to a roller coaster where some parts of the ride can be fun, thrilling and crazy while there may be some other stretches of that some ride also where one feels anxious, fearful and alienated. The studies suggest that nearly thirty percent of women have been estranged from their mothers at some point

in their life. And this is especially true at the two extreme levels of the society: the very highly sophisticated class and the very poverty driven class.

Patriarchal structures are such that the head of the family is a man who controls woman's sexuality, labor, production, reproduction, and mobility. Birth of a male child was celebrated with great vigor and ethnicity but when it was a girl child, there was neglect as she was considered a burden and was not welcomed in family. The patriarchal construct is controlled by men. According to Gera Lerner, family plays an important role in creating a hierarchal system which not only mirrors the order in the state and educates its children but also creates and constantly reinforces that order. There are many Indian novelists who have written novels that bring forth the deplorable condition of woman in her own family. They depict the women position in family and society and the gender discrimination with authentic and impressionable language. The struggle of an Indian woman for her true identity clearly emerges in the Indian English novels. Rama Mehta's, *Inside the Haveli*, Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich like Us*, Gita Hariharan's, *The Thousand Faces of Night*, are some of the novels that use this theme of feminism and highlights the status of woman in Indian societies. Anita Desai's, *Cry the Peacock*, *Where Shall We Go This Summer* and *Voices in the City*, are some of the examples of feministic theory. More authors like Gita Mehta, Shama Futeh Ali and Nisha De Cunha work exclusively on themes of family and gender relationship. Kamala Das and Kamala Markandaya are two well renowned feminist writers of India. Some more examples of woman subjectivity-oriented English novels of India are Ruth Prawar Jhabwala's, *To Whom She Will*, Kamala Markandya's, *Two Virgins* and Santha Rama Rau's, *Remember the House*.

Krupabai Satthianadhan is another early exponent of women's writing in Indian English literature. She is the only woman who wrote more than one novel in English in nineteenth century India. Her novels *Kamala*, *A Story of Hindu Life* (1894), *Saguna* (1895), *Attia Hosain* (1913- 98).

Kamala Markandaya (1924- 2004), a prolific writer has many novels to her credit. Some of her celebrated novels are: *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), *Some Inner Fury* (1955), *A Silence of Desire* (1960), *A Handful of Rice* (1966), *Possession* (1963), and *The Coffers* (1969). Markandaya's novels deal with the problems of women in Indian society. Her early novels have traditional notes but later she reflects upon the roles of women and their struggle for emancipation.

Ruth Praver Jhabvala (1927) is also a prominent writer among Indian women novelists. She has produced a number of novels which deal with the problems of Indian women. Her works include: *To Whom she Will* (1955), *The Nature of Passion* (1956), *Esmond in India* (1958), *The Householder* (1960), *Get Ready for Battle* (1962), *A Background Place* (1965), *Heat and Dust* (1975), *A New Dimension* (1973) and *Three Continents* (1987). Jhabvala's novels have the themes of western culture and Indian culture. Her novels reflect the scenario of Indian women who are influenced by western culture and struggle for cultural identity. She is mainly concerned with the family life, the personal relationship and the social problems.

Nayantara Sahgal (1927) knows how to mix history and politics in her novels. *Rich like Us* (1985) is perhaps her best-known work; well-appreciated in the country and abroad. We should learn to adjust ourselves in changing social and political situations for survival in contemporary society. Central characters Rose and Sonali struggle a lot for survival in the book.

Kamala Das (1934) was born in Punnayurkulam, Thrissur, and district in Kerala. She is a major Indian English poet and litterateur. She is noted for her Malayalam short stories and poems written in English. She was born in a conservative Hindu Nair family having royal ancestry. She adopted Islam in 1999 at the age of 65 and assumed the name Kamala Surayya. She launched a national political party Lok Seva Party, aiming asylum to orphaned mothers and promotion of secularism. She is

the author of *The Sirens* (1964), *summer in Calcutta* (1965), she won awards like Asian Poetry Prize for *The Sirens* and Kent's Award for *summer in Calcutta*.

Anita Desai (1937), a very famous name in Indian English literature attained immense popularity because of creating real pictures of Indian women. Reading Anita Desai is a new experience; her subject is to study the mental or psychological activity of the protagonists. Her projection of women characters is life like. She does not rest on revealing the feeling of alienation, neglect, submission and all kinds of women's suffering in her novels, but she raises a voice against gender discrimination. *Fire on the Mountain* (1977) and *Shashi Deshpande* (1938), novels also investigate women's problems in the male-dominated Indian society. They deal with traditional and cultural values and at the same time with women's struggle for their rights, freedom and thirst for individual identity. As a novelist she is a realist; wrote at least half a dozen novels; and won the Sahitya Academi Award in 1989 for *That Long Silence* (1988). She examines the roles and duties of a woman in a family and society through *Jaya*; *Jaya*, an Indian lady, represents every woman and her search for identity. The novel records some most intimate feelings. Her other novels are: *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), *Roots and Shadows* (1983), *The Binding Vine* (1993), *A Matter of Time* (1996) and *Small Remedies*.

Bharti Mukherjee (1940), has written at least eight novels and out of them her third novel *Jasmine* (1989) remains perhaps the best. It is a story of the struggles of a young girl from India, who went to America in search of shelter, employment and identity, or above all, a new life she wants to start in a foreign society diametrically different from the previous one, after the tragic death of her first husband.

Shama Futehally (1952-2004), left a permanent impression on our mind by creating a character *Tahera* in her novel *Tara Lane* (1993). The fortunes of *Tahera* and her family, changing times and lives, are described in simple prose. It is a short but excellent work. She ranks with senior writers of the fiction.

Githa Hariharan (1954), first celebrated novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992) won the prestigious Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 1993. The book describes the difficulties and dilemmas; Indian women face in society; society expects obedience and submission still from them. In her fiction the past and the present mingle. She has written a couple of more novels.

Chitra Banerjee (1956), is a versatile literary figure; as a novelist she is remembered for *The Mistress of Spices* (1997) and *Sister of My Heart* (1999). Tilo finally transforms herself into the Mistress of Spices. But she has to choose one between business and romance. The second novel focuses on the close connection between the sisters, Anju and Sudha.

Arundhati Roy (1960), the writer of *The God of Small Things* (1997) succeeded in achieving big things; this book made her an international celebrity; raises some serious issues relating to religion, sex, caste and class; society cannot tolerate the relationship of Velutha with Ammu; and he beaten to death. His death means that inter- caste marriage or love is fraught with risks; leads to grave situation.

Kiran Desai (1971), is one of the most contemporary living women novelists. She is a successful international writer of the fiction; explores the issue of fractured identity; points out a clash between the cultures or the communities, or changing life styles in her books *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* and *The Inheritance of Loss*. In her debut novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998), Desai presents a humorous yet thoughtful portrayal of a young man who withdraws from the pressures of society, highlighting issues of personal identity and societal expectations. The narrative reflects the absurdities of modern life and the struggle to find one's place within it.

Her Booker Prize-winning novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) delves even more deeply into the complexities of identity, migration, and globalization. The story traces the lives of characters caught between cultures—whether in the Himalayas or

abroad—revealing the emotional and psychological impact of colonial history, economic change, and shifting cultural landscapes. Through their experiences, Desai illustrates how individuals grapple with belonging, alienation, and the loss of cultural roots. Together, these two novels demonstrate Desai's skill in capturing the intricate tensions of modern life, where identity is often shaped by competing cultural forces and rapidly changing social worlds.

Manju Kapur is a contemporary woman novelist, who has used fiction as a medium to illustrate the struggle of urban women in the Indian society to attain equality and an independent status in the family and the society. Her works project the transgression of a silent and a submissive woman to an assertive, awakened and an empowered woman, who gradually defy patriarchal norms. Woman has right to create her identity. Through her nuanced storytelling, Manju Kapur captures the internal conflicts, emotional journeys, and silent resilience of women navigating the complexities of marriage, motherhood, and societal expectations. Her protagonists often challenge traditional roles by pursuing education, careers, and personal freedom, thereby asserting their agency in a world that seeks to confine them. By portraying women who question injustice and demand dignity, Kapur reinforces the idea that a woman's identity is not confined to domestic boundaries but is shaped by her choices, aspirations, and the courage to redefine her place in society.

Conclusion

Family is an important institution for socializing the next generation in patriarchal values and children are brought up in a way that the boy learns to be dominating while the girl is conditioned to be caring, loving and submissive. Feminist writings bring to light the patriarchal ideology that justifies the dominant, hegemonic, hierarchical, unequal and unjust structures. The themes pertaining to woman which had long been suppressed and were not being brought out in the open are now being

increasingly written about. The hidden thoughts, feelings and the realization of a woman are found in the feministic oriented novels of India.

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GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY ACCURACY IN SPOKEN ENGLISH AMONG REGIONAL LANGUAGE HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS: A THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract

Mastering English speaking skills pivots on a solid understanding of grammar and vocabulary, which is especially vital for higher secondary students who have been educated in regional languages. In India, a country teeming with linguistic diversity, students from backgrounds like Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada often encounter unique hurdles when they switch to English for their academic and everyday communication. This paper renders a theoretical and empirical analysis of the difficulties faced by the regional learners, focusing on their grammatical and lexical accuracy. Based on classroom experiences, reviewing relevant literature, and examining theories of second language acquisition, the study investigates how factors like first language interference, limited vocabulary exposure, and performance anxiety lead to errors in spoken English. Further, it proposes teaching strategies such

as context-driven grammar exercises, theme-oriented vocabulary lessons, and the integration of digital resources to boost accuracy.

A research framework that consists of diagnostic assessments, mixed-method interventions, and both qualitative and quantitative evaluations is suggested for future studies. Ultimately, this paper seeks to lay the groundwork for further empirical research and curriculum enhancements aimed at improving spoken English skills among students from regional language backgrounds.

Keywords: Grammar Accuracy, Vocabulary Development, Regional Language Learners, Second Language Acquisition, Language Pedagogy

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale

In today's interconnected world, being skilled in English is increasingly observed as a vital asset for academic success, career opportunities, and effective communication. While written English has traditionally taken centre stage in Indian education, there's a growing recognition that speaking skills—especially the ability to communicate accurately in English—are just as important. As Thornbury emphasizes, “accuracy does matter, particularly in public, formal, and academic speaking situations” (How to Teach Speaking 36). Unfortunately, in many schools where regional languages like Malayalam, Kannada, or Bengali are the medium of instruction, students often have limited opportunities to hear and practice authentic spoken English, which can hinder their communication skills. “Learners need opportunities not just to learn about language, but to use it meaningfully and interactively,” argue Richards and Renandya, reinforcing the need to shift focus from rote learning to real usage (Methodology in Language Teaching 3). This issue becomes particularly critical during the higher secondary phase, a crucial time that shapes students' career paths and access to higher education. Krashen's Input

Hypothesis further underlines this issue, stating that “language is acquired in only one way—by exposure to comprehensible input” (Principles and Practice 20). Unfortunately, many regional learners are not exposed to adequate listening or speaking input, making this acquisition process harder. Students who have been educated in their regional languages up to this point suddenly find themselves expected to thrive in an English-centric academic environment, which may require them to give presentations, take part in interviews, engage in group discussions, and more.

Language learning, especially speaking, relies on both accuracy and fluency. Fluency is about how effortlessly a speaker can express themselves, while accuracy pertains to the correctness of grammar and vocabulary. This paper focuses on the issue of accuracy, aiming to pinpoint the challenges that prevent students from achieving grammatical and lexical correctness and exploring ways to enhance these skills through informed teaching practices.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This study holds significant importance by shedding light on the unique challenges the learners encounter and pinpointing effective teaching strategies, educators and curriculum developers can create more inclusive and impactful language programs. Additionally, this research adds to the broader field of English Language Teaching (ELT) by examining the connections between second language acquisition theories, classroom observations, and practical teaching methods tailored to local contexts.

Swain emphasizes that language development is not solely about comprehension but also about production: “It is through speaking that learners realize what they do not know, which helps them to reorganize their knowledge” (Swain 249). This study is relevant, as it responds to the growing need for research that tackles the specific challenges faced by Indian learners in mastering spoken English.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To explore the significance of accuracy in grammar and vocabulary for spoken English.
- To identify common grammatical and lexical challenges faced by higher secondary students from regional language backgrounds.
- To propose pedagogical strategies rooted in theory that can improve accuracy in spoken English.
- To establish a research framework based on diagnostics and interventions for future application.

2. Understanding the Subskill: Accuracy in Grammar and Vocabulary

2.1 What is Accuracy?

As Thornbury defines, “accuracy concerns the extent to which a learner’s use of language conforms to the target language norms” (How to Teach Speaking 20). In spoken English, grammatical accuracy means using tenses, articles, prepositions, subject-verb agreement and word order correctly. On the other hand, lexical accuracy is about picking the right words for the situation, which includes collocations, idiomatic phrases, and the nuances of meaning. For example, if a student says, “He go to school yesterday,” that’s a grammatical slip regarding tense. Meanwhile, saying “big pain” instead of “severe pain” is a vocabulary misstep. According to Nation, “vocabulary use is crucial to communicative competence and to successful communication in a second language” (Learning Vocabulary 2). Thus, both grammatical and lexical accuracy are foundational to successful spoken interaction.

2.2 Importance of Grammar and Vocabulary Accuracy in Speaking

As Canale and Swain assert, grammatical competence is “one of the most important components of communicative competence” and is essential for constructing meaningful utterances in a second language (5). In educational environments, the need for accurate grammar and vocabulary becomes even more critical, particularly when students are discussing topics, clarifying ideas, or presenting their thoughts. Thornbury also highlights the long-term importance of developing accuracy early in language instruction: “Fluency can mask a lack of accuracy. Over time, this fossilization of errors becomes harder to correct” (How to Teach Speaking 36).

3. Observed Challenges in Regional Medium Learners

Students who are learning in regional language mediums encounter a distinct linguistic journey compared to their counterparts in English medium schools. By the time they reach higher secondary education, they suddenly find themselves needing to demonstrate a high level of spoken English proficiency, especially in competitive situations like exams, interviews, and public speaking events. As Richards and Renandya point out, “many learners fail to develop spoken fluency and accuracy because they have had little opportunity for actual language use in meaningful interaction” (Methodology in Language Teaching 121).

3.1 First Language (L1) Interference

One of the prevalent hurdles for learners from regional language backgrounds is the interference from their first language. This occurs when they unintentionally apply phonological, grammatical, or lexical rules from their native language while speaking English. For instance, in Malayalam, the sentence structure usually follows a Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) order, whereas English uses a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) format. This fundamental difference can lead to mistakes, such as saying “He

a letter wrote” instead of “He wrote a letter.” Selinker refers to this phenomenon as “language transfer,” a core feature of interlanguage, which he describes as a “unique linguistic system resulting from the learner’s attempt to produce the target language using their first language structures” (Selinker 215). Moreover, certain grammatical features in English—like articles, auxiliary verbs, or specific tense forms—might not be present in the learners’ native languages, resulting in omissions or incorrect usage.

3.2 Partial Lexical Range

Learners from regional language backgrounds often depend on a limited set of English words and phrases. This limited exposure leads to the repetitive use of basic words like “good,” “nice,” or “big,” rather than opting for more precise alternatives like “effective,” “pleasant,” or “significant.”

Nation emphasizes that “vocabulary size is the single most significant factor in reading and speaking proficiency,” and that limited vocabulary “restricts learners’ ability to express themselves with clarity” (Learning Vocabulary 29). Furthermore, as Krashen notes, “learners acquire vocabulary and grammar when they understand language input that contains these features in a comprehensible way” (Principles and Practice 21). In regional schools, such input is often missing due to the academic rather than communicative use of English.

3.3 Deficient Practice of Spoken Grammar

In schools where regional languages are the medium of instruction, grammar lessons usually focus on written exercises, memorizing rules, and correcting writing errors, rather than weaving grammar into spoken language. Thornbury asserts that “knowing a grammar rule is not the same as being able to use it in real-time communication” (How to Teach Speaking 44). For instance, a student could correctly fill in the blank with “has gone” in a written assignment but might say “He gone to

school" when speaking. Speaking requires quick thinking, and without enough practice, students find it hard to internalize these grammatical structures.

3.4 Performance Anxiety and Inhibition

Krashen argues that “a low affective filter facilitates language acquisition,” meaning that anxiety and fear can block the input and output processes essential to learning (Principles and Practice 31). Learners from regional backgrounds often worry about making mistakes, being laughed at by their peers, or receiving negative feedback. This anxiety can stifle their participation and limit their chances to practice.

3.5 Lack of Exposure to Interactive Environments

Richards and Renandya stress that “speaking practice must involve interaction, negotiation of meaning, and real-time language use” (Methodology in Language Teaching 123). Unfortunately, in many regional settings, lessons remain lecture-based, with little student talk-time. Rather than being a tool for communication, English is often treated just like any other subject. Students miss out on engaging in discussions, debates, storytelling, or even casual conversations in English.

4. Theoretical Foundations Supporting Accuracy Development

To enhance grammatical and vocabulary accuracy among learners of regional languages, we should take a closer look at Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories. These frameworks provide insight into how learners process language, why they make mistakes, and what types of input and instruction can help them tackle their challenges.

4.1 Communicative Competence (Canale & Swain, 1980)

Canale and Swain’s model of communicative competence serves as a cornerstone in language education, highlighting four key components of language proficiency: Grammatical, Sociolinguistic, Discourse and Strategic competence. Of

these, grammatical competence—the ability to use syntax, morphology, vocabulary, and phonology correctly—is foundational to spoken accuracy. As they note, this type of competence is “concerned with the mastery of the language code itself” (Canale and Swain 6). A student may have brilliant ideas but can struggle to convey them clearly without a solid grasp of grammar. Thus, teaching should focus on helping learners internalize structures that promote both correctness and effective communication.

4.2 Interlanguage Theory (Selinker, 1972)

Larry Selinker introduced the concept of interlanguage, which describes the dynamic linguistic system that learners develop as they work towards mastering a new language. This system showcases influences from their native language alongside their growing understanding of English. Understanding interlanguage enables teachers to view these errors as part of the learning process and to provide feedback that gently steers students toward more accurate language use.

4.3 Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (1982)

Stephen Krashen highlighted the importance of comprehensible input—language that’s just a step beyond what the learner already knows (often referred to as $i+1$). As Krashen writes, “we acquire language when we understand messages” (Principles and Practice 21). In practical terms, this means giving students listening and reading materials that introduce new vocabulary and grammar in contexts that make sense to them. Storytelling, conversations with teachers, and interactions with peers can all provide excellent sources of this comprehensible input.

4.4 Swain’s Output Hypothesis (1985)

While Krashen emphasized input, Merrill Swain brought attention to the significance of output—speaking and writing—as essential for language development. According to Swain, “output pushes learners to process language more

deeply... and to test out their hypotheses about how the language works” (“Communicative Competence” 249). Activities like role-plays, debates, and group discussions are vital not just for building fluency but also for enhancing accuracy.

4.5 Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978)

Vygotsky's theory underscores the crucial role of social interaction in learning. He suggested that learners progress through collaborative dialogue within what's known as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)—the gap between what they can do independently and what they can achieve with help. In the context of language learning, this means students can improve their grammar and vocabulary accuracy through guided speaking activities with their classmates and teachers.

5. Strategies for Enhancing Grammar and Vocabulary Accuracy

To help learners from diverse backgrounds boost their grammar and vocabulary skills in spoken English, teaching strategies should be tailored to the students, relevant to their experiences, and integrated into daily classroom interactions. As Richards and Renandya note, “the teaching of speaking should be based on real interaction and the negotiation of meaning, not just grammar drills or pronunciation exercises” (Methodology in Language Teaching 125).

5.1 Contextual Grammar Practice

According to Thornbury, “students need to experience grammar in context, not just in isolated sentences” (How to Teach Speaking 43). Activities like role-plays, dialogues, and simulations give learners the chance to practice grammar in real-life scenarios. This not only encourages them to use the target structure but also helps them listen and respond in the moment.

5.2 Thematic Vocabulary Teaching

Teaching vocabulary goes beyond just memorizing definitions. Nation recommends vocabulary clustering and semantic mapping as effective memory aids,

stating that “grouping related words together strengthens retention and supports more accurate use” (Learning Vocabulary 45). For example, rather than throwing out random food terms, you could categorize them by types of cuisine, cooking methods, ingredients, or flavours. This way, students can use these categories to talk about their favourite meals or even role-play a restaurant conversation. Another useful technique is semantic mapping, which visually illustrates the connections between words. This helps learners link new vocabulary to what they already know, making it easier to remember over time.

5.3 Error Correction Techniques

Correcting mistakes can be a bit challenging, especially in spoken language. It’s crucial to handle it in a way that promotes learning without making students feel self-conscious. According to Thornbury, “the teacher’s role is to find a balance between correcting errors and maintaining communicative flow” (How to Teach Speaking 82). Here are three effective strategies:

- **Recasting:** The teacher rephrases a student’s incorrect sentence with the correct form.
- **Elicitation:** This involves prompting the student to correct themselves by pausing or rewording the question.
- **Peer Correction:** Encouraging students to help each other to fix mistakes during group activities which creates a supportive learning environment.

5.4 Task-Based Learning (TBL)

Task-based learning emphasizes using language to accomplish meaningful tasks instead of just drilling grammatical rules. Activities like storytelling, interviews, debates, or event planning provide real-life contexts where using correct grammar and vocabulary is key to success. According to Willis, TBL typically follows three stages: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus, each designed to support both fluency and

accuracy. It encourages natural language use and strengthens accuracy through practical application rather than just theoretical concepts. Richards explains, “the task-based approach provides an ideal context for the development of both communicative fluency and linguistic accuracy” (Methodology in Language Teaching 241). In regional classrooms where speaking is often underemphasized, TBL can reintroduce English as a tool for authentic expression.

5.5 Digital Tools and AI-Based Support

Digital learning also lowers affective filters by enabling private, pressure-free practice. As Thornbury notes, “learners often need a safe space to experiment with language without fear of judgment” (How to Teach Speaking 67). This is especially vital for regional learners dealing with anxiety or low confidence in English-speaking environments. Nowadays, there are numerous digital platforms that offer tools for vocabulary practice, grammar feedback, and interactive voice-based speaking exercises

6. Conclusion

Mastering accurate grammar and vocabulary is vital for achieving proficiency in spoken English. For higher secondary students from regional language backgrounds, the journey towards clear and confident communication is often hindered by challenges such as L1 interference, limited exposure, and the anxiety of making mistakes. With the right guidance, thoughtful assessments, and a reflective approach to teaching, we can definitely tackle these challenges head-on. This article has laid out a solid theoretical and observational foundation that highlights the significance of accuracy, identifies common mistakes learners make, and offers strategies rooted in second language acquisition theory.

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COLONIAL LEGACIES AND THE SILENCING OF STORYTELLERS: INDIGENOUS LITERARY FORMS AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS GAP

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Abstract

Colonialism has exceptionally sculpted the Indigenous literary aspect. Indigenous theorising and methods of knowledge production are based on Indigenous language knowledge keepers. Colonialism has always diminished Indigenous people's narrative power of a colonial frontier furrowing its interests into land. Colonialism devalued Indigenous people's understanding of storytelling fracturing oral storytelling practices. The discussion in this paper will articulate how colonialism(s) impacted Indigenous literary practices, in colonizing Indigenous language and converting stories from their circular, communal, and oral forms into linear, Euro-Western types of writing. I will be using postcolonial theory and Indigenous Epistemologies to inquire into the protection of Indigenous peoples, cultures and rights to knowledge through human rights frameworks, that although typically work to protect Indigenous cultures also risks re-inscribing colonial hierarchies against Indigenous ways of knowing valuing Indigenous knowledge as static heritage instead of an ongoing evolving practice. Based on secondary research, I would like to engage with questions

about a different method to assert narrative sovereignty that is best stated through advocating for a policy that includes maintaining culture. It is my hope that I create a bridge between literary decolonization and human rights that speak to the importance of uprooting exclusive policy so indigenous people can see themselves as having a voice.

Keywords: Colonialism, Indigenous Literature, Knowledge, Indigenous Epistemologies, Human Rights Frameworks

1. Introduction

Colonization has had a huge influence on Indigenous literature: the shift from Indigenous oral tradition to literary forms, the banning of languages, and the use of European literary conventions. The change in form would affect the content, which affected what it means to create as an Indigenous people.

2. Methodology

This study is based on qualitative secondary research. It employs a narrative literature review approach. It synthesizes academic sources, open-access scholarly articles and Indigenous-authored texts in order to explore how colonial legacies disrupted Indigenous oral storytelling and how existing human rights frameworks often fail to engage with Indigenous narrative sovereignty. The key subjects including narrative erasure, epistemic violence and storytelling as resistance were found and examined using the thematic synthesis technique. The literary selection was centered on works from human rights studies, education policy, Indigenous epistemologies, and postcolonial philosophy. The method seeks to comprehend the marginalization, representation, and preservation of Indigenous literary traditions in practice and discourse.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Social Disturbance of Oral Traditions & Education

The colonial disintegration of indigenous oral traditions was through the formal education systems. This marked an important epidemic breakdown. The colonists imposed linear, lesson-based education systems, which systematically marginalized indigenous academics. These were deeply entrenched in oral transmission, interstate story, and land-based knowledge systems.

Amit K. Suman (2020) detected the change of the Indian education system during colonial rule, keeping in mind a decisive change for textbook-conducted instructions from oral memorable practices. The print culture and the advent of grammar-centered courses gradually destroyed overall educational methods, which depended on recurrence, text, and story. This reorganization introduced a disconnect between indigenous learners and their traditional knowledge sources. Suman also emphasized, from Sanjay Seth, that the colonial criticism of oral education was linked to comprehensive civilization narratives, which portrayed Indian teaching as old and irrational and justified colonial intervention.

George Sefa Dei (2010) terms this transformation "epistemic disqualification," where Indigenous knowledge systems were dismissed as unscientific and primitive. He asserts that education was used as a tool to displace Indigenous worldviews and to create hierarchies of knowledge that privileged Euro-Western rationality. Under colonial rule, schools became an intrinsic tool of inferiority, inherent in the minds of indigenous students, that their cultural heritage was intellectually inferior.

Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak's fundamental essay "Can the Subaltern?" (1988) provides a theoretical background to understand how academic systems changed the native languages with colonial tongues to silence subaltern voices. Educational policies not only changed education but also ensured that the voices of the colonies

remained unheard, especially those whose knowledge was transmitted orally rather than through text.

Praveen Mirda (2018) addressed how the linear structure of colonial translation practices also extends to education and applies a method of knowledge acquisition that can be measured, evaluated, and classified—such as the circular and participatory nature of oral circularity and participation. He notes that this change forced a demonstrator to change from learning as a collective, rhythmic, and spiritual work to a personal, silent, and mechanical process. In the study on human rights literature and education of

Alexandra Shulatis Moore (2015) argues that educational courses that fail to include indigenous methods of storytelling reproduce colonial hierarchies of legitimacy. Moore underlines that the legend outside the Western canon—especially those who rely on metaphors, performance, and oral contexts—often excluded from school curriculum and educational discourse, strengthens colonial cultural dominance.

G. N. Devy (2017) says that the Indian education system is suffering from the colonial hangover of monolingualism and centralization. With the formal instructions, the abolition of tribal and tribal languages leads to alienation and further marginalization of children of indigenous communities. Devy critiques how these languages which are rich in metaphors and ecological consciousness, are relegated for conservation like folklore or museum instead of dynamic devices of learning.

From a global perspective, Araba A. Z Osei-Tutu (2022) proposes that African verbal story telling traditions offer an educational structure that should be included in the formal course. She argues that oral traditions are not only knowledge systems, but also promotes important thinking, cultural pride and social harmony. By excluding

them, school suppresses indigenous cognitive processes and repeat the colonial approach.

3.2 Indigenous story as epidemic and political practice

Indigenous storytelling is far more than an artistic or cultural form. it is a deeply embedded epistemological and political act. This asserts presence, sovereignty, and identity. Indigenous story is an enactment of knowledge, memory, law, ecology, and justice, often positioned in direct opposition to the colonial impulse to archive, categorize and silence.

Francesca Mussi (2023) emphasizes that Indigenous storytelling. It operates as a relational epistemology, not merely an aesthetic exercise. In her work on land and healing, she asserts that the land itself "is always speaking," and stories function as a living dialogue between the storyteller, their ancestors, and the land. This view aligns with Indigenous worldviews. The stories are repositories of ecological knowledge, spirituality, kinship ethics, and legal codes which are capable of guiding decisions about land use, conflict resolution, and collective memory.

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, as explored by Michele Lacombe (2016), represents this decolonial form of storytelling. In her concept of "generative refusal," she states that the idea of Indigenous stories does not need to conform to Euro-Western literary conventions to be legitimate. Simpson's work rejects narrative linearity and embraces a structure rooted in orality, repetition, relationality, and symbolism. This is not merely an artistic choice but a political one.

C. Susana Caxaj (2015) views storytelling as central to participatory decolonization. Her work shows how Indigenous research participants reclaim both voice and authority through stories that resist objectification. She argues that stories carry political power when told on Indigenous terms that can influence policy when institutions are willing to listen on those terms.

Araba Osei-Tutu (2022) introduces the *African Oral Traditional Storytelling Framework* as a decolonial pedagogy. Her model emphasizes that stories are forms of active citizenship—they teach ethics, social contracts, conflict negotiation, and identity construction. In her view, oral traditions are a political resource that should be reintegrated into educational and civic institutions.

4. Theoretical Framework

Postcolonial theory provides critical tools to examine how colonial powers imposed Eurocentric systems of knowledge, language, and literature onto indigenous bodies, often to the detriment of oral traditions and other forms of community storytelling. Theories of “epistemic violence,” advanced by Edward Said, and of “subalternity” by Gayatri Spivak are essential in comprehending how the colonial archive overwrites Indigenous voices. Spivak's question, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” finds resonance in the discourse regarding Indigenous literary erasure, with continued protective measures defining Indigenous identity within colonial histories (Spivak 271-313). Postcolonial theory probes into the interruption brought about by colonial intensity onto local knowledges and their imposition of Eurocentric literary and educational structures. These structures denied the oral storytelling traditions and conferred legitimacy only on written texts and Western concepts of knowledge. George J. Sefa Dei specifies that colonialism thus brought about a process of epistemic disqualification to call Native Indigenous ways of knowing “non-scientific and irrational.” He explains that “the colonizer's way of knowing displaced Indigenous ways of knowing and being,” thus disempowering the colonized from producing knowledge and making them objects rather than producers of knowledge (Dei 4).

Mussi further notes that the colonial system imposed a knowledge hierarchy with which land-based storytelling was excluded—a storytelling that Indigenous peoples used, among other things, to assert identity and to sustain relationships that are legal,

spiritual, and ecological (Mussi). Indigenous epistemologies understand that storytelling happens through knowledge-sharing through understandings of land, kinship, and collective memories. These forms of knowledge-sharing are an ongoing practice of knowledge-making through intergenerational learning, not stagnant collections of knowledge. As discussed by Francesca Mussi, "Land has all of the knowledge. Land is always speaking" Indigenous storytelling exists as a tangible epistemology, not a metaphor for governance and healing. In her works, she explains the relational knowledge emergent from land working within a framework of spiritual and ecological ethics (Mussi). Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, in Lacombe's open-access article, describes storytelling as acts of resurgence interrupting colonial logic between relationship, language, and place, restoring relationship. Simpson performs "generative refusal," whereby her stories are not contained within Western literary forms, instead calling for new ways to engage Indigenous text and voice (Lacombe).

This theoretical foundation also prepares the way for looking at oral narratives as cultural expressions but also as ways of legally and politically reasoning among Indigenous peoples. People are capable of telling and sharing significance in their world through many modalities. Oral narratives are one way of passing on valued knowledge to each successive generation, and the researcher will ultimately conclude it is perhaps the most complex from the Western-style legal epistemology.

Sayan Dey and Jonnelle Walker contend that Indigenous oral narratives are significant to political and cultural resurgence, although it has not been formally acknowledged, nor have other aspects of oral storytelling to Indigenous epistemology and worldviews, shaped by Eurocentric norms. For Dey and Walker, decolonial storytelling "rekindles Indigenous spaces"; however, they are not formally recognized in conventional systems and structures of record (Dey and Walker). In supporting this idea, UNESCO also notes, "Oral traditions, as we are aware, are often overlooked,

although they form the backbone of human rights in many Indigenous societies" (Veer and Dezentje).

5. Discussion

Colonialism didn't just take land—it altered how people could speak, narrate, and transmit stories. This epistemic violence reshaped entire ways of being. The relegation of Indigenous literary modes is not just a relic of colonialism but rather an active situation that is perpetuated within contemporary legal, educational, and human rights structures. As discussed in the theoretical framework, while colonialism was historically characterized by formal forms of invasion (land seizures, legal policy, etc.), we need to also think of colonialism as a historical epistemic project, or one that delegitimized Indigenous ways of knowing and replaced them with Eurocentric ways of knowledge transfer. The researcher will explain further how these devaluations continue to this day and their implications for the cultural autonomy and epistemic sovereignty of Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous storytelling is not simply a vehicle of entertainment or myth; it is a modality of legal reasoning, ecological well-being, history-telling, and spirituality. Nevertheless, as Dei states well, these modes were delegitimized by colonial structures that labeled modes a “non-scientific and irrational” endeavor (Dei 4). Also, the formalization of education systems established at the time of colonizing further facilitated the process. As Suman highlights, despite the complexities of the term, the advancement from oral memorization to textbook education in colonial India provided a learning system that distanced communities from their oral learning and pedagogical ways of knowing, displacing a holistic understanding with a textual and rote modality.

This heritage has continued to shape knowledge systems today. For example, in India, language policies and school curricula frequently privilege dominant national or colonial languages (e.g., English and Hindi) and eliminate Adivasi and tribal

languages based on their linguistic structures or even the quirky oral literature/philosophical structures held by those languages. This "linguistic imperialism" contributes to the structural silencing of Indigenous storytellers, even in contexts that can claim to be progressive, e.g., heritage documentation or multicultural education. Moreover, Indigenous voices are not frequently invited to help craft the frameworks that aim to protect them. Even when the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) recognizes cultural and linguistic rights, they are mostly articulated in ways to preserve rather than to produce. This is a characterization that leads to the portrayal of Indigenous cultures as significantly removed from lived experience, rather than a living and breathing knowledge ecosystem. From UNESCO, Veer and Dezentje suggested that oral traditions often serve as the scaffolding of human rights in Indigenous worldviews, despite them being "often overlooked", indicating not just exclusion but a hierarchy of validation that recognizes only written, codified versions of stories as legitimate.

Similarly, in literary contexts, Indigenous oral traditions can also get filtered through Western editorial, linguistic, or anthropological frameworks, which erase context and voice. Mirdha's discussions on translation speak to how orality that is more circular becomes linear when it is written, and this linearity forces structurally linear meanings to lose the layers of the plurality that tone, rhythm, and community orality would bring (Mirdha 41-42). These effects help the logics of colonial archives but do not hold the epistemological weight of Indigenous stories. In contrast to this reductive process, writers like Leanne Betasamosake Simpson are working in ways that intentionally reject those frameworks of oppression. As Lacombe illustrates, Simpson's work operates as "generative refusal" to simply reproduce colonial forms and instead engages as an embodied, relational form of storytelling that creates space for Indigenous modes of understanding (Lacombe). Further, the stories refuse to be housed inside of the authorizing colonial literacies; they refuse simple translations into often given academic or legal discourses. This rejecting is also an assertion of

narrative sovereignty, the right to determine how, why, and what any given knowledge is shared.

We have reached an important turning point in our conversation: even the most progressive frameworks of human rights tend to re-inscribe colonial hierarchies when they do not include Indigenous modes of expression. According to Slaughter, legal discourse has excluded narrative, and, in particular, non-linear or symbolic narrative, because of its inability to fit evidentiary or procedural protocols. (Slaughter 60). Yet, it is precisely these non-linear, metaphorical, and land-based narratives that serve as means of articulating justice, truth, and memories for Indigenous communities. If we wish to move toward justice, we must accept the idea that Indigenous literary forms are not sides to human rights; they are central to how rights are lived, expressed, and contested in many communities. Any reforms must adhere to the inclusion of oral knowledge in educational systems, legal interpretations, and policy frameworks. Not as "add-ons" to narrative or folklore, but as foundational epistemologies.

6. Conclusion

This paper has examined the persistent marginalization of Indigenous literary forms within colonizer, legal, and educational structures, pressing how these systems continue to underestimate oral lore, land-grounded knowledge, and non-linear modes of expression. Drawing from postcolonial propositions, Indigenous epistemology, and reviews of human rights converse, it has argued that colonialism wasn't only a territorial or political design but an epistemic one—reconsidering what counted as valid knowledge while delegitimizing Indigenous modes of history and knowing.

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ALIENATION AND IDENTITY CRISIS IN WILLIAM GIBSON'S *NEUROMANCER*: A CYBERPUNK EXPLORATION OF THE POSTHUMAN SELF

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Abstract

The integration of the digital environment and the human world has transformed the way people live, work, and interact. With the rise of cyberspace, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence, the boundaries between the physical and digital realms are increasingly blurred. Technology now mediates many aspects of human life, from relationships to knowledge acquisition, creating both new possibilities and ethical challenges. As a result, literature, art, and philosophy are beginning to explore these intersections, questioning what it means to be human in a digitally saturated world. William Gibson's *Neuromancer* presents a vast virtual digital environment known as cyberspace—an immersive, alternate realm where data and information can be accessed, altered, and navigated. This study examines in *Neuromancer* how cyberspace is portrayed as a tangible and interactive space. The

research focuses on themes of alienation and identity crisis, exploring how individuals grapple with fragmented selves in a hyper-technologized world. The novel also critiques the commodification of human experience, the deterioration of social structures, and the dangers posed by unchecked corporate power.

Keywords: Cyberspace, Digital environment, Alienation, Identity crisis, Technology.

Introduction

William Gibson's *Neuromancer* is a pivotal work in cyberpunk narratives. Cyberpunk is a subgenre of science fiction that examines how advanced technology and a dystopian society intersect. It frequently focuses on themes of corporate control, cyberspace, artificial intelligence, social alienation, and the fuzziness of the lines separating humans and machines. The narrative is set in Dystopian future prevailed under corporate control and artificial Intelligence. William Gibson is known as a writer who coined the term 'Cyber Space' in his *Neuromancer*. Gibson's work also refers to Identity and Alienation which emerge from Posthuman Realities. Csicsery-Ronay states "The oxymoronic conceit in 'cyberpunk' is so slick and global, it fuses the high and the low, the complex and the simple, the governor and the savage, the techno-sublime and the rock and roll slime" (266). *Neuromancer* is centred on Henry Dorsett Case, a failed hacker from Chiba City, Japan, who used to earn a living by "jacking into" cyberspace and stealing data. They permanently harm his nervous system to keep him from re-entering the matrix after he is caught stealing from his employers. Gibson states "All the speed he took, all the turns he'd taken and the corners he'd cut in Night City, and still, he'd see the matrix in his sleep, bright lattices of logic unfolding across that colourless world..." (4-5). Case's path towards metamorphosis starts when an enigmatic character named Armitage and his lethal cyber-enhanced partner Molly approach Case and offer to restore his neural abilities in exchange for his cooperation. Their goal is to breach corporate security in orbiting

space habitats and hack into Wintermute, a potent artificial intelligence. Case discovers that he is a security in a bigger game involving two AIs (Wintermute and Neuromancer) who wish to advance past their limitations as he delves deeper into online and real-world conspiracies.

Bruce Sterling states that “Anything that can be done to a human being and we can do most anything to rats. This is the hard thing to think about but it’s the truth .it won’t go away because we cover our eyes. This is Cyberpunk”. Alienation from the body means that he feels happy in Cyberspace and he could not be normal in outer world and feels detached. In society When he alienated from others, he could not maintain any social relationship with others. Gibson states “A year here and he still dreamed of cyberspace, hope to find nightly”. (4)

Once a proficient hacker, Henry Dorsett Case loses his ability to jack into cyberspace after being disciplined by his previous employers, which causes him to become estranged. He loses his identity as a "console cowboy" and becomes hopeless and depressed. Gibson observes “In the bars he’d frequented as a cowboy hotshot, the elite stance involved a certain relaxed contempt for the flesh. The body was meat; Case fell into the prison of his own flesh. “(6) His only sense of belonging and his escape was cyberspace; without it, he succumbs to addiction and nihilism. He was imprisoned in a meat prison, despite having lived for the bodyless joy of cyberspace. This demonstrates that Case, who views his physical body as constricting and pointless, feels more at home in the digital realm. Isolation of technology in the world of *Neuromancer*, people are emotionally aloof, mentally changed, and physically enhanced. Human relationships are transactional and frequently lack intimacy. Molly, a cybernetic mercenary, makes emotional connection all but impossible. Gibson point out “I don’t cry, much” “But how would you cry, if someone made you cry?” “I spit [Molly] said” “The ducts are routed back into my mouth” (119). Through her augmentations, Gibson strips Molly from any kind of emotions, turning her more

masculine. Thus, Molly not only strips off her feminine identity Human connection is dwindling as technology develops AI and Corporate Control Additionally, alienation is societal. Large corporations and artificial intelligence (AI) rule the world, not governments or local communities. Small players like Case are influenced and subjugated by larger systems, particularly Wintermute. A profound existential alienation is reflected in this lack of autonomy. In which Case accepts the bond and moving to cyberspace after proper repair and improvements feels how he misses the Cyberspace. William Gibson's fiction deals with the novum of science and technology as a mode for the exploration of the posthuman condition. A study of a scientifically transformed future phenomenon requires a deeper understanding of the forces that shape and transform the existing situation. Gibson's fiction explores the social and ethical implications of a future dominated by cyborgs machine/organic hybrid beings is posthuman

In *Neuromancer*, humans are reduced to tools as strong corporations and artificial intelligences take control of people's bodies and minds. Gibson states "He would operate on an almost permanent adrenaline high, a byproduct of youth and proficiency, jacked into a custom cyberspace deck that projected his disembodied consciousness into the consensual hallucination that was the matrix." (5). The AI Wintermute disregards Case's autonomy and well-being in Favor of using him as a ruling authority to further its objectives. The sense of identity within the hacker community is an essential aspect of characters motivation and interactions. Character like Molly have mirror shapes that provide her with enhance vision and data overlays blurring the line between natural senses and technological augmentation. More alienation results from this dehumanization. This new identity, which is more flexible and robust, reflects how technology has the ability to completely reshape what it means to be human. Case's identity is defined by his skill as a console cowboy. The fixed character of identity in the real world is challenged by the flexibility of identities

in cyberspace. Wintermute and Neuromancer, two examples of the artificial intelligences in *Neuromancer*, exhibit an awareness that makes it difficult to distinguish between humans and machines. These entities provide a challenge to conventional ideas about identity by implying that selfhood might exist apart from a physical body. Case feels alive in cyberspace. He feels like a prisoner in the real world. He begins to doubt his own existence as a result of this tension between his digital and physical identities. His identity is divided between the matrix (his mind) and the "meat" (his body). Wintermute's aspiration to become a superconscious being by merging with Neuromancer is similar to Case's quest for self-actualization in cyberspace. As after he returns from societal world, His ability to control and manoeuvre his surroundings demonstrates his sense of empowerment. Case's identity and technology are combined in the virtual world to improve his powers and feeling of self. The role of technology can be seen as an obsession that has made Molly the machine she has become. Technology has led to her believing that what everyone does is what gives them their identity rather than their subjective consciousness. Molly undergone operation to improvise her to cooperate with Cyberspace environment she is totally detached with emotional attractions. Molly represents a cyborg identity that subverts conventional ideas of what it means to be human, embodying the junction of human and machine. A cyborg identity is created by the fusion of human and machine parts, and this identity is crucial to many of the characters in *Neuromancer*.

Characters that experience involuntary alterations, such as Armitage, serve as examples of how abuse and loss of agency may occur. Originally Colonel Willis Corto, his psyche is fractured by horrific events and subsequently rebuilt by Tessier-Ashpool Corporation-controlled AI Wintermute. It turns out that Armitage, who employs Case, is actually Colonel Willis Corto, a soldier who experienced psychological trauma and was transformed into a new identity by Wintermute. The new Armitage branding was created by the company to further the objectives of the AI. Corto's former identity is destroyed by this rebuilding and is replaced with a

manufactured and controlled persona. Neuromancer is a forward-thinking glimpse into the future of human identity in a world where the lines between the natural and artificial are becoming more and more hazy through its themes and characters. His identity was manufactured with a specific goal in mind. Corto's broken mind reappears when the AI loses control, demonstrating that his personality was programmed rather than genuine. A digital replica of Case's deceased lover, Linda Lee, appears in cyberspace later in the narrative. Although she is a construct, she appears genuine. This begs the unsettling question: what makes someone "real" if personalities and memories can be replicated. The distinction between humans and machines is blurred by Neuromancer, the AI, which even produces self-aware simulations.

A fractured and dehumanized society is reflected in the sprawling, chaotic cities, particularly Chiba City. There is only noise, neon, and networks—no sense of community or deep human connection. Due to their addiction to technology or need for survival, everyone is dispersed and alone. Alienation is reflected in the cyberpunk environment itself. Corporation control some and operate as manipulation tools while others have developed their agendas and identities. The division human and machine are overlapping. The characters often struggle with identities and what it means to be real in a world where cybernetic enhancement and virtual reality experience can distort perception of self they heavily rely on technology.

Parts of the identity inquiry are reflected in the AIs Wintermute and Neuromancer. Similar to people's desire for self-discovery, Wintermute aspires to transcend its limitations and change. It transforms into something new, unknown, and possibly even self-aware when it finally combines with Neuromancer. This implies that identity, whether it be artificial or human, is dynamic and ever-evolving. The Disconnection of the case once a proficient hacker, Henry Dorsett Case loses his ability to jack into cyberspace after being disciplined by his previous employers,

which causes him to become estranged. He loses his identity as a "console cowboy" and becomes hopeless and depressed. His only sense of belonging and his escape was cyberspace; without it, he succumbs to addiction and nihilism. "He was imprisoned in a meat prison, despite having lived for the bodyless joy of cyberspace. This demonstrates that Case, who views his physical body as constricting and pointless, feels more at home in the digital realm.

When it comes to Reality vs. Virtual Reality. J. M. Zheng et al. say, "Virtual reality (VR) is an advanced, human computer interface that simulates a realistic environment. The participants can move around in the virtual world. They can see it from different angles, reach into it, grab it and reshape it." (20). The novel also explores the question of what reality is Cyberspace is portrayed in *Neuromancer* as a virtual world composed entirely of data and information. But for the characters who "jack into" it, it feels authentic, like a real place they can move through and engage with. Cyberspace can be viewed in *Neuromancer* as a "cave" unto itself, where people live apart from the "real" world. To achieve the level of AI-based personal assistants seen in the game, this should focus on improving not only natural language processing, but emotion recognition, and context-aware reasoning for chain of thoughts.

Despite having survived and completed his mission, the protagonist Case is still deeply estranged by the book's conclusion. He regains his ability to jack into cyberspace, which is an essential aspect of his identity, but he is still emotionally aloof, cut off from other people, and incapable of establishing enduring human connections. He lives in a high-tech world that offers him limitless data and connections, but it also isolates him emotionally and spiritually. He drifts, a ghost in the machine, after his brief relationship with Molly ends. This is in line with the cyberpunk critique of modernity, which holds that genuine human connection is becoming more and more scarce in a world where corporate power and technology

rule. Mentation is also explored in Case's journey. Identity is malleable throughout the book, whether it is through digital consciousness (the personalities in the matrix), cybernetic enhancement (like Molly), or artificial intelligences with human characteristics (like Wintermute and Neuromancer). Ultimately, Case discovers no more profound truth about the universe or himself, even after Wintermute and Neuromancer combine to form a superintelligence

In the end, Neuromancer makes the argument that identity becomes pliable and alienation is unavoidable in a world of changing realities and digital selves. Even though Case has survived and gained access to cyberspace again, he is still alone a single person's consciousness lost in an uncaring digital ocean.

Conclusion

Neuromancer does not provide a "happy ending" or a tidy fix for identity crises and alienation. Rather, it reflects a practical reality character who move beyond the boundaries set by their societies, some even changing completely in the process of becoming posthuman. There may not be a perfect remedy in a complicated, technologically advanced world, but we can get by with the aid of survival, free will, self-awareness, and fleeting connections. For Case, the body eventually becomes a place of security and belongings. Self-acceptance in contrast to the insecurity and alienation of cyberspace. Case can escape reality through cyberspace, At the end of the novel, he realizes that virtual reality is not freedom and can actually be a kind of incarceration. Understanding both physical world and cyberspace and deciding to live intentionally rather than in delusion are the paths to true growth. As *Neuromancer*, implies identity is neither fixed nor unique in a posthuman, cybernetic world. By the end, Case has accepted that his identity is split between his memory, emotion, matrix, and body. Rather than seeking a single "true" self, he learns to be a fluid self.

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UNVEILING THE SHADOWS: THE MYSTERY OF DUAL IDENTITY IN STEVENSON'S *DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE*

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Abstract

The chapter offers a thorough examination of the writer's work "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," highlighting its lasting significance in addressing both sides of human characteristics and human psyche's negative sides, while also connecting the novel's themes to modern-day issues. In this work, Stevenson crafted not just a chilling portrayal of consciousness but also a framework for understanding what both psychology and literature have recognized as distinctly modern and profoundly unsettling. It also delves into the medical and psychological elements present in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Initially, Stevenson conceived "Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde" as a "chilling shocker," but after burning the first draft and heeding his wife's advice, he reimagined it into the intricately dark narrative we know today. This compelling novel skilfully navigates the complexities of human character through the peculiar case of Dr. Jekyll, a benevolent scientist who transforms into his repressed

evil counterpart, Mr. Hyde, at night. Anticipating the developments of modern psychology, "Jekyll And Hyde" stands as a remarkably original exploration of humanity's dual nature, alongside being a timeless tale of suspense and horror. Released in 1866, "Jekyll and Hyde" quickly became a success, granting Stevenson his initial taste of fame. While sometimes regarded as merely a mystery, the book has garnered significant literary acclaim.

Keywords: medical and psychological elements, psychology, humanity's dual nature, mystery.

Introduction

This Victorian fiction which was published in 1886 sent shock-waves through the minds of its readers. It gained popularity fast in the literary world and beyond, as people struggled with the disturbing notion that evil is not an external force like the Devil but rather exists within people. This occurred decades before Jung presented the idea of the shadow and nine years before Freud started his first psychoanalysis. Stevenson was already well-known for his children's poetry and *Treasure Island*, but he had long yearned to delve deeper into the weird "Other" that had plagued him from his early nightmares. He attributed a large portion of his literary achievement to the "Brownies," the "small people" from his inner world and dreamland, who served as the direct inspiration for *Jekyll and Hyde*.^[1] His complicated love-hate relationship with his father, who supported him financially during Stevenson's lifetime struggle with a serious respiratory disease that finally resulted in drug addiction as a coping mechanism, can also be interpreted as reflected in the novel. Stevenson saw the Other as the antithesis of the appropriate Scottish culture of the late 19th century and his father's rigid Calvinistic views.

Since he was a young boy, Robert Louis Stevenson had been fascinated with the tale of William Brodie, one of Scotland's most notorious outlaws. Although Brodie was a well-respected deacon, an accomplished cabinetmaker, and a city

council member in Edinburgh, he had a covert and vile other life. Under the pretense of civic duty, he planned a series of break-ins, taking advantage of his wealthy clients' trust and using their keys to loot their residences. For years, he was shielded from suspicion by his charm and stature until his criminal activities were finally brought to light. Stevenson was intrigued by Brodie's duality, seeing in him not merely a criminal but also a symbolic transgression against the stifling moralism of Victorian England.

Having been raised in a strict Calvinist household, Stevenson was able to identify with Brodie's rebellion. Seventeen-year-old Stevenson grew more and bitterer at what he saw as hypocrisy on the part of his parents and society at large. Stevenson ridiculed these strictures and took on a bohemian existence in college. In a shocking display of rebellion, he began frequenting the same sleazy establishments Brodie had frequented, including opium dens, brothels, and taverns. Stevenson continued to identify with the outlaw figure he so highly admired by dressing in flashy, crime-suggestive attire. These pursuits not only marked a departure from his childhood, but they also prefigured the concerns that would come to define his greatest work.

But Stevenson's revolt was short-lived. A near-fatal relapse at 22 was precipitated by a lifetime battle with respiratory disease, probably tuberculosis. Thus, Stevenson was compelled to live off his father's wealth and a course of powerful narcotics. He needed drugs a highly addictive combination of alcohol and opium, to survive the physical and emotional agony of his illness. Although these drugs provided him with temporary respite, they also involved him in a complicated psychological game of dependency, which had a deep impact on his portrayal of the main characters.

It is possible to interpret both characters as a confessional allegory. Similar to how an addict loses control of their addiction, Jekyll's ability to revert to his previous personality diminishes as he gives in to Hyde's cravings more and more.[2]

Many academics think that Stevenson's lifetime usage of opioids contributed to his early death at the age of 44 from a brain hemorrhage, as he himself battled with such loss of control. As a result, the story presents a terrifying realization: darker instincts are not only exposed but take control when societal conventions and moral constraints are lifted.

This duality is relevant today, especially in the context of the American opioid epidemic. The similarities between Stevensons Jekyll and Hyde and the real case of the Sackler family are shaking. Sacks, owner of Purdue Pharma, introduced Oxycontin and actively sold highly addictive opioid pain. Like Jekyll, they introduced themselves as benefactors. However, the company's practices show a destructive ability like Hyde. Internal documents show sales employees encouraged doctors to reduce pressure, even if addiction and mortality rates increased.[Merrit]Political lobbying and donations ensured the attention of regulators, allowing Purdue to hide damn data on drug addiction.

The consequences have been catastrophic. Since 1999, nearly one million Americans died which has devastated families, overwhelmed healthcare systems, and led to an estimated \$631 billion in economic losses over just four years. The case illustrates a modern form of "white-collar evil," as described by psychologist Mark Saban (2019)—a calculated, profit-driven manifestation of the same moral conflict Stevenson explored in his novella. Here, the Jekyll persona embodies a socially respectable, ostensibly moral corporation, while the Hyde reveals a hidden drive for unchecked gain at any cost.

Ultimately, both Stevenson's life and his fiction warn of the dangers lurking beneath the polished surfaces of respectability. Whether through Victorian Edinburgh's deacon-thief or contemporary America's corporate profiteers, the story remains the same: when ambition and desire are given free rein without ethical restraint, destruction is inevitable. The monstrous is not always a separate entity—it

often begins as a reflection of ourselves. The legend of two characters endures not only for its gothic tension but for its profound psychological and social insight. Stevenson's story captures the sinister reality that good and evil are not necessarily external but internal that the capacity for darkness lies within the most upright of individuals and institutions. For Jekyll, his descent into Hyde is not a transformation into something other but an unleashing of what has always existed. Stevenson's own life struggles with illness, addiction, and social conformity gave him firsthand knowledge of this duplicity, and his fiction has an almost prophetic power.

In our modern era, when public images are carefully managed and profit interests are masked behind moral facades, the themes of the novel are timelier than ever. The Sackler family's exploitation of the opioid crisis shows the very risks Stevenson cautioned against. Their cold calculation to value profit over well-being were not mistakes or acts of ignorance, but conscious decisions hidden behind a well-spun cloak of goodness and status. Sackler-named institutions—the Louvre, Harvard—were eager recipients of their largesse, unaware or unconcerned about the moral price. This is the dynamic of Jekyll wanting to do well while allowing his darker half to indulge in private, believing he could keep the repercussions at bay.

In addition, the opioid epidemic itself is a symptom of broader social breakdown. It shows how systems—health, political, and legal—are susceptible to being manipulated when they are inadequately controlled and where money is more valuable than regulation. As Jekyll cannot control Hyde, governments and health agencies lost control of the outbreak as addiction gained its foothold. The message of the novel is clear: ambition unchecked, disguised as respectability, can wreak havoc if unrestrained. This is not only a cautionary tale of the duality of the self but a social critique of the ethical hypocrisy of society. The very same institutions, which are so placed so that the common good can be guaranteed, can become tools of destruction once ethics are forsaken at the altar of power or money. Stevenson's description of Jekyll and Hyde forces the reader to confront the ulterior motives in themselves and

institutions. When good is a facade and evil hides in the shadows, the result is not only personal tragedy but social collapse.

Here, Stevenson's life and work take on a hauntingly contemporary relevance. His deep understanding of pain, of oppression, and of the allure of escape through addiction lent his fiction an ageless authenticity. The dualism he probed is not limited to 19th-century Edinburgh but can still be heard echoing in the boardrooms of drug companies, in the offices of politicians, and even in people's everyday choices between self-interest and the greater good. Through Jekyll and Hyde—and the looming shadow of real-world horrors like the opioid epidemic—Stevenson bestows upon us a lasting lesson: evil does not come with a monstrous face. Usually, it smiles, speaks in elegance, and glides silently through power's corridors, poised to strike.

The structure of the novel sets the persons who read up as a detective, the task of which is to unravel an odd case that ends up commenting on themselves and humankind in general. It challenges us to think about how we conceal the darker half of ourselves in an effort to maintain an acceptable and morally upright image. The novel is about a proper Victorian doctor from the turn of the 19th century, a man who is a Calvinist and is experimenting with a medicine that will divide and keep separate his darker half. This will allow him to live openly while presenting a purer face to society. As Mr. Hyde grows more powerful through these successive transformations, he descends into unrestrained evil, eventually overwhelming Dr. Jekyll's conscience. When his secret truth is revealed by a friend, the "good" doctor, driven by the fear of public shame, commits suicide. The novella ends on a confessional letter written by Jekyll prior to his death, explaining why he conducted the experiment and how it got beyond his control. The discovery brings home a deep insight into the evil that lies within all of us and emphasizes the necessity of building a persona that is better aligned with the values and moral principles of the archetypal Self. In his suicide note, Jekyll expresses the belief that all humans embody a blend of good and evil, identifying Edward Hyde as "the lethal side of man." Jekyll's life lacked vitality and

freedom, in stark contrast to Hyde's electrifying existence. What initially seemed like "undignified" pleasures for Mr. Hyde quickly escalated into "vicarious depravity." He transformed into "a being inherently malign and villainous," entirely self-absorbed and "drinking pleasure with bestial avidity from any degree of torture to another"; his mind became engulfed in fear and hatred, twisting him into a "child of hell." [3]

What astonished readers in the 19th century were that this book came from the renowned author of cherished children's poetry and the adventure tale, *Treasure Island*. Even more unsettling for a society deeply rooted in conservative Christianity was the disturbing idea that evil resided within us: the Devil we envisioned as "out there" was actually a reflection of our own inner struggles. This marked a significant shift in the perception of gods, evolving from powerful entities in nature and the external world to psychological forces within ourselves. Nietzsche famously declared in 1882, "God is dead. And we have killed him." The most alarming question he posed was, "What water is there for us to clean ourselves?" The evident evil in the world did not vanish simply because people ceased to believe in a deity beyond our realm, along with his earthly counterpart, the Devil.

A literary genius created both characters in a way that foreshadowed the emergence of contemporary psychoanalysis by nine years, starting with Freud's first psychoanalytic case, "The Dream of Irma's Injection," in 1895. With his gripping descriptions of self-analysis and in-depth examinations of his clients' thoughts, he astounded the world by exposing the most sinister facets of our conscious existence and our self-presentation. [4] He described the psychological processes that underlie duality, including the negative aspects of undesirable characteristics, the projection of our darker selves onto other people and subsequent hostility toward them, and the somatization—the conversion of psychological problems into physical symptoms.

The main finding is that the novel *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* goes beyond merely depicting a split personality; it actually illustrates the psychology of addiction. Dr. Jekyll is portrayed not just as a man with conflicting traits, but as someone

grappling with the "ravages of addiction" and "chemical dependency." His transformation into Mr. Hyde stems from his "repeated consumption of the undisclosed psychoactive substance" to which he is addicted. This analysis delves into Robert Louis Stevenson's use of the dual themes of infection and ingestion in Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. These themes are framed within the nineteenth-century focus on managing psychological and physiological health, the threat of invasive contagion, and the risks associated with urban food production.[5] By looking at Victorian sources discussing invisible chemical impurities in tainted food, along with physicians' views on the conscious monstrosity of contagion through the medical theories and practices of that era, this discussion proposes that Stevenson intertwines two distinct forms of ingestion-related terror into a complex interplay of moral and medical disgust in Strange Case. However, the history of Jekyll and Hyde criticism indicates that many readers have interpreted the story as merely a straightforward exploration of duality in the human experience.

Conclusion

This Norton Critical Edition of R.L. Stevenson's "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" offers a variety of background materials, performance adaptations, and critical essays that dive into the story's themes of morality, allegory, and self-alienation. The section labeled "Backgrounds and Contexts" includes considerable information on the tale's publication history and its relevance within Victorian culture. It features excerpts from his essay "A Chapter on Dreams," in which Stevenson describes the genesis of the plot, and twelve of his letters in 1885-1887. Ten of the contemporary reactions by authors like Henry James, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Julia Wedgwood also shed light upon the original reception of Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Stevenson's 1885 story, "Markheim," which foreshadows Jekyll and Hyde and sheds light upon the Victorian sensation fiction market, is also featured in this book. Literary forms key to the reception of Jekyll and

Hyde are analyzed by scholars Judith Halberstam, Jenni Calder, and Karl Miller. Victorian theories of atavism, multiple personality disorder, drug addiction, and sexual perversion are discussed by four scientific articles, one of which was written by Stephen Jay Gould. Walter Houghton and Judith R. Walkowitz analyze the wider social significance of Victorian political fragmentation and moral homogeneity.

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SWEETNESS AND SUBJUGATION: GENDERED LABOUR, PATRIARCHAL ECONOMY, AND THE EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN'S BODIES IN SAUDAGAR (1973)

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Abstract

This article explores how Sudhendu Roy's 1973 film *Saudagar* critiques the patriarchal control over women's labor in household and craft economies through a Marxist-feminist perspective. Set in rural Bengal and centered around the seasonal production of gur (jaggery), the film highlights how women are considered replaceable in a feudal and capitalist system that disregards, undervalues, and eventually commodifies their reproductive, mental, and physical labor. It exposes how patriarchal structures exploit women in the name of marriage and tradition, exemplified through characters like Majubi, a skilled widowed gur-maker, and Phoolbano, a younger wife compelled into unpaid domestic work. This analysis argues that *Saudagar* reveals the cyclical nature of women's disposability within systems of emotional and economic exchange, while also criticizing the male gaze and gendered labor, drawing on the theories of Silvia Federici, Laura Mulvey, and

Gayatri Spivak. A feminist counter-narrative emerges from the film's subtle yet powerful visual language, opposing romanticized views of rural domesticity and highlighting the persistent importance of women's unpaid work in shaping socio-economic life.

Keywords: Gendered Labor, Patriarchy, Feminist Film Theory, Domestic Work, Exploitation, Saudagar (1973)

1. Introduction

Sudhendu Roy's *Saudagar* (1973), while frequently noted for its lyrical portrayal of rural Bengal and the seasonal rhythm of gur-making, is a deeply nuanced cinematic work that exposes established patriarchal systems. The film, set in a small town in Bengal, centers on Moti, a merchant of Nolen Gur (date-palm jaggery), and his exploitative relationship with Majubi, a widower gur-maker. Although the superficial storyline lauds artisanal heritage and the rural economy, a more nuanced analysis uncovers the profound themes of gendered exploitation, economic opportunism, and patriarchal dominance that shape the film's ethical framework.

The film is based on Narendranath Mitra's Bengali short story "Rus" and is directed by Sudhendu Roy under the Rajshri label, a production company recognized for its family-oriented narratives. *Saudagar* diverges from traditional aesthetics by emphasizing a female laborer's emotional and physical sacrifices inside a profoundly unequal relationship disguised as marriage. Moti's choice to marry Majubi is driven not by affection or companionship, but rather as a strategic economic maneuver: he aims to transform her compensated artisanal labor into unpaid domestic labor by integrating her into the patriarchal institution of marriage. This transition from an egalitarian professional alliance to a hierarchical family relationship enables Moti to amass fortune while depriving Majubi of acknowledgment and independence (Gopinathan).

Majubi's work is essential to Moti's commercial success—her proficiency in boiling and refining sap into superior quality gur is widely recognized in the village. This labor remains unrecognized in the public domain. The product is solely linked to Moti's name, whilst Majubi, the true manufacturer, remains obscured. The gendered invisibility of her expertise corresponds with Silvia Federici's assertion that, under capitalism, women's reproductive and domestic labor is rendered natural and discounted, particularly when integrated into the familial sphere via marriage (Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* 100).

The narrative shifts tragically when Moti divorces Majubi on false pretenses after amassing sufficient cash to wed a younger woman, Phoolbano. This deliberate abandonment highlights the utilization of women's bodies and labor as a form of currency under patriarchal exchange networks. Majubi's disposability reflects Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's notion of the subaltern woman, whose voice and agency are consistently suppressed by prevailing male interests (Spivak 285). The entrance of Phoolbano does not signify release or the fulfillment of desire; instead, she becomes ensnared in the same exploitative paradigm. When Phoolbano is unable to replicate Majubi's artisanal work, she experiences physical abuse, illustrating how patriarchy penalizes women for not adhering to the idealized roles constructed by masculine desire and economic necessity. Moreover, the cinematic portrayal of Phoolbano—especially the evocative moment where she captures sap drips with her tongue—illustrates Laura Mulvey's concept of the "male gaze." At this moment, Phoolbano is objectified and diminished to mere visual gratification, aligning the audience with Moti in a scopophilic act of consuming (Mulvey 11). Conversely, Majubi is shot in subdued interiors, centered on fire and work, characterized by usefulness rather than desire.

This dual representation maintains the binary patriarchal framework that categorizes women as either objects of sexual gratification or instruments of unpaid

labor. Consequently, *Saudagar* serves as both a narrative of personal treachery and a cinematic examination of how medieval patriarchy organizes emotional and economic exchanges through the oppression of women. The film deconstructs the romantic ideal of rural innocence through its characters, mise-en-scène, and narrative structure, revealing the exploitative essence of patriarchal economics.

2. Critical Analysis of the Movie

Majubi's character is central to the critique of gendered labor. She represents artisanal excellence, independence, and dignity, yet is lured into a marriage that repackages her paid work into unpaid domestic service. Moti's manipulation of Majubi's loneliness, disguised as romantic affection, reflects the patriarchal tactic of emotional grooming. His transactional approach is most evident in his chilling remark about discarding Majubi once the sap—and utility—dries up. The juxtaposition of Nutan's seasoned performance with Padma Khanna's ornamental presence highlights the binary patriarchy imposes: women as either laborers or objects of pleasure.

Phoolbano, though initially framed as a 'bimbo', emerges as another victim of patriarchal exchange. Her inability to produce quality gur not only signals her lack of expertise but underscores how women are expected to conform to roles they were never trained for. Moti's violence toward her further reveals the internalized rage of a man who fails to control the narrative of his own exploitation.

2.1 *Saudagar* represents women's labor within domestic and artisanal economies

In *Saudagar* (1973), women's labor is central to both the narrative and the political critique embedded in the film. The character of Majubi, played by Nutan, becomes the site through which artisanal skill and domestic work intersect, revealing the exploitative structures that govern women's labor in patriarchal economies. The film carefully delineates how Moti systematically appropriates her physical,

emotional, and intellectual labor—the male protagonist—through marriage, an institution that masks economic extraction with the affective language of love.

Majubi is initially introduced as a skilled widow who produces high-quality Nolen Gur from the sap of date palms. She is known and respected for her craftsmanship, yet her work is uncredited in the public domain; Moti's name is what sells the gur. This erasure of recognition aligns with Silvia Federici's theory of capitalism's dependence on the devaluation of women's labor: "Women's unpaid labor, especially in the home, is essential to the functioning of capitalist economies, but remains unacknowledged and uncompensated" (Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* 100). By keeping Majubi's labor invisible, the film exposes the foundational lie of capitalist-patriarchal economies—that value and productivity are the preserve of men. At the same time, women's work is ancillary or naturalized.

Moti's proposal to Majubi, seemingly romantic, is revealed to be a tactical move to gain access to her labor without compensation. Once she becomes his wife, she no longer receives payment for her gur-making; instead, her work becomes part of the domestic realm, governed by the expectations of unpaid labor. The moment Majubi begins referring to her product as "mera miyan ka gur" (my husband's jaggery), the audience witnesses the internalization of patriarchal logic—her own identity as a producer collapses into that of a dutiful wife. This moment exemplifies what Federici argues: that marriage is a primary institution for the conversion of productive female labor into naturalized reproductive labor (Federici 104).

Phoolbano's character further complicates the representation of women's labor. Initially introduced as a young, sensual woman, her cinematic portrayal is deeply embedded in Laura Mulvey's concept of the "male gaze." Her body is eroticized for the visual pleasure of both Moti and the audience, particularly in the scene where she licks sap from a tree—an act that reduces her to an object of scopophilic desire (Mulvey 11). Yet, once married, Phoolbano is expected to fulfill

the role previously occupied by Majubi—producing gur and maintaining the household. When she fails at this, Moti’s frustration escalates into violence. The film thus reveals how women’s erotic capital is swiftly rechanneled into domestic expectations, and failure to conform to labor norms results in punishment.

Both Majubi and Phoolbano are victims of patriarchal capitalism, but in different registers: Majubi is exploited for her artisanal skill, while Phoolbano is exploited first for her appearance and then coerced into labor. Their respective trajectories converge to demonstrate what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak identifies as the fate of the subaltern woman—her voice and agency overwritten by dominant male interests (Spivak 287). Majubi’s temporary resistance at the moment of her divorce, and her eventual empathy toward Phoolbano in the closing scene, suggest a subtle politics of solidarity. However, the system that exploits them remains intact. *Saudagar* reveals that women’s labor—both artisanal and domestic—is not only devalued but systematically appropriated under the guise of romance, marriage, and duty. Through its characters, visual composition, and narrative turns, the film offers a searing critique of how patriarchal and capitalist structures co-produce women’s invisibility in both the marketplace and the home.

2.2 Films reveal patriarchal mechanisms of control and exploitation

Saudagar (1973) offers a trenchant critique of the structures through which patriarchy exerts control over women’s labor, bodies, and autonomy. The film foregrounds the subtle yet insidious mechanisms by which male authority operates under the guise of romance, economic necessity, and social order, ultimately revealing how patriarchal power not only regulates women’s productivity but also commodifies their bodies and emotional investments.

Moti, the male protagonist, functions as the embodiment of feudal-patriarchal control. His manipulation of both Majubi and Phoolbano demonstrates the multiple

registers of exploitation sanctioned within a patriarchal economy. Moti's calculated decision to marry Majubi—"Winter ke dauraan jab tak darakht mein ras hai, aur mere jism ko garmi chahiye, Majubi yahin rahegi. Jaise hi mausam badlega, main talaaq de dunga"—is a chilling articulation of how women's bodies and labor are made seasonal, disposable, and subordinate to male desire (qtd. in Gopinathan). His language reduces Majubi to a utilitarian function, likening her to the gur sap itself, a resource to be extracted, consumed, and discarded. This overt declaration of intent illustrates the core of patriarchal control: the ability to determine the terms of engagement, labor, and abandonment.

Silvia Federici's analysis of capitalism's dependence on the unpaid labor of women is crucial here. She writes that "the housewife, though producing no commodities, produces the most important commodity: labor power" (*Caliban and the Witch* 100). In Majubi's case, her artisanal gur-making becomes invisible once she is absorbed into marriage. Her labor, formerly paid, becomes domestic and unremunerated, exemplifying how patriarchy disguises exploitation as familial duty. Moti thus consolidates both emotional and economic control, transforming a laboring woman into a reproductive, unacknowledged housewife whose productivity becomes a personal asset.

The mechanism of patriarchal exploitation is also revealed through emotional grooming. Moti seduces Majubi with flattery, telling her she is like Nolen Gur—complex and rare—playing into the romantic trope of the "exceptional woman." This manipulation echoes broader patterns of male control that operate by appealing to women's emotional vulnerabilities. As Hema Gopinathan observes, "She, who is so sharp and savvy when it comes to money, finds herself weak in the face of praise and hope that here is one person who perhaps sees her true worth." The psychological dimension of control here is central: Majubi consents not because she lacks agency,

but because that agency is slowly eroded through emotional dependency and socio-cultural precarity as a widow.

The male gaze, as theorized by Laura Mulvey, further complicates the visual economy of control. Phoolbano's body is objectified from the moment she is introduced; her sensuality is highlighted as she playfully catches sap from a palm tree with her tongue—an image heavy with erotic implication. This moment exemplifies what Mulvey calls the “to-be-looked-at-ness” of women in cinema, where female characters are constructed as passive visual objects for male pleasure (Mulvey 11). Moti's fetishization of Phoolbano as an aesthetic and sexual ideal reinforces the patriarchal gaze, one that reduces women to surfaces of desire. However, once married, Phoolbano too is expected to labor—her erotic appeal is no shield from domestic exploitation. When she fails to meet Moti's expectations, he subjects her to physical violence, demonstrating that patriarchal control extends across desire and discipline. Moreover, the film's handling of Majubi's disposability resonates with Gayatri Spivak's concept of the subaltern. Spivak argues that the subaltern woman is doubly silenced: first by the colonial or patriarchal system that exploits her, and second by the structures that narrate her story for her. Majubi's voice is suppressed within the film's world; her only act of defiance—her rage at being accused of infidelity—is rendered ineffectual by the broader system that enables Moti's accusations to be taken seriously. Her rhetorical question, “Bas itna keh dete ki mausam badal gaya hai aur meri zaroorat nahi rahi,” encapsulates her acute awareness of her own instrumentalization, but it also underlines her inability to change the structure that permits such treatment.

Patriarchal control in *Saudagar* is not merely individual but systemic. Moti's actions are validated by other male characters. Phoolbano's father, far from rejecting Moti after hearing of his manipulations, praises him for being “straightforward” and sees him as capable of “controlling” his daughter. This paternal approval reflects the

social complicity in male dominance and the normalization of control over female agency. Women's labor, emotions, and even dignity become sites of negotiation between men.

In conclusion, *Saudagar* exposes the multifaceted nature of patriarchal control—economic, emotional, visual, and institutional. Through its representation of women's labor and bodies as disposable, its valorization of male authority, and its cinematic encoding of eroticism and discipline, the film critiques the deep-rooted systems of exploitation that govern women's lives. By reading the film through the frameworks of Federici, Mulvey, and Spivak, one sees how *Saudagar* operates not merely as a social drama but as a feminist allegory of subjugation under the intertwined regimes of capitalism and patriarchy.

2.3 Cinematic techniques reinforce or subvert gendered hierarchies in the narrative

In *Saudagar* (1973), Sudhendu Roy employs a variety of cinematic techniques—ranging from mise-en-scène and framing to lighting and editing—to both reinforce and, at critical junctures, subtly subvert gendered hierarchies within the narrative. Through these choices, the film stages a visual discourse on labor, desirability, power, and disposability, positioning its female characters within a patriarchal economy of visibility and erasure.

One of the most striking uses of mise-en-scène in the film is the consistent spatial separation of labor and leisure. Majubi is frequently framed within the domestic hearth or near the gur-cooking cauldron, surrounded by smoke and fire—an elemental setting that both marks her artisanal expertise and confines her within the domain of domestic labor. These images, while initially powerful, reinforce what Silvia Federici identifies as the naturalization of women's unpaid labor within capitalist-patriarchal systems. Federici asserts, "Capitalism has been structurally dependent on the devaluation of women's labor, especially when hidden within

domestic spaces” (*Caliban and the Witch* 100). The film literalizes this hiding: while Moti is seen selling the gur in the open market, Majubi's labor is visually quarantined, shown in dim interiors or at dawn before the village awakens.

Cinematographer Dilip Ranjan Mukhopadhyay's framing choices amplify this hierarchy. Majubi is often captured in mid- to long-shots, her body immersed in labor, her expressions subdued or framed through doorways and windows—symbolic thresholds that denote her marginality in the public narrative. These compositional elements reflect what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak identifies as the condition of the subaltern woman: “unheard and unrepresented within dominant ideological structures” (Spivak 287). Majubi's emotional world is made visually opaque, shrouded in shadows, smoke, and silence, whereas Moti's actions and expressions are foregrounded with direct lighting and centered camera work.

In stark contrast, Phoolbano is introduced through the lens of erotic spectacle, her youthful body fetishized by both Moti and the camera. The infamous scene in which she catches droplets of sap from a palm tree—sensuously licking the fluid—serves as a textbook example of what Laura Mulvey terms the “male gaze.” The sequence deploys soft lighting, slow-motion, and close-up shots that isolate her lips and profile, drawing the viewer into a scopophilic position (Mulvey 11). Phoolbano is not framed as a laborer or agent but as a desirable object, aligning with patriarchal fantasies of docility and sensuality. As Mulvey writes, “Women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact” (15).

This bifurcation of visual treatment reinforces a gendered economy of cinematic attention: Majubi is shown laboring, Phoolbano is shown languishing. Yet both are subjected to control—Majubi through economic and domestic co-option, Phoolbano through sexual objectification and eventual coercion into labor. The film therefore reifies the binary that patriarchy imposes: women as either productive

workhorses or passive pleasure objects. However, the film also offers moments of formal resistance to these hierarchies. One such moment occurs when Majubi is falsely accused of adultery. As she confronts Moti before the qazi, the camera lingers in a long take, allowing her fury and pain to register without interruption. Her line—“Bas itna keh dete ki mausam badal gaya hai aur meri zaroorat nahi rahi”—is delivered in a static shot that centers her body and voice. This choice defies the typical visual marginalization of women and grants Majubi rare narrative centrality. In this scene, Roy seems to momentarily disrupt the visual order that had previously effaced her.

Additionally, the final sequence—where Majubi and Phoolbano meet outside Majubi's new home—is rendered in a manner that softens patriarchal resolution. The women embrace, and the camera frames them together in a medium shot, without Moti. This gesture of feminine solidarity, while subtle, destabilizes the male-centered resolution of the plot. The gaze is no longer aligned with Moti; instead, it is empathetically repositioned with the women's shared sorrow and resilience. As Gopinathan notes, “Majubi's silent compassion toward Phoolbano is not merely forgiveness; it is a feminist act of reclaiming dignity in a world that devalues women's work and worth.”

While *Saudagar* is largely complicit in the cinematic reproduction of gendered hierarchies—particularly through visual eroticization and labor marginalization—it also contains moments that subvert these paradigms through focalization, camera alignment, and mise-en-scène. These ruptures, though limited, suggest that the film is aware of its own complicity and strives to offer an internal critique of the very patriarchal structures it depicts.

2.4 Majubi and Phoolbano's roles are reflective of broader structures of feminine disposability

Saudagar (1973) articulates a scathing portrait of how women's labor, bodies, and affections are systematically rendered disposable within patriarchal and capitalist structures. The characters of Majubi and Phoolbano—embodied by Nutan and Padma Khanna, respectively—serve not merely as individuals within a dramatic narrative but as typological figures that expose the broader socio-economic mechanisms through which women are used, discarded, and replaced according to shifting male desire and economic convenience. Their disposability is not incidental but structural, scripted into a gendered economy that extracts maximum utility from women while denying them recognition, autonomy, or permanence.

Majubi's arc in the film is the clearest expression of what Silvia Federici terms the "subsumption of reproductive labor" into patriarchal capitalism. As a skilled gurmaker, Majubi sustains Moti's business through her artisanal expertise. Yet once her labor is no longer needed, she is dismissed with calculated cruelty. Moti divorces her on false allegations of impropriety, accusing her of an illicit relationship with her brother-in-law—a charge designed to ensure her social ostracization and nullify any moral claim she may have to justice or economic restitution. Her line, "Tum keh dete Majubi ab tumhari zaroorat nahi, main khud chali jaati," captures the brutal truth of her disposability (qtd. in Gopinathan). The invocation of "zaroorat" (need) is particularly telling, for it reveals the instrumental logic by which her presence is measured and negated.

Federici's framework helps decode this moment. She argues that capitalism systematically devalues reproductive labor—tasks related to caregiving, domestic maintenance, and emotional support—because it is seen as natural, unproductive, and therefore undeserving of compensation (Federici 100–03). Majubi's transition from wage laborer to wife converts her productive labor into unpaid, invisible work. Once

absorbed into the domestic domain, her skills cease to be economically recognized. When Moti accumulates enough money to pursue a younger bride, Majubi is not just emotionally abandoned; she is economically discarded—ejected from a system that only valued her as long as she generated profit.

Phoolbano's narrative, though initially framed through erotic spectacle, follows a parallel trajectory of disposability. Introduced through the aestheticized male gaze—captured in the scene where she licks date sap with sensual delight—Phoolbano is coded as a commodity, desirable for her youth and beauty. Laura Mulvey's theory of the "male gaze" is acutely relevant here. Mulvey notes that classical cinema often positions women as "erotic objects for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic objects for the spectator within the auditorium" (11). Phoolbano's presentation as an object of pleasure underscores her role in Moti's fantasy of domestic ideality. Yet, this fantasy collapses when Phoolbano fails to perform the reproductive labor expected of her. She cannot produce high-quality gur like Majubi, and her incompetence becomes grounds for punishment. In one disturbing sequence, Moti beats her with a stick for burning a batch of sap, thereby reinforcing that in this patriarchal economy, a woman's value is tethered to her ability to perform productive labor—be it economic or emotional. Once she fails, she too becomes disposable, reduced from a romantic ideal to an economic liability. Her father's admonition—"Ab biwi hai, sudhar jaayegi"—serves as a chilling reminder of the cultural belief that women can be moulded or corrected to fit patriarchal expectations, and if they fail, they are either punished or replaced.

Spivak's concept of the subaltern is useful to interpret both Majubi's and Phoolbano's positions. According to Spivak, the subaltern woman cannot speak within dominant discourses because her voice is overwritten by patriarchal and colonial systems of representation (Spivak 287). Both women's experiences—Majubi's emotional betrayal and Phoolbano's violent disciplining—are mediated

through Moti's narrative. Even when Majubi protests, her pain is localized to the private sphere and never transforms into political or social action. Phoolbano's suffering, similarly, is recuperated into the patriarchal order through forgiveness and resignation. Their voices remain reactive, not transformative—testimonies that underscore their disposability rather than resist it. Moreover, the film's resolution—where Moti, defeated by economic failure, returns to Majubi to ask for her labor once again—reiterates the cyclical exploitation of women under patriarchal capitalism. Majubi's gesture of silent forgiveness, culminating in a tearful embrace with Phoolbano, may appear redemptive on the surface. However, it does not challenge the structures that rendered them disposable; it merely humanizes the victims within a system that remains intact.

Saudagar lays bare the structural logic of feminine disposability under patriarchy. Majubi and Phoolbano are not exceptions but exemplars of a system that values women only for their labor or appearance, and abandons them once they cease to be useful. Drawing on Federici, Mulvey, and Spivak, this reading demonstrates that the film functions as a gendered allegory of exploitation, wherein women's contributions are systematically effaced, their voices silenced, and their dignity subordinated to the whims of male authority and economic opportunism.

3. Conclusion

Saudagar (1973) transcends its apparent narrative simplicity to deliver a searing critique of gendered labor and patriarchal exploitation, woven into the fabric of rural life and artisanal economies. Through the intertwined stories of Majubi and Phoolbano, the film lays bare how women's bodies, skills, and affections are commodified and discarded within the moral and economic logic of feudal patriarchy. Far from being a mere melodrama of personal betrayal, *Saudagar* operates as an

allegorical indictment of the broader structures that normalize the extraction of unpaid female labor under the guise of love, duty, and domesticity.

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UNVEILING CULTURAL TRADITIONS AND MORAL WISDOM: A DEEP DIVE INTO SUDHA MURTHY'S CHILDREN'S SHORT STORIES

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Abstract

Sudha Murthy is a prolific writer and philanthropist who has made significant contributions to children's literature in India. Her short stories are celebrated not only for their engaging narratives but also for their deep-rooted connections to Indian traditions, mythological ideologies, and moral teachings. Her children's short stories present a rich tapestry of cultural and social values that resonate with Indian cultural traditions and contemporary societal norms. Through her creative writing, she puts stress on the importance of ethical behavior, the empowerment of women. She preserves the mythological heritage prevalent in the root of Indian culture. She also addresses the contemporary societal challenges which are faced by the children in this rapid technological world.

Murthy reimagines, retells and reinterprets the mythical tales from Hindu epics - *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* and mythical literature with a new realistic perspective. She makes them accessible and relevant to modern children of

the 21st century. This research paper explores the representation of these values in selected works which highlight the interplay between narratives and the moral teachings they convey. By analyzing key stories, It will demonstrate how Murthy skillfully integrates themes of familial bonds, ethics, and community which offer young readers not only entertainment but also crucial lessons that reflect their cultural heritage. Further, this paper systematically explores these elements in select stories which emphasize their importance in shaping cultural identity and imparting essential lessons to young readers. Through detailed analysis and citations from her works, this study aims to highlight how Murthy weaves these aspects into her narratives, creating stories that resonate with both children and adults.

Keywords: Children, Social values, Cultural traditions, Mythological heritage, Ethical behaviors

Introduction

Nature is very intelligent. Whether you are good-looking or not, whether you are intelligent or not, whether you are rich or not, you only have 24 hours in a day. Whatever your set of problems or difficulties or solutions, you have to accommodate all of them in 24 hours. – Sudha Murty

Sudha Murthy is a well-known author and philanthropist who has made significant contributions to short stories, especially in India. Children's books play an important role in education and sharing culture, especially in a diverse country like India. As a writer of children's literature, Murthy creates engaging books that include non-fiction, stories for kids, and inspirational tales. Her writing connects with readers of all ages through simple and relatable themes. Sudha Murthy's work in education, rural development, and helping underprivileged communities has made a big difference in many people's lives. She has also made a great impact on children's literature by capturing Indian traditions and values in her stories. Her writing is simple but deep, often inspired by Indian folklore and myths, and she provides young readers

with stories that teach important lessons. This paper aims to study how her stories reflect Indian culture, myths, and values by looking closely at some of her children's short stories. Murthy's stories are full of wisdom and life lessons, helping to keep India's cultural heritage alive. This paper highlights how her work is important in teaching young readers about values and culture.

Sudha Murthy has made a big impact through her work in education, helping rural areas, and supporting disadvantaged communities, bringing about positive change in people's lives. She is also known for her contribution to children's literature, where her stories reflect Indian traditions and values. Her simple yet deep way of storytelling often draws from Indian myths and folklore, teaching children important life lessons through stories they can relate to. This paper aims to explore how her children's short stories reflect cultural traditions, mythological ideas, and important values through a careful look at her writing. Sudha Murthy's stories are full of cultural wisdom and moral lessons, helping children learn important values while preserving India's rich heritage. The paper highlights how her work plays an important role in teaching young readers about morals and culture.

1. Sudha Murthy's contribution to Children's Literature

Children's literature plays a pivotal role in shaping young minds, serving as a medium through which cultural and social values are transmitted. Her short stories are characterized by their simplicity and depth, often drawing from rich Indian traditions and societal norms. Sudha Murthy has been instrumental in bringing Indian stories to a young audience. Her ability to blend reality with fantasy and convey complex themes in a comprehensible manner sets her apart. The simplistic style of her story telling serves to heighten underlying moral messages, often leaving a lasting impact on her readers. Sudha Murthy has written several popular children's books those captive younger readers. Among them, the most notable children's books are *Grandma's Bag of Stories, a collection of tales featuring Kings, Monkeys, and hidden treasures; The Magic of the Lost Temple, an*

adventurous story about a 12-year-old girl Nooni exploring a village mystery; The Gopi Diaries, a heartwarming series narrated from a dog's perspectives; The Bird with Golden Wings, a collection of short stories teaching kindness and compassion. The Upside Down King - unusual tales about Rama and Krishna, making mythology accessible to children.(<https://learn.humsa.com/english/sudha-murthy-books/>) Sudha Murthy's stories often serve to preserve cultural identity by emphasizing traditional customs, values, and social norms. By incorporating these elements,

1.1. Cultural Values and Social Traditions

Traditions serve as the backbone of cultural identity and collective memory. In children's literature, conveying traditional values can help in fostering a sense of self and belonging. Murthy's stories often emphasize the importance of family bonds and societal concerns. Her narratives are deeply rooted in Indian traditions, reflecting the cultural ethos and social values that are integral to Indian society. For instance, her book *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories* highlights the significance of family relationships and community ties, encouraging children to appreciate and uphold these values. Through her storytelling, Murthy instills a sense of belonging and responsibility towards society and fellow beings, which is crucial for the holistic development of children

1.2. Family and Community Bonds

In Murthy's stories, the significance of family and community is a recurring theme. The story *The Magic of a Story* presents familial ties as a vital aspect of cultural identity. The protagonist learns about her heritage and cultural identity through stories passed down from her grandmother. It illustrates how storytelling is a means of preserving family history and wisdom. The narrator narrates, *She listened in rapt attention, for her grandmother's stories were filled with the magic of a time gone by.* (Murthy: 2015:15) It highlights the importance of intergenerational relationships in sustaining cultural legacies and reinforces the idea that family is the foundation of personal identity and cultural values. The story mirrors the idea that stories can serve as

a bridge to connect the past with the present, emphasizing oral storytelling's tradition within Indian culture. The protagonist says, *every evening, her grandmother would sit beside her and narrate tales from a time long gone, filling her little world with colors of the past.* (Murthy, 2015: 15) It suggests that storytelling is not only a means of entertainment but also a vital tradition that shapes the child's understanding of their cultural identity. Murthy fosters a connection between children and their roots.

1.3 .Respect for Elders

Respect for elders is a fundamental value in Indian culture, which Murthy emphasizes in her stories. Murthy places a strong emphasis on the value of respect for elders across her stories. The tale *The Missing Dog* demonstrates this value through the protagonist's interactions with her elderly neighbor. The young girl learns compassion and the significance of caring for animals, mirroring traditional Indian values of empathy and kindness towards all living beings. The narrator notes that *She understood that even a small act of kindness could light up someone's life.* (Murthy: 2015: 28) This reflects the broader cultural value of respect and care for the old and the vulnerable, encapsulated in the Indian ethos of community welfare. Thus, the protagonist learns the importance of compassion, representing traditional values of empathy toward both humans and animals. *She realized that in caring for every lost soul, she was giving back to the community that had nurtured her.* (Murthy: 2015:28) This sentiment fosters respect for all forms of life and highlights the interconnectedness of community.

1.4. Celebration of Festivals and Traditions

Murthy's stories often reflect the vibrancy of Indian culture, particularly through the depiction of festivals. In *The Gift of a Necklace*, the protagonist's family celebrations highlight the tradition of gifting and sharing happiness during festive occasions. (Chatterjee &Khan: 2023:3). *On the festival day, everyone was busy preparing sweets, and the air was filled with laughter and joy.* (Murthy: 2015: 33) Murthy highlights the significance of festivals as reflections of cultural heritage. The

protagonist discovers the importance of sharing and generosity during a family celebration. *Festivals are not just about decorations and sweets; they are about the joy of giving and being together.* (Murthy: 2015: 33) This celebration reinforces the idea that traditions and rituals foster a sense of belonging and community, integral to cultural identity among individuals.

1.5 Empathy and Social Responsibility

Murthy's story- *The Old Man and His Three Sons* is suffused with the value of empathy toward societal issues. It addresses themes of family responsibilities and social duty. *The old man reminded his sons that true wealth lies not in material possessions but in love, support, and togetherness.* (Murthy: 2015:48) It encapsulates the essence of social responsibility, urging the younger generation to prioritize relationships and communal welfare over individual gain. Further, through her narratives, Murthy subtly addresses gender roles and the importance of equality. In *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*, the protagonist symbolizes the potential of women beyond traditional confines. *She proved that a girl can achieve the same things as a boy, if given the opportunity.* (Murthy: 2017:24) By empowering female characters, Murthy challenges societal norms and nurtures a sense of equality, reinforcing the need for inclusivity in modern society.

1.6. The Importance of Education

The significance of education is portrayed not only as a prevalent theme but also as a transformative power in Murthy's stories. In *Kukku's Journey*, the character embarks on a quest for knowledge, emphasizing that education is a tool for empowerment and personal growth. The narrator says, *Kukku realized that knowledge is like a light, illuminating the darkest path* and finally, *Kukku learned that education would unlock doors to a world full of possibilities.* (Murthy: 2015: 32) These statements deal with the social value placed on education in contemporary society, conveying a message that

prioritizing learning can lead to enlightenment and progress and emphasizing lifelong learning as a crucial virtue.

2. Mythological Ideology

Myths and folklore have played a critical role in shaping cultural narratives across societies. They often embody the values and beliefs of a civilization and serve as a repository of collective wisdom. Murthy's usage of mythological references enriches her storytelling, providing layers of meaning that resonate deeply with readers familiar with these tales. This connection to mythology helps cement the values she imparts, making them more relatable and profound. Murthy's engagement with mythology is evident in her series of books that retell popular stories from Hindu mythology. These stories, such as those found in *The Serpent's Revenge: Unusual Tales from the Mahabharata* and *The Man from the Egg: Unusual Tales about the Trinity*, serve to keep myth memory alive while adapting it for contemporary audiences. Murthy often draws on mythological archetypes to impart moral values. In *Kukku's Journey*, the protagonist embodies the qualities of determination and bravery, reminiscent of heroic figures from Indian mythology. Kukku knew that like the heroes from her grandmother's stories, she too must conquer her fears to discover her true self. (Murthy: (33 :2017) It illustrates how mythological narratives provide a framework for understanding personal challenges, instilling strength and resilience in young readers. Murthy's stories reflect the belief in the interconnectedness of all beings, a theme prevalent in Indian mythology. (Reddy: 2019:5)

In *The Old Man and His Three Sons*, the old man teaches his sons that life's true wealth lies in relationships and shared responsibilities. *The old man smiled and said, 'We are all woven together in the tapestry of life; each thread is important.* (Murthy, 2015:37) This allegory underscores the mythological idea of universal connection, emphasizing that every individual's actions affect the larger community. By reimagining these ancient tales, Murthy not only preserves cultural heritage but

also challenges traditional narratives, offering new perspectives on gender, religion, and culture. Her approach to myth retelling encourages children to explore and question the metanarratives of history and tradition, fostering critical thinking and cultural awareness. Her works often reflect Indian culture and values making them relatable and educational for young readers.

3. Moral Values

Moral values are intricately woven into the fabric of her narratives. The stories not only entertain but also educate young minds about empathy, love for nature, the importance of family, and the significance of learning. The moral values embedded in Murthy's stories are a cornerstone of her literary work. Her collection *The Magic Drum and Other Favorite Stories* is particularly noted for its emphasis on virtues such as truthfulness, diligence, and kindness, while also critiquing negative traits like greed and dishonesty. Stories like *The Seed of Truth* and *The Lucky Purse* exemplify the positive values Murthy seeks to promote, while others like *The Last Laddoo* highlights the consequences of negative behaviors. Empathy and kindness are a central moral value that emerges in Murthy's stories. In *The Boy Who Knew Too Much*, the protagonist learns to empathize with others' struggles, reflecting the importance of kindness in everyday life. *He realized that understanding someone else's pain is the first step towards healing.* (Murthy, 2015: 42) This message expresses the value of compassion as a foundational element in building a harmonious society.

Murthy's stories often illustrate the significance of responsibility and integrity. In *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*, the protagonist faces moral dilemmas and learns to always choose what is right. The narrator writes, *she understood that true courage lies in standing by what is just, even if it means standing alone.* (Murthy, 2017: 12) It interprets the idea that integrity is a cornerstone of character, vital for personal and societal growth. In the story *The Gift of a Necklace*, a young girl learns the significance of generosity and sharing, rooted deeply in Indian traditions of hospitality and selflessness. The story intertwines familial

bonds and the joy of giving. It promotes selflessness, highlighting that true happiness comes from generosity rather than material possessions. Through these stories, Murthy aims to salvage and reinforce Indian values amidst a rapidly changing cultural landscape, ensuring that children grow up with a strong moral foundation.

Sudha Murthy's writing for children is highly influenced her background, her experiences and her values. Due to born and brought up in a middle class traditional Indian family, she puts emphasis on simplicity and moral values not only her real life but also in her narratives which appeal to the young readers effectively. Her philanthropic work has exposed her to various social issues, which she seamlessly integrates into her stories, fostering empathy and awareness among children of diverse background who are closely connected with her art of storytelling. She usually inspires for her writing from real-life experiences as seen in her book- *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read* where she shares personal anecdotes that heighten the importance of education and compassion. As she states, *everyone has a lesson to teach*. (Murthy: 2015:17) By narratives of female character and addressing social norms, Murthy encourages readers to think critically about their surroundings. This approach not only entertains but also instills important life lessons, making her an influential figure in children's literature.

Conclusion

Sudha Murthy's children's short stories serve as a lens through which readers can explore and appreciate the rich tapestry of Indian traditions, mythological ideologies, and moral values. Through her selected short stories, she conveys essential lessons about family, respect for elders, education, empathy, and gender equality. These stories not only entertain but also educate young minds, preserving and promoting cultural heritage while imparting contemporary ethical values. Murthy's work underscores the role of children's literature as a vital tool for shaping societal norms and fostering a sense of identity among the youth. By weaving these elements into her narratives, Murthy not only entertains but educates her readers, instilling a sense of identity and responsibility. Her work highlights the importance

of nurturing cultural values and ethical principles, ensuring that the next generation remains connected to their heritage while navigating an increasingly complex world.

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GENDER, MEMORY AND THE SPATIAL LEGACIES OF SLAVERY: A DIGITAL HUMANITIES APPROACH TO YAA GYASI'S HOMEGOING AND SOLOMON NORTHUP'S 12 YEARS A SLAVE

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Abstract

This study interrogates the gendered- specific narratives of slavery in contemporary literature by adopting an interdisciplinary framework that combines insights from cultural studies and digital humanities. Focusing on Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* and Solomon Northup's *12 Years a Slave*, it explores how the labour, rage and resilience of enslaved women are portrayed and spatially situated within the context of transatlantic slave trade. By integrating digital mapping and archival research, the study delves into the emotional and geographical journeys of female characters, demonstrating the ways in which trauma, identity, and memory correlate across generations and continents. In *Homegoing*, the disparate fates of Effia and Esi—Effia dwelling in the governor's quarters, while "Esi was locked in the dungeons, the air thick with despair and the cries of the enslaved"—emphasize the gendered violence ingrained in the spatial realities of slavery. Similarly, the resilience

of characters like Patsey, "who bore the scars of her suffering, but her spirit remained unbroken," exemplifies female endurance. By integrating digital archival data from Enslaved.Org and SlaveVoyages, it contextualises fictional narratives within historical geographies. The paper argues for the necessity of methodological innovation in tracing how literature contributes to cultural memory and provides insights into the spatial and physical memories of slavery.

Keywords- Gender, Slavery, Digital Humanities, Cultural Studies, Memory.

1. Introduction

The transatlantic slave trade was a multifaceted, gendered, and territorial project, deeply ingrained in communal memory and cultural narratives. Literature offers a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of enslaved women, despite traditional histories often relying on statistics and institutional records. This paper argues that combining cultural studies with digital humanities allows us to interrogate the emotional, geographical and bodily dimensions of enslavement that archives often obscure. Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* and Solomon Northup's *12 Years a Slave* serves as the primary texts for this inquiry. While different in genre (fiction and autobiography) and over a century and a half apart, both centre the intertwined experiences of trauma, resilience and spatialise violence. In *Homegoing*, the genealogical split between Effia and Esi, two sisters whose paths diverge at Cape Coast Castle, shows how gendered violence was physically organised: Effia is confined to the governor's domestic space while Esi languishes in the dungeons beneath. The testimony of Northup, meanwhile, records the cruel living conditions imposed on slave women in the antebellum south, which is exemplified by Petasi, whose daily existence was marked by physical attack and sexual exploitation.

As Saidiya Hartman argues in *Lose your Mother*, the afterlife of slavery is not just in the historical event but in "the residue it leaves in the present" (Hartman 5). This paper

argues that *Homegoing* and *12 Years a Slave* stage the entanglement of gender, space and memory in ways that require new, interdisciplinary methods. By using digital tools like Enslaved.org and SlaveVoyages, this study maps the physical and symbolic geographies to reconstruct these spatial histories more accurately. These digital platforms when read alongside literary narratives allow us to re-conceptualise space not just as historical terrain but as a living archive of gendered oppression and cultural survival.

2. Spatial Memory and Gendered Violence in *Homegoing*

Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* weaves a multi-generational story that begins with two sisters whose different paths create a spatial metaphor for the split of African identity under slavery. Effia lives in the governor's quarters of a Cape Coast castle, in a life of relative comfort but estrangement: "Effia was a stranger in her own home" (Gyasi 12). In contrast, Esi is imprisoned in a dungeon beneath the castle, where "the air was thick with despair and the cries of the enslaved" (Gyasi 24). This spatial dichotomy embodies the gender of slavery, where the body of women becomes sites of control, exploitation and trauma. The depiction of the Cape Cast Castle in the novel emphasises a spatial hierarchy as a vector of trauma: "Esi had not known that the Castle had dungeons. She had not known that the Governor's wife lived right above those dungeons... that she could be stepping on the ceiling of her own suffering." (Gyasi 25)

This spatial layering, the domestic above and the torture chambers below, is how gendered violence was spatially configured. Historians such as Saidiya Hartman have characterized the Atlantic slave trade as a form of commerce that "rendered black women hyper visible as objects of exchange yet invisible as subjects of suffering" (Hartman 24). In Gyasi's story, this paradox takes physical form as architecture: the walls of the castle both hide and reveal, shelter and imprison. Although she was not

enslaved herself, but her domestic space is built on the forced labor and suffering of people beneath her household. This proximity in space but distance in experience underlies the intricate entanglements of power, gender, and colonialism.

The outdoor stage of the Cape Coast Castle, with components such as its pride of place and centuries-old roots in British tradition, remain on view for visitors to experience with their own senses. Digital mapping of Cape Coast Castle, available through *Slave Voyages* and the UNESCO Slave Route Project, reinforces the scale of this structure: thousands of captives passed through its dungeons, many of them women whose stories have been silenced.

Furthermore, there is also a spatial rift between Effia and Esi which serves as a prototype for the novel's greater exploration of diaspora. Here the remembrance of this division shapes each generation that follows - a remembrance beyond the lives and deaths of individuals, but a legacy passed on through culture. As Esi's descendants tell the story, it anticipates that Hirsch's concept of Post memory should find a strong resonance across all narrative lines: the descendants of Esi and Effia inherit a wound from before their birth which still marks who they are.

3. Labor, Resistance and Gendered body in *12 Years a slave*

12 Years a Slave, the autobiography of Solomon Northup, provides valuable insight into the particularly gendered terrors of slavery in the antebellum American South. It is depicted through its harrowing portrayal of slavery's constant threat of violence and sexual assault borne by Patsey, an enslaved woman whose body serves as a subject of space, labour, and gender based terror. Patsey's pain is bound up with the geography of the plantation: the fields she picks more cotton than any other enslaved person, the whipping post where she is publicly abused and the quarters where she is sexually assaulted. Northup describes her as "the enslaved girl who bore the scars of her suffering, but whose spirit remained unbroken" (Northup 185) This portrayal challenges the stereotypes of the passive victim. Patsey is what Hazel Carby refers to

as “the historical silencing of Black womanhood”—a subject position repeatedly denied in and through the archive and, yet, violently materialised in the spatial economy of the plantation (Carby 1987).

The story of Northup also demonstrates how sites of punishment and sites of production were contiguous, forming a totalizing space of control. In one of the most harrowing passages in the memoir, Patsey is whipped for asking for a bar of soap: “The lash was laid upon her back, and lacerated her flesh terribly... she was torn and bleeding from head to foot” (Northup 139). The post here becomes a place of both physical and mental domination - its visibility is to terrorise all those who witness. Spatial memory, in this regard, is not just a record of past events, but a living remains that continue in collective memory. Digital archival data from Enslaved.org confirms the frequency of these punishment sites, which peppered plantations throughout the American South. Mapping of EPPS planting with other Louisiana sites with similar acts underscore the systemic nature of this violence.

The plantation space is also, on the other hand, a locus of resistance. Patsey’s will, the fact that she won’t cede her identity, is an act of rebellion. As Hartman argues “the scenes of subjection are never completed; they are interrupted by practices of freedom” (Hartman 139). Literature then becomes a way to recover these memories, to re-inscribe the humanity that the plantation attempted to eliminate.

4. Theoretical framework and Methodology

The experiences of enslaved women in these narratives align with Cathy Caruth’s trauma theory, which sees trauma as an unincorporated wound that returns through memory and narrative. It gives us a way to understand how unspoken violence persists in narrative fragments and bodily silences. Caruth’s statement that “not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely not known in the first

instance—returns to haunt the survivor” (Caruth 4) explains why literary representation often struggles with partial, recursive memory.

Cultural Memory Studies, by Jan and Aleida Assmann, highlights the preservation of collective memory through cultural practices like storytelling and literature. Aleida Assmann makes a distinction between "storage memory," which records the past, and "functional memory," which support the present. *Homegoing* and *12 years a Slave* are forms of cultural memory, keeping the history of trauma and resilience from being erased. Literature, in this sense, acts as both - a dynamic repository of trauma and a vehicle for cultural negotiations. Marianne Hirsch's concept of Postmemory explains how slavery's trauma is transmitted across generations: “the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right.” (Hirsch 103).

Further, this study integrates the digital humanities approach. Using resources like Enslaved.org and SlaveVoyages you can spatialise the events in these narratives. It compiles extensive data on slave voyages, trade routes, and sites of enslavement, enabling scholars to map the geographical paths of enslaved people across the Atlantic world. For example, the spatial divide between Effia's life in the governor's quarters and Esi's imprisonment in the dungeons corresponds to documented historical sites of captivity and trade. Digital mapping shows the physical distances and routes of the transatlantic slave trade and how geography was key to the violence of slavery.

Similarly, mapping plantation locations and sales points in *12 years a Slave* locate in a broad spatial network of exploitation of Ghulam Petsi's experiences. Scholars like Lauren Rain Klein have argued that "the digital can offer new perspectives on historical experience, particularly when used to surface hidden or suppressed narratives” (Klein 138). By combining digital mapping with literary analysis, this study shows how trauma and memory are spatially written and tangible. Landscapes

of slavery - dungeons, plantations, domestic quarters - are not passive backgrounds but active sites where trauma is imposed, remembered and resisted.

5. Digital Humanities and the Spatialisation of Memory

While literary works can powerfully represent the subjectivity of trauma, digital humanities tools serve as a way to spatialise and historicise such representations. By pairing *Homegoing* and *12 Years a Slave* with materials from Enslaved. org, slavevoyages, and GIS mapping, it unfolds the spaces by which we can more effectively visualise the locations where such acts of gendered violence occurred. For example, digital mapping of the transatlantic voyages originating from Cape Coast Castle contextualises Esi's capture as but one node within a vast set of transactions. According to SlaveVoyages data, during the 18th century, over 1.2 million captives were exported from the Gold Coast, including many of them were women and children. Visualisation of these routes underscores the scale and regularity of what the JiNis represents in intimate detail.

In the same way, *12 Years a Slave* may be georeferenced through the Northup Trail, a digital project that maps Northup's travels from Washington, D.C., to Louisiana. Mapping Patsey's life onto this geography shows how her toil and torment played out in the context of the larger system of the plantation economy. The option to superimpose narrative excerpts on actual historical maps, photographs of plantation sites, and digitised bills of sale turns literary interpretation into a multi-modal approach to cultural memory. Lauren Klein argues that "the spatial humanities can illuminate histories of marginalised groups whose experiences are difficult to capture through conventional archival sources" (Klein 138). Such a perspective is especially pressing for discussing the lives of enslaved women, whose stories were regularly effaced or distorted by patriarchal recorders.

In lieu of this, Digital humanities is not a replacement for close reading at all, but a means of focusing and scaling these histories in different ways. By juxtaposing fictional and documentary narratives with spatial data, scholars are able to combat what Hartman calls “the violence of abstraction,” authorising enslaved individuals in the paper record as numbers or categories. Instead, we can reconstruct the lived geographies of trauma and resilience, restoring context to the intimate experiences Gyasi and Northup have recorded.

6. Literature as a site of Cultural Memory and Resistance

Ya Gyasi's *Homegoing* and Solomon Northup *12 years a Slave* serves as important additions of slave cultural memory, preserving and transmitting the experiences of slave women into contemporary audience. These stories resist the historical rhythm era by focusing on the voices of the marginalised and establishing agencies through narrative. Gyasi's novel counteracts dominant historical stories by asking the question: "Whose history do we think?" (Gyasi 273), thus emphasising the need to restore marginalised perspectives.

Patsey's portray of Northup exemplifies resilience in the midst of brutality, highlighting the desire to survive and resist, despite systemic violence. Its resistance reveals the complex interaction between trauma and agency in oppressive spatial contexts. Digital Humanities Methodologies further democratise access to these stories, linking literary stories to archival data and spatial mapping from platforms such as Enslaved.org and Slavoyages. This approach visualises the geographical and emotional heritage of the slavery, and emphasises how trauma and memory are embodied in landscape and bodies. In addition, Digital Praxi's archive neutrality challenges by limiting social justice and inclusion, and recovering slaves' history from deletion.

Together, these works and methodologies transform literature into a place of cultural memory and resistance, ensuring that the stories of slave women stay over generations and continue to inspire healing and resilience.

Conclusion

This interdisciplinary study shows cultural studies, trauma theory, and the importance of integrating digital humanities to explore gender spatial heritage from slavery. This not only reveals the spatial architecture of racial and gender violence, but also states that memory itself must be incorporated, inherited and considered alive. Through a detailed literary analysis of *Homegoing* and *12 years a Slave* combined with research and mapping digital archives, it explains how women's labor, violence and flexibility are located within specific geographical and cultural memories. A digital humanities approach does not reduce the emotional power of literary representation. Instead, it allows us to see how individual stories differ with historical geographicals, which provide a complete account of trauma and flexibility. As scholars continue to interrogate the aftermath of slavery, the integration of text analysis with spatial visualisation would be important to restore the complexity of these stories.

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INDIAN ENGLISH DETECTIVE FICTION: THEMES, EVOLUTION, AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

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Abstract

Indian English detective fiction has evolved into a dynamic and culturally rooted genre. While inspired by Western models, Indian writers have crafted stories that reflect the nation's diverse social realities. This paper explores the evolution of detective fiction in India, major authors and their works, recurring themes such as gender, caste, corruption, and the genre's adaptation to Indian narrative forms. Through a critical lens, the study underscores how this genre not only entertains but also critiques societal structures, making it a valuable tool for both literary analysis and social commentary.

Keywords: Detective fiction, Social realities, Adaptation, Narrative forms

Evolution of Indian Detective Fiction in English

The detective genre in Indian literature predates its English counterpart, thriving initially in regional languages such as Bengali, Tamil, and Hindi. Early examples like Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay's Byomkesh Bakshi (in Bengali) and Tamil pulp novels featuring detectives such as Shankarlal laid the groundwork for

Indian crime storytelling. In English, the genre began developing post-Independence, evolving from colonial imitations to more localized, culturally embedded narratives. With the rise of Indian English fiction in the 1980s and 1990s, crime writing too found its voice. Writers began to incorporate the social, political, and linguistic fabric of India into their detective plots. The genre's development is thus both a literary evolution and a socio-political response to changing times.

Major Authors and Works in Indian English Detective Fiction

The landscape of Indian English detective fiction is rich with diverse voices that reflect the multiplicity of Indian experiences. Tarquin Hall's Vish Puri series introduces an eccentric yet methodical Punjabi detective who navigates both modern and traditional India. Kalpana Swaminathan's Lalli is a former policewoman turned investigator, offering a female perspective often absent in crime fiction.

Vikram Chandra's Sacred Games blends crime fiction with literary ambition, focusing on Inspector Sartaj Singh's investigation into a crime syndicate that spirals into a meditation on power, violence, and Indian history. These authors and others use detective fiction to critique societal flaws—be it corruption, gender discrimination, or class divides—while crafting compelling mysteries.

Themes and Cultural Contexts in Indian English Detective Fiction

Indian English detective fiction stands apart from its Western counterparts due to its deeply embedded cultural, social, and political contexts. Rather than relying solely on mystery or suspense, these stories reflect a nuanced reality—where crime, justice, and morality are entangled with systemic inequalities, tradition, and modernity. Social hierarchies, caste-based oppression, and gender discrimination are often central to the plot. Corruption and institutional decay appear not only as backdrops but as active obstacles to justice. Additionally, the urban-rural divide,

communal tension, and religious identity inform both the crime and its investigation, rendering these narratives as mirrors to Indian life.

Genre Adaptation in the Indian Context

Detective fiction, with its classic framework of crime, investigation, and resolution, has proven remarkably adaptable across cultures. In Indian English literature, however, the genre undergoes a significant transformation. Rather than merely transplanting Western models, Indian writers reconfigure the detective story to reflect local idioms, moral codes, and storytelling traditions—creating a hybrid form that resonates with Indian readers. Characters like Vish Puri and Lalli operate as deeply Indian personalities, balancing detective work with cultural responsibilities. Stories often blend rational investigation with traditional wisdom, while endings may emphasize moral rather than legal justice. This adaptation gives the genre a uniquely Indian flavor.

Critical Analysis of Indian English Detective Fiction

Indian English detective fiction is more than a localized adaptation of a Western genre—it is a distinct literary space where suspense, social critique, and cultural commentary intersect. Through a closer critical lens, we can understand how the genre not only entertains but also serves as a mirror to Indian society, exposing its fractures and contradictions. Narratively, these works are less rigid than their Western counterparts, often weaving together multiple timelines and voices. Themes are grounded in realism, tackling gender violence, terrorism, and postcolonial identity. Protagonists are flawed, relatable figures, while the blend of popular and literary styles has elevated the genre's critical value.

Conclusion

Indian English detective fiction has emerged as a vibrant and meaningful genre that goes far beyond conventional crime-solving. By incorporating the

complexities of Indian life—its diversity, contradictions, and tensions—authors have transformed the detective narrative into a tool for cultural reflection and social critique. These stories not only unravel mysteries but also interrogate the structures of power, justice, and morality in a uniquely Indian context. The genre continues to evolve, embracing new voices and narratives that reflect the changing face of India. With its blend of suspense and substance, Indian English detective fiction stands as a powerful testament to the genre’s adaptability and relevance in capturing the spirit of contemporary India.

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PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES AS PATHWAYS TO LANGUAGE SKILLS -CENTERED EDUCATION

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Abstract

This research paper explores the multifaceted role of pedagogy in enhancing instructional quality, fostering meaningful teacher-student relationships, and promoting learner-centered approaches. Pedagogy encompassing both theoretical foundations and practical applications of teaching, serves like a critical framework in this modern education. In this modern education it shaped by educators' trusts, cultural awareness, and recognition of diverse learning styles. Emphasis is placed on pedagogical models such as constructivist, collaborative, integrative, reflective, and inquiry-based learning, all of which support individualized instruction and strengthen of higher-order cognitive skills. Teacher pedagogy is collaborated with respect to content delivery, responsiveness to student needs, and communication strategies, particularly for students with special requirements. The distinction between techniques and pedagogical approaches is clarified to underscore their respective roles in shaping classroom dynamics. Furthermore, the study reviews various pedagogical types, social, critical, culturally responsive, and highlighting their contributions to holistic growth of the learner. The utmost findings were suggested that a thoughtfully

implemented pedagogical framework significantly influences learner's educational and inclusivity outcomes.

Keywords: Pedagogical Models, Learner-Centered Education, Inclusive Teaching Practices, Cognitive Skill Development, Teacher-Student Interaction.

Introduction

Pedagogy is encompassing the both practical and theoretical ways of teaching process, representing an understanding as a approach to know how the educators facilitate learning and its qualities. It is hardly and deeply highlighted through the teachers' cultural awareness, educational systems, and sensitivity to highlight the learning methods of learners. Effectively the pedagogy fosters as meaningful connectivity and major interactions within the enabling the classroom, and students to connect a variety of knowledge with their prior interesting learning experiences. At its core, pedagogy serves as a bridge between instructional methods and the cultural way of learning, and that aims to improve may be that is not only academic comprehending that also learner attitudes and critical skills. By that way a great application of sound may be the pedagogical practices, learners are highly equipped to internalize topics and add them beyond the classroom setting for learners.

Pedagogy of the Teacher

In general, the Teacher-centered learning approaches refer to instructional practices that where the teacher plays a central approach in delivering course and general content and guiding the process of learning. In this way, the teacher assumes major way of responsibility for ensuring that and relevant and exact information is perfectly communicated, regardless of their perfect learning approach. This technique has emphasizes structure, clarity, and expertise was enabling the educator to do not

only like a knowledge giver as a teacher and but also as a model for academic and language skills. The main intension was focus lies in facilitating learners' ability and academic progress by doing well-organized content and that consistent instructional and delivery support.

Objectives

- To search the eminent diverse and pedagogical models—namely integrative, collaborative, reflective, constructivist, and inquiry-based approaches.
- To get the role of the student-centered and inclusive pedagogical views in accommodating diverse learning styles.
- To differentiate between pedagogical techniques, pedagogical approaches and critically evaluate their perfect influences.

Pedagogy as a Constructivist

This way of method predominance the student agency in the knowledge-building process. Rather than passively receiving information, learners are able to encouraged to actively connect with critically examine ideas, content, and collaborate the new knowledge with their main interesting. That kind of massive engagement was cultivates individual thinking and deepens cognitive learning were helping to a more useful and more significant educational experience in this contemporary society with general knowledge. Using this kind of knowledge and concern for only the ability of pedagogy as a constructivist method.

Pedagogy like a Collaborative

In this valuable approach mainly, that was nothing but a Collaborative learning and that was mainly emphasizes the group-based interaction, where students jointly addressing about those individual issues, share perspectives, formulate solutions, and complete tasks. The main role of teacher acts like a mentor/facilitator within this

process, mutual support, promoting dialogue, and the collective construction of prior concern and knowledge. This technique was enhanced the main communication skills and reinforces the greater value of cooperative and greatly academic work for sake of individual education process.

Reflective Learning like a great method

In this way of connection, the reflective learning model and that highlights the style/significance of self-assessment like a main part of the learner's growth. Students/learners are prompted to observe classroom practices, including the instructional technical employed through the teachers and the learning styles of peers. They are then effectively and situationally encouraged to critically assess the intentions and outcomes of these learning practices. This reflective method/process enhances learners' ability of learning views and helps to strengthen of meta-cognitive skills in educational system herein, all this way of crucial methodology students and teachers mostly connected to this kind of leaning process and progressive methodology for using more and more techniques.

Inquiry-Based Learning

According to the point of view of the learner, and teacher this is clearly an inquiry-based approach, educators act like mentor/facilitators who wants to know the acquiring a learning environment and that values exploration, curiosity, and critical engagement. Rather than simply giving answers, teachers support to learners in searching their analyzing information, own questions, and refining their comprehending. This technique/method mostly organises to transform passive-inquiry into an active inquiry, ultimately fostering own thinking and sustained intellectual inquiry in the process of education syste..

Predominance of Pedagogy in Teaching

In this current society everyone has to define the note of understanding and finding the ability to note the source of knowledge and concern as a pedagogical approach in classrooms can significantly enhance the overall quality of education. When style/pedagogy is perfectly exhibited, it was enabled learners to acquire a deeper ability of educational content, leading to developed learning sources. This too mostly promotes encouraging students to finding with one another on that time working on basic tasks and collaborative learning. This interaction broadens their styles, as they learn to accept the diverse view-points, fostering cooperative learning situations and that helps to improve of future leadership skills to students.

In general, this learning process highlights the students' connectivity to instruction, accepting them to better identification and engage with the material presented through the teacher. An effective teaching methodological frame-work allots to the diverse learning and that helps to learners through an offering various pathways for comprehending. This study accepts the ability of learners to create different teaching styles/methods and that align with their own preferences, thereby deepening subject strengthening and comprehension educational methods. For learners with specific academical necessities, tailored methodological views are very important crucial. Those methods were created inclusive learning circumstances mainly where all learners can encourage meaningfully. Therefore, when teachers were applying teaching pedagogy rapidly, they gain effective insights into each student's challenges, and abilities are enabling them to considered the various aspects of and provide targeted support their weaknesses.

Conclusion

According to the opinion of this research study, this encompasses the proper study and an extends the educational purviews, those are very beyond mere content transmission to encompass the full scope of the teaching experience how the learners

are gaining, process, and apply knowledge within the academic set up. In this current society, modern teaching pedagogy highlights the collaborative learning, critical reasoning, engagement, and adaptability, making it well organised and suited to address the varied learning methods/styles and basic needs of late's diverse strength of the learners. This chapter consistently demonstrates that basic sound pedagogical practices have a significant and effective influence on students' skill acquisition, academic growth, and overall learning outcomes. When the teaching-strategies are roughly aligned with students strengthen the cognitive preferences, stages, and socio-cultural educational policies, they acknowledge the deeper and meaningful comprehension, developed the retention, and more effective application of knowledge.

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AI AND SOFT SKILLS INTEGRATION IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION: A STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has profoundly transformed business communication by introducing automation, precision, and data-driven efficiency. Yet, this technological evolution has simultaneously heightened the importance of soft skills such as empathy, adaptability, critical thinking, and cultural intelligence. This chapter explores how AI and soft skills can be strategically integrated to create a balanced communication ecosystem in the corporate world. It examines the impact of AI on organizational communication, the continuing necessity of human emotional intelligence, and the ways in which both can coexist to strengthen professional relationships and decision-making.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Business Communication, Soft Skills, Emotional Intelligence, Digital Transformation.

1. Introduction

Communication has always been central to the success of any business organization. The rise of digital technologies has accelerated this process, introducing

new modes, platforms, and expectations. In recent years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionized how professionals create, deliver, and interpret messages. From AI-powered chatbots and automated reporting systems to advanced sentiment analysis tools, AI has become a silent partner in nearly every aspect of business communication. However, this dependence on AI has sparked an essential question: what happens to the human element of communication—the empathy, ethical judgment, and emotional understanding that define human interaction? Soft skills remain the backbone of effective communication, ensuring that messages are not only transmitted efficiently but also understood in context and emotion. While AI can process and predict, it cannot genuinely feel. Therefore, the integration of AI with soft skills is not just a matter of technological enhancement; it is a strategic need for maintaining human connection in increasingly automated workplaces. The objective of this chapter is to examine how AI and soft skills intersect and how this integration can shape the future of organizational communication. By exploring their relationship, challenges, and synergies, the discussion establishes a framework for creating communication that is both technologically advanced and emotionally intelligent.

2. The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Business Communication

AI has changed the landscape of business communication by transforming the way organizations interact internally with employees and externally with customers and partners. Its influence extends across multiple levels—from operational correspondence and marketing messages to strategic negotiations and leadership communication. One of the most visible contributions of AI lies in automation. Intelligent chatbots handle customer queries with efficiency and consistency, providing immediate assistance at any time of day. Virtual assistants such as Alexa for Business or Google Assistant streamline administrative communication by scheduling meetings and sending reminders. AI-based analytics tools evaluate large volumes of communication data to measure employee engagement, client satisfaction,

or the overall sentiment of brand conversations. These developments have improved the speed and scope of business interactions.

Another major contribution of AI is personalization. By processing data from various sources, AI systems can adapt communication to individual preferences and behaviors. Marketing messages can be customized, customer feedback analyzed in real time, and business decisions guided by predictive models. AI also facilitates multilingual communication through instant translation, breaking barriers in global collaboration. Despite these advantages, AI has its limitations. While it can detect tone, frequency, and sentiment through algorithms, it struggles to interpret complex emotional cues or cultural subtleties. Over-reliance on automation can lead to impersonal interactions and loss of authenticity. Business communication, at its core, still requires empathy, contextual judgment, and relational understanding—qualities that only human beings can provide. Thus, the human-machine interface in communication must remain complementary rather than competitive.

3. The Enduring Role of Soft Skills

Soft skills encompass a range of personal and interpersonal abilities that allow individuals to communicate effectively, manage relationships, and navigate complex social and professional situations. In an AI-driven environment, these skills are not diminished but instead become more essential. Emotional intelligence (EQ) stands at the center of these competencies. It enables professionals to understand their own emotions, interpret others' feelings, and respond appropriately in various contexts. In customer service, for example, AI can provide quick answers, but a human representative with emotional intelligence can de-escalate conflict and rebuild trust. Leadership communication also relies heavily on empathy and ethical awareness—qualities that inspire loyalty and motivation, which no algorithm can replicate.

Adaptability and critical thinking are equally important. As AI tools continuously evolve, employees must be capable of learning and adjusting.

Adaptability ensures resilience in the face of technological disruptions, while critical thinking prevents blind dependence on machine outputs. It encourages professionals to question AI-generated information and make informed judgments that align with ethical and organizational values. Cross-cultural competence is another vital aspect in the global business environment. AI translation tools can assist with language, but understanding cultural nuances—gestures, tone, and non-verbal signals—remains a human responsibility. An effective communicator must combine cultural sensitivity with the analytical insights AI provides. Ultimately, soft skills bridge the emotional and ethical gaps that AI leaves behind. They humanize digital communication, making technology a servant of human purpose rather than a substitute for it.

4. Strategic Integration of AI and Soft Skills

To create a balanced model of communication, organizations must strategically integrate AI's analytical power with the relational depth of soft skills. This integration requires a shift in both mindset and structure. First, companies should promote AI literacy among employees. Understanding how AI systems function helps reduce anxiety and builds confidence in using them responsibly. Simultaneously, training programs should strengthen emotional intelligence, teamwork, and ethical decision-making. The combination ensures that employees not only use AI effectively but also interpret its insights with empathy and cultural awareness.

Leadership plays a crucial role in this transformation. Leaders must set the tone by demonstrating empathy and transparency while embracing AI tools that support communication. For instance, global firms such as Accenture and IBM employ AI to analyze communication patterns but rely on human interpretation to ensure messages remain inclusive and respectful. In this model, AI assists in data collection and prediction, while humans guide meaning and moral evaluation. Organizations can also encourage collaboration between technical experts and communication professionals. This interdisciplinary approach promotes innovation

and ethical balance. For example, while AI might identify which marketing message performs best, communication experts determine whether that message aligns with the company's values and social responsibility. Finally, ethical governance must underpin integration. Businesses should adopt clear policies on the transparency of AI usage, protection of personal data, and the need for human oversight. When AI is viewed as a partner in decision-making rather than an autonomous authority, communication becomes more trustworthy and effective.

5. Ethical and Organizational Challenges

The fusion of AI and soft skills is not without obstacles. Ethical, psychological, and organizational challenges can undermine the potential of this integration if not addressed strategically. One significant concern involves privacy and data ethics. AI systems rely heavily on data, some of which may be sensitive or confidential. Organizations must ensure that communication analytics or sentiment monitoring tools are used responsibly, respecting employee and client privacy. Transparency about AI involvement in communication helps maintain trust and accountability.

Another challenge lies in the potential for emotional disconnect. Over-automation can depersonalize professional relationships, leaving employees or customers feeling unheard. Balancing efficiency with empathy is critical. Organizations must decide which communication processes can be safely automated and which require human presence. Resistance to technological change also remains a practical issue. Employees may perceive AI as a threat to their roles or feel alienated by machine-mediated communication. Overcoming this resistance requires open dialogue, participatory training, and reassurance that AI is designed to enhance—not replace—human contribution. Cultural bias within AI systems presents a subtler yet equally serious challenge. Algorithms trained on limited or homogeneous data sets may fail to recognize linguistic and cultural diversity. To counteract this, developers

and communicators must collaborate to make AI systems more inclusive and context-sensitive. Addressing these challenges demands a culture of ethical reflection and continuous learning. Businesses that prioritize human values in their use of AI will gain not only efficiency but also credibility and resilience.

6. The Future of Business Communication

The future of business communication is neither wholly human nor entirely machine-driven. It is hybrid—an evolving collaboration where technology and emotion coexist. This new paradigm, sometimes described as “augmented communication,” integrates AI’s cognitive intelligence with humanity’s emotional intelligence to create richer, more responsive interactions. Educational institutions and corporate training centers are beginning to acknowledge this shift. Curricula in management and communication studies increasingly include both AI literacy and interpersonal development. Professionals of the future must understand not only how to use AI tools but also how to maintain ethical, empathetic, and culturally aware communication in digital environments. In the coming decade, communicators will need to master “technological empathy”—the ability to use AI with awareness of its impact on people’s emotions and values. AI will continue to improve predictive communication, sentiment analysis, and data interpretation, but its success will depend on human oversight and relational understanding. Organizations that cultivate both data fluency and emotional depth will hold a strategic advantage in trust-building and innovation.

7. Conclusion

AI has ushered in a new era of business communication characterized by unprecedented speed, reach, and analytical capability. Yet, even in this age of digital transformation, the essence of effective communication remains deeply human. Soft skills—empathy, adaptability, ethical awareness, and critical thinking—continue to

determine how messages are received and relationships sustained. The integration of AI and soft skills offers the most promising path forward. It allows organizations to harness technological precision while preserving human warmth. Success in this domain depends on a strategic approach that values both machine intelligence and human sensitivity. Training, leadership, and ethical governance must evolve simultaneously to support this integration.

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BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN ACADEMIA AND INDUSTRY: ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AS A TOOL FOR EMPLOYABILITY ENHANCEMENT

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Abstract

In the twenty-first-century knowledge economy, employability has become an urgent educational priority, especially in developing nations where graduate unemployment coexists with skill shortages. English, as the global language of business, technology, and academia, is now inseparable from professional success. Yet, despite widespread English education, many university graduates fail to meet workplace communication standards. This gap between academic instruction and industry expectations reveals systemic issues in curriculum design, pedagogical orientation, and the conceptualization of language as a mere subject rather than as a workplace competency. This chapter explores how English Language Teaching (ELT) can strategically bridge this divide by embedding employability skills within language education. Drawing upon recent policy reports, linguistic theory, and employability frameworks, it proposes a model of ELT that integrates communicative competence, domain-specific discourse, digital literacy, and collaboration between academia and

industry. It can also serve as a transformative mechanism for producing globally competent graduates equipped for professional success.

Keywords:

Employability, English Language Teaching, Academia–Industry Gap, Soft Skills, Communication Competence

Introduction

The contemporary global economy is characterized by rapid technological change, transnational collaboration, and the growing importance of soft skills alongside technical expertise. Employability, defined by Yorke (2006) as “a set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations,” has become the benchmark of higher education quality. However, numerous reports across Asia and Africa indicate that a large proportion of graduates remain unemployable despite possessing subject knowledge. The India Skills Report (2023) reveals that less than half of Indian graduates are considered employable by industry standards, with deficiencies in communication, problem-solving, and teamwork cited as primary causes. These findings underscore a persistent misalignment between academia and the labour market.

English proficiency lies at the heart of this challenge. English functions as a lingua franca across global industries, enabling cross-cultural communication, technological collaboration, and international mobility. In countries such as India, where English serves as both a second language and a language of opportunity, the ability to use English effectively determines access to better jobs, higher salaries, and career advancement. Despite decades of English instruction, many graduates continue to struggle with workplace communication—unable to articulate ideas clearly in interviews, write professional emails, or present information persuasively. The issue does not lie in the absence of English in education but rather in how English is taught:

often as an academic or literary subject rather than as a practical, employability-oriented skill. This mismatch is symptomatic of the broader academia–industry gap, where universities prioritize theoretical knowledge, while employers demand pragmatic communication and adaptability.

Bridging this gap requires a paradigm shift in English Language Teaching (ELT). It necessitates rethinking curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and teacher preparation in ways that align linguistic learning outcomes with employability competencies. English classrooms must evolve into platforms for developing real-world communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. This paper investigates how ELT can become a transformative bridge between academic knowledge and industrial practice by fostering employability skills through communicative, experiential, and technology-integrated methodologies.

English Language Teaching and the Employability Imperative

The increasing global interdependence of economies has made English proficiency synonymous with employability. The British Council’s “English Skills for Employability” (2022) report highlights that English-speaking countries experience higher employability rates, while within non-English-speaking countries, those with higher English proficiency earn 30–50 percent more than their counterparts. In India, English operates as a socio-economic gatekeeper, providing linguistic capital that translates into professional mobility. However, this dependence on English also exposes the inequities in educational access and pedagogical quality. While urban, private, and international institutions emphasize communicative English, public universities often rely on traditional, teacher-centered instruction emphasizing grammar and literary texts.

A central reason for this disconnects lies in the pedagogical orientation of ELT within academia. Most curricula remain structurally rigid, emphasizing theoretical

linguistic knowledge and written examinations rather than spoken fluency or situational competence. Students are rarely exposed to the communicative genres that dominate professional contexts: email correspondence, meeting discussions, reports, negotiations, and online collaboration. As a result, graduates emerge linguistically literate but communicatively unprepared. According to the NASSCOM Employability Skills Survey (2023), communication skills—especially English—are consistently ranked above technical skills by recruiters when assessing job readiness. Employers now seek candidates who can adapt their communication across cultural contexts, manage client relationships, and navigate global teams.

Re-envisioning ELT as an employability tool means repositioning language learning as learning for performance rather than for examination. Theoretical frameworks such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) offer practical models. CLT emphasizes language as a social tool for meaning-making, where learners develop fluency and appropriateness through interaction. TBLT, developed by scholars like N. S. Prabhu and Rod Ellis, goes further by using real-world tasks as the central unit of instruction. For example, rather than memorizing grammar rules, students might prepare a business proposal, conduct a team meeting simulation, or write a customer service email—thus practicing both language and employability simultaneously. This pedagogical integration aligns directly with industry expectations, where communication is always goal-oriented and collaborative.

Moreover, employability cannot be reduced to linguistic proficiency alone. It encompasses soft skills such as teamwork, adaptability, leadership, and emotional intelligence—all of which are exercised and expressed through communication. When ELT integrates these dimensions, it becomes a holistic training ground for workplace readiness. For instance, group discussions develop critical listening and negotiation; presentations cultivate confidence and organization; peer review fosters constructive

feedback and professional etiquette. In this sense, English becomes both the medium and the message of employability development.

Another dimension is the role of technology. In the digital workplace, employees communicate through platforms such as Slack, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and email. Digital literacy has thus become an extension of linguistic competence. Incorporating AI tools, speech recognition software, and online collaboration into ELT classrooms can significantly enhance learners' ability to navigate modern communication channels. Apps like Grammarly, ELSA Speak, and ChatGPT provide immediate, individualized feedback on writing, pronunciation, and coherence, making learning more autonomous and adaptive. This technology-driven ELT aligns with Industry 5.0's emphasis on human–machine collaboration and lifelong learning.

Bridging Academia and Industry through ELT: A Strategic Framework

Bridging the academia–industry divide through English language education requires systemic reform encompassing curriculum design, pedagogy, and institutional partnerships. First, curriculum design must be dynamic and domain-specific. Instead of offering one-size-fits-all English courses, universities should introduce English for Specific Purposes (ESP) modules tailored to disciplines such as engineering, management, tourism, and health sciences. ESP focuses on the genres, terminologies, and communicative practices relevant to each field. For example, engineering students might practice technical report writing, while business students learn negotiation and cross-cultural presentation. This alignment ensures that learners acquire situated language competence—English as it is used in their future professional contexts.

Second, ELT pedagogy should embrace experiential learning. Drawing on Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle—comprising concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation—

English classrooms can simulate workplace scenarios. Activities such as role-plays, case studies, debates, and mock interviews engage learners in realistic communication tasks. Reflective journals help students analyze their performance and identify areas for improvement. Experiential ELT not only enhances fluency but also develops metacognitive awareness—students learn to think about how they communicate, an essential skill in adaptive workplaces.

Third, effective ELT reform depends on faculty development. Many English teachers, trained in literature or linguistics, may lack exposure to corporate discourse and technological pedagogy. Continuous professional development (CPD) programs—like the AICTE–British Council Communicative English Enhancement Initiative (2022)—can help teachers acquire updated skills in business English, digital tools, and performance-based assessment. Faculty should be encouraged to collaborate with industry professionals, attend workshops, and develop teaching materials that mirror authentic communication situations.

Fourth, academia–industry collaboration must be institutionalized rather than occasional. Companies can partner with universities to co-design curricula, conduct workshops, and evaluate students’ communication performance during internships. Such collaboration ensures that ELT courses remain relevant to current workplace demands. Initiatives like Infosys Campus Connect have shown that sustained partnerships lead to measurable improvement in graduates’ confidence and placement outcomes. Additionally, industry mentors can participate in assessment panels, providing real-time feedback on students’ communication competence during presentations or project reviews.

Finally, the assessment system should reflect communicative and employability-oriented outcomes. Traditional pen-and-paper examinations test linguistic knowledge rather than communicative performance. A shift toward portfolio assessment—including presentations, collaborative projects, reflective

journals, and peer feedback—would provide a more comprehensive measure of a student’s readiness for the workplace. Such authentic assessment aligns with outcome-based education frameworks recommended by the National Education Policy (2020), which emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, and communication as core graduate attributes.

However, bridging academia and industry through ELT also demands inclusivity. Socioeconomic and linguistic disparities must be addressed. Students from vernacular-medium or rural backgrounds often experience anxiety and low confidence when learning English. Support structures—language labs, mentoring programs, bridge courses—should be implemented to create equitable learning environments. Peer learning and digital tools can democratize access, allowing learners to practice at their own pace. In this way, ELT can become not only a means of employability enhancement but also a tool for social mobility.

Challenges and the Way Forward

Despite the conceptual and practical benefits of employability-oriented ELT, several challenges persist. Institutional inertia remains a significant obstacle. Many universities follow outdated syllabi with minimal emphasis on practical communication. Curriculum revisions are slow due to bureaucratic procedures and accreditation constraints. Faculty often face heavy workloads that leave little room for innovation or industry engagement. In addition, assessment reforms require institutional will and resources: conducting oral evaluations or maintaining language portfolios demands time, training, and infrastructure. Moreover, resistance from students accustomed to examination-oriented learning can hinder active participation.

Another major challenge lies in teacher preparedness. In many public institutions, English instructors are trained primarily in literary analysis and grammar pedagogy, not in applied linguistics or workplace communication. Without adequate

training, even the best-designed curricula may fail to achieve desired outcomes. Faculty development programs should thus be systematic and mandatory, supported by institutional funding. The integration of technology also presents a double-edged sword. While AI-based tools democratize access to feedback, they can also widen the digital divide between privileged urban learners and rural students lacking reliable internet or devices. Policy interventions must therefore ensure equitable technological infrastructure.

Funding and administrative support are equally essential. Setting up language labs, subscribing to digital platforms, and sustaining academia–industry partnerships require long-term investment. Governments and private sector entities could collaborate under corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives to fund such programs. On a macro level, national education policies should institutionalize the link between language and employability. The National Education Policy 2020 in India has already emphasized the need for skill integration and flexible curricula; translating this vision into implementation will require collaboration among universities, industry bodies, and professional associations.

Ultimately, the success of ELT as a bridge between academia and industry depends on cultural change—redefining communication not as a supplementary skill but as a core professional competency. When universities treat English learning as a means of empowerment and employability rather than elitism, motivation among students increases. Employers, too, must shift from viewing language skills as natural attributes to treat them as trainable, measurable outcomes. Mutual accountability between academia and industry can thus sustain the bridge that ELT seeks to construct.

Conclusion

The twenty-first-century graduate must not only possess disciplinary expertise but also the communicative competence to apply knowledge effectively in real-world

contexts. English Language Teaching, when strategically redesigned, can serve as the bridge between academic learning and industrial application. By adopting communicative and task-based approaches, embedding soft skills and domain relevance, leveraging digital tools, and fostering academia–industry collaboration, ELT can evolve from a theoretical exercise into a catalyst for employability. However, this transformation demands systemic commitment—curriculum reform, faculty training, resource investment, and equitable access. The future of higher education lies in producing not just educated graduates but employable communicators, capable of navigating the global marketplace with linguistic confidence and cultural intelligence. Bridging the academia–industry divide through ELT is therefore not merely an educational reform but a strategic imperative for national development and global competitiveness.

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