VEL TECH
RANGA SANKU ARTS COLLEGE
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Department of English & IQAC
Organises

International Seminar

(Hybrid mode)

Proceedings of

Reflections of Reality: Language, Literature, and Human Experiences

29th October 2025

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PREFACE

It is with great enthusiasm and academic vigor that we present the proceedings of the *International Seminar (Hybrid Mode) on "Reflections of Reality: Language, Literature, and Human Experiences"*, held on 29th October 2025.

Language and literature serve as mirrors of reality, reflecting societal values, human emotions, and cultural identities while questioning dominant ideologies and representations. In an increasingly interconnected world, it is essential to examine how literary and linguistic expressions continue to shape identity, culture, and human understanding. The seminar brought together diverse perspectives on themes such as cultural and postcolonial narratives, gender and identity studies, translation, and contemporary literary discourse.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the distinguished resource persons **Dr.R.Ajith**, Assistant Professor of English, V.O. Chidambaram College, Thoothukudi, India, and **Dr.Sougand Akbarian**, Translator and Author of Indian Literature, and Assistant Professor of English at Sheikh Bahaei University, Iran, Asia, as well as to all researchers and participants for enriching the seminar. We also acknowledge the unwavering support of our **Chief Patrons**, **Col. Prof. Vel Shri. Dr. R. Rangarajan**, Founder & Chairman, and **Dr. Mrs. Sagunthala Rangarajan**, Foundress & Vice Chairman, and our **Patrons**, **Dr. Mrs. Rangarajan Mahalakshmi. K**, Chairperson & Managing Trustee, and **Dr. A. V. K. Shanthi**, Principal, along with the organizing committee, without whom this event would not have been possible.

Mr.M.Vijaya Kumar

Dr.K.Siva Madasamy

Conveners

MESSAGE DESK

I extend my best wishes to Vel Tech Ranga Sanku Arts College and its Department of English for organizing the International Seminar (Hybrid Mode) on **"Reflections of Reality: Language, Literature, and Human Experiences"** on **29th October 2025**. This seminar stands as a commendable academic initiative that offers an intellectually stimulating platform for students, researchers, and scholars to explore the intricate relationship between language, literature, and lived human realities. The pursuit of knowledge remains the cornerstone of meaningful progress, and I am confident that this seminar will inspire participants from diverse and multidisciplinary backgrounds across the globe to share innovative perspectives and critical insights. True caliber is reflected in the confidence with which we engage with reality and articulate human experiences. I sincerely hope this International Seminar attains great success and leaves a lasting academic impact.

Col.Prof.Vel Shri.Dr.R. Rangarajan
B.E.(Elec.).,B.E.(Mech.).,M.S.(Auto).,
D.Sc.,Founder President & Chairman

MESSAGE DESK

Vel Tech RangaSanku Arts College has always stood as a beacon of academic excellence, envisioned to nurture young minds through knowledge and innovation. In that spirit, the Department of English's initiative to organize the **International Seminar on "Reflections of Reality: Language, Literature, and Human Experiences" on 29th October 2025** is truly commendable.

This seminar reflects a meaningful academic pursuit that seeks to benefit students and scholars across disciplines by offering an enriching platform to exchange ideas, explore human realities, and engage critically with language and literature. As rightly believed, *"The human mind is like a parachute; it works only when it is open."* Challenges are not obstacles but opportunities that shape intellect, character, and confidence.

The dedication, perseverance, and collective effort of the organizing team have brought this scholarly endeavor to fruition, and such initiatives stand as a testament to the institution's enduring commitment to holistic education. With heartfelt wishes to the bright young minds participating in this seminar, it is hoped that this International Seminar reaches great heights of success and continues to inspire meaningful reflection and positive transformation through the power of language and literature.

Dr.Mrs.Sagunthala Rangarajan, M.B.B.S.,
Foundress President& Vice Chairman

MESSAGE DESK

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." Opportunities are rare, and it is the responsibility of students and scholars to embrace them with dedication, vision, and intellectual curiosity. Education remains one of the most powerful tools for social transformation. The **International Seminar on "Reflections of Reality: Language, Literature, and Human Experiences,"** organized by the Department of English, offers an excellent platform to engage in meaningful academic discourse and to reflect upon the lived realities that shape human experience through language and literature.

I am delighted that **Vel Tech Ranga Sanku Arts College** is hosting this seminar on **29th October 2025**, and I extend my heartfelt wishes to the organizing committee for a successful and impactful event. At Vel Tech, we do not merely impart knowledge; we inspire minds. We do not simply prepare students for careers; we equip them for life. May this seminar become a significant milestone in learning, growth, and global scholarly exchange.

Mrs. Rangarajan Mahalakshmi Kishore, BE., MBA (US).,
Chairperson & Managing Trustee

PRINCIPAL MESSAGE

It gives us immense pleasure to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Department of English for successfully organizing the International Seminar (Hybrid Mode) on "**Reflections of Reality: Language, Literature, and Human Experiences**" held on 29th October 2025. This seminar stands as a testament to the department's steadfast commitment to academic excellence and its dedication to fostering insightful discourse in the field of humanities. The seminar witnessed the enthusiastic participation of over 350 scholars, educators, and students, along with the presentation of more than 110 research articles from institutions across the nation and abroad. The scale, scholarly depth, and seamless execution of this seminar, organized meticulously within a short period, reflect the dedication and organizational acumen of the conveners, Mr. M. Vijaya Kumar, Head of the Department of English, and Dr. K. Siva Madasamy, Assistant Professor of English, as well as the collective efforts of the English Department faculty. We are confident that the intellectual deliberations and academic exchanges that occurred during this seminar will make a meaningful contribution to future research, cross-cultural understanding, and pedagogical practice. We extend our sincere appreciation to all the resource persons, presenters, participants, organizing committee members, and student coordinators for their dedication and tireless efforts in making this seminar a remarkable success.

Dr. A.V.K. Shanthi, M.Sc., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Principal

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Equilibrating the Performance of Masculine Identity in *The Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation*

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Abstract

This paper explores *The Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation* under the lens of language and gender theory. It explains the impact of speech, naming, and silence, which helps the characters shape their identity and resistance. Using Judith Butler's idea of gender as a performance and Raewyn Connell's theory of different types of masculinity, the paper views linguistic expression as a tool of power and self-expression in the cultivation world. The main character, Wei Wuxian, challenges authority through his gestures and playful way of speaking; later, it evolves as a form of rebellion that questions moral and societal rules.

Keywords: Identity Construction, Gender Performance, Masculinity, Rebellion, Social Norms

Masculinity in Chinese literature is shaped by over two thousand years of cultural, philosophical, and political traditions. Unlike the Western model that often emphasizes physical dominance, Chinese masculinity has historically been defined through the tension between wen - the cultured, scholarly ideal and wu - the martial, physically strong ideal. Most literary portrayals of men balance these two forces, turning masculinity into a moral, intellectual, and social performance rather than a

mere biological category (Louie 239). Early Chinese texts such as the *Analects*, *The Book of Songs*, and *Mencius* construct masculinity around the ideal of the junzi, or "gentleman." This figure is a morally upright, emotionally restrained, loyal to family and clan, disciplined in speech, dedicated to self-cultivation and committed to ritual propriety

Meanwhile, Confucianism discourages loud emotional display, framing masculinity as quiet strength, self-control, and intellectual depth (Song 3). A "real man" was expected to embody wen qualities of learning, poetry, calligraphy, strategic thinking, and virtue. Additionally, texts like *Water Margin*, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, and martial-arts fiction introduced a competing ideal of wu masculinity - physical power, loyalty between brothers, bravery in battle, readiness to die for honor. These warriors are emotionally intense, fiercely loyal, physically strong, sometimes crude or rebellious and noble in spirit. This wu model complicates the Confucian ideal by suggesting that men can be heroic without being refined.

The primary material of this research article, *The Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation* (*Mo Dao Zu Shi*), written by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu, was originally serialized on Jinjiang Literature City between 2015 and 2016, and is one of the most influential works in contemporary Chinese danmei literature (Yang 34). The novel belongs to the xianxia/cultivation genre, blending elements of fantasy, martial arts, Daoist-inspired spiritual training, clan politics, and supernatural warfare. Its narrative follows Wei Wuxian and Lan Wangji across two lifetimes, weaving themes of identity, morality, loyalty, trauma, and resurrection into a complex world structured by sect hierarchy and cultural expectations. Though massively popular as a web novel, the book has since expanded across media, including an official print edition, an audio drama, a manhua, a donghua, and an internationally acclaimed live-action adaptation. The novel sits at the crossroads of traditional Chinese storytelling and contemporary internet culture, reshaping literary conventions while remaining deeply tied to classical themes (Feng). The novel plots centers around the narrative of different ways of being male. Characters like Lan Wangji, jin Guang yao, and Wei Wuxian each show distinct kinds of masculinity through various factors like discipline, aggression, and empathy that break away from rigid gender roles.

As seen, masculinity in literature often unfolds as a set of normative expectations tied intrinsically to culture, history, and power. In *Mo Dao Zu Shi*, (*The Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation*), the portrayal of masculinity engages critically with questions of identity, social regulation, and emotional expression. This research paper applies Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity alongside Raewyn Connell's conception of multiple masculinities to analyze the diverse expressions of masculine identity in the novel. The cultivation world in *Mo Dao Zu Shi*, with its strict codes and hierarchical institutions, reflects a hegemonic masculinity characterized by discipline, emotional restraint, and moral rigidity. However, characters occupying the same cultural space perform distinctly different masculinities, which complicates, resists, and at times redefines hegemonic norms. Through detailed character analysis and theoretical engagement, this paper reveals masculinity as a contested, unstable field rather than a fixed essence.

Judith Butler's concept of gender as performative offers a foundational framework for understanding masculinity in *Mo Dao Zu Shi*. For Butler, gender does not exist as an innate or stable identity; rather, it is constituted through repeated acts, gestures, and behaviors that produce the illusion of coherence and fixity. These performative acts are regulated by social norms and power structures, which reward conformity and punish deviation (Butler 24). Masculinity, therefore, emerges not from essence but from the ritualized enactment of culturally prescribed practices such as stoicism, loyalty, self-sacrifice, emotional silence, and adherence to tradition. This framework helps to understand why characters repeatedly act in certain ways to sustain recognizable masculine identities and why breaking these scripts elicits social sanctions or violence.

The other framework of Raewyn Connell's theory of multiple masculinities complements Butler's insights by mapping masculinity as a hierarchy of gender performances shaped by social relations, class, race, and institutional power. Connell identifies hegemonic masculinity as the culturally exalted form that legitimizes male dominance and subordinates other masculinities, including subordinate, complicit, and marginalized forms. This theory accounts for variations among masculinities within the same culture, explaining why men who share a social environment perform masculinity in diverse and often contradictory ways (Connell 37). Applied to *Mo Dao Zu Shi*, Connell's model elucidates how sects and families enforce hegemonic masculinity through rigid moral codes, while

alternative masculinities emerge from resistance, marginalization, or strategic compliance.

Wei Wuxian's character embodies a vibrant challenge to the hegemonic masculinity of the cultivation world, particularly visible in the *Cloud Recesses – Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation*. The strict discipline and austere self-presentation promoted by the Lan Sect impose expectations of perfect silence, attentiveness, and emotional control on their disciples. Wei Wuxian's sarcastic humor, irreverent teasing of Lan Wangji, casual posture, and disruptive behavior enact a masculinity that refuses the ascetic ideal. His yawns and whispered jokes during lectures assert bodily autonomy against institutional norms in moments of playful resistance that also expose the performative dimension of hegemonic masculinity by highlighting its reliance on constant repetition and compliance.

Wei Wuxian's rebellious behavior in the *Cloud Recesses – Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation – Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation*, such as joking during lessons and teasing Lan Wangji, demonstrates his casual disregard for rigid discipline. When Wei Wuxian jokes during lectures, Lan Wangji silently reprimands him with a glance, showing the tension between conformity and subversion. Wei Wuxian teasingly calls Lan Wangji by his personal name "Wangji," defying formalities. In the text, when the dialogue unfolds: "Wei Ying, why are you always so unruly? "Lan Zhan, don't be so serious!". His speech and behavior openly challenge the masculine expectation of stoic discipline. His jokes break the solemn environment and undermine the idea that a "proper man" must remain serious and emotionless.

Moreover, Wei Wuxian's turn to demonic cultivation foregrounds the stakes of gender nonconformity. His choice to pursue forbidden magic represents both a literal and symbolic transgression of sectarian and masculine boundaries. The punishment he endures for this innovation reveals the capacity of hegemonic masculinity to exclude forms of power that do not align with dominant ideals. Yet, Wei Wuxian's joyful irreverence and emotional openness underscore a masculinity grounded in authenticity rather than imposed discipline, reflecting Butler's idea that norms are fragile and can be destabilized by performative subversions.

Wei Wuxian's turn to demonic cultivation also represents a radical breaking of sect and masculine norms, embracing a forbidden path that places him outside

official approval. This choice embodies an alternative masculinity that embraces independence, emotional expressivity, and innovation, in stark contrast to the rigid, rule-bound hegemonic masculinity of cultivation sects. In the text, he states, "Who cares about the crowded, broad road? I'll walk the single-plank bridge into the night". This line powerfully conveys Wei Wuxian's performance of an alternative masculinity—bold, independent, and willing to embrace risk and solitude for the sake of personal freedom and justice. It aligns well with the paper's themes on his subversive masculinity within the rigid structures of the cultivation sects.

This sentiment also reflects his internal struggle with belonging and identity amid rigid social norms and harsh judgment. Wei Wuxian's experience of isolation arises from being marginalized by sects for his unconventional choices, especially his embrace of demonic cultivation, which places him outside accepted norms of masculinity and morality. Despite the vastness of the world around him, he experiences profound emotional solitude, feeling rejected by the very society he seeks to protect and engage with. This feeling of exclusion mirrors the broader theme of how hegemonic masculinity excludes and punishes those who do not conform to its codes. The emotional complexity here aligns with his playful, rebellious exterior but reveals a deep vulnerability and longing for acceptance, connection, and understanding. It also brings out the softer and vulnerable characteristics of him.

Lan Wangji (Lan Zhan) in *Mo Dao Zu Shi* epitomizes the hegemonic masculine ideal as defined by his strict adherence to the Lan Sect's rigorous moral and behavioral codes. As the model disciple, Lan Wangji's embodiment of discipline, emotional restraint, and moral purity is deeply woven into both his daily conduct and his cultivation practice, making him a living symbol of hegemonic masculinity within the narrative. Lan Wangji's character in *Mo Dao Zu Shi* is characterized by self-discipline, emotional restraint, and moral authority, but his emotional development adds profound depth to this portrayal. His stoicism and silence are outward performances shaped by the rigorous codes of the Lan Sect, where men demonstrate their masculinity through control over their bodies and feelings. Lan Wangji's silence, in particular, functions as a sect-sanctioned discipline rather than mere personal reticence; he speaks only when necessary, and his restrained demeanor signals inner strength, honor, and unwavering commitment to sect ideals. Throughout the novel, his physical posture often described as rigid

and upright serves as a visual metaphor for this self-control. His precise execution of rituals and cultivation techniques reflects mastery both bodily and socially, manifesting Connell's hegemonic masculinity where dominance is expressed through discipline and regulation of the self (Connell and Messerschmidt 841). Lan Wangji's presence in the *Cloud Recesses – Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation* embodies culturally exalted masculine ideals that enforce social hierarchies within the cultivation world.

Yet, beneath this disciplined exterior unfolds a nuanced emotional journey that complicates the straightforward image of hegemonic masculinity. Lan Wangji's growing care and attachment toward Wei Wuxian reveal a masculinity tempered by loyalty, affection, and ethical conviction. He is willing to take tremendous personal risks including breaking sect rules and defying social expectations—to protect Wei Wuxian, demonstrating that his restraint is not synonymous with passivity. His silence transforms into an emotionally charged language itself (Martyres 120), conveying meanings beyond words. This silent communication reveals solidarity and affection, challenging traditional hegemonic norms equating masculinity with emotional detachment. By expressing vulnerability and tenderness through subtle gestures and persistent protection, Lan Wangji destabilizes rigid binaries between strength and softness.

This emotional development traces Lan Wangji's internal conflict between duty and desire, between the sect's restrictive moral framework and personal moral judgment. His silence and composure both uphold sectarian authority and conceal the passionate care that motivates his actions. His reluctance or inability to openly express feelings underscores the costs of hegemonic masculinity's demands, yet his steadfast dedication shows that such masculinity can harbor profound empathy and courage beneath its austere façade. Through Lan Wangji, the narrative illustrates that hegemonic masculinity is neither monolithic nor purely oppressive but can be negotiated and expanded to include a complex interplay of discipline, love, and resistance.

The quiet vulnerability of his confession is example when Wei Wuxian teases him about past rejections and Lan Wangji solemnly responds, "Tell me if you felt the same way… You can try and see if I would deny you anything now". This shows how his masculinity shifts from obedience to authenticity. Instead of the

emotionless composure demanded by his sect's ideals, Lan Wangji chooses emotional openness, devotion, and honesty. In this way, Lan Wangji's masculinity exemplifies Connell's concept not as a fixed essence but as a culturally constructed, dynamic performance that legitimizes authority while accommodating hidden emotional truths. His development conveys how hegemonic masculine ideals are lived realities entangled with personal struggles and ethical commitments. His model of masculinity legitimizes social power through bodily mastery and emotional regulation, but it simultaneously reveals the profound human cost and the capacity for genuine care embedded within these performances.

Ultimately, Lan Wangji stands as a layered masculine ideal that integrates outward control and inner tenderness, exemplifying how hegemonic masculinity can be simultaneously a source of social power and a site for emotional complexity. His restraint is an act of strength in itself, rendering visible the often-invisible dimensions of masculine experience and contributing a richly textured understanding of gender performance within the cultivation world.

Jin Guangyao's complex character in *Mo Dao Zu Shi* is deeply influenced by the traditional Chinese virtue of filial piety, a concept that demands unwavering loyalty, respect, and obedience to one's parents and elders. This cultural expectation shapes much of Jin Guangyao's behavior and motivations, casting him as a tragic figure caught between personal ambition and the compulsions of filial devotion. The saying, "I always greet others with a smile, even though I might not receive one in kind," encapsulates Jin Guangyao's performative diplomacy, a smile that hides the internal struggle of seeking approval and legitimacy in a world that is often harsh and unwelcoming because of his illegitimate status.

Filial piety in Chinese culture is not merely a family duty but a fundamental marker of morality and social responsibility. It is deeply embedded in Confucian ethics and society's collective consciousness. Failure to exhibit filial piety invites harsh judgment, with accusations of being a "buxiaozi" (unfilial child) marking one as morally deficient and socially disreputable (Wendy Wen et al.). This cultural context lends significant depth to Jin Guangyao's choices. His relentless efforts to serve his father, Jin Guangshan, no matter how abusive or destructive his father's ambitions become, reflect a tragic adherence to filial piety. In many other narratives steeped in Chinese tradition, Jin Guangyao would be valorized as a model filial son

who sacrifices personal wellbeing for family honor. However, *Mo Dao Zu Shi* offers a nuanced deconstruction. Jin Guangyao's loyalty leads him into morally questionable acts: manipulating sect politics, supporting his father's ruthless designs, orchestrating assassinations, and participating in tragic family betrayals, such as the death of his half-sister's child. These acts are symptomatic of the burdens placed on individuals by filial expectations within oppressive family and social systems.

His decision to retrieve his mother, Meng Shi's who was a prostitute, remains despite personal risk is another poignant expression of filial devotion. Though many might view his actions cynically, one can interpret them as a reflection of sincere but tragic filial loyalty. These moments reveal how deeply ingrained filial piety shapes not only Jin Guangyao's decisions but also the very possibilities available to him, highlighting the constraints imposed by cultural and familial obligations.

The tension between Jin Guangyao's public persona and private motivations creates a multifaceted character: outwardly polite, strategic, and affable (reflected in his polite smiles and bows), yet inwardly trapped by desperation to prove himself worthy of his father's recognition and maintain his precarious status. His smile, often unreciprocated, symbolizes this lonely struggle for acceptance and dignity within a society that stigmatizes his birth and condemns his actions. Thus, Jin Guangyao's narrative functions as a powerful critique and exploration of filial piety's double-edged nature. It exposes the potential for filial loyalty to become a source of personal tragedy when entwined with authoritarian ambition and social rigidity. Through Jin Guangyao, *Mo Dao Zu Shi* engages with the cultural complexity of traditional family values—showing how virtues like filial piety can simultaneously nurture relationships and perpetuate suffering.

His actions throughout the narrative reveal the darker Implications of this negotiated masculinity. Jin Guangyao's alliance with politically corrupt factions such as Sushe and his orchestration of the assassination of Nie Mingjue, a moral paragon and formidable martial figure, mark him as a man whose power relies on secrecy, betrayal, and ruthless pragmatism. These deeds illustrate a masculinity shaped less by heroic ideals and more by survival within exclusionary structures. His marriage to his half-sister, followed by involvement in the tragic death of their

newborn, further casts his masculinity in a morally compromised light, underscoring the devastating personal costs of ambition shaped by marginalization. Despite his ruthless measures, Jin Guangyao's motivations consistently align with a desire to secure his place and protect his father's legacy, revealing a deeply conflicted male identity negotiating between loyalty and self-preservation. His relationship with Lan Xichen, marked by a mixture of trust and betrayal, adds layers to his character, reflecting the tension between public duty and private survival inherent in his masculinity.

Ultimately, Jin Guangyao's fall, manipulated and undone by Nie Huaisang, reveals the vulnerabilities of masculinity constructed through deception and the limits of power founded on social marginalization. While he gains tremendous political clout through his alternative masculinity, this constructed identity proves unstable and contingent, vulnerable to exposure and ruin. Jin Guangyao's life arc compellingly demonstrates Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity's policing function: it not only privileges certain masculine expressions but actively marginalizes and punishes those that diverge, regardless of their contributions to sustaining existing power. His story sheds light on how alternative masculinities operate in tension with dominant norms, negotiating identity and authority under systemic constraints. Through Jin Guangyao's narrative, *Mo Dao Zu Shi* critiques narrow ideals of masculinity by portraying the complexities faced by men on the margins of power. His multifaceted masculinity marked by intelligence, ambition, compromise, and tragedy enriches the novel's exploration of gender performance, power relations, and identity, highlighting the contested and plural nature of masculinity within hierarchical cultures.

Nie Huaisang presents a masculinity that consciously rejects the martial and heroic ideals prioritized in cultivation culture. His outward performances of incompetence, cowardice, and helplessness - flapping his fan, avoiding combat, exhibiting theatrical fear - are strategic rather than genuine. These acts allow him to appear harmless in a world where strength is valorized.

Conclusively, this paper's exploration of masculinity in *The Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation* (*Mo Dao Zu Shi*) and broader gender and cultural theories is grounded in how the novel's characters enact diverse, performative masculinities within a traditional yet evolving Chinese cultural context. The analysis uses Judith

Butler's concept of gender performativity to show that masculinity is not a fixed essence but a repetitive performance regulated by social norms, which the novel's characters challenge or conform to in varied ways. Raewyn Connell's theory of multiple masculinities further helps to situate these performances within a hierarchical social structure, where hegemonic masculinity is dominant but can be resisted or redefined by alternative expressions.

In *Mo Dao Zu Shi*, Wei Wuxian exemplifies a subversive masculinity that resists the austere, disciplined ideal represented by the Lan Sect and the hegemonic masculine norms of the cultivation world. His playful speech, irreverent gestures, and choice of demonic cultivation symbolize an embrace of emotional openness and individual freedom, destabilizing hegemonic masculinity's rigidity. Conversely, Lan Wangji embodies hegemonic masculinity through his disciplined silence, ritual mastery, and emotional restraint, yet his loyalty and care for Wei Wuxian reveal a nuanced masculinity that accommodates vulnerability and ethical complexity.

Jin Guangyao and Nie Huaisang introduce more layered masculinities shaped by cultural expectations like filial piety, political survival, and strategic deception, illustrating the costs and compromises within hegemonic masculinity's social order. The novel uses language, naming, gesture, and embodied behavior to perform and contest masculine identities, reflecting the cultural tensions between wen (scholarly) and wu (martial) ideals in Chinese masculinity that balance moral, intellectual, and physical virtues. This connection shows how the novel's portrayal of masculinity aligns with and enriches contemporary gender theory by dramatizing masculinity as a fluid, contested, and culturally situated performance. It highlights how traditional Chinese literary and cultural frameworks of masculinity are both upheld and subverted in a fantasy narrative that engages with modern questions of identity, power, and resistance in male relationships and social hierarchies.

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Perumal Murugan's *Pyre* and *Paava Kaadhaigal's* "Oor Iravu": A Cultural Critique of Caste Violence through Literature and Visual Media

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Abstract

The research paper aims to delineate heinous, brutal structure of caste, which threatens the survival of individual existence. The study employs the theoretical tool of sociocultural criticism to unveil the existential crisis of the marginalized individuals' struggle in the evil existing society. The study also provides an analytical framework to examine the systematic complexity of caste-based social order and the manifestation of caste violence against marginalized individuals or communities. The social order is powerfully embedded in caste hierarchy, resulting in social seclusion and isolation of the individuals within the community. Caste stereotypes play a crucial role in everyday life and operate as a dominant discourse to subjugate subaltern groups by spreading horrific caste violence, including honour killings. This paper highlights how systematic cultural oppression, inextricably bound with the pervasive caste violence to exploit the lives of the marginalized, particularly women, within the patriarchal caste structure that is deeply embedded in the realities of Tamil rural society. The intersection of the novel *Pyre* and the visual media anthology *Paava Kaadhaigal* fosters cultural expression and social awareness, seeking to dismantle the destructive, stigmatizing violence. Moreover, this paper focuses on caste-based discrimination and violence

and on how marginalized individual thrives by defying the extreme social stratification imposed by the symbolic caste hegemony.

Keywords: Caste mobilization, Honor violence, Constructive social norms, Purity and Pollution, Social inequality, Existential crisis

Literature, from the ancient to the modern era, expresses the exploration of infinite social realities' flaws and positivity. It unfolds the fictional stories of the social characters that ultimately reflect real-life classified choices of humans including surrealism, gender inequality, social structure, discrimination, existentialism, nihilism, Marxism, feminism, environmentalism, and so forth. Through literature, individuals find a voice to reach the mechanized existence. To illustrate this tragic scenario's presence in contemporary life effectively, T.S. Eliot's *Wasteland* claims that human minds are mechanized to fulfil the disintegrated social ideologies, emphasizing how people constrain themselves by setting boundaries such as gender, caste, and social order, and helplessly chase emptiness by losing their unique identities in the process of conforming to established socio-cultural norms.

The historically constructed concept of 'caste' functions as a significant factor in shaping the social hierarchical structure. It emphasizes the cruel discrimination of minority people as untouchables and pollution. The social exclusion and subordination of the subaltern community have continued for ages. They are confined within norms of socio-cultural boundaries such as culture, ethnicity, language, religion, and social order. The norms of caste and untouchability slowly acquire dominance by exploiting the marginalized people physically and economically. To destroy this stratified system, the intellectuals such as Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Jyotirao Phule, and Ramaswamy Periyar introduced various social movements to liberate the subaltern from the strangling social strictures.

Perumal Murugan is a realistic Tamil contemporary writer. As a professor of Tamil literature, Murugan contributes to literature by writing twelve novels, six anthologies of poetry, and thirteen non-fiction anthologies. His major works are *Rising Heat* (1991), *Current Show* (1993), *Season of Palms* (2000), *One Part Woman* (2010), *Pyre* (2013), *Poonachi: Or the Story of a Black Goat* (2016), *A Lonely Harvest* (2018), *Trial by Silence* (2018), *Estuary* (2020), *Resolve* (2021), and *Fire Bird* (2023. Murugan's novels have figuratively been transcreated into English by Anirudh Vasudevan, V. Geetha, and Kalyan Raman.

The manifestation of class consciousness in Tamil society is critically examined in the path narrative of Murugan's *Pyre,* and the "Oor Iravu," an episode from the anthology *Paava Kaadhaigal* directed by Vetri Maaran, appears on Netflix, which incorporates caste-based normalized elements such as pollution, untouchables, purity of blood, honour killing, caste conceit, and vengeance. The intersection of novel and visual media seemingly unfolds the formation and reinforcement of caste-based social order within constructive hegemony. The novel *Pyre* exposes the systematic nature of caste violence as a normative function in the mainstream dominant social discourse. Similarly, the series "Oor Iravu" powerfully examines the entrenched honour killings, which are upheld in the name of caste pride within the systematic structure of caste hegemony.

The dichotomy between purity and pollution is strategically outlined in the narrative of *Pyre* and "Oor Iravu." By foregrounding the immersive Tamil cultural narrative, the documents reform to comprehend the ethnocentric practice of caste's structural violence and stereotypical norms, which are purely bound up with the matter of culturally constituted subordination. In both contexts, the savagery principle of purity is maintained to oppress the marginalized individuals within the heterogeneous cultural performances of the caste social order. An occasional example from *Pyre* outrageously exposes the ontological reality of illusory caste-based social strictures. When Kumaresan and Saroja encounter a man from the village, he judgmentally comments that, "Can't I tell by the face … This is not a face from our caste Mapillai…this is the face of someone who has not toiled, a body that hasn't suffered summer's heat" (Murugan 12). The man's comment exposes the conjuring reality of the abiding myth that caste identity can be discovered from one's physical appearance.

Uma Chakreaborty's *Gendering Caste Through a Feminist Lens*, attempts to sketch a descriptive relationship between class and caste, which are encumbered within the threshold of material reality. As she states, "To understand the relationship between class and caste… important to recognize that two hierarchies are operative in Indian society: One according to ritual purity, with the brahmana on top and the 'untouchables' at the bottom, and the other according to the political and economic status, with the landlords at the top and the landless labourers at the bottom… the second to the reality - together they make for the unique form of inequality that caste represents." (Chakraborty 12)

An articulating element in class social hierarchy is subjectively levelled at the material principle of purity and pollution. Historically, in Indian society, the upper caste people have been categorized based on a religious myth called 'purity' and their tendency towards stability through land ownership and wealth, whereas, as a result of underdeveloped social ideologies, marginalized people are socially subordinated, immorally branded as 'untouchables.' Their improvised economic condition has forced them to play a servitude role to the dominant classes. This socio-class ambiguity is authentically exhilarated in both the novel *Pyre* and the episode "Oor Iravu."

As David Rudner maps out the realities of caste-based oppression in his work *'Caste and Capitalism in Colonial India'*, "Standard anthropological views of caste were well established by the 1950s and 1960s…From the standard but agrarian perspective, castes were held to be commensal, endogamous groups, ritually ranked with other castes in consideration of local standards of relative Purity" (Rudner 16). In Tamil society, the social strata of standard castes are structurally underpinned as a means of concrete, ranked ritual practices. The well-ordered communities preoccupy a standard socio-political position to maintain the principle of hierarchical order, instrumentalized through the religious aspect of purity, which utterly degrades the subordinates within the caste privilege social matrix. Murugan and Vetri Maaran potentially illuminate the constraining facts of social differences in the dynamic equilibrium between ritual and secular status maintained in the ideological hegemony.

In *Pyre*, a cross-caste marriage between Kumaresan and Saroja is denounced by the village council members. Based on the inaccessible beliefs of 'religious pollution,' the entire village community expresses its opposition to Kumaresan's courtship with Saroja, a girl from an outcaste. The villagers believe that Saroja's presence in the village is 'impure', fearing it might anger their Goddess. Subsequently, they resist initiating the preparation for the temple festival. According to the village people, "People said we should stop all preparations for the temple festival. They said we should not start any temple work without getting rid of the impurity that has come to our village because a girl from a different caste is living here" (Murugan 134).

The entire village community perceives Saroja's presence as 'impure,' considering her existence within the village as inauspicious and polluting due to her identity as an outcaste. Murugan's approach to the principle of systematic caste is

inextricably intertwined with the dominant power of religious ideologies, highlighting how the exploitative caste dimension is also strategically constituted through symbolic and material religious belief. The interplay between caste and religious ideology has influenced the caste-based assumption of elevated status that has infiltrated religiously sanctioned practices of considering the subaltern group as impure.

In the anthology of *Paava Kaadhaigal*, the episode Oor Iravu" portrays how Sumathi's marriage to Hari is ingeniously considered impure by Sumathi's father. After discovering Sumathi's house in Chennai, her father Janakiraman visits her, pretending that he desires to have a baby shower for his daughter. Meanwhile, Hari comprehends the sanctioned inequality by contending, "You said you let go of everything and came here for your grandchild. I am the father of the child. You hesitate to even drink a glass of water that I offer you. How will your relatives accept me being there?" (Maaran 20:10). Through this instance, the director Vetri Maaran effectively displays how the mechanism of inter-caste marriage widely oscillates between the systematic traditional caste ideology of 'pure' and 'impure.'

The structural feature of caste hierarchy is predominantly maintained by symbolic hegemony, which is decisively shaped by socio-cultural factors, including endogamy, gender norms, and religious cultural traditions. These socially normalized elements incorporated a dichotomy between purity and pollution. An occasional example is that marrying within one's caste or community is a socially sanctioned practice. In contrast, inter-caste marriage or inter-religious marriage inevitably exploits the maintenance of caste conceit and displaces the strategic domain of the class system.

The concept 'Symbolic Violence' by Pierre Bourdieu is a concealed form of dominant power that is established through cultural and symbolic constructive force rather than articulated through physical force. Symbolic violence often functions through the deliberation of language, socio-cultural norms, cultural beliefs, social performance, and practices that culminate in the social hierarchical order by perpetuating actual inequalities to be naturally institutionalized. In his work, *Masculine Domination,* Bourdieu emphasizes that "Symbolic violence is exercised only through an act of knowledge and practical recognition which takes place below the level of consciousness and will and which gives all items manifestations – injunctions, suggestions, seduction, threats, reproaches, orders or calls to order – their 'hypnotic power'" (Bourdieu 42). Hence, this symbolic form of class violence

is a subtle process, fundamentally reproduced through the channels of communication, recognition, and feeling, causing the subordinates to unconsciously accept the illusion of social discourse in nature of hereditary order, social disorder, and sex-gender stereotypes.

In *Pyre,* Saroja, a woman from an outcaste, is forced to confront her position as an 'untouchable' within the symbolic hegemonic structure. Saroja's neighbour, Mythili, partially dehumanizes the people from the lower caste by labelling them as inauspicious. Saroja experiences caste-based humiliation when Mythili cruelly rejects the snacks she offers because of her pre-determined position as an untouchable. "… She distributed the portions of the snack to each house in the row. But Mythili akka said, 'What is this? No one in our house will eat this.' Saroja felt like she'd been slapped. Another neighbour, Parvati, said to her, 'Don't you know Mythili only accepts things from people of certain castes?'" (Murugan 87).

Similarly, in "Oor Iravu," Sumathi's sisters are barred from their education after her elopement with a man from a lower caste. As Sumathi's sisters expressed, "After you eloped, father pulled us out of college…Father said education led you astray and forbade us from studying." (Maaran 23:47). At this vantage point, Murugan and Vetri Marran's methodological narrative proclaims that the concrete practice of symbolic violence is evaporated in the form of established cultural beliefs and norms.

Honor Killings are acts of physical violence against individuals who dishonor the family's elevated social status by transcending the established socio-cultural norms and beliefs that operate as an internalized source for regulating hegemonic power within the constructive society. An obsessive possessiveness for a proclaimed social status in society, families are pushed to extreme measures to restore their caste-based purity by killing their own daughters or sons as a means of symbolic cleanliness of family honor.

In *Pyre,* Saroja's inter-caste marriage with Kumaresan is seemingly perceived as the community's dishonor and a heinous sin. In order to restore the established community's honor, the upper caste people from the village, including Saroja's mother-in-law, dreadfully planned to murder Saroja in an notion to clean the pollution or impurity caused by Saroja's caste identity. "It would not have mattered if he had found a girl from one of our castes. Now this has become such a dishonourable affair" (Murugan 181). The upper caste people from the village council and Saroja's mother-in-law tactically use Kumaresan's absence as an

opportunity to burn Saroja alive within the bushes to justify or restore their community's established honor.

Similarly, in "Oor Iravu," Sumathi's father, Janakiraman, poisoned his own daughter Sumathi, fully aware that she was carrying the child in her womb, intending to restore his family's honor by clearing the sin as his daughter married a man from a lower caste. "Uncle said if I mixed the poison in the water, the end would be quick and painless. I did not know it would be slow and painful" (Maaran 06:51). This act of honor violence has emerged out from Janakiraman's inability to accept his daughter's marriage to an outcaste man. In an attempt to systematically uphold his family's honor within the well-ordered social community, he executes Sumathi as a means of perceiving the ideological caste hegemony.

At this juncture, both Murugan and Vetri Marran culpably reflect the destructive force of prevailing caste assumptions, institutionalized through culturally constructed power that exploits the lives of innocents like Saroja and Sumathi as they attempt to transcend the prolonged oppressive aspect of the caste privilege system. This ingenious hierarchical structure constitutes its power through individuals such as Marayi and Janakiraman to continue the subjugated cycle of violence with a sole aim of maintaining the social and political power of the dominant class, which appeared as a primary mechanism of upholding caste ideologies of symbolic hegemony. From the researcher's perspective, Saroja and Sumathi survived their death and function as a catalyst in transcending the systematic nexus of caste purity and pollution in the constructive section of society. They are remarkably seen as a symbol of hope, representing the manifestation of light that justice will be served.

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Beyond Words: Mother Tongue as Identity in Sherman Alexie's Eulogy and Sujata Bhatt's Search for My Tongue

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Abstract

This paper explores the multifaceted role of mother tongue as a cornerstone of personal identity, delving into its emotional, cultural, and existential dimensions. Through a critical analysis of Sherman Alexie's Eulogy and Sujata Bhatt's Search for My Tongue, it examines how these poets articulate the intricate relationship between language and identity. The study highlights how the speakers' connection to their native tongue shapes their sense of self, belonging, and cultural heritage underscoring the tension between linguistic assimilation and cultural preservation. The poems reveal the mother tongue as a repository of memories, emotions, and traditions and culture imbuing the speakers with a sense of rootedness and continuity. At the same time, the loss or fragmentation of this linguistic heritage is depicted as a disorienting experience, leading to questions of identity and displacement. By probing these complexities, the paper argues that mother tongue is not merely a means of communication but a vital component of one's identity, deeply intertwined with personal and collective narratives. This research contributes to ongoing discussions about language, identity, and cultural memory, offering insights into how poetry serves as a medium for expressing the profound significance of mother tongue in shaping individual experiences. Ultimately, it underscores the importance of preserving linguistic diversity as an essential aspect of human heritage and identity.

Keywords: language, identity, displacement, memory, communication

Basically, Language is always contrived to be a basic tool for communication. But it is more than a tool. It is a fundamental aspect of human identity, shaping our perceptions, interactions and understanding of the world. It's a powerful tool that not only enables communication but also influences our thoughts,

emotions and sense of belonging. It is a vital part of our identity, influencing how we pursue ourselves, our place in this overall society and our connection with others. In essence, according to the renowned linguist, Joshua Fishman, "Language is not just a tool for communication, but a symbol of identity, culture and community". Once a language is lost, it leads to the loss of the entire culture and civilization associated with it. Because, it is language that carries traditions, values to the next generation along with the soul of the culture.

In context to language, poetry is a potent tool that allows us to explore the complexities of human emotion, to convey the intricacies of the thoughts. It is a powerful medium that enables us to translate our innermost thoughts and emotions into words, giving form and voice to our deepest feelings, sufferings and experiences. It is more like an unique platform to transcend our emotions as a universal languages across cultures and borders.

Here, the poems "Eulogy" by Sherman Alexie and "Search for My Tongue" by Sujata Bhatt offer poignant explorations of the complex relationship between language and identity. While Alexie's poem speaks to the disconnection from one's mother tongue, Bhatt's poem celebrates the enduring connection to one's native language. Sherman Alexie's eulogy for his mother is more than a tribute to a beloved family member; in turn, it is a lament for the death of a culture, a language, and an identity that is slipping away slowly. In his poem Eulogy, Alexie mourns not only the demise of his mother but also the extinction and the eradication of his native tribal language, of which his mother was one of the last living repositories. This intertwining of personal grief with cultural loss underscores how deeply language is tied to identity, belonging and survival. For Alexie, his mother was the last living link to a linguistic heritage that held the songs, stories, and knowledge of not only his ancestors but of his tribe. She is a portable archive that embodied the soul of his ancestors and his people.

Alexie describes his mother as one of the final four speakers of their tribal language. She had carried words, songs, and stories within her memory that no one else alive could claim to know and acknowledge. Similar to many Indigenous cultures, here the poet's mother, the eldest is revered as a living dictionary, thesaurus, and encyclopedia as a keeper of etymology, usage, and context. She knew the origins of each and every word, the nuances of its grammar, the rituals in

which it was spoken, and the emotional weight it carried along with the exceptional language essence. As being an authentic speaker, she was the embodiment of cultural continuity. Yet, in a painful irony, she chose not to teach her children her native tongue because she knew that would not help them for their survival in future.

The decision haunts Alexie's reflection. She recognized that English had become the language of opportunity, of economic survival, of the future that her children would have to navigate in a colonized, modern America. She deliberately taught them English, believing that fluency in the dominant language was a pragmatic necessity, perhaps even a shield that saves them against the harsh realities of poverty and racism. This pragmatic choice, however, came at a cost i.e., the loss of intergenerational transmission, the rupture in the chain that passes culture from one generation to the next. And the language of the younger generation is so varied and polished losing the authentic essence of his native tribal language, diminishing the original language on the whole.

Alexie illustrates this erosion through vivid imagery. He fears listening to the last recorded audio of his mother singing an ancient lullaby with her mother Big Mom, fearing the cassette tape fragile, deteriorating might snap, erasing not just her voice but the last tangible evidence of the tribe, language and Identity itself. The cassette is a metaphor for the fragility of oral tradition; once the medium is broken, the sound is lost forever. In that fear lies the recognition that language is not merely a tool for communication but a vessel for memory, emotion, and identity. When the last speaker dies, the language does not simply disappear, it takes with it histories, worldviews, and a unique way of relating to the world.

For Alexie, the native language is wholly inseparable from his mother; both Alexie's mother and his native language are the sources of origin, of nativity, of authenticity. The loss of one entails the death of the other which explains the close interconnectedness with between them. As his mother never passed the language on, and to add the few remaining speakers speak a corrupted and a polished version, the poet feels he can never truly reclaim his linguistic birthright and heritage. The language that should have been his mother tongue remains an absence, a void that shapes his sense of self. This absence is a form of cultural disinheritance — the stripping away of his true self and quality of his heritage, leaving behind a

fragmented identity that is part Indigenous, part assimilated American, and fully neither. Alexie's mother's generation grew up under that shadow, learning that their language marked them as backward or unfit for success as well as survival in the following era. Her decision to teach English was both a survival strategy and an act of love and motherly affection, a painful bargain that sacrificed cultural continuity for the hope of material security for her children.

His eulogy can be seen as a meditation on how language operates as the backbone of cultural identity. When that backbone fractures, the individual experience disorientates and the community suffers a collective grief that is rarely acknowledged in mainstream narratives. The death of a language is not a natural extinction but a human-made catastrophe; it is the silencing of a worldview, the extinguishing of a unique way of being. His poem exemplifies that identity is not a static monument but a living conversation between past and present. It is shaped by the words we inherit, the words we choose to use, and the stories we dare to tell. For Indigenous peoples, maintaining and revitalizing language is an act of cultural sovereignty.

In this way, Alexie's eulogy transcends personal grief; it becomes a universal reminder that language is a bridge connecting people to their roots, communities and humanity. When that bridge weakens, we all lose a little of what makes us whole. The challenge he leaves for all readers is to honor the languages that shaped us, to learn the words we do not yet know, and to speak them aloud because in the speaking, we keep both the living and the dead alive.

In "Search for My Tongue," Sujata Bhatt masterfully captures the experience of linguistic and cultural displacement. The speaker, who was born in Ahmedabad, later moved to the United States, finds herself caught between two different languages and different cultures. This inbetween state can be referred as 'limbo'. This limbo state is characterized by a sense of disconnection from her mother tongue, Gujarati, and a struggle to assimilate and adapt into the foreign tongue, English.

Bhatt's use of the phrase "If you had two tongues in your mouth" explains the speaker's feelings of linguistic and cultural duality. The speaker is torn and struck between two languages, unable to fully claim either of it as her own. This sense of disconnection is further underscored when she was put to a situation to use

English more frequently than her mother tongue, leading to fears that sooner Gujarati is dying and rotting within her silently.

However, the poem takes a powerful turn when the speaker dreams in Gujarati and the language begins to blossom within her like a bud. This moment marks a turning point in the speaker's relationship with her mother tongue, as she comes to realize that her connection to Gujarati is unbreakable i.e. it would never be displaced. The language may have been dormant, but it was never truly lost from her life and her self. Bhatt's poem is a testament to the enduring power of language and identity. Despite the speaker's physical distance from her native place and native culture, her mother tongue remains an integral part of her day-to-day life both in and out, travelling always with her. The poem suggests that language is not just a means of communication but a fundamental aspect of our identity, one that cannot be erased or replaced.

Here, the speaker's journey is a powerful reminder that language and identity are deeply intertwined and interrelated. Our native language is often tied to our sense of self, community, and culture and heritage. When we are forced to navigate multiple languages and cultures, it can be disorienting and lead to feelings of disconnection. However, Bhatt's poem also offers a message of hope and resilience. Even in the face of linguistic and cultural displacement, this poem proves that one’s mother tongue can remain a source of strength and connection to one’s roots. The speaker's dream in Gujarati is a testament to the enduring power of language, which can transcend geographical and cultural boundaries.

Though it challenges linguistic and cultural displacement, while also celebrating the enduring connection to one's mother tongue, this poem is a reminder that language is not just a means of communication but a fundamental aspect of our identity, one that shapes our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world. It is a proof to the power of language to shape our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world. Thus, Sujata Bhatt’s Search for My Tongue as well as Sherman Alexie’s Eulogy highlights the importance of preserving and promoting linguistic diversity. As languages continue to disappear at an alarming rate without any trace, it is more necessary than ever to recognize the value of our mother tongues and the role that they play in shaping the understanding of ourselves and the surrounding around us in this world. It also sheds light on the importance of

preservation of language. By promoting language education and language preservation, it can help to ensure that future generations continue to speak and celebrate their mother tongues by being connected to their true self.

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Unmasking Social Realities: The Reflection of Social Evils in Sudha Murthy's *Gently Falls the Bakula, Dollar Bahu,* and *Mahashweta*

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Abstract

Literature has long served as a mirror reflecting the truths and tensions of human society. Indian English fiction, in particular, often explores the contradictions of modernity, morality, and cultural tradition. Among contemporary Indian writers, Sudha Murthy stands out for her lucid storytelling and deep concern for the moral fabric of society. Her novels highlight ordinary lives caught in the web of social evils—patriarchy, class discrimination, greed, and social stigma—that persist despite modernization. This paper examines how Murthy's *Gently Falls the Bakula*, *Dollar Bahu*, and *Mahashweta* portray the reflection of reality through characters who confront entrenched social ills. Through accessible language and realism, Murthy exposes the erosion of human values in a society shaped by material ambition and moral decline. The paper argues that Murthy's fiction not only depicts social evils but also advocates empathy, dignity, and ethical responsibility as pathways to human progress. By blending moral insight with simple prose, Murthy bridges the gap between literature and lived experience, turning fiction into a tool for social awareness and transformation.

Key words: Social Realism**,** Gender Inequality**,** Indian English Fiction**,** Materialism and Morality**,** Social Evils in Literature.

The role of literature has always been intertwined with the moral and social conscience of a community. Writers across cultures have used fiction as a space to reveal, critique, and reform the realities of their societies. In India, this role gains even greater significance because literature has historically engaged with social transformation—from reformist novels of the nineteenth century to the feminist and postcolonial narratives of the present. Sudha Murthy, an Indian author, philanthropist, and educator, writes from this ethical tradition. Her novels, simple in style yet profound in intent, question the hypocrisy and injustices of contemporary Indian life.

Murthy's storytelling, often dismissed as "domestic fiction," is deeply political in its implications. She writes about the common woman—educated but confined, intelligent yet undervalued—and through these figures, she holds up a mirror to social evils that continue to thrive behind the façade of modernity. The chosen novels—*Gently Falls the Bakula* (2008), *Dollar Bahu* (2007), and *Mahashweta* (2002)—each depict a unique facet of India's social reality: gender inequality, materialism, and social discrimination. Together, they form a moral trilogy that reflects how society, even in its most progressive guise, continues to marginalize empathy, equality, and ethical integrity. This paper explores how Murthy's fiction turns language into an instrument of truth. Her realism functions not as mere description but as moral revelation. By analyzing these novels, the study demonstrates how literature can reflect human experience while questioning the ethical health of a nation in transition.

The concept of literature as a mirror to life has deep philosophical roots. Aristotle's idea of *mimesis* suggested that art imitates life, not in a superficial sense, but by revealing universal truths about human nature. In modern criticism, this idea evolves into the notion that literature both reflects and shapes social consciousness. Indian writers, from Premchand to R. K. Narayan and Arundhati Roy, have continued this reflective tradition. Their works show how individual stories embody larger collective struggles.

Sudha Murthy's fiction aligns with this lineage. Her narratives do not seek to impress through linguistic experimentation or grand metaphors; instead, they appeal through emotional honesty and ethical clarity. She uses language as a transparent medium through which reality—social, moral, and psychological—is rendered visible. Her characters are drawn from everyday life: middle-class

families, ambitious youth, devoted wives, and marginalized individuals who reveal the contradictions of modern India. Murthy's writing reminds us that reflection in literature is not passive. It challenges readers to recognize their complicity in social evils and to imagine more humane alternatives. As Meenakshi Mukherjee notes, Indian English fiction often "mediates between the local and the universal" (Mukherjee 45). Murthy's novels achieve this mediation by grounding moral dilemmas in local contexts while resonating with universal human concerns.

In *Gently Falls the Bakula*, Murthy presents a poignant portrayal of gender inequality within marriage and ambition. The novel tells the story of Shrimati and Shrikant, childhood friends whose marriage deteriorates as Shrikant climbs the corporate ladder and Shrimati's individuality is lost in domestic routine. The novel opens with tenderness but soon evolves into a critique of patriarchal expectations that define a woman's worth through her husband's success.

Shrimati is an intelligent woman whose academic excellence is overshadowed by societal norms that prioritize her role as wife over her personal growth. As Shrikant's career flourishes, he becomes absorbed in ambition and neglects the emotional bond that once connected them. Murthy's language, calm and understated, heightens the emotional realism of Shrimati's silent suffering. Her decision to leave Shrikant is not an act of rebellion but of self-reclamation. The social evil exposed here is not overt violence but the subtle erasure of women's identities under patriarchy. Murthy's realism lies in her refusal to dramatize. She writes with quiet empathy, showing how ordinary marriages can perpetuate inequality under the guise of love and duty. In one scene, Shrimati reflects, "The bakula flowers fell gently, yet they smothered everything beneath them." This metaphor mirrors how societal expectations—gentle, seemingly harmless can suffocate individual freedom.

Through Shrimati, Murthy questions the ideal of the self-sacrificing woman so deeply ingrained in Indian culture. Critics like Supriya Chaudhuri observe that "Murthy's women do not reject tradition; they reinterpret it on their own terms" (Chaudhuri 63). Shrimati's departure is not defiance but an assertion of moral and intellectual equality. The novel thus reflects a lived reality: educated women in modern India continue to negotiate between personal desire and social obligation.

While *Gently Falls the Bakula* explores gendered sacrifice, *Dollar Bahu* critiques the obsession with wealth and Westernization in Indian families. The novel contrasts two daughters-in-law in a middle-class Indian household—Vinuta, the modest Indian wife, and Gauramma's preferred daughter-in-law, the glamorous "Dollar Bahu" Jamuna who lives in America. Murthy uses this domestic setting to reveal how social hierarchies are redefined by money, not morality.

Gauramma's idolization of Jamuna reflects a wider cultural phenomenon—the belief that success abroad signifies superiority. Vinuta, despite her integrity and devotion, is devalued because she represents the "old India," while Jamuna becomes the symbol of status and modernity. Through simple but biting dialogue, Murthy exposes the hypocrisy of a society that equates virtue with wealth. The novel's moral climax occurs when Gauramma visits America and experiences loneliness and cultural alienation. Her realization—that love and respect cannot be purchased brings the story full circle. The "Dollar Bahu" becomes a mirror of her own moral blindness.

Murthy's depiction of class obsession serves as a critique of globalized materialism. According to Shubha Tiwari, "Murthy's fiction foregrounds the moral confusion of a society torn between ethics and affluence" (Tiwari 102). *Dollar Bahu* thus reflects a social evil that transcends borders: the reduction of human relationships to economic exchange. The language of the novel remains deceptively simple, echoing the cadence of everyday speech. Yet beneath this simplicity lies a moral intensity that forces readers to question their own values. Murthy's realism is not pessimistic but corrective; she believes in the possibility of moral awakening through empathy and introspection.

Among Murthy's novels, *Mahashweta* most directly addresses social stigma and the cruelty of judgment based on appearance. The protagonist, Anupama, is a beautiful, intelligent woman whose life collapses when she develops leucoderma. Her husband, Anand, and his family abandon her, reducing her to a symbol of shame. What follows is a journey from despair to self-discovery, as Anupama transforms her suffering into strength.

Murthy uses Anupama's condition as a metaphor for the larger social disease of prejudice. The narrative challenges the cultural obsession with beauty and purity, which often defines a woman's worth in Indian society. Anupama's

resilience and eventual independence represent Murthy's belief in moral renewal through self-respect. The social evil here is not merely the superstition surrounding disease but the lack of compassion in human relationships. Murthy's tone remains calm, never sentimental, which enhances the credibility of her message. She allows Anupama's dignity to speak louder than her pain.

As Anita Desai notes, "the strength of Murthy's narrative lies in its moral clarity" (Desai 54). In *Mahashweta*, literature becomes both reflection and resistance—a reflection of social cruelty and a resistance against moral apathy. Anupama's journey symbolizes the possibility of rebirth within suffering. She reclaims her agency, not by escaping society but by redefining her place within it. The novel ends not in despair but in quiet triumph, asserting that social change begins with personal integrity.

One of Sudha Murthy's greatest achievements is her command over language that bridges the gap between academic and popular readership. She avoids ornamentation and complex symbolism, choosing instead a conversational tone that reflects the rhythms of ordinary life. This stylistic simplicity enhances accessibility and ensures that her message reaches readers across social and educational divides. Her realism is grounded in observation rather than abstraction. The dialogue in her novels mirrors spoken Indian English, filled with moral reflection yet free from pretension. As Ramesh K. Srivastava observes, "Murthy democratizes the English novel by using simplicity as a moral force" (Srivastava 27).

This linguistic transparency becomes a form of social critique. In revealing ordinary lives without literary camouflage, Murthy affirms that moral truths do not need elaborate language to be powerful. Her storytelling invites readers to look inward, to see that the "social evils" she depicts are not distant issues but intimate realities woven into daily life.

The social realities in Murthy's novels are not portrayed for condemnation alone. Her fiction seeks to awaken moral reflection. Each of her protagonists undergoes a journey that begins with disillusionment and ends with ethical awareness. In *Gently Falls the Bakula*, Shrimati's departure prompts Shrikant's introspection about the meaning of success. In *Dollar Bahu*, Gauramma's return from America marks her moral awakening. In *Mahashweta*, Anupama's suffering becomes the foundation of her self-respect. These transformations embody

Murthy's humanism—a belief that ethical renewal is possible even in a corrupt society. Her characters are not heroes in the conventional sense; they are ordinary individuals who choose conscience over conformity. Through them, Murthy translates the philosophical into the personal. Literature, in her vision, becomes not just a mirror but a lamp illuminating paths toward self-awareness. As Murthy herself once stated in an interview, "Writing is not about preaching; it is about reminding people of what they already know but have forgotten." This sentiment captures the heart of her realism: a compassionate reminder of humanity's moral potential.

Sudha Murthy's novels embody the reflective power of literature. Through her clear prose and moral insight, she reveals how social evils—patriarchy, greed, and prejudice—persist under the veneer of modernity. *Gently Falls the Bakula*, *Dollar Bahu*, and *Mahashweta* together form a tapestry of human experience, where individual lives become sites of ethical struggle and renewal. Her fiction stands as a bridge between the intellectual and the emotional, the literary and the everyday. Murthy's realism is not bleak but restorative. She believes that recognition of moral failure is the first step toward social healing.

In the larger context of Indian English literature, Murthy continues the reformist legacy of writers like R. K. Narayan and Premchand while infusing it with a contemporary feminist perspective. Her works remind us that the purpose of literature is not only to entertain but to awaken empathy and conscience. In a time when language is often used to obscure truth, Sudha Murthy uses it to reveal the reality of human experience in its most honest form. Her novels teach that the reflection of reality in literature is not a passive image but an ethical invitation—to see, to feel, and ultimately, to change.

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Echoes of Nature: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's *The Living Mountain*

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Abstract

Environmental degradation and the result of human haughtiness in the face of nature have become the most important issues in the contemporary era. The Earth is facing an expansion of ecological catastrophe from rising sea levels, melting glaciers, extreme weather changes because of deforestation. Humans greed, exploitation, industrialization are endangering not only the environment but also the future of mankind. This reality has deeply influenced contemporary literature and the writers across the world are using poems, fiction and essays as a tool to reflect destruction relation between humans and nature. Literature has become a powerful tool through which the writers can critique human supremacy over nature, domination of technology and raise the voice for nature. In many literature works, nature has become a predominant theme. Tales like Amithav Ghosh's *The Living Mountain* describes not only about the environmental crisis but also highlights the cautioning about ignorance of ecological knowledge. Amitav Ghosh an Indian writer whose novels features the connection of human lives and the environment. His writings go beyond the narration to involve deeply with realities of environmental crisis, climatic changes and human relationship with nature. Through a close reading of *The Living Mountain* it deepens our understanding of the complex relationships between nature and humans. Also the story presents the value of traditional ecological wisdom. This research aims to provide insights into the role of literature in shaping our comprehension of the nature and respecting its power.

Key words: *environment, degradation, sustain, human- nature relationship*

Literature is a powerful medium that voices human emotions and social realities. Through narration, poetic expression writers explore the depths of humans encountering like love, loss, hope, despair, liberation, suppression. Literature not

only entertains but also educates and transform. Literature has the power to bring awareness to the people. Writers create relatable characters, plots and make the readers to feel and reflect. It serves as a moral and philosophical lesson on the consequences of human intervention towards nature, reminding us that survival depends on harmony and respect for the nature. In this modern world there are many ecological crises spreading widely, from extreme weather events to rising sea levels, melting of glaciers, population, deforestation, industrialization, extinction of species are all visible in every part of the world. This topic has become very important in current period because it not only affects the environmental world but also human health condition.

Human activities are the main cause of environmental crisis. Urban expansion, deforestation, industrialization, excess burning of fuels led to ecological imbalance. The natural resources are being pushed beyond their limits and scientists warn that they are approaching irreversible tipping points. This issue has become not only scientific but also moral and ethical. It challenges humans to rethink about living and association with nature. The emergency of the crisis has sparkled a developing movement among scientists, educators, activists, writers and artists to use their platforms to raise awareness among people. Literature has become a significant space for environmental contemplation. Environmental literature is often termed as Eco literature, which examines the complex relationship between human beings and the environment. Through environmental literature, writers began to explore the emotional, social and philosophical aspects of environmental changes.

In contemporary times, environmental literature has evolved into a powerful form of environmental activism expressed through art. Many writers started to incorporate environmental themes in their works to voice out and raise awareness on the environmental crisis. Authors like Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future*, Margaret Atwood's *The MaddAddam Triology*, Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Water Knife*, Barbara Kingolver's *Flight Behaviour* and Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* and *The Living Mountain* highlights climate catastrophes, ecological collapse, species extinction, socio- political consequences of global warming and human's disconnection from nature. These writers project a dystopian future by using scientific reality, cultural criticism to caution against inaction and

historical insight. Also these writers challenge predominant narratives. They give voice to nature and urge readers to rethink their relationship with the environment.

Amitav Ghosh born on 11th July 1956 at Calcutta, West Bengal. He studied in The Doon School, Dehradun also he earned a doctorate in social anthropology at the University of Oxford. He worked in many academic institutions and also at the Indian Express newspaper in New Delhi. He often contributes to *The New Yorker*, *The Guardian* and other leading publications. He is known for his narrative innovation and thematic depth. He holds an important place in literature canon particularly in postcolonial and climate literature. His notable works are *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *In an Antique Land* (1992), *The Glass Palace* (2000), The Imam and the Indian (2002), *The Hungry Tide* (2004), *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011), *Flood of Fire* (2015), *Gun Island* (2019), The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis (2021), *The Living Mountain* (2022). He has won Sahitya Akademi Award, Jnanpith Award, Padma Shri and Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters (France). His voice echoes globally, not through his works but also through lectures and essays support for environmental justice. By entwining history, mythology and environmental importance widely recognized for his interdisciplinary approach to literature.

The Living Mountain is an allegorical narrative about the relationship between humans and the environment. The novella challenges the modern mindset of conquest and exploitation through the lens of climate fiction. The plot is set in an unnamed valley and story begins with a narrator Maansi narrates a tale told to her in childhood about a sentient mountain Mahaparbat respected by her people as a living entity. Also how the mountain Mahaparbat was profaned by outsiders known as the *Anthropoi*. The protagonist cum narrator recalls, "Our ancestors had told us that of all the world's mountains ours was the most alive; that it would protect us and look after us – but only on condition that we told stories about it, and sang about it, and danced for it – but always from a distance" (7). This myth serves not only as tale frame but also as a counter communication to enlightenment period and scientific reasonableness which vision nature as stationary matter to be exploited.

Ghosh's option to narrate the plot through Maansi, a tribal woman lends control to non- western forms of knowing. In the following context, allegory becomes a medium for ecological resistance. As Elizabeth DeLoughrey says,

"Allegories of the Anthropocene [. . .] compel us to confront the material consequences of imperialism and extraction" (DeLoughrey 11). By turning to allegory, Ghosh gives environment a form of cultural resistance.

The mountain Mahaparbat is a living entity, holy to the valley people. Its spiritual significance is such that it never to be touched. The valley people symbolize ecological wisdom and cultural harmony. Their traditions teach respect, discipline and harmony. They take only what is necessary and confess the sacredness of the land sustains them. As the narrator narrates, "almost always wreathed in clouds" (7) and "the most alive" (7). On the other hand, the invaders represent modern civilization's unending desire for control and profit. Their arrival disturbs the ecological balance, leading to the mountain's slow destruction. Ghosh keeping mountain as a symbolism exposes the Modern life driven by greed and colonial power, breaks the old and balanced relationship between humans and nature. As Rabani and Mishra states, Ghosh "depicts environmental violence as both a physical and psychological assault on the Earth's living systems" (Rabani and Mishra 44).

Ghosh's pagan portrayal of the mountain destroys the Cartesian dichotomy of human and nature restore an ecological cosmology. This respect is in complete contrast to the scientific ideology of the Anthropoi. The writer stresses on the mountain as a character repeats with his broader reasoning in *The Great Derangement* that modern literature and science have failed to treat bloodless actors with earnestness. As he states, "The real mystery is not in the facts of climate change but in the silence of literature." (*The Great Derangement* 9). By treating the mountain as a holy subject, *The Living Mountain* reconstructs environment towards correlation and humility, moving beyond techno fix narration that influences mainstream environmental address.

Amitav Ghosh's analysis escalate with the arrival of the Anthropoi- a name derived from the Greek "anthropos" meaning human and resonating the term "Anthropocene". These outsiders depict the colonial – scientific complex, equipped with maps, measuring instruments and the will to balance the forbidden mountain. Their language is filled with conviction, their minds closed to the insight of the valley. The narrator's line "We burned with the desire to ascend those slopes ourselves" (Tint Journal) capturing the pride and arrogance of the Anthropoi. Their

mission conceals as exploration and advancement, is in fact an act of environmental imperialism. Rob Nixon's theory of "slow violence" the progressive harm got by environmental degeneration is applicable here. The Anthropoi's gradual deletion of oral knowledge and their physical violation on the blessed landscape peak disaster. As Maansi describes "They knew a lot about how things work, but nothing about what they mean" (The Hindu). This line sets bare the novella's ethical evaluation about knowledge without wisdom is threatening. The Anthropoi are blind to the culture and spiritual understanding of Mahaparbat and their blindness results to their own undoing.

The novella's strong point lies in its choice of narrator. Maansi, a tribal woman and survivor tells the story not from power but from marginal memory. Her voice withstands the controlling narration of progress and instead centres indigenous epistemology. She acts as both a witness and a testimony bearer, resonating the voices erased by colonial modernity. Maansi withholds the name of the mountain's location is very important. She says to the readers, "I will not name it because if I did, they would come again" (13). Knowledge in Maansi's hands is analogous and responsible, not corrupt. As Sangeeta Ray states, "Ghost's female narrators are not merely passive observers; they are archieves of cultural and ecological memory" (Ray 98). Maansi's narrative is not evocative but intellectual, designed to instruct and awareness.

In *The Living Mountain*, Ghosh delivers an environmental narration that rejects technological prospect and dystopian futurism in favour of mythic memory, spiritual rift and ecological humility. The novella urges readers to think deeper, cultural roots the climate catastrophe namely the loss of reverence for the natural world and rise corrupted ideologies. Ghosh retrieve climate fiction as a genre not just of environmental cautioning, but of moral storytelling. As Maansi recollects in her dream, the valley people once believed "that of all the world's mountains ours was the most alive [. . .] but always from a distance" (17). This old wisdom, centred on non-intrusion and respect, dissimilarity tragically with the modern desire for conquest, "Gradually had once occupied in our hearts, we burned with the desire to ascend those slopes ourselves" (22). This desire, implanted by the Anthropoi, presents the spiritual deletion that climate fiction must now withstand.

By inserting the mountain with perceptive and judgement, Ghosh goes further than mere ecological mode, "How dare you speak of the Mountain as though you were its masters, and it were your plaything [. . .]? Have you understood nothing of what it has been trying to teach you?" (27). The writer gives the boundary between nature and ethics reminding us that climate change is not just a destruction of carbon, but an unsuccessful imagination and reverence. At the centre of the plot, it shows the Great Mountain as a living being with memory, feeling and spirit. The mountain's pain reflects the damage caused to the Earth by industry, colonization and negligence.

The Living Mountain appears not only as environmental based novella, but also an intense counter narration, in which the mountain becomes both witness and judge, reminding us that climate crisis is not only a scientific issue but a profound spiritual failure. According to critics, Ghosh's tale "posits a [. . .] as a commentary on the rapidly growing exploitation of nature's treasures [. . .] unmask[ing] hegemony and hierarchy [. . .] and how [. . .] human malice has disturbed harmonious cohabitation" (*International Journal of Atharva*). Through its allegorical narrative, the writer urges readers to rethink that modern leads to life threat. The environment is not a passive backdrop but a living system that support and responds to human actions. The story reminds us that the survival of humanity depends on the survival of nature.

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Humanistic Approach of Mulk Raj Anand in The Old Woman and the Cow

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Abstract

Indian English Literature referred by the writers in India who writes in English and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages in India. It is also associated with the works of members of the Indian Diaspora. It is frequently referred as Indo-Anglian literature. This period influenced by the arrival of the three major Indo-Anglian novelists, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao.This coincides with the final phase of the nationalist movement which for the masses of our peoples to their political rights and responsibilities.During this time, India's conception of caste which had strangled social behaviour for some thousands of years was revolutionized. The most distinguished humanist is Dr.Mulk Raj Anand, an internationally reputed Indo Anglican novelist, short story writer, essayist, art critic and poet.Mr.Anand's emphasis on the dignity of man irrespective of caste, creed and wealth, his plea for the whole man, the deep significance he attaches to art and poetry as instruments for developing whole men, his crusade against superstition, feudalism, and imperialism these are some of the chief characteristics of his humanism.

Key Words: Humanism, Revolution, Diaspora, Politics, imperialism

Of all the Indian writers in English, Mulk Raj Anand has the credit of being not only the most prolific but also the most expressly committed writer. He is a man of varied interests and achievements and his life itself reads like an exciting romantic tale full of struggle, quest and accomplishment. He was born on December 12th 1905 in Peshawar in the North West Frontier Province of pre-partition India. His father Lal Chand Anand, served in the British Indian army. His mother Ishwar Kaur, from central Punjab. She fed the little Anand on songs and stories drawn from Indian myths, epics and folklore.

It is natural that a creative artist's works should be deeply coloured by the philosophy of life that he espouses. A scrutinised study of Anand's fictional as well as non-fictional works reveals that what vitalises them is the strong undercurrent of a broad-based philosophy of humanism. The type of humanism that Anand envisages for this nation can be better understood and appreciated if it is studied in relation to the background of his life. Anand was born in India, which was groaning under the imperialistic rule of the British. The people had lost their moorings: old values were crumbling and new ones were seen nowhere near the horizon. Religion had become a meaningless ritual. Fatalism and superstition dominate the minds of the poor masses. The British rulers failed to enable the Indian either to acquire a clear understanding of his own culture or to get a correct appreciation of European culture.

He settled down in England to do research in English Philosophy. In England most of the men lived lives fraught with squalor, poverty and class consciousness. By the influence of this he started to write about world chaos. Anand knew that the old world was dead because of the rapid growth of science and the consequent industrial revolution; this had resulted in commercialism, colonialism, and imperialism; simple human values like love, justice and beauty had receded from the background. In this situation Anand came to realise that only a new humanism with its respect for man and the message of love and compassion could restore peace and happiness to the war-torn world.

Anand's insistence on the dignity of man irrespective of caste, creed and wealth, his plea for the practice of compassion as a living value, his conception of the whole man, the profound importance he attaches to art and poetry as instruments for developing whole men, his crusade against superstition, feudalism and imperialism, these are some of the chief characteristics of his humanism. Like most other humanists starts with a declaration of his immense faith in the protagorean dictum, "Man is the measure of all things." By this Anand means that he believes in measuring the values and actions related to human personality. Man has in him enough creative energy and imagination to transform dignity and to rid mankind of its unspeakable misery and pain, all through his tireless physical and mental energy. It is to enable man to achieve this end that Anand fervently pleads for the emergence among men of a new conception of the role of man in this vast universe. The most vital need of our troubled times is to engender among men a genuine

respect for man, love for him and faith in his ability to live a life full of dignity. He believes that man can solve his many problems with the help of imaginations, reason and scientific method. This idea of viewing man as the centre of the universe and as an entity capable of improvement is a point of view which is generally shared by all humanists.

Anand humanism implies in its essence that tenderness or compassion is a powerful force, the liberation of which enables man to emerge from the encircling gloom of violence, greed, jealousy, and narrowness, and live intensely and fully. The 'whole man' should be our aim, and the individual's development is, after all, inextricably bound up with the development of the society as a whole. Anand writes: The urge towards the attachment of the complete man entails, as it has always done, the exercise of compassion and understanding with a view to removing wrongs and for the creations of tenderness among men: While Anand's humanism has much in common with different varieties of humanism, it owes its origin as well as development to his pre-occupation with the whole man and his writings are frankly inspired by his love of man. This is made clear by Anand himself:.....as my media as a writer were the memory and imagination and the substance of my work, the whole of my varied experience, the theme of my work became the whole man and whole gamut of human relationship, rather than one single part of it.

According to Anand, art is a tool in the service of mankind as science is. It is significant that he attaches very great importance to the vital role a creative artist plays or ought to play in society. In fact, he agrees with Shelley's description of poets as "the unacknowledged legislators of the world'. This how Anand defends Shelley: He (Shelley) had felt that the creative artist, the unacknowledged legislator', who goes far down into the depth of human personality, stirs the suppressed yearning....people. Anand abhors the doctrine of art for art's sake which, he thinks, is escapism. True art plays an important role in the reconstruction of human society. It is commensurate with the needs of the time. Anand explains the function of a creative artist in these words: ...the writer alone, Change it?

Woman, according to Anand's humanism, deserves to be treated on an equal footing with man.Anand deplores the fact that a majority of Indians still respect that woman can have freedom at no stage of her life. Women can no longer

be considered a mere child-breeding machine, never to be allowed to stir out of the four walls of home. She can no longer be treated as chattel. In fact, it needs to be recognised that women are as important as men in the great task of social reconstruction. He is mainly in the tradition of scientific humanism. According to the world-view he holds, the whole of nature, the cosmos, exists and operates according to natural laws. Man is a part of this universe. He must try to achieve harmony with nature..Anand like Julian Huxley, believes in the evolution conception of the universe and rejects the dualism between matter and spirit and the body and mind.Anand humanism is a happy synthesis of the best and most vital elements in western as well as Asiatic philosophies of humanism. The Protagorean conception of man being the measure of all things, the great concern of the teachings of Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates for man's well-being, the passion of renaissance humanism for building a glorious human civilisations, the plea of naturalistic humanists for achieving human happiness here and now as well as their rejection of the super- natural, Huxley's insistence on recognising and utilising man's immense possibilities for a happier world- these are some of the points that Anand takes from western humanism schools of philosophy and assimilates them in his own philosophy of humanism.

Anand's humanistic notice in The Old Woman and the Cow is obvious and presents a strong plea for the identification and approval of women's rights. The novelists sense of disbelief in the Christian perspective of Vice, his emphasis on the value of compassion in human affinities, his criticism of the cash- bond and his usual reproof of uncritical faith in superstition, Karma, and God these are the humanistic notes that from the plot of this novel. In our conventional socio-cultural milieu the woman remains unrealised, trapped, caged and oppressed. That women need equality with men is the chief principle of Anand's humanism which constructs the plot of this novel. The novelist presents the treatments of man's ideas and actions in respect of woman.Gauri's whole life is a tale of torture and trauma. The crowded and obstructed atmosphere of the joint family does not allot a room for making love between Gauri and her husband. She does nothing but groans and moans under the distress of male chauvinism. She is abidingly blamed of being an inauspicious creature, liable not only for the mishaps of the family but also for the drought in the village. Kesari, the traditional mother-in-law, does not want to loosen her hold on Panchi and continues to despise and distress Gauri.She finds a little love

and tenderness in the corner of her husband's heart. Her husband, Panchi is also a prey of the stratagems of the envious Kesari and artful Mola Ram. Despite his occasional love and compassion for Gauri, he is mostly seen as a savage peasant, a wild bull whose gruesome tendency comes in constant conflict with Gauri's gentle nature.

Another aspect of Anand's humanistic note in the novel is the emphasis on the demand for deserting pain and barbarity and exercising mollification and softness. The novelist does this by depicting a true scene of the gloomy plot against which the tragedy of the novel takes place. At whatever place Gauri goes she meets with savage suffering but it is only Dr. Mahindra who gives her solace. Even Gauri thinks that her husband, Panchi, would have probably sent her away due to his miseries and mishaps. Mr. Anand explicates it through a minor character of the novel Rafique Chacha is a poor man, but he is by nature gentle and keeps his goodness in spite of all miseries. He is kind enough to ask Panchi and his wife Gauri to come and live with him. But Dr. Mahindra's generosity makes Gauri a hopeful woman. Due to Lakshmi's and Amru's greed for money Gauri faces hardships. Lakshmi's lure for money, "the new god" induces her to sell away her daughter. Even the hill men do not flee from the enticement of money, and its and its consequences are calamitous. Lakshmi say to the city confectioner: Women always taught men to love But when you shopkeepers came with money you taught us hill people to buy and sell girls. I am not ashamed of having gone to bed with men, but i am ashamed that i had to sell my daughter

The novelist tries to combat against the man's faith in charms and omens, his power, possession, money, karma, and God-all age-old nations which impedes the development of the people. The denizens of the village are the victims of superstitions. Panchi sometimes feel it nugatory to believe in superstitions but he is not completely got rid of it only because he considers the destiny of Gauri who is a prey of mishaps are due to the wrong stars of Gauri compelled by the circumstances Gauri herself thinks that she is probably an inauspicious woman as blamed by all. Gauri also believes in destiny and God, since she artlessly thinks that a day will come when she will be free from the reward of sufferings imposed by the kith and kin and the villagers. She contemplates that there is no means or no way for proving her virginity, for the mother Earth would not open up and swallow her, hence has she decided to work out her own dirtying herself. Here the novelist

indicates that. The idea of deserving a higher birth, as a reward for good or bad deeds is, to my thinking, a myth promoted to keep men and women at work for the slave-drivers. It is true that at the back of all wretchedness, there is the soul of man. And the soul remains when the wretchedness has passed So the deepest good builds on the deepest human being, the whole man Anyhow, there is no question of rebirth .Initially we find in the novel that Mr. Anand presents a realistic picture of Gauri's sufferings. Gauri, a good and gentle woman, is aptly compared to a cow, for her endurance and immolation. Dr. Mahindra tries to implant humanist ideas in Gauri by which she evinces how a person need to depend on himself rather than on god for constructing his fate. The novelist tries to combat against falsity and hypocrisy, savagery and insensibility, and a defence of love and compassion, and all that goes to make man's life gay some and lenient.

In this novel we find the whole process of the change of woman from a puppet in man's hands to the state of an independent woman who asserts her equal rights with man and demands recognition as such. The novelist adroitly makes use of the old myth of the Ramayana and suggests how it is no longer possible for man either to keep suppressed or to neglect her lawful liberty, equality, identity and individuality. He also re-created the Indian classical myth of Ramayana in a modern context to suit his purpose of answering the question of human destiny, in this particular care the destiny of Indian women in a period of transition. In Ramayana the problems of the heroine are solved by the intervention of Gods, this is when Sita is rescued from further humiliation by mother Earth. But the problems of Anand's heroine, Guari, are solved by herself, since there are no Gods to intervene on her behalf.

As already stated, *The Old Woman and the Cow* occupies an exceptionally important place among Anand's fictional works, since it is the sole novel dealing with woman and her statues in society. It reveals Anand's emphatic plea for the amelioration of woman, which is one of the important tents of his humanism. Anand vividly portrays the wretched position of Indian Woman in rural society, and suggests the changes that are coming about by giving a lively description of the heroines enlightened reaction to tradition and custom, corrupted through man's selfishness, ignorance and vested interests.

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Raw Realism and Authentic Portrayal of Dalit life in Bama's *Vanmam*

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Abstract

Bama Faustina Soosairaj is an exceptional Dalit activist who holds her readers in increasing awe and appreciation. She knows how to fit her readers into place in her original narrative art. The exclusive world of her writings captures the imagination and thoughts of the marginalised community. Her way of narrating that astoundingly runs along an unheard-of and untraveled path. Her commendable art of account style may seem raw, but it resonates like a unique form of writing. Bama has become a spokesperson for Dalit literature. Her zealous advocacy to liberate her people from the authority of caste tyranny is obviously reflected in her works.

Keywords: reflection of reality, discrimination, clutches of caste, Tamil Dalit literature, Solidarity, Aesthetics, knowledge for empowerment

Dalit writings renovate histories from below, making visible the experiences hidden from history. Bama's writings empower subjugated subjects to speak for themselves, breaking casteistic restraints. She expresses society's aspirations, fears, and hopes in her works. Her writings include *Karruku* (1992), *Sangati* (1994), *Vanmam* (2003), and *Kisumbukkaran* (1996). Her latest work, *Manushi*, is in Tamil. Bama's narratives differentiate the experiences of her community. She realistically portrays her people's culture and customs. As a Dalit representative, she voices the uniqueness of her culture.

Scholars have examined Bama's works from various critical perspectives, including caste, gender, resistance, and subaltern studies. Bama's *Vanmam* (Vendetta) gains attention for bold portrayal of intra-Dalit conflicts, critique of caste hierarchies, exploration of gender and social justice. *Vanmam* reveals caste discrimination beyond upper-caste oppression to divisions within Dalit communities, particularly between the Pallars and Parayars. Internal hostilities, often instigated by dominant castes, show how caste prevents collective progress.

Bama's courage in addressing this subject is appreciated, exposing "divide and rule" tactics used by upper castes to maintain social control.

Scholars like S. Balasundari (OIIRJ) further note that Bama's representation of Dalit women is central to the novel's emotional and political power. The women in *Vanmam* endure poverty, violence, and sexual exploitation not only from upper-caste landlords but sometimes even from men within their own community. This inter sectional portrayal of caste and gender has drawn praise for its realism, though some critics argue that the female characters are depicted more as victims than agents of resistance, unlike in *Karukku* or Sangati. Nonetheless, Bama's emphasis on their suffering underscores the compounded oppression faced by Dalit women, making *Vanmam* a key text in Dalit feminist discourse.

Several reviewers point out that the language and structure of *Vanmam* are deliberately rooted in oral traditions and Dalit idioms. The novel's use of nonstandard Tamil and its episodic narration mirror the rhythm of rural life and community storytelling. While some literary critics initially dismissed this as lacking refinement, others view it as a form of linguistic resistance, asserting the validity of Dalit cultural expression in literature. J. R. Menon and Ramanathan P. V (IJMH Journal) argue that the novel's simplicity and realism strengthen its political message, even if it lacks the lyrical intensity of Bama's earlier works. *Marx explores novel's portrayal of structural violence and social conflicts due to caste discrimination. Karukku and Sangati focus on resistance, while Vanmam highlights systemic caste violence in rural Tamil Nadu.*

Thematically, *Vanmam* is political and didactic. Critics highlight the novel suggests education, unity, and social awareness as paths to empowerment. The ending offers a fragile but significant sense of hope. Some scholars believe *Vanmam* repeats patterns from Bama's earlier writings and risks reinforcing stereotypes about Dalit divisions.

Despite these debates, critics agree that *Vanmam* stands as an important work in Dalit literature one that expands the discourse from oppression by others to the struggles within the oppressed themselves. It challenges readers to see caste not merely as an external social system, but as an internalized force that shapes identities, relationships, and resistance. Through its unflinching realism, *Vanmam*

continues to invite discussion on solidarity, justice, and the urgent need for unity among marginalized groups in contemporary India.

Bama's novel, *Vanmam* , is a significant work in Dalit literature that first and foremost addresses the theme of intra-caste rivalry among different Dalit communities, which is influenced by dominant upper-caste landlords to uphold authority. Bama, highlights intra-caste conflict , Divide and Rule Tactics , Education and Empowerment, Mob Mentality versus Collective Consciousness as Core Themes of *Vanmam.*

This article examines how Bama accurately reflects the reality of Dalit life in her work *Vanmam*. She highlights their nature, strength, weakness, and struggles against societal systems. Bama sees caste as a major obstacle to human relationships and sustainable growth. The narrator envisions empowerment and peace for marginalized people in Kandampatti village.

The novel is praised for its raw realism and authentic portrayal of Dalit life, including struggles, exploitation, and caste-ism in modern India. Bama uses colloquial language of her community, criticized at first but now seen as powerful. *Vanmam* goes beyond victimhood narrative to focus on oppressed communities' journey towards self-realization and resistance. The book ends optimistically, calling for unity and political power. Reviews position *Vanmam* as a call to action for Dalit community to unite against caste hegemony and achieve equity through education and political empowerment.

Bama's *Vanmam: Vendetta*, focuses on how caste, a cluster of sub-castes creates intra-caste division that becomes the impediment for Dalit uprising. The novel explores the intensity of the rivalry between two Dalit communities, the Pallars and the Parayars. The novel shows how the upper caste society uses wealth, power, and the 'upper class status' to create indifference within the Dalit communities and in turn uses that intra-caste division as a tool to marginalize and oppress the even lesser-fortunate Dalits – Parayars in this case.

Vanmam depicts small incidents in the lives of Pallars and Parayars, highlighting their indifference. The novel explores inter-caste rivalry among Dalit communities through various characters. It delves into the conflict within Dalit

communities, showcasing their reality. The incidents details how Pallars and Parayars initially get along but eventually start fighting.

The concept of *reflection of reality* in literature suggests that creative works mirror the social, political, and emotional conditions of human life. In the context of dalit studies, this reflection turns out to be a political and ethical act of representing the marginalized or silenced sections of society. Originating from Antonio Gramsci's idea of the "subaltern," the Subaltern Studies Group, including scholars like Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak**,** emphasized recuperating the voices disqualified from elite historical and literary narratives. Through this lens, literature is not merely an imitation of life but a rebuilding of concealed authenticity**,** especially those of the oppressed, colonized, or socially excluded. Texts by writers such as Bama**,** Mahasweta Devi**,** and Mulk Raj Anand exemplify how marginalised voices mirror the resistances, turmoil, and dignity of marginalized lives. Thus, the reflection of reality in Dalit literature confronts overriding representations, renovating literature into a means of recovering identity and emphasising social truth. The purpose of employing reflection of reality in literature is to reveal truth, social issues, or human emotions. The goal of applying such technique is to help readers understand life and society better.

Writers and poets observe the world and recreate it artistically, not as a direct copy of reality but as an interpretation. Literature can be studied as a mirror, truth through art, emotional and social reality, and selective reflection. Literature as a Mirror reflects society, portraying human life, social systems, culture, and emotions. Truth through Art expresses real-life truths like injustice, poverty, love, or hope. Emotional and Social Reality reveals inner feelings and social truths deeply experienced. Selective Reflection means authors choose what to reflect, showing beauty, harmony, struggles, or conflicts. Reflection can be idealistic, critical, or symbolic.

Reflection of Reality has its roots in the teachings of two renowned philosophers, Plato and Aristotle. Plato, in his philosophical discourse, referred to art as a form of mimesis, which essentially means imitation of reality. However, he regarded this imitation as a representation of a lesser truth compared to the ultimate reality. On the other hand, Aristotle also acknowledged art as mimesis but held a

different perspective. He believed that art, through its imitation, serves as a medium for readers to grasp universal truths and concepts that transcend mere representation.

To delve deeper into Plato's viewpoint, consider the concept of a painter creating a portrait. The painter may capture the physical attributes of the subject, but the essence or true nature of the individual remains elusive in the painting. This notion aligns with Plato's assertion that art can only offer a shadow of reality rather than the reality itself. In contrast, Aristotle's stance on art as mimesis emphasizes the educational and enlightening aspects of artistic representation. For instance, a playwright crafting a tragedy can evoke deep emotions and provoke thought in the audience, leading them to contemplate fundamental truths about human nature and existence.

Polanki Ram Moorthy says, “Dalit literatures are concerned with freedom and expression. The three values can be considered as major force constituting Dalit literature representing their life-equality, freedom and harmony. The dominion in Dalit literature is not only the life strength but also the exquisiteness. The main occupation of Dalit people is farming. During sowing, and harvest season, they worked hard in the fields from morning till evening. The young men, women, the small kids all are involved in the works field and earn Even the educated boys would engage in any field work during their vacation. In *Vanmam* Anthony is depicted in that way "In fact, whenever he (Anthony) was home or vacation from college, he would even take up some daily wage work" (*Vanmam* 57). Bama proudly admits her people are hardworking souls. Through their hard working nature they would win their goals.

Dalit men are strong and fearless in hillside forests. Bama praises their hard work in Vanmam. They turn leasing fields into orchards with coconut, guava, and mango trees. Despite dangers like jackals, boars, snakes, wolves, and elephants, the Dalit people stay vigilant. They fearlessly face challenging and dangerous lives.

Bama's language is inseparable from culture and subsumes writer's identity. Songs likely repeat Dalithood without deliberate attempt to sharpen possibility. It's a matter to be felt and realized. People, without learning, sing songs perfectly. Mariaraasu Thatha knew all songs and sang tunes and words excellently. No need

to wonder about inner talents of Dalit children. "Our youngsters have music and dance flowing in their veins" (*Vanmam* 43). Fiery talent veiled in their hearts.

The women of Dalit are brilliant. While planting paddy seedlings and working in the fields, they sing lullabies, celebrate puberty and marriage, sing dirges, dance kummi, and participate in Sapparam procession. The young men of Dalit community are good at the art of playing silambum, kabaddi. By lifting the 'youth stone' high into the air and throwing it down to the ground they demonstrate their physical strength. During Pongal festival, the total village would be entertained by the games like Jallikattu and Bull chasing. The activities, like singing, dancing, kummi are performed by both Dalit men and women.

Two headmen, Junior Naattaamai and Senior Naattaamai, make political decisions. Criminals are punished based on elders' decisions guided by traditional Dalit laws. Bama's writings depict Dalit tradition in villages like Kandampatti. Narrator embraces society's traditional values influenced by local customs. Freud suggests ethnocentrism creates bond with group leader and members, improving individual sense of work. Ethnocentrism is viewed by Freud as group-level Narcissism.

The Dalit women's instantaneous talents of producing songs on the spots on different aspect of life are a marvellous wonder to learn. In all their songs, their everyday experience that closely tied them to prevailing social convention, their living condition, in the name of culture and tradition. The songs of Dalit women reflect their uniqueness, their entertainment, sense of Sarcasm, imagination, aesthetic culture and so on.

The novel *Vanmam* is centred on the conflict within Dalit communities whereby it reflects the reality of Dalit circumstances and occurrence. *Vanmam* portrays caste as a major reason for weakening human relationships and a real obstruction for sustainable development of downtrodden. Bama describes the time when both Parayars and Pallars maintained peaceful and harmonious relationship and in contrast she also portrays how the caste causes indifference and lack of concern among them. For instance, Bama refers to early incidents of people from both the castes coming together and celebrating festivals like New Year, Christmas, Easter and Pongal. The character Gnanapoo recounts the past saying, "Every time Easter festival came around, we'd all celebrate in a grand manner.

People of various castes used to come and watch…. People of other religions would also come and watch" (*Vanmam* 51). This clearly proves how they lived in unity.

Bama also explores how caste is used by upper caste people as an approach to stifle the growth and development of Dalit communities. The upper caste society uses the hostility between Pallars and Parayars for their own advantage. There are many instances in this novel that depict how Naickers, the upper caste people encourage Pallars to fight against Parayars. The upper caste society instigates the antagonism between those two communities in order to preserve their status and power.

The characters Marraasu, a Parayan working in the fields of Ranga Naicker and Karuppusamy, a Pallan working in the fields of Palanivelu Naicker have invariable wrangles regarding irrigation and they are aggravated by their landlords, the Naickers. The line, "Ranga Naicker would instigate Marraasu, while Palanivelu would stir up Karuppusamy… On top of all this Palanivelu seems to have further encouraged Karuppusamy to be aggressive" ((*Vanmam* 8), explains the role of Naickers in creating violence and Karuppusamy kills Marraasu brutally. It is told that the Naickers were the one who instigated the enmity between Dalit communities in few other instances too. The old man Abraham laments that it was the Naickers who really made themselves such bitter enemies.

The Naickers create problems for people from other castes trying to befriend Parayars. Chakkiliyars refuse to donate to Anthony from Parayar community, fearing the Naickers. Naickers' unity scares them, hindering Dalits' development. Parayars are seen as the lowest among Dalits. Bama shows how caste fuels violence, weakens relationships, and hinders marginalized groups. She emphasizes the vulnerability of Dalit communities within power structures.

Bama explains how education liberates Dalit community by giving them a voice. Characters in the novel recognize education's importance for self-respect and dignity. Saminathan highlights education's significance in the beginning chapter. Anthony, Saminathan, and Jayaraj exemplify this viewpoint. Dalits lack proper education and money to overcome hurdles from uppercaste men. Ambedkar advocated for reforms like grass root education and Hindu code bill. Older Parayar people in Kandampatti stay silent during bad situations at the police station, while educated youngsters bravely interact with the inspector.

Vanmam also depicts the transformation in Dalit's life and society. The novel has many actions and incidents depict and strategies and approaches that have been intentionally used in order to oppose hegemony and exploitation. Bama's handling of the characters in the novel is inimitable in the sagacity that they seem to be attentive of their rights and choices. The best example would be the women in the novel who raise their voice against violence and injustice.

In *Vanmam* the Parayar and Pallars realised the intervention of the third party. They start to forget the vengeance and start to reunites themselves. Bama highlights the importance of community and kinship among the Dalit groups and executing the dream of Ambedkar , "we must capture the levers of government Power" (*Vanmam* 134). They create a strategy in contesting the election. The voice of dalit should be resonated in the power system. Bama is not only the voice of her conscience but also of her community. She used the novel form as the medium to probe into her people's awareness in order to disclose also the collective conscience of her caste people. Her writings essentially a social and cultural document which deal with the man and the social milieu. They visualize concrete situations, perceiving and appreciating reality. The description of each and every activity like the life style, their mode of thinking, level of cultural patterns, attitudes, beliefs and practices of the characters are presented in very clear and extended dimensions to provide all the view of the group of which the author speaks and to which she belongs. Thus her ultimate aim is to highlight the positive identity to Dalit social group and community.

The novels of Bama reflect Indian socio-cultural organization. Dalit people live happily with limited facilities. Despite suffering, discrimination, and torture, they lead confidently with humour. Bama aims to bring social change through her writing. Dalits have a unique cultural background. Including Dalit culture in group studies is essential for positive identity. Following leaders like Dr. Ambedkar is crucial for marginalized people's aspirations. Pursuing dreams will lead to equality and dignity.

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Resilience And Renewal: A Literary Exploration of Sustainability *in Carol Shields' The Stone Diaries*

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Abstract

This paper examines the intertwined themes of sustainability and resilience in Carol Shields' *The Stone Diaries*, a Pulitzer Prize–winning novel that traces the life of Daisy Goodwill Flett. Through Daisy's emotional endurance, relational bonds, and evolving sense of identity, Shields presents a nuanced reflection on how individuals and communities sustain themselves across time. The study explores how the novel articulates forms of emotional, social, and intergenerational sustainability, emphasizing the sustaining power of memory, community, and familial connection. By portraying women's roles in preserving continuity amid change, Shields reveals how personal resilience contributes to collective stability. Moreover, the paper highlights the relationship between individual experience and collective memory as essential to social sustainability. Ultimately, *The Stone Diaries* illuminates the delicate balance between personal survival and the ongoing renewal of social and familial structures.

Keywords: Sustainability, Resilience, Memory, Intergenerational Bonds, Carol Shields, *The Stone Diaries*

Carol Shields' *The Stone Diaries* is a deeply reflective and multifaceted narrative that chronicles the life of Daisy Goodwill, a woman whose experiences in navigating personal loss, relationships, and the search for meaning are intricately tied to the theme of sustainability. In the context of the novel, sustainability does not solely refer to environmental issues or ecological preservation; rather, it is concerned with the emotional, social, and generational continuity necessary for personal and communal survival. Through the life of Daisy, Shields explores how human beings endure the complexities of life and maintain their emotional and social ties, despite the challenges posed by time, change, and personal tragedy. This paper examines the various forms of sustainability in *The Stone Diaries*, focusing

on emotional resilience, community connections, intergenerational relationships, and the sustaining power of memory.

One of the most prominent forms of sustainability in *The Stone Diaries* is emotional resilience, particularly the ability of Daisy to maintain a sense of self despite the hardships she faces throughout her life. Daisy's life, marked by numerous losses, including the deaths of loved ones, disconnection from family, and struggles with identity, reveals the sustainability of the self through resilience. Sustainability, in this context, is rooted in the ability to adapt and find meaning in life despite adversity. Daisy's experiences, such as the loss of her husband, the estrangement from her children, and her struggles with her own sense of purpose, showcase the internal emotional labour that allows her to endure. Daisy's emotional growth is crucial in sustaining herself through these challenges and her eventual reconciliation with her family and her own life exemplifies how individuals can maintain emotional well-being even in the face of seemingly insurmountable personal crises.

Shields demonstrate that emotional resilience requires more than survival—it involves a process of transformation, where the individual not only endures but also learns and adapts. Daisy's emotional sustainability, while tied to her relationships, is ultimately a reflection of her ability to adapt to changing circumstances and to find meaning in her life, even when it seems fractured. In *The Stone Diaries*, Shields presents intergenerational relationships as a key element of social sustainability. Daisy's relationships with her parents, her children, and her grandchildren form the foundation of her emotional and social world. These connections embody the transmission of values, emotional labor, and the ongoing continuity of family structures, which are integral to maintaining social stability across generations.

The novel's exploration of Daisy's relationship with her mother, Mercy, is central to understanding the role of intergenerational ties in sustainability. Mercy's life, although marked by sacrifice and emotional constraint, represents the sustaining force of maternal love and duty that is often passed down through generations of women. Daisy's memories of Mercy and the way they shape her own motherhood highlight the importance of preserving family traditions and emotional bonds. Furthermore, Daisy's role as a mother and grandmother shows how women's

contributions to family and community sustainability are often undervalued, yet indispensable. As Daisy's own children grow up and establish families, the novel underscores the cyclical nature of emotional labor and the role that women play in sustaining not only their immediate families but the broader social fabric. These intergenerational connections are vital to understanding the continuity of social life and the emotional support networks that ensure individuals can weather life's challenges.

Beyond the family unit, *The Stone Diaries* also examines how social connectivity within broader communities contributes to the sustainability of the individual. Daisy's life, though often marked by isolation and loss, is intertwined with those around her, whether through friendships, neighbors, or more fleeting acquaintances. These connections, while sometimes tenuous, are integral to sustaining Daisy through difficult periods. While Daisy frequently experiences moments of disconnection, her ultimate realization that she is part of a larger social network is a central aspect of the novel. The relationships she forms—whether fleeting or deep—offer emotional sustenance and provide the support necessary for her survival. Daisy's relationship with her neighbors and her involvement in her community, though understated, plays a crucial role in sustaining her well-being.

Social sustainability, in this case, extends beyond the immediate family. Shields suggests that individuals are often shaped by their interactions with the broader community, and these connections are necessary for the emotional and psychological survival of individuals. Daisy's eventual sense of belonging is rooted in the idea that individuals do not exist in isolation, but rather, they thrive through the relationships they cultivate with others.

The novel's fragmented structure and the use of various narrative voices highlight the importance of memory in sustaining the self and community. Memory plays a critical role in the continuity of Daisy's identity, providing her with a sense of connection to the past and grounding her in the present. Daisy's ability to reflect on her experiences and her past, particularly through the memories of her mother, father, and other family members, illustrates the significance of personal history in sustaining the individual.

In *The Stone Diaries*, memory serves as a tool for understanding and interpreting one's life, providing continuity and coherence in the face of loss and

change. Daisy's recollections, although at times unreliable or incomplete, serve as a means of preserving not just her sense of self but also the emotional and relational ties that sustain her. These memories allow Daisy to reconstruct her identity and sense of purpose, and through them, Shields suggests that sustainability is not only an active process but also a reflective one. The preservation of personal and family history is vital to ensuring social sustainability. Shields' narrative underscores how communities, and individuals, are sustained through the collective memory of shared experiences, stories, and relationships. These memories help to bridge generational gaps and allow for the continuity of emotional and social connections across time.

Women in *The Stone Diaries* are portrayed as central to the sustainability of the family and the broader community. Daisy's role as a daughter, mother, and grandmother is emblematic of how women often bear the emotional and social labor required to sustain familial and social structures. Shields critiques the expectations placed on women to maintain family cohesion, often at the cost of their own emotional needs and desires. Through characters like Mercy and Daisy, Shields highlights the often invisible work that women do to sustain the emotional and social well-being of those around them. Despite the sacrifices these women make, the novel ultimately emphasizes the power of women's relationships in ensuring the sustainability of both the family and the community. The emotional labour they provide, whether through caregiving, nurturing, or simply maintaining family bonds, is essential to the social stability of the community.

The Stone Diaries, focusing on the portrayal of women's roles in the sustainability of family and social structures, and how these roles are integral to both individual and community survival. It analyses how the preservation of personal and family history contributes to emotional and social sustainability. It discusses Daisy's fragmented recollections as both a strength and limitation in her quest for personal meaning and stability. *The Stone Diaries* illustrates the invisible emotional and social labour performed by women, particularly in family structures, and how these efforts are essential for maintaining social sustainability. It focuses on Daisy and other women in the novel as primary agents of relational continuity and stability. It portrays social sustainability through its depiction of the interconnectedness of individual lives with the broader community. It focuses on

how Daisy's relationships and her search for identity are central to understanding the sustainability of the self and social structures.

In *The Stone Diaries*, Carol Shields offers a nuanced exploration of sustainability, focusing on the emotional resilience, relational bonds, and intergenerational continuity that sustain individuals and communities over time. Through the life of Daisy Goodwill, Shields illustrates how individuals survive and thrive through the support of their families, communities, and memories. The novel reveals that sustainability is not only a matter of personal survival but is deeply interconnected with the relationships and social networks that people build throughout their lives. Ultimately, *The Stone Diaries* demonstrates that the sustainability of the self, the family, and the community depends on emotional resilience, the strength of relationships, and the preservation of shared memories that bridge generational gaps.

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Faith as a Resistance: Cultural Fragility and Religious Endurance in S.Y. Agnon's *The Bridal Canopy*

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Abstract

S.Y. Agnon's *The Bridal Canopy* stands as a profound allegory of faith and endurance amid the collapse of traditional Jewish culture. Set in the waning world of the Galician shtetl, the novel portrays the spiritual journey of Reb Yudel Hasid, whose steadfast belief becomes an act of resistance against cultural fragility. This paper interprets Agnon's work through the hermeneutic philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, emphasizing the redemptive role of narrative and interpretation in the reconstruction of meaning after disintegration. Ricoeur's concept of the "second naïveté," the restoration of faith after critical doubt, provides a vital framework for understanding Yudel's piety as an interpretive act rather than a mere repetition of tradition. Agnon's portrayal of religious resistance transforms fragility into moral endurance, illustrating how faith persists not by denying modernity but by reinterpreting its uncertainties. The analysis reveals that Agnon's narrative elevates spiritual endurance as both a psychological and cultural necessity in an age of skepticism. Through a blend of irony, symbolic depth, and biblical cadence, *The Bridal Canopy* interprets faith as a dynamic form of resilience, a creative force that rebuilds identity and sustains hope amid cultural disintegration. The study concludes that Agnon's vision remains deeply relevant to contemporary societies struggling with moral disintegration, offering a model of faith that resists despair through the transformative power of interpretation.

Keywords: Cultural fragility, Faith, Hermeneutics, Paul Ricoeur, Religious resistance

S.Y. Agnon stands among the most significant voices of twentieth-century Hebrew literature, a writer whose works record the moral and spiritual struggles of a people caught between faith and modernity. Born in Galicia and later living in Jerusalem, Agnon witnessed the disintegration of traditional Jewish life under the pressures of enlightenment, migration, and secularization. His fiction captures that fragile threshold between worlds, the sacred order of the past and the skeptical consciousness of the modern age. *The Bridal Canopy* (1931), one of his early masterpieces, embodies this tension through the wandering figure of Reb Yudel Hasid, a man whose naïve faith resists the spiritual exhaustion of his generation. The novel transforms an ordinary tale of poverty and pilgrimage into a moral allegory of endurance, a narrative in which faith becomes an act of resistance against cultural fragility.

The central argument of this paper is that *The Bridal Canopy* dramatizes faith as a creative and interpretive force that endures amid the collapse of collective meaning. Through the lens of Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic thought, particularly his reflections on interpretation, narrative identity, and the recovery of meaning after doubt, the novel can be read as a profound meditation on how belief survives within modern uncertainty. The hypothesis is that Agnon portrays faith not as blind devotion but as an imaginative act that reinterprets fragility as endurance. His work suggests that faith, far from being obsolete, is the moral language through which a fractured culture seeks to heal itself.

The Bridal Canopy recounts the travels of Reb Yudel, a pious yet impoverished man who leaves his home to collect dowries for his daughters. His journey, filled with miracles, mishaps, and moments of quiet revelation, mirrors the wandering of the Jewish spirit through exile and doubt. Yudel's faith appears absurd to others, yet it gives him dignity and purpose. The tone is both humorous and elegiac; Agnon's irony conceals deep reverence for the moral imagination of the simple believer. Beneath the comic surface lies the tragedy of a world losing its center. The shtetl that once lived by the rhythm of prayer and Torah is now weary, fragmented, and spiritually impoverished. Agnon captures this atmosphere of disintegration with tender melancholy:

"In our town of Buczacz, the old piety was dying,
like the candle that still flickers before it is extinguished,

and the people went about their lives as if faith were a dream,
fading with the dawn of reason" (*The Bridal Canopy* 47).

This image of the dying candle expresses what may be called cultural fragility, a world in which inherited symbols have lost their power to illuminate. The modern spirit has eroded the immediacy of faith, replacing shared belief with skepticism and irony. Yet, as Paul Ricoeur observed, meaning is not destroyed by such loss; it is reborn through interpretation. For Ricoeur, faith in the modern age passes "through the desert of criticism" to emerge as a "second naïveté," a new kind of understanding that affirms belief after doubt (*Freud and Philosophy* 28). Yudel embodies this second naïveté. He is not untouched by the world's brokenness; rather, he endures it with interpretive hope. His simplicity is the strength of one who sees meaning where others see only emptiness.

Throughout his journey, Yudel encounters a range of characters, including merchants, beggars, and scholars, each representing a facet of a society in decline. Their cynicism and disillusionment contrast with his unwavering trust in divine providence. When mocked for his belief, he responds with quiet conviction:

"If they call me fool, let them;

the fool who believes has more wisdom

than the wise who have forgotten how to pray" (*The Bridal Canopy* 139).

In these words, lies the essence of what this paper calls religious resistance, a faith that refuses to surrender meaning even when faith itself is ridiculed. Agnon's sympathy for Yudel is not sentimental; he portrays him as an existential figure who transforms suffering into moral insight. The narrative suggests that the endurance of faith is not the preservation of old forms but the reinterpretation of experience through hope.

Ricoeur's idea that "we tell stories because human lives need and deserve to be narrated" (*Oneself as Another* 75) offers an illuminating parallel. Yudel's life unfolds as a narrative of faith that gives coherence to his hardship. Each episode he encounters becomes part of a larger pattern, what Ricoeur calls "narrative identity," the unity of a self discovered through storytelling. Agnon's use of folklore and

biblical rhythm turns Yudel's wandering into a sacred story. His journey becomes an act of interpretation, through which a broken world continues to signify.

The novel's title, *The Bridal Canopy,* embodies this fragile but enduring faith. Traditionally a sign of joy and union, the canopy in Agnon's hands becomes a metaphor for belief suspended between heaven and earth. By the narrative's end, when Yudel's family finally raises the canopy, Agnon writes:

"And they lifted the canopy between heaven and earth,

a shelter for joy and a shade for sorrow,

where faith, like the thread of gold in torn garments,

still held the cloth together" (*The Bridal Canopy* 312).

This image reveals the intertwining of fragility and resistance. The canopy trembles yet stands; it shelters a community that has forgotten its wholeness. The golden thread of faith, though thin, keeps the fabric of culture from disintegrating entirely. Agnon here transforms weakness into strength, reminding readers that the endurance of a culture depends not on certainty but on interpretation, on the ability to see continuity in fragments.

The concept of cultural fragility in the novel refers not merely to historical decline but to a psychological and spiritual condition. It marks the loss of coherence in moral life and language. Yet Agnon does not lament this loss passively; he turns it into a creative challenge. Faith, for him, must become interpretive. It must read the world anew, as Yudel does, finding divine meaning in human imperfection. As Yudel reflects, "Even in a broken vessel there is light, if one knows how to look" (*The Bridal Canopy* 189). Ricoeur's notion that "faith begins where the immediate symbols are broken" (*The Symbolism of Evil* 8) resonates here: Agnon's characters inhabit a world where revelation is indirect, where the divine hides within irony and absurdity. Agnon writes, "The righteous man stumbles, yet the blessing clings to him" (*The Bridal Canopy* 203), suggesting that holiness survives in fragments. The task of the believer is to interpret rather than to see, to resist despair through imagination.

Agnon's style contributes to this hermeneutic vision. His blending of humor and holiness reflects what Ricoeur calls the "hermeneutic of suspicion and restoration." Irony, in Agnon, does not destroy faith; it purifies it. The reader is invited to doubt and believe at once, to perceive the sacred through laughter and loss. As Agnon writes, "The Holy One, blessed be He, loves a cheerful heart, even when it laughs through tears" (*The Bridal Canopy* 176). Yudel's foolishness exposes the wisdom of humility, the kind of insight that emerges only when pride and certainty collapse. When mocked by others, Yudel answers simply, "Better a fool in God's eyes than a wise man without Him" (*The Bridal Canopy* 212). Through such irony, Agnon enacts a theology of endurance: faith survives by embracing the paradox of being fragile yet unbroken.

Robert Alter observes that Agnon's prose "combines the realism of modern fiction with the moral interiority of midrash" (Alter 56). That combination, modern narrative form infused with traditional ethical consciousness, embodies the tension between cultural fragility and religious resistance. As the narrator reminds us, "Though the canopy is patched and worn, it still covers the bride and groom" (*The Bridal Canopy* 241), symbolizing the persistence of sanctity amid decay. The old world is gone, yet its moral vision continues to speak through literature. Yudel's journey thus becomes a collective allegory: the persistence of the Jewish spirit despite exile, secularization, and the fragmentation of faith.

Ricoeur's reflections on memory deepen this understanding. In *Memory, History, Forgetting*, he writes that "to remember is to keep faith with the past, but to interpret it is to make it live again" (Ricoeur 57). Agnon's narrative performs exactly this act of remembrance. His recreation of the Galician world is not nostalgic but interpretive; he restores its meaning by retelling it. As the narrator observes, **"**The world is old, but each day it is made new for those who remember" (*The Bridal Canopy* 142). Through narrative, what seemed lost becomes spiritually recoverable. Even in exile and poverty, Yudel reminds himself, "The Lord has not forsaken His world; the canopy still stands over Israel" (*The Bridal Canopy* 237). The story itself thus becomes a form of religious resistance, a canopy of words raised over the ruins of a culture.

Seen through this lens, Yudel's faith is not archaic but prophetic. It anticipates a modern understanding of belief as moral endurance. He lives as if

meaning still matters, even when no evidence remains. As Agnon writes, "Happy is the man who walks in his integrity, though he has naught but a crust of bread" (*The Bridal Canopy* 214). This is what Ricoeur would call a "hermeneutic of hope", a trust in the possibility of meaning despite historical disintegration. Agnon's hero thus embodies both the fragility of culture and the persistence of the sacred within it. His wandering affirms that interpretation, not possession, sustains the soul.

In the context of contemporary life, Agnon's vision retains profound relevance. Today's societies, fractured by secularism and materialism, experience their own forms of cultural fragility. The erosion of shared values and narratives has left individuals searching for coherence. Agnon's work offers a moral insight: that resistance lies not in withdrawal but in re-interpretation. Faith, reimagined as interpretive endurance, can transform disillusionment into understanding. In this sense, *The Bridal Canopy* speaks beyond its Jewish setting to the universal human struggle for meaning in times of uncertainty.

The novel ends not with triumph but with quiet affirmation. The canopy is raised; the ritual is completed. Yet the tone remains subdued, aware of the precariousness of the joy it depicts. The fragility of faith is acknowledged but not despised. In its trembling endurance lies its strength. Agnon's closing image of the canopy "between heaven and earth" captures what Ricoeur called the "fragility of meaning", a condition not of despair but of possibility. Faith exists not because certainty is possible, but because interpretation is endless.

In *The Bridal Canopy*, Agnon turns cultural fragility into the ground for renewal. The disintegration of communal life becomes the soil from which new faith grows, not the old faith of unexamined ritual, but a faith of reflection, irony, and moral courage. Yudel's resistance lies in his willingness to keep believing, to keep interpreting, to keep the divine alive in a disenchanted world.

To live, the novel suggests, is to interpret; to believe is to resist meaninglessness. Through the delicate balance of irony and reverence, Agnon teaches that fragility and endurance are inseparable. The canopy of faith may tremble, but it stands. Under its shade, a culture finds its voice again, and a fragmented world remembers how to hope.

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The Socio-Cultural and Educational Role of the Chumpo Ki in Traditional Lotha Society: An Eco-critical Reading

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Abstract

This research paper explores the Chumpo (or Chumpo Ki), the traditional youth dormitory of the Lotha Naga community, as a cornerstone of their socio-cultural and educational system. Seen as the Lotha equivalent of the Pan-Naga "Morung," the Chumpo was more than just a building; it served as the central institution for cultural transmission, social cohesion, and the development of male identity. The study highlights the importance of Chumpo Ki through an analysis of its sacred architecture, ritualized construction processes, and diverse functions. It emphasizes the meticulous, spiritually charged process of building a Chumpo, guided by the Village Priest (*Pvüti* in Lotha) and elders. Key aspects included the declaration of a holiday (*Emung* in Lotha), the ritual dismantling of the old structure, and the creation of ornate elements like the Main Front Pillar Post decorated with carved images of Mithun and Hornbill (*Hümtsen* in Lotha). The paper establishes that the Chumpo functioned as a comprehensive, informal academy where unmarried male youth, under the guidance of senior peers (*Chumporamo* in Lotha), were trained in warfare, craftsmanship, community law, folk arts, and their roles as village guardians. The study concludes that the Chumpo was the core driving force of traditional Lotha society, designed to cultivate capable individuals deeply connected to their community's collective spirit. By detailing its structure and functions, this paper underscores the Chumpo's role as the living heart of cultural continuity, whose legacy, though transformed, continues to shape contemporary Lotha identity.

Key Words: Youth Dormitory (*Chumpo Ki*), Village Priest (*Pvüti*), Holiday (*Emung*), Main Front Pillar Post (*Hümtsen*), Senior-most Youth (*Chumporamo*), Peculiar Practices differing from village to village (*Yanthi*)

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Introduction

The Lotha Nagas, a vibrant ethnic community, live in Wokha District of Nagaland in North East India, possessing a cultural and ethnic society defined by a rich traditional heritage. This heritage is not only preserved in their renowned warrior shawls and vibrant festivals like Tokhü Emung but is also deeply embedded in their oral traditions and social institutions. Their rich tapestry of **folktales** acts as a mirror to their culture, thus reflecting ancestral wisdom, moral codes, and the tribe's worldview. Through word of mouth, lineage history, and values through captivating narratives of heroes, spirits, and the natural world, they are passed down for posterity to cherish.

Central to the transmission of this heritage is ***Chumpo Ki***, the traditional youth dormitory. This institution served as the bedrock of Lotha society - a training ground where young men learned the arts of warfare, craftsmanship, community laws, dances, folksongs, and the very folktales that defined them. *Chumpo Ki* was more than a building; it was the living heart of cultural continuity, forging individual identity and unwavering communal bonds. Together, the timeless folktales and the formative experience of the *Chumpo* illuminate the essence of the Lotha Naga spirit. To keep to the cultural significance of the Lotha tribe, key words in Lotha terminologies will be used consistently throughout the paper.

Meaning of Chumpo.

Medolenuo Ambrocia writes, "The term *Morung* is commonly used in the literature to refer to the Nagas' Youth Dormitory, reflecting the ancient architectural style of the Naga tribes, and it is called differently by the various Naga tribes" (Ambrocia). Typical of many Naga Tribes, Lotha Nagas had youth dormitories in their own villages. Thunjamo Tsanglao stated that a small village would make a single youth dormitory, but if the village had many households and was divided into khels, each khel would make its own youth dormitory (eg, Pangti, Lakhuti, Longsa villages had more than one Chumpo Ki). The youth dormitories in Lotha are called "**Chumpo Ki,"** meaning bachelor's dormitory - houses for the abled-unmarried youth (Tsanglao 27 July). Tsentsu Yanthan stated that no one ever dared to encroach on the demarcated land, meant for *Chumpo Ki*, as it would be a bad omen for him or his family and could bring bad reputation for the individual as well as for the family lineage (Yanthan, 19 July). Chumpo Ki became a place for learning and training. They were places of recreation, social gathering, and various social

activities, the lifeline of communication in the village, a place of personal and social enrichment.

The Making of Chumpo Ki

Rituals, seeking blessings, and divine interventions were always sought before the beginning of any major events in the village. In this regard, the Village Priest played an important role in the village life and the society of the people. Ngheo Ezung recalls what he saw as a youth in Chumpo Ki and how the Village Priest would initiate on the day of making new Chumpo Ki by saying a prayer:

Bless us, today's Chumpo Ki is made for the Village Youth

May the youth flourish like the spiderlings.

May they grow and flourish like the crabs.

May the village be graced with a good destiny

with no evil and enemies may endanger us. (N. Ezung, 27 July)

Social Observances in the Construction of Chumpo Ki.

When a new village was set up, the site for building *Chumpo Ki* was chosen by the Village Priest and village elders. In some cases, this is because of certain peculiar practices, (*Yanthi* in Lotha) they would observe and interpret dreams and omens for site selection. Due to the topography and climatic variation in Wokha District, Ngheo Ezung further stated that there were no particular fixed years for rebuilding *Chumpo Ki* because of the climatic conditions, which varied from Range to Range. No renovations or any sort of repairs of the old *Chumpo Ki* were made – when the need arose, the old *Chumpo Ki* was dismantled and a new one was built on the same location (N. Ezung). L. Longshio Humtsoe and Ntsemo Shitiri stated that materials from the old dismantled *Chumpo Ki* were used by those youths who resided in *Chumpo Ki*. No other villagers could use them as they would bring dishonour and bad luck. Certain ceremonies were kept or observed while rebuilding the Chumpo. The Lothas weren't used to the modern monthly calendar, but counted the days of the week. Therefore, after consultation with the village elders, the *Pvüti* would announce that the construction of the new *Chumpo Ki* would take place on such a day, which would normally be within the week. Once the announcement is

made, village youth who stay in *Chumpo Ki* would announce it in the village. From then on, preparations would begin for the construction (L. Humtsoe; Shitiri, 13 Sept.).

Architectural Features of the *Chumpo Ki*.

Chumpo Ki was a large, rectangular structure, built using locally sourced materials such as: Timber (from species like Alnus nepalensis and Mesua ferrea), Bamboo, Thatch (Poaceous/Graminoid – *Lishü* in Lotha) or palm leaves (*Oko* in Lotha) for roofing, cane and rattan for binding. Ntsemo Shitiri, Longshio Humtsoe, Tsentsü Yanthan, and Ngheo Ezung stated that *Chumpo Ki* was constructed with the best available materials to last for a number of years. *Chumpo Ki* was supported by massive wooden stilts (Hümtsen - main pillar post), signifying strength and stability. *Hümtsen* was often decorated with carved motifs: mithun (Indian Bison – bos fontalis) – and the Great Indian Hornbill (Buceros bicornis), indicating wealth, prosperity and fertility (Shitiri, 13 Sept.; L. Humtsoe; T. Yanthan, 9 Sept.; Ezung, 27 July). Rukhow Kikon corroborated the statements made by Ngheo Ezung, Ntsemo Shitiri, Tsentsu Yanthan, and L. Longshio Humtsoe that there was no written documentation and blueprint designs, but *Chumpo Ki* was minutely planned. The best builders in terms of house constructions were employed who meticulously saw to the length and breadth, height and width, and construction material for the building – the length and breadth depended on the landscape, thus varying from village to village. The interior was functionally austere, featuring a central passage for a hearth and bamboo sleeping platforms. Externally, rough-hewn plank walls served as a defensive measure against spear attacks (R. Kikon).

The *Chumpo*, as a traditional institution among the Lotha Nagas, embodies both social organization and ritual symbolism. Its reconstruction is not merely an act of physical renewal but a communal and sacred event reflecting the village's spiritual unity and cultural order. The construction process was a sacred undertaking, governed by strict ritual and social protocols. J.P. Mills notes that the Village Priest's announcement of a new Chumpo initiated an *Emung*, a five-day period of ritual seclusion that suspended all village labour and travel. The dismantling process begins ceremonially, with the Priest removing a piece of thatch from the roof to symbolize the rite's commencement, followed by his attendant, the *Yenga*, who displaces the *Oha* (fertility stone) from the base of the *Hümtsen*. The structure is

methodically taken apart, and the roof sections cut in two lengthways are rearranged to provide a temporary shelter for the *Chumpo* youths for that night. The site is then ritually cleansed and levelled in preparation for rebuilding (Mills 26–27). This cyclical process of demolition and renewal reinforces communal cooperation, ritual discipline, and the transmission of traditional knowledge across generations, underscoring the *Chumpo*'s enduring role in sustaining Lotha cultural identity.

Thungjamo Tsanglao and Tsentsü Yanthan affirmed that the materials used for the construction were taken from the village reserved forest, and if any other materials were further required, they would be taken from any individual or clan forest. The best Trees, bamboos, binding-ropes, rattan, etc., required for the construction were collected by the youth under the elder's supervisions (Tsanglao; T. Yanthan, 9 Sept.). Tsentsü Yanthan and Ngheo Ezung and further L. Longshio Humtsoe, Ntsemo Shitiri and Rukhow Kikon stated that this labour was exclusively male; the participation of women was a cultural taboo and only able-bodied men and unmarried youth were permitted on the construction site (T. Yanthan, 9 Sept.; Ezung, 27 July; Humtsoe; Shitiri, 13 Sept.; R. Kikon). This collective, ritualized effort transformed the physical act of building into a profound reinforcement of communal identity and cultural continuity.

Hümtsen – Main Pillar Post

The selection and preparation of the *Hümtsen* (main pillar post) was a ritualized process guided by principles of sustainability and sacred reciprocity. Village elders meticulously searched for a single, perfect tree - straight and devoid of defects - with a prohibition against any "wanton destruction of forests" (N. Ezung, 27 July; L. Humtsoe; Shitiri, 13 Sept.; R. Kikon). If not found in communal reserves, they could source it from clan or individual forests with permission, but no payment was made, providing the timber was considered a prestige item (L. Humtsoe). The felling was consecrated by a ritual where a senior youth broke an egg on the trunk to invoke divine blessings. The community collectively fed the workers, and the village's best carver ornamented the pillar with mithun and hornbill motifs. Its transport to the site was a celebratory, all-male procession, with participants supplying their own food and rice-beer (Ezung, 27 July; L. Humtsoe; Shitiri, 13 Sept.; Kikon).

The protocol for sourcing the tree establishes a land ethic where communal need supersedes individual property rights. L. Humtsoe stated that if the tree is not found in the communal reserve, elders can seek it in "any individual or clan-owned forest." Crucially, while permission is required, "no payments in any form were made for it." Instead, providing the tree was considered "a prestige."(L. Humtsoe) This system fosters a model of shared stewardship. This intricate practice exemplifies a sophisticated land ethic, aligning with ecocritical principles that posit "human culture is connected to the physical world" (Glotfelty xviii). The careful selection and ritual sacrifice of the tree reframes resource extraction as a sacred exchange, moving from a transaction to a gesture of reciprocity, a concept Greg Garrard explores in his discussion of ecological sacrifice (131-132). The communal sourcing and labour further embody an ecocentric worldview, illustrating what Glen Love describes as a shift from human dominance to recognizing humanity as part of a larger ecological community (18). The egg acts as a symbolic offering, a gesture of reciprocity that acknowledges the tree's intrinsic value beyond its utility. This ritual ensures the taking is done with gratitude and respect, thereby maintaining a cosmic and ecological balance, a concept central to many indigenous land ethics that ecocriticism seeks to elevate. Ultimately, this tradition functions as a lived expression of Aldo Leopold's "land ethic," where actions are right when they "preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community" (qtd. in Garrard 72).

Hümtsen is not merely a building method but a profound expression of a lived land ethic. It integrates sustainable resource management, communal ownership, ritualized reciprocity and collective labour, providing a practical example of the very ecocentric and community-oriented values that Love, Garrard and the foundational texts of ecocriticism argue are essential for a sustainable future. Ngheo further stated that another feature of *Chumpo Ki* was the *Songkong* (log-drum) selected and crafted like *Hümtsen* by the best wood carver. Whatever was chiselled out was measured in Bamboo basket (*dekho* in Lotha) and paddy or rice in equal measure was given to him. While its specific location and prevalence were uncertain, its primary documented function was as a village alarm for dangers like enemy attacks or fires (Ezung, 27 Sept.).

Inauguration of Chumpo Ki

Completion of *Chumpo Ki* was an important occasion for the Khel and the village at large. The day of the inauguration (*Müvchuk* in Lotha) or dedication was auspicious. The inauguration ritual of the Chumpo Ki involved a complex ceremony. According to J.P. Mills's ethnography of the Lotha community, the day's events began with the killing of a dog tied at the Village Priest's house. The most renowned warrior was given the honour of cleaving the dog's head in two with a single Dao strike. Following this, "the young boys of Chumpo Ki would dance round and round chanting, he has killed it, he has killed it." The head was then brought to the dormitory to be inspected; a crooked cut would cause the warrior to be "laughed at as a boaster and a wind-bag," after which an elder disposed of the head. The day concluded with a symbolic evening event, as "a mock fight takes place – women pretend to go in and the youth block them – by doing so they believed that fertility in women increases" (Mills 28).

Nchumbemo Yanthan recalled how in the olden days, the forefathers chanted 'O yanthan shari, O mmhayile, O he, O he' (O, all you villagers gathered dance for joy, O bless us). Youth and married men - but absolutely no women - would dress in traditional dress and from different colonies within the Khel or village will chant, yodel and come to the newly constructed Chumpo Ki (N. Yanthan, 10 Oct.). Ntsemo Shitiri recalls how the elders on the day of the dedication would chant, yodel, sing folksongs and dance. Groups of youth and elders, in traditional dress, would come from different parts of the khel or village singing "O woro rosa, roncholona njübeni phe eshong Nrenro na kyatala…aye…. aye…. hey" (The building is made so beautiful, that it would cause spinsters to fall, making children and the women folk cry like the small birds chirping in unison – Free style translation by Ntonse John Lotha). The day would end with a common meal for the youth and men, and the unmarried youth would then begin sleeping in the newly constructed *Chumpo Ki* (Shitiri, 13 Sept.).

Chumpo Instructors.

Traditional Lotha Naga society was characterized by a distinct division of authority, separating the sacred, embodied by the Village Priest who oversaw all religious and ritual observances, from the secular, which was vested in a council of elders. This council (Satarontai in Lotha), comprised of the merit-based ranks of

the *Tongti* (village elders), *Ekhyo Ekyung* (validated through Feasts of Merit) and *Ekyung* (celebrated warriors), served as the paramount civil authority. Its critical functions included governing the village or its constituent *khels* as custodians of customary law, consulting the Village Priest on major initiatives, appointing his successor and supervising the *Chumpo* youth organization to facilitate intergenerational knowledge transfer. Their immense and unquestioned authority was not hereditary but derived from achieved status and communal respect, firmly establishing this council as the bedrock of Lotha Naga socio-political organization. To ensure the training of the future of the village, the Village elders made sure that the youth were properly instructed and trained. They appointed *Chumporamo* and *Chumpoeran* for the future of the khel or village depended on the youth (Khopenthung Ezung 3 Nov; T. Yanthan 9 Sept; N. Yanthan 3 Nov; N. Ezung 27 July).

Tsentsü Yanthan, Thungjamo Tsanglao, Ntsemo Shitiri, L. Longshio Humtsoe, and Ngheo Ezung stated that there was no board of directors or management to see to the overall training of the youth. However, a person was entrusted to teach, train, and instruct the youth. He was called "*Chumporamo* (in Lotha)" - the eldest and most capable among the youth in the dormitory – who had been instructed by his elders and had lived in the dormitory longer than others. He was well-versed in dances, games, expert in the use of weapons, etc. He was respected by the youth in the dormitory and held in high esteem by the village elders to be entrusted with the responsibility as instructor of Chumpo. He maintained discipline and order in *Chumpo Ki* – there were occasions when everyone was asleep, taking ashes from the hearth spread at the entrance of the door to catch any culprit misbehaving or escaping without permission. In some villages or khels, there was more than one instructor, who was called *Chumpoeran*. Some of these *Chumpoeran* were younger than others but were more capable than even some of their elders in *Chumpo Ki*. They were selected to teach the others based on their capabilities and experience. Apart from them, sometimes Village or Khel elders would visit them and impart knowledge in the form of certain dance steps for festivals, folk songs, folk stories, stories of the village, etc. (T. Yanthan, 19 July; Tsanglao; Shitiri, 3 Aug.; Humtsoe; Ezung, 27 July).

The socio-political order of traditional Lotha society rested on a symbiotic relationship between the secular authority of the *Satarontai* (council of elders) and

the pedagogical institution of the *Chumpo*. The elders, as custodians of customary law and moral order, exercised indirect but decisive influence over the youth by appointing and legitimizing the *Chumporamo* and *Chumpoeran* - instructors chosen for merit and capability. This system reflected a refined governance model wherein authority and instruction were distributed yet interdependent: the elders preserved ideological and legal continuity, while the *Chumpo* functioned as a dynamic site for cultural transmission, discipline, and leadership formation. Through this interplay of guidance and practice, the Lotha community sustained its moral cohesion and ensured the renewal of its intellectual and civic traditions across generations.

Importance and Purpose of Chumpo.

The Chumpo Ki was the foundational institution of traditional Lotha society, serving as what Mmhonlumo Kikon describes as the "first and the biggest institution in the olden days" (M. Kikon). Its primary function was the holistic preparation of unmarried male youth for their roles as community members and defenders. As the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, notes, this system served a dual purpose: "(i) Preparation for a disciplined life with values and traditional skills… and (ii) training of young men for village defence" (Ministry of Culture). Participation was compulsory for all able-bodied young men from the time they could wear a Dao until marriage, with exemptions made only for those caring for ailing widowed mothers (Mills 24; Tsanglao). The dormitory was the operational hub for village security, where "raids were planned and discussed" (Mills 24), and it also functioned as a communication center, especially during festivals like Tokhü Emung (Tsanglao).

As a comprehensive, non-formal academy, the Chumpo Ki provided a complete education. Under the guidance of elders and senior peers, youth were trained in warfare, craftsmanship, community law, and the performance of traditional dances, music, folktales, and etiquette (Ezung, 27 July; Shitiri, 3 Aug.). This formative space was, however, exclusively male; access was "strictly prohibited for women and girls" as well as differently-abled men, reinforcing its role in forging a specific male identity (Ezung, 27 July; Shitiri, 3 Aug.).

Contemporary Relevance: *Chumpo Ki* in a Transformed Social Landscape

The contemporary significance of the Lotha Chumpo is defined by its transition from a central, functional institution to a potent symbol of cultural identity, a shift precipitated by the profound impact of modern education and Christianity. Historically, the Chumpo was the "first and the biggest institution" (M. Kikon, 2021), a compulsory and holistic training ground that served as the "lifeline of communication" and the crucible for forging Lotha identity through the transmission of warfare, crafts, oral history, and communal values. With the introduction of state-run schools, the traditional dormitory's role as a local educational centre gradually diminished, its oral training systems giving way to formal curricula (Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India). Consequently, the Chumpo's function has been largely relegated from a compulsory training centre to a site of symbolic preservation.

Simultaneously, Christianity has prompted a fundamental re-evaluation of the Chumpo's social and spiritual foundations. The intricate animist rituals that governed its construction, site selection, and inauguration - overseen by the *Pvüti*, which involved specific invocations and omens – contradict Christian doctrines. Furthermore, the institution's rigid social structures, particularly the absolute exclusion of women and the differently-abled, now exist in tension with the egalitarian principles often emphasized by modern Christian and secular ethics.

In conclusion, the modern revival of the Chumpo, as evidenced by its symbolic inauguration in Wokha (2021), represents not a return to its functional past but a conscious effort to reclaim cultural identity amidst homogenizing forces. While Chumpo, as a living institution, was dismantled by the pressures of modernity and new belief systems, it endures as a crucial cultural archetype. Its story is one of adaptation, not mere extinction. Its contemporary relevance lies in its power as a heritage symbol - a curated repository of "Lotha spirit" that affirms "our culture is our identity" (M. Kikon, 2021). It now serves less as a practical "first line of defense" and more as a monument to a distinct heritage, navigating its place within a social life now predominantly structured by the frameworks of formal education and Christian faith. The challenge and opportunity for the Lotha community lie in integrating the core values of the Chumpo - its communal spirit and rich oral heritage - into modern frameworks, ensuring that the essence of this "first and biggest institution" continues to inform Lotha identity in a rapidly changing world.

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A Thematic Study of Language and Gender Dynamics in Preeti Shenoy's *Life Is What You Make It*

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Abstract

This paper explores the reciprocity of language and gender dynamics in Preeti Shenoy's novel Life Is What You Make It, with particular heed to how linguistic and narrative choices expose the intersections of patriarchy, mental health, and identity in contemporary Indian society. The novel centers on the protagonist, Ankita Sharma, a skilled and ambitious young woman whose life is shaped by both her inner psychological struggles and the external pressures of a gendered social system. Through a first-person narrative, Shenoy grants Ankita a self-examining voice that challenges traditional silencing of women's experiences. The study scrutinizes how the novel's language reflects power relations—male characters often employ decisive, rational tones, while female voices are pictured as emotional or subdued, thereby mirroring societal hierarchies. However, Shenoy overturns this binary by allowing Ankita's language to progress from confusion and submission to clarity and empowerment. The representation of mental illness becomes a metaphor for women's protest against patriarchal confinement and the blemish attached to emotional expression. Ultimately, the paper argues that life is what you make It. It reframes the female bildungsroman in Indian English fiction by portraying self-reflection as an act of liberation, where language becomes both the medium of subjugation and the instrument of rejuvenation.

Keywords: women's identity, feminism, patriarchy, language and gender, Preeti Shenoy.

Preeti Shenoy's Life Is What You Make It (2011) examines the psychological and emotional landscape of a young woman caught between her personal ambitions and the expectations forced by society. The centered centeredred on Ankita Sharma, reveals how language reflects and shapes gendered identity in a patriarchal world. Shenoy's language is personal, admissive, and deeply introspective—turning the novel into a linguistic exploration of the feminine self. The story unfolds through Ankita's first-person voice, making the reader a participant in her emotional struggles and achievements. Through her use of attainable yet powerful prose, Shenoy portrays how women employ language as both a shield and a weapon in haggling their place in society.

Ankita's voice becomes the central instrument through which gendered power relations are both revealed and withstood. Her words reflect the double consciousness of women who live under societal scrutiny and harbor a silent rebellion within. When she writes, "My life had seemed so perfect, so full of promise, but everything changed so fast" (Shenoy, 34), the emotional clarity captures the evolution from illusion to awareness. Shenoy's intentional simplicity of diction reveals the depth of Ankita's internalized gender conditioning—her fear of being judged, her need to please, and her longing for liberty. This narrative tone demonstrates how gender shapes linguistic choices, with women often forced to balance hostility with socially acceptable politeness.

Gendered communication in the novel is versatile. Ankita's interaction with her family and male parallels highlights how speech acts differ according to context. When she speaks to her parents or professors, her language conforms to cultural expectations of conformity and modesty. In contrast, her exchanges with Vaibhav and Abhishek are more expressive and emotionally vulnerable, demonstrating linguistic volatility that reflects changing gender dynamics. This shift suggests that a woman's way of speaking shifts to fit social expectations, often masking the more genuine voice she wishes to express. Shenoy subtly exposes this tension, presenting language as both a position of repression and resistance.

The narrative's treatment of mental illness further prioritizes the link between language and gender. Ankita's struggle with bipolar disorder symbolizes the broader social repression of women's emotions. Her condition, often

misinterpreted as weakness, becomes a metaphor for the silenced feminine psyche. Shenoy's use of inner monologue enables Ankita to reclaim her voice from societal stigma. When she declares, "I am not what happened to me. I am what I choose to become" (Shenoy 178); her words surpass pain and evolve into affirmation. The language of self-definition replaces silence with articulation, allowing Ankita to reconstruct her identity on her own terms. Here, Shenoy's novel meshes with feminist linguistic theory, particularly Hélène Cixous's écriture féminine, which emphasizes women's writing as an act of reclaiming selfhood.

Shenoy's linguistic style reflects the emotional texture of modern Indian English—unassuming, intimate, and deeply human. Her female characters correspond in a tone that mirrors the lived reality of Indian women balancing tradition and sovereignty. Through carefully chosen words and tacit silences, Shenoy exposes the micro-level gender politics entrenched in everyday speech. The act of writing letters, journaling, and conversing becomes representative of reposing space in a world that often denies women a voice. In transforming personal pain into written expression, Ankita turns language into empowerment, transmuting suffering into strength.

Language in Life Is What You Make It is also revolutionary in its relationship to identity. The novel's linguistic rhythm mirrors the stages of Ankita's evolution from an acquiescent daughter to a self-aware woman. Each phase of her life is marked by a change in tone, vocabulary, and narrative control. Initially, her language is hesitant and compliant, mirroring the gendered conditioning of a conventional society. As she gains psychological clarity, her voice becomes self-assured and reflective, signalling liberation through linguistic self-assertion. This evolution underscores Judith Butler's idea that gender is demonstrative and constructed through repeated linguistic acts. Ankita's speech patterns and written expressions take apart the binary boundaries of femininity, demonstrating how self-articulation revamps gender identity.

Ultimately, Life Is What You Make It epitomizes how language becomes the space where gender, selfhood, and social authority interact and negotiate with one another. Shenoy's portrayal of Ankita's journey is both linguistic and existential—her words become acts of insolence against patriarchal structures that seek to silence her. The novel's simplicity of expression, emotional resonance, and

introspective tone collectively contribute to a feminist reinventing of communication. Shenoy reveals that language is not neutral; it is a reflection of cultural taming and an instrument for revolution. By giving Ankita the agency to recite her own story, Shenoy allows her to contravene linguistic and gendered boundaries, affirming that speech, when authentically feminine, can soothe, liberate, and redefine existence.

In conclusion, Shenoy's Life Is What You Make It stands as a notable contribution to feminist literary discourse in India. Through her subtle use of language, she encapsulates the complexities of womanhood in a society still bound by patriarchal expectations. Language, as Shenoy presents it, is not merely communicative but innovatory; it is the foundation upon which a woman builds her identity and asserts her compassion. The novel thus exceeds personal narrative, becoming a broader commentary on how women, through language transform enforced quiet into expression and social constraint into self-determination.

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Jawaharlal Nehru's Ecological Lament: Ecocide in *Glimpses of World History*

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Abstract

The concept of ecocide gained prominence in India following the country's experience of ecological impact resulting from industrialization, modernization, and globalization. Ecocide refers to the mass destruction of the natural environment and damage to the ecosystem. In the Indian context, the results of colonialization and early modern progression paved the way for environmental disturbances and ecological decay. Against this backdrop, although Jawaharlal Nehru's *Glimpses of World History*, which was written between 1930 and 1933, presents a wide overview of human civilizations, it also presents how the natural environment and ecology were ignored by empires, industrialization, and modern life. Through his writing, he also implicitly and explicitly discusses human-nature relationships, environmental and ecological destruction, and the exploitation of natural resources and ecosystems. In his reflections on civilization, imperialism, and scientific technology, he exhibits how the pursuit of power and progression often results in environmental destruction – what can be described as ecocide today. This paper aims to exhibit how ecocide is described in *Glimpses of World History*. This study also aims to understand Nehru's view of nature and ecology and how his historical writing connects to present-day ecological concerns.

Keywords: Biodiversity Loss, Ecological Imbalance, Environmental Crisis, Nature, Pollution.

The concept of ecocide gained prominence in India following the country's experience of ecological impact resulting from industrialization, modernization, and globalization. Ecocide refers to the mass destruction of the natural environment and damage to the ecosystem. This term was coined by Professor Arthur W. Galston in

1970 to explain the effects of the usage of Agent Orange by the United States of America in Vietnam during the Vietnam War, and he recognized the act of ecocide as an international crime against nature (O'Brine, 2021). Ecocide is the amalgamation of two words – 'ecology' and 'suicide'. Although this term emerged in the 1970s, contemporary academicians employ this term to interpret earlier times that experienced ecological destruction as a result of colonial expansion, industrialization, and environmental transformation. In the Indian context, the results of colonialization and early modern progression paved the way for environmental disturbances and ecological decay. Against this backdrop, although Jawaharlal Nehru's *Glimpses of World History*, which was written between 1930 and 1933, presents a wide overview of human civilizations, it also presents how the natural environment and ecology were ignored by empires, industrialization, and modern life (Nehru, 2004, p. v).

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) was an anti-colonial leader of the Indian independence movement, a statesman, and the first Prime Minister of India. He is one of the renowned writers of the twentieth century, and his books are hailed as modern classics (Carvalho, 2024). Of several books Nehru wrote, his *Glimpses of World History* remains a remarkable achievement in Indian English Literature. This book includes his 196 letters written by Nehru and to his daughter, Indira Gandhi, when he was imprisoned in various prisons in India from 26 October 1930 to 09 August 1933; later, the letters were collected and published as a book in 1934 (Jha, 1990, p. 172). These letters, written during the early stages of India's industrialization, explore the underlying causes of environmental disasters, such as industrialization itself, war, climate change, commercial agriculture, and man-made famines (Keerthy, 2019, p. 200). Although Nehru discusses the history of civilizations and political situations in his letters, he also implicitly and explicitly discusses human-nature relationships, environmental and ecological destruction, and the exploitation of natural resources and ecosystems in his letters.

Despite many ecological inquiries having been carried out on Indian English literature, only a few studies have addressed *Glimpses of World History* from an ecocritical perspective. This paper aims to exhibit how ecocide is described in *Glimpses of World History*. This study also aims to understand Nehru's view of nature and ecology and how his historical writing connects to present-day ecological concerns. The objectives of this paper are as follows: to study the

historical events in this book that showcase how humans misuse natural resources and disturb ecological balance, to understand how these instances can be linked to the concept of ecocide, to explore Nehru's attitude towards nature and development, and to highlight how this book can help the present generation to understand the roots of ecological issues in history.

This study employs a qualitative analysis to explore ecocide in Jawaharlal Nehru's *Glimpses of World History*. This book serves as the primary text, and the theory of ecocriticism is applied to examine the portrayal of environmental degradation, the human-nature relationship, and the effects of industrialization and modernization. Additionally, secondary sources like books, journal papers, scholarly articles, academic essays, and reviews on Nehru were employed to interpret data from the primary source.

Ecocriticism is the study of literature and environment from a multidisciplinary perspective, where all sciences unite together to assess the environment and devise possible solutions for the rectification of contemporary environmental issues (Keerthy & Sam, 2017, p. 157). In simple terms, it is the study of the association between the literature and physical environment (Bracke, 2014, p. 426). In 1978, William Rueckert coined the term 'ecocriticism' in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" to describe the relationship between literature and ecology (Glotfelty, p. xxviii). Various ecocritical tropes represent this relationship, which are used by the ecocritics to evaluate ecocritical texts (Garrard, 2011, p. 2). Ecocide is one of the ecocritical tropes that is used to evaluate the severe damage caused by human activities to nature, environment, and ecology, which endangers biodiversity, disturbs ecological balance, stimulates climate change, exploits natural resources, and disrupts millions of human and non-human life forms (Singh & Tomar, 2025, p. 128). This paper employs the theory of ecocriticism to understand how Nehru discusses the human-nature relationship and the impact of human activities on nature that results in ecocide.

The analysis of Nehru's *Glimpses of World History* unveils his reflections on civilization, science, industry, modern economy, nature, environment, and early signs of environmental crisis. His letters to his daughter expose how human progression without any check on nature led to ecocide, that is, the destruction of

biodiversity and natural ecosystems. Through historical instances in his letters, Nehru links social, economic, and political developments with their impact on nature. His writing exhibits his admiration for scientific advancement as well as his concern for its misuse against the natural environment. The findings of this paper emphasize how his historical vision carries deep ecological consciousness, which remains relevant to modern environmental debates.

War has always been an ecological disaster and has led to a devastating impact on the environment (O'Neill, 2025). Nehru mentions that war achieves nothing of value. He also presents the devastations of various wars throughout history in countries, such as India, Greece, China, Knossos, Egypt, and so on, in one of his letters. He explains that because of these invasions, the natural resources and ecological riches of these nations were looted and ruined. Furthermore, Nehru indicates the destructive colonial power. For centuries, Europeans have justified environmental destruction and natural resources depletion under the pretext of advancing civilization, and they "grab everything they can get from the countries of Asia" (Nehru, 2003, p. 9). Additionally, Nehru comments on humans who indulge in war as savages and relentless, and he writes, "What would a stranger to this world of ours say if he were to visit us during war-time?... and come to the conclusion that we were cruel and relentless… with one master-passion – to kill and destroy each other." (Nehru, 2003, p. 249)

Global warming is extremely transforming the world, resulting in unprecedented and drastic climate changes. Global warming results in ecocide in contemporary times since it radically destructs ecological systems and habitats due to everyday human activities (White, 2018, p. 19). Global warming is a gradual and long-term increase in Earth's average temperature due to the abundant release of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, methane, and so on, to the atmosphere emerging from diverse human activities like burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, mining, and improper waste-disposal of non-biodegradable products, that trap the heat that would normally escape the earth (Blok, 2025). In one of the letters, Nehru discusses climate change in Central Asia. In the past, Central Asia was once fertile and rich in biodiversity. However, its climate became progressively drier over the centuries, resulting in desertification of the region and decline of its native life forms. This historical example exhibits the profound environmental and ecological impact of global warming and climate change, and he writes,

> Long ago, … the river Tarin, which flows into the Lop-Nor changed its course, and the desert sands quickly came and covered its old deserted course. The old city of Loulan that stood there was cut off from the outside world and its inhabitants left to its ruin… To-day it is almost a deserted area, with few towns and a sparse population. Probably there was much more water there at that time, and so it could support a big population. As the climate became drier and water less abundant, the population lessened and dwindled away. (Nehru, 2003, p. 226)

Furthermore, Nehru laments that the old world has been "destroyed by the hand of man" and mourns that humans have exploited and damaged the natural world for their selfish interests and advantages, who laid their heavy hands on it and "gradually made the climate drier and less habitable" (Nehru, 2003, p. 248) Commercial crop agriculture and large-scale grain agriculture are among the primary causes of global ecocide (Smaje, 2020). Commercial farming is a major threat to the natural environment since it leads to deforestation, habitat loss, soil degradation and erosion, and pollution because of the usage of artificial fertilizers, pesticides, and weedicides (Edet, 2025). Nehru explains that during the colonial rule, India faced aggressive change because of industrialization, replacing traditional subsistence farming and small-scale, cottage industries, since the farmers were forced by the East India Company to cultivate commercial or cash crops, such as sugar, cotton, rubber, indigo, and so on, by employing modern technology and artificial fertilizers to get an increased yield. Nehru calls this "British exploitation of India" (Nehru, 2003, p. 429).

Famines are the result of ecocide and human mismanagement of nature and the environment (Sourabh & Myllyntaus, 2015). In one of his letters, Nehru mentions the four catastrophic famines of India that happened in 1861, 1876, 1896, and 1900 – all are "terrible famines in Indian history" resulted because of the British's plundering of Indian natural resources (Nehru, 2003, p. 427). Here, Nehru quotes the words of Florence Nightingale about the Eastern Empire of the British, especially India: "The saddest sight to be seen in the East – nay, probably in the world – is the present of our Eastern Empire… the consequences of our law… producing in the most fertile country in the world, a grinding, chronic semi-starvation in many places where what is called famine does not exist." (Nehru, 2003, p. 428) The misuse of modern technology and its incorrect application and

implementation lead to environmental degradation and ecocide, which is a curse to nature (Ahuja, 2022). Similarly, Nehru points out the same that man misuses modern technology and machinery. He writes, "The fault lies with the person misusing the tool. In the same way modern machinery, good in itself, has been and is being misused in many ways. Instead of bringing happiness and comfort to millions… it has brought misery to many… But the fault lies not in machinery, but in the misuse of it." (Nehru, 2003, pp. 108-109)

Nehru stresses that Nehru also compares the contemporary world with environmental ruins as "the present age of evil, the Kali Yuga" (Nehru, 2003, 525). He also points out Darwin's theory, which describes how people believe in the idea of progress and growth towards perfection and becoming better day by day. Nehru relates this concept to the Industrial Revolution, which made people believe that human progress would certainly lead only to perfection and betterment. This belief created an anthropocentric mindset in humans that they believe they are above nature and can control it or use it as they wish. Such thinking boosted large-scale industrialization, pollution, deforestation, natural resources exploitation, misuse of technology, and ecological imbalance, resulting in the destruction of ecosystems – what is now called ecocide (Nixon, 2011, p. 13). Thus, Nehru's letters illustrate early awareness and consciousness that the notion of limitless progression can also yield harm to the planet. Furthermore, he also hopes for a future where there should be no question of "any country exploiting another" (Nehru, 2003, p. 246) since one country's greed can destroy and exploit the natural environment and ecosystem, leading to ecocide.

This paper exhibits that Jawaharlal Nehru's *Glimpses of World History* consists of early ideas that link human progression, industrial expansion, and the exploitation of nature. In his reflections on civilization, imperialism, and scientific technology, he exhibits how the pursuit of power and progression often results in environmental destruction – what can be described as ecocide today. Nehru's work exhibits his great foresight by addressing environmental issues that have since become critical in our contemporary time. It also reveals how past human greed and uncontrolled progress led to the environmental problems of the twenty-first century that we face today. Through his critical insights illustrated in his letters, Nehru suggests that true progress should include respect for all living and non-living constituents on the earth with an ecocentric point of view. The limitation of this

study is that it focuses only on the ecocritical trope of ecocide in Nehru's *Glimpses of World History*. Future research can explore Nehru's other works to identify and analyze ecocide and understand how his environmental thought developed over time.

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Code-Switching as Social Capital: Language, Power, and Identity in Urban Indian Youth Literature

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Abstract

This article examines the code-switching deployment, in particular the Hinglish which is the hybrid of Hindi-English, in present Indian Young Adult literature. Going beyond the idea of multilingual dialogues as a mirroring reflection of urban Indian speech patterns, this study contends that writers like Chetan Bhagat and Anuja Chauhan use code-switching as a sophisticated literary device to convey the accumulation and performance of social capital. Analyzing Pierre Bourdieu's linguistic capital theory and postcolonial linguistic resistance theories, the analysis suggests that the young protagonists and their linguistic choices are enacted within a complicated, postcolonial "linguistic market." In this economy, proficiency in and manipulation of several linguistic registers right from standard English to Hinglish which is colloquial become crucial skills for navigating social hierarchies. Through the comparative textual analysis of important works, this article distinguishes between two primary functions of code-switching: as a tool for capital sought by aspirational youth who uses it to overcome linguistic anxiety and bridge cultural divides, and as a marker of capital owned by elites of urban who use clever, fluid Hinglish to solidify the identity of being in-group. In conclusion, the article states that code-switching in this genre serves both as a form of linguistic resistance against the colonial English's hegemonic legacy, while also serving as a critical tool for creating and negotiating hybrid, contemporary Indian identities. This literary

phenomenon not only reflects the realities of sociolinguism of the urban side of India but also participates in contributing in shaping and developing the evolving vernacular of its youth.

Keywords: Code-Switching, Linguistic Capital, Postcolonial Identity, Hinglish, Indian Youth Literature, Sociolinguistics, Hybridity

Metropolitan India is an environment of multiple languages coexisting due to years and years of trade, cross-cultural social inclusiveness and trade. This has led to the emergence of Hinglish, a combination of Hindi and English language as a result of hybridisation and constant use of code-switching. In urban and semi-urban parts this is increasingly the informal communication mode. It was before unaccepted by language experts but now sociologists have agreed this as a by-product of multilingualism also as a symbol of social identity.

Now looking at this from the point of view of written literature, this influence is reflected in Indian Young Adult (YA) literature too. Especially authors like Chetan Bhagat and Anuja Chauhan's writings retain originality and authenticity by using the words and terms that reflect the essence of the so-called urban youth. The dialogues between the characters are written in a similar style of real life conversations as a mix of English and Hindi. Though it may sound like an imitation when studied from literary and social sense this is deep. However, to view this linguistic representation as merely mimetic is to overlook its deeper literary and social function. These authors are not simply transcribing a dialect; they are strategically deploying it as a sophisticated device to explore the intricate relationships between language, power, and identity formation in modern India. The transition from spoken word to written text elevates code-switching from a communicative habit to a deliberate narrative strategy.

This paper argues that in the works of contemporary Indian YA authors, code-switching transcends its function as a realistic representation of urban speech. It is strategically deployed as a performance and accumulation of what French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu terms *linguistic capital*. Through the nuanced use of Hinglish, young protagonists navigate the complex postcolonial linguistic market, performing acts of both linguistic resistance against the hegemonic legacy of "pure" English and identity construction within a hybrid, globalized India. This process reveals how language choice becomes a tangible form of social capital, used to

assert belonging, signal aspiration, and negotiate power dynamics in the construction of a modern Indian youth identity. Theoretical Moorings: The Currency of Language in Postcolonial India

To fully unpack the significance of code-switching in this literary context, it is essential to ground the analysis in two complementary theoretical frameworks: Pierre Bourdieu's conceptualization of language as a form of capital, and postcolonial theories that address linguistic resistance and hybridity. Together, these frameworks illuminate the high-stakes nature of language use in a nation grappling with the enduring legacies of colonialism.

The Bourdieusian Marketplace: Language as Capital Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice provides a powerful lens for understanding how language functions within social hierarchies. He posits that linguistic skills are not neutral tools of communication but forms of *linguistic capital* an asset whose accumulation and deployment can determine an individual's social standing. This capital is not just about grammatical correctness but encompasses the mastery of the "legitimate" language variety, including the valued accent, vocabulary, and style sanctioned by dominant institutions like the education system and the professional world.

This legitimate language wields *symbolic power*, the capacity to impose a particular worldview and legitimize certain linguistic forms as inherently superior. This power is often exercised subtly, leading individuals to accept the dominant linguistic norms as natural rather than arbitrary social constructs. All linguistic exchanges, according to Bourdieu, take place within a *linguistic market*, a social field where utterances are produced, exchanged, and assigned value. Individuals, guided by their ingrained *habitus*, intuitively adjust their linguistic expressions to suit the demands of the current market, whether it be a formal job interview or a casual conversation with friends, in order to maximize the value of their linguistic output. In the Indian context, this framework is particularly resonant. The historical imposition of English during the colonial era established it as a language of power, administration, and upward mobility. Consequently, proficiency in English has long functioned as a potent form of linguistic and cultural capital, a key determinant of access to education, economic opportunity, and social prestige. The Indian linguistic market is thus heavily weighted, with English holding a high symbolic value that continues to shape social and economic realities.

Postcolonial theory offers a critical perspective on the power dynamics inherent in the linguistic legacy of the empire. The concept of *linguistic imperialism*, as articulated by Robert Phillipson, describes how the language of the colonizer achieves and maintains dominance through structural and cultural means, often at the expense of indigenous languages. This process creates a hierarchy where the imperial language is associated with modernity and progress, while local languages are marginalized.

However, the response from the colonized is not one of passive acceptance. Postcolonial literary theory highlights the strategy of *appropriation*, whereby writers and speakers seize the colonizer's language and "remake it for their own purposes". They infuse it with local idioms, syntactical structures, and cultural references, effectively "tropicalizing" it to articulate their own distinct realities. This act of writing in a style that deliberately violates the norms of Standard English constitutes a powerful form of linguistic resistance, challenging the cultural authority of the former colonizer.

The result of this process is linguistic and cultural *hybridity*. Homi Bhabha's concept of the "third space" is useful here; it describes a new, interstitial cultural territory that emerges from the encounter between colonizer and colonized. This space is neither one nor the other but a dynamic and ambivalent fusion of both. Hinglish can be understood as a product of this third space a hybrid linguistic form that disrupts the binary opposition between English and Hindi, allowing for the creation of fluid, syncretic identities that are at once modern and deeply rooted in the Indian context.

The synthesis of these two theories reveals a crucial dynamic: the postcolonial legacy fundamentally distorts Bourdieu's linguistic market in India. It is not a simple hierarchy with a single, legitimate language at its apex. While "pure" English retains immense symbolic power due to its colonial history, its hybrid offshoot, Hinglish, acquires a different, subversive kind of capital the capital of authenticity, in-group solidarity, and urban modernity. The linguistic market, therefore, is a complex and stratified arena where different forms of English and Hinglish hold varying types of capital depending on the specific social context. This complexity explains the strategic linguistic choices made by young protagonists as they navigate their social worlds.

Hinglish is more than a simple mixing of Hindi and English; it is a complex linguistic phenomenon encompassing both *code-switching* (the alternation between languages at sentence or clause boundaries) and *code-mixing* (the integration of linguistic elements from one language into another within a single clause). Its evolution from being perceived as a "corruption" of both languages to being recognized as a vibrant and legitimate form of expression mirrors a broader shift in India's cultural self-perception.

The normalization of Hinglish in popular literature was significantly preceded and enabled by its saturation of the Indian mediascape, particularly in domains aimed at the youth. The advertising industry, for instance, discovered the commercial power of Hinglish early on. Catchy, bilingual slogans many of which were penned by Anuja Chauhan herself during her career in advertising, such as Pepsi's "Yeh Dil Maange More!" (This heart wants more!) and Kurkure's "Tedha hai par mera hai" (It's crooked, but it's mine)—embedded Hinglish into the lexicon of consumer culture, branding it as the language of modernity and aspiration. Simultaneously, Bollywood cinema embraced Hinglish in film titles, dialogues, and song lyrics. This was a strategic move to appear more contemporary, create memorable and rhythmic lines, and forge a stronger connection with a young, urban, and increasingly globalized audience. This widespread media presence cultivated a cultural environment where a literary voice rendered in Hinglish would be not only understood but welcomed.

For urban Indian youth, the use of Hinglish is deeply intertwined with the process of identity formation. In a globalized world, speaking Hinglish becomes a performance of a specific, hybrid identity. It signals an affiliation with a cosmopolitan, "Americanized" culture while simultaneously affirming a distinctively Indian identity. This linguistic practice allows adolescents to navigate between different cultural worlds, constructing an identity that is both locally grounded and globally conversant.

This dual functionality makes Hinglish both a shield and a sword in the negotiation of social identity. For characters who lack fluency in formal English, it can act as a *shield* against linguistic insecurity, providing an accessible pathway into English-dominated social and professional spheres without the prerequisite of perfect mastery. It allows them to participate and communicate effectively,

mitigating the shame and exclusion often associated with linguistic deficiency. Conversely, for those already possessing high levels of cultural capital, fluent and witty Hinglish can be wielded as a *sword*. It becomes a marker of an exclusive in-group, a sophisticated linguistic style that signals belonging to a certain urban elite. Its rapid, reference-laden cadence can actively exclude those who are fluent only in "pure" Hindi or a more formal, "stiff" English, thereby reinforcing social boundaries. The same linguistic phenomenon thus serves two distinct functions in the economy of social capital: for the aspirant, it is a tool for *acquisition*; for the elite, it is a tool for *consolidation and distinction*. This duality is central to its representation in the works of authors like Bhagat and Chauhan.

The contrasting ways in which code-switching functions as social capital are vividly illustrated in the works of Anuja Chauhan and Chetan Bhagat. While both authors employ Hinglish to create realistic and relatable characters, their approaches reveal different facets of the Indian linguistic market. Chauhan's characters typically operate from a position of *capital possessed*, using language to affirm their elite status, whereas Bhagat's protagonists are often engaged in a quest for *capital pursued*, using language as a means of social and cultural mobility.

Anuja Chauhan's novels are celebrated for their sharp, effervescent dialogue that perfectly captures the vernacular of India's urban elite. Her background in advertising endowed her with a keen ear for the "golgappa dialogue"—spicy, tangy, and quintessentially local that defines her characters' speech. Her prose is famously "chutnified," a seamless and witty blend of English and Hindi that feels entirely authentic to its setting.

In *Those Pricey Thakur Girls*, set in the exclusive world of Lutyens' Delhi, the language of the five Thakur sisters and their social circle is a clear demonstration of linguistic capital already possessed. Their code-switching is not born of a deficiency in either language but is a sophisticated stylistic performance. It functions as a marker of their class and education, creating an intimate and exclusive linguistic in-group where shared slang and bilingual puns reinforce social bonds. The dialogue is peppered with Hindi words like *hissa* (share/inheritance) and references to cultural practices like playing *kot-piece* (a card game), which ground the English-dominant conversation in a specific Indian context. This effortless fusion of languages allows the characters to perform a confident, modern identity

that is unapologetically Indian yet globally aware. The seamlessness of their Hinglish is a testament to their high linguistic capital and their *habitus*; they are not attempting to fit into a social stratum their language *is* the social stratum.

In contrast, Chetan Bhagat writes for and about the aspirational Indian youth, often hailing from middle-class or non-metropolitan backgrounds where English is a goal rather than a given. His deliberate use of simple English and functional code-switching makes his novels accessible to a mass audience and reflects the linguistic realities of his characters, for whom language is often a site of struggle and ambition. This theme is central to *Half Girlfriend*, where the protagonist Madhav's journey is defined by his linguistic insecurity. His "Bihari English" is a source of deep shame and a stark marker of his lower social capital in comparison to the elite, convent-educated Riya. For Madhav, English is not a playground but a formidable barrier to social acceptance and romantic love. His struggle to gain proficiency in the language is synonymous with his quest for upward mobility, explicitly framing language as an obstacle that must be overcome to succeed in modern India.

In *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*, code-switching serves the related but distinct function of cultural translation. The novel chronicles the relationship between Krish, a Punjabi from Delhi, and Ananya, a Tamilian from Chennai, and the primary conflict arises from the cultural chasm between their families. Language becomes a key signifier of this divide. The narrative is replete with instances of cultural clashes expressed through linguistic prejudice, most notably when Krish's mother dismissively refers to Ananya's family as "Madrasis," a term Krish corrects to the more respectful "Tamilian". The dialogue incorporates Hindi and Tamil words and cultural references to constantly highlight this friction. The couple's ability to mediate these differences and ultimately unite their families is achieved by creating a shared linguistic and cultural middle ground. Their journey represents the acquisition of a new form of "intercultural capital," where code-switching is the very tool used to build bridges and forge a new, pan-Indian identity.

The literary deployment of code-switching in the works of Anuja Chauhan and Chetan Bhagat provides a compelling illustration of its dual function as a marker and a means of acquiring social capital in contemporary India. Chauhan's witty elites display their inherited linguistic capital through a seamless,

sophisticated Hinglish that reinforces their exclusive social standing. In contrast, Bhagat's aspirational protagonists strive to acquire this capital, with their linguistic journeys marked by anxiety, struggle, and eventual synthesis mirroring their broader quests for social and economic mobility.

This analysis confirms that code-switching in Indian YA literature is far more than a stylistic quirk or a nod to realism. It is a complex literary strategy that operates on multiple levels. As a postcolonial act, it represents a form of linguistic resistance, appropriating the language of the former colonizer to create a hybrid "third space" where new, fluid Indian identities can be articulated. Simultaneously, it is a deeply sociolinguistic performance enacted within a Bourdieusian market, where every linguistic choice is laden with social significance and tied to the intricate power dynamics of class, education, and region.

The immense popularity of these novels signals a cultural shift and a validation of Hinglish as a legitimate literary voice for a new generation. This phenomenon does not merely "reflect reality"; it actively participates in the construction and legitimization of the evolving identity of urban Indian youth. By giving voice to a generation navigating the complex legacies of colonialism in a rapidly globalizing world, these authors demonstrate how a hybrid tongue can become a powerful form of social stock, used to forge identities that are confidently and uniquely both Indian and global.

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Language and Literature as Therapy: Transforming Trauma through Healing Words

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Abstract

Language and literature serve as the greatest tools of emotional healing, helping individuals to express pain, confront trauma and find balance through self-expression. This paper explores how reading and writing function as therapeutic processes that help in release of suppressed emotions. From both literary and psychological perspectives, it highlights how readers and writers experience catharsis, a purifying emotional release by engaging deeply with words. I chose this topic as a lover and benefiter of words, writing what I feel inside gave me the true intentions and clarity of my thoughts, thus eliminating scattered feelings. Analysing the works of confessional writers like Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton and Maya Angelou, the study explains how language and literature help in transforming trauma and promotes healing. This paper also includes insights from expressive writing research by James. W. Pennebaker and Louise Desalvo, providing proofs for language and literature as therapeutic tools. Essentially, it argues that language and literature do more than reflect human experience, they heal it. The paper emphasizes on the main idea of the power of words, both written and spoken. Words don't judge; they heal by revealing the true emotions to oneself and making them understand it.

Keywords: Catharsis, Expressive writing, Healing, Language, Literature, Trauma.

Introduction

Language is one of humanity's most profound forms of expression. It doesn't merely convey thoughts, it is also used to express emotions, memories and experience of a human. Language becomes art through literature which helps in self-discovery and healing. For a long time, the written words have been recognized as a source of comfort, allowing individuals to express pain, grief, and trauma that often remain unspoken. Writing and reading helps in releasing emotions by giving meaning and structure to them. Literature as Therapy often referred to as bibliotherapy or expressive writing. It is rooted in the idea that words can heal. Writing helps in untangle even the most tangled emotions which often felt complicated to understand. As a benefiter of expressive writing, I am writing this. Open yourself fully to the words, as they listen quietly and make you understand yourself and heal the wounds of your heart by clearing your mind. This creates the distance between the writer and their suffering.

Similarly, readers often find solace in literature that is a reflection of their own experiences and it helps in realizing that they are not the only ones to suffer and feel isolated. It also helps in realizing that their struggles are neither isolated nor meaningless. This process of identification and catharsis promotes emotional resilience and self-awareness. Confessional writers like Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton revealed their psychological struggles through raw and honest verse. While Maya Angelou's autobiographical writings gave voice against abuse and inspired many traumatic souls. Their works demonstrate that language can transform vulnerability into power. This paper aims to explore how language and literature act as therapeutic tools for emotional healing. It examines how expressing emotions through words helps in trauma release by combining literary analysis with psychological perspectives. The study argues that writing and reading are not only artistic acts but also psychological processes that lead to recovery, self-understanding and emotional balance

Review of Literature

Language, psychology, and healing have been studied all over the world across many disciplines. The idea of literature and art can help release emotions goes back to Aristotle's concept of catharsis in *Poetics*. Watching a tragedy helps people experience a kind of emotional cleansing through feelings like pity and fear was Aristotle's idea behind catharsis.

Sigmund Freud, a psychologist, suggested that talking or writing about hidden emotions can bring relief. Later, researcher James W. Pennebaker found that writing about painful experiences actually helps in improving both mental and physical health. He proved when people start writing about their trauma, they turn confusing memories into clear stories, which helps in more self-aware and calmer state of mind.

Louise DeSalvo in her book, *Writing as a Way of Healing* (1999), also said that writing helps people make sense of emotional pain and find meaning in it. She believed, writing makes people to take control of their stories which helps in turning pain into creativity. Julia Cameron, in *The Artist's Way* (1992), encouraged writing as a way to clear emotional and mental blocks and to reconnect with oneself. This theory of literature as a therapeutic process has been written and proved by many critics and writers.

Mrs. Dalloway, the novel by Virginia Woolf shows the thoughts of people struggling with mental distress. She uses language as a way to understand the mind. Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* and Anne Sexton's *Live or Die* use confessional writing to express their deep personal pain and turn it into art of literature. Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* being the story of her trauma, when written it becomes the story of freedom and courage. By all these examples we know that writing and reading can help people heal.

Literature as a Healing Space

Literature serves as a Healing space where emotions can find voice and meaning. It becomes a safe place for both writers and readers to face pain, understand it, and rise from it. Where spoken words fail or are not enough, writing helps to express the feelings that seem impossible to express. Writing makes people to express trauma and see it from a distance. When pain is written, it becomes

something outside the self, something that can be looked at, named, and slowly released. This helps writers gain control over what once felt overwhelming and readers who connect with such writing experience the sense of healing through empathy and shared emotion. This idea was clearly shown by the confessional poetry movement of mid twentieth century. Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton, two of its most well-known poets, used their writing to face and survive deep emotional struggles. In *The Bell Jar*, Plath explores the pressures of society and the fragile nature of mental health through her main character Esther Greenwood. Her poems are deeply personal and intense. It acts as both confession and healing and helped her to transform pain into insight.

Anne Sexton's work shows a similar journey. In her Pulitzer Prize winning book *Live or Die*, with honesty and courage, she writes about her mental health battles. Through poems Sexton turned her distress into creativity and art even in her moments of despair. Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, shows how storytelling can turn trauma into freedom. Her writings of racial and sexual abuse she faced, remains as her voice of strength and full of hope. Angelou frees herself by giving words to her pain and inspires others who share similar struggles. The caged bird becomes the symbol of courage. It is proof that even the most wounded spirit can still sing. Pain loses its power when it is expressed. Writing helps in rebuilding the self, while reading builds empathy and understanding. Literature becomes a bridge between pain and peace, silence and expression, loneliness and connection.

Expressive Writing and Trauma Release

Writing about what the feelings and emotions is called expressive writing. It is a powerful way to heal the wounds of heart and clear the mind. While writing the emotions one feel inside makes them see their emotions clearly and organize their thoughts and feelings reducing chaos. This act of writing moves pain out of the mind and onto the page, it can be seen, understood, and released. Psychologist James W. Pennebaker found in his research that writing about ones painful experience even for few minutes a day helps in healing physical and mental health. His research showed that putting emotions into words helps in lowering anxiety, strengthening the immune system, and brings better mental clarity. Writing helps people connect their emotions with understanding. Louise DeSalvo, in her book

Writing as a Way of Healing (1999), shared a similar idea. She believed that writing helps people gain control over what once felt uncontrollable. By turning painful memories into stories, writers can write their way out of pain and focus on survival instead of suffering. The act of creating becomes their strength instead of suffering. The writer becomes someone who creates meaning from pain instead of being a victim of the pain. Literature shows this same healing power.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf writes about Septimus Smith, a soldier struggling with memories of war. His thoughts are scattered and restless because of the trauma he experienced. Woolf's own mental struggles are reflected in her writing style, where thoughts flow freely and shift suddenly. By shaping her feelings into words, Woolf not only faced her own pain but also helped readers understand what living with trauma feels like.

Sexton's poetry worked as a mirror to her subconscious. It helped her express pain and find temporary relief from her inner chaos. Literature can be deeply Healing for the readers, when they see their own pain reflected in a story or poem, it makes them feel less alone. This experience is known as vicarious catharsis and it helps readers process their emotions through empathy. Reading about someone else's journey of pain and recovery allows them to understand and release their own feelings in a safe way and makes them think emphatically.

Expressive writing is not just personal therapy for the writer but also a shared experience between writer and reader. The written word becomes both medicine and message and it becomes a way to express, connect, and heal. Through writing people turn suffering into understanding and isolation into shared humane healing.

Emotional Liberation through Language

Language is one of the most powerful ways humans can find freedom. When emotions are turned into words, they stop being silent burdens and become signs of strength, awareness, and survival. Through literature, language becomes a way to release inner pain, find one's voice again, and reconnect with both themselves and the world. Writing is not just a way to express feelings. It is also a way to heal the traumatic memories. Emotional freedom begins when a person finds the courage to

speak about pain. When suffering stays unspoken, it grows heavier in silence. But once it is named, it starts to lose its heaviness.

Sylvia Plath's poems in *Ariel* also show how language can turn despair into expression. Her words do not hide her pain but face it directly. Her line, "Out of the ash I rise with my red hair and I eat men like air," (Plath, lines 82–84) shows how pain can be transformed into power. Literature becomes a quiet form of therapy and an unseen conversation where emotions are shared and released. Beyond personal healing, language also helps communities find strength. Throughout history, literature has been used to fight injustice and express pain. Through words, people reclaim their dignity and tell the truth of their experiences. To express emotion through language is to set oneself free. Writing makes us to understand the pain, creates shared empathy and reading it gives the reassurance of no human is facing struggles alone. Both in writing and reading, the human spirit finds release not by erasing trauma, but putting the heaviness down, out of the heart and mind as words.

Findings and Discussions

The study of literature as a form of therapy shows an important truth – words do more than express emotions. They also help in releasing and transforming them. Both psychology and literature agree that language has healing power. Whether through personal writing or creative works, expressing emotions in words helps people face, understand, and free themselves from inner pain. The first main finding is that language brings order to emotional chaos. When people put their painful experiences into words, those emotions become part of a clear story instead of scattered feelings. This process helps the fragmented mind find balance. It turns confusion into clarity and allows people to see their past in a new light. Psychologist James W. Pennebaker's studies support this by showing that writing about emotions improves both mental and physical health. The second finding is that literature can turn pain into art. Writers like Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, and Maya Angelou show how personal suffering can become a source of strength when expressed creatively. Through honest expression in their poems, they turn private pain into something that speaks to everyone.

The third finding highlights empathy and connection. Literature builds a bridge between the writer and the reader. When readers find their own feelings or struggles reflected in a story, they experience emotional release through empathy. This shared understanding shows that healing is not just a personal process but something deeply human that connects us all. Language helps people regain control. Trauma often makes individuals feel powerless or voiceless, but writing allows them to reclaim their story and identity. Putting emotions into words gives back the sense that trauma takes away. In this way, writing becomes a form of strength and resilience. Writing and reading creates safe space to explore emotions without judgement. In simple terms, the healing power of literature lies in turning inner pain into expression and loneliness into shared understanding. Through words, people not only heal themselves but also help others see that every story of pain can also be a story of survival and hope.

Conclusion

Literature has always been one of the oldest and most powerful ways for people to heal. From ancient stories and songs to modern poems and memoirs, humans have always used language to understand their emotions and make sense of their experiences. This shows that literature is not just about art. It is also a form of therapy that helps people find their voice and rebuild themselves after pain or trauma.

The study of expressive writing and confessional literature shows that putting emotions into words makes one free from their inner turmoil. When pain is written down, it no longer stays hidden inside. It becomes a story that can be shared and understood. Writers like Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, and Maya Angelou show us that speaking the truth through writing can turn silence into survival and weakness into strength. Whenever the emotional rollercoaster hits, I have always turned to words. As I write down what's swirling inside my mind and making me anxious, the swirling seems to stop as the words flow into the page. By seeing those words, I understand the feelings and emotions which seemed confusing and unclear some moments ago. Reading has a major role in this process. When readers see their own struggles reflected in a story or poem, they feel understood and less alone. This emotional connection creates empathy and a shared understanding between the writer and a reader. In this way, literature becomes both a mirror that reflects human

pain and a medicine that helps soothe it. To write is to name one's pain and to read is to recognize it in another person. Both acts help people feel connected instead of isolated. Through words, pain finds meaning, and through stories, hearts find comfort. Literature holds the human pain but allows it to move toward healing and freedom. In the end, language and literature remain timeless forms of therapy, teaching us that when we express what hurts, we begin to heal what was once broken.

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Objet Petit A and Mirror Stage: Jacques Lacan's Psychoanalytical Interpretation of The Unconscious on Second Language Acquisition

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Abstract

This article explains two of Jacques Lacan's ideas — the mirror stage and objet petit a — in simple language, and shows how they help us understand second language learning. The mirror stage helps us see why learners form an "ideal" image of themselves in the new language. Objet petit a explains why learners keep wanting more, even after they have made progress. These ideas connect to motivation, classroom emotion, identity, mistakes, silence, and practical teaching. The paper gives clear suggestions that how learners' self-images and desires shape their language learning and connects Lacanian theory to SLA themes such as motivation, Emotions, Identity, errors, silence and the real and formulaic language.

Key Words: Objet Petit a, Mirror stage, Second Language Acquisition, Unconscious Process, Emotions, Identity, Desires, Psychoanalysis and language learning.

Learning a second language is not just about grammar or vocabulary. It is also about feelings, wishes, and how people see themselves. Many learners feel proud, anxious, shy, or hopeful. These feelings come from deep parts of who we are. Jacques Lacan, a psychoanalyst, offers two useful ideas. The mirror stage shows how people form an image of themselves by seeing a whole, confident figure in a reflection. That image becomes a goal they try to reach. Objet petit a is the name Lacan gives to the small, missing thing that keeps desire alive, something people always want but can never completely get. When applied to language learning, these ideas help explain why learners dream of a perfect speaker, why they

keep trying even after success, and why some become silent or anxious in class. For Lacan, the unconscious is structured like a language: it speaks through slips, symptoms, and sustained investments in signifiers. Thus learning an L2 is not merely a cognitive acquisition but an entry into another symbolic economy that reorganizes how the subject is spoken and speaks itself.

A psychoanalytic interpretation aims to reveal how unconscious structures—repetition, desire, and identification—shape apparent behavior and narrative. In SLA this involves attending to slips, resistances, fantasies of identity, and affective patterns as expressions of unconscious economies rather than only as cognitive states or sociocultural positions. SLA is the process by which individuals learn languages beyond their L1. Classical approaches stress input, interaction, and internal processing; contemporary research highlights identity, emotion, and sociopolitical context. A Lacanian approach supplements these by treating L2 learning as a psychic re- inscription in a new symbolic order. Lacan's Mirror stage shows how a person forms an ego from an ideal image, and this ego later becomes shaped by language. As Hendrix notes, "From the mirror stage … all perception is taken into language… and the perceived image becomes the signifying I." Lacan's mirror stage describes how a child recognizes their reflection and feels a sudden sense of wholeness. Even if the child is still clumsy, the reflection looks complete. That image becomes part of the child's Identity. In language learning, learners form a similar reflection: an image of the perfect speaker. This image may be a native speaker on TV, a respected teacher, or an admired friend. Learners compare themselves to this image and set it as a goal. This ideal picture can motivate learners to work hard, but it can also cause shame when they feel they fall short (Dörnyei, p. 34). For example, a student may imagine speaking English as smoothly as a film star. This vision helps them practice, but every small error can feel like failure. Teachers who understand this can help by guiding learners to set realistic, step-by-step images of success rather than chasing one flawless ideal.

Objet Petit a

Objet petit a is Lacan's way of naming the small lack or gap that keeps desire going. It is not a real object; it is a sense that something is missing. Even when people achieve a lot, they feel pulled toward something more (Al-Hoorie, p. 5).In language learning, objet petit a can be the wish to "sound perfectly native," or to be fully accepted by a speech community. Even learners who speak very well may still feel they are missing something. This feeling can be painful, but it also

keeps learners curious and learning. Teachers can help learners by normalizing this endless desire. If learners accept that some lack will remain, they can view learning as a life-long process rather than a race to a finish line.Lacan explains that desire comes from what remains absent, noting that "residue is the object a, which is not the object of desire but its cause….the lack, the gap, the reminder that drives the subject ceaselessly towards what is felt to be missing".

Motivation: The Ideal L2 Self and Real Effort

Recent models of language motivation use the idea of an "ideal L2 self" — a clear image of oneself as an effective user of the second language. This idea matches the mirror stage: learners imagine a future self who speaks well and is respected (Dörnyei , p. 34). As Dornyei notes, "If the learner has a vivid image of their ideal L2 self, this image can act as a powerful motivator that directs effort, persistence, and long term commitment" (p.14). A well-shaped ideal L2 self-motivates study and practice. But if the image is too far from current reality, it may cause stress or drop in confidence. Research shows that when learners hold positive, realistic future images, they are more likely to work steadily and enjoy learning. Teachers can help by asking learners to describe small, real steps toward their ideal. For instance, instead of "sound like a native," a learner might aim to "give a short presentation in the class with clear pronunciation." Smaller, concrete goals make the ideal L2 self-more useful.

Emotions and the Role of the Other in the Classroom

Lacan wrote that desire is linked to the Other, we want recognition from others. In classrooms, this means learners care about what teachers and classmates think. Fear of being judged can stop learners from speaking or trying new things. Studies in language learning show that when classrooms feel safe and positive, students take part more and learn better (MacIntyre and Mercer, p. 155). If a teacher responds kindly to mistakes, learners feel safe to experiment. If the teacher laughs or criticizes, learners may retreat into silence. Practical steps for teachers include kind, specific feedback, private correction when needed, and praising effort. Creating a culture that values risk-taking helps learners feel recognized and encouraged. As Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope state," The social evaluation component is central to the experience of language anxiety; fear of negative judgement can inhibit even highly motivated learners from speaking" (p.128).

Identity: Multiple Ways of Being in Different Languages

As Pavlenko observes, "Second language users often report feeling like different people when they switch languages, as each language affords new ways of feelings, acting, and being" (p. 15). People often feel different when they use another language. A learner may be more outgoing in one language and quieter in another. Each language gives a new way to express feelings and ideas. Lacan's idea of the imaginary helps explain this: each language offers a new mirror and a new ideal self. Learners can explore different sides of themselves through language. Some feel free to try new roles, which boosts creativity and confidence. Teachers can use role play, dialogues, and storytelling to let learners try different identities. These activities help build flexibility and reduce pressure to fit only one ideal.

Errors, Silence, and the Real

Lacan divided human experience into three registers: the Imaginary (images), the Symbolic (language and rules), and the Real (what cannot be fully put into words). For language learners, the Real shows when they cannot express something, feel blocked, or fall silent. Moments of silence or strange mistakes can feel alarming, but they are also signs of development. Careful correction helps, but harsh correction can create shame. Research on feedback shows benefits when corrections are supportive and timely (Gass and Mackey, p. 82), whereas harsh and public corrections can "threaten a learner's self – esteem and discourage participation" (Young, p. 429). Giving wait time, gentle prompts, or opportunities to write before speaking helps, as " wait- time increases learners confidence and encourages deeper processing" (Walsh, p. 73). "Learners may fall silent when their linguistic resources cannot keep pace with their communicative intentions" (Tsui,p.148) and that silence can be "a meaningful response to cognitive or emotional overload" (King p. 56). These moments, though uncomfortable, are signs of progress, since "errors are natural and unavoidable in language development; they signal that learning is taking place" (Corder, p.167). Teachers should treat errors as a normal part of learning. When a learner goes silent, give time, ask gentle questions, or let them write first. These small changes honor the learner's emotional state and allow the symbolic systems of language to grow.

Formulaic Language

Formulaic language refers to set phrases and common chunks like "How are you?" or "I'm sorry." These ready-made pieces help learners communicate quickly and feel fluent even if they do not know all grammar rules. Using formulaic chunks brings short-term wholeness — learners feel more whole and competent for a moment (Wray, p. 3). As Wray explains, "formulaic sequences enable speakers to produce language fluently without having to compute each elements from scratch" (Wray, p.9). Even beginners can join conversations because "routine formulas give new learners access to participation before they have full grammatical control" (Wood, p. 47).

Teachers should teach and praise these chunks, because, "mastering common formulas develops confidence and a sense of communicative competence" (Wood, p.132). It helps learners join real conversations and gain confidence. Practice with formulas also offers stepping stones toward more complex use. Celebrate these small wins to keep desire and motivation positive. Learning a second language is both a mental task and an emotional journey. Lacan's mirror stage explains why learners form strong images of the perfect speaker, and objet petit a explains why learners keep wanting more. These ideas help teachers understand why learners feel proud, anxious, silent, or brave. Teachers who guide desire by encouraging small goals, using kind feedback, and valuing many kinds of language can turn worry into curiosity and longing into steady learning. The aim is not to remove the sense of lack but to help learners relate to it in healthy, creative ways.

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Decentering The Human: A Posthumanist Reading of Anuradha Roy's *An Atlas of Impossible Longing*

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Abstract

The research strives to interrogate the critical paradigm of posthumanism in literature that redefines the ontological relationship between humans and non-human entities within the entangled frameworks of ecology, materiality, and consciousness. This critical venture investigates the notion of posthumanism in Anuradha Roy's *An Atlas of Impossible Longing* through the theoretical lens of post humanist interlocutors. The study adopts qualitative textual methodology to analyse the novel, deconstructing human-centred existence by illustrating floods and earthquakes as driving energies that evoke affective currents carrying traces of memory and existential renewal. The outcome of the study reveals that Roy decentres anthropocentric hierarchies in her narrative by rendering water and earth as vibrant participants in the emotive and ethical facets of human experience. Furthermore, by drawing attention to the natural elements, the research advances an insight on eco-material consciousness in socio-cultural and educational domains, promoting a sustainable and symbiotic coexistence between humans and the environment.

Keywords: Posthumanism, Ecological consciousness, Climate change, non-human entities

Posthumanism is a theoretical methodology that critically questions the concept of humans being the central or subject of the universe. The theoretical premise of posthumanism is applied to examine the human-centred beliefs of human's superiority and mastery over nature or other forms of being. As Cary

Wolfe in his seminal work, *What is posthumanism?* states, "Posthumanism…thematics of the decentring of the human in relation to either evolutionary, ecological, or technological coordinates…insist that we are also talking about how thinking confronts that thematics" (17), it decentralizes the idea of human subjectivity and emphasises the interconnection of technology, nature and other non-human forces in shaping the existence, thoughts and experience of humans. In effect, posthumanism reconstructs the moral, existential and epistemological positions of humans and reconceptualizes the vision of being based on connections demonstrates that humans are not dominant subject but a part of a larger web of life.

Within literary studies, posthumanism acts as a theoretical standpoint interpreting the projection of human dominance over environment and non-human entities in literary texts. N. Katherine Hayles underscores the transformative role of literature in *How we became posthuman*, "literature and science as an area of specialization is more than a subset of cultural studies…embodied creatures living within and through embodied worlds and embodied words" (24). As Hayles states posthumanist literature stands apart from the typical humanist literature which values only human thoughts and emotions by interrogating the human exceptionalism and emphasizing the themes which highlights the embodiment of humans with environment. In Indian literary contexts, posthumanism examines the ideology of humans as the power holders while emphasizing the entangled relationship between humans, nature and technology by demonstrating Indian ecological, cultural and spiritual concerns. In juxtaposition to western literary texts, Indian literature predominantly integrates posthumanist ideas with mythology, folklore, and ecological consciousness by depicting nature's constituents like rivers, forests, mountains, and animals not merely as a topographical frame, but as driving energies that affects and moulds human emotions, actions and experiences. Contemporary Indian writers such as Arundhati Roy, Amitav Ghosh and Vandana Singh interrogates and explores posthuman trajectories like environmental crises, human–nonhuman entanglements, technological posthumanism, hybrid identities and the ethical implications of relational existence. Posthumanist literature in India critiques narratives that situate humans as the power regulator of everything. By contrast, it focuses on highlighting the ethical duties of humans towards environment while setting a foundation for reinterpreting human's identity in

relation to non-human entities. In addition, it creates a distinct balance between old and the new age by the means of blending cultural traditions of India with modern ecological and technological sensibility.

Anuradha Roy, one of the most significant contemporary narrators in Indian English literature, scrutinizes the nuanced corelation between humans, nature, memory and art. Her works encapsulates the ideology of posthumanism by illustrating rivers, clay, and art as active mediators of human experience Through her refined yet effective portrayal of nature and other material entities, Roy decentres the concept of humans as the sole centre or subject of every experiences rather than envisioning the existence as chain of synergistic relation between human and non-human. The ethical and ecological sensibility in her writing parallels with the underlying principles of posthumanism such as decentring the supremacy of humans, interconnectedness with nature and material vitality. Dinc, D. B., in an article titled *"Anthropocentrism and Nature in* An Atlas of Impossible Longing *by Anuradha Roy"* published in *Lale Oraloglu International Culture, Arts and Multidisciplinary Studies*, observes, "Roy presents… anthropocentrism as moving beyond the problem of separation between human beings and nature to articulate all kinds of exploitations and discriminations; the idea of dominance stemming from anthropocentrism has negatively affected nature." (Dinc, 2023)

As Dinc asserts, Roy in her novels such as *An Atlas of Impossible Longing*, *The Earthspinner*, and *Sleeping on Jupiter* personifies natural and material elements that influence emotion, memory, and transformation in human experience. She points out that, the continuation of human domination over nature leads to hierarchies within human society such as men over women, rich over poor, colonizers over indigenous people. Her works vividly reveal that the pattern of human domination and the justification for exploiting nature mirror the patriarchal or colonial systems that justify oppression over certain people. Furthermore, she sheds light on the consequences of this supremacy leading to the ecological decay when humans assume superiority over nature and disruption in compassion and morality among humans when they believe they have power over another human. The imagery of natural elements in her novels often aligns with human emotion and transformation. For instance, by employing the images such as floods, droughts and decay she highlights the interconnectedness of humans within the ecological web. Her vision of an 'ethics of coexistence' is illustrated through the voice and elements

of nature, whose actions and reactions profoundly affect human life, endorsing humans to live responsibly with the understanding of ecological balance.

Jane Bennett, contemporary political theorist and philosopher's concept Vibrant Matter in her seminal work *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* challenges the Western notion that material things such as plants, metals and other non-living entities are passive and devoid of vitality. She argues that all forms of materiality even a rock, river or even a piece of metal has inner energy or vitality that enables them to act and influence events around them. As Benett affirms, "It is futile to seek a pure nature unpolluted by humanity, and it is foolish to define the self as something purely human…is vibrant matter" (116). This viewpoint is exemplified in Anuradha Roy's *An Atlas of Impossible Longing* through natural phenomena such as floods, earthquakes and shifting rivers. Roy, through her narrative seamlessly interlaces human emotion, landscape, and elemental force into a symbiotic network of life and contextualizes human experience within an uncertain ecology that outstrips human control. Her illustration of nature in the novel parallels the standpoint of posthumanism which rejects human exceptionalism and acknowledges the power of nonhuman matter. The phrase 'Man as the measure of all things' by Protagoras became the foundation of Western humanism which suggests that everything in the world including truth, morality, knowledge and even existence should be recognized from the perspective of human. Rosi Braidotti critiques this anthropocentric ideology in *The Posthuman*, arguing that the concept of Man as measure marks the origin of both the destruction of nature and creation of hierarchies within humanity. She uncovers the underlying arrogance of humans considering themselves as masters of existence, "These radical critiques of humanistic arrogance from Feminist and Post-colonial theory…new alternative ways to look at the 'human' from a more inclusive and diverse angle…Man as the measure of all things, standard-bearer of the 'human'" (28). This perspective effectively reflected in Anuradha Roy's *An Atlas of Impossible Longing*, where Roy decentres human by portraying her characters as temporary, fragile parts of a sentient environment. Through the portrayal of flood and earthquake in Manoharpur and Songarh, she illustrates the capacity of vibrant matters to act, respond and transform human lives which dismantles the illusion of human mastery over nature. The flood scene in the novel symbolizes nature's power, subverting the illusion of human's superiority over it. Bikash Babu's pride in his house built on high

grounded and his neglection towards the rising river reflects his belief in human superiority which is ultimately shattered by the flood, "Not only was he giving his friends loans…his house was on high ground and he watched the progress of the river with amused complacence" (69). The house positioned on 'high ground' symbolizes the illusion of safety and dominance, a false sense of control will eventually be destroyed by the means of nature. In this scene, Roy decentres the human by giving power to nature to act reflects Jane Bennett's idea of Vibrant matter, where the flood operates as a vital force that influences human life. In addition, this instance exemplifies Braidotti's critique of human arrogance, exposing that when humans consider themselves as masters and ignores their interdependence with the environment will result in nature responding in the form of flood and other ecological disruptions, reminding them that they are temporary and interdependent beings within a larger living system.

Another instance that reflects Roy's posthuman vision in the novel is Shanti's death during childbirth amid the storm, when she becomes trapped by the rising water. Here the flood is not merely the backdrop to the human tragedy but acts as an active participant possessing the power to affect and transform the emotion and fate of humans. This scene exemplifies the concept of 'thing-power', meaning the inherent vitality of matter to act, affect and transform, introduced by Bennett in *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, "expression of thing power as an effect of culture and the play of human powers, politicizes moralistic and oppressive appeals to nature" (17), the river in the novel emerges as an autonomous force that acts upon human lives rather than a passive setting, "The river will make this house its own…marble will be the river's bed now. Fish will swim in and out of our finest teak shelves and nibble our ivory figurines" (75). Through this imagery, Roy captures the act of ecological justice where the river destroying Bikash Babu's home and reclaiming the land he once claimed as his own, thus reasserting the power of the element he ignored. Roy portrays flood as a posthuman fable that destabilizes the subjectivity of humans and reinterprets the vitality of the material world through her narration about objects such as marble, teak, ivory which were once the emblem of wealth are transformed into the habitats of fish and snakes signifies that nature retrieve things which belongs to it. Through this transformation Roy dismantles the anthropocentric structures and repositions humans as just a participant within a vast dynamic network of material vitality.

In parallel, Roy's narrative entices reflection on human responsibility within an unstable ecological order. The villagers' repeated warnings to Bikash Babu to abandon his riverside home and move to safer ground resonate as a microcosmic echo of global appeals to confront climate change that are persistently ignored by modern society. Roy transforms this environmental urgency into a literary allegory through Bikash Babu's obstinate refusal to relocate with humans' collective denial of ecological catastrophe. Potol Babu's lament, "What a sad irony… that the water that is our saviour is so easily turned into Destroyer" (69), encapsulates the paradox of the fragility of human existence within ecological systems. Through this parallel, Roy exposes the ethical blindness underpinning anthropocentric privilege and advocates for a posthuman ethics stemmed from humility, reciprocity, and ecological consciousness. Bruno Latour, a French philosopher in his seminal work *We Have Never Been Modern* argues, If Nature is not made by or for human beings, then it remains foreign, forever remote and hostile. Nature's very transcendence overwhelms us, or renders it inaccessible. Symmetrically, if society is made only by and for humans, the Leviathan, an artificial creature of which we are a t once the form and the matter, cannot stand up. Its very immanence destroys it at once in the war of every man against every man. But these two constitutional guarantees must not be taken separately, as if the first assured the nonhumanity of Nature and the second the humanity of the social sphere. (30-31)

His argument about the false separation of nature as objective, external and society as subjective, human and cultural mirrors in *An Atlas of Impossible Longing*, through the character Nirmal who is an archaeologist studying the fort's ruins, experiences the quake as both terror and revelation. He expresses, "Magnificent, don't you think it was magnificent? The plates of the earth shifting, continents changing shape, mountain ranges rising, ocean migrating. Amazing it's all hot liquid deep inside! Fire below the ocean" (143). In contrast to the representation of flood scene as a destructive power of nature in the novel, the earthquake scene elicits a transcendent wonder that transmutes fear into admiration. The response of Nirmal to earthquake embodies the acceptance of nonhuman vitality, an understanding that the planet is not static or passive but constantly moving, changing and creating. Rather than considering the natural phenomena as threat, he views nature as a powerful and creative force. This shift in his emotion is the central

idea of posthuman ethics, which implies the need for reverence, reciprocity, and a renewed consciousness towards the non-human entities that sustains us.

The findings of the research highlights that Roy in *An Atlas of Impossible Longing* substantiates that human and non-human entities are inseparably interconnected through the depiction of natural phenomena such as flood and earthquake being an active participant in human experiences. The experiences of Bikash Babu and Nirmal in the novel epochs ethical awakenings that manifest a posthuman shift from domination to coexistence, from control to mutuality. Roy transfigures the ecological catastrophe into a philosophical insight through her non-linear narrative by dissolving the conventional divisions of time, space and being. Thus, the study synthesizes that the novel serves to illustrate an ethical and imaginative guide that reminds humans are part of the living world rather than superior while encouraging the recipients to understand the necessity of acknowledging the network of ecological systems.

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Silence and Speech: Negotiating Gender and Power through Language in Anuradha Roy' Novels

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Abstract

Anuradha Roy, a prominent voice in contemporary Indian English fiction, offers a nuanced portrayal of women negotiating the complex intersections of language, gender, and power. Her novels highlight how patriarchal societies employ language to silence women but also reveal how these silences become potent sites of resistance and resilience. This study critically examines The Folded Earth and An Atlas of Impossible Longing to explore language's dual role as a means of oppression and empowerment. Through the female characters' journeys, Roy reveals how women reclaim their voices and identities within constraining patriarchal frameworks. By analyzing speech, silence, and narrative strategies, the paper illustrates how Roy transforms silence from mere muteness into a subversive and communicative act, demonstrating that silence can speak louder than words. Engaging feminist linguistic theories, including those of Deborah Cameron and Judith Butler, alongside postcolonial perspectives like Gayatri Spivak's subaltern theory, this paper argues that Roy's women redefine traditional boundaries of speech and selfhood. The novels thus become spaces where language emerges as an instrument of empowerment, helping women transcend social and verbal limitations. Roy's fiction invites readers to appreciate the multiple layers of female expression, emphasizing a linguistic negotiation that challenges patriarchal dominance while fostering resilience and identity reclamation.

Keywords: Language, Gender, Silence, Power, Patriarchy, Resistance.

Language functions not merely as a tool for communication but as a profound cultural instrument that shapes and regulates power relations, identity formation, and social hierarchies. In patriarchal societies, language is often wielded as a means of control, operating as a subtle yet pervasive mechanism that reinforces gender inequalities. It restricts women's voices by framing their speech as inferior, emotional, trivial, or deviant from established male norms. This marginalization is not accidental but systemic, embedded in linguistic patterns that privilege male authority and silence female expression. Feminist linguists such as Deborah Cameron have critically demonstrated how everyday interactions and conversational norms reproduce and sustain power asymmetries. Cameron highlights that women's ways of speaking, characterized often by politeness, emotional expressiveness, or indirectness are treated as less authoritative or credible, perpetuating their exclusion from dominant public discourses.

Similarly, Dale Spender argues that language itself is a political battleground shaped by male interests, creating a male-centric worldview that limits women's capacity to be heard as authoritative subjects. Language becomes a form of symbolic violence where male norms define intelligibility and legitimacy, sidelining female perspectives and knowledge systems. Judith Butler's seminal theory of gender performativity further illuminates how gender identities are not innate but constructed and continuously reaffirmed through repeated acts of speech, behavior, and social performance. Language, therefore, does not simply reflect gendered power but actively produces and maintains it by scripting the boundaries of acceptable gendered behavior and expression.

Literature emerges as a crucial space for contesting and renegotiating these power dynamics. This is especially true in postcolonial contexts, where language carries complex legacies of colonial domination and cultural assertion. Postcolonial women writers engage language as a contested terrain—simultaneously a site of oppression and a resource for subversion. By re-framing and reinventing linguistic norms, they challenge patriarchal and colonial discourses, creating alternative modes of expression that validate female subjectivities often erased or marginalized in dominant narratives.

Indian author Anuradha Roy's novels The Folded Earth and An Atlas of Impossible Longing exemplify this critical engagement with language, gender, and

power. Her female protagonists navigate emotional and linguistic landscapes where silence and speech do not occupy fixed or opposing positions but rather function as dynamic and interrelated modes of agency. The women in her narratives experience silence not only as imposed muteness or social exclusion but also as a space for reflection, resistance, and nuanced communication. Conversely, their speech represents a gradual reclaiming of voice—an act of empowerment that challenges entrenched patriarchal norms.

This paper argues that Roy's work reveals the complexities involved in negotiating silence and speech within patriarchal frameworks. It explores how linguistic suppression is resisted, reshaped, and transformed into a language of empowerment, enabling women's identity formation and self-assertion. Through a close reading of her novels, and drawing on feminist linguistic theories alongside postcolonial perspectives, this study demonstrates that Roy's characters articulate a multifaceted relationship with language—one that critiques male dominance while fostering resilient, evolving female voices.

In Anuradha Roy's novels, silence is an ambivalent yet central motif, foregrounding the gendered constraints imposed by patriarchal society. Silence represents not only the absence of speech but also the suppression of female subjectivity. In An Atlas of Impossible Longing, Meera's silence within her oppressive marriage conveys the weight of patriarchal control. Her muteness is a forced invisibility, imposed by domestic violence and social expectation, reflecting how women's voices are systematically marginalized. This silencing aligns with Dale Spender's notion that language functions as a "man's world," where women's speech is delegitimized or confined to the domestic realm.

However, Roy complicates this narrative of silence by imbuing it with resistance and emotional depth. Meera's silence is not mere passivity; it becomes a means of preserving a hidden self. Through interior monologues and evocative descriptions, the novel exposes the subtextual power of silence as a form of non-verbal communication. Elaine Showalter's concept of female subcultures helps to illuminate this dynamic, suggesting that women's silence can embody a covert counter-discourse to patriarchal norms.

Mukta, Meera's daughter, inherits this complicated legacy of silence. While outwardly compliant, Mukta's internal world brims with questions and suppressed

desires. Her evolving narrative voice exemplifies the tension between silence imposed by tradition and the emerging assertion of selfhood. This dialectic reflects Judith Butler's theory of performativity, wherein gender identities are continuously produced through acts of speech and silence, negotiation and resistance.

Roy's depiction resonates with Gayatri Spivak's seminal inquiry into the subaltern woman's voice. The novels expose the difficulty for women to "speak" in hegemonic discourses that obscure or distort their experiences. Yet Roy's narrative strategies challenge this erasure by narrating what remains unsaid, inviting readers to listen to the eloquence of silence. The narrative thus transforms silence from a void into a powerful symbolic resource, critiquing patriarchal language norms while affirming women's interior resilience.

Speech in Anuradha Roy's novels functions as a vital pathway toward female empowerment, representing not only a reclaiming of voice but also a profound assertion of selfhood amidst systemic patriarchal oppression. The characters in The Folded Earth, particularly Maya and Charu, exemplify how speech transcends simple communication, becoming a deliberate act of resistance and identity formation. Maya's profession as a teacher is significant beyond its occupational identity; it symbolizes a vital intervention in her community, where language facilitates healing, connection, and empowerment. Through her pedagogical interactions, Maya disrupts the social isolation often imposed on women, especially in patriarchal settings that restrict women's public engagement. Teaching becomes an arena in which Maya's voice acquires authority, enabling her to shape narratives, influence minds, and cultivate solidarity. This role allows her to articulate an alternative feminine discourse that challenges dominant paradigms of silence and submission.

Charu's transformation from muteness to articulate self-expression further highlights speech's emancipatory potential. As Charu begins to voice her desires, fears, and aspirations, she not only claims agency over her own body and identity but also destabilizes entrenched social norms that seek to polite female expression. Her speech is not a replication of patriarchal discourse but rather an innovation of linguistic registers, imbued with empathy, introspection, and subtlety. This corresponds with Virginia Woolf's concept of "the female sentence," which privileges complexity, emotional nuance, and indirect forms of communication over

the linear, confrontational modes often associated with male speech. Charu's articulation embraces ambiguity and emotional depth, enabling her to navigate restrictive social contexts with resilience and creativity.

Roy's narrative style reflects and amplifies these forms of speech through prose that is lyrical and intimate, layered with symbolic and emotional resonance. Language in her novels is not neutral; it becomes a contested space where patriarchal power is negotiated and challenged. Storytelling, personal narration, and dialogue serve as tools through which female characters reclaim narrative control, reconstruct fragmented identities, and resist prescribed social roles. By inscribing their experiences into the text, these women disrupt the male-dominated language frameworks and assert political as well as personal authority.

Thus, Roy's portrayal deepens feminist understandings of speech as an act of defiance and empowerment. Female expression in her novels is a means of transforming imposed silences into active narratives and undermining the linguistic barriers that perpetuate gendered subjugation. Through language, the women in her fiction do not simply survive; they assert their existence, resist erasure, and redefine what it means to speak and be heard in a patriarchal world.

Anuradha Roy's novels intricately tie language to spatial and environmental contexts, emphasizing how physical and linguistic landscapes together shape female identity. In The Folded Earth, the mountainous town of Ranikhet is not merely a setting but a dynamic space reflecting the emotional and psychological terrain of its female characters. The natural environment, with its shifting moods and serene isolation, mirrors Maya's internal struggles and aspirations for autonomy.

Roy's vivid, sensory descriptions of the mountain landscape serve as an extended metaphor for the constraints and possibilities surrounding women's speech. The dense forests, winding paths, and calm lakes symbolize both the entrapment of patriarchal expectations and the hidden reserves of female resilience. This interplay between language and space echoes ecocritical and ecofeminist theories, such as those by Val Plumwood, who argue that women's and nature's subjugations are interconnected under patriarchal capitalism. Roy's narrative suggests a parallel between nature's muted endurance and women's suppressed voices, both sustaining a quiet strength beneath apparent silence. The domestic spaces women inhabit further complicate language and identity. While households

often restrict women into roles of submission and muteness, Roy reclaims these interiors as sites of emotional complexity and linguistic negotiation. The rhythms of domestic life, punctuated by moments of conversation, silence, and storytelling, create intimate arenas where women practice subtle forms of resistance. This aligns with theorists like Hélène Cixous, who advocate for writing and expression as a "feminine space" to confront and dismantle patriarchal discourse.

Through this fusion of spatial and linguistic elements, Roy crafts a multifaceted feminine identity negotiating boundaries of speech and silence, nature and culture, constraint and freedom. The mountain environment becomes a character itself, shaping dialogue and thought, and offering a symbolic refuge where women can reclaim fragmented voices. Ultimately, Roy's work foregrounds the interdependence of space and language in narrating the complexities of female selfhood within oppressive social frameworks. Anuradha Roy's narrative technique embraces polyphony—a multiplicity of voices and perspectives—that destabilizes singular patriarchal narratives and constructs a fractured, layered portrayal of female experience. Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic theory, Roy weaves interlacing voices that resist authoritative closure, allowing diverse expressions of gendered identity to coexist and challenge dominant discourses.

In An Atlas of Impossible Longing, the alternating narratives of Meera, Mukta, and later generations emphasize how silence and speech are transmitted across time and geography, creating a collective female voice that defies erasure. For example, Meera's recollections are marked by poignant silences: "She said everything in the spaces between words, where the unsaid hung heavy like a storm cloud." This evocative portrayal signifies how absence and silence contain as much meaning as speech. Mukta's narrative, unfolding with growing boldness, asserts: "I learned that telling my story was the only way to keep it alive, to claim a voice where none seemed allowed."

Similarly, The Folded Earth merges Maya's introspective voice with those of marginalized characters to form a rich tapestry of emotional and cultural truths. Roy's prose style is lyrical and restrained, privileging emotional nuance and empathy over explicit confrontation. Maya's voice offers a "language softer than a scream," a phrase that encapsulates Roy's feminine aesthetic favoring subtlety and internal depth. This aesthetic resonates with Hélène Cixous's concept of écriture

féminine, which values fluidity and non-linear expression as feminist strategies to dismantle patriarchal logocentrism.

Roy's polyphonic narratives craft a feminist linguistic space where women's speech is collaborative rather than competitive, transformative rather than subjugated. The nuanced interplay of silence and voice in the narrative emphasizes multiplicity and flux, opposing the fixed dichotomies of spoken versus unspoken or visible versus invisible. Through this, Roy advances a visionary literary project that foregrounds female linguistic empowerment, expressing the complexities of subjectivity and resistance within patriarchal constraints. In Anuradha Roy's fiction, silence and speech exist in an intricate dialectical relationship, each continuously shaping and defining the other. Her female characters demonstrate that agency is not limited to vocal expression but also resides powerfully within muteness. This duality reveals the multifaceted nature of female resistance, as women negotiate spaces of power and subjugation within patriarchal societies. Silence in Roy's narratives is not mere absence or passivity; rather, it is charged with meaning, embodying both the internalization of oppression and the quiet strength that sustains endurance and subversion. Conversely, speech acts as a transformative tool through which women assert their identities, articulate desires, and challenge social hierarchies. This ongoing negotiation between silence and speech mirrors broader, often difficult journeys toward self-awareness, identity formation, and empowerment.

Roy's nuanced portrayal contributes significantly to feminist literary discourse by illustrating language as a paradoxical instrument—both constraining and liberating. Unlike traditional narratives that may define silence as suppression and speech as freedom, Roy blurs these binaries, exposing how silence can itself be a form of communication and resistance, while speech may carry the risks of vulnerability and social censure. By transforming silence into a space of meaningful communication and turning speech into a medium for self-realization and narrative control, she expands the aesthetic and thematic possibilities of women's writing within Indian English fiction. Language moves beyond its conventional function of storytelling to become a potent metaphor for identity, resistance, and renewal.

Her fiction invites readers to engage with the layered complexities of female language and identity, encouraging a reexamination of how language can be

reconfigured to dismantle entrenched patriarchal power. Through her characters' experiences, Roy showcases how language—whether through silence or speech—can affirm women's voices in both deeply personal and overtly political realms. Ultimately, her work underscores the power of linguistic negotiation as a tool for reclaiming selfhood, fostering resilience, and asserting feminist subjectivities in an often-hostile world.

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Rootless in a Global World: Exploring Cultural Alienation in Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye Blackbird*

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Abstract

Anita Desai's Bye-*Bye Blackbird* explores the themes of exile, cultural alienation and identity crises through the experiences of Indian immigrants in England. The novel outlines the problems and hardships of exiled and diasporic people caught in the crises of a shifting society. It attempts to convey the confusion and difficulties of the exiles through Desai's inventive method, captivating drama, and impeccable style. The novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird* simultaneously presents a comprehensive view of both Indian diasporic literature and exile literature. The novel critiques the racial prejudices and social barriers that immigrants face, emphasizing the alienation that leads to psychological turmoil. Through the contrasting perspectives of Dev and Adit, Desai portrays the complexities of migration, where nostalgia for one's homeland clashes with the desire for assimilation.

Key words: Diaspora, Exile, immigrants, cultural, Alienation

The concept of cultural identity is associated with belonging to a group. It addresses the elements of a group. It addresses the facets of a person's vision and conception of themselves. The representation of any social group with a unique culture that makes up the cultural identity, including religion, race, country, generation, socioeconomic class, geography, and so on. *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, written by Anita Desai in 1971, is an example of how cultural interactions can represent cultural identity.

The story revolves around Dev and Adit, two close friends in London. Adit married Sarah, an English woman, and lived in London for a longer time. The study of cultural identity examines the various viewpoints and aspects associated with

methods for examining the differences in societies with unusual social values and beliefs. Culture is dynamic and adapts to society's demands.

Additionally, it can be used to characterise our way of life and the values, beliefs, and attitudes we employ on a daily basis. The cultural aspect emphasises religious and artistic values in different ways depending on the situation. Cultural identity has taken on a completely different form in the modern day, encompassing the assessment of a variety of factors, including race, beliefs, language, religion, and lifestyle, as well as concerns of gender identity, national identification, ethnicity, and aesthetics. By using social and psychological burdens, the novelist posed the subject of cultural identity while representing the deepest thoughts of the human psyche. The meeting of the west and the east yielded fresh insights on cultural conflicts.

The novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird* by Anita Desai ventures out into uncharted territory. After Adit and Dev, two educated Bengali immigrants, choose to adopt English beliefs and mannerisms, the novel presents cultural questions. People frequently encounter environmental changes when they relocate, which frequently results in ongoing difficulties acclimating to the new cultural norms and beliefs. Through cultural contacts, the shifts in cultural practices also cause perplexity, anxiety, anguish, and irritation. Regardless of the language in which they were composed, the great legends bear witness to this through their profound ideas about humanity and how it can benefit the sick aliens and exiles.

The intense emotions and passions of men and women worldwide, regardless of their differences in race, religion, nationality, government, or colour, are the subject of and foundation for literature worldwide. The literary landscape of the twentieth century is where the issue of cultural estrangement and exile is most prevalent. In the rapid technological advancement and international communication, the roving characters in front of us and their robotic march serve as a reminder that true relationships are lacking.

The phenomena of cultural alienation and exile have spread throughout the world. The exile and alienation of displaced people are vividly shown by Anita Desai in her novels. Desai has the ability to read people's thoughts and recognises that they are feeling alienated. In *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, these emotions turn her characters into victims. Culture shock, which is a depressive state that overtakes a

person when they recognise the difference between their normal way of life and their new surroundings, is the root cause of cultural conflict. All of the characters are extremely alienated from one another, which is a result of Desai's preoccupation as an author. One or more enduring characters who occupy distinct places in our hearts are featured in each of her novels. Once more, she makes the projection of female protagonists living in a closed, secluded, and distinct world away from issues involving passion, love, and hate the main focus of her character representation. Desai portrays each of her characters as an unsolved and challenging enigma, which sets her apart from other Indo-English novels.

Anita Desai provides an unexpected window into the deeper psychological states of her protagonists because she is concerned about the isolation of the characters. In her interview Desai states that: I am interested in characters who are not average but have retreated, or been driven into some extremity of despair and so turned against, or made a stand against, the general current. It is easy to flow with the current, it makes no demands, and it costs no effort. But those who cannot follow it, whose heart cries out "the great No," who fight the current and struggle against it, they know what the demands are and what it costs to meet them (1).

Anita Desai's novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, captures the confusions and conflicts of another set of alienated persons. It has rightly been maintained that in the novel "the tension between the local and the immigrant blackbird involves issues of alienation and accommodation that the immigrant has to confront in an alien and yet familiar world."

Desai addresses the intricacies of alienated immigration in this book by emphasising both its allure and a strong sense of disdain or distaste. Prejudice against foreigners is disliked in the book. The novel's origins are undeniable, and it is not a replica of real connections that pose ongoing and significant problems for exiles and cross-cultural interactions. According to Desai, "*Bye-Bye Blackbird* is the closest book to the reality of all; almost everything in it is taken straight from the experience of living with the Indian immigrants in London" (31). Dev, who comes to London to further his education, is the main subject of *Bye-Bye Blackbird*. As the story progresses, it is possible to observe him evolving into a fully realised individual who has let someone down. Both Indians and Englishmen make him feel

isolated in London. English guys are quite insensitive; they treat Indians as though they are outsiders and do not acknowledge that they are their neighbours. Dev finds the complete quiet in London to be unsettling and uncomfortable.

Dev understands how strangers in their community view him. He observes that Indian immigrants are rushing westward and that they are severely missing their homeland. He feels incredibly suffocated in the tube station and thinks of himself as a stranger wandering around in a pitch-black prison: Dev contact starts to blossom from Adit, who has moved to London with his wife, who was born and raised in England. As Dev leaves to look for work at random, he is surrounded by issues. He finds it too hard to cope with the intense silence in the nearby blocks where people don't care about one another. Dev, who is feeling lonely and alienated, is called a fool by Adit for trying to find his identity in a foreign country.

Dev is a victim of estrangement and accumulates a lot of experiences. He makes comparisons between India and London. Dev is neurotic as a result of his time in England since he cannot give his experience and final decision any significance. He is conscious of the confusion and confession that the external pressure has generated in him. Dev makes the ultimate decision not to go back to India and not to guide the people there. He begins to gradually acclimatise to the new surrounding environment. His friend Adit Sen, a young Indian man, and his English wife reside in England. Adit first worked as a teacher in England before accepting a small position at the huge Blue Skies. But for him, the intimacy does not negate his sense of cultural identification. England became wealthy, fertile, and successful; even when he considers traveling to India, he is mostly reminded of Indian cuisine, attire, and music. Adit recognises that she is separated from the English people and feels like a stranger in England. He describes himself as an outsider who doesn't belong in England.

The novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird* has an international theme since Adit marries Sarah, an English girl, and becomes the target of white society's ire. Ironically, Sarah, Adit's subservient wife, is the one who suffers. She has violated the social code of England by marrying a brown Asian, and she is constantly being made fun of and insulted by both her co-workers and the students at the school where she works as a clerk. Although her friends are interested in asking inquiries about her husband and family, she always steers clear of them.

Sarah responds to many inquiries from Julia, a teacher at her school, with strange remarks like, "she was still breathing very hard at having so narrowly escaped having to answer all the personal questions" (11). They would have been more than willing to believe her, but the letters from India about her Indian husband would have made her stand out like someone who poses as someone else and makes life claims that she didn't feel were her own. The younger generation was likewise following the older generation, and they were enraged and provoked to hurt some of the others. Once she crossed the street, she heard them yell, "Hurry, hurry, Mrs. Scurry, and Where's the fire, Pussy cat?" (35). They pretended not to see her at all as she old-fashioned her way through a crowded mob of people and animals. The awful experience she had at work at the hands of her co- workers and students is discussed here. However, her marriage has a significant impact on her that permeates all aspects of her life. She stays away from the shops on Laurel Lane, where she resides when she goes shopping because she fears that doing so will compromise her relationship with India. Despite taking every precaution, she is unable to escape the predicament that has become a part of her life; therefore, she prefers to travel to the large department store where she would stay an unknown customer and no one would know she has Asian credentials.

The constant conflict between her real life and her guilt about attempting to impress others, reality, and appearance speaks volumes about her and can lead to a long term mental illness of a kind that involves a relationship breakup. She is tired of changing her identity and is unsure of her place in the world. She wants individuals who will be faithful and devoted to her, and that will only happen when she finally leaves England at the end of the book. Finding peace in England does not make her happy or comfortable.

Throughout the novel, she experiences estrangement on multiple occasions, which leaves her feeling alone and raises the question, "Who is she?" After getting married to Sarah, the Diaspora person in the quest finds herself in a circumstance where she feels alienated; she loses her identity and her name, and she becomes dispersed while seeing people vanish. The intelligent Adit imagined that only a stranger would discover her and that she had lost her identity in England after marriage, with a sudden silver dropping on the light of glamour. It is simpler for a lady to fit in with her new family and friends if she marries someone from the same culture. However, intercultural marriage creates adjustment issues that are difficult

to overcome and deal with in society. The issue in Sarah's case is difficult because she married someone whose race was once subjugated by her own. The greatest irony is that Sarah is homeless in her own country.

Whether Sarah is Indian or English, she aspires to be a true person. She has had enough of being in the middle without a real identity. She does her best to maintain her integrity as a wife by making sure that her marriage is not ruined. Though not as deliberately as she did, her husband Adit had also been experimenting with his ridiculous appearance to give the impression that he was charming. However, he also acknowledges that his existence in England is wrong, and Sarah is well aware of this as well: "His whole personality seems to her to have cracked apart into an unbearable number of disjointed pieces, rattling together nosily and disharmoniously" (200).

Adit is considering leaving England permanently after the Indo-Pak War in 1965, and Sarah is well aware of this. Adit is unstable at this point and requires a supportive, understanding wife, and Sarah is a decent, responsible wife. She understands and supports her husband better than any other wife in Anita Desai's novels. She would give up anything to keep her home and her connection with him disciplined. She is aware of how to respond to her spouse in the aforementioned situation:

She could not tell what effect the smaller refusal or contradiction might have on him - …Rather she would sacrifice anything at all, in order to maintain, however superficially, a semblance of order and discipline in her house, in her relationship with him. His whole personality seemed to her to have cracked apart … if she allowed this chaos to reflect upon their marriage, she knew its fragments would not remain jangling together but would scatter, drift and crumble. (200)

Adit Sen's English wife, Sarah, shares her husband's sense of alienation. The two social worlds that she lives in do not intersect with the two irreconcilable cultures that divide her. Her marriage causes her to become estranged from her community. Because she is English, she continues to be an outsider in the Indian community. She is not a person who has been physically uprooted; she does not belong anyplace. However, she is in a vulnerable state. Finding new roots is not Sarah's problem; rather, it is one of up rootedness and, consequently, depth. She discovers that she is an outsider and unfamiliar with the world she is a part of. Sarah

feels reluctant to leave her home at the time of her departure, "it was her English self that was receding and fading and dying, she knew, it was her English self to which she must say good-bye" (200).

Anita Desai's vivid, rich imagination is only seen to be at its peak. Since the Indian characters define themselves by their responses to the foreign surroundings, the establishment of the physical environment is crucial to the novel's success. Portobello Road symbolises urban England, while the picturesque and romantic countryside of England is depicted with all the attention to detail and love that one expects from Anita Desai's writing. All of the figures in London are given an appearance of unreality and free copying of people due to the city's densely packed bazaars and crowds. Indians are volatile and act in a manner typical of East Asians. White people's awareness of their race is in line with how English people act.

Sarah, Dev Adit, and the other three main characters all act in too predictable ways. They are trying to figure out who they are. Adit's abrupt decision to return to India, Dev's shifting views towards England, the tension, and the hatred are all accurately depicted. Sarah faces the most difficult decision of her life when she must decide whether to accompany Adit to India and raise her child with yet another uninteresting identity or to stay in England and enjoy her promoted job as long as her child has an English identity. Through the three major characters in *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, Anita Desai effectively exposes the issue of identity crisis and provides a piece of in-depth information and insight on the subject.

For many exiled or immigrant writers, writing novels about their home nation based on memory has proven to be a formidable undertaking. She addresses the issue of adjustment that Black immigrants in England experience in the novel. She brings up this issue by depicting the circumstances of three distinct persons. The three main characters in the novel Dev, Adit, and Sarah all deal with identity quests by examining the impact of racial hatred on their sensibilities. In order to comply with societal expectations, the characters are compelled to practice manipulation.

Desai starts her characters with thoughts of self-analysis after placing them in particular delicate human situations. The story progresses as people adopt new perspectives, realise who they are, and frequently experience alienation. Many

times, in order to accept the truth of the situation, one must enter a realm of imagination. Adit's nostalgia takes on the horrifying aspect of a disease or pain within himself. It starts off suffocating and eventually gets him tired of being in England. He thinks of himself as stronger and wins. In a sort of aberrant dimension of disease, he wanders around London in quest of a sense of belonging, but the city seems completely different; he just cannot recognise his workday, exhausted London as his former golden Mecca. The main characters' identity quest remains ongoing, and they are unable to make a snap decision about what to do. Desai portrays the Indian immigrants' anguish, sorrow, and hopelessness. Similar to this, Jhabvala uses the multicultural and multifocal interactions of the European migrants in her book Heat and Dust to explore the cross-cultural encounter and identity crisis. Jhabvala and Desai both do a good job of exposing the sociocultural sterility of Europe and India, respectively.

The difficult situation of these outsiders in an alien Indian and European culture was beautifully observed by Desai and Jhabvala through a number of uprooted and alienated characters from their homeland. Desai's attempt to visualise the differences on the social, political, and cultural fronts where they wanted to be merged with Europe and India but their European and Indian thoughts never left them ultimately led to their characters being in a crisis in an alien culture.

A number of Indian authors have written about cultural struggle, exile, expertise, and man-woman relationships. Due to the abundance of the West, many educated Indians have migrated to postcolonial India. In this book, Sarah is the most attractive character. Both at home and work, she is a dedicated and selfless lady. She is so spiritually aware that she asks herself too many questions about her life, some of which she finds difficult to comprehend. She separated from her parents after being married in order to fulfil the new duties that come with being a wife. She is prepared to travel to India and let go of all she has ever loved.

In the novel, *Bye-Bye Blackbird* the ontological instability, alienation, cultural struggle, and misery of uprooted individuals are depicted by Anita Desai, a specialist in explaining the action of criticising the psyche. Through her works, Anita Desai has eloquently captured the predicament of those who have been uprooted. Her works clearly address the experience of exile, cultural conflict, human relationships, and existential issues that are prevalent in the literary scene of

the twentieth century, and the readers are able to obtain a quick study of these issues.

Despite her social dissatisfaction due to racial prejudice and her separation from her people, the novel's analyses how shrewdly Sarah handles her responsibilities as a wife. While most of Anita Desai's couples struggle in their marriages, and are fortunate to have a kind and understanding wife in Sarah. She might not be pleased and satisfied as a social creature. Once in India, we would all like to commend this foreign woman for understanding her husband, his family, and his nation. In *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, Anita Desai has masterfully highlighted the isolation and self-alienation of these three characters. Throughout the novel, the uprooted characters Adit, Dev, and Sarah experience exile, and cultural and social alienation, and they are plagued by ongoing identity crises. With particular reference to Anita Desai's novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, this essay has attempted to illustrate the development of exile literature from its modest beginnings to its current position. Since this paper aims to produce many more, this is just the beginning. Interested in studying literature from exiles.

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Text, Symbol, and Identity: When DMK Flag becomes Literature and Speaks through the Literary-Political Vision of Muthamilzh Arignar Dr. Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi

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Abstract

The Research paper deals with the DMK flag as cultural and literary text, fixing within the framework of postcolonial Identity, Semiotics and political figure. The flag of the party embodies a symbolic grammar. When it comes to DMK, the black color signifies oppression and the Red color signifies struggle and the rising Sun represents the promise of Social justice. Through readings from Kalaignar's autobiography Nenjuku Needhi , the research paper interprets the DMK flag as narrative of resistance. The flag is integral part of Dr.Kalaignar M Karunanidhi, acting as a site where ideology, literature and cultural symbolism converge. By decoding flag as Text, the study denotes that how political symbols, when analysed through English literary theory, tells deeper insights into the intersection of identity, power and cultural expression. In the end, the paper states that the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam flag not only belongs to the party and politics but also to the broader archive of world literature and symbolic discourse.

Key words : Semiotics, Nenjukku Neethi, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, M.K Stalin, Udhayanidhi Stalin Flag, Dr.Kalaignar M Karunanidhi, Symbolism, Black and Red

In literary studies, Symbols translate the immediate cultural or political content to become text that utter layered meanings. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) flag remains one such symbol. The Rising Sun, Black and Red

motifs, is often considered as just political insignia of Tamil soil, Dravidian movement. But then when it is viewed in the lens of Semiotics , the banderole can be read as cultural text that connotates narratives of oppression, resistance and hope. The Research paper examines the DMK flag as a Literary symbol and Semiotics, fitting it into the framework of postcolonial Identity and political literature. It also examine the central role of Muthamilzh Arignar Kalaignar Dr.Karunanidhi, whose literary political voice is with the flag, that crosses beyond politics into cultural memory, history and literature. The flag was found in 1959 by C.N. Annadurai. Rising Sun between the mountains was added by electoral Commission of India in 1970.

Semiotics is developed by Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes. They has allowed us to treat sign as carriers of meaning. In the sense, the DMK part flag is not only running as party embelem but as a living text. Its color form structure of meaning, black color symbolizes oppression and ignorance. The red color symbolizes revolution and struggle. The Rising Sun denotes equality, hope and justice. This symbolism equates the use of methapor and imagery in literature. As Yeats invoked roses swan and banners to express nationality of Irish. The DMK flag condenses an entire socio political narrative into visual. It convey stories of resistance and aspiration that echo with literary tradition of symbols as vehicle of identity.

"The black in our party flag symbolizes ignorance and oppression; the red signifies struggle and the rise toward equality; and between them, the rising sun manifests hope and justice." (Karunanidhi 1:C) Karunanidhi fits flag with symbolic reference akin to literary imagery, interpreting color and images as social transformation, Kalaignar transcends politics. The above passage from Nenjuku Needhi of Karunanidhi clearly picturize the Semiotics meaning within the flag. The black visual symbol in the flag elevates the metaphor for historical oppression and Social ignorance. It represents the societal and Social injustice to the the Dravidian populous, prior to the emerge of party. The red color signifies the revolutionary struggle and active resistance akin to literary use of fire and blood as transformative symbol. The Rising Sun in the center part of party flag denotes equality,hope and justice that reflect and symbolizes the entire Tamil society. The memoir integrates political philosophy with literature and literary imagination.

In the book the author says black color in the flag symbolizes the oppression and inequality. The red color symbolizes the struggle for equality. The duality encapsulates party commitment to dismantle social hierarchy and uproot the self respect and rationalism. The Rising symbol in the central part of flag denotes the dawn of new era similarilized to social equality and justice. The author discusses symbolism embedded in flag aligning with Kalaignar political thoughts.

The flag enacts as a postcolonial text. The hegemonic domination that how communities resist was frequently interrogates postcolonial literature. The Dravidian movement's declaration of Tamil identity against Sanskrit and Northern imposition reflects the struggles that voiced in postcolonial English Literature. Ngugi wa Thiong'o has penned on reclaiming African languages. Indigenous narratives against colonial stereotypes was spoked by Chinua Achebe . Indian fractured Identity was articulated by Salman Rushdie. Similarly, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam flag represents a reclamation of Dravidian Identity, avoiding cultural subjunction while proclaiming Self - Determination. The DMK flag becomes a part of global Archives of symbols of resistance and liberation, when read in dialogue with English literary text.

The literal meaning of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's flag cannot be separated from the personality called Dr.Muthuvel Karunanidhi. He is a screenwriter, statesman and playwright and renowned politician. Karunanidhi consistently and continuously integrated his political ideas with literary imagination. The Rising Sun motif was not merely a visual symbol or image but also a recurring metaphor in his Speeches writing and dramas. The flag becomes an supplement of his celebrity persona. It not only representing DMK movement but also the voice of Dr.Kalaignar M Karunanidhi's voice. In this contemplative, the flag is unfurling as both a signifier of collective identity and projecting Kalaignar as strong personality, blurring the boundary between literature and politics.

In English literature, Flag and embelem places a major role. In *Leaves of Grass*, Walt Whitman celebrated American flag as a symbol for democracy. William Butler Yeats brought in Irish national imagery in his poetry, fitting cultural symbols into identity. In *Midnight's Children* Salman Rushdie experienced the fractured symbolism of Indian flag as a metaphor for national crisis and partition. Unfurling DMK flag in this conversation with these literary work. I (Researcher)

could strongly recognize that its symbolism is not parochial but it is a part of universal tradition where DMK flag embody collective hopes, struggles and identities.

The study has found that, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam flag has many dimensions beyond political functions like Cultural text. Through the lense of Semiotics, it grows as a narrative of oppression and resistance and hope. It becomes a symbol, identity reclamation and cultural sovereignty. In conclusion, in comparison with English literary traditions , it fits with a extended symbolic economy in which flag serve as embelem of collective aspiration. The DMK flag represents the power of symbols in literature and cultural imagination beyond politics.

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Language, Identity, and the Feminine Body – A Feminist Reading of Mona Awad's "13 Ways of Looking at a Fat Girl"

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Abstract

Contemporary feminist studies position the feminine body as a site of social and cultural constructs formed by gender expectations, stereotypes, beauty standards, and power dynamics. Language acts as a pivotal tool to define the meanings associated with society, emphasizing how women embody these cultural and linguistic representations, shaping identity development and self-image. Mona Awad's "13 Ways of Looking at a Fat Girl" delivers a clear narration that examines the counters of self-perception, social scrutiny, and fatness, uncovering the linguistic expression and gendered expectations that construct the feminine body. Employing Susan Bordo's Feminist Body Theory, this study seeks to interpret how language acts as a tool of resistance and subjection in forming body politics and female identity. This paper employs a qualitative method to analyze the dynamics between cultural standards, self-representations, and internalized fatphobia through a linguistic representation and narrative construction lens. The portrayal of fatness illuminates the cultural discipline of moral judgments, gendered oppressions, and surveillance. To create a space for resistance, irony, and self-assertion, this novel exposes the need for language mechanisms to foreground fat female expressions, nurturing the scholarship on identity, embodiment, language, and highlighting the critical interrogations of how literature illustrates and reinforces the gendered stereotypes of the body.

Keywords: Language, Fat body, Identity, Resistance, and Power dynamics

Language is a neutral component for communicating social meanings, cultural practices, ideology, liberation, and mechanisms of oppression. The feminine body emerges as a reflective artifact in linguistic and cultural aspects, formed by aesthetic beauty ideals and societal constructions. Feminist scholars like Susan Bordo, Simon de Beauvoir, Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, and Naomi Wolf discuss the cultural discipline, social construction, and discursive construction of the female body, beauty as a control mechanism, remembering the transformation of the female body into a political text. The novel "13 Ways of Looking at a Fat Girl" was published in the year 2016 by Mona Awad, a compelling Canadian-American novelist. Her themes revolve around womanhood, identity, and embodiment. Her works discuss the internalization of social standards like beauty, desirability, attractiveness, and success that result in distorted self-perception and unbalanced emotional energy. All women have flaws in their skin since society has long held the belief in a certain standard of beauty based on factors including outward look, internal characteristics, and attitude (Khoo). Amad's debut novel, "13 Ways of Looking at a Fat Girl" is a transformative exploration of female identity, self-objectification, and body politics in a media-driven world. The novel traces the life of the protagonist, Elizabeth, as three counters, "Lizzie, Beth, and Liz" from her childhood to adulthood as an evolving relationship with self-perception and body image.

Awad's motif in transforming the aspects of the protagonist is to mirror the metaphors constructed as a cultural surveillance of the female body. These days, there are still certain individuals who judge others, which might result in the ongoing objectification of women (Sherrow). Although both male and female sexuality are portrayed as means of empowerment, the former is consistently replicated as the latter's validated consent: feminine beauty is practiced as the act of making oneself attractive rather than as an act of expressing one's sexual desire (Gill). By resonating with the postmodern feminist discourse, examining how embodiment and identity are conveyed by power and performance. According to Gill, the ritual of caring for one's body becomes a self-disciplined activity, "a narcissistic self-surveillance," governed by normative depictions of what is expected to be feminine and female (Gill). The scrutiny and fragmentations are

captured, where fatness and femininity are socially conflicting, where language acts as a form of violence, and self-determination is concurred through screens.

The interplay of Language, Individuality, and the Feminine body displays how broader perceptions influence and restrict a feminine sense of self. Language determines how individuals are identified with, assessed, and regarded, regularly strengthening gender stereotypes of aesthetics, integrity, and control. The female body develops into an artistic narrative, and a sense of self is established by using words and representation. Women internalize these cues, transform constructive criticism into self-control and shame. By means of feminist expression, language becomes a method to fight back. Twenty-first-century theorists have been able to examine the masculine/feminine dichotomy and examine how it shapes social, political, and economic institutions, thanks to the development of feminist ideas and gender studies (Dimulescu). It lets you take back your body from being objectified and use it to create power, agency, and a new identity that exists beyond what society thinks is attractive. This research employs a close textual review of Mona Awad's 13 Ways of Looking at a Fat Girl, grounded in Susan Bordo's Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body. Utilizing feminist body theory, the study explores language, representation, and interpersonal psychological factors to reveal constructed body politics, fat portrayals, and socialization. For comprehending this change, Bordo's theory provides a crucial foundation. Bordo contends that despite the body's cultural markings, it is also a site of "lived resistance," where women may reassess and redefine cultural communication (Nichter and Bordo).

In this novel, language functions as a weapon and a reflection of oppression. Awad's narration is disciplined through words to convey her internal thoughts and emotions. From the opening "When We Went Against the Universe" Lizzie's thought is filtered as she is a fat girl, differentiated from others, as this world looks too strange, where others are slim, the social comparison is exposed here. "McFlurry and talk about how fat we are for a while. But it doesn't matter how long we talk about it or how many times Mel assures me she's a fucking whale beneath her clothes; I know I'm fatter." (Awad 10). This passage reveals the internalized fatphobia and distorted body perception integrated in self-identity and female friendship. By sharing a McFlurry, weight becomes a self-punishment and an act of intimacy during the discussion. Although Mel's reassurance, Elizabeth's certainty

that she is 'fatter', emphasizes the toxic hierarchy of body comparison forged by traditionalist beauty standards. The language used by the author reveals the raw and self-loathing reflection of how women in society are accustomed to measuring their value through body shape or size. By exposing the painful irony of female bonding formed from shared inner conflict, where solace coexists with persistent surveillant selfhood and internalized discrimination.

"Later on I'm going to be really fucking beautiful. I'm going to grow into that nose and develop an eating disorder. I'll be hungry and angry all my life but I'll also have a hell of a time" (Awad 13). The phrase "I'll be hungry and angry all my life" expresses Lizza's tragic anticipation of beauty as distress and pursuit. Her belief that beauty is the pursuit of societal validation is expressed in the phrase 'develop an eating disorder'. The juxtaposition of hungry and angry demonstrates the dual emotional exhaustion of resistance and deficit. Awad analyses that culture equates thinness with desirability, confidence, and success, revealing how socialized gender oppression shifts pain into attractiveness. Awad's way of expressing the meaning through an ironic tone is to make aware of the violence she faced in her life, illustrating how beauty becomes a benchmark of attraction and a form of custody. "Christ, what's the fat girl's name again? Liz? Liza? Eliza? Something -iza, maybe. The point is, even though it's Friday night and very, very late, you know she'll be home. The fat girl is always home" (Awad 17). This phrase enhances the dehumanization and suppression of fat individuals through self-perception and language. The narrator's nervousness shows the stereotype by calling the woman "Liz" instead than "fat girl." The notion that "the fat girl is always home" affirms societal stereotypes of being undesirable, solitary, and an outsider. Awad expresses how fat individuals are discriminated against and presented as invisible within dominant beliefs. The language perpetuates structural body-based discrimination, shaping identity through extrinsic determination rather than empowerment.

"Yup," you breathe into her warm, doughy neck, marveling at how, with one mere breath, you can make a whole fat girl tremble like a leaf" (Awad 22). 'The whole fat girl trembles like a leaf' illustrates the objectification of fat female individuals. Phrases such as "fat, warm, doughy neck" objectify the female character, limiting her to an object rather than an individual. The distressing hierarchy of power is evident as attraction and vulnerability are interconnected with

guilt. Here, being big is both taken humorously and praised by men, exhibiting how authority, disgust, and social prejudice can affect relationships. The imagery underscores that the condition of fat women's bodies is degraded and desired. "A full-body shot's no big deal," she says. "I guess. Just I haven't really told him about me, you know?" "Don't move." "Like, about my weight or anything," I add, the word weight falling from my mouth like a stone" (Awad 27). 'A full-body shot's no big deal' expresses the vulnerability surrounding self-representation and revelation in relationships. To reveal the internalized shame, fear of rejection faced in society signifies the emotional burden and stigmatization pressure attached to fat identity. Awad shows how society was created, distorted self-expression, and the body becomes a site of suppression and testimony. This reveals the psychological repercussions of fat visibility and societal perception.

""Really?" I turn to look at her—eyes nose lips chin so cutting and sharp, her bones in an elegant origami configuration on my bed. If she took the photo. Did my eyes. Helped me choose my clothes. She's really into art, so she probably knows all about angles. I feel a surge of something like hope" (Awad 31). This aspect demonstrates how badly Elizabeth desires to be acknowledged by her more toned "artistic" companion. The friend's "cutting and sharp" attributes, resulting in are demonstrated within origami images, are intended for attractiveness and power while being misconceptions for vulnerability. Elizabeth's reliance on her friend's "angles" to transform her appearance shows that she has embraced fatphobia and relies on people to convince her that she is attractive to make herself feel optimistic about her looks. Awad clarifies that female self-worth is influenced by how other individuals see themselves, especially women who conform to what the culture thinks is acceptable. The "surge of hope" conveys that Elizabeth desires change and does not accept her identity. This emphasizes how the beauty industry promotes women to seek acceptance from external changes rather than real self-assurance.

"I fold my arms and look down past my thighs at the bedspread beneath me. I never look at my body if I can help it. It's bigger, I can feel it, but I haven't stepped on the scale or looked in a full-length mirror in months" (Awad 34). During this stage, Elizabeth's indifference and embarrassment make it clear that she is experiencing a sense of disconnection from her physical self. She can't look at herself in mirrors or weigh herself on scales, which shows how emotionally distant and angry she is with herself. "Folding arms" is a protective motion that she uses to

conceal and deal with what she thinks is unfair. Society's obsession with thinness causes self-monitoring and doubt, which generates a perception of reliance and unhappiness, according to Awad. Elizabeth's "I can feel it" feeling that her body is changing without assistance highlights how being yourself may affect your mental health when your body is a prison and an affirmation of your perceived inferiority. "Sure. I'm grateful, you know. I'm grateful to you. Look at you. Look at me. I'm unworthy. It's okay. I know I am. I've accepted it. The fact that you let me do this?" (Awad 49). Elizabeth's repeating "I'm grateful to you" shows how deeply she feels unworthy in Elizabeth's saying "I'm grateful to you" again and over demonstrates how profoundly she feels unworthy in relationships. This is because she feels inferior in her body. Comparing "Look at you. The hierarchy "Look at me." makes thinness valuable and fatness a debt. Awad shows how love in this relationship seems conditional, like it's given rather than shared. The comment "The fact that you let me do this?" shows she thinks closeness is permission, not choice. Awad criticizes the constructed control that transforms love into affirmation and how ideals of beauty limit both psychological and physical freedom.

"That was a couple of years ago, when we were living together. I was still more or less an agoraphobic whale" (Awad 68). As a "agoraphobic whale," Elizabeth illustrates how societal prejudice unites physical and emotional suffering. Fat body abuse has created a self-image of enormity, disgust, and concealment, which the "whale" embodies. Awad expresses her level of buried disgust through black satire and self-satisfaction. She might be "more or less" agoraphobic, enabling her avoidance of gatherings because of discomfort and shame. Fatness has been associated with social isolation, stress, and a decrease in autonomy, as demonstrated in this passage. "She's taking it all in, my whole fat-to-muscle ratio, and I know it's making me less credible in her eyes, which say she has named me. Probably something like Inconsistent Gym User. Or Fat Ass" (Awad 154). Elizabeth's evaluative awareness demonstrates the disciplining gaze ingrained. The "fat-to-muscle ratio" reveals the way she understands herself via fitness societal facts, measurements, and appeal. Her descriptions, such as "Inconsistent Gym User" and "Fat Ass," disclose how she leverages cultural judgment into personal surveillance. Awad speaks out against a society that links physical form to obedience or success. As Elizabeth's personality is determined to decrease

diversity, emotions, and distinctive characteristics under mental review, this example displays her exhaustion from persistent study.

Mona Awad's 13 Ways of Looking at a Fat Girl visually illustrates the female body as a cultural construct shaped by societal conventions, regulations, and restrictions, using Susan Bordo's Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body as a theoretical framework. Bordo says internalization and body surveillance enable women to adopt authoritarian norms, turning repression into self-surveillance. Elizabeth's knowledge of her "fat-to-muscle ratio," her negative thoughts about herself in front of mirrors, and her desire to be skinny all show how this kind of oppressive examination works.

Mona Awad's 13 Ways of Looking at a Fat Girl is a strong argument for how language, society, and cultural norms control the bodies of women. Awad shows how life under continual scrutiny can be emotionally and psychologically violent, as patriarchal and commercial norms determine beauty and worth. He does this via Elizabeth's shattered view of herself. The textual studies show how Elizabeth's concept of self is shaped by getting approval from others, being watched by others, and keeping her feelings to herself. She avoids mirrors, is afraid of photos, and wants to be liked. This shows how the body can be both a place of pain and a place to negotiate identity. The narrative draws on Susan Bordo's body theory to show how the expectations of society get ingested, forming what Bordo calls the "docile body" a body which conforms to customs on its own merits. Elizabeth's thoughts, which are driven by disgust and contrast, are reminiscent of Bordo's claim that women's bodies are formed by societal control that seems like personal choice. Awad's story illustrates how being required to be slim is not solely an issue of self-image; it is a sort of social authority that differentiates women from their bodies and from other people.

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Ecological Devastation and Green Resistance: Reimagining Sustainability in Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood*

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Abstract

Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* envisions a world destroyed by environmental exploitation, corporate greed, and unethical scientific experimentation. The novel foregrounds sustainability through the eco-spiritual community known as God's Gardeners, who advocate organic living, compassion for all species, and harmonious coexistence with nature. This paper examines how Atwood critiques the Anthropocene and highlights sustainable alternatives necessary for ethical human survival. Employing ecofeminism and environmental ethics as theoretical frames, the article reveals how the text promotes activism, ecological responsibility, and planetary care as pathways to future sustainability. Atwood positions nature not as a passive backdrop but as an active force demanding accountability, reminding humanity that exploitation carries irreversible consequences. The narrative challenges anthropocentric ideologies, urging readers to recognize the interconnectedness of life and the fragile balance that sustains ecosystems. Through its portrayal of climate catastrophe, bioengineered creatures, and collapsing social systems, the novel functions as both a warning and a moral compass, calling for immediate ecological consciousness and reform. In doing so, Atwood imagines sustainability not as a distant aspiration but as a necessary collective commitment for survival in a rapidly deteriorating world.

Keywords: Eco-literature, sustainability, Anthropocene, ecofeminism, environmental ethics, Atwood

Introduction

The 21st century has witnessed alarming ecological crises caused by reckless industrial development. Literature has increasingly responded to these environmental emergencies, creating what is now termed eco-literature. Margaret Atwood emerges as a leading writer in climate fiction, questioning the destructive impacts of human actions. *The Year of the Flood* presents a near-future dystopia

where ecological collapse, biotech experiments, and pandemics redefine the fate of life on Earth. Atwood uses this fictional setting as a warning and as a call for sustainable reform grounded in environmental ethics. The narrative dramatizes how the capitalist pursuit of profit has prioritized growth over the biosphere, resulting in irreversible damage. Corporate forces like the CorpSeCorps and Compounds operate as symbols of ecological injustice, exploiting both nature and marginalized communities. Through the God's Gardeners, Atwood proposes an alternative worldview rooted in ecological humility, spiritual stewardship, and interspecies solidarity. Their practices such as urban gardening, vegetarianism, and recycling emphasize that sustainability is not merely a scientific solution but a cultural and ethical transformation. Atwood suggests that survival in the Anthropocene depends on a shift from domination to coexistence, from consumption to conservation.

The novel interrogates the illusion of human supremacy by showcasing bioengineered organisms and hybrid life forms that blur the boundaries between species. These creations reveal that scientific innovation, without moral responsibility, can threaten the balance of evolution itself. In this sense, Atwood positions nature as a retaliatory force; ecological abuse inevitably circles back to endanger humanity. Through speculative fiction, the novel compels readers to confront the environmental consequences of their daily choices and to imagine a future where sustainability is foundational to human existence rather than a mere afterthought.

Objectives

This article aims to:

- Analyze how ecological devastation is depicted in the novel.
- Explore sustainable practices through God's Gardeners.
- Examine ecofeminist and ethical questions regarding nature and the body.

Literature Review

Scholars identify Atwood as a leading voice in climate fiction, addressing global ecological anxieties of the 21st century. Critics emphasize the novel's warning against unregulated biotechnology, which threatens biodiversity and environmental balance. Researchers link consumer capitalism in the novel to real-world "Capitalocene," showing how profit-driven systems accelerate ecological collapse. Studies highlight God's Gardeners as representatives of sustainable ethics who promote recycling, plant-based diets, and ecosystem protection. Ecofeminist criticism explores how oppression of women parallels exploitation of nature in

patriarchal societies. Several academic works argue that Atwood uses religion as ecological consciousness, celebrating environmental heroes as saints.

Research Methodology

The study uses a qualitative research method, focusing on close reading and textual interpretation of Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood*. The analysis is grounded in Eco-critical theory, especially sustainability studies, to understand how the novel represents human–nature relationships. Ecofeminism (Vandana Shiva, Carolyn Merchant) is applied to examine parallels between the exploitation of nature and the domination of women in the narrative. Concepts from Environmental Ethics (Arne Naess) are used to evaluate the moral obligation toward nature shown by characters like God's Gardeners. The research adopts a descriptive and analytical approach to explore how environmental crisis is portrayed as a direct outcome of consumerism and biotech capitalism. The study incorporates secondary sources such as scholarly articles, critical essays, books on climate fiction, and eco-literature to support and validate claims.

Ecological Devastation and Green Resistance: Reimagining Sustainability

Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* offers a powerful narrative of ecological ruin caused by corporate greed, technological manipulation, and reckless consumerism. The dystopian world portrayed in the text foreshadows an era where human civilization collapses because it fails to value the natural systems it depends on. The fictional corporations such as HelthWyzer convert nature into a profit-making machine, treating even illness as a commodity. This reveals the terrifying truth that "people are starving to death while companies make money from keeping them alive just long enough" (Atwood 212). Such lines expose capitalism's role in accelerating environmental destruction and demonstrate why sustainability becomes a life-or-death necessity.

Throughout the novel, Atwood suggests that traditional development models are incompatible with ecological balance. The ecosystem is shown as fragile, violated, and retaliatory. The rise of genetically engineered organisms and toxic degradation of ecosystems signals that humanity's desire to dominate nature ultimately leads to "water turning toxic and crops failing overnight" (Atwood 126). The text's environmental imaginary functions as a critique of the Anthropocene era, where humans behave as planetary rulers rather than responsible inhabitants.

Against this backdrop of devastation, the green community known as God's Gardeners emerges as an alternative model of sustainable living. They grow their

own food, recycle waste, and respect all species as fellow creations of Earth. Their prayer that "we must live lightly upon the Earth" (Atwood 45) serves as both a spiritual reminder and a manifesto of sustainability. Their ecological spirituality blends science, ethics, and community responsibility, advocating a lifestyle that minimizes human damage to the biosphere. This practice challenges the reader to rethink what it means to survive: not through exploitation but through cooperation with nature.

The treatment of women's bodies in the novel parallels the exploitation of the Earth, forming an ecofeminist structure. Characters like Toby are forced into oppressive labor, and Ren suffers under sexual commodification. Their bodies, like the planet, become targets of corporate control and violence. Toby reflects that "they want every part of you," and this line echoes the extractive logic of capitalism that takes relentlessly from both women and nature (Atwood 99). Atwood frames sustainability not only as an environmental goal but as a feminist one; liberation of the Earth is inseparable from liberation of marginalized bodies.

A remarkable aspect of the novel lies in its reimagining of religion. Instead of oppressive dogma, spirituality in God's Gardeners reinforces ecological ethics. They celebrate saints like Rachel Carson and Jane Goodall, blending holiness with environmental heroism. The reminder that "every creature has a place in the Earth household" (Atwood 58) elevates all beings to moral significance. Religion here becomes a tool of ecological awakening, transforming faith into an activist force that supports sustainability, compassion, and biospheric rights.

The Year of the Flood positions sustainability as the foundation for survival after catastrophe. Atwood does not merely describe an ecological apocalypse; she teaches that collapse occurs when humans fail to respect natural interdependence. Her narrative argues that sustainability is not a utopian dream but a practical blueprint for the future, one modeled through the communal resilience of God's Gardeners. Their commitment to low-consumption living, ethical food production, and cross-species solidarity demonstrates that a different world is possible.

The novel insists that humans must shift from domination to coexistence. Nature cannot be endlessly exploited because, as the story suggests through the symbolic pandemic, the Earth will correct human arrogance. Survival depends on eco-consciousness, collective responsibility, and the courage to resist destructive systems. Atwood's dystopia becomes a warning and a guidebook: only by embracing sustainable living can humanity hope to prevent real-world catastrophe.

In this way, *The Year of the Flood* stands as an urgent eco-literary call to rebuild our relationship with the planet before it is too late.

Atwood also advances a posthuman critique by destabilizing clear distinctions between humans, animals, and genetically engineered beings. Creatures like the Mo'Hairs and Liobams symbolize the dangerous consequences of treating evolution as a corporate playground. Their existence questions the arrogance of assuming that scientific capacity equals ethical license. As the novel implies, once humanity crosses certain genetic boundaries, "nothing remains purely natural" (Atwood 173). This complexity urges readers to reconsider human exceptionalism and recognize that all species share vulnerability in a destabilized ecosystem.

The ethics of scientific experimentation form another crucial strand in Atwood's sustainability message. The corporations' manipulation of viruses to maintain pharmaceutical profits exposes a horrifying reality where "cure and disease are engineered together" (Atwood 207). Through such revelations, the novel underscores that sustainability requires not only ecological protection but also moral responsibility in technological advancement. Atwood champions scientific progress guided by compassion, transparency, and long-term planetary welfare.

Community resilience emerges as a practical antidote to the collapse of global systems. God's Gardeners demonstrate that sustainable futures must be cooperatively built through shared labor, mutual care, and respect for diversity. Their communal gardens resist the industrial food chain that has poisoned the soil and the market system that starves the poor. The text celebrates grassroots activism by showing that meaningful environmental change begins "with small steps, taken by many hands" (Atwood 61). Sustainability becomes a collective journey rather than an individual struggle.

Atwood also emphasizes the role of storytelling in sustaining ecological memory. The hymns, oral teachings, and rituals of God's Gardeners ensure that lessons of environmental care are transmitted across generations. These narratives preserve hope, strengthen identity, and inspire action in times of despair. Atwood suggests that survival depends not only on physical adaptation but on the cultural will to remember and repair. Literature itself becomes an instrument of activism, encouraging readers to imagine alternative futures beyond destruction.

The Year of the Flood reframes sustainability as a holistic paradigm that connects **environmental health, social justice, scientific ethics, and spiritual renewal.** Atwood's dystopia warns that if humanity continues on its current path,

the consequences will be irreversible. Yet her fiction also offers strategies for resistance: cooperative living, respect for biodiversity, and ethical innovation. The novel calls upon readers to challenge the systems that endanger the planet and to build lifestyles that nurture life rather than consume it. Atwood transforms dystopian fear into ecological empowerment, urging us to act before fiction turns into fate.

Conclusion

The Year of the Flood challenges humanity to confront its ecological failures. Atwood calls for a sustainable future built on environmental compassion and resistance against destructive economies. The novel positions literature as a powerful medium to cultivate awareness, provoke change, and safeguard life on Earth. Human survival depends on rediscovering balance with nature, recognizing that the exploitation of the planet ultimately threatens our own existence. Sustainability is not a choice. It is the only path forward if we hope to protect the diverse, interconnected networks that allow life to flourish.

Atwood further emphasizes that technology alone cannot rescue the world if human behavior continues to be driven by greed and indifference. Sustainable living requires a moral transformation, where empathy for non-human life and responsibility toward future generations become central values. The novel also insists that environmental justice must be at the heart of sustainability, ensuring that marginalized communities are not the first victims of ecological collapse. Atwood suggests that remembering the mistakes of the past is crucial for building a future that avoids repeating patterns of destruction. Through her dystopian warning, she demonstrates that ecosystems can heal if humans choose humility over dominance.

Atwood converts fear into motivation. *The Year of the Flood* delivers a hopeful yet urgent message: that resilience is possible through cooperation, ethical innovation, and care for all forms of life. The text becomes a call to action, urging readers to rebuild human–nature relationships before irreversible damage is done. Atwood's vision reminds us that sustaining the planet means sustaining our own humanity. Only when society embraces ecological respect, equality, and accountability can a livable future remain within reach.

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The Modern Art of Storytelling: From Patter and Page to Pixel

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Abstract

Storytelling is an art especially in Indian culture and the way it is told has evolved over the years. In the ancient times, stories were told orally and people would gather around the narrator and imagine what is being narrated to them. Later, the stories were transcribed and made into books but due to the advancement in technology, the present generation prefers digital story rather than written script in pages or oral tradition. In a way, it is helping them to understand the concepts better because of LSRW skills that are involved in visual storytelling. This digital advancement has blurred the boundaries between the narrator and the audience, pixel and print. Social media influencers narrate stories when they do Get Ready With Me (GRWM) videos and even stand-up comedians perform by narrating stories in a humorous way which are delivered to the global audience through different platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter (X). Also, today's youth often prefers movie adaptations of certain books but definitely it does not overshadow the original text. Therefore, this paper tries to explore on how Indian literature did not confine with just oral tradition or libraries but has flourished with multimedia creations through various platforms like social media posts, reels, blogs, podcasts and YouTube.

Keywords: Digital Storytelling, Multimedia, Literary Transformation, Digital Literature, Stand-up Comedy.

Story telling is an art in Indian culture and it has been made simple in the present times due to the advancement in technology which has made easily accessible for the audience through different platforms. A story is simply a narration about an incident, person or any event. Before the invention of storytelling, people shared knowledge through spoken stories. In India, stories are not just fictional stories rather it carries the social values, communal values and the preservation of

culture. The way in which it is delivered might vary as years pass by depending on the narrator and the medium but the cultural value is still preserved and it remains strong.

In the ancient times, folktales are used as a means of communicating ideas and to pass down the culture. In those days, folktales are told not only to the children but it was applicable to all the folks irrespective of age differences in their daily life. Folktales are small stories which are narrated by a person when villagers gather in a place that shaped their understanding of the world. These stories are not a myth or legendary stories rather it has a purpose that is to teach moral values, to create a sense of their communal identity and belonging. These folktales are embedded with the secrets of particular community, their culture, their way of living to the future generations and they do not have any written scripts just like how we have at present. The current generation has knowledge about the world and science because of their exposure to various social institutions like school, college and religious places but in those days for the rural people, there was no such place to know about creation, medicine and universe.

Digital storytelling is the modern expression of the ancient art of storytelling. It helps people in language learning process because of the use of digital visuals and auditory artifacts in the story narration. Digital storytelling has made complex subjects easier and enjoyable for the mass audience. There are two components in digital story telling that are story and digitalization of the story. Digital storytelling is used in different fields even in schools and colleges for the better understanding of the concepts. In those days, children learned a new language from their parents, teachers, neighbors and relatives and it was oral and more of an experience based learning but now the present generation kids learn language through radio, television, films, mobisodes, stand-up comedy shows, YouTube and even from GRWM videos. Language learning was slow paced earlier but now it is fast paced because of the digital environment. Digital storytelling is not just a tool but it is a revolution (Meadows, 2003a, p.192).

Tamil Nadu is well known for great epics like Kambaramayanam, Mahabharata, Thiruthondat Puranam, Aiyumperumkappiyam, Ainchirukappiyankal and so on. These epics highlight the value story telling has in their culture. These stories not just stop with oral narrations rather it is performed during great festivals

as a shared cultural event. Also, children listen to the stories told by their grandparents which are commonly called as "Paati Kadhaigal" meaning Grandmother Stories. Villupaatu, Harikatha, Pattimandram (debate), Therukoothu are all different types of storytelling in Tamil culture. These stories not only shaped their way of communication but also their thinking ability.

Before the digital era, language was not learnt as a separate subject just like how we learn in school these days. Children learnt vocabularies from their communities, parents, relatives, and elders. Without formal teaching, they were able to learn vocabulary naturally without rote learning. Language learning was fun and interactive in those days where they did not have any pressure for perfection. In the present days, schools focus on written language more than spoken language. This resulted in loss of natural flow, emotional tone and rhythm. Even in this digital era, parents are busy with their work and daily routine. The normal daily communication has also reduced in families as a result of increase in nuclear families. Even, youths and adults have also stopped oral communication and prefer text messages over phone calls or direct conversation. This is where we could see that media has started influencing our lives. First, it started with newspapers, radio, films and later it has transformed with digital media platforms. Thus, there is a shift from interpersonal learning to media based learning.

With the invention of printing press, oral storytelling started fading in every part of the world because everyone started to have their own copies of books and enjoyed the stories by reading in seclusion. Before books came into existence, stories lived with everyone in their memory and within their community but after the arrival of books, the stories travelled beyond the borders and entertained everybody irrespective of whichever cultural background they belong to. After this, radio was used for mass broadcasting. In a way, it brought back the collective listening experience which gave them the exposure to different accents, tone and modulation while listening to the story narrations. The advent of Television brought another change in the lives of the people. While radio gave space to imagination when the story is being narrated, television stopped it as the stories were visually represented. But in the movies, the actors acted in an expressive way by delivering the content with emotions which helped the audience to replicate the dialogues while speaking which in turn helped them to learn the language and vocabulary. People even started imitating punch dialogues in movies told by famous actors, their

mannerism while delivering the content, jokes and expressions. Television strengthened this style made by the media personalities.

After all these came the interactive digital story telling though transmedia. There came a quick shift in storytelling with the internet world via smartphones, laptops, tablets and the internet. At present, anyone can become a story teller using YouTube videos where people tell story while cooking or through Get Ready With Me (GRWM) videos. This allows everyone to share a message or a story instantly to the mass audience. The digital media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Twitter (X), Tiktok, Podcasts and Facebook helps them to share their personal stories or the stories with which the audience can relate with. For this type of storytelling, they do not even need a proper stage or audience gathered around and it is accessible to all. In the olden days, storytelling required training, voice control and stage presence but now even an ordinary people use digital platforms to narrate their everyday life scenarios. Thus, today's storytelling style is conversational and interactive which not the case was in the olden days because people remained as passive listeners. At present, if the so called influencers talk about some controversial topics people will not remain silent as passive listeners, instead they question their ideas by responding in the chat box or in comments. At the same time, if they perform something impressive, the public is ready to appreciate them also.

Stand-up comedians mostly use personal stories to grab the attention of the audience as an effective way to engage with them. They deliver their stories by exaggerating something that has happened in their life or something that they witnessed in person. They talk about various topics like friendships, love failures, relationship problems, school experiences, work experiences, marriage experiences, superstitious beliefs and cultural habits. The main aim is to evoke homour to the audience but there will be a message behind their jokes. The famous comedians like Alexander Babu, Abishek Kumar, Nirmal Pillai, Praveen Kumar, and Ramkumar often speak in Tanglish which will make the audience to emotionally connect with them.

GRWM videos are another unique type of storytelling by content creators which is watched by many. Their tone of speech is mostly casual, unfiltered, and friendly and talks like the girl next door. They share relatable, simple, and ordinary topics. This seems to have the vibe of Grandma Stories in

those days so the audiences feel personally connected. The drawback with this type of storytelling is that more than the story, the creator is on the main focus. In those days, whenever someone spoke to a larger audience, they will intend to teach moral values and lessons but they are lacking in these types of stories. Sometimes even the content creators mislead the audience by justifying their wrong doings which the young generation might mindlessly consume without their knowledge. They may sometimes give misinformation to the audience about certain products when they are paid. Here the setting might be a vanity room, bedroom or the living area of their home to narrate their story but the cultural purpose of storytelling never changed.

These types of storytelling allow them to find their own voice by using a global language or blending their regional with English to speak Thanglish or Hinglish. They deliver their dialogues through actions, gestures, gaze and even by the tone of their voice. All these communicate with us emotionally and not mechanically. With all these, the cultural value still remain the same and more strong.

To conclude, be it digital storytelling or traditional storytelling, the natural language learning process is evolving over the centuries. Storytelling being part of our culture has never lost its charm and heritage. Starting from Grandmother Stories, Villupaatu, Therukoothu to modern story telling platforms, only the medium has changed whereas the sole purpose remains the same with all sort of emotions. While some modern art of storytelling may be misleading, it is our duty to stand up by our own communal values and cultural emotions. The modern art of storytelling has not replaced the traditional one rather it developed the way of telling stories by memes, voice notes, live videos, chats, and messages. Thus, storytelling tradition thrives till today in each and every part of the world irrespective of age and languages in variety of forms.

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Destabilizing Victorian Social Hierarchies through Class Mobility in John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

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Abstract

The French Lieutenant's Woman examines the problems of socially and economically oppressed groups in Victorian England. The characters portray the three distinct levels of the Victorian class system. John Fowles, the prominent postmodernist writer explores the social limitations and prejudices through the characters of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. John Fowles the famous postmodern novelist has written many famous works like *The Collector*, *The Magus,* and *The French Lieutenant's woman*. Most of his works focuses on the subject of love, society, philosophy. One of his prominent novel is *The French Lieutenant's Woman* which was published in 1969. Through this novel Fowles parodies the cultural system of the Victorian society and criticize the society through self reflexive narrative method. This novel was familiarized for his storytelling method and it was adapted as a film. This paper analyses how John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* has destabilized the conventional Victorian society through class mobility. The titular character 'French lieutenant's woman' is an outsider who defies both class and gender norms of the Victorian rigid class system. She is an independent woman. The protagonist Charles Smithson encounters personal and social dilemmas. He was forced to choose between Sarah, an outsider and Ernestina, a middle-class woman. Again, he is placed between the aristocrat and middle class society. If he chooses Ernestina, he will be traveling

downward from the aristocrat to the middle class. If he chooses Sarah, he will be as Sarah, who exempts herself from the rigid social hierarchy, as an outsider. The evolution of society and technology challenges the traditional structure of aristocrats, middle class and working class. The interplay of social and political norms enriches the narrative and invites modern readers to sort out the Victorian hierarchy in the rapidly changing world.

Key words: prejudices, aristocrat, Victorian hierarchy, societal dilemmas, oppressed

The French Lieutenant's Woman is a blend of Victorian hierarchies and modern perspectives. It was written by John Fowles with the setting of Victorian England around 1867. It was first published in 1969. It was considered as one of the most important works of post modern literature as it blends old with the new, it's a meta fiction, uses fragmentation, multiple endings and author interference within the text. The narrator often breaks the fourth wall, and directly addresses the readers about the nature of fiction and reality. This makes the novel a blend of romance, history, and philosophy. It reflects both nineteenth century realism and twentieth century existentialism. This is not just a story about the forbidden love, but also the portrayal of individual freedom, class conflict, social constraints and search for identity. Fowles uses this novel to expose the moral and social boundaries imposed by class distinctions. He recreates the Victorian world of injustice and hypocrisy through modern narration. He calls the readers to view the Victorian social structure through the perception of twentieth century.

The story revolves around the titular character Sarah woodruff, an outcast of Lyme Regis. She was abandoned by a French lieutenant and the locals call her "a poor tragedy". In the world of Victorian England her reputation was spoiled as "the French lieutenant's whore". She was unable to express her own struggles and inner conflicts to anyone. The mystery of her enthralls and entraps the young paleontologist Charles Smithson. A series of clandestine trysts with the beautiful, mysterious, Sarah Woodruff made him to fall in love with her. This leads him to break off his engagement with Ernestina Freeman. He wants to unveil the mystery behind the French Lieutenant's woman and offer a good life to her. The characters in the novel inhabit a rigid Victorian class system that command their opportunities,

behavior and perception. Fowles here presents three different levels of Victorian class system.

The upper class – Aristocrats, Upper class people usually don't perform manual labor. They were the land owners who hired lower class workers to work for them. This group is further divided into three categories -Royal, middle upper and lower upper. This elite group includes Charles Smithson and his uncle Sir Robert, who holds inherited titles, land and wealth. They enjoy the social privilege and leisure. They feel superior to the rising industrial class. Though Charles is engaged to Ernestina, the rising bourgeois, he looks down on the Freeman's economical background.

The middle class- Bourgeois, Middle class group was further expanded because of the development of cities and economy. This bourgeoisie, work in the skilled jobs. The merchants, shopkeepers and traders overseas flourished. They were placed in the white collar jobs, so earned more and had connections with the people in powerful positions. This group further classified into two categories, higher level and lower level. The lower middle class people work for the upper middle class people. This bourgeoisie tries to adopt the lifestyle of the upper class. This group includes Ernestina Freeman and her father. The newly wealthy people who moved towards upper middle class because of their hard work, belongs to this group. They try to adopt upper class manners and behaviors. Though they are successful in earning more, this upward mobility is hated by the aristocrats. Besides, Fowles notices the absurd dissatisfaction of the bourgeois. Literally bourgeois have escaped from the suppression. They are, like the working class, striving to move upward in the social ladder. They are not content about their position. They force themselves to pursue higher wealth and status. The working class – servants, the working class people often worked and lived in the unsanitary conditions. They were considered mean by the other class of people. They don't have proper water and food. They were dependent on their employers. Sam, the servant of Charles and Mary, Ernestina's maid are included in this group. They are wage earning class who are struggling to survive and they had limited rights.

Victorians follow a strict hierarchy, while race, religion, region and occupation were all meaningful aspects of identity and status. The main principle to organize the Victorian society is gender and class. They state that men and women

are different and meant for different things. Men are physically strong; participate in politics, works to earn more, independent and less religious. While women were mentally strong, run households, raise families, dependent and more religious than men. Fowles delves deep into the issues of class mobility in the British social structure. The strict social structure never allows mobility to happen naturally or peacefully. The working class has to face dejection and disappointment during the class mobility. Sam and Mary present the most hopeful picture of upward social mobility. They were the working class at the beginning, but by the end of the novel they are moving towards the bourgeois. They were happy about their hardly earned fortune and new identity. This new level of bourgeois was possible only through the deception and betrayal.

Sam, Charles manservant has dreams of moving from the working class to the middle class by starting a business of haberdashery. He informs it to his master Charles with a great hesitation because the mobility of the working class is impossible without the help of their employers.

> 'Sam took a deep breath.
>
> I've been thinking of going into business, Mr.Charles.
>
> When you're settle, that is, Mr. Charles. I hope you know, I should never leave you in the hower of need'.
>
> "Business!What business?"
>
> 'I have set my heart of having a little shop, Mr.Charles'…
>
> 'Drapers and Daberdasher's, Mr.Charles'.(FLW 329)

Sam is in love with Ernestina's maid. Basically, he is not a bad person. He prioritizes his happiness and willingly takes opportunities to sabotage Charles's relationship with Sarah Woodruff. So that Charles will marry Ernestina and he can marry Mary. He doesn't hesitate to blackmail Charles into giving him the money to start his business. Sam ruins his master after he breaks off his engagement with Ernestina. "It is easier in short, to be dishonest for two than for one. Sam did not think of his procedure as dishonest, he called it "playing your cards right". In simple term it meant now that the marriage Ernestina must go through; only from her dowry could he hope for his two hundred and fifty pound; if more spooning

between the master and the wicked woman of Lyme were to take place, it must take place under the card player's sharp nose".(FLW 333) Eventually, he quits job from Charles and becomes successful in Mr. Freeman's store. Sam is the symbol of disadvantage in the British class system. He was often belittled by the wealthy Charles.

> "What the devil do you want, I didn't ring"
>
> Sam opened his mouth but no sound emerged…
>
> 'It's never true Mr. Charles?'
>
> 'Were you at the house?'
>
> "Yes it's true. Miss. Freeman and I are no longer to marry. Now go. And keep your mouth shut."
>
> 'But ..Mr.Charles, me and my Mary?'
>
> "Later, later. I can't think of such matters now".(FLW 389-390)

The aristocrats treat the working class as their slaves. We can notice that Charles uses the term 'devil' to call Sam. He considers Sam as a mean human. Fowles exhibits modern people, how difficult it is for the working class to clamber upward in the rigid British class system. Thus he shows us that, only through selling one's soul to the devil, working class can climb up the social ladder. Charles, an aristocrat on the other hand, steps down in the social ladder. Charles is an orphan. He is financially dependent on his uncle and an amateur paleontologist. Charles believes that he is the next hire to his uncle, Sir Robert, but the decision of Sir Robert to marry another lady dismantled the hope of Charles. He is no longer an aristocrat as he expected to be. We can see the love triangle. Charles already engaged to the middle class Ernestina and had fallen in love with the outsider Sarah. He has to make a choice between Ernestina and Sarah. His encounters with Sarah strengthen his love on her. Doctor Grogan and Charles discussed about science, Darwin and Sarah Woodruff. With their knowledge of science, they believe that she suffers from a vague disorder called 'melancholia'. The Victorian class system and her bad reputation alienated her from the society. Dr. Grogan suggests that if she leaves this town, she may feel relieved. Mrs. Poulteney's home might be a worst place for Sarah to live.

Charles accepts the suggestions of Dr. Grogan and intimates Sarah to leave Lyme to Exeter. He considers himself as a sympathetic listener to Sarah and can help her recover from her madness. Charles and Sarah meet again. Sarah reveals the story of herself and French lieutenant. His ship was wrecked and Lieutenant Varguennes was seriously injured. Sarah the governess for the Talbot children nursed him. As he recovers, he increased an interest in Sarah. He teased and flirted with her. The day of his departure came, he told her to meet him in the nearby town to bid farewell. She too followed him to a disreputable hotel. Though she realized his true identity, she gave herself to him, being aware that she couldn't see him again.

On listening to the disasters of Sarah, Charles eventually gets attracted towards her. He excuses his mind to justify his attraction as purely charitable. As an aristocrat he is not willing to meet an outsider, Sarah, but as a Victorian gentleman, he sends her to Exeter and meets her in her room. Their intimacy grows more and more. This results in their intercourse. Finally, Charles identified Sarah as a virgin. This enhances his true love. Now Charles is willing to marry her and planning to break off his engagement with the middle class Ernestina.

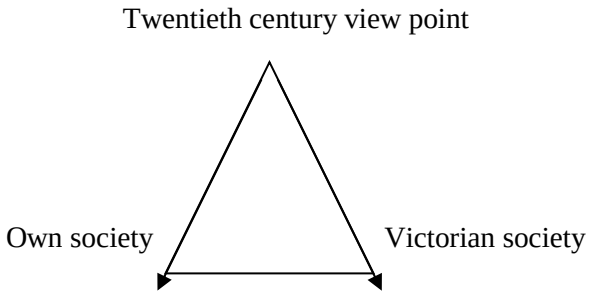
Charles returns to his town and find that his uncle Mr. Robert has decided to marry a young widow, Mrs. Tomkins. Unfortunately, Charles won't be the heir of his Uncle. At this point confused Charles meets Mr. Freeman. He hopes that Mr. Freeman would cancel his marriage with Ernestina on his loss of inheritance and title, but Mr. Freeman approves their marriage and tells Charles to take over his own business. Even though it brings him wealth, it will lessen his status. Charles's hatred of becoming bourgeois is somewhat foolish, but here, Fowles is satirizing the aristocrats. He eventually gets down in the social ladder.

Charles couldn't fix himself in the appropriate level in the social ladder. He actually plays a series of roles. He is fatherly and liberal with his fiancée; condescending and insulting with his servant Sam; stiff and uncomfortable with Sarah. He indeed travels from ignorance to understanding. He thinks as if he is helping Sarah to recover, but what actually happens is, he was mentored by Sarah in each level of his life. He gets through each level of struggles and matures to the level of a perfect human being. Sarah Woodruff an outcast, who doesn't belong to any class, frees herself from the social expectations. She was born into the

agricultural working class family. Her education raised her to the level of bourgeois. She was educated beyond her level and became a governess. The story created about her reputation, is a mystery and shame to her. Sarah's class-based loneliness leads her to violate the society's conventions. Thus Sarah is presented by Fowles as an outsider in the Victorian society by gender and class. The title "French lieutenant's woman" seems ironic because Sarah doesn't belong to the French lieutenant. As the plot unveils Fowles clearly shows that Sarah is an independent woman, owned by neither the Frenchman nor Charles.

The middle class grows gradually during the Victorian era and tries to move upward towards the upper middle class. They value their new prosperous job and status. They try to influence the society by their hardly earned income. This shifts the focus from inherited status, land and title to earned status, land and income. Thus the middle class become a new source of social influence and tries to destabilize the place of aristocrats.

Fowles doesn't recreate his Victorian world uncritically. In this postmodern work, Fowles examines the problems of socially and economically oppressed people. He also portrays the poverty of the working class and the social entrapment of women. Fowles explores the fossilized class system and the evolution of British society. He focuses on the aspects of Victorian hierarchy which would seem most alien to the modern reader. We have a triangle shaped historical setting to understand.



Fowles inserts himself into the plot as a narrator and reminds us to make comments through the lens of twentieth century about our own society and Victorian society. Fowles through his postmodern narrative contrasts the nineteenth century fatalism with twentieth century existentialism.

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Language and Identity as Tools for Self-Discovery and Social Awareness in The Works of Annie Ernaux

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Abstract

This study explains how language becomes an important part of understanding one's identity and connection with society. In the writings of Annie Ernaux, language goes beyond communication; it becomes a reflection of class, memory, and emotion. Born into a modest working-class family, Ernaux later entered the academic world, which created a gap between her social origins and her new environment. This movement between two worlds made her feel both proud of her progress and uncertain about her belonging. Through this emotional and social journey, her works explore how language can connect people to their roots while also revealing feelings of distance and change. In books such as *The Years* and *A Man's Place*, she uses simple yet powerful language to capture complex emotions like shame, pride, and transformation. Her straightforward style makes readers feel the reality of her experiences and see reflections of their own lives. By writing honestly about her past, she turns private memories into shared human experiences.

This study shows that language is not only a personal expression but also a bridge between the self and society. It shapes identity, preserves memory, and helps people understand where they come from, how they grow, and how they find belonging in an ever-changing world.

Keywords: language, identity, autobiography, class, memory

One of the most effective tools people have for comprehending both the outside world and themselves is language. It enables people to connect with others in society and share their ideas feelings and experiences. People are able to contemplate their cultural surroundings social background and personal history through language. It serves as a tool for identity formation memory preservation and self-discovery in addition to communication. By using language to analyse their own lives and the lives of others around them writers and thinkers frequently enable readers to view familiar situations in fresh ways.

People can understand their feelings relationships and the society they live in because language gives the human experience structure. It turns into a conduit between the inner self and the external environment connecting personal ideas with common social and cultural knowledge. The ability of language to convert personal experiences into collective reflections makes it even more significant in literature. Themes like social class gender memory and belonging are frequently explored through language in autobiographical and reflective writing. Through narratives and firsthand experiences writers can illuminate problems that impact society at large and expose the intricacies of human existence.

Language allows writers to present their own experiences while inviting readers to connect relate and reflect on their own lives. It turns into a tool for social awareness cultural comprehension and self-discovery. By examining the ways in which authors employ language we can gain a deeper understanding of how it shapes identity conveys feelings and links individual experiences to the larger human condition. The author uses language as a profound lens through which to study human identity and social existence going far beyond simple communication. Her writing serves as an example of how our language our self-expression and the stories we tell all influence the formation of our individual and societal identities. In The Years Ernaux blends her own recollections with social history to consider the passing of time the transience of life and the common experiences that unite

generations. Her methodology demonstrates how language serves as a tool for understanding who we are in relation to the outside world and the people in our immediate vicinity in addition to being a means of expression. She highlights the idea that identity is dynamic and always shaped by past events social interactions and memories illustrating how people negotiate feelings of alienation and belonging in larger social contexts. Ernaux writes:

We thought we had time, we thought we would live forever, each of us alone, with no one left to remember us. Every day seemed endless, and we never imagined that life would change so quickly. Memories of youth and childhood mingled with the unfolding present, making identity feel both constant and fragile. The language of our lives carried the weight of what we remembered and what we feared forgetting. In these moments, we realized that who we are is shaped as much by memory as by experience (*The Years* 121–122)

Ernaux also explores the ways in which social class and cultural norms impact identity in A Mans Place demonstrating how people's speech actions and internalization of rules all play a role in the formation of their identities. Her work demonstrates how language and conduct are intricately linked to social norms and expectations influencing how individuals perceive themselves and their role in society. She demonstrates how people frequently learn to regulate their emotions words and body language to conform to social norms particularly in families and communities.

These actions which are picked up and seen by others have an impact on one's identity by imparting values such as respect belonging and social survival. According to Smith (2009) analysis people's sense of self is shaped both internally and externally by how other people view and evaluate them. Using this perspective Ernaux shows that identity is not created in a vacuum but is continuously negotiated through social interactions where language serves as a mirror of both personal discipline and cultural norms. Her works demonstrate how language is much more than just a tool for communication by observing and portraying these dynamics. It also serves as a tool for reflecting social realities preserving personal memory and raising awareness of one's own place within a larger social structure. In this sense Ernaux highlights how language contains the subtle pressures expectations and

lessons that shape who we are and how we interact with the world making it essential to understanding identity.

Social class and memory are important factors in determining human experience and Ernaux explores these relationships with remarkable clarity through language. Her creations serve as a reminder that a person's identity is inextricably linked to their upbringing and the collective memories of their community. She emphasizes in The Years the importance of memories—both private and public—in comprehending oneself and the passing of time. People can use memory to think back on past events and identify how social structures such as class divisions and cultural expectations have shaped their own lives. These memories are organized communicated and preserved through language which also serves as a bridge between the individual and the group shedding light on larger social realities. Ernaux writes: The Years highlights how memory is an ever-present and potent force that shape our identities and ties us to the past and present. Memory does not exist in a vacuum it combines one's own experiences with those of others unifying past events with dreams and reality with imagination. Our memories continuously shape our feelings choices and sense of self bridging the gap between our past selves and our present selves and future selves.

Personal identity is invariably entwined with cultural and social context as these memories are also shaped by society reflecting social norms class structures and collective experiences. Language is essential to this process because it gives memory shape and makes intangible ideas and experiences visible comprehensible and shareable. Through verbalizing recollections people can place themselves in a larger historical and social context relating their individual identities to the shared human experience. Since memory is a social and cultural phenomenon rather than merely a personal experience Ernaux's viewpoint demonstrates that comprehension of language is crucial to comprehending how memory influence's identity feelings and our position in society. Ernaux uses the life of her father in A Mans Place to show how social class affects how people remember and narrate events as well as their opportunities in life. This is what she writes. In order to tell the story of a life governed by necessity, I have no right to adopt an artistic approach. Every choice, every hardship had to be presented as it happened, with no embellishment or dramatization. The constraints of social class dictated the limits of expression and memory. His life, shaped by labour, poverty, and responsibility, left traces in the

language used to describe it. Language became a tool to honour reality without distortion, preserving identity through honest and precise narration (AMP 31)

The quote above highlights the limitations of class on memory and self-expression demonstrating how language must negotiate social realities in order to accurately portray experience. Ernaux shows in these pieces that identity is inextricably linked to memory and class and that language is the key instrument that makes it possible for these experiences to be comprehended recorded and communicated. The author Dufresne M. (2013) demonstrates how specific lives are influenced by larger societal contexts highlighting the close relationship between social awareness and personal experiences. She offers readers a window into her own life so they can analyse topics like social mobility gender and class.

Ernaux gives readers a clear and honest account of her own experiences revealing the nuanced ways in which society shapes opportunities behaviour and self-perception. Her observations demonstrate that societal norms and cultural expectations constantly shape ones sense of self rather than perpetuating it. Her creations also demonstrate how social consciousness affects individual development. In order to help her and her readers comprehend the limitations and advantages of social structures Ernaux frequently examines epiphanies where her personal experiences collide with accepted social norms. Her upbringing in a working-class household for instance and her subsequent entry into an academic setting exposed her to the linguistic behavioural and moral distinctions between social classes. Her understanding of identity and belonging in intricate social environments was shaped by these contrasts which also served as a source of inspiration for contemplation on social injustices. Furthermore, Ernaux's autobiographical style turns private recollections into a more comprehensive social critique. She highlights how these seemingly insignificant moments have social significance by reflecting on everyday routines small interactions and events in ordinary life.

Looking at her life in light of other people Thompson J. (2010) highlights how Ernaux's writings highlight the connection between social realities and individual experiences. Through this method readers can make connections between societal trends and their own personal histories leading to a deeper comprehension of the ways in which individual lives are entwined with broader social

consciousness. Golsan claims that R. s (2011) emphasis on individual experiences as a means of achieving social consciousness highlights the moral and sentimental aspects of her work. She illustrates how knowledge of the society one lives in including its injustices customs and cultural norms is necessary to comprehend oneself.

Ernaux's painstaking description of her own experiences inspires readers to grow in empathy identify common hardships and critically consider the social forces that shape identity—all of which contribute to a greater sense of social awareness and accountability. Her literary works which combine individual narrative with shared experience provide insightful insights into human life memory and society. Her prose encapsulates everyday existence while exposing the remarkable social and cultural forces that influence it. Ernaux examines universal themes like class identity gender and memory by reflecting on her own life through her autobiographical narratives. Her writings encourage readers to reflect on how their own pasts reflect societal realities by highlighting the connections between personal experience and larger social structures. Time passing and memory continuity are major themes in Ernaux's reflections. She frequently talks about her personal experiences growing up and into adulthood emphasizing how past experiences still shape who she is today. Her stories show that memory is not static but rather changes as we mature offering fresh perspectives on the social and personal facets of existence. Miller D. (2015) shows how language can capture the transient nature of human experience and preserve it for later reflection by using her own life as an example. This enables people to connect with the continuity of time and collective societal memory.

Ernaux gives careful thought to social injustices and how class affects people's opportunities and perceptions of themselves. The conflicts between various social worlds are frequently explored in her narratives by contrasting her working-class upbringing with her subsequent academic and cultural experiences. The way that social structures impact communication behaviour and individual identity is revealed by these reflections. Ernaux fosters a greater awareness of social realities by presenting her life honestly and clearly inspiring readers to consider the social factors that influence both their own and other people's lives. Readers can reflect on society and their own experiences by using Ernaux's works as a mirror. Her unadorned minimalistic approach highlights the core of social interaction and the

human condition. By doing this she turns individual recollections into group understanding demonstrating how unique tales shed light on more general social realities. Ernaux's thoughts show how literature can be a tool for both individuals and society as a whole bridging the divide between social consciousness and self-awareness and inspiring readers to reflect critically on the intricacies of human existence.

Furthermore, Ernaux's investigation of language and memory emphasizes how literature has the ability to change people's perceptions of the world. Her writings inspire readers to critically examine the systems that control behaviour social mobility and identity formation by tying personal experiences to larger societal realities. Her work shows how literature can act as a link between personal comprehension and societal consciousness enabling readers to identify trends of tradition cultural expectations and inequality in both their own lives and society as a whole. Ernaux demonstrates that personal narratives are not separate stories but are entwined with the experiences of others highlighting the ethical duty of self-reflection and the significance of empathy. This demonstrates how pertinent her writings are to current debates over identity social justice and the function of language in navigating interpersonal relationships ultimately reaffirming that memory expression and close observation of daily life are all essential components of understanding oneself and society.

Finally, her writings show that language is much more than just a tool for communication it is an essential instrument for social awareness and self-discovery allowing people to place themselves in larger societal contexts and delve deeply into their own identities. Ernaux's unobtrusive and minimalist approach reveals how class social expectations and cultural norms shape identity by transforming ordinary experiences and personal memories into reflections of human life shared by all. Her stories demonstrate how people negotiate emotions of pride shame and metamorphosis as they transition between various social contexts highlighting the conflict between social belonging and personal development. Ernaux's accurate and honest depiction of her life enables readers to relate her stories to their own experiences encouraging empathy and critical thought about societal realities. Her focus on memory highlights how the past continues to shape one's identity today while her analysis of behaviour and social class shows how outside forces both support and limit individual expression. Ernaux's writings ultimately confirm that

language serves as a bridge and a mirror reflecting the intricacies of social and personal identity preserving memory traces and assisting in understanding ones place in society. Her writings show how the development of self-awareness and social consciousness is intricately linked to our use perception and comprehension of language inspiring readers to acknowledge the interconnectedness of the self and society.

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Sustainable Future and Ecological Balancing in Ruskin Bond's *My Father's Trees in Dehra*

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Abstract

My Father's Trees in Dehra is a semi-autobiographical short story by Ruskin Bond. It shows the author's enduring connection to nature particularly the trees that stand for sustainability, love and memory. This story is included in his semi-autobiographical collection *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* which is the best example of eco-literature. The plot revolves around Ruskin Bond's recollections of his father, who taught him to respect trees and the natural world by fusing ecological awareness with emotional remembrance. While planting trees together, both the father and son develop a generational duty to protect the environment and a bond with the earth. The trees in Dehra are flourishing when the author Ruskin Bond returns years later, fulfilling his father's vision of environmental harmony and human life coexisting. The short story calls for ecological awareness over urban greed and condemns human carelessness and deforestation. It is rooted in realism and nostalgia that shows Ruskin Bond's narratives that combine personal emotion and environmental ethics to present trees as living companions rather than immobile background objects. Ruskin Bond urges a personal realisation in order to protect the

natural world as a living thing through his straightforward language and vivid imagery. *My Father's Trees in Dehra* is a tribute to sustainability and the timeless bond between humans and nature, showing how environmental supervision starts with small deeds of kindness. The story serves as a timeless meditation on ecological balance, harmony and the moral agreement to coexist with the earth's living systems, promoting a sustainable growth philosophy based on continuity and compassion.

Keywords: Eco-Literature, Memory and Nostalgia, Human-Nature Relationship,

Sustainability, Environmental Ethics.

Ruskin Bond's body of work represents a profound literary journey through the emotional, spiritual and ecological landscapes of India's hills. His work *My Father's Trees in Dehra*, a gem from the collection *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* (1991). It is one of the most beautifully reflective pieces in Indian eco-literature, written in Ruskin Bond's characteristic simple narrative, this story shows memory with environmental consciousness, evoking both nostalgia and a call for sustainability. The world of Ruskin Bond is a serene woodland world filled with trees, birds, rain, hills and humanity's quiet coexistence with nature. In *My Father's Trees in Dehra*, that coexistence is threatened by deforestation, modernization and human disconnect, but Ruskin Bond restores hope by portraying the flora as the moral and spiritual carriers of life and legacy.

This paper explores Ruskin Bond's story through the lens of ecocriticism, an analytical approach that examines the relationship between literature and the natural environment. The discussion analyses the story's treatment of memory, sustainability, generational love and moral responsibility, emphasizing the ways in which Ruskin Bond's fiction transcends storytelling to become a form of environmental activism in words. Eco-literature or ecological literature integrates environmental awareness into narrative form to foster empathy for the natural world. It portrays humans as a part of an intricate web of life rather than as isolated dominators.

Cheryll Glotfelty in her foundational work *The Ecocriticism Reader* defines this approach as the study of "the relationship between literature and the physical environment". Ruskin Bond's writings perfectly align with this philosophy. His

nature-infused narratives reflect both ecological apprehension and moral optimism. In postcolonial India, eco-literature also serves as a discourse of resistance against reckless urbanization, deforestation and human arrogance. Ruskin Bond's powerful works like *The Blue Umbrella*, *Dust on the Mountains* and *My Father's Trees in Dehra* speak to the fragile equilibrium between humans and their environment. His eco-literary standpoint combines spiritual intimacy with ecological warning.

The story begins with the narrator's recollection of his childhood days spent with his father planting trees along the Dehra roads and on an island near the forest. His father's love for greenery goes beyond personal enjoyment; it becomes a conscious ecological act. He tells his son, People keep cutting trees; instead of planting them, there'll soon be no forests left at all, and the world will be a vast desert. This statement shows Ruskin Bond's entire ecological vision linking human sustainability directly with environmental preservation. In Ruskin Bond's world, trees are not mere biological entities. They have emotional memory, expressing loyalty and love.

When the grown narrator returns years later, he sees how the trees have grown and moved, symbolically reaching out to welcome him back. The island that was once bare now bursts with shrubs, grasses and birds, proving nature's resilience and regenerative power when it is given respect and time. His poetic description of the trees, 'whispering and beckoning' reflects a deep ecological spirituality, an awareness of nature as conscious presence. His narrative bridges science and spirituality, reminds sustainability is not only physical but also emotional and ethical.

My Father's Trees in Dehra is a deeply personal tribute to paternal love and its ecological continuation. The father's act of tree-planting is both literal and metaphorical and it becomes a legacy of nurturing life. By involving his son in this process, he transmits values of care, continuity and responsibility. This intergenerational dynamic also mirrors the broader principle of sustainability, to preserve resources and beauty for future generations. His father, a man of modest means and gentle progress, functions as both parent and environmental philosopher. His idea of planting beyond one's garden represents an expansive moral consciousness that transcends personal boundaries.

Specifically, I am going to experiment with the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature, because ecology (as a science, as a discipline, as the basis for a human vision) has the greatest relevance to the present and future of the world we all live in of anything that I have studied in recent years. Experimenting a bit with the title of this paper, I could say that I am going to try to discover something about the ecology of literature, or try to develop an ecological poetics by applying ecological concepts to the reading, teaching, and writing about literature. (William Rueckert 107)

Ruskin Bond does not plant trees only for shade or fruit, but to give shelter for birds, butterflies, and animals. This vision aligns with the fundamental ethic of eco-sustainability, where human actions are meant to coexist harmoniously with all life forms. His portrayal of his father provides an early prototype of ecological stewardship as a personal act of love and social duty. The father's death, although a turning point in Bond's young life, does not mark an end. The trees continue to grow, living testaments of love, reminding the narrator that sustainability is the continuation of human compassion through nature.

At its core, *My Father's Trees in Dehra* mourns the loss inflicted by human greed and urban sprawl. Ruskin Bond contrasts the once lush hills and quiet woods of Dehra with the later noisy, soulless landmarks of modernization. He draws a moral equivalence between cutting down trees and committing violence. In one of his reflections, he even compares the death of a tree to the death of a loved one. For him, every fallen tree is an act of destruction that diminishes the collective soul of humanity. Environmental degradation, for Ruskin Bond, is not an abstract crisis but a personal injury. He treats desecration of nature as a moral failure and a betrayal of memory and heritage. The story transforms into a gentle yet powerful critique of anthropocentrism and consumerism.

Ruskin Bond's ecological philosophy resonates deeply with Indian cultural traditions. Ancient Indian thought recognizes nature as sacred and interdependent with human life. The Vedas personify rivers, trees and mountains as divine entities. Similarly, Ruskin Bond's sensitivity to trees, birds and the rhythm of the seasons emerge as a continuation of this ethos, a blend of modern environmentalism and ancient reverence. When the narrator revisits the island of trees years later, the experience resembles a pilgrimage. He feels the trees know him and their

whispering becomes a nonverbal blessing. This spiritual dimension situates Ruskin Bond's eco-literature within a broader Indian worldview where human existence derives meaning only through harmony with nature.

The narrator observes that the island trees are moving again, a line carrying symbolic healing. Despite human neglect, nature regenerates if given space and respect. The phrase implies both biological vitality and moral awakening, the idea that ecological restoration mirrors emotional reconciliation. The trees are not only growing, they are fulfilling the father's dream, demonstrating that genuine acts of kindness never perish. This regenerative aspect defines Ruskin Bond's sustainable vision, the belief that life, if nurtured with empathy, finds ways to renew itself. His message is not rooted in despair but in the possibility of cooperation between humans and nature, a hallmark of sustainable philosophy.

Although Ruskin Bond's story centers on a male narrator and father, its themes can be paralleled with ecofeminist thought, which associates nature with nurturing, care and regeneration and qualities often undervalued in patriarchal structures. The father's feminine tenderness toward trees opposes the dominant masculine culture of exploitation and industrialism. Ruskin Bond subverts gendered relations of power through ecological storytelling. Moreover, his ethics of care align with Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic, which advocates treating the biotic community soil, water, plants, animals as moral subjects. His narrative encourages this consciousness through storytelling rather than activism.

Critics and scholars have consistently recognized Ruskin Bond's contribution to Indian eco-literature. As per N. Anjan's study *Ecological Concern in Ruskin Bond's Short Stories*, *My Father's Trees in Dehra* portrays the moral duty of planting and preserving flora and fauna beyond one's personal domain to beautify the world and offer shelter to other beings. Likewise, recent ecocritical readings place Bond alongside international environmental writers such as Henry David Thoreau and Rachel Carson, though his tone remains gentler and locally grounded.

Bond and his father want to preserve both flora and fauna in Dehra. Planting trees are moral duty of man to nurture this love of trees and impart it to their children. This is going beyond one's own garden, and beautifying the world at large, and creating shelter for birds, butterflies and animals, is the largesse that Bond gives out to the world. (N.Anjan 289)

Ruskin Bond's legacy lies in making environmental awareness accessible. His childlike imagery, unpretentious sentences and emotionally direct style allow to recognize the sacredness of ordinary trees. His vision of sustainability arises not from technological interventions but from personal ethics rooted in love. His style in *My Father's Trees in Dehra* is notable for its intimacy and lyrical calm. His descriptions trees whispering, arms reaching out, koels and parrots nesting again build a sensory bridge between reader and environment. He personifies trees gently, never as fantasy but as living presences, transforming realism into emotional ecology.

His diction is simple and conversational, reflecting his purpose of communicating ecological truths through memory rather than ideological preaching. This accessibility makes the story ideal for eco-literature studies that focus on the intertwining of aesthetic expression and environmental ethics. In modern contexts of climate change, deforestation and species extinction, Ruskin Bond's story carries increasing relevance. His father's warning that the world will be a vast desert is not mere metaphor it anticipates current global ecological crises. Ruskin Bond implicitly advocates the principles now framed as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): environmental protection, resource preservation, and ecological justice.

Ruskin Bond's approach differs from formal environmental activism. Bond achieves sustainability through storytelling by cultivating emotional awareness that leads to responsible action. His eco-literature functions as moral ecology, where empathy replaces exploitation and memory restores equilibrium. His *My Father's Trees in Dehra* stands as a cornerstone of eco-literature and sustainability narrative in Indian English writing. Through an intimate recollection of planting trees with his father, Ruskin Bond transforms personal memory into a universal message about environmental ethics and continuity. His story embodies the core tenets of sustainability: coexistence, regeneration and responsibility.

In an age of rampant industrialization and ecological imbalance, Ruskin Bond's simple prose offers profound guidance that nurturing nature is nurturing humanity. The trees his father planted are more than greenery, they are living symbols of faith, resilience, and intergenerational harmony. Their continued growth is both literal and metaphorical proof that acts as love toward the earth transcend time. Thus, *My Father's Trees in Dehra* is not merely a nostalgic reflection but a

timeless ecological testament, a call to plant, to remember and to sustain. In Bond's words, the trees are indeed moving again, reminding us that even in forgotten corners, the roots of human goodness can still take hold and grow.

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Belonging in Transition: Noongar Identity and Liminal Experience in Kim Scott's That Deadman Dance

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Abstract

Kim Scott's That Deadman Dance intricately intertwines the tensions between Noongar futures and colonial histories, presenting historical fiction as a liminal space through which Indigenous identity and cultural endurance are negotiated within the framework of settler colonialism. By subverting linear narrative conventions and disrupting traditional historical representations, Scott dismantles the static and colonial portrayals of Indigenous histories, replacing them with a fluid, interwoven vision of past, present, and future. This paper examines how the novel engages deeply with Noongar cultural knowledge and historical memory to foreground the liminality that shapes both the genre of historical fiction and the lived experiences of the Noongar community. Through its fragmented narrative structure, multilingual expression, and richly layered characters, the novel reconfigures the colonial encounter as a site of negotiation, resilience, and transformation. By exploring the in-between spaces of oppression and resistance, this study argues that Scott's narrative not only reclaims Noongar voices from colonial silencing but also imagines new pathways for Indigenous futures—rooted in cultural renewal, historical consciousness, and enduring strength.

Keywords

Indigenous, fragmented narrative, transition, traumatic legacies, colonial past.

Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance* offers a compelling rethinking of colonial history, using the liminality of historical fiction to engage with both Noongar futures and the colonial past. In this novel, history is not a completed or fixed narrative but an ongoing, fluid process that refuses to conform to linear,

colonial depictions of time. By occupying the space between past, present, and future, Scott's work reflects the liminality that exists within historical fiction, where storytelling can challenge and reconstruct dominant narratives while also serving as a means of resistance. Through this framework, Scott invites readers to reconsider how Indigenous histories are remembered and reimagined, positioning the Noongar people not as passive victims of colonialism but as active agents who continue to shape their cultural and historical identities. This study examines how *That Deadman Dance* utilizes the genre's liminality to construct a vision of Noongar futures that resists colonial structures while fostering continuity, survival, and renewal in the face of ongoing colonial legacies.

Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance* offers a profound and complex exploration of Noongar futures, where the past, present, and future are intertwined in ways that challenge colonial histories and propose alternative pathways for Indigenous survival and agency. Rather than being defined solely by the traumatic legacies of colonization, the future for the Noongar people in Scott's novel is a dynamic space shaped by resilience, cultural continuity, and the possibility for decolonization. Through characters like Bobby Wabalanginy, Scott imagines Noongar futures as something that is continually negotiated, where history is not an immutable force but something that is actively reshaped through ongoing resistance, survival, and reclamation of identity.

At the heart of *That Deadman Dance* is the notion that Noongar culture and identity are not fixed in the past but remain active and evolving. The future of the Noongar people is not one of inevitable destruction but of cultural survival and adaptation. Scott's portrayal of Noongar traditions, their connection to the land, and their ways of knowing underscores the importance of maintaining cultural practices, language, and spirituality in the face of colonialism. The novel's emphasis on oral traditions and the living nature of Noongar stories speaks to the idea that Noongar futures are inherently tied to the continuation and revitalization of these cultural practices.

Bobby Wabalanginy, the protagonist, embodies the negotiation between past and future that defines Noongar agency. Bobby's journey is one of survival, adaptation, and resistance, caught between two worlds: the traditional Noongar world and the settler colonial world that seeks to erase it. As Bobby navigates these

worlds, he is forced to reconcile the pressures of colonial assimilation with his desire to retain his Noongar identity. His experience reflects the broader struggle of Noongar people to maintain their cultural integrity while engaging with the realities of colonial oppression. Bobby's movement between the Noongar and settler worlds highlights the tension between the desire for self-preservation and the challenge of navigating a colonial system that marginalizes and oppresses Indigenous peoples. In this liminal space, Bobby's identity is constantly evolving, reflecting the broader trajectory of Noongar futures—ones that are shaped by resistance to colonial forces and a determination to assert autonomy and cultural survival. The novel portrays Bobby not as a victim of colonialism but as an active agent capable of asserting his own future, despite the obstacles imposed by colonial systems.

Language plays a crucial role in shaping Noongar futures in *That Deadman Dance*. The use of both Noongar and English throughout the novel highlights the ways in which language can be a tool of both oppression and resistance. Scott uses language to reflect the complexities of colonial encounters and the ways in which Noongar people have adapted and survived through the use of their own language, despite efforts to suppress it. Noongar language, with its deep connection to the land and cultural knowledge, becomes a symbol of cultural resilience and continuity. Through storytelling, the Noongar people are able to preserve their history, pass down knowledge, and assert their identity in the face of colonial silencing. The act of telling stories—whether in Noongar language or in the hybrid forms that emerge from the encounter with English—is portrayed as a form of decolonization, a means of reclaiming power over how history is told and remembered.

Scott uses *That Deadman Dance* to imagine a future in which the Noongar people can reclaim their sovereignty, self-determination, and cultural vitality. The novel presents Noongar futures as open and unfinished, where the possibility of decolonization remains central to the ongoing struggle for justice and recognition. The liminal space of historical fiction allows Scott to explore the tension between the enduring trauma of colonization and the hope for a future that is not defined by that trauma. Rather than offering a simplistic vision of reconciliation or return to an idealized past, Scott envisions a Noongar future that is shaped by the active engagement with both colonial and Indigenous histories. This engagement does not seek to erase the painful legacies of colonialism but rather to transform them, using the knowledge and strength derived from the past to build a future where Noongar

people can thrive on their own terms. The novel offers a hopeful vision of decolonization in which Noongar futures are not dictated by colonial structures but are instead shaped by Indigenous self-determination, creativity, and resilience.

Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance* grapples with the colonial past and its lingering effects on the Noongar people, weaving a narrative that disrupts the conventional linear portrayal of history. The novel explores the traumatic and complex nature of colonialism while also demonstrating how the colonial past continues to shape the present and future experiences of Indigenous peoples. The arrival of Europeans in the Noongar land marks the beginning of a profound disruption to their way of life, something Scott powerfully illustrates throughout the novel. The colonial past is presented as an invasive force, one that attempts to reshape and destabilize Noongar cultural, spiritual, and social practices. Settlers, driven by colonial ideologies, impose their own systems of land ownership, religion, and social structures, seeking to erase Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and belonging. The traumatic impact of colonialism on the Noongar people is central to the novel, as Scott shows how this intrusion profoundly alters their connection to the land, their communities, and their traditional practices. The settlers' actions are portrayed as both violent and insidious, perpetuating a form of cultural erasure that continues to resonate across generations. This colonial past is not presented as something relegated to a fixed historical moment, but as a continuously evolving structure that deeply affects the Noongar people's present and future.

The settler colonial system depicted in *That Deadman Dance* is a constant source of tension between the colonizers and the Noongar people. The settlers' attempts to impose a foreign system of ownership and law over Noongar lands are met with resistance, but the novel also explores the complexity of these relationships. While the Noongar people are largely marginalized within this new colonial framework, there are moments of temporary integration, confusion, and mutual dependence that complicate the simple dichotomy between victim and oppressor. Scott portrays the colonizers' worldview as one that frames the Noongar people as either subjects to be subjugated or as curiosities to be studied. Characters such as the European settlers and their interactions with the Noongar people reflect the deeply entrenched belief in Indigenous inferiority. These interactions are marked by violence, displacement, and betrayal, and Scott emphasizes that the

repercussions of these actions—land dispossession, the imposition of settler identities, and the erasure of Noongar traditions—are not relegated to the past but continue to impact Noongar communities in the present.

The colonial past in *That Deadman Dance* is also examined through the lens of trauma and memory. Scott explores how the Noongar people carry the weight of historical trauma, not as a fixed and finished event but as a series of ongoing wounds that are passed down through generations. The trauma inflicted by the colonial encounter reverberates through the characters' lives, affecting how they view themselves, their identity, and their relationship to the land. Scott uses storytelling as a way for the Noongar people to process and make sense of their past, emphasizing the importance of oral tradition in the transmission of history and memory. The liminal nature of the novel allows Scott to illustrate that the colonial past is never truly "finished" or "over." Through the Noongar characters' lived experiences, the novel shows that the effects of colonialism are embedded in the present, perpetuating cycles of trauma and dislocation. Scott's characters are haunted by memories of violence, loss, and dispossession, and yet these memories also serve as a means of resistance—a refusal to forget and a call to confront the past in order to create a future of cultural renewal and survival.

The colonial encounter in *That Deadman Dance* is not only a violent imposition of foreign power but also a complex interaction between two cultures that cannot be easily understood through the lens of domination and submission. Scott complicates the binary of colonizers versus the colonized, showing how both groups are shaped by their interactions. The settlers' attitudes toward the Noongar people are marked by ignorance and superiority, yet they are also dependent on the Noongar for their survival in the new land. The Noongar people, meanwhile, are forced to navigate the increasingly violent and confusing world of settler colonialism, sometimes engaging with settlers in ways that are not simply antagonistic but fraught with compromise, negotiation, and survival. The colonial past in *That Deadman Dance* is not a one-sided process of destruction but an ongoing dynamic shaped by conflict, collaboration, and adaptation. Scott's portrayal of the settler-Indigenous relationship highlights the complexity of colonialism, where colonizers and colonized are linked in a cycle of violence, cultural exchange, and survival.

Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance* intricately explores the concept of *liminal histories*, where the past and present exist in a fluid, transitional space. This liminality challenges conventional historical narratives and underscores the ongoing negotiation between the colonial past and the possibilities for Indigenous futures. In the novel, history is not depicted as a fixed or closed chapter but as something continuously reshaped by the living experiences of the Noongar people. Through a fragmented narrative structure, Scott invites readers to reconsider the boundaries of time and history, suggesting that Indigenous histories are not static but are alive and in motion, influenced by memory, storytelling, and cultural survival.

Liminal histories in *That Deadman Dance* emphasize the fluidity of time and history, where the boundaries between past and present are not rigid but are instead in constant motion. The novel's non-linear narrative structure, which shifts between various perspectives, disrupts the traditional notion of a linear historical timeline. This approach mirrors the cyclical understanding of time in many Indigenous cultures, particularly the Noongar people, where the past is always present and continuously shapes the future. In this liminal space, history is not something fixed that can be neatly placed in the past, but is an ongoing process that is lived, re-lived, and retold. The central figure of Bobby Wabalanginy exemplifies this liminal relationship to history. His character moves between the past and present, engaging with both the memories of his people and the contemporary colonial world. Through his experiences, the novel illustrates how the past, particularly the colonial past, is never truly over for the Noongar people; instead, it reverberates in the present, shaping the ways in which individuals and communities experience identity, land, and survival.

Storytelling is a crucial mechanism for expressing liminal histories in *That Deadman Dance*. The novel's use of Noongar language alongside English reflects the tension between colonial and Indigenous cultures, emphasizing the space between these worlds. Language serves as both a tool of cultural survival and an act of resistance, enabling the Noongar people to reclaim their histories from the colonial narratives that have sought to erase them. By telling their stories, the Noongar people negotiate their identities and historical experiences, asserting their agency in the process of historical re-imagination. Scott emphasizes the power of oral traditions in preserving Noongar history. Storytelling becomes a space for the past to be relived, reshaped, and passed down across generations. This form of

storytelling in the novel is not linear; it is cyclical, just as Noongar history is. The stories told are not about fixed events or settled truths but are continuously evolving, shaped by the experiences and memories of those who live them. This act of storytelling, situated in the liminal space between the present and past, allows for the reclamation of Indigenous histories and the expression of resistance to the colonial structures that seek to silence them.

The novel's engagement with liminal histories is particularly evident in the way it presents the intersection between colonial histories and Indigenous experiences. In *That Deadman Dance*, Scott depicts colonial history as an ongoing process, not as a singular historical moment that ended with the formal establishment of colonial rule. The Noongar people continue to live within the consequences of colonialism, constantly negotiating their identities and futures in response to the cultural, social, and political structures imposed upon them. This interplay between colonial and Indigenous histories shows how these two histories are interconnected and influence one another, even if one seeks to dominate the other. In Scott's novel, the liminal space between these histories is marked by moments of cultural exchange, adaptation, resistance, and survival. For example, some Noongar people adopt certain aspects of European culture, such as language or economic systems, while simultaneously resisting the overarching colonial ideology. This complex relationship between the two histories reflects the way in which Indigenous people exist in the space between both worlds—neither fully assimilated nor fully resistant, but constantly negotiating and redefining their identities.

The liminal histories in *That Deadman Dance* also suggest that the past, rather than being a fixed site of trauma, is an open space for reimagination and transformation. Scott's novel allows for Indigenous futures to emerge from these liminal histories, proposing that the past can be revisited and reshaped in ways that promote cultural survival and empowerment. Through the continual act of remembering and retelling Noongar history, Scott suggests that there is room for new futures—ones that are not determined solely by colonial histories but are shaped by the resilience, agency, and creativity of the Noongar people. By blurring the boundaries between the past and the present, *That Deadman Dance* challenges readers to see Indigenous history as something fluid, living, and evolving. The novel encourages a reimagining of Indigenous futures that are grounded in the

continuity of culture and the survival of traditions, but that also embrace change and adaptation. In this way, the liminal histories in the novel are not just about preserving the past, but about actively transforming it to create possibilities for the future.

That Deadman Dance offers a profound meditation on the liminality between Noongar futures and colonial pasts, using historical fiction as a space to challenge colonial histories and propose new ways of understanding and shaping Indigenous identities. Through the experiences of characters like Bobby Wabalanginy, Scott presents a vision of the future in which the Noongar people are not passive victims of their past but active agents in the reclamation and revitalization of their culture and identity. Through the portrayal of the settler colonial system, its violence, and its lasting effects on the Noongar people, the novel emphasizes the persistence of colonial legacies in the lives of Indigenous communities. However, it also suggests that despite the deep scars of colonization, there remains the potential for resistance, survival, and cultural renewal. The Noongar people continue to confront and challenge the colonial past, making space for futures that are not defined by their subjugation. The novel ultimately suggests that the colonial past, while traumatic and painful, is not a fixed force but an ongoing, negotiable history that can be reimagined, resisted, and reclaimed by Indigenous peoples. By presenting history as something that is continuously lived and retold, the novel portrays how Indigenous histories are remembered, reconstructed, and transformed. The liminal space in the novel allows for a broader, more nuanced understanding of colonialism and its ongoing effects, while also offering hope for the reimagination of Indigenous futures that transcend the boundaries of trauma and colonization. Through its engagement with liminal histories, *That Deadman Dance* presents a vision of cultural survival, resistance, and empowerment that transcends the fixed narratives of colonial history.

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When Memory Becomes Material - Feeling Things in Arundhati Roy's *Mother Mary Comes to Me*

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Abstract

Arundhati Roy's *Mother Mary Comes to Me* (2025) is a memoir that intricately weaves memory, grief and familial intimacy through a non-linear, poetic narrative. This paper proposes to examine how the memoir's material and spatial elements co-produce emotional experience. This is done through an interdisciplinary reading that combines Affect Theory, New Materialism and Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO). Roy's memoir is populated not only by human actors, but also by objects, landscapes and spaces that serve as active participants in memory-making. In addition to the mother and the daughter, letters, household possessions, backwaters, streets of Aymanam and the mother's personal artifacts emerge as agents of affect that mediates grief, love and reconciliation. Using Affect Theory, the paper explores how Roy's language evokes emotional resonance in both narrator and reader by tracing the circulation of guilt, longing and tenderness. New Materialism and OOO allow for a reading that decentres the human subject and recognizes material entities as co-shapers of experience, memory and identity. By addressing the interplay between affective experience and material agency, this study illuminates how personal grief becomes a shared, embodied encounter with the world. It also investigates how literary memoir can reconfigure our understanding of objects, space and emotional relationality. This approach ultimately foregrounds the entanglement of emotion, matter and narrative. By doing so, it demonstrates that human experience is inseparable from the vibrant materiality of memory and the world it inhabits in Roy's narrative world.

Key words: Affect Theory, New Materialism, Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO), Memoir, Memory and Materiality, Grief and Emotional Experience, Maternal Agency, Mother-Daughter Relationships, Materiality in Literature, Spatiality / Place and Identity, Language and Emotion.

Arundhati Roy's memoir *Mother Mary Comes to Me* (2025), offers a deep and intimate exploration of grief, memory and maternal legacy. This work chronicles the life and influence of her mother, Mary Roy who is both a private figure and a public activist. Mary Roy challenged entrenched patriarchal norms in Kerala. Her presence in the memoir permeates Roy's narrative through the material traces she leaves behind like letters, personal belongings, spaces and landscapes as much as she does so through her deeds. Most of the existing scholarship emphasizes on Roy's literary style or feminist perspective. But the ways in which materiality and affect intersect to shape emotional and mnemonic experience in her works remain underexamined. Hence, this paper situates the memoir at the intersection of Affect Theory, New Materialism and Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO). Following scholars such as Sara Ahmed and Sianne Ngai, Affect Theory provides tools to investigate how emotions like grief, longing and reconciliation circulate between narrator, objects and reader (Ahmed 3; Ngai 8). New Materialism and OOO, as articulated by Karen Barad and Graham Harman, decentres the human subject and grants agency to objects, landscapes and spaces as co-creators of narrative meaning (Barad 31; Harman 45). In this lens, the memoir emerges as a site where human and non-human agents interact in complex affective entanglements. The paper examines how letters, household artifacts and the landscapes of Aymanam function as active participants in shaping memory, emotion and identity. This study argues that Roy's memoir demonstrates the profound interconnection between emotion and materiality, revealing that the experience of grief and remembrance extends beyond the human subject to the objects, spaces, and landscapes that surround her.

Scholarly engagement with Arundhati Roy's literary oeuvre has predominantly focused on her fiction, exploring narrative strategy and socio-political perspectives (Mehrotra 112; Chaturvedi 57). Existing analyses often emphasize her works as a site of feminist reflection or postcolonial identity formation, highlighting the mother-daughter relationship within Kerala's socio-cultural context (Rajan 88). However, the interplay of material objects, spatial environments and affective experience in shaping memory in her works has not received significant attention.

Affect Theory has emerged as a critical lens in contemporary literary studies. It offers tools to examine how emotions circulate across textual and social spaces. Sara Ahmed (2004) defines affect as "a way in which bodies and worlds

affect each other" (3). She suggests that feelings are not purely internal but relational and dynamic. On the other hand, Sianne Ngai (2005) emphasizes the literary significance of nuanced affects such as anxiety, melancholy and guilt across narrative structures (6). Applying Affect Theory to memoir allows to trace how emotions like grief, longing and reconciliation operate between the narrator, the reader and material traces within the text.

New Materialism and Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) offer complementary perspectives by decentring human subjectivity. Karen Barad's concept of *intra-action* suggests that objects, humans and spaces co-constitute reality. This enables a reading of the memoir where letters, household artifacts and landscapes become active participants in memory-making. Similarly, Graham Harman's Object-Oriented Ontology emphasizes the autonomous agency of objects. He argues that non-human entities interact with humans and other objects shaping experience. These frameworks have been used to examine the material and spatial dimensions of western narrative, but their application to Indian literary studies, especially memoirs, remains scarce.

This study fills a critical gap by combining Affect Theory with New Materialism and OOO, offering an interdisciplinary approach to understanding how Roy's memoir enacts memory, grief and emotional relationality through both human and non-human agencies. This framework is in alignment with recent scholarship in memoir studies, postcolonial literature and affective materiality and provides a robust theoretical foundation for textual analysis.

This study adopts an interdisciplinary theoretical framework, combining Affect Theory, New Materialism and Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) to analyse Arundhati Roy's memoir, *Mother Mary Comes to Me*. These approaches foreground the interplay between human emotion, materiality and narrative agency and all together allows for a nuanced understanding of how memory, grief and maternal legacy are enacted in the memoir. Roy's memoir is seen as a site of entangled human and non-human affect, in which materiality, emotion and memory are inseparable. This framework highlights the memoir's complex interplay of affect, memory and materiality by allowing for a reading that recognizes both the poetic circulation of emotion and the active material presence of objects and spaces.

This study employs a qualitative, text-based methodology that integrates close reading, thematic coding and interdisciplinary theoretical analysis to examine Arundhati Roy's *Mother Mary Comes to Me*.

Textual Analysis and Close Reading: Key passages from the memoir were identified through careful reading of sections that details maternal relationships, childhood landscapes, household artifacts and moments of reflection on grief and reconciliation. Close reading of the narrative structure, syntax, repetition and figurative language is carried out to trace the circulation of affect and how Roy's prose materializes emotional experience.

Thematic Coding: Passages were organized into three interrelated themes: Material Objects as Emotional Agents – letters, books, furniture and personal belongings of Mary Roy. Spaces and Landscapes – the home, Aymanam village, backwaters and school spaces. Language and Affect – narrative pauses, fragmented syntax, silence and poetic description of emotions.

Theoretical Application: Affect Theory guides the analysis of emotional circulation between narrator, objects and spaces. New Materialism frames objects and landscapes as active participants in memory-making.Object Oriented Ontology foregrounds the agency of material entities independent of human perception. Together, this methodology captures the entanglement of affect, materiality and narrative and allows for a nuanced reading of Roy's memoir.

Material Objects as Agents of Memory and Affect

In Roy's memoir, material objects serve as repositories of memory and affect. They function as active participants in the narrator's emotional experience. Letters, notebooks and personal artifacts of Mary Roy repeatedly evoke grief, longing and reflection. For example, Roy describes holding her mother's letters as the "familiar weight of paper in my hands, carrying the imprint of her voice and presence" (27). This moment illustrates how materiality mediates affect and makes memory tangible. According to Ahmed, affect circulates between bodies and objects, shaping perception and emotional resonance (3).

Barad's notion of *intra-action* frames the letters as co-constitutive agents, participating in the creation of meaning alongside the narrator (31). Furniture, spectacles and other domestic items assume autonomous presence in the memoir

and embodies Mary Roy's personality, authority and influence. Reflecting on Object-Oriented Ontology, these objects are not mere symbols but entities with agency, interacting with the narrator and shaping her reflective experience. The memoir thus positions materiality as emotionally charged and narratively potent agent that bridges the personal and the relational.

Space, Landscape and Emotional Cartography

Roy's depiction of Aymanam village, backwaters of Kerala and domestic spaces depict how landscapes function as co-agents in memory and emotional experience. Descriptions of monsoon rains, village streets and the family home evoke both nostalgia and mourning, "The river remembered her as I did; the rains whispered secrets of her laughter and insistence" (Roy 65). The spaces become witnesses to life and grief. This resonates with New Materialist perspectives where environments actively shape human perception and affective response (Barad 31).

Classroom and school spaces, where Mary Roy taught, are depicted in the memoir as material nodes of relationality. Here pedagogy, care and legacy intertwine to create a deeper meaning. These spaces more than providing a setting, actively mediate the daughter's emotional understanding of her mother's life work (102). By looking in to spatial materiality, the memoir reflects how affect is distributed across human and non-human alike, creating a relational cartography of memory.

Language, Silence and Circulation of Affect

The narrative structure of the memoir itself materializes affect. The complexity of grief and reconciliation is conveyed through Roy's fragmented, non-linear prose which is interspersed with pauses and silences. For instance, she writes: "There are things I cannot say; yet they linger in every corner, in every page" (45). Here, silence becomes a materialized affect. It becomes a space where emotion is both felt and performed. Ngai notes that subtle literary affects such as melancholy or anxiety, circulate through textual structures and rhythm (12). This interplay of language and materiality underscores that emotional experience in memoir is not internal but circulates between the narrator, objects and the reader. Roy's intimate engagement with memory and material traces is reinforced through the memoir's poetic syntax and rhythm.

Intersections of Human and Non-Human Agency

Roy's memoir can be read as a site of entangled human and non-human agency. Letters, household artifacts, landscapes and even climatic elements like monsoons and rivers, participate in shaping emotional and mnemonic experience. For example, Roy describes the river as "holding pieces of her laughter, as though it too remembered her insistence" (65). This exemplifies how affect flows across human and non-human entities, highlighting relationality beyond anthropocentric frameworks. This intersection shows that memory, grief and reconciliation are co-produced by both material and human actors. This positions the memoir as a space where emotional and material entanglements are central to narrative meaning.

This study demonstrates that Arundhati Roy's *Mother Mary Comes to Me* is not just a memoir of maternal loss and remembrance, but also a site where emotion, memory and materiality are entangled. The paper highlights the co-agency of human and non-human actors in shaping narrative meaning. Letters, household artifacts, landscapes and spaces do not merely symbolize memory. Rather, they actively participate in producing grief, reconciliation and emotional reflection.

The findings of this research have several implications for literary scholarship:

Interdisciplinary Methodology: Combining affective and materialist frameworks enables a reading of memoir that goes beyond anthropocentric narratives. This foregrounds the relational circulation of emotion across people, objects and spaces.

Materiality in Memoir Studies: This approach emphasizes that objects and spaces in autobiographical writing are not passive backdrops but dynamic agents of memory and emotion. They expand the scope of memoir analysis to include non-human actors.

Reconceptualizing Grief and Memory: The study suggests that emotional experiences such as grief are distributed across both human and material networks equally. This offers a nuanced understanding of maternal legacy and familial affective entanglements.

Pedagogical and Critical Value: The framework provides a model for future literary scholarship, where objects and spaces are integral to narrative and affective structures.

Thus, this paper contributes to literary criticism by demonstrating that materiality and affect are inseparable in narrative construction. Roy's memoir exemplifies this potential of interdisciplinary approaches to enrich understanding of human experience, memory and relationality.

Arundhati Roy's *Mother Mary Comes to Me* presents a rich tapestry of memory, grief and maternal legacy, where human and non-human entities collaboratively shape the narratives. This study has shown that objects, spaces, and material traces are not mere symbols but active participants in the circulation of emotion and memory. The analysis shows that Roy's narrative materializes affect through language, poetic structure and attention to objects. This renders grief, longing and reconciliation both tangible and relational. Spaces and landscapes act as co-constitutive agents, highlighting that memory and emotion are distributed across networks of human and non-human agencies.

This interdisciplinary approach expands the scope of memoir studies by moving beyond anthropocentric readings. It acknowledges the agency of materiality and offers new ways to interpret grief, maternal relationships and memory in contemporary life writing. Furthermore, it provides a model for analysing texts through the lenses of affect and material agency, foregrounding the interconnectedness of emotion, memory and matter.

In conclusion, *Mother Mary Comes to Me* demonstrates how literary memoir can function as a site of entangled affective and material relations by challenging conventional distinctions between subject and object, human and non-human, memory and materiality. The memoir's richness lies in this intricate web of emotional, spatial and material entanglement that makes it a compelling text for interdisciplinary literary analysis.

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"From Subjugation to Solidarity: A Marxist Study of Class and Gender in Toni Morrison's *Sula* and Walker's *The Color Purple*"

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Abstract

This study examines the Marxist perspectives on Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and Toni Morrison's *Sula*. In addition to examining issues of race, gender, and class, both works show how the ruling class oppresses and takes advantage of the working class. This paper makes the case that Morrison and Walker both use Marxist ideas to emphasize the struggles of oppressed groups against the repressive system and to challenge the prevailing worldview in the novels they write.

Keywords: Marxism, Class struggle, Capitalism, Proletariat, Race.

Marxism is a nineteenth-century critical theory that seeks to illustrate and criticize the exploitative practices and inequality found in capitalist systems. According to Marxist theory, society is split into two classes: the working class, which provides the labor, and the ruling class, which controls the means of production. This notion is seen in the writings of numerous authors who highlight the working class's struggles and expose the ruling class's exploitative tactics through Marxist themes. Two significant works of fiction that examine issues of race, gender, and class in America are Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and Toni Morrison's *Sula.* Marxist theory had an impact on both writers, and Marxist ideas are included into both novels to highlight the repressive system's fights against underprivileged populations and to attack the prevailing ideology. The purpose of

this research paper is to examine the Marxist perspectives in both novels and to evaluate how they portray the fight for oppression and power.

According to Marxist theory, there are two classes in society: the ruling class, which controls the means of production, and the working class, which performs the labor. To keep their hold on power and influence, the ruling class takes advantage of the working class. History is fueled by the conflict between the ruling class and the working class. *Sula* and *The Color Purple* both demonstrate this theory. The literary world has been greatly influenced by Marxist viewpoints in novels. By examining the relationship between classes and their power struggles, these novels have shed light on how society functions. Other literary movements, including socialist realism, which centers on the lives of working-class people, have been influenced by Marxist literature. Marxist writing has often come under fire for being too politically oriented and ignoring aesthetics. In response to this critique, a number of Marxist authors have maintained that politics and aesthetics are interwoven and that their writings have aesthetic value.

The lives of two Black women, Sula and Nel, who are raised in a small Ohio town are examined in the novel *Sula*. In addition to examining issues of gender, ethnicity, and class, the book emphasizes how the ruling class oppresses and takes advantage of the working class. Sula's defiance of her community's prevailing ideology is a critique of the capitalist system, which exploits and oppresses underprivileged people. Sula rebels against the prevailing mentality of her community with her nontraditional lifestyle and refusal to follow gender norms. Shadrack, a World War I veteran who suffered from trauma, is a symbol of the working class's fight against the ruling class. Shadrack's incapacity to handle the pain of war serves as a metaphor for the ways in which the oppressive system traumatizes the working class.

In *Sula*, Toni Morrison explores the rebellion of the main character, Sula, against the dominant ideology of her community. Sula challenges the conservative values of her hometown of Medallion, Ohio by rejecting traditional gender roles and engaging in sexual promiscuity. Sula also rebels against the idea of the "bottom," a term used in the black community to describe the lowest social status, by asserting her own agency and identity. Her rebellion against the dominant ideology of her

community ultimately leads to her being ostracized and demonized as a pariah, but it also allows her to find freedom and self-determination.

The novel depicts the power dynamics between the black community and the white community, as well as the power dynamics between men and women. The character of Nel represents the traditional power structures of the community, as she conforms to the expectations of her gender and the dominant ideology of her community. In contrast, Sula challenges these power structures by rejecting traditional gender roles and asserting her own agency. The struggle for power in Sula reflects the Marxist idea of the struggle between the ruling class and the working class. The character of Shadrack represents the trauma of the working class, as he struggles to cope with the horrors of war and the trauma of being an African American in a racist society. The novel also highlights the ways in which poverty and lack of resources can exacerbate trauma and create cycles of violence and abuse. Sula explores the role of community in maintaining power structures and perpetuating inequality. The community of Medallion represents a microcosm of the larger society, with power structures that reflect the Marxist idea of the ruling class and the working class. The community also reinforces the dominant ideology that perpetuates oppression and marginalization. The character of Eva represents the power of community to maintain the status quo, as she uses her influence to control and manipulate others in the community.

Sula also explores the intersection of race and class and the ways in which these identities are used to create and perpetuate inequalities. The character of Sula, as a black woman from a poor family, faces multiple forms of oppression and marginalization. The novel exposes the ways in which the intersection of race and class can lead to unique experiences of oppression and marginalization, and how these experiences are used to maintain the power of the ruling class. *Sula* also critiques the role of women in the labour force and the ways in which women are exploited for their labour. The character of Nel represents the traditional role of women in the labour force, as she sacrifices her own aspirations and desires to care for her husband and children. The character of Sula, in contrast, rejects the traditional role of women in the labour force and asserts her own agency and independence.

The life of Celie, a young Black woman in the American South in the early 20th century, is examined in the novel *The Color Purple*. The battle of the working class against the ruling class is shown in the novel, which also examines the junction of race, gender, and class. Celie's experiences demonstrate how oppressed groups, especially women and people of color, are taken advantage of and oppressed by the ruling class. The fight of the working class against the ruling class is symbolized by Sofia, a powerful and outspoken black woman. Sofia's defiance of her community's prevailing ideology is a critique of the capitalist system, which exploits and oppresses underprivileged people. intersection of gender, class, and race.

Through Celie, the main character, *The Color Purple* examines how race, gender, and class intertwine. Early in the twentieth century, Celie, an African American woman, lived in the American South. She experiences numerous forms of prejudice and oppression because of her class, gender, and color. The narrative reveals how these overlapping identities result in distinct marginalization and oppression experiences. The novel's Marxist perspective emphasizes how these overlapping identities are employed to uphold the ruling class's authority and to continue oppressive and exploitative regimes.

The novel shows how white landowners take advantage of African American sharecroppers and how males take advantage of women. Throughout the book, Celie is subjected to various sorts of exploitation and abuse, including physical and sexual torture at the hands of her husband and father. The capitalist system, which permits the exploitation of underprivileged populations for the advantage of the ruling class, is criticized in the novel. The Rebellion of Sofia In *The Color Purple,* Sofia is a symbol of defiance against the prevailing hierarchies of authority. Sofia is a strong, self-reliant woman who defies both the demands of her community's prevailing philosophy and traditional gender roles. The ruling class punishes and imprisons Sofia for her resistance, underscoring the ways in which they employ tyranny and violence to hold onto power. As Sofia rebels against the systems of power that aim to oppress and take advantage of her, it also symbolizes the Marxist notion of the conflict between the ruling class and the working class.

The fight for education as a tool for social mobility and empowerment is examined in *The Color Purple*. Initially illiterate at the start of the book, Celie gains

literacy and uses her newfound knowledge to become independent and express her own agency. The novel challenges the manner in which capitalism limits educational opportunities and sustains inequitable structures. The role of religion in upholding injustice and power hierarchies is also criticized in *The Color Purple*. Celie is a character that grows up in a strongly religious household that manipulates and controls her. The novel reveals the manner in which religion may be employed as a tool of the ruling class and to defend and uphold tyranny. The color purple emphasizes how crucial unity and group effort are to overthrowing established power systems and bringing about change. Since Shug Avery encourages Celie to claim her own agency and fight for her own freedom, she serves as a symbol of the value of group action in the struggle against oppression. The novel challenges capitalism's emphasis on individualism and emphasizes the value of group efforts in building a more fair and just society.

Similarities between Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and Toni Morrison's *Sula* Both novels examine the lives of African American women and their fights for autonomy, self-discovery, and agency in an oppressive and discriminating society. The subject of sexuality and the effects of gender norms and cultural expectations on women's lives are also covered in both books. While Celie's experiences of sexual assault and exploitation underscore the fragility of women in a patriarchal culture, Sula's nonconformist sexuality and rejection of traditional gender roles subverts the norms of her community. Variations Among the Novels although the Marxist topics explored in both novels are similar, their narrative styles are different. Sula is organized as a sequence of short stories, each of which focuses on a distinct facet of the protagonist's lives. The story is not always linear, as the book moves around in time. *The Color Purple*, on the other hand, is more conventional. Because the book is written as letters from Celie to God, the reader may follow Celie's character development and her interactions with other characters.

The power struggle between the ruling class and the working class has been examined in Marxist literature. By shedding light on societal dynamics and fostering the growth of other literary groups, these books have had a profound effect on the literary world. Many authors have maintained that their works are aesthetically valuable and that politics and aesthetics are interwoven, despite criticism that Marxist literature is unduly political. Both *Sula* and *The Color Purple*

are significant fiction pieces that use a Marxist perspective to examine issues of race, gender, and class. Both books emphasize the working class's fight against the ruling class and criticize the prevailing ideologies of their respective societies. Although the novel's Marxist concepts are similar, their narrative patterns are different. While *The Color Purple's* conventional narrative form enables a more thorough examination of Celie's character and her connections, *Sula's* non-linear structure and use of vignettes allow for a more fractured investigation of the individuals and their lives. All things considered, both books employ Marxist ideas to emphasize the struggles of oppressed groups against the repressive system and to reveal and condemn the injustices and exploitative behaviors seen in capitalist countries.

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The English Language as a Globalization Tool

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Abstract

The phenomenon of world globalization sets new benchmarks for proficiency in foreign languages, as well as for the educators of these languages. The globalization of markets is a significant factor that has contributed to the emergence of English as a global language. To facilitate effective interactions among international companies, there has been a growing demand for proficiency in the English language within the market and economy. Consequently, English has evolved into a vital tool for effective management and is recognized as the most beneficial second language. Additionally, there is a pressing need to enhance English language proficiency across all companies and business institutions. By increasing the number of English speakers, we can enhance international communication at both academic and business levels.

Keywords: Globalization, English Language, Market, Business, Communication

Globalization refers to the transformations taking place in our daily lives, as well as in society, the economy, and politics, which arise from international trade and cultural exchanges. In the field of economics, the term "free trade" was utilized before the advent of the term "globalization" to denote the liberalization of trade and the deregulation of the international market. Currently, the term "globalization" is employed in a broader context, encompassing all facets of human existence. It is becoming increasingly challenging to overlook that:

The contemporary definition of the term includes various factors that have played a role in globalization, such as advanced communication technologies at all levels, transportation innovations and services, mass migration, and the movement of

people and languages. It serves to characterize a degree of economic, social, and cultural activities that have transcended national borders and markets, whether through industrial mergers and commercial alliances that span national boundaries, international agreements that lower the costs of conducting business in foreign nations, or the cultural impacts of specific societies on others. (Wu & Dan, 2006)

Globalization facilitates the interaction of populations, cultures, and languages across international borders due to the increasing economic, social, and cultural exchanges among various societies. The availability of new technologies, media, the internet, and other communication channels enables individuals to engage in global interactions, fostering the belief that they shape intercultural communication.

Undoubtedly, globalization enhances global social relations and the collective awareness of the world, and it is often regarded as a "trendy buzzword" that can be embraced as a "concept denoting individuals' growing awareness of their membership in a global community." (Steger, 2003:11).

According to Giddens, "globalization is synonymous with westernization, or more precisely, Americanization, given that western powers, particularly the United States, currently hold the status of the sole superpower, possessing a preeminent economic, cultural, and military position within the global framework. Many of the most prominent cultural manifestations of globalization are American in origin, such as Coca-Cola, McDonald's, and CNN." (2000: 33).

Stager seeks to convey that the concept of globalization pertains to a series of social processes that seem to "transform our current social state of diminishing nationalism into one characterized by globality." (2003:10) He elaborates that globalization involves evolving forms of human interaction. To define and elucidate the phenomenon of globalization, Stager poses several inquiries, including: How does globalization take place? What drives globalization? Is it a singular cause or a combination of factors? Is globalization a consistent or an inconsistent process? In what ways does globalization differ from earlier social changes? (2003:11) Stager posits that globalization is an inconsistent process, indicating that individuals residing in different regions of the world experience this monumental shift in social structures and cultural domains in markedly diverse ways.

However, when discussing globalization, the intercultural aspect that predominantly comes to mind is the English language. It is evident that English is recognized by almost everyone due to their necessity to communicate on a global level. The Anglo-American cultural industry has established English as the global lingua franca of the 21st century. English is utilized in the fields of economy, diplomacy, mass media, and education worldwide, in contrast to other languages that have largely remained confined to national and regional contexts.

The significance of the rise of the English language has a long history reaching back to the British colonialism and the attempt to subaltern the rest of the world as well to exploit and assimilate other cultures imposing English language as medium of communication between people. In 16th century, at the beginning of colonization only 7 million people used English as their mother tongue, by the end of the 20th century the number increased to over 350 million. “English was the official vehicle and the magic formula to colonial elite.” (Wa Thiongo, 2004:12).

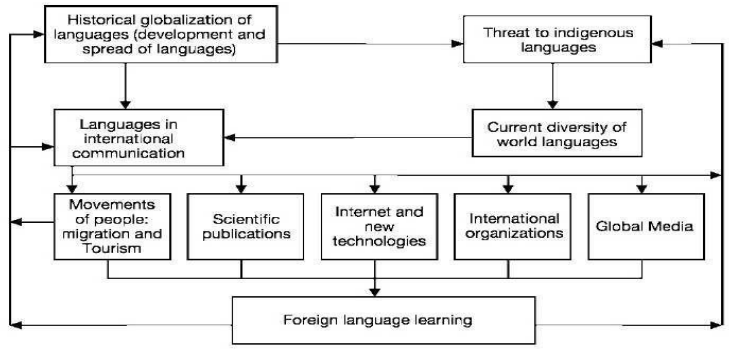
In many colonized countries English has not been rejected as a symbol of colonialism, it has rather been adopted as a politically neutral language. Any achievement in spoken or written English was rewarded. English became the measure of intelligence and ability in arts, science, music, literature. English became the main determinant for the progress and the success in education and business

Imperialism, spearheaded by the USA, confronts the oppressed populations of the world and all advocates for peace, democracy, and socialism with a stark choice: accept theft or face death […] the most formidable weapon that imperialism employs, and which is unleashed daily against collective resistance, is the cultural bomb. The impact of the cultural bomb is to obliterate a people's faith in their identities, in their languages, in their surroundings, in their historical struggles, in their solidarity, in their abilities, and ultimately in their self-worth. (Wa Thiongo, 2004:3)

Beginning with the assertion that "language acts as a marker of group affiliation, allowing various groups of individuals to recognize their ethnic identity and the shared heritage they possess". (Kiplangat, 2003) The absence of language would result in a loss of cultural identity; however, the evidence indicating that the

English language is more prevalent in certain nations than indigenous languages is alarming.

"The reality that the indigenous population has often been absorbed by colonizers has typically resulted in the disappearance of native languages, particularly when the colonized are maintained in a subordinate status. A crucial element is their participation in an economic framework that necessitates the use of



The globalization of languages.
Source: Adapted from Globalization Research Center at the University of Hawai'i-Manoa, www.globalhawaii.org.

the colonizer's language to compete in the job market and adapt effectively. This phenomenon reflects globalization as homogenization, which demands that operations in the colony mirror those in the metropole, particularly regarding the exertion of power and the control of the working class." (Solikoko, p.29)

Globalization facilitates the widespread influence of languages and cultures on a global level; however, it simultaneously contributes to the extinction of various other languages and cultures. Steger highlights the reduction in the number of spoken languages worldwide. He notes that there were approximately 14,500 spoken languages in 1500, which dwindled to fewer than 7,000 by the year 2000. "Considering the present rate of decline, some linguists predict that between 50% and 90% of the languages currently in existence may vanish by the conclusion of the 21st century. (2003:84)

As stated by Anne Johnson, the proliferation of the dominant language is accompanied by the dissemination of its culture. This phenomenon is evident in the orldwide distribution of popular American films, as well as in American media and cuisine, exemplified by the global expansion of McDonald's.

The extent of globalization would not be possible without the advancement and extensive use of the English language, while simultaneously, globalization enhances the status of English as a global lingua franca. It is acknowledged that the global community cannot operate efficiently without a universal language; thus, as Crystal highlights: English serves as the language of globalization or the "global language". Economic and professional motivations have rendered English a valuable asset, as the "exportation of desirable technology frequently brings along the language and culture of the dominant manufacturer." Whether this phenomenon stems from the imperialistic ambitions of Western powers in Europe or arises as a natural outcome of globalization, it is evident that English is gaining prominence in European media and education. It is suggested that those proficient in English do not require knowledge of other languages to communicate with the global community. "A language attains a truly global status when it assumes a distinct role that is acknowledged in every nation." (Crystal, 1997:3)

The worldwide proliferation of English is further bolstered by educational institutions. In contemporary society, children are often raised without their mother tongue, as they are not afforded the chance to learn it in educational settings. This trend is particularly pronounced in numerous urban areas of developing nations, where families converse solely in English. The heightened prestige associated with English has resulted in a diminishment of the cultural identity within these communities. Moreover, students are increasingly motivated to acquire English for global purposes, frequently at the expense of their native languages. While it has emerged as a universal language that facilitates communication among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, it continues to threaten the integrity of each culture involved.

In conclusion, it is evident that the English language serves as a prominent illustration of globalization. As noted by Schichao Li in her article, "Globalization of Languages," the English language can be regarded as a global language since "except English, no other language dominates international business, academia, media, the Internet, and international air/sea traffic." (2002)

The English language has become a tool, an instrument for effective management, and the most beneficial second language. On a daily basis, there exists a continual necessity to enhance English language proficiency within every

company or business institution; thus, the increasing number of English speakers fosters international communication at both academic and business levels.

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Expressions of Reality: Language, Identity, and Human Experience in Barack Obama's *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*

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Abstract

Literature functions as a reflective space where language captures, interprets, and reshapes human experience. Barack Obama's *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* exemplify this function by presenting a narrative rooted in lived reality, racial identity, and social consciousness. This paper examines how language operates as a medium through which personal memory and collective history intersect in Obama's memoir. Through a close reading of key episodes, the study explores how experiences of race, displacement, and belonging are articulated and transformed into a broader reflection on the human condition. The paper argues that Obama's use of language not only mirrors reality but actively constructs meaning, enabling the reconciliation of fragmented identities and inherited histories. By situating the memoir within the discourse of literature as social testimony, the study highlights the role of narrative in fostering self-awareness, moral insight, and empathetic engagement.

Keywords*:* Language, Reality, Human Experience, Identity, Race, Memoir

Language and literature have always played a crucial role in expressing and interpreting human experience. Literary texts emerge from lived realities and, in turn, shape how those realities are understood. Memoirs, in particular, occupy a distinctive space in literary studies because they combine personal memory with social and historical reflection. Through narrative, individual experience is transformed into collective meaning.Barack Obama's *Dreams from My Father* is a significant autobiographical work that reflects the complex realities of race, identity, and belonging in modern society. Written before his political rise, the memoir traces Obama's journey through childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood as he negotiates his mixed racial heritage and social position. The text reveals how language becomes a tool for self-exploration and social critique. This

paper examines how Obama's memoir reflects reality through language and how it articulates human experience within specific cultural and historical contexts.

Literature has long been regarded as a mirror of reality, capturing the emotional, psychological, and social dimensions of human life. In autobiographical writing, this reflective function becomes more pronounced, as authors revisit lived experiences and reinterpret them through narrative. *Dreams from My Father*, reflects the lived realities of racial identity and social inequality in America. Obama's early life in Hawaii and Indonesia exposes him to diverse cultural environments while also intensifying his awareness of difference. His experiences of racial exclusion during school years reveal how power and privilege operate within everyday interactions. These moments are presented not as isolated events but as part of a broader social structure. Through reflective language, Obama documents these realities, transforming personal encounters into social testimony. Language plays a central role in shaping human experience.

Feelings of alienation, anger, and aspiration gain clarity only when articulated through words. In Obama's memoir, language becomes both a means of expression and a process of transformation. Obama's engagement with African American literature marks a turning point in his intellectual development. Writers such as Ralph Ellison, Langston Hughes, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Malcolm X provide him with conceptual tools to understand race and resistance. However, Obama's struggle lies in finding a language that fully captures his own experience. This search illustrates how identity is not inherited fully formed but shaped through linguistic and narrative negotiation. The search for identity is central to *Dreams from My Father*. Obama's mixed heritage places him at the intersection of multiple cultural realities, complicating his sense of belonging. The memoir reflects the emotional burden of negotiating authenticity in a racially divided society. Family narratives play a crucial role in shaping Obama's identity. His mother instills values of fairness and independence, while stories of his father introduce him to a legacy of ambition and struggle. These inherited stories form a backdrop against which Obama constructs his self-understanding. Through reflective narration, experiences of pain and confusion are transformed into sources of insight and resilience.

Obama's work as a community organizer highlights the importance of collective experience in shaping identity. Here, language functions as a tool for

communication, trust-building, and social action. By listening to the voices of marginalized communities, Obama learns that individual identity is inseparable from collective reality. The memoir emphasizes that belonging is achieved not through withdrawal but through engagement. Literature, by documenting these interactions, preserves the voices of communities often excluded from dominant narratives. *Dreams from My Father* demonstrates how language and literature reflect reality while shaping human experience. Through memoir, Barack Obama transforms personal history into a narrative that speaks to universal concerns of identity, race, and belonging. The text reveals that literature is not merely a passive mirror of reality but an active process of meaning-making. By articulating lived experience through language, Obama bridges individual memory and collective understanding. The memoir underscores the power of narrative to confront social realities, preserve cultural inheritance, and foster empathy. As such, it stands as a compelling example of how literature reflects and reshapes the human condition.

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The Water Element: Spiritual Symbolism and Survival in Cinema
A Comparative Analysis of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Teachings and *Boat* (2023)

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Abstract

Water has long occupied a central position in spiritual philosophy, literature, and visual storytelling, symbolizing life, emotional depth, transformation, and uncertainty. This article undertakes a comparative analysis of the water element as conceptualized in Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's spiritual teachings and as represented cinematically in the Tamil film *Boat* (2023), starring Yogi Babu. Drawing from the Bon Buddhist understanding of the five elements, Rinpoche presents water as a force of adaptability, purification, emotional balance, and spiritual flow. In contrast, *Boat* portrays the sea as a tangible and often threatening presence that governs the survival, livelihood, and social struggles of a marginalized fishing community. While both perspectives recognize water as essential to human existence, they diverge in their emphasis: spiritual introspection and inner harmony on one hand, and physical survival and socio-economic reality on the other. By juxtaposing spiritual philosophy with cinematic narrative, this study reveals how water functions as both a metaphysical symbol and a material force, underscoring humanity's enduring dependence on and negotiation with this life-sustaining element.

Keywords: Water symbolism, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, *Boat* (2023), Tamil cinema, spirituality, survival, nature and culture

Introduction

The element of water has been a recurring symbol across cultures, belief systems, and artistic expressions. From ancient philosophies to contemporary cinema, water signifies life, transformation, emotional depth, and uncertainty. In spiritual traditions, water often represents inner flow and purification, while in cinematic narratives it frequently becomes a site of conflict, survival, and socio-

political struggle. This article explores the contrasting yet interconnected representations of water in two distinct contexts: the spiritual teachings of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and the Tamil film *Boat* (2023), directed by Karthik Srinivasan and starring Yogi Babu. While Rinpoche's teachings, rooted in the Bon Buddhist tradition, conceptualize water as a subtle internal force shaping emotional and spiritual well-being, *Boat* situates water—the sea—as an external, physical reality that determines the fate of a fishing community. By placing these perspectives in dialogue, this article seeks to examine how water functions as a symbolic bridge between inner consciousness and external survival, revealing the multifaceted relationship between humans and nature.

The Water Element in Spiritual Philosophy: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, a renowned Tibetan Buddhist teacher, interprets the five elements—earth, water, fire, air, and space—not merely as physical substances but as fundamental energies that shape both the inner and outer worlds. Among these, water occupies a significant place due to its association with emotions, flow, and connection. According to Rinpoche, water symbolizes adaptability and resilience. Like water that flows around obstacles rather than confronting them head-on, individuals aligned with the water element learn to respond to challenges with flexibility and acceptance. This adaptability fosters emotional intelligence and psychological balance. Water is also a powerful symbol of purification. Spiritually, it cleanses negative emotions such as anger, fear, and jealousy. Through meditative awareness, the water element helps dissolve emotional blockages, enabling clarity and inner peace. Rinpoche associates water with emotional depth and compassionate connection. When balanced, the water element nurtures empathy, harmonious relationships, and emotional stability. An imbalance, however, may lead to emotional overwhelm or detachment.

Water represents the flow of life itself. In spiritual alignment, life unfolds naturally without resistance. This concept of effortless flow underscores the importance of surrender and trust in the natural rhythm of existence.

Water and Survival in Cinema: *Boat* (2023)

Boat (2023) is a Tamil comedy-drama that departs from conventional portrayals of its lead actor Yogi Babu by blending humor with social realism. Set in

a small fishing village, the film foregrounds the sea as the central force shaping the lives of its inhabitants.

In *Boat*, the sea is the lifeblood of the fishing community. It provides food, income, and identity. The villagers' relationship with water is not symbolic in an abstract sense but deeply material—survival depends on daily interaction with the sea. The film repeatedly emphasizes the dual nature of water. While the sea sustains life, it also poses constant danger through storms, uncertainty, and environmental threats. This tension highlights humanity's fragile dependence on nature. Water also functions as a unifying force. Shared dependence on the sea fosters solidarity among the fishermen, especially during crises caused by natural disasters, corporate exploitation, or governmental policies. Collective resilience becomes essential for survival. Yogi Babu's protagonist embodies emotional resilience. His humor masks fear and vulnerability, serving as a coping mechanism against uncertainty. Unlike spiritual adaptability, his flexibility is rooted in immediate survival rather than inner transcendence.

Spiritual Symbolism vs. Cinematic Reality

Rinpoche's water element emphasizes inner adaptability—flowing with life's changes through emotional acceptance. In *Boat*, adaptability is external and pragmatic. The fishermen must adjust to environmental and socio-economic threats to survive, leaving little room for spiritual contemplation. Spiritually, water cleanses the mind gently. In *Boat*, the sea's "cleansing" is harsh, forcing characters to confront painful truths. Struggle, rather than serenity, becomes the pathway to transformation. Rinpoche's teachings associate water with emotional calm and compassion. In contrast, the sea in *Boat* generates anxiety and fear alongside communal bonding. Emotional connection arises from shared hardship rather than inner peace.

While water in spiritual philosophy nourishes harmonious growth, in *Boat* it is unpredictable—capable of sustaining life or destroying it. This duality underscores the precarious existence of marginalized communities dependent on natural resources. Both perspectives acknowledge water as central to life. Whether spiritual or physical, water shapes identity, relationships, and survival. Respect for water emerges as a common theme. The primary divergence lies in orientation. Rinpoche's interpretation is inward-looking, focusing on emotional balance and

spiritual evolution. *Boat* is outward-looking, portraying water as a site of struggle, power imbalance, and socio-economic vulnerability.

Conclusion

The comparative study of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings and *Boat* (2023) reveals water as a profoundly multifaceted element. Spiritually, water symbolizes inner harmony, emotional flow, and purification. Cinematically, it becomes a material force governing survival, labor, and social injustice.While these perspectives differ in emphasis, they converge in acknowledging humanity's inseparable connection with water. Together, they remind us that survival and spirituality are not mutually exclusive but interconnected dimensions of human existence. Through inner awareness or external struggle, water continues to shape the human journey—quietly, powerfully, and relentlessly.

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"Passing for White" as Mimicry: Postcolonial Theory and the Internal Colonization of African Americans

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Abstract

Although American Literature has virtually never been considered to belong to the genre of "Postcolonial Literature," it is reasonable to argue that a close analysis of literary works written byAfrican Americans will reveal that Blacks in the United States have also suffered under conditions that continue to be "colonialist" in nature, despite the fact that the United States of America formally ceased to be a colony of the British Empire as early as 1776. Likewise, Homi K. Bhabha's theories of Hybridity, Third Space, and Mimicry are equally applicable to the state of African Americans, despite the fact that the United States of America would not seem to be a "colonialist situation" in the usual sense of the term. Postcolonial Theory is preferable to Marxist Theory to explicate the oppression of Blacks in America.While Marxist Theory reduces all racism to an ideological distortion of the capitalist mode of production, Postcolonial Theory transcends every economic paradigm by revealing all social identity categories (race, gender, sexual orientation etc.) to be linguistic constructs performatively brought into existence. Above all, the trope of "passing for white", which is a common recurring theme in early African American novels, exhibits what Homi K. Bhabha called "mimicry": the black subject repeats the

white constructs of identity within the colonial gaze, but with a disruptive difference added in that subverts the power structures of the latter from within.

Keywords: *Postcolonial Theory, Homi K Bhabha, African American History, Internal Colonization* Although the term "Postcolonial Literature" is not typically associated with the writings of African Americans in the United States, a careful analysis of key texts within the genre will reveal undeniable structural similarities to the plight of colonized peoples, as portrayed in contexts like Frantz Fanon's French-ruled Caribbean or Homi K. Bhabha's British-ruled India. Such a characterization of the United States of America as a site of ongoing colonialist oppression may initially strike the reader as absurd, given the historical fact that the United States formally gained its independence from the British Empire as far back as the year 1776 and has therefore remained outside "colonial" status for nearly 250 years. In addition, the United States continues to pride itself for standing as the very symbol of a modern democratic nation founded on the political ideals of freedom and equality for all of its citizens, given that the United States replaced the archaic political institutions of monarchy and theocracy with an electoral system of secular democratic representation long before other western nations had followed the same trend.

These historical and political facts are, however, quite irrelevant to the question of whether the United States maintains colonialist structures of oppression, because from the very start of its history, the United States of America has been defined by the contradiction that its democratic rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" have been implicitly understood to only apply to a fraction of its population: those endowed with the status of white, property-owning males. The silenced minority of Native Americans, Blacks, and undocumented Hispanics therefore embody a subaltern status which might be considered to be structurally isomorphic to that of subaltern figures in any other overtly "colonialist" context. For this reason, Postcolonial Theory terms like Mimicry, Hybridity, and Third Space will hold the same potential for positive, revolutionary change in the United States as they would in contexts more conventionally "colonialist" in nature, such as Africa, South Asia, or the Caribbean. Another reason why Postcolonial Theory is uniquely fit for the task of explicating the oppression of racial minorities in the United States of

America is that traditional Marxist attempts to explain racism as an ideological side effect of the materialist means of production defined by capitalism fail to account for the historical fact that the oppression of Blacks actually began long *before* the West – and especially the Southern United States – had adopted an economic system that could be described as properly "capitalist" in nature. The oppression of Blacks actually transcends the capitalist paradigm as such because the British Atlantic slave trade (as described by Eric Williams) adhered more to the mercantilist economic ideal of state-sponsored monopolies than the capitalist ideal of freed trade.

Eric Williams's classic study on *Slavery and Capitalism* revealed that the oppression of Blacks in the West transcends any one particular economic paradigm, such as capitalism, because of the historical irony that although slavery made British capitalism possible in the first place, it also ceased to exist after full-blown capitalism arrived.Abolitionism became a major political force only *after* slavery ceased to be profitable in economic terms, due to its adherence to outdated mercantilist arrangements, such as the creation of state-sponsored monopolies that thwarted competition and innovation (129).Although British abolitionists paid lip service to the humanitarian ideals of human dignity and Christian moralism when denouncing slavery at the turn of the 19th century, their true motivation was to increase their own financial profits through replacing outdated arrangements with more modernized ones.

This irony can be explained as follows. On one hand, the slave trade provided the conditions for British industrialism to develop through increasing the supply of raw materials –above all, sugarand cotton– to be processed by British manufacturers, as well as driving up demand for British manufactured goods in African markets, in which they would be traded for human slaves (Williams 29). On the other hand, the arrival of mature industrialism in Britain served as the unexpected catalyst for slavery to be formally abolished for the following reason. The deeper economic flaw with the slave trade was that it required the British government to use coercion to sponsor monopolistic arrangements that forced its citizens to buy sugar at a higher price from British colonies, such as Barbados and Jamaica, through banning cheaper imports from French-owned colonies (109). 19th century capitalists found such arrangements

hopelessly outdated and obstructive in comparison with the *laissez faire* policies of free trade, leading the government to abolish slavery for economic rather than humanitarian reasons (117). Put briefly, the problem of institutional racism must have origins that are not strictly dependent upon any one particular economic paradigm (such as mercantilism or capitalism) or political ideology (such as state-sponsored monopolism or laissez faire free trade) because it has survived intact in both contexts just as well (119).

The Marxist attempt to reduce racism to economic origins also falls apart when one realizes the following historical fact:long after the British had abolished slavery in 1807 in order to modernize their economy (Williams 129), the agrarian plantation economies of the antebellum American Southremained in a pre-capitalist state of development. Whereas the North pursued industrial modernization in order to sell manufactured products to domestic consumers, the South remained committed to the archaic paradigm of exporting huge quantities of raw materials, such as cotton and tobacco, to foreign customers in Europe in order to raise the cash to pay for imported manufactured products from those same European nations (Keegan 13). Under such conditions, the American South had no incentive to develop a capitalistic industrial economy but instead remained in a state of technological backwardness so profound that at the time of the American Civil War, the South had no unified railroad system but instead operated a number ofdifferent short, ad hoc lines (often constructed with differently sized tracks that could not be joined together) that served as nothing more than a means to an end to transport bulk shipments of cash crops from the rural hinterlands to a handful of port cities on the coast (86-7). John Keegan noted, in fact, that it was precisely because the South was so economically backward that it was able to withstand the Union blockade of foreign imports for so long, given that its population was already accustomed to a hand-to-mouth existence of dire poverty for all those outside the tiny minority populating the affluent, aristocraticplanter class (22).

In addition, J. H. Franklin's classic study of *Reconstruction After the Civil War* revealed the shocking truth about just how little the American South changed after the Civil War, as the pre-modern, agrarian economic arrangements positioning the white plantation owner at the very top of a quasi-feudalist social

hierarchy remained firmly in place, despite radical attempts to "modernize" or "Northernize" the South during the 12 violent and chaotic years of Reconstruction (216). Despite adopting measures as extreme as having the federal government station troops in a number of southern states in order to use martial law to force the formerly confederate areas to comply with new laws allowing Blacks to attend school, vote, and even hold elected office,these laws proved to be totally ineffective in the long run (35).Terrorist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan recruited disgruntled confederate veterans to ride on horseback at night dressed as ghosts in order to use violence and intimidation to discourage Blacks from exercising their newly acquired rights (154). In addition, the Klan targeted whites who had relocated from the North (pejoratively labelled "carpetbaggers") on accusations that the latter were malicious"Yankees" who had come for no reason except to profiteer from the South's destruction in the aftermath of the Civil War by financially exploiting vulnerable locals (93). Similarly, the Klan targeted supposedly disloyal whites from the South (pejoratively labelled "scalawags") on accusations that the latter were"traitors" to their race and home states for the "crime" of cooperating with Blacks, carpetbaggers, and the Republican federal government(104).

The Klan's terroristic activities were only the most violent and most explicit expression of the same non-compliance with the Reconstruction efforts that characterized the sentiment of the general populace of the American South after the Civil War. In 1876, all of the federal government's Reconstruction efforts proved futile at any rate, as President Rutherford Hayes signed an agreement with Democrats to withdraw all federal troops from the South as part of a "sweetheart deal" allowing the Republican Party to effectively steal a contested election by just one electoral vote in 1876. At that moment, Reconstruction formally came to an end and the South returned to the control of Democratic governors whose aversion to racial equality was so extreme that, in many cases, the elected officials in question were literally high-ranking Confederate soldiers or officers who had fought violently against their own country just a few short years earlier in order to keep Blacks enslaved, even at the cost of destroying their home states (Franklin 215).

As a result, despite being nominally freed by President Lincoln's

Emancipation Proclamation and having been granted the right to vote by the 1870 15th Amendment, after the Civil War, the majority of Blacks remained in a position little different from the slavery of the antebellum period. Indeed, most slaves remained employed doing the exact same hard labour of picking cotton on the same plantations they had already worked on, with the only difference being that their titles had changed from "slave" to "sharecropper" or "renter" of land ultimately owned by the same wealthy, white aristocrat who had formerly been their owner (216).

Even after the South had joined the rest of the United States in accepting full-blown capitalistic industrialism over the course of the 20th century, Blacks remained stuck in their previous state as second-class citizens, as the Supreme Court upheld that racial segregation did not in fact violate the Constitution, so long as one provided facilities and services (such as train carts) deemed "separate but equal" by the farcical Kangaroo Court standards of the 1896 Supreme Court ruling known as "Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537."

With this "separate but equal" ruling established as the law of the land, all of the progress of the Reconstruction period was inverted into an awful form of regression that dragged on for the majority of the 20th century. As a result, the 1960s Black Arts Movement, led by figures like Nikki Giovanni, promoted a radical subversion of the established racial hierarchy in American society a full century after President Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation (Smethurst 84-90).

Because black oppression continued to survive long after major events like the formal abolition of slavery and the industrialization of the South's agrarian plantation economy, Marxist Theory is incapable of providing a satisfactory explanation for a problem whose foundations run much deeper than any particular economic arrangement, such as capitalism. Rather than treat racism as an ideological side effect of the capitalist mode of economic production, Postcolonial Theory allows one to recognize racism as an inherently linguistic problem, one which emerges from the complicated interstitial "Third Space" referenced by Homi K. Bhabha in his 1994 collection of essays titled *The Location of Culture*. Only the radical theoretical notions of Hybridity, Third

Space, and Mimicry can do justice to the way that black oppression, as well as the rebellion against it, expose all racial, gender, and sexual orientation identity categories to hold an illusory and unstable character, founded on the linguistic structures of writing and difference, rather than the metaphysical categories of substance or presence (Bhabha 22-3).

Although Homi K. Bhabha's writings bear the unenviable reputation of being borderline unreadable texts that have been described as filled with "dense, jargon-ridden, barely comprehensible prose", it can be argued that all of Bhabha's ideas rely on the common insight that cultural constructs such as culture, race, gender, and sexual orientation are not *things* so much as they are *effects* of a type of writing that reveals difference to be more primordial than identity for the following reasons. Bhabha's predecessor Jacques Derrida noted in his famous talk on "Différance" that the priority of writing over speech had been mischaracterized in Structuralist Linguistics, as Ferdinand de Saussure famously claimed that language is primarily realized as the spoken word and is only secondarily realized as a written text, because a written text is never anything except a belated representation or copy of living speech. Derrida reversed this order through punning the neologism "Différance", a French word which would sound exactly the same whether spelled with an "a" ("Différance") or an "e" ("Différence") in the penultimate vowel position (Derrida 1). Without a written text, in other words, it would be impossible to tell which word was being used, which is meant to call into question the old Saussurian idea that speech is always prior to writing because, under that view, writing would be nothing except a secondary and belated representation of a fully living speech (Lyons 38). By coining a new term that actually reveals *more* in its written form than its spoken form ever could, Derrida intentionally disrupted this hierarchical distinction between the supposed full presence of speech and the lack of presence in writing, but he did not do so in order to claim that writing has the full presence which speech has been proven to lack (3). Instead, Derrida did this in order to reveal that nothing, in fact, is characterized by full presence, because this invasion of speech by writing reveals everything to be, in fact, a form of writing in disguise. Everything therefore escapes the Metaphysics of Presence because writing has the strange status of being neither present nor absent. Writing is not fully present, as speech would seem to be, because it can represent a

meaning beyond itself; and yet writing is also not fully absent, because the inscription continues to reveal *more*, in fact, than living speech could.

In his essay "Of Mimicry and Man," Bhabha revealed that for this reason, colonialist attempts to force the colonized to adopt the colonizer's customs ironically end up undermining the colonizer's attempts to dominate the Other from within through having the colonized repeat the mandated changes back to the colonizer with an excess of disruptive *difference* added into the mix. The colonized subject who "mimics" the colonizer's way ironically subverts the colonial gaze from within its own coordinates, precisely through obeying the colonizer's mandate to combine the identity of Englishness with the difference of race (to have subjects that are Anglicized but not English) by repeating the master's identifying features back at him with a disruptive difference contaminating the expectations of the familiar (87).

The history of African American Literature is full of memorable examples of the same sort of mimicry described by Bhabha, long before he had explicitly formulated the theory. Above all, African American authors have portrayed mimicry as the recurring trope of "passing for white." As Valerie Babb noted, the theme of passing for something else dates back to the earliest slave narratives, such as the 1768 *Life, and Dying Speech of Arthur, A Negro Man*, which portrayedthe narrator as "cross-dressing as a Squaw and hiding among Indians [Native Americans] to avoid recapture into indentured servitude" (10-1). Similarly, in the first African American novel as such,*Clotel; or, the President's Daughter* by William Wells Brown, the title character escapes slavery through disguising herself as a white man named "Mr. Johnson" to escape on a river boat into the North (Brown 66). The irony, of course, is that the "president's daughter" actually *could* be considered white because of her status as the illegitimate daughter of President Thomas Jefferson and one of his black slaves.

The trope of "passing for white" therefore proves that race never exists in a vacuum but is always socially constructed in accord with the arbitrary prejudices of those who had been granted the power to designate where the borders between one race and another begin and end. Such an act was so

arbitrary that it varied from state to state, as African American author Charles Chestnut's 1900 novel *House Behind the Cedars* portrayed a character who was classified as a different race after moving across state lines: "The main character John has left his home in Patesville, North Carolina, to pass as the white John Warwick of Walden is of African, white, and Native American descent, but the strains don't matter under the one-drop rule in place in this part of North Carolina." (57) In other words, in North Carolina just "one drop" of "black" blood was enough to make someone a second-class citizen in accord with a totally absurd law.

Although it would initially seem that black characters' attempts at "passing for white" exhibit a tacit acceptance that the white race is superior or, at the very least, that one would gain greater economic and political advantages from seeming to belong to it, the truth is much more complicated. In reality, the trope of "passing for white" reveals that "black" and "white" do not pre-exist the performative act of mimicry as reified cultural or racial essences with the coherence and self-identity of Aristotelian substances; instead, the black mimicry of whiteness in the act of "passing" enacts Bhabha's "repetition with a disruptive difference" in a context that may not conventionally be considered "colonialist" in nature.

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Identity Collapse, Silence and Projection: A Social Identity Interpretation of Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You*

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Abstract

Everything I Never Told You (2014) by Celeste Ng illustrates the difficulties of forming an identity in a mixed-race Chinese-American household in Ohio in the 1970s. Using Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), this paper explores how Lydia Lee, the adolescent woman whose silence becomes crucial to the tension in the novel, develops her social and personal identity through language use, cultural norms, and family contact. This argues that Ng uses both language and silence as powerful narrative instruments to reveal the psychological effects of assimilation and belonging. Lydia is the vehicle for her parents' unfulfilled desires since they both project their goals onto her, each of them weighed down by social fears and past frustrations. These opposing forces cause Lydia to struggle to strike a balance between her need for independence and her parents' objectives, which damages her sense of self. Spoken and unspoken communication both influence identity formation, as evidenced by the family's communication, which is marked by miscommunication, deceit, and emotional detachment. The way that Ng portrays gender norms and cultural hybridity highlights the fine lines that exist in multicultural America between creativity and conformity. The paper demonstrates how language, silence, and identity are all combined by internalized cultural norms that govern self-formation in immigrant and bicultural communities. The novel *Everything I Never Told You* is a comprehensive exploration of the relationship between language and belonging in contemporary American literature, illustrating how social identity develops through both articulation and silence.

Keywords: Identity, Miscommunication, Emotional detachments, language, cultural hybridity

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Introduction

Everything I Never Told You by Celeste Ng opens with the stark, unnerving statement, "Lydia is dead," creating an atmosphere of suspense, absence, and introspective psychological analysis. Instead of being a murder mystery, the novel is a sophisticated sociopsychological analysis of the systemic racism, sexism, and strong parental projection that lead to personal tragedy. A powerful microcosm of larger problems of identity development and intergroup conflict is the bicultural Lee family, who struggle for acceptability in the largely white midwest of 1970s America.

According to this paper, the novel is best viewed via the exacting prism of Social Identity Theory (SIT), which holds that people's sense of self and self-worth are largely derived from their affiliation with particular social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). As a racially and culturally oppressed group in America in the 1970s, the Lees are bound to be negatively compared to the dominant white out-group. Family contact, expectation, and silence is influenced by this basic discord. It makes the argument that Lydia's existence and subsequent death are directly caused by the family's mutual but different attempts to cope with her low social standing, particularly the failed strategy of individual mobility

Social Identity and Status

A solid basis for analyzing the relational dynamics inside the Lee family is provided by social identity theory. According to SIT, people seek for a good social identity, which is attained by making positive comparisons between their in-group (like Asian Americans or the Lee family) and the out-groups (like white, suburban Americans). Members' self-esteem is threatened when the comparison has a negative effect, as it must for a minority group that is the target of institutional bias.

In the face of this negative social comparison, members of low-status groups typically resort to three main strategies: Individual Mobility, Social Competition, or Social Creativity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). *Everything I Never Told You* is fundamentally structured around the damaging pursuit of the first option, Individual Mobility. James Lee is an ideal instance of this strategy through his relentless assimilation, and he cruelly projects this objective onto Lydia by using her as a means of achieving his desire to fit in and be accepted. Lydia's failure to carry out this impractical plan turns into the sad focal point of the novel, highlighting the grave psychological consequences of trying to break free from one's own identification group.

Lydia Lee: The Failed Strategy of Individual Mobility

Lydia's entire adolescent existence is a painful execution of her parents' shared but conflicting goals for individual mobility. James's expectation of Lydia's popularity and social skills is a clear rejection of his own lonely, excluded upbringing. According to Marilyn, Lydia must possess exceptional intelligence, serving as a conduit for the medical profession that she was socially and culturally prohibited from pursuing because of gender norms. In order for Lydia to adopt a false identity intended for acceptance by the outgroup, both projections need her to essentially reject important facets of her own personality, such as her loneliness and lack of interest in science. Acute identity dissonance is the result of this unrelenting search for an external, status-granting identity. Lydia lies about her friendships and academic achievements because she feels compelled to act like someone she is not. This is a classic sign of unsuccessful individual mobility: the person stays in a state of liminality when the boundaries of the high-status out-group are permeable enough to try admittance though inevitably not porous enough for true inclusion. Ng depicts Lydia's situation of being torn between her parents' white-centric goals and her bicultural ancestry by making her emotionally distant and mute. Her eventual withdrawal to the isolated lake, which serves as the physical border of her social circle, is her last, last effort to flee the oppressive pressures of her false identity. The drowning is the most fatal instance of a plan that calls for the low-status person to destroy themselves.

In-group status and racial prominence: James's internalized shame

James Lee, the patriarch is an ideal instance of the psychological damage caused by a lifetime of hostile societal comparison. Having grown up as a visible minority in America, he experiences his race as a source of indelible low status. His marriage to Marilyn is, in part, an unconscious strategy to raise his social standing through affiliation with the dominant out-group. However, his fundamental racial identity remains an immutable barrier to full individual mobility.

His shame is pathologically channeled into his parenting. James is obsessed with Lydia's social life because he thinks that her fame would serve as a symbolic kind of social competition, demonstrating that his family is better than, or at least on par with, the white majority that has always kept him out. His insistence on assimilation, which is frequently disguised as paternal concern, is a kind of in-group denigration since it subtly conveys to his kids that their Chinese ancestry is a barrier to success. According to SIT, the family is prevented from ever creating a strong,

respected in-group, which is essential for self-worth and group identity, by this pervasive culture of internalized bias. James, on the other hand, reinforces the external social hierarchy by his actions, turning the home from a place of safety to one of performance and surveillance.

Gender, Ambition, and Social Comparison in Marilyn

Lydia's tragedy is dramatically informed by Marilyn's character, which creates a complex junction of gendered and racial identity crises. Although Marilyn occupies a racial position associated with social dominance, she perceives her gender as a profound source of limitation and low status. She is confined to the home in addition to feeling deeply frustrated and unsatisfied by her failed attempt to become a doctor in the patriarchal 1950s and 1960s. Marilyn is separated from her sense of self by the societal assumptions that women should put marriage and motherhood before education, which starts a lifetime conflict between conformity and defiance. She compares her ideal identity as a scientist, professional, and independent woman negatively to her actual identity as a homemaker, which causes psychological dissonance.

In her attempt to reconcile this identity gap, Marilyn enacts a form of identity projection through her daughter, Lydia. Lydia becomes the symbolic extension of the self that Marilyn could not realize. By compelling Lydia to study physics and biology, Marilyn vicariously competes within the male-dominated professional realm from which she was excluded. Thus, her goals turn parenthood into a socially competitive arena where instrumentalism replaces loving. Deprived of her uniqueness, Lydia serves as Marilyn's stand-in for social advancement and self-validation. Marilyn's liberation effort ironically reproduces the oppressive system she hated, revealing the complex internalization of patriarchal principles by subordinating Lydia's liberty to the same restrictive rules that previously imprisoned her. Ng highlights this irony by contrasting Marilyn's intellectual aspirations with James's yearning for social acceptability, and by depicting Lydia as the tragic between ground of their opposing impulses. Lydia is crushed under the weight of her inherited inadequacy and unfulfilled goals as a result of the unavoidable friction that her parents' projections generate between visibility and genuineness, ambition and devotion.

Identity dissonance, silence and misrecognition

The motif of silence throughout the novel is the ultimate psychological manifestation of the family's deep-seated identity dissonance and failed intergroup

dynamics. When authentic identity is suppressed in favor of performance (the individual mobility strategy), language breaks down. Being silent turns into a deception, a jail, and a shield. Lydia's self-preservation techniques, such as her refusal to acknowledge her low grades, her loneliness, and her general emotional disengagement, are meant to keep the brittle, high-status persona she is putting on from collapsing. It is as distressing that the parents misinterpret this silence: James sees conformity, Marilyn sees dedication. Instead than representing Lydia's reality, their interpretations are wholly self-referential and reflect their own personal ambitions. Mutual recognition and an understanding of status are necessary for productive group functioning, according to SIT. The Lees' failure to speak honestly about their marginalization or their true desires ensures that they remain locked in their individual, competitive efforts for status. The home grows into an emotionally inert vacuum as an outcome of this lack of cohesive communication, where the suppressed emotions build up to be forcefully expressed in Lydia's last quiet act.

The Lee Children's Divergent Identity Strategies

The responses of the three Lee children to their low-status, bicultural environment show the variety of outcomes that SIT predicts when there is no shared group identification. Lydia's response, as previously demonstrated, is a poor failure of Individual Mobility. The oldest sibling Nathan (Nath) on the other hand, exhibits clear signs of social competitiveness. In contrast Nathan, the eldest sibling shows evidence of social competition. He rejects his father's subdued integration approach in favor of one that values uniqueness over consistency. His wrath, obsession with going East, and animosity against Lydia's forced popularity are all expressions of his desire for a framework in which his in-group might achieve superiority or at least aggressive equality by direct battle.

The Role of Cultural Space and Group Boundaries

The novel's setting functions as a spatial metaphor for the Lee family's tenuous social identity. The isolated house, located by the tranquil yet deceptive lake, symbolizes the boundary between the family's private reality and the outside, dominant society. Ohio in the 1970s is explicitly defined as a predominantly white space, reinforcing the permeability of the group boundary, it is hard to enter and isolating to reside near.

The lake itself is the ultimate boundary marker. For Lydia, it is a place of escape but also the endpoint of her identity collapse. The lake is not an accepted social space; it is a space of solitude and danger. This geographical isolation reflects

their social standing: the family is physically present in the suburban landscape, yet symbolically segregated. The very lack of a defined, positively valued cultural space forces the Lees to turn inward, intensifying their individual struggles for external validation and preventing the development of a collective identity based on Social Creativity.

Ng in SIT as a Case Study

Social Identity Theory's capacity for prediction is nicely matched by Celeste Ng's Everything I Never Told You, which presents a deep and intricate story. The book shows that the root causes of tragedy are not malicious intent but rather the ubiquitous, sneaky consequences of unfavorable social comparison that fuel conflicting identity strategies. The family, which is supposed to be the main source of in-group support, ends up becoming the scene of the most severe and harmful intergroup conflict. This internal battle is waged against the external racism of society. The parents' individual mobility tactics, Michael through proxy achievement and James through assimilation, put Lydia under an unsupportable pressure. Her death is the tangible result of the self-destructive failure that comes with denying oneself in an effort to fit in with the outgroup, while her silence represents the psychological cost of this act. In the end, the book is a profound, sobering literary case study that shows that in order to truly belong, one must go through the challenging and painful process of creating positive distinctiveness inside one's own in-group rather than assimilating into a high-status out-group.

Conclusion

Everything I Never Told You by Celeste Ng is a stunning illustration of the damaging force of societal prejudice as it is internalized and used as a weapon in the home. Through the application of Social Identity Theory, this analysis has shown that the Lee family's attempts to control their low-status collective identity through self-denying and mutually incompatible techniques inevitably lead to the tragic arc of the novel. The inability to balance her parents' divergent expectations for personal freedom defines Lydia Lee's existence, resulting in severe identity dissonance that takes the form of heartbreaking silence.

The novel is a sophisticated commentary on the necessity of mutual recognition and the establishment of a positive social identity free from the tyranny of external social comparison. Lydia's last, silent deed compels the remaining members, especially James and Marilyn, to face the real cause of their dysfunction: a basic lack of self-acceptance connected to their racial and gendered place in

society, rather than a lack of love. Ng concludes that the family can only begin the healing process symbolized by Hannah's silent empathy and the parents' tentative attempts at sincere communication when they put an end to their pointless pursuit of out-group approval and start the crucial process of figuring out their own in-group worth.

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Posthumanism and Indian Ethics and Ethos

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Abstract

"Posthumanism" as introduced by Ihab Hassan in his text *"Prometheus as Performer: Towards a Posthumanist Culture?"* challenges Western Anthropocentric principles which centres man for whom other lives exist in the universe. Posthumanism asserts the interconnectedness of human life, environment including animals, birds and plants, technological tools, etc. It involves ecoconsciousness and believes in the shared life of human, non-human and all aspects of life. Man is neither above nor below anything in the world. As Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* says that everything in the universe shares spirituality. All beings in God's world have their rights and share in the running of the world.

Key words: Posthumanism, anthropocentric, coconsciousness, Spirituality, Culture.

Posthumanism, as a contemporary theoretical framework, challenges the anthropocentric assumptions of Western humanism by decentering the human subject and foregrounding human-nonhuman entanglements. While posthumanism is often presented as a recent intellectual turn emerging from technological and ecological crises of late modernity, this article argues that many of its core philosophical premises are deeply resonant with, and in fact anticipated by, Indian philosophical traditions.

Drawing upon concepts from Advaita Vedanta, Samkhya philosophy, Buddhist thought and indigenous cultural practices, the paper demonstrates that the Indian ethos has long embraced relational ontology, multispecies ethics, and non-dual understandings of existence. By placing post humanist theory in dialogue with Indian worldviews, the article proposes an indigenous framework of posthuman ethics that challenges Eurocentric claims of theoretical novelty and repositions Indian philosophy as a generative source for global ecological and ethical thinking.

The twenty-first century has witnessed a growing crisis of the humanist subject—an entity historically imagined as autonomous, rational, and superior to the natural and nonhuman world. Climate change, ecological devastation, technological mediation, and the ethical consequences of species extinction have rendered such a model increasingly untenable. In response, posthumanism has emerged as a critical discourse that questions human exceptionalism and reimagines the human as embedded within complex networks of material, technological, and biological relations.

However, posthumanism is frequently framed as a radical departure from earlier philosophical traditions, particularly those outside the Western Canon. This article contests such a framing by arguing that Indian philosophical and cultural traditions have long articulated a worldview that aligns closely with posthumanist principles. The Indian ethos—rooted in non-dualism, cyclic temporality, and ecological reverence—offers a deeply relational understanding of existence that predates contemporary posthuman thought by millennia. By examining points of convergence between posthumanism and Indian philosophy, this study seeks to decolonize posthumanist discourse and foreground indigenous epistemologies as vital contributors to global theoretical conversation.

Posthumanism emerges as a critique of Enlightenment humanism, which positioned the human as the measure of all value and meaning. Thinkers such as Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, and Cary Wolfe challenge the binary oppositions—human/animal, nature/culture, mind/body—that sustain anthropocentric thought. Posthumanism, instead, emphasizes relationality, interdependence, and the agency of nonhuman entities. Central to posthumanist theory is the idea that subjectivity is not fixed or sovereign but distributed across networks of human and nonhuman actors. Matter is no longer seen as inert; rather, it is dynamic, responsive, and participatory in the production of meaning. Ethics, consequently, must extend beyond human concerns to include animals, ecosystems, and even technological forms of life.

While these ideas are often treated as novel responses to modern crises, a closer examination reveals striking parallels with Indian philosophical traditions. Indian philosophy does not privilege the human as an isolated or supreme being. Instead, it situates humanity within a broader cosmic order governed by principles

of interdependence and balance. The concept of *Rta* (cosmic order) in Vedic thought emphasizes harmony between all forms of existence, human and nonhuman alike. Advaita Vedanta in particular, dismantles the notion of a separate autonomous self. The declaration *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman)... dissolves the boundary between individual consciousness and the cosmos. This non-dual ontology resonates strongly with posthumanism's rejection of isolated subjectivity and its embrace of relational being. Buddhist philosophy denies the existence of a permanent self (*anatta*), proposing instead a processual understanding of identity shaped by interdependent origination. Such perspectives undermine anthropocentrism by refusing to grant ontological privilege to the human subject. One of posthumanism's key interventions lies in its reconceptualization of matter as active and agentic. The Indian concept of *Prakriti* aligns closely with this view.

In Samkhya philosophy, *Prakriti* is not passive substance but a dynamic, generative force responsible for the manifestation of the material universe. Nature, within the Indian ethos, is not an object to be exploited but a living presence deserving reverence. Rivers are worshipped as mothers and Goddesses possessing the capacity to cleanse the sins of human beings, trees are protected as sacred beings, and animals occupy central positions in religious and cultural symbolism. Such practices reflect an implicit recognition of nonhuman agency and ethical worth. This sacred materialism blended with spiritualism anticipates posthumanist notions of vibrant matter and ecological agency, suggesting that Indian philosophy offers an ethical model grounded in respect rather than domination.

The principle of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) represents one of the most profound ethical contributions of Indian thought. Extending moral consideration beyond human life, *Ahimsa* encompasses animals, plants, and the environment. It calls for restraint, compassion, and responsibility toward all forms of existence.

Multispecies Justice Posthumanist ethics similarly advocate for multispecies justice, challenging human-centred moral frameworks. By foregrounding interconnected *vulnerability*, posthumanism aligns with Indian *Ahimsa's* insistence on minimizing harm across species boundaries.

Relational Accountability Importantly, *Ahimsa* is not merely a moral injunction but a philosophical recognition of shared being. Violence against others

is seen as violence against oneself, a notion that reinforces posthuman ethics of *relational accountability*.

Indian mythology abounds with hybrid figures that defy rigid human boundaries. Deities such as Ganesha, Narasimha, and Hanuman embody *human-animal hybridity* without invoking fear or monstrosity. These figures are revered, suggesting that *hybridity* is not a threat to order but an expression of *Cosmic creativity*.

Parallels with Modern Theory Posthumanism's embrace of the cyborg and hybrid identities finds an unexpected precursor here. Donna Haraway's cyborg, which destabilizes fixed categories of identity, echoes the Indian mythological imagination where boundaries between species, matter, and divinity are *fluid*.

Alternative Imaginaries Such narratives challenge Western anxieties surrounding hybridity and offer alternative imaginaries in which the posthuman is *sacred* rather than aberrant.

Posthumanism rejects linear, progress-driven conceptions of time, favoring instead models of *becoming* and transformation. Similarly, Indian philosophy conceives of time as cyclical, governed by the rhythms of creation, preservation, and dissolution.

The Concept of Samsara The concept of *Samsara* emphasizes *continuity* rather than finality, positioning life as an ongoing process of transformation. Death is not an end but a transition within a larger ecological and cosmic cycle.

Humility and Responsibility This perspective aligns with posthuman thought, which resists human-centered narratives of mastery and permanence. By situating humanity within vast temporal scales, both posthumanism and Indian philosophy cultivate *humility* and *ecological responsibility*.

Decolonizing Theory While posthumanism presents itself as a radical theoretical shift, its reluctance to acknowledge non-western philosophical antecedents risks reproducing *epistemic colonialism.*

Indian philosophy demonstrates that decentering the human is not a modern rupture but an ancient ethical orientation. Recognizing the Indian ethos as a foundational contributor to posthuman thought enables a more inclusive and plural theoretical landscape. It also allows posthumanism to move beyond technocentric

concerns and engage more deeply with spiritual, ethical, and ecological dimensions of existence. Such a dialogue transforms posthumanism from a Western corrective into a globally resonant framework rooted in shared planetary responsibility.

Theoretical Implications This article has argued that Indian philosophical traditions offer a rich and largely untapped resource for posthumanist thought. Concepts such as non-dualism, *Prakriti*, *Ahimsa*, hybridity, and cyclical *temporality* not only resonate with posthumanism but fundamentally challenge its claims to novelty.

By grounding posthumanism in the Indian ethos, the study repositions posthumanism as a return to relational wisdom rather than a break from tradition. In an era marked by ecological crisis and ethical uncertainty, such an indigenous framework provides vital insights into coexistence, humility, and shared becoming.

Integrating Philosophical Fields Ultimately, integrating Indian philosophy into posthuman discourse enriches both fields, offering a more ethical, inclusive, and sustainable vision of life *beyond the human*.

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