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**ST. ANTONY'S COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOR WOMEN (AUTONOMOUS),
THAMARAIPADI, DINDIGUL, TAMIL NADU, INDIA.**

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Proceedings of the International Conference

**Indian Writing in English: Past Legacies,
Present Challenges, Future Hopes**

CP - Volume 2, Issue 1 – April 2026

Guest Editors

Dr. A. Angayarkanni

Mrs. S. Rajeswari



St. Antony's College of Arts and Sciences for Women, Dindigul, is a minority institution established in 2007 by the Congregation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (C.I.C) under the guidance of the Bishop of Dindigul. The college is located on a serene 20-acre campus at Thamarapadi, 10km from Dindigul on the Trichy-Dindigul Highways (NH45). The institution offers 12 UG and 7 PG courses, focusing on empowering women, especially the poor and underprivileged. It provides quality education integrated with creative and communication skills for holistic development. The college enhances employability through functional MoUs with universities and industries, offering certificate courses like CAT and CMA, along with various Skill Development Programs. Campus facilities include lively NSS units, student clubs, sports grounds, a canteen, a spacious auditorium, seminar halls, and an outdoor gymnasium. Comfortable hostel accommodations are also available. Through its commitment to academic excellence and social responsibility, the college strives to build responsible citizens and contribute to a developed India.

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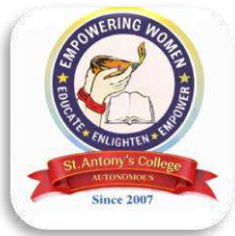


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ST. ANTONY'S COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES FOR WOMEN (AUTONOMOUS), THAMARAIPADI, DINDIGUL, TAMIL NADU, INDIA.

About the College

St. Antony's College of Arts and Sciences for Women, Thamaraipadi, Dindigul is an autonomous institution established in 2007 by the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception (CIC) with the blessings, guidance and moral support of the most Rev. Dr. Antony Pappusamy, the Bishop of Dindigul. This premier institution of higher education is located on a 20-acre campus with beautiful gardens, well-furnished and aesthetically designed buildings and sports grounds at Thamaraipadi, 10 km North of Dindigul on Trichy-Dindigul Highways (NH45), in a gentle serene and tranquil atmosphere for academic pursuits and life-long learning. The motto of our institution is to empower women through higher education. The college now offers 15 UG and 9 PG courses. With the spirit of goodwill, we impart quality higher education with creative, critical, and communication skills in addition to domain knowledge to women students, especially the rural girls for their holistic development. We provide opportunities for students to hone their employability through curricular and co-curricular training. The College has signed functional MoUs with various universities, colleges and with other reputed industries/agencies and this motivates students to be responsible citizens and to be accountable for the time invested and competencies acquired. Our institution remains committed in empowering women through quality education, skill development and holistic growth, preparing them for responsible citizenship and employability.

About the English Department

The Department of English was established in 2008 along with the inception of the college and has been steadily contributing to the academic vision of the institution ever since. The Postgraduate programme was introduced in 2015, strengthening the department's commitment to higher learning. The department offers UG and PG programmes and had successfully offered the M.Phil. programme until 2022. Along with regular academic courses, career-oriented Skill Development Courses (SDC), remedial coaching, and enrichment programmes are also conducted to support both immediate and advanced learners. Equipped with a digital language laboratory, audio-visual facilities, ICT resources, and a well-stocked departmental library, the department blends traditional teaching methods with modern technology. Through literary activities, workshops, seminars, international conferences and various academic programme organised by the English department, the department actively promotes interactive learning, critical thinking, and creative skill among the students.

ARN Conference Proceedings

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THAMARAIPADI, DINDIGUL, TAMIL NADU, INDIA.**

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Proceedings of the International Conference Indian Writing in English: Past Legacies, Present Challenges, Future Hopes

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In preparing this volume of **CP - Volume 2, Issue 1, April 2026 in ARN Conference Proceedings** for the **International Conference on "Indian Writing in English: Past Legacies, Present Challenges, Future Hopes"**, the editors affirm that every manuscript underwent peer review process. The expert reviewers assessed each submission under the academic and scientific standards upheld by the journal.

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Review type

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 - **International Conference Full Papers:** Editorial review
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Overview of the Review and Editorial Process:

The authors submitted the papers to the conference committee. Each paper was evaluated on criteria developed by the conference organizing committee. These criteria focused on two main aspects: (a) whether the submission presented is a concrete idea with novelty aligned to the aim and scope of the conference (b) whether it demonstrated assessable impacts on student learning, faculty learning or teaching practices. They were also checked for Plagiarism and AI content and approved for review. The papers that fulfil both criteria were selected for publication with the reviewers' strong agreement in their evaluations. These papers were evaluated by the reviewers of the board, and the authors revised their work in response to detailed feedback. The selected manuscripts were finalised for publication by the Guest Editors and formally endorsed by the Chief Editor on 18 April 2026.

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Message from the Secretary



**Rev. Sr. Dr. Antony Pushpa Ranjitham,
Secretary**

St. Antony's College of Arts and Sciences for Women,
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Dindigul-624 005. Tamil Nadu India.

It gives me immense pleasure to present this special issue in the journal *Academic Research News* brought out in connection with the theme “*Past Legacies, Present Challenges and Future Hopes.*” This volume reflects the collective academic spirit and intellectual engagement of scholars who continue to explore the richness of literature and culture across time.

The past legacies of literary traditions have always served as a guiding force for scholars, writers, and readers. They remind us of the Indian values, histories, and creative expressions that have shaped societies and intellectual thought over generations. At the same time, the present era presents numerous challenges ranging from cultural transformations and globalization to evolving perspectives on identity, gender, and social justice. These challenges invite us to rethink, reinterpret, and critically engage with literary texts and contexts. This publication stands as a testament to the dedication of researchers who seek to bridge the past and the present while envisioning meaningful directions for the future.

I sincerely appreciate the efforts of the editorial board, contributors, and organizing committee whose commitment and hard work have made this publication possible. I hope this journal will serve as a valuable resource for academicians, students, and researchers, inspiring further inquiry and academic excellence.

I extend my best wishes for the success of this publication and hope that it continues to encourage thoughtful scholarship and meaningful discussions in the years to come.

Wishes

Message from the Principal



Rev. Sr. Dr. Vanitha Jaya Rani
Principal

St. Antony's College of Arts and Sciences for Women,
Amala Annai Nagar, Thamaraijadi,
Dindigul-624 005. Tamil Nadu India.

I am pleased to appreciate the scholarly collection of article in the journal *Academic Research News* centered on the theme “Past Legacies, Present Challenges and Future Hopes.” This journal shows a significant role in fostering intellectual dialogue and encouraging meaningful research among scholars and students.

The study of Indian literature and culture allows us to understand the rich legacies of the past that have shaped human thought, creativity, and social values. These legacies continue to inspire new interpretations and critical perspectives in contemporary scholarship. At the same time, the present world presents several challenges that demand thoughtful reflection, innovative thinking, and interdisciplinary approaches in academic research.

This journal serves as an important platform for scholars to engage with these dimensions by revisiting the past, addressing the concerns of the present, and envisioning possibilities for the future. The contributions included in this volume demonstrate scholarly rigor, intellectual curiosity, and a commitment to advancing knowledge in the field of literary and cultural studies.

I congratulate the organizers, editorial team and contributors for their dedicated efforts in bringing out this valuable publication. I hope that this journal will inspire further research, critical engagement, and academic collaboration among scholars and students.

I extend my best wishes for the success of this publication and appreciate the collective efforts that have made this scholarly endeavour possible.

Wishes

Convenor's Message



Mrs. S. Rajeswari,
Assistant Professor,
Department of English,
St. Antony's College of Arts and Sciences for Women,
Thamarapadi, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, India.

It is a privilege to present this felicitation for the publication in the journal *Academic Research News* based on the theme “*Past Legacies, Present Challenges and Future Hopes.*” This volume highlights the collective academic contributions of scholars who offer valuable insights into the relevance of literature and culture across different periods.

Understanding the legacies of the past helps us appreciate the foundations of literary and cultural traditions. At the same time, the present world brings new challenges that require critical thinking, innovative perspectives, and meaningful academic discussions. By examining these aspects, scholars are able to connect historical knowledge with contemporary realities while also envisioning possibilities for the future.

This journal aims to provide a platform for researchers and academicians to share their ideas and interpretations on various literary and cultural issues related to the theme. The papers included in this publication demonstrate thoughtful analysis, scholarly dedication, and a commitment to advancing knowledge.

I sincerely thank the management, Principal, editorial board, and all the contributors whose constant support and hard work have made this publication possible. I hope this journal will serve as a useful academic resource for researchers, teachers, and students.

Convenor
With regards

Message from the Guest Editor



Dr. A. Angayarkanni

Guest Editor

Assistant Professor of English

St. Antony's College of Arts and Sciences for Women (Autonomous)

Thamaraipadi, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, India.

It is a matter of great pleasure to present this conference proceedings volume published in *Academic Research News* in connection with the International Conference on “Indian Writing in English: Past Legacies, Present Challenges, Future Hopes.” This publication brings together a collection of scholarly articles that reflect the diverse perspectives, critical insights, and intellectual engagement of researchers and academicians in the field of literary and cultural studies.

Indian Writing in English has continually evolved through the dynamic interaction between tradition and modernity. At the same time, contemporary scholarship seeks to address emerging challenges such as globalization, shifting cultural paradigms, questions of identity, and new theoretical approaches in literary studies. The contributions included in this volume thoughtfully explore these dimensions and offer meaningful interpretations that connect the past with the present while envisioning possibilities for the future. As Guest Editor, I sincerely appreciate the dedication and scholarly commitment of the contributors whose research has enriched this publication. I also extend my gratitude to the reviewers and members of the editorial board for their valuable guidance and support throughout the review and publication process.

I express my heartfelt thanks to the management, the Principal, and the Department of English of St. Antony's College of Arts and Sciences for Women for their encouragement and support in organizing the conference and bringing out this publication. It is my hope that this volume will serve as a useful academic resource for scholars, teachers, and students, and that it will inspire further research and critical engagement in the field of Indian Writing in English.

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Diaspora and the Question of Home in Anita Desai's *Baumgartner's Bombay*

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Abstract

Exile, homeless wandering and hatred have been the lot of the Jews since the time immemorial. Though after the creation of the State of Israel, many scattered Jews have found respite, anti-Semitism is still the highest rating prejudice making the Jews linger forever in vulnerability, sense of homelessness, fear of discrimination and persecution, exile and loss of the sense of belonging. This paper discusses how Anita Desai's Baumgartner's Bombay is the true diaspora story that brings to vivid light the pathos, suffering and exile forced upon the Jews and how her protagonist, Hugo Baumgartner epitomises the fate of the "Wandering Jew."

Keywords: Homelessness, Exile, Antisemitism, Holocaust.

"You shall be as you have been thus far/ As the cursed Jews are, there! / ...Who have not a country, but live on the road... Behold the Jews, who do not have a country and are strangers everywhere and on the road at all times." -Ion Budai Deleanu, Tiganiada, The Gypsyiad.

Antisemitism is without doubt the longest running and most irrational hatred in the history of mankind and the Jews, the most persecuted, hated and dispersed race in the whole world. Down the ages, based on various misconceptions, the Jews have been hated, persecuted and scattered. The term "Diaspora" which is now used and implied for people settled in countries other than theirs, originally had its origin in the dispersion of the Jewish people among the gentiles. The term Diaspora is derived from the Greek verb *diaspeirō*, meaning "I scatter", "I spread about" and refers to the dispersion of a people, particularly the Jews, from their homeland. In the Biblical Psalm 137, the Jewish people in exile following the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in 586 BCE, lament thus:

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept
When we remembered Zion.
There on the poplars we hung our harps,
For there our captors asked us for a song...
How can we sing the songs of the Lord
While in a foreign land? (1-4)

This pain of the Jews who were captives in Babylon can be considered as one of the earliest recordings of diasporic predicaments that are widely expressed today. Though the brutalities against the Jews precipitated in Europe around the first half of the twentieth century and culminated in the annihilation of six million European Jewry under the schematised extermination by Hitler, antisemitism neither started with Hitler nor did it end with him. The Jews were hated by the world owing to the fact that they were singular in many aspects. To begin with, they were followers of Judaism, a monotheistic religion in a pagan world and this made other suspicious of them. They were groundlessly accused of poisoning wells, blood



libels, starting wars and were accused of greed, materialism and malice. After the crucifixion of Christ, Jews were additionally castigated as “Christ-killers”, the world conveniently forgetting the fact that Jesus was a Jew himself. Hitler’s Nazi antisemitism was based on the ideology of race and ethnic cleansing inspired by the theory of Darwin. Whatever was the given reason, the fact remains that the Jews have been scattered all over the world, living without a homeland-with all the accompanying dangers and apprehensions.

From the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries the Jews of Europe were driven from their homelands. In 1290, they were expelled from England, between 1306 and 1394 from France, in 1400 from Prague, between 1420 and 1493 from Austria and later from countries like Spain, Portugal, Provence and so forth. These expelled and wandering Jews inspired legends like that of the “Wandering Jew”, cursed by fate to find no place or rest. The condition of the “wandering Jew”- oppressed, wandering, homeless, exiled from his country and without right is perceived to be analogous with that of all the homeless Jews like Desai’s Baumgartner. Poet Octavian Goga had summed up the condition of exile thus:

I am a man deprived of homeland,
A speck of fire swept by a breeze,
A slave loos’d from his clasping strand,
The poorest that ever breathed...
I among you my burden carry,
In dirt befouled and in laughter scorned,
For woe to him bereft of country
That begs that his home be returned. (Inventing the Jew, 333)

Based on a real-life story, Anita Desai’s *Baumgartner’s Bombay* is a tale that depicts the utter precariousness of exile. The story recounts the life of Baumgartner- a wandering Jew who tries to escape the clutches of Nazis and ends up in India. He finds himself a stranger everywhere: someone too dark for Nazi Germany and too fair for India. “In Germany he had been dark- his darkness had marked him the Jew, *der Jude*. In India, he was fair- and that marked him the firangi. In both lands, unacceptable” (23). The story shuttles between past and present, Berlin and India. As T. S. Eliots’s East Coker epigram suggests “in the beginning is my end”, the novel begins with the murder of Baumgartner in his Bombay apartment and flashes back to WWII Berlin and ends again in India. After a lifetime of exile, Baumgartner becomes victim of what he has been running away from all his life.

Desai vividly portrays Hugo Baumgartner’s childhood in Berlin, opulence with which he grows, the tightening of the anti-Semitic net, the Kristallnacht, his father’s arrest and suicide and Baumgartner’s eventual exile to India. The story takes us through Berlin, Venice, Calcutta, the internment camp at the foothills of Himalayas, Bombay and interiors of India- all the places Baumgartner had travelled but never belonged. All through the novel, the readers find Baumgartner drifting around not able to fit in anywhere. He does not belong in Berlin, where he grows up. Life becomes increasingly complex and hazardous for the family with the rise of Nazi power. Hugo's father, who owns a furniture showroom and proudly walks the streets with an ivory-knobbed cane, "his head held high, his hat gleaming like the wing of an airborne beetle," (26) ends up in Dachau concentration camp, from which he returns "a fortnight later," shivering and with nothing to say. After the father’s suicide, Hugo and his mother dwindle to a very poor existence and Hugo is forced to take up a job in India. Refusing to accompany him to the strange land his *Mutti* says back to eventually end her life in a Nazi death camp. Hugo’s spending a week at Venice on transit does not offer him any comfort as well.



About Baumgartner in India, Desai says, “He had lived in this land for fifty years- or if not fifty then so nearly as to make no difference... Yet the eyes of the people who passed by glanced at him who was still strange and unfamiliar to them, and all said: Firangi, foreigner” (22). The people around him avoid any contact with him and he suffers the fate of not only being an exile but also an untouchable. “Their faces sneered ‘firangi, foreigner’, however good-naturedly, however lacking in malice. Still the word, the name struck coldly and he winced, hunching his shoulders and trying to avoid the contact he knew they hated because contact contaminated” (23). Desai sums up Hugo Baumgartner’s life in one sentence: “Accepting-but not accepted: that was the story of his life, the one thread that ran through it all” (23). He does not belong to the detention camp for Germans that the Indians keep him for six years when the war between the Allied and the Axis power starts. As the war intensifies, the internment camp proves to be a microcosm of Germany itself fostering hostility between highly-efficient Pro-Nazi Germans and the frightened Jews. On the parade-ground, it was not enough that the German’s had to stand in a line and sing ‘*Deutschland, Deutsch-land uber alles*’ but they also fly the German flag, raise their right arm and say, “Heil Hitler!” while the Jews watch in fear and silence.

After the war, Baumgartner finds that he doesn’t belong in Calcutta or Bombay either. About his life in Bombay Desai says, “The life of Bombay which had been Baumgartner’s life for thirty years now-or, rather, the setting for his life; he never actually entered it...” (251). Though he tries his hand in business and gambling, finally he loses interest in everything and lives a degraded life that revolves around his sick and maimed stray cats. Farrokh, the owner of Café de Paris in the neighbourhood fills his bag for him with the remains of the food cooked the night before and one night he forces a German Aryan drug-addict on Hugo Baumgartner’s care and Kurt, the depraved youth, in return to his kindness murders Hugo for his few silver trophies. The meeting of Baumgartner and his nemesis, Kurt, is described by Desai in a heart-chilling way:

That fair hair, that peeled flesh it was a certain type that Baumgartner had escaped, forgotten. Then why had this boy to come after him, in lederhosen, in marching boots striding over the mountains to the sound of the *Wander vogels Lied? The Lieder* and the campfire. The campfire and the beer. The beer and the yodelling. The yodelling and the marching. The marching and the shooting. The shooting and the killing. The killing and the killing and the killing. (25)

Anita Desai, the daughter of a Bengali father and a German mother has deftly incorporated a whole series of German songs into the text adding to the poignant effect. Her *Baumgartner’s Bombay* proves itself to be the perfect diaspora story of the wandering Jew who never belonged anywhere. Through the event where Hugo goes exploring a cave temple, Desai portrays how spat out by the society, Hugo is refused acceptance even by native Gods.

Hugo, all his life tries to run away from Nazi hatred and ends up becoming a victim of the Holocaust only forty years later. Through the meaningless killing of Hugo by Kurt, Desai also implies the meaninglessness and madness of the Nazi extermination of six million Jews during the Holocaust. Along with Hugo, we also come across other mixed-race characters like Lotte, Gisela and Julius who never belonged anywhere. Spewed out of their own nation, they live their lives with a longing of returning to their homeland and acquire again a sense of belonging. Their longing remains till the end as they neither could return to their homeland nor could they fit in where they lived. Julius and Gisela try hard to fit in and they try changing their names to Julian and Gala Van Roth. Julius is always immaculately dressed unlike the unkempt Hugo and Gisela tries to be a lady unlike Lotte but even then, they remain



feeling alienated too. The book hints that being religious or agnostic, neatly dressed or staying shabby, being tarty or lady-like doesn't make a difference in an exile's life and a refugee will forever remain one. Desai says of Hugo, "Like a mournful turtle... he carried everything with him; perhaps it was the only way he knew to remain himself". Till the very end Hugo Baumgartner's homelessness remains making his mother's heart, probably the only home he has ever had.

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Bakha's Quest for Dignity and the Caste Crisis in Untouchable: A Study of Social Hierarchy and Oppression

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Abstract

The Emergence of Indian English literature, as distinct from English literature, in our country, has not been recognized, rough prejudice against the English language, alien rule. Indian English literature has attained an which was imposed on under independent status in the realm of world literature. Wide ranges of themes are dealt with in Indian writing in English. Although this body of literature remains reflective of Indian culture, traditions, social values, and even historical narratives by portraying life in India and among Indians abroad, contemporary Indian English fiction has begun to articulate the Indian experience regarding modern challenges. There are critics appreciate Indian English novels. and commentators in England and America who Prof. M. K. Naik remarks Alone one of the most notable gifts of English education to India is prose fiction for though India was probably a fountain head of story-telling, the novel as we know today was an important from the west, India's substantial contribution to world literature is largely due to the generated by Indian novelists in English. Their profusely creative literary works contemplated and deliberated on multifarious range of issues like nationalism, freedom struggle, social realism, individual consciousness. This literary movement being fortified by the overwhelming output by novelists and distinguished itself as a remarkable force in world fiction. This has been achieved by novelists who sought to prove their inner creative urges in English language, which is indeed an alien tongue for them. It is to the credit of these novelists that they have overcome the hurdles of writing in foreign language and have been evolved a distinctive style for themselves by mastering the intricacies of the language and assimilating in it the hues and flavours of the Indian sub-continent Raja Rao famously argued in 1938, in the preface to his novel Kanthapura, for employing English, but English suited to Indian conditions.

Keywords: Dalit Literature, Caste, Indian's Striggles, Oppression, Freedom.

Introduction

The struggle for independence was a mighty and momentous movement sweeping the entire nation and exerting tremendous impact on the sense of national consciousness among the literary fraternity. Thus, the lucid description of the freedom struggles showcased images of the awakened Indians who sought to regain them. Freedom from the rigorous and cruel tyranny. In addition to these observations, the authors were able to spread their viewpoint, which eventually assisted in inspiring and directing the general public. Thus, the fixation on religious aestheticism was replaced by concerns on socio- political issues. The joy of accomplishing the grandiose feat of obtaining independence was abruptly marred by the horrendous and partition of 1947. The Indian English fiction has had meteoritic growth traumatic during the dawn of the millennium year and the writing in all genres of literature has gained momentum, particularly the Indian novel, and the doyens of the Indian writing like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and their link promoted the conventional mode of writing. Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, and numerous others are among the



modern era's crusaders. They elucidate and substantiate strength of the emerging modern voice of India, which has the vibrancy and energy of gushing artesian along with an unmatched resolve to experiment and explore new avenues of writing novels.

Dalit Literature

The term Dalit originates from Sanskrit and translates to "downtrodden," "oppressed," "crushed," or "shattered.". It was first used by Jyotirao Phule in the nineteenth century in the context of the oppression faced by the erstwhile "Untouchable" castes of the twice-born Hindus. To refer to the former untouchables, Mahatma Gandhi created the term "Harijan," which loosely translates to "Children of God. The religious scripture "Manu Smriti" described 'Varna System' of the society based upon the occupation. Dalit have been destined for inferior activities such as leather work, butchering or removal of rubbish, animal carcasses and waste; by this so called civilized Hindu society. Dalits work as manual labourers cleaning street, latrines and sewers. Engaging in these activities was considered to be polluting to the individual and this pollution was considered contagious. As a result, Dalits were commonly segregated and banned from full participation in Hindu social life.

Dalit Literature After Independence

Dalit literature after independence which is not structured or entertaining like the ones conforming to Bhraminical Ideological theories. Contemporary mainstream literature might not find it suitable but this literature was the realistic reflection of those oppressed classes. One group of literary critics and researchers defines it's time to the Buddhist Age while second to the saint poet chokhamela whereas next to Mahatma Phule and there are some who prefers to S.M. Mate (1 886- 1957). Modern Dalit literature is detected in 1969 with the article "A Discussion; Literature of Dalit: Consciousness, Direction and Inspiration" by M.N. Wankhade in which he cites Buddhist authors like Shankarrao Karat and Keshav Meshram. It comes against the physical reaction to the violence against untouchable or Buddhists. One who not born as a Dalit, even though writing on the socially downtrodden with sympathy or empathy, cannot be considered as a Dalit writer nor will his/her literature be taken as Dalit literature. Upper caste Hindu writers have not taken into account several important issues. her untouchables were denied access to public amenities like roads, schools, markets, rivers, and wells as late as the early twentieth century The most perverted practice of untouchability was that which, at one time, compelled the untouchables to tie an earthen pot around their neck so that their sputum's should not fall to the earth and pollute others. Another practice was the compulsion to tie a broom behind them so that their footprints would be erased before others set their eyes on them.

Untouchability

The novel, Untouchable is Mulk Raj Anand's first novel and it provided to him vast recognition and stature. The novel is a sociological manuscript that focus concentration on a number of traditions, social troubles etc, of Hindu society during 1930's. This novel depicts the pragmatic and realistic image of society. This is fundamentally an epic of unhappiness of the human being trapped in the net of the long-standing caste system. But at the same time, the novel has a tragic attractiveness of its own. For Anand dirt and mud is as much a part of life as attractiveness, hygiene and graciousness. It means not that he loves viciousness but pragmatism demands it, if it is that in real life. In this novel, the novelist has described an image of a sweeper boy, who is untouchable. The protagonist of the novel is the representative of all oppressed society in pre-independence of India. Bakha, the main character, is a figure of suffering just due to his caste. There are other characters who also suffer because of their lower caste. They live in a huddled colony in their mud-walled



cottages. The theme of the novel untouchability itself is very practical. Untouchable is a practical novel of socially and generally crushed protagonist Bakha. It is a portion of a life that hasn't been changed or altered. The novel starts with a realistic image of the outcastes' colony. Anand illustrates:

The Outcaste' colony was a group of mud Walled houses
That clustered together in two rows,
Under the shadow both of the town and the cantonment,
But outside their boundaries and separate from them. [U: 2001: p- 1]

Undoubtedly untouchable is Anand's modern work which is the image of his society's trodden and exploited class. This piece is considered to be an autobiographical note which came out as a form of his experiences. When Anand was a child, his father was employed as a Subedar in the Indian Army. During those days Anand mixed with the children of leather-workers, washer men and sweepers and came across their real daily life and its realities. This association and attachment continued till the days of his youth. Hence this Novel is the authentic document of his life's incidents. Untouchable is the story of the deprivation of outcaste people and at the same time of the exploitation of teenagers. It basically deals with the different teenagers' problems like Bakha, his sister Sohini and his brother Rakha and some other his outcastes' friends like Chota and Ramcharan we come across during a day's activities.

Equivalent Themes in Untouchable and Coolie

Mulk Raj Anand is considered to be God or Messiah in backward castes and exploited class just because of his brilliant works which describe down-trodden and poor India's social, political, and cultural conditions. The Novels Untouchable and Coolie, which communicate the abuses of an exploited class's untouchable boy in Untouchable and a Waif, Munoo in Coolie. Untouchable and Coolie are the only Novels in which Anand has presented the realistic picture especially problems and exploitations of teenagers of the early decades of 20th century in India to reveal the social background with the unique observation of social reformer. Anand has not presented the teenage character in particularly but in a general way, The writer has not only painted his works with the idea of keeping his literary pieces mirror up to the Indian society but also made it mandatory to think about the masses, about the sufferers and abused people and provided ideal solutions.

Anand deals with the various section of society to present inhumanity of the upper class on the lower class. Untouchable presents the issue like loss of identity, rootlessness. Dalits like Bakha are subjected to endless conflicts between multiple ideological assumptions of the traditional Hindu culture and the desperate attempts of the Dalits to recover their rights and identities. Society intervenes to prevent them from mounting the platform surrounding the well for taking water, from entering into the temples, from touching any high-caste Hindu, from going to schools which were meant for the Babus, not for the lowly sweepers; religion interferes in the hypocritical representations of Pundit Kali Nath and Colonel Hutchinson to exploit them; politics intercedes to force the general public to embrace a political party's ideology. Economical exploitation is the prerogative of the deceitful shopkeepers who deceive the untouchables knowing that they will not protest. Even they are compelled to repay compound interest for the money. Anand has presented a realistic picture of reality by using his creativity and imagination to turn facts into fictions. Anand has transformed facts into fiction by using his creativity and imagination to present. He has organized his material with great care and skill. His books undoubtedly have a cohesive theme. His literary contributions map the pre-independence and modern India and



universalize issues which concern every man and every country. He produces a tragic vision of life but also finds resolutions to the problems it presents. He imagines a world full of kindness and compassion in his books.

Anand gives a humanistic touch in tune with Bakha's deepest yearnings. It shows a simple way of effacing the age-old label of a bhangi by the introduction of the flush toilet and drainage system in the country to alleviate the misery of the marginalized people. Premila Paul points out Bakha's case exemplify a situation in which the ethic of work alone can eliminate social alienation, even social ostracism. The conversion of latrines to the flush system is the third solution proposed by Anand. Performance of the degrading work assigned to Bakha by an oppressive system, the untouchable in India is in a sense perpetuating untouchability. The flush System would eliminate the need for the performance of such humiliating jobs and that would The Novels deals with many low caste people were suffered a lot by high class people and they treated low class as dog; it showed their cruelty towards humanism. Sohini also suffered by oppression and suppression. She was teased by pundit kali nath, he is an evil.

Conclusion

The novel reveals all their feelings, Finally Bakha went to share his experience about Gandhiji with his family. Untouchable with a hint of idealism and faith. The manifest place in the novel is for the total abolition of untouchability Bakha fervently hopes for the dawn to his nature of his work and his relevance in the societies without the label of untouchable. The inhuman treatment meted out to Bakha in Untouchable could have really happened to a social outcaste during the colonial days in India; perhaps such cruelties are being perpetuated in many parts of villages even today which the objective newspapers publish Undoubtedly, Anand had drawn upon what he had himself witnessed and heard boy, he brings into print in the as a form of a novel.

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Collective Eco-Consciousness in the Works of Vandana Singh's *Ambiguity Machines* and Richard Powers *Overstory*

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Abstract

Ecological Consciousness part ways to enrich and delight to protect the biodiversity. It mentions things sculpted in own thinking. It frames the interconnectedness between humans and other species. It sees nature as one of the active agents as of challenging anthropocentrism. This consciousness arose when one feels ethical responsibility among nature, leading to environmental preservation. Vandana Singh's Indra's web connects speculative narration where the forest been showcased as one of the best ideas and external inspiration. It aligns with posthumanistic thoughts of many creatures. Indra's web connects science with nature whereas in Richard Powers The Overstory, he narrates the character Patricia Westerford forms deepest connection with nature by questioning and experimenting the trees which exposes the shared well-being. This comparative analysis splashes the deep ecological awareness in humans as trees modelled to be a healer and mentor which show the great dealing of Anthropocentrism. Vandana Singh notes the idea of involving experimentation deeper by connecting intellectual frame work. Powers area gets widened by flexing the notion of trees as a advisor and commander performs gateways of treasures.

Keywords: Commander, Experimentation, Ecology, Posthumanism

Introduction

Posthumanism challenges the question of humans are the center and superior of Existence. It dives deeply beyond the traditional humanism as placing humans above everything else. It voices for the non-human things like trees and technology. Vandana Singh, Indian speculative fiction writer and physicist writes from ecological and ethical perspectives co-relating with post human identities by blending science, nature and technology. Singh's writing exposes the responsive and active summation of ideas. Richard Powers is an American novelist whose works explore the ecological perspective by foregrounding the agency of non-humans world. His works significantly adds the myth and ritual as one of the key element in the non-human world. Survival depends on the co-existence and not control of ecological beings.

Collective Eco-Consciousness

The short story *Indra's web* delves in to the fungal network called misconnect connects between plants of forest. This concept gets widen by various connections of plants talks to each other through chemical formula. In forest they planted sensors in the soil to notify the chemical exchanges between plants. Some of them made music from the signals. Powers character Patricia Westerford builds her creation of planting trees in her garden. Er wooden doll's head turns in to planting a sapling in another. Her father could understand her woodland world and understands her every word utters. She goes on trip with her father as she learns more on Ohio farm. The imagination goes on Milky Way galaxy depicting the



chloroplasts of leaf of corn. The land is covered with dark beech forest which shows the best trees could be seen.

Indra's web depicts the character Mahua who attempts to view Ashapur in height. Ashapur is located in Delhi, where the project takes place. When she overviewed it by sighting the gardens fall of native trees like running from the hill. There are also some of the solar plants that make water by breaking down the hydrogen and numerous biogas plants. These villagers accept the idea of three R's by recycling into another form. Patricia Westerford began to analyse the tree's growth. How it turn to be bloomed and shed their leaves in isolation. Nowadays the native trees keep on shedding their lives and Mahua world's village shows abundance of trees particularly the pipal tree by non-disturbances of the road. Patricia feels the tropical fruit in Ohio farms is the best and biggest one. People's letters gets sculpted in the trunk of beech trees where they waits by watering it grows bigger and large. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* gifted by Patricia's father whose known meaning of trees gets deepened. *Metamorphoses* shows how peoples, gods and nymphs change in to animals and trees. The narration is best appreciated through providing key elements that suits posthumanistic way of delivering the words. "Let me sing to you now, about how people turns into other things" (147). Patricia father death drives her into grief. Mahua's intellectual thinking shows how animals and people in the village because of branching and biodiversity came close to nature gets psychological benefits to gets cooler the season. The science directly connects with environmental and Salman installed the moss to grow on earth so the conversation goes on between. To learn from nature not to exploit her (146). Intellectual and curiosity part ways to characters lives. Powers shapes Patricia a girl who turns out as botanist learning and interpreting various plants. Based on the analysis of Patricia Westerford's narrative in *The Overstory* and *Indra's Web* from *Ambiguity Machines and Other Stories*, it can be seen that there is a strong focus placed upon the idea of collective eco-consciousness. In *The Overstory*, the scientific research that Patricia Westerford conducts points to the idea that there exists a hidden communication network within trees, which in turn points to the idea that forests act as intelligent communities. This challenges the traditional view that humans have of nature and encourages people to think in terms of the ecological balance that exists within the world. In *Indra's Web*, the idea of a cosmic web points to the idea that all beings within the world, including humans, technology, and nature, are interconnected. The study has shown that, in their works, both authors use their representations to encourage the idea of a wider ecological consciousness, which is grounded in the concept of interconnectedness. Indeed, the discoveries made by Patricia Westerford in *The Overstory* have shown that forests have a form of collective intelligence, which changes the way in which people think about nature. In *Indra's Web*, the metaphor of the universal network has expanded this idea beyond the forest, to the entire cosmos, in which each entity affects another. The findings have suggested that, in fact, both works encourage the reader to think in a posthumanist way, in which there is cooperation between people, nature, and technology.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the works of Richard Powers and Vandana Singh have highlighted the importance of collective eco-consciousness in understanding the relationship between humans and nature. Through the exploration of forest communication by Patricia Westerford and the philosophical vision in *Indra's Web*, both authors have portrayed nature as an interconnected system where all elements play an important role in maintaining the balance of life. These narratives have challenged anthropocentric views and have highlighted the importance of a more holistic ecological perspective. In conclusion, the study has highlighted



that the importance of understanding collective ecological networks cannot be overlooked in order to promote environmentalism and ensure the sustainability of life on Earth.

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Burning Boundaries: Dehumanization and Caste Prejudice in Perumal Murugan's *Pyre*

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Abstract

Perumal Murugan's novel Pyre presents a soulful narrative based on caste discrimination in rural places of India. The novel sets in a village, it exposes the upshots of an inter-caste marriage between a young couple. Through an unembellished, harsh and unfiltered realism, Murugan exposes the caste prejudice and its violence. This article examines the novel and analyse how Murugan projects castism as an intense psychological, social force which controls people's belonging, identity.

Keywords: Caste, Hierarchy, Marginalization, Social Conflict, Violence, Tradition.

Introduction

Castism is being an incurable disease which has no treatment or remedy. Only solution to cure this disease is to have a constant mind and to think rationally and logically by considering all human being equal instead of looking their caste and divisions. India is being recognized as a developing country where Unity in diversity is still in progress. Indian believes United we stand and divided we fall. In the modern age we are tagged by castism the name of caste people divided into groups. Though years have passed and many laws were established in order to protect those people, who are being suppressed under the tag called caste, still castism destroys the unity of people. According to Satya Sai Baba there is only one caste, the cast of humanity, there is only one religion, the religion of love, there is only one language, the language of heart...

The Caste Discrimination

But the bitter fact is no one give important to statement rather they split among themselves. And in the name of castism people oppress one another by seeking difference in the status, strength of the community, religion etc., Though many movements and protest tried to abolish inequality, discrimination, deprivation, violence against inequality still the castism survives in the society. The worst scenario is even the educated people are being trapped to follow this blind faith. Though the Indian constitution has abolished such inhuman Act of Untouchability still in the most outcast places in India casteism it's been seen visibly. B.R.Ambedkar said, Caste is a state of mind It is a disease of mind The teachings of the religion or the root cause of this disease. We practise castism and we observe Untouchability because we are enjoined to do so by the religion a better thing cannot be made sweet. The taste of anything can be changed but poison cannot be changed into nectar. (Writings and speeches ed. 2003)

The Superstitious Belief in Indian Culture

In Indian culture marriage is being considered as Holistic relationship. But it is being considered as official legal contract of two different people of the society It's a contract that makes to share their good their emotions together. The Indian culture always prioritises and appreciates the concept of arranged marriage where the parents find the suitable one for their family. Dough marriage is being considered as a holistic one its holiness lose its purity when



people give importance to caste rather than preference. The most common flaw of the concept called characterism. Is that the family cannot tolerate any boy or girl belongs to their community gets into the person of other cast and go against their family in having a relationship. Hence this tends to show their anger as violence. Violence goes beyond humanity which tends them to kill the people Who goes against their wish this goes by a name called Honour killing which is a kind of domestic violence. Taking this Issue as an account which is prevailing in the society as an example Writer Perumal Murugan's *Pyre* serves to be a controversial and notable novel that reflects negative side of the concept Castism. Aniruddhan Vasudevan has translated this work from Tamil version without losing its original essences of themes.

The Marital Status of Saroja

The novel *Pyre* sets in the rural area of Kattupatti in Tamil Nadu. The Protagonist of the novel is Kumarasen who leaves his widowed mother for his work. Later in the town he finds a job at a soda factory he usually washes soda bottles filling them up with essence water and distributing them to the nearest shops. Between his Job Kumarasen finds his love with the girl named Saroja who is a fellow resident of the factory where he resides. The two love birds exchange their vows of wedding and set to begin a new journey of life together. After marrying Saroja, Kumarasen takes his wife to his village. On entering the village itself Saroja does not feel secure, she felt alienated and finds herself isolated the new place. She was driven with immense fear What Her husband's family would not accept her but her husband cheers up by saying cozy the words that his family will surely accept her, but he also warns her that his family consist of different opinioned people, which increases the fear of Saroja. With the hope given by her husband saroja felt some braveness in her.

Saroja clutched his shoulder and continued to shuffle ahead making sure her legs did not get in the way of his. Smiling faintly, she wondered if he would have taken her smile to mean, I have one besides you, I have come placing all my trust in you. (*PYRE*5). Kumarasen always reassured Saroja about her state of doubt of what the future will be. He tells her that she can speak one or two words Because He always know that she is worrying about what people will say about their inter-caste marriage. So, he says," Whatever I say, amma will listen,'ge assured her many time in many different ways. (*PYRE*7). As they near to the village, Saroja saw some faces of a woman sitting together, when they came closer, they hear a sudden voice aggressively scolding. Saroja raises her face her bowed face to see the voice, it was Kumarasen's mother. And his mother went on singing: Is this why I send you to work in a different place? She demanded. I had thought my son would earn some money and walk with his head held high among the people here. But he has thrown fire on me. If he had killed in a road accident somewhere, I would have written it off my destiny. I would have cried my heart out for eight days or so and being done with it. But now he has given me a reason to weep for the rest of my life. Why did you do this...? (*PYRE* 16). After saying this words His mother tried to hit to slap her, but he did not allow her to do that. But the words and the actions of the mother terrified Saroja her condition and fainted. He asked for help from the neighbors, but no one came forward to help, so he angrily rushed into the kitchen to grab some water. One day Kumarasen send his friend to inform Saroja that he wants to go to a movie with her. But Saroja hesitates to accept to go to movie as her mother-in-law will bring up with angry. Because when Saroja arrived the village, she encounters many suspicions about her identity, caste which led her towards isolation. On the other hand, Kumarasen's mother and the villagers' continuously questions on Saroja's background by probe her behavior, speech and appearance. Even though the couple believes that time will heal



everything, but the community becomes moderately hostile. The villagers start pressuring Kumarasen to expose Saroja's caste, because they believed that an inter-caste marriage would round the purity of their village's caste system, meanwhile Kumarasen stood up with Saroja. The tension moderately elevated as the villagers emotionally charged against the couple. Gossip, anger and suspicions grew rapidly which created a dangerous environment for Saroja to survive in the village.

Contrast between the Village and the Town

Another aspect of the novel is the contrast between the village and the town. In the town where Kumarasen meets Saroja. The town represents a free space where caste is not a big concern. However, once Kumarasen moves to village, caste becomes the center factor of social interaction. The novel also explores Kumarasen's inner-conflict though has great love for Saroja, he strives to challenge against his mother. Kumarasen initially hopes that patience and hard work will lead to acceptance, but he later realized that the prejudice of caste is stronger than he imagined. Saroja as an outsider of the village, constantly faces- fear, loneliness and heartedness. Even simple activities in life like, walking, interacting with neighbors turned into the source of anxiety. Meanwhile, Kumarasen tries to build a stable life for both. He decided to start a small-scale soda selling business. Because he decided if he work hard the villagers might accept their marriage.

Conclusion

The novel shifts towards a tragic end as the villagers decided to attack the couple especially on Saroja. The title *Pyre* symbolizes the tragic violence of the final act. Their anger leads to brutal reality of honor killing. The novel ends with disastrous consequences. Murugan leaves the reader with the sense of sadness and anger. Through the tragic love of Kumarasen and Saroja, Murugan exposes the cruelty of the caste system. Through his narrative, Murugan criticizes the cruelty of caste system. The villagers who stood stern in their actions in the name of honor, caste and purity. However, Murugan mirrors that justification which allows violence and injustice in the society. This novel also projects the vulnerability of the caste conflicts of women. Saroja the protagonists becomes the primary victim of aggression and oppression. Her suffering and isolation show how the caste system oppress the women.

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Diaspora and Displacement in Chithra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl*

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Abstract

This paper analyses the identical pain and sufferings of a girl who is compared to the Oleander. This novel mainly focuses the protagonist who struggles for her identity and also to construct her life in abroad in her identity seeking process. Chithra Banerjee Divakaruni gives much importance to female characters. For women their identity gives them individuality. The female protagonists of Divakaruni do not depicted by traditional images. From olden days to till now, the quest for identity for women still arises. Divakaruni beautifully portrays the empowerment of Korobi, the protagonist in oleander girl. This paper too analyses the life of two generations-Korobi Roy, Anu Roy.

Keywords: Search, Identity, Individuality, Oleander Girl, Liberation.

Introduction

This novel oleander girl is a multi-perspective of korobi, her grandmother, the muslim driver and the future relative. Korobi brought up by her grandparents with traditional Brahmin family background. Her grandparents give a little talk about her parents. The three of them had a great love towards each other and the bond between them seems to be nice. The novel opens with a night before Korobi's engagement to her fiancée Rajat Bose. Korobi often wakes up from her dream that her died mother's ghost trying to tell something. The quiz is that she wants to find her living dad in abroad and prove her identity. Korobi was well educated and her grandfather only takes her to the school. They had a lot of discussions about life and studies.

Diaspora and Displacement

Bimal Roy, Sarojini, Korobi belonged to the well renowned family whose the road is named after Tarak Prasad Roy. Maman and Papa are mother and father of Rajat. They all ran an art gallery and it goes well, earning comes good. Pia-missy was the sister of Rajat and she goes to school. Pia likes to go school with Asif, a muslim driver who is working with Rajat. She used to call Asif as A.A and friendship between them looks so great. Korobi reads a letter written by her mother which is unsend to her dad and she comes to the point that without knowing her identity she doesn't want to survive in the society and she likes to prove it. Magical realism often occurs in Divakaruni's novel in creating twists. Her descriptive and evocative writing fills with more thoughts and made us to feel complete. Korobi came to know the truth after the death of her grandfather which is revealed by her grandmother. The truth is that her father is still living and he is in America. Korobi gets hurt a more when she came to know the truth that her mother gets pregnant without properly getting married. The oleander, which is an exotic toxic plant, compared to Korobi who suffered a lot to protect herself in abroad and also from predators. Korobi and Rajat had a great love towards each other. The entire story spins around Korobi's personality and her battle to settle her life before she gets married. She adjust between the integrity of society and inadmissible social conditions. Korobi moves in a opposite direction in a way of hardships and test. The young



lady don't know what to decide and how to decide her life. Rajat admits his love by "I don't want to leave, either. I love you Korobi. Don't abandon me and go to America" (85).

Korobi started to find her father and also to prove her identity. She got more confused in finding her individuality because she came to know only the first half name of her father (i.e) Rob. With knowing this alone she started her travel to America and takes a lot and lots of risks in finding her father. She came to know that there lives a many men named Rob. With the help of Rajat's friend in America she gets help whatever she wants. Korobi thought to meet three men named Rob, they are Rob Evanston, an architect, Rob Mariner, an estate lawyer in San Francisco, a writer. Peering with a great investigation Desai helps much to Korobi by looking into her father and checking through the- mails. To make money she donates her hair which is an unacceptable one to their tradition and with the help of the money she started to find her father. She admits that "I feel light-headed, untethered. But once the money is in my hand, I am somewhat consoled. I now have enough for California and I've done without having beg to anyone" (177). By looking her new hairstyle her friend Vic expressed that she is looking bold and confident. Robin Lacey was the father of Korobi and he is living in California. He is an Afro-American and he believed that his wife Anuradha (Anu), and his daughter Korobi died during the delivery time. He became very surprised by hearing the news about his living daughter and her search for him.

Korobi realizes the nostalgic feel which she was away from her grandmother and also she missed Rajat the more. She had a small conversation with Rajat over phone and she updates her daily happenings. Sarojini too feels bad about long distance of her granddaughter and she prayed regularly to god regarding wellness of Korobi at their Hindu temple which is located inside their home. She feels uncomfortable there and when she went to meet Rob Mariner at office he asked her to come to his home and therefore he tried to seduce her. Korobi escaped from his cunning plan and returned to Mithra and Seema's house where she stayed by the advice given by Rajat. The conflicts of old-India with its strict norms and traditions play a great role in Divakaruni's oleander girl. Both Bimal and Bose family gets well attached and they helped each other both in business and house works. There arised a claim on Boses gallery and their share market gets decreased. Divakaruni in her novel considers characters of man are considered to subject matters. After finding her father Robin Lacey she contacted him and both of them went to the coffee shop and share their opinions. There she came to know that he came to Calcutta in search of her but her grandfather lied to him that they both are not surviving now.

Conclusion

Finally, Korobi feels free in finding her true identity. After she came to Calcutta Rajat's family shocked by her appearance particularly in her hair. Maman shouts at Korobi and asked her to get out of her sight. Then Korobi came out of that house by removing her engagement ring, put it on the table and came to meet her grandma. Korobi realizes that she is capable to survive in any situation. She tells that "I am Korobi, Oleander, capable of surviving drought and frost and the loss of love" (274,275) Rajat realizes Korobi's love and came to meet her at night. Sarojini clears everything to Korobi that Rajat speaks against his mother and came to meet her. Both of them and their family gets compromised and gets ready for their marriage. Their bond seems to unseparatable and they had a lot of trust on each other. They doesn't believe what others say about them. Finally both of them gets married and Anuradha also feels happy about the identity faced by her daughter. Magical realism here portrays by the arrival of the ghost of Anuradha.



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The Architecture of Absence: Purgatorial Trauma and the Deconstruction of Memory in St. John of the Cross's *Dark night of the Soul*

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Abstract

The paper explores the mystical journey in St. John of the Cross's Dark Night of the Soul through the contemporary lens of memory and trauma studies. While traditional theological interpretations view the Dark Night as a spiritual transition, the study argues that the process functions as a Sacred Trauma. A deliberate and radical stripping of the ego identity that mirrors the psychological fragmentation found in traumatic experiences. Central to St. John's treatise is the Purgation of the Memory, a state where the soul is forced to abandon all past sensory and intellectual attachments. By analyzing the night of the senses and the night of the spirit, the paper highlights how the mystic undergoes a structural collapse of personal history to facilitate a divine encounter. Drawing upon the intersection of apophatic theology and psychological shadow work, the paper examines the wound of love as a transformative trauma that does not paralyze the subject, but rather catalyze a rebirth of self. Through a close reading of the original stanzas and their accompanying commentaries, the paper demonstrates that St. John's Dark Night is a literary representation of the void, a space where erasure of memory becomes the primary site of spiritual reconstruction. Ultimately, it concludes that the Dark night provides a unique literary framework for understanding how trauma can be reclaimed as a tool for profound psychological and spiritual individuation.

Keywords: St. John of the Cross, Dark Night of the Soul, Memory Purgation, Mystical Trauma, Spiritual Shadow.

Introduction

The Dark Night of the Soul (La Noche Oscura Del Alma) is a phase of passive purification in the mystical development of the individual's spirit, according to the 16th century Spanish mystic and catholic poet St. John of the cross. John describes the concept in his treatise *Dark Night* (Noche Oscura), a commentary on his poem with the same name. It is the concept suggests it is actually a painful but necessary stripping away of the ego to make room for a deeper, more authentic version of yourself. It is far more than just "feeling sad"; it is a systemic collapse of the internal structures we use to find meaning in the world. When viewed through the lens of spiritual trauma, it represents a total breakdown of one's belief system, often leaving the individual in a state of divine abandonment. While clinical depression is often biological or situational, the Dark Night is specifically teleological, it concerns your sense of purpose and your relationship with the infinite. St. John breaks this spiritual journey down into two distinct 'Nights' or stages of purification. He describes the first stage as a *Night of the Senses*. The author explains that beginners often follow a spiritual



path because it makes them feel good. In this night these pleasant feelings were dry up or they lose interests in worldly attachments feel like they were in the trauma. The old self dies before the new self is born. This creates a terrifying vacuum where previous sources of comfort like prayer, meditation, community, or philosophy would suddenly feel hollow or fraudulent. The 'trauma' of the Dark Night is the friction caused by the ego trying to hold on to a reality that it has outgrown. It is a painful, necessary labor toward a more authentic, unmediated experience of existence. Through a psychological perspective, this trauma can be seen as a form of Positive Disintegration. For a person to reach a higher level of spiritual maturity, their lower-level integration the ego, the "false self" must be shattered. "The dark night of the soul is a journey into the light, but the light is so bright it looks like darkness."

The Void of Memory

Our personal history is usually anchored by 'landmarks' memories of success, spiritual highs, or emotional certainties. In the Night of the Senses, these landmarks vanish. According to St. John spiritual beginners activities that used to define their identity like hobbies, religious rituals and social roles are suddenly provide zero emotional satisfaction. The author describes a state where the memory becomes 'empty and detached.' You may still remember the facts of your life, but you lose the emotional attachment to them. Your history no longer feels like 'yours.' Psychologically, we are often a collection of curated memories that protect our ego. If you have always seen yourself as the helper, the achiever, or the spiritual one, this night strips away the feedback loops that sustain those titles. By silencing the external senses and the internal chatter of memory, the soul is forced to confront a terrifying blank slate. You are no longer defined by what you did, but by what you are in the present moment of deprivation. When this process is viewed as a landscape of trauma, it is the trauma of un-learning. The senses are our primary way of connecting to the world. When they are darkened, the psyche experiences a form of sensory deprivation. This forces a clean break from a past that might be cluttered with unhealthy attachments or rigid self-images. By deconstructing memory, the Night of the Senses creates the holy emptiness required for a new, more authentic identity to emerge one that isn't dependent on the ego's historical narrative.

The Healing Wound

Clinical trauma is essentially a failure of the psyche to process an event. The brain remains stuck in the moment of the threat. In clinical trauma, the past is never past. The individual is paralyzed by flashbacks and hyper vigilance, meaning they are constantly reliving the wounding event. The nervous system stays in a state of fight, flight, or freeze. This paralysis prevents the individual from moving forward because their energy is entirely consumed by the need for safety. The trauma creates a split or dissociation. Instead of evolving, the soul fragments to protect itself, leading to a diminished sense of agency. Unlike clinical trauma, which is often inflicted by external malevolence, mystical trauma is seen as a holy wounding. It hurts because the ego is resisting a necessary expansion. It involves the death of the old self to make room for a new being. While it feels like paralysis the inability to pray or feel joy, it is actually a gestation period. Mystical trauma has an aim (union with the Absolute). It evolves the soul by stripping away the attachments, histories, and "false selves" that prevent a direct experience of reality. It is possible for clinical trauma to be the trigger for a mystical evolution. This is known in psychology as Post-Traumatic Growth. When a person stops trying to fix the broken pieces of their old life and instead allows the trauma to empty them of their previous worldviews, the paralysis can shift into a Dark Night. The trauma then stops being a cage and becomes a threshold. A person who has undergone



individuation is less likely to be manipulated by unconscious impulses or social pressures, as they have established a firm relationship with their internal world. You cannot achieve individuation without first confronting the shadow. Jung famously noted, “No tree, it is said, can grow to heaven unless its roots reach down to hell.” By acknowledging the ‘roots’ (the shadow), the individual gains the stability and self-awareness necessary for the branches to reach toward their full potential (individuation).

Conclusion

The Light of individuation is not a return to happiness, but a move toward wholeness. Through the trauma of the Night, the center of the personality shifts from the Ego to the Self. The Night facilitates the mysterious conjunctions of the marriage of the dark and the light, the masculine and the feminine, the conscious and the unconscious. The Night serves as the Crucible. Without the heat of this spiritual trauma, the psyche remains a collection of fragments and masks. The trauma evolves the soul by proving that the ego is not the master of the house, eventually leading to a grounded, resilient, and authentic existence that can withstand the paradoxes of life.

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Finishing Touches to the Unfinished: The Phenomenology in Kay Ryan’s Poetry

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Abstract

In this paper, I explore the phenomenological underpinnings of Kay Ryan’s poetry through the philosophical frameworks of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Gaston Bachelard. My analysis draws on Merleau-Ponty’s concepts of embodied perception and the intentional arc, alongside Bachelard’s theories of reverie and topoanalysis, to demonstrate how Ryan’s compressed, aphoristic poems function as enactments of phenomenological experience. I read selected poems, such as “Attention,” “The Light of Interiors,” and “Polish and Balm”, not merely as reflections on perception, but as perceptual events in themselves. I argue that Ryan’s refusal of narrative excess and confessional inwardness allows her to achieve a linguistic immediacy that resonates with the lived body and its sensory orientation to the world. The paper is therefore an exercise at proving that Ryan’s poems contain the literary or poetic equivalent of phenomenology.

Keywords: Perception, Embodiment, Epoché, Attention, Intentional Arc, Intersubjectivity

Experience is never limited, and it is never complete.

—Henry James

A Phenomenology of Poetic Imagination

Dreams remain inextricably tied to the subconscious terrain from which they arise. The most vivid ones, those on the threshold between sleep and wakefulness, often slip away just as we grasp at them. But some dreams belong to daylight, seen with eyes wide open. These are what Gaston Bachelard, in his *Poetics of Reverie* (1960) calls reveries. While dreams can be recounted, reveries cannot; the only form in which a reverie can be communicated is through writing (most often in the form of poetry). Things around us, a lake, for instance, can stoke up our cosmic imagination, and the poetry that ensues, is this beauty of the natural world continued. The imagination can both extrapolate reality and create unreal, unprecedented scenarios. But where is the role of perception here, one might ask. In a reverie, we do not passively receive the images, we construct them. Yet, quite paradoxically, they seem to have arrived from somewhere beyond us. Bachelard states that the poetic reverie “gives the I a non-I which belongs to the I: my non-I” (Bachelard, 1971/1960, p. 13). It is not an alienation of the self, but an expansion of consciousness by the encounter of the self with an otherness, which nevertheless is intimately connected to oneself. A reverie transforms our experience of the world. Ergo, reverie, posits Bachelard, is the apt medium for the phenomenological research of poetry.

Phenomenology is a method of inquiry that examines the structures of consciousness as they are directly experienced from a first-person perspective. It seeks to analyse phenomena—that is, the way things appear to us in our lived experience—rather than making metaphysical claims about objective reality independent of perception. At its core, phenomenology emphasizes intentionality, its directedness; our experiences, perceptions, and thoughts are always *about* something. Maurice Merleau-Ponty expands phenomenology by arguing that perception is rooted in bodily experience. Rather than being a detached, purely



intellectual process, perception arises through our physical engagement with the world. To perceive an object, we must be spatially situated in relation to it, meaning perception is always tied to our lived body (*corps vécu*) and its interaction with the environment.

Attention: Merleau-Ponty and Kay Ryan

Attention is the rarest form of generosity.

—Simone Weil

It is not uncommon for young lovers to romanticize their connection by imagining that they are breathing the same air or treading the same earth as their beloved. In much the same way, I bring together Kay Ryan and Merleau-Ponty on the subject of ‘attention’. While Merleau-Ponty used the concept of attention to expand on his theory of perception, Ryan wrote a sleek poem which captures the phenomenological consequences of withdrawn attention, particularly its impact on one who has grown accustomed to it and, perhaps, even thrived under its presence.

In the Merleau-Pontian sense, attention itself is a creative act of the consciousness that actively reorganizes the perceptual field instead of merely being a spotlight selectively focusing on an object (often associated with empiricist and cognitive theories of perception). It is a transitional process involving the articulation of *figures* from a *horizon* of pre-formed, pre-existing givens. When one pays attention to a certain figure, one does not extract or isolate it from the horizon; the consciousness is mindful of the *Gestalt* whole. If perception is not simply a matter of selecting objects but of bodily attunement to the world, how does the absence of attention shape experience? Kay Ryan’s poem “Attention” from *Say Uncle* (2000) offers a striking meditation on this question: “As strong as / the suction cups / on the octopus / are the valves / of the attention. // If threatened / or pulled off / they leave welts / and pink rings // but also / can unstick / unfelt / from things.” (Ryan, 2010/2000).

Attention here, is likened to an embodied force, a force that is both potent, and has directedness (intentionality). It is *self-transcending* in that sense. In the Merleau-Pontian discourse, perception (which awakens the attention) involves a reconfiguration of elements of a hitherto indeterminate system. The image of multiple suction cups mirrors the Gestalt approach, where perception organizes elements into relational parts of a whole rather than isolating them. Prior to the creative act of the consciousness, the horizon has been arranged, a stage has been set, with figures subsumed under the broader perceptive field, such that all that is now left, is for the consciousness to begin its creative act. But what, in the Merleau-Pontian sense, is the effect of its retraction? What happens when one ceases to pay attention to something/someone? A new articulation of the phenomena takes place and together with this new-found identity, it retreats into its horizon, now transformed. Ryan’s use of “welts” and “pink rings” suggests a. the transformative force of the attention, b. that attention is embodied and manifests in ways that can be spotted in our physical world and c. the object attended to is at the mercy of (and therefore subordinate to) this attention (including any effects following its retraction). Though Ryan’s depiction of attention carries sentimental undertones, it also reflects the habitual and anticipatory structures of perception—both central to Merleau-Ponty’s concept of the *intentional arc*. This concept accounts for how perception, action, and memory interact dynamically, allowing us to engage with the world in ways that feel immediate and continuous rather than deliberate and fragmented. It is what allows a pianist to move his fingers smoothly along the keyboard without pausing for deliberation each time.

Merleau-Ponty illustrates this through Schneider, a neurologically impaired war veteran, who struggled to conduct intentional movements (such as pointing at a certain spot on his body when asked) but who was nevertheless capable of performing habitual ones (like the



scratching of an itch). Perception, therefore, is not a passive reception of stimuli but an active, embodied process, continuously shaped by our experience and interaction with the world over time. In this sense, the metaphorical suction that leaves welts at specific locations on the skin parallels Schneider's impairment—not a global disruption of movement but a localized breakdown in intentional (goal-directed) action. An alternative but more fitting interpretation would be that we don't perceive someone's attention (especially the kind with sentimental value) in isolation; we interpret it through past experiences, bodily reactions, and anticipation. When such attention ceases, the pink rings and welts become personalized manifestations of response or overreaction. One might be tempted to equate the tone of indifference in the last stanza with Merleau-Ponty's notion of disinterested attention, the idea that attention can fix itself to anything. What it suggests instead, is that the effectiveness of this suction and the impact of its retraction depend on the nature of the surface it acts upon. In other words, how one copes with the absence of attention, perhaps from a love interest, varies from person (surface) to person. This, in turn, shifts agency, though not entirely, to the object or the thing attended to.

The Unfinished Business of Phenomenology

Sometimes a multitude of elements, lacking definition or intensity or even recognition, register themselves into the consciousness of the poet or the dreamer of reveries. It could be the feeling evoked by light filtering through the foliage, quaint vistas or smells, soft winds, elements that have more to do, in Bachelard's words, with "décor" rather than drama, with atmosphere and its sundry pixels, along with their strange attractions. These flickering images, or "henids" (a term used by Otto Weininger in his controversial book *Sex and Character* to stand for nascent sensations or pre-thoughts as opposed to full-fledged concepts) need no development. It is entirely possible to make a poem out of an unformed, unfinished thought, a vague, mysterious sensation, resulting from what Bachelard calls *intimate immensity*, or a surge of being. Such oneiric images unfold in one of Kay Ryan's longer poems (and possibly in her creative process), "The Light of Interiors," the initial lines of which read: "The light of interiors / is the admixture / of who knows how many / doors ajar, windows / casually curtained, / unblinded or opened, / oculi set into ceilings, / wells, ports, shafts, / loose fits, leaks, / and other breaches / of surface. But, in . . ." (Ryan, 2010/2003, lines 1-11).

One cannot find a better Ryan poem to sit with Bachelard's ideas of décor and his dialectics of inside and outside from his influential book, *The Poetics of Space* (1958). In his text, he introduces the term "topoanalysis" which he refers to as the study of intimate spaces and the emotional significance they hold (Bachelard, 2014/1958). Bachelard believes that intimate spaces (such as houses, rooms, and corners) can shape our imagination and memory. He was wary of the rising urbanism of the 20th-century, lamenting how Parisian houses were reduced to box-like structures. The intimacy of verticality was progressively being lost to homes without cellars or top floors, erasing the osmosis between interiors and the indeterminate spaces outside. How light collects or dissipates has to do with the arrangement of ports and shafts and doors. Bachelard writes about doors, half-open, ajar, shut doors, and how each of them connects to the many possibilities of the consciousness, that evoke daydreams. The enjambment acts as a refractive mechanism, altering the flow of perception much like light bending through a prism, or passing through apertures—narrowed, scattered, or intensified. The sparing use of rhyme can be read as an extension of space itself. Unlike the expansive echoes of open landscapes, poetic echoes (through rhyme) can sometimes create a sense of enclosed acoustics, suggesting walls and confinement. It is worth noting that to Bachelard, meaning marked the closing of language while poems marked its



expansion. With her protean diction, Ryan captures not only the shifting configurations of doors and curtains but also enacts Bachelard's poetics of dwelling, replete with architectural nuance.

A Question of Vantage

If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear
to man as it is, infinite.

—Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*

Just as Ryan's architectural poetics shape interiors, her manipulation of space and language extends beyond enclosed structures to landscapes and surfaces, where perception itself becomes an act of dwelling. Look at Ryan's (2015) poem "Velvet", for instance: "There are / hills you / long to touch: // velvet to / the eyes. // So much / is soft // the wrong / size." (Ryan, 2015) While the hills in this poem may evoke Bachelard's notion of 'topophilia,' my focus shifts here to the perspectival and transcendental aspects of perception. The hills look like they might be pleasant to touch, meaning that the poetic image is one of self-transcendence, the imaginative extending of one's arm to feel the texture, an innate quality, of the object. There is a synesthesia of visual and tactile sensations. The limitation is not so much perspectival in that the hills, whether real or imagined, perfectly fall under the subject's field of perception, and can even be touched, engaged with in the spatial domain if only one got closer. One could, hypothetically, walk up to the hill, or hike, but that would disturb the perspective at which the hills (and their texture) look pleasing. One can only feel blades of grass. The hills here present a paradox: they are visually alluring yet lack the very quality that would make them fully satisfying to the touch—their size. If only they were smaller, they could be felt as well as seen. Because the poem's power lies in its perspectival tensions, it aligns closely with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological insights into perception and embodiment. He explains this in his treatise using the example of a neighboring house, and the vantage at which one observes it. The house, based on how we position ourselves, i.e. our bodies around it, has several ways of presenting itself. But each time, some part of it, a wall, a rear side, or its underside, shall remain hidden from us, making it impossible to see the house in its entirety. This perspectival inadequacy, this incompleteness, according to Merleau-Ponty, is not a flaw, instead, it is one of phenomenology's key features. Ryan's poem "Polish and Balm" further illustrates the point:

Dust develops from inside as well as on top when objects stop being used. No unguent can soothe the chap of abandonment. Who knew the polish and balm in a person's simple passage among her things. We knew she loved them but not what love means. (Ryan, n.d.)

For an adult reader, Ryan's poems offer a refreshing departure from the well-worn themes of love and loss. Her poems exude a sense of childish wonder, due in part to her mastery of rhyme. Metrical verse, as she relates in interviews, would have probably left her poems sounding ridiculous. That, she would leave to the greats, to Frost and to Dickinson. From Dickinson, she inherits the allure of rhyme and the frisson of compression, while leaving meter out. But free-verse isn't such an easy ride either. To enforce purposiveness in free-verse is harder than the task in front of those who write using traditional forms of poetry.

In the above poem, for instance, the absence of meter in no way takes away from the musicality and the overall effectiveness of the poem. Several poetic devices come into play. First, Ryan disrupts the habitual perception of dust as an exterior phenomenon, embedding it within the interior. This shift unsettles the distinction between surface and depth, nudging the perceiver toward a more layered awareness. Next, from the outset and again toward the end,



the poem is dense with fricatives. The sibilance builds toward, and then recoils from, the force of the plosives in “unguent” and “abandonment,” producing a clipped rhythm at the poem’s center, sonically enacting the impact of neglect. This counterbalance ensures that there is a lull at the ends of the poem, leaving something unnerving yet revelatory in the middle. From a Merleau-Pontian perspective (a fitting term, given his entire philosophy hinges on perspective itself), the image of a person “passing” among her things would imply a person’s frequent use of them, invoking a shared perceptual field between the person, and the said object (here a woman’s belongings). No sound is superfluous, it is a vivid sonic constellation and the dots are left to the readers to join. This is the pleasure afforded to Ryan’s readers, the pleasure of pattern-making, the felicity of agency even in reception.

Perception and Isolation

It is not hard to identify a Ryan poem, but that is not the same as saying that Ryan does not have range. She has a most prodigious repertoire of metaphor and rhymes. In her poem “Atlas”, Ryan counts on an average educated reader’s basic knowledge of Greek Mythology and geography, then slyly begins her wordplay:

Extreme exertion isolates a person from help, discovered Atlas. Once a certain shoulder-to-burden ratio collapses, there is so little others can do: they can’t lend a hand with Brazil and not stand on Peru.(Ryan, 2010/2005)

Atlas’s burden here marks the breaking point of intersubjectivity, where exertion becomes so extreme that shared experience is no longer possible. While Merleau-Ponty asserts the fundamental ‘intersubjectivity’ of perception, he also acknowledges existential solitude. Though the poem situates Atlas in the spatial world, the implied distance between him and those who might have the goodwill (and, in a sense, the obtuseness) to want to help him reinforces the first-personal nature of perception: we can never fully access another’s experience, only perceive them from our own embodied standpoint.

Atlas is alone in his struggle and must bear the burden himself, leaving him in an existential and intercorporeal isolation, where even the possibility of assistance collapses. It is this opacity of the experience of the other and the irreducible gap between one’s consciousness and another’s that makes this poem so fundamentally phenomenological. The poem’s tone is one of dispassionate yet astute observation, laced with mockery that peaks with the quasi-mathematical phrasing of ‘shoulder-to-burden ratio.’ One must be mindful of this ratio before offering to help—lest, in lifting Brazil, one ends up stepping on Peru, thereby doing more harm than good. Just as “Atlas” explores the limits of perception, Ryan’s other poems experiment with space and language, shaping meaning through both structure and sound. One often finds in Ryan’s poems neologisms and clichés and playful misuses of idioms. In her poem “Bestiary” Ryan (1996) gives her poetic license free rein by calling a bestiary a catalogue of ‘bests’. She ends the poem with yet another coinage, “goodiary,” only to erase it by assigning to it a past that has allegedly failed to retain the term. Ryan’s poetry spans everything from objects and wild animals to oil paintings, phenomena proper, sometimes incubating idioms and technical terms until they hatch into aperçus shaped by perfect sonic patterns. They have a seamless blend of brevity, wit and internal rhymes, or what she likes to call “recombinant rhyme”. Though deeply reflective, there is still an impersonality about Ryan’s poems, a disinclination towards betraying anything about her own life in her poetry. It is this lack of inwardness, or self-reflectiveness that makes Ryan an ideal poet for phenomenological study. As Merleau-Ponty argues, “Truth does not merely “dwell” in the “inner man”; or rather, there is no “inner man,” man is in and toward the world, and it is in the world that he knows himself. And this must happen at the level of the body.”



(Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2018, p. xxiv)

Against Received Wisdom

Doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is absurd.

—Voltaire

For Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology is the study of essences, not as abstract concepts, but as lived experience. What appears as an objective, third-person fact is, in reality, a subjective inquiry. The third-person perspective always carries an implicit first-person viewpoint; there is no view from nowhere. You have to ‘see for yourself’ what you refuse to take for granted. It is this descriptive attitude, this bold attempt to give the dignity of a poem to an abstract philosophical musing, that we see in her poem “Things That Have Stayed in Position”:

Things that have stayed in position may nevertheless have almost no root system. You could unstick and slide them like chess pieces. Much of this apparently tenacious earth is fairly slick. (Ryan, n.d.)

This Ryan poem is classic defamiliarization. Apparent fixity could be an illusion. The poem is an exercise on the same “seeing for yourself” that we previously discussed. Ryan here is working against a perspectival limitation. The poem, like many of Ryan’s other poems reads almost entirely like a sentence but for the caesural hesitation created by the staccato sound of the velar plosives “thick” and “slick”. These end rhymes break the syntactic flow of an otherwise smooth, rhymeless and predictable poem, but also mirrors a phenomenological uncertainty. This effect is further exacerbated by the semantic discord between the words. Just as the reader momentarily grasps at “tenacious”, it is undercut by “slick.” This syntactic interruption enacts the *epoché*, which in phenomenological parlance refers to a suspension of immediate judgment. In this sense, the poem uses the phonological to imply the phenomenological. Ryan’s poetry thus challenges the dictates of received wisdom.

Pocket-Poems: Notes on Compression

Sometimes the smallest things take up the most room in your heart.

—A.A. Milne

At her sharpest, Ryan reinterprets fables and myths (poems like “New Clothes” or “Glass Slippers”) to uncover neglected philosophical truths. Some of her poems are a kind of etymological word-play. In this way, she resists what Ernest Fenollosa (1919/2019) calls the “anaemia of modern speech”. We have deadened language with a mindless, transactional consumption of it, reducing it to a mere surface and forgetting its origins. In the poem “Dry Things”, she invokes Aesop’s fable of the crow and the pitcher, using neither the word crow nor pitcher. The caesura then serves a delectable paradox “. . . It’s a / miracle when / that works, / don’t you think? / Dry things / letting us / drink?” (Ryan, 2015). Ryan’s creations can be thought of as pocket-poems in that they are short enough to be memorized and carried around. This is also why she can afford to read her own poems twice or more during poetry readings. Her style is never didactic, but her readers don’t leave the poem without having gained something. Ryan’s poetry never smells of the proverbial lamp. This is partly because she refuses to be burdened by the need to be original. Ryan’s poems are sincere, never overearnest. They are authentic, not desperately original, and it is this that makes her unafraid of losing ideas, and loathe to the habit of keeping notebooks or attending writing workshops. Ryan’s poetry achieves, in Bachelardian terms, a condensation of reverie. While Bachelard sees poetic images as expanding consciousness, Ryan’s poems operate in reverse: they suspend perception, distilling entire experiences into a moment of heightened awareness.

**Closing Remarks**

In poetry, as in memory, time is suspended, not only in the act of reading but in the reverie that brings it into being. Powerful images do not unfold gradually; they strike all at once. Through its condensed form, poetry captures perception in brief yet vivid flashes of clarity. By engaging Ryan's gnomic poetry through Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) and Bachelard's *The Poetics of Reverie* (1960) and *The Poetics of Space* (1958), I have sought to show that her work does not merely reflect phenomenology, it enacts it. Her poetry does not describe perception; it renders it a lived, linguistic event.

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Freedom, Self- Sacrifice, and Structural Inequality: A Theoretical Analysis of Rabindranath Tagore's *MUKTA-DHARA*

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Abstract

Rabindranath Tagore is one of the earliest and most illustrious exponents of this genre. Tagore was a poet in essence. Therefore, his plays represent poetic representations of his thoughts and emotions. There is no doubt that he admired Shakespeare, Ibsen and Maeterlinck, but he had deep interest in dramatic tradition of India. He portrayed the Indian myths and cultural traditions and plots through his plays. Tagore being ultra-modern in his thoughts chose to express him against such Indian customs as he found out-dated and inhuman. Idolatry, for example, he held, was anachronistic Mukta-Dhara is often said to be the best play of Tagore. In this play Tagore has said strongly against onslaught of machinery and technology. Progress is a double-edged sword. It affects the character of the people and lessens job opportunities. The big industry exploits labour. Uttarakut and Shivtarai are exploiter and exploited respectively. The former is arrogant in power while the latter is brave in spirit. Dhananjaya, the ascetic and Abhijit, the Prince become the symbols of man's immortal spirit. The Prince defies the machine patronized by the State to allow Mukta-Dhara of life flow smoothly. Human values are to be cherished at all costs but ignoring human values means marching towards self-destruction.

Keywords: Anachronistic, Achism, Machinery, Exploit, Patronized, Self-Destruction.

Introduction

This play *Mukta-dhara* is the most popular and symbolic play by Tagore. It takes its name from a mountain stream named *Mukta-dhara*; which literally means a free rivulet. The King of Uttarakut, a small kingdom, named Ranjit builds a dam over this river which presents the people of Shiva-tarai from irrigating their fields. This causes great disaffection in the hearts of the people of Shiva-tarai. The whole play is centred round the Patriotism and the destructive role of machinery.

Political Convictions of Rabindranath Tagore

The play is a mirror of the political views of Tagore. The feudal King of Uttarakut is against the interests of the people of Shiva-tarai. K.R. Kriplani says in his introduction to the play, "perhaps no other play of Rabindranath expresses his political conviction, with such directness and force. The drama is pregnant with suggestions not merely on modern politics but on many other problems that vex the modern world—the misuse of science by man, the mad pursuit of pleasure and the worship of the Machine, race pride and race prejudice, and the regimentation of children's minds by a slavish system of education. On all these questions which have a vital bearing on man's life and happiness, Tagore had thought deeply and held strong convictions. These convictions are given forcible expression in the drama and when we hear Prince Abhijit denouncing the Machine or Vairagi, Dhananjaya preaching the message of non-violence, we feel we are hearing the very voice of the poet-prophet. But the play is not written with a purpose; it is not a piece of propaganda dressed up as a drama. It has great merit as a drama."

**Characterisation in the Play**

The play shows poet's deftness and literary skill in the portrayal of characters, when we read the play, we are struck with the livingness of Tagore's characters in *Mukta-Dhara*. The principal characters though they symbolise certain qualities of character, are not shadows, mere abstractions, but impress us as living persons, men of real flesh and blood. But it cannot be denied that part of the appeal of the drama to the reader lies in the noble sentiments which find eloquent expression here, especially in the words of Abhijit and Dhananjaya. Edward Thompson remarks that the play "has many strands of significance woven into it, so that it is like shot silk suggesting many colours." The first of these is the poet's deep conviction that science used for the purpose of military conquest and economic exploitation is a curse and not a blessing. It is a perversion of the powers that God gives to man, its abuse and not its proper use. It is no doubt good to harness the powers of Nature to the service of man, but this conquest of Nature often makes man arrogant. He arrogates to himself a power and a position that does not belong to him, and thinks that he is greater than the gods; in the blindness of his pride, he forgets God and God's law of love. The Steel-tower that rises above Bhairava's temple is a symbol of this arrogance. Even the King feels that it is like the menacing fist of a demon. Bibhuti, the royal engineer, proudly declares that his purpose in building the dam is to assert the power of human intelligence over Nature and not either to help man or hinder man a stark display of power divorced from human values and purposes. It is this power which is sought for its own sake and often used ruthlessly for the destruction of man that Tagore calls a monster, a devilish creation that seeks to rule in place of God's creation. The people of Uttarakut adore and worship this Machine singing:

"Thou hast the captive world in thee,
And we thy servants worship thee,
We bow to thee, we honour thee,
O Lord, O Lord Machine." (MD15)

Non-violence versus Violence in *Mukta-Dhara*

Mukta-Dhara is a philosophical play. Tagore has tried to prove that in this age of violence, non-violence will win ultimately. In this play Dhananjaya is a transcript of Mahatma Gandhi who was fighting British rule by means of non-violent movements. A third strand of thought in the drama is Tagore's hatred of all race-pride and race-prejudice. He does not believe in the native superiority of one race to another and the white man's talk of his civilising mission. The Aryan race's contempt for the dark races, Hitler's talk of the superiority of the Germanic races—all this excites the poet's scorn. He feels that it is all an excuse invented by the ruling race for holding another in subjection. The most benevolent foreign rule is no substitute for self-rule, and a nation can grow to the full stature of its powers only by freedom. He fills their minds with poisonous stuff like false history. The fearlessness of Dhananjaya is strong plan for non-violence in the play. The racial prejudice has also been condemned in the play.

The Mystic element in *Mukta-Dhara*

The play *Mukta-Dhara* is a very, shining example of mystic philosophy of Tagore. Certainly, most of the plays of Tagore are full of mystic appeal but the very title of the play has mystic connotation. Human soul is the creation of divine freedom and every individual ought to be free. One of the special charms which is also one of the special difficulties of Tagore's dramas is the strong element of mysticism in them. Tagore is not only a mystic philosopher and a mystic poet, but he is also a mystic dramatist. He sees the world, as the Vedic seer did, as Brahmin, as created by, subsisting in, and permeated by oneself or spirit.



This spirit which is also our own deepest self is not to be reached by reason but can only be realised by intuition. There are ranges of truth which are beyond the reach of the reasoning mind, and which can be reached, if at all, only by faith, love and devotion. The highest values of life, therefore, are of the spirit, and birth, wealth, power, position are of little worth beside the eternal values of the spirit, such as truth, goodness and love. Man has often to sacrifice material values for the sake of the higher spiritual values. Death is often the gateway to eternal life, and suffering, the prelude to happiness. Such, in brief outline, are the essential principles of the mystic view of life and these truths find the most convincing expression in the poems of Tagore.

The Crown Prince, Abhijit sacrifices his life

On account of mystic inspiration, Prince Abhijit sacrifices his life. His sense of service to the people of Shiva-tarai is excellent. The central thought is that the soul can find its fulfilment only through freedom. To Abhijit, the palace seemed a prison and the trappings of royalty, so many fetters, because they took away his freedom of action. He longed to serve the people of Shiva-tarai by removing the restrictions imposed upon them, but the King and people of Uttarakut will not allow him to do so. As they dammed the waters of Mukta-Dhara just to keep the Shiv-tarayans in political subjection, so they want to use the Prince as an agent and tool of their political policies. Again, the ruling motive of the Prince's life is a sense of mystic union with the stream Mukta-Dhara. He tells Sanjaya, "Somewhere or other in the external world God writes for each man the secret mystery of his spirit." As for himself, *Mukta-Dharabores* the secret of his inner being. He can be free only if she is freed from her bonds and to that end, he devotes himself unmindful of the claims of kinship and of country. In the end he breaks the dam, giving up his own life in the attempt. And the author says that in death he found eternal life. This mystic thought makes the Crown Prince's sacrifice a sacramental offering to the eternal spirit.

Conclusion

Through *Mukta-Dhara*, Tagore has expressed his deep conviction that science and machine deprive man of his innate sense of morality and higher values. Tagore has expressed such ideas through his main characters, Dhananjaya and a crown prince Abhijit. Thus, the chief characteristics of the play are its idealism, its exposition of non-violence, the hidden and symbolic element of its mysticism and its allegorical characterisation.

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Perspectives of Social Marginality and Terminal Illness in Mahesh Dattani's *Brief Candle: A Dance between Love and Death: An Analysis*

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Abstract

This study examines Mahesh Dattani's play Brief Candle, highlighting the marginalization of cancer patients within society. It shows how these patients deal with the challenges they face and how they learn to understand their new place in society and in their relationships. The play shows how a group of characters moves from the main part of society to being on the outside or less important. The idea of social marginality, which includes both things' people come by naturally and things they gain through experience, is briefly explained here. The people who used to be important now find themselves in a very lonely and excluded place because they are seriously ill and living in a hospice. Using six characters named Dr. Deepika Dave, Mahesh Tawade, Vikas Tiwari, Amol Ghosh, Amarinder, and Shanti Venkataraman, Dattani skilfully portrays social issues in a unique way. He explores topics like gender, the purpose of life, the certainty of death, and how people view serious illnesses, clearly showing both perspectives. Dattani blends real life with a play being rehearsed by a character named Vikas, including the involvement of characters who have died. He combines the past, present, and future to highlight how some people, like cancer patients, face social isolation both because of things they are born into and things they have experienced.

Keywords: Cancer, Hospice, Vikas, Deepika. Rehearsal, Love, Death, Illness, Marginality

Mahesh Dattani's *Brief Candle* shows a touching story about serious illness and how the life became complicated. The play takes place in a hospice where cancer patients get ready to put on a funny show to raise money. Dattani says that "theatres provide a pathway to our feelings and concerns so that we can look at our life and its vicissitudes squarely in the mirror without having to wear a mask of placid existence"(3). It mixes comedy and sadness to deeply explore life and death. The characters in the play are alive but always face the fact that they will eventually die. This situation makes them feel like outsiders who live on the edge of normal life. Using humour, acting, and deep thinking, Dattani looks at the feelings and thoughts of people dealing with terminal illness. The hospice is a special place, where people try to keep their dignity, stay together with others, and find meaning in life, even when facing the death. This paper looks at how Dattani shows marginalization, sickness, and people's strength through the lives of hospice patients.

The play has seven scenes and goes on without pauses. Mahesh Dattani uses a big mask called the "Face of Cancer," which looks hurt because of chemotherapy. The mask stays on the stage during the whole play, and there is a piano on top of it for the character Vikas, who is already dead, to play the piano. The quick background of the play sheds light on the social marginalization. The play starts with a practice for another play called *Hotel Staylonger*, which was written by Vikas, a cancer patient who has passed away. During the



practice, Dr. Deepika Dave is the hotel manager. Mahesh Tawade, a nurse at the hospice, acts as Mr.

The hotel manager helps Mr. Kulkarni is going to the room 206 in a hotel in Mumbai because his flight is delayed, and he needs to stay there for the night. But he has to share the room with another person, Mr. Sengupta, a character role, played by Amol, is also a cancer patient. Kulkarni does not feel good about sharing the room with Mr. Sengupta is sipping a drink called Bloody Mary. Kulkarni then tries to flirt with the hotel manager, but she makes it clear that she is not a call girl or someone who sleeps around. Soon, another person named Mr. Malhotra, who is played by Amarinder (who also has cancer), comes into the scene. Shanti Venkataraman, who had previously met Mr. Malhotra also comes.

Sengupta walks around with his Bloody Mary while the others are chatting. Malhotra asks Mr. Kulkarni wants to buy Viagra pills because he plans to propose to Miss Unikrishnan, who is also staying at the hotel. Mr Sengupta says that Mr. Kulkarni goes to get another drink and asks the hotel manager to spend the night with him. The audience sees Vikas sitting on it and playing the piano, even though he is no longer alive. Vikas then talks to Deepika and reminds her that she promised to visit him before he dies to say goodbye. Deepika is standing in a bright light. In their chat, we find out that Deepika and Vikas were a medical students who were in love. Vikas decided to stop studying medicine because he wanted to be a writer and help poor and disadvantaged people.

The second scene goes back in time and shows the hospice. Mahesh, a male nurse, is giving medicine to the cancer patients in the hospital. Vikas is now a patient at that place. He tells Deepika he wrote a play about their love story. Deepika tells him that she is a doctor and then walks away. Mahesh gives Vikas a medicine called Roxanol, but Vikas puts the pill in his shirt instead of taking it. Mahesh says that he should take the medicine. Vikas says he will jump out of the window and hurt himself if Mahesh makes him do something. Vikas teases Mahesh by saying he could get rich if he visits the Bajrang Bali temple of Hanuman. At this time, Amol comes in holding a bottle of blood that's attached to his body by a tube. Vikas keeps discussing the Hanuman Chalisa and the tale of Markandeya.

The other scenes are with more practice for the play and what's happening in the characters' lives. They show the connections between cancer patients, their struggles with being sick, their feelings about love and death, and how the play combines both funny and sad moments. In the end, the play shows that all six main characters feel left out lonely. Deepika Dave is an example of someone, who faces some challenges because she decides to run a hospice, which is not a typical job in the medical field. Even though she comes from a wealthy family, she still has problems because her job helping cancer patients doesn't get enough money. As a woman doctor, she also sees that women have a lower status in society, so she experiences two types of unfair treatment that is, one because she is a woman and another because of her job choice.

Vikas is a clear evident of being left out by society. He stopped studying medicine and decided to become a writer to make the world better and support those in need. This choice made him different from most people. Even after, he got sick with AIDS and then cancer, he still felt good about the choices he made in his life. He was still proud of being a writer and trying to make society better. Although he could have had a nice life, he ended up living and dying in a hospice, away from the rest of society. Amol Ghosh also shows how some people are pushed to the edges of society. He has lung cancer and his family has turned away from him. Because he is sick and has personal problems, he lives on the edge of society. Shanti Venkataraman shows how women often have a low status in marriage. Her



life and illness demonstrate how women can face both social exclusion and hardship due to their life situations.

Mahesh Tawade, the nurse, shares how he and his family were treated unfairly in their hometown. His choice to work in a hospice, which isn't a usual job, also puts him in a less common social situation. Mahesh Dattani shows characters who face both born and learned types of being treated unfairly. The play uses these characters to show the difficult lives of people who are on the sidelines of society, especially those dealing with serious sicknesses like cancer. Mahesh Dattani is known as one of the most important writers in modern Indian English plays. His plays often centre on people who live on the edges of society, those identities or experiences go against traditional social norms. Dattani's plays highlight social problems that are often ignored and show the challenges faced by people who usually go unnoticed in popular stories. *Brief Candle: A Dance between Love and Death* looks at people on the edges of society but now focuses on serious illness.

The story takes place at the Avedna Cancer Institute, where some cancer patients choose to put on a funny show called Hotel Staylonger. Their choice to put on a funny play might seem surprising at first because of the sad situation they're in. Mahesh and Amol are stuck because of the delayed flight and have to stay in the Hotel, Mahesh: ...So make the most of your stay at hotel... and Amol repeats, 'Make the most of your stay in Hotel Staylonger, may your stay be long, (Scene 1, 10). However, the difference between laughter and pain creates the main conflict of the play. The characters are very aware of their situation. They understand that death can come at any time, but they still choose to enjoy life by participating in theatre, making friends, and sharing laughs. Their situation shows a strange truth about being human: even when facing death, people still look for meaning and relationships. "All creativity is about exploration, openness and a willingness to look at life again from a different perspective".(42-43)

The title of the play comes from a well-known quote by Shakespeare in *Macbeth* about how life doesn't last long. The title of the play derives from Shakespeare's famous reflection on the transience of life in *Macbeth*:

"Out, out, brief candle! Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more" (Shakespeare 5.5.23-26).

The idea of the "brief candle" means that human life is weak and doesn't last long. Life is similar to a candle flame; it lasts for a little while before going out. Dattani's choice of this title highlights the main idea of death that is present in the play. But the play doesn't just focus on how short life is. Instead, it looks at how people react when they know they will die. The hospice patients know they don't have much time left, but they still want to keep living. One character expresses this determination when he remarks: "We know we are dying, but until that moment comes, we must continue to live" (8). Dattani conveys it is more important to keep up with the quality of our lives till we live.

The hospice setting is very important in the play. It shows a place that is between being alive and being dead, between feeling hopeful and feeling like giving up. Patients in the hospice are cut off from the regular social activities of everyday life. Amar, a character in Vikas's play is suffering from prostate cancer, yet is confident of satisfying a woman, his insecurity is reflected in his confidence and he says, "And once I am in her room, could you have some wine sent to the room, but don't take too long. But not if the 'Do not Disturb' sign is turned on" (Scene 1, 9). They can no longer fully take part in regular things like work, family duties, or social events. As a result, they hold a low status in society. They are not totally left out or completely included. Their illness puts a barrier between them and healthy



people. This feeling of not belonging becomes clear when one of the characters notices. This sense of marginality becomes evident as follows: “People don’t know what to say when they see us. They either pity us or avoid us” (14).

The statement shows how people who are very ill often feel awkward or uncomfortable in social situations. People in society often have a hard time connecting with those who make us think about death. A serious illness impacts both the body and the mind. The characters in *Brief Candle* face deep emotional struggles as they deal with the truth of their situation. Cancer affects not only the body but also the mind. This observation shows that patients feel a heavy emotional load as they constantly try to balance hope and fear. The illness is always there in their lives, affecting how they think, their relationships, and how they see themselves. Even with this mental struggle, the characters try to keep their own identities. They don’t want to be seen only as someone who is sick.

One of the most unique parts of the play is when the patients choose to put on a comedy show. Theatre is a strong way to fight against hopelessness. This shows how theatre can change things. Performance gives the characters back a sense of control and creativity that illness has tried to take away. The technique of a play within a play creates a cool difference in the drama. The comedy inside is very funny and over-the-top, but the real lives of the performers are affected by serious illness. This comparison makes the story more emotional. Humour plays a surprisingly important role in the play. Although the characters are confronting death, they frequently engage in playful conversations and jokes. Laughter becomes a strategy for coping with fear. Through humour, the characters assert their humanity and resist the despair that might otherwise overwhelm them. Because the characters realize their time is short, they start to value the present moment more. As one of my characters puts it, ‘In comedy, people don’t die.’ However, if we can view death with the same distance as we do comedy, then maybe it is not a comedy with a flaw anymore. The play has been presented in seven scenes without any interruption. Dattani has used a huge mask, “Face of Cancer” – “ravaged by the effects of chemotherapy” (3),

This idea is one of the main themes of the play. It is already known that life is short, which makes the characters appreciate everyday experiences that they might usually take for granted. Even though things are tough, the hospice patients make important friendships with each other. Their common struggles lead to understanding and support for each other. Love doesn't go away just because life is short; sometimes it grows stronger. This statement means that people may feel stronger, emotional and bonds with others, when they realize how fragile life can be. The characters use memories and stories to feel connected to something larger than themselves. As the play goes on, the characters slowly begin to accept the idea of death. Instead of seeing death only as a sad event, they started to realize that it is a natural part of life. People can’t control when they die, but they can decide how to live in the time they have left.

Mahesh Dattani's play, *Brief Candle: A Dance between Love and Death*, looks closely at sickness, being on the outside of society, and how strong people can be in tough times. The play shows how hospice patients with terminal cancer deal with their feelings about life and death. The characters live in a place that feels different from regular life because they have an illness. In this place, they find surprising kinds of friendship, funny moments, and deep thoughts. Their stories encourage people to think differently about sickness and death. In the end, the play shows that what matters in life is not how long you live, but how deeply you experience it. A short candle can light up the dark for a little while, and during that time, people keep looking for purpose, respect, and togetherness.

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Marginalized Voices and Dalit Feminist Consciousness in *Sangati*

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Abstract

Dalit literature has emerged as a powerful medium for articulating the experiences of marginalized communities in India. Among the prominent voices in Dalit writing, Bama occupies a significant place for portraying the struggles and resilience of Dalit women. Her work Sangati highlights the intersection of caste and gender oppression experienced by Dalit women in Tamil society. This paper examines how Bama represents marginalized voices and constructs a Dalit feminist consciousness through the collective experiences of women in the Dalit community. The narrative focuses on issues such as poverty, domestic violence, social discrimination, and gender inequality while simultaneously emphasizing solidarity and resistance among Dalit women. By employing a realistic narrative style rooted in oral storytelling, Bama foregrounds the everyday struggles and resilience of Dalit women. This study analyzes how Sangati becomes a text of resistance that challenges both caste hierarchy and patriarchal oppression. The paper argues that Bama's work not only documents the lived experiences of Dalit women but also provides a platform for their voices to be heard within the broader discourse of Indian feminist literature.

Keywords: Marginalized Voices, Dalit, Feminist Consciousness, *Sangati*.

Introduction

Dalit literature plays a crucial role in representing the voices of communities that have historically been marginalized within the rigid caste hierarchy of Indian society. Emerging as a form of protest literature, Dalit writing seeks to expose social inequalities and advocate for dignity, equality, and justice. Among the prominent Dalit writers in Indian literature, Bama has gained recognition for her powerful portrayal of Dalit women's experiences. Her work *Sangati* presents a vivid depiction of the everyday lives of Dalit women in rural Tamil Nadu. The narrative does not revolve around a single protagonist; instead, it offers a series of interconnected episodes that collectively portray the struggles, resilience, and solidarity of Dalit women. Through these stories, Bama highlights how Dalit women face a double burden of oppression, both from the caste-based discrimination imposed by upper-caste society and from patriarchal norms within their own community. *Sangati* is significant because it foregrounds the voices of Dalit women who have long been excluded from mainstream literary discourse. By portraying their hardships and resistance, Bama constructs a strong Dalit feminist perspective that challenges both caste oppression and gender inequality.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are:

1. To examine the representation of marginalized voices in *Sangati*.
2. To analyze the portrayal of Dalit women's experiences in the narrative.
3. To explore Dalit feminist consciousness and gender discrimination in the text.

Research Methodology

1. The study adopts a qualitative research approach to analyze themes of marginalization and Dalit feminist consciousness in *Sangati* by Bama.



2. It uses textual analysis through close reading of the primary text to examine issues such as caste discrimination, gender inequality, and the lived experiences of Dalit women.
3. The research applies the perspective of Dalit feminism to understand the intersection of caste and gender represented in the narrative.
4. Secondary sources such as scholarly books, journal articles, and critical essays on Dalit literature are used to support the interpretation.
5. The study also considers the socio-cultural context of Dalit communities to better understand the realities portrayed in the text.

Marginalized Voices and Dalit Feminist Consciousness

Sangati by Bama presents the lived experiences of Dalit women who are marginalized by both caste and gender oppression. The narrative is structured as a series of interconnected episodes rather than a single linear plot, reflecting the collective experiences of women in a Dalit community. The title itself means “events” or “happenings,” suggesting that each incident contributes to a broader understanding of the social realities faced by Dalit women (Bama 2). The novel portrays the everyday struggles of Dalit women who perform hard physical labour while receiving lower wages than men. They face exploitation not only from upper-caste landlords but also from patriarchal structures within their own community. Through these portrayals, the narrative reveals the intersection of caste and gender discrimination that shapes the lives of Dalit women (Rege 45). From childhood, Dalit girls are trained to accept hardship and responsibility, as they are expected to manage household duties and contribute to family income. These experiences expose the deep-rooted gender inequalities that exist within marginalized communities (Bama 28).

Language plays an important role in conveying the authenticity of Dalit voices. Bama uses colloquial expressions and oral storytelling techniques that reflect the everyday speech of the community. This narrative style challenges the dominance of elite literary language and affirms the cultural identity of Dalit communities. By presenting the voices of women in their own linguistic register, the text preserves the oral traditions and lived realities of marginalized groups (Limbale 62). The narrative also highlights domestic violence and patriarchal attitudes within the community. Many women struggle to support their families while men often misuse their earnings. By presenting these realities, Bama critically examines the internal hierarchies within marginalized groups and calls attention to the need for gender justice within Dalit communities as well (Guru and Sarukkai 91). Despite these hardships, the women in the narrative demonstrate remarkable resilience and solidarity. They support each other during difficult times and share their experiences openly, creating a collective sense of strength. Their conversations, humour, and mutual support become forms of resistance against social oppression. Through such portrayals, the text emphasizes that Dalit women are not merely victims but active agents who confront injustice in their daily lives (Bama 72).

Education also emerges as a significant theme in the narrative. The text suggests that education can serve as a powerful tool for empowerment and social mobility for Dalit women. At the same time, the narrative exposes the barriers faced by Dalit children in accessing education, including poverty and social discrimination (Rege 78). Through these representations, *Sangati* constructs a strong Dalit feminist consciousness that highlights the intersection of caste, gender, and class oppression. The work gives voice to marginalized women whose experiences have long been excluded from mainstream literary discourse. By documenting their struggles and resilience, Bama transforms personal narratives into a



powerful critique of social inequality and an assertion of dignity and identity for Dalit women (Bama 94).

Conclusion

In conclusion, *Sangati* stands as a significant contribution to Dalit literature and feminist discourse in India. Through a series of powerful narratives, Bama gives voice to the experiences of Dalit women who have long been marginalized within society. The text not only documents their struggles but also highlights their resilience, solidarity, and determination to resist oppression. By foregrounding the intersection of caste and gender discrimination, *Sangati* challenges traditional social hierarchies and advocates for equality and justice. Ultimately, the work serves as a powerful testimony to the strength and agency of Dalit women, making it an important text in the study of Dalit feminist literature.

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Exploring the Quest for Identity in Manju Kapur's *Home* and *Difficult Daughters*

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Abstract

Manju Kapur is an Indian writer whose works mainly analyse the issues related to the struggles of women both in family and society and their search for identity. Her notable characters Nisha in Home and Kasturi, Virmati, and Ida in Difficult Daughters face Identity crisis. The two novels explore the feelings and psychological issues experienced by the women in India who are struggling to cope up with the personal freedom and the demands of the society and family. It shows the position of women and her longing struggle to establish an identity. They are strong individuals belong to middle class family but caught within the boundary of a society with strict customs. This research article aims to explore both the Passive and resistant women in Manju Kapur's two novels 'Difficult Daughters' and 'Home. It highlights Kapur's remarkable ability to examine the psychological conflicts of the contemporary urban, educated middle-class woman who finds herself caught between tradition, modernity and a patriarchal society while struggling to yearn for a search of Identity.

Keywords: Identity Crisis, Education, Freedom, Psychological Trauma, Struggle.

Introduction

In the contemporary Indian English literature, Manju Kapur stands out as a profound chronicler of the female experience. Her work consistently delves into the intricate domestic and social struggles of middle-class women striving to carve out their own identities within a deeply patriarchal framework. This dynamic is powerfully illustrated in two of her acclaimed novels, *Difficult Daughters* and *Home*. Through protagonists like Nisha in *Home*, as well as the generational triad of Kasturi, Virmati, and Ida in *Difficult Daughters*, Kapur maps the intense psychological conflicts of educated, urban women caught in the crossfire of evolving modern desires and entrenched traditional expectations.

Quest and Identity in the Novels

The novel "Difficult daughters" opens with the death of the protagonist, Virmati who is the daughter of the first generation woman Kasturi. Her story is narrated to the audience by her daughter Ida who is a divorcee. She travels to Amritsar to know her mother's past life. She comes to know that Virmati belongs to a traditional Indian Arya Samaji Punjabi family and she has eleven siblings. She becomes the second mother of her family and takes care of her brothers and sisters. Being the eldest daughter of the family, she takes all the responsibilities on her shoulder. The bond between Virmati and her youngest sister parvati is adorable. She pursues her studies in Fine Arts in Amritsar. Through Virmati, Manju Kapur exposes the role of Indian woman in the family. Her family treated her like a dancing doll. She falls in love with Harish, an Oxford return English Professor who already got married. She marries him without the support of her mother. Kasturi chooses Indrajith an Engineer as the bridegroom of Virmati. She does not want to keep heavy weight on Virmati's shoulders at the same time she does not give so much of freedom in education too. She wishes to study in



Lahore but nobody accepted her decision. Her will power wins. She moves to Lahore with Kasturi and get admission in RBSL College. Her roommate Swarnalata becomes a good friend to her. Inspired by her words, she too wants to become an activist. The unexpected visit of Harish creates a big turning point in her life. He shows his sexual desires on her. Virmati is sexually molested by the professor. He refuses to marry her. Virmati feels the symptoms of Pregnancy. Harish refuses to marry her. She uses her bangle for abortion. After huge struggle, she marries Harish. At Harish's home Virmati faces so many struggles. Her mother in law and Harish's first wife Ganga hate her. She calls her Shameless Punjabi. She is not allowed to enter Kitchen. She takes care of her husband's first wife children too. She completes her Master degree after marriage. Her biggest inspiration is her aunt's daughter Sakunthala. Virmathi wants to lead an independent life like Sakunthala. She starts to search for her own identity. The next character in the novel is Ida, the third generation daughter of Kasturi family. She was born in post Independence era. Her father was a professor in the field of education. He wished his daughter also to be an educator, but Ida shows no interests in studies. The novel begins with the journey of Ida towards her mother's native town. She wants to gather information about her dead mother. This shows the gap that exists between the mother and daughter bond.

In the novel, *Home* the Banwari Lal family is very strict and male dominated. Similarly, Nisha in Manju Kapur's *Home* longs to create an identity for her. Nisha is the daughter of Yashpal and Sona. Like Ida she too represents the third generation. In her childhood, she was not even allowed to play on her own choice. She was sexually abused by her cousin Vicky. This incident created a psychological trauma in her early state of life. Nisha remains silent and nobody knows about it. Her aunt Rupa notices the changes in Nisha, when she tries to speak with the family members; they refuse to accept the fact about Vicky. Nisha who is caught in between mental pressure and emotional pain tries to get rid of it. She wants to get good education and wishes to have an identity. The Journey of Nisha's search for identity begins here. She comes under the custody of her uncle Premnath and aunt Rupa. They support her to continue her studies. Nisha's life starts to change, when she came out of her house. Nisha's aunt Rupa has pickle business. After seeing Rupa, Nisha too wants to live an independent life. Sona is shocked that Nisha doesn't know how to cook at the age of sixteen. She scolds her daughter furiously how she will manage in her mother-in-law's home? Nisha's brother got married when she was studying in college. Nisha is a Mangalik according to her horoscope. Her mother advice her to keep fasting for her future companion. Nisha who is not interested in superstitious beliefs refused to follow her mother words. She falls in love with a boy at bus stop but she think about her family and remain silent as usual. Thus she struggles between tradition and modernity. She is the real sufferer of a male dominated family. She is not allowed to go out for working like her brother. She joins in a play school as teacher. She became tired of the children and soon quit the job. She decides to have her own profession. Her grandfather's old textile showroom is transformed as mirror showroom and the home is changed as flat, but there is no change in Nisha's life. Her longing for identity increases. Atlast, with the help of her father, she starts her new boutique "Nisha's Creations". Her creative ideas in tailoring gave her good improvement. She gets good customers and developed her shop. Within one year she refunded half of her father's money and proved her a notable business woman in Karol Bagh. She marked an Identity. Her parents fixed her marriage with Arawind. Her battle for identity continues even after her marriage. She becomes pregnant after a month. Her Husband and mother-in-law did not allow her to go to shop for business. Her boutique is overtaken by her sister-in-law. Nisha is



again caught up in the societal norms of Indian tradition. She delivered twin babies. Nisha's life is completed now as a daughter - in - law & mother, but her quest for identity still exists. The mothers, Sona in *Home* and Kasturi & Virmati in *Difficult Daughters* might have shown a little attention on their daughter's early childhood and in their adolescent life.

Conclusion

Manju Kapur, through women characters, Kasturi, Virmati, Ida and Nisha exposes the reality of Indian patriarchal social system. She clearly portrays their emotions, ambitions, unfulfilled desires, internal conflict and external expectations. The women in the Indian family can never create an identity for them. They play many roles in their family but they don't have any individual space or platform to exhibit their skills. The strong male dominated society and strict restrictions against women crushes their aim and desire to create their own identity. According to Indian society, a woman should bind herself within a circle. If she tries to come out of the circle, she will be hurt physically and mentally. Most of the protagonists in the Indian novels fall as a victim either in the hands of their family or by the society.

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Text-to-Text Relations in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*: A Postmodern Reading

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Abstract

The graphic novel has emerged as a significant literary form that expands the possibilities of narrative representation by combining visual and verbal modes of storytelling. Will Eisner, who popularized the term “graphic novel,” argues in Comics and Sequential Art (1985) that the medium constitutes a “language” with its own grammar, capable of expressing complex psychological and social realities. Eisner’s claim challenged the long-standing marginalization of comics within literary studies and opened the field for serious academic engagement. This article examines Alison Bechdel’s Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic through the framework of postmodern intertextuality. Drawing on Julia Kristeva’s theory of text-to-text relations, Roland Barthes’s notion of textual plurality, and Linda Hutcheon’s concept of historiographic metafiction, the paper argues that Fun Home constructs autobiographical meaning through dense intertextual and intermedial networks. Situating the text within the historical evolution of the graphic novel, the study offers close, panel-level analysis to demonstrate how visual and verbal narratives collaborate to destabilize singular truth. The article establishes Fun Home as a major postmodern graphic memoir and affirms the academic legitimacy of graphic novels within contemporary literary studies.

Keywords: Graphic Novel, Intertextuality, Postmodernism, Graphic Memoir, Queer Autobiography, Visual Narrative

Introduction

The graphic novel has emerged as a significant literary form in contemporary literature, challenging traditional distinctions between high and popular culture. Once relegated to the margins of literary studies, graphic narratives are now recognized for their capacity to engage with complex themes such as memory, identity, trauma, and history. Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (2006) stands as a landmark work in this transformation, combining autobiography, literary criticism, queer studies, and visual narration. Rather than offering a linear life story, *Fun Home* constructs meaning through recursive memories and sustained dialogue with other texts. The memoir is structured through constant reference to literary works, myths, diaries, photographs, and archival materials. This paper examines *Fun Home* as a postmodern text built upon text-to-text relations, arguing that intertextuality functions as both a narrative strategy and an epistemological framework. The graphic novel evolved from early comics and sequential art, which were largely episodic and entertainment-oriented. The latter half of the twentieth century marked a decisive shift with the emergence of long-form, thematically serious



narratives. Will Eisner's *A Contract with God* (1978) is often credited with legitimizing the term "graphic novel" by demonstrating the medium's literary potential. Subsequent works such as Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, Alan Moore's *Watchmen*, and Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* further established graphic narratives as vehicles for historical memory, political critique, and personal testimony. In the twenty-first century, graphic novels have become integral to academic discourse, particularly in studies of postmodernism and life writing. *Fun Home* exemplifies this evolution by merging visual narration with literary intertextuality and self-reflexive commentary. Julia Kristeva defines intertextuality as the intersection of multiple texts within a single textual space, arguing that meaning is produced relationally rather than originating from a single source. Roland Barthes further destabilizes textual authority through his concept of the "death of the author," shifting interpretive power to the reader. Linda Hutcheon's theory of historiographic metafiction emphasizes narrative self-reflexivity and the questioning of historical truth. These theoretical frameworks are particularly suited to *Fun Home*, which repeatedly exposes its own narrative construction and foregrounds the instability of memory and identity. The graphic novel format enhances this postmodern impulse by allowing visual quotation, repetition, and juxtaposition. Alison Bechdel is a contemporary American cartoonist known for her feminist and queer interventions in popular culture. While her earlier work *Dykes to Watch Out For* employed satire and social commentary, *Fun Home* represents a turn toward introspective, long-form autobiographical writing.

A Postmodern Reading

Bechdel's purpose in *Fun Home* is not merely confessional. The memoir functions as an analytical inquiry into her relationship with her father, his closeted homosexuality, and his death. Literature becomes the primary medium through which Bechdel interprets lived experience, positioning reading and writing as central acts of identity formation. Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* foregrounds text-to-text relations by framing autobiographical memory through classical mythology.

Figure 1: Daedalus as a Father

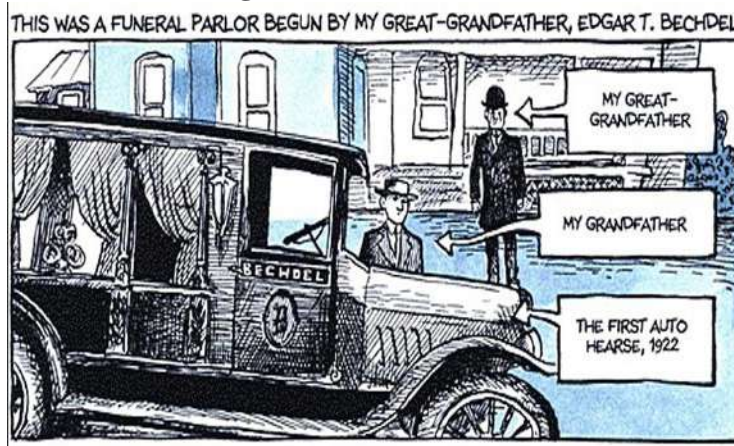


This draws upon the Greek myth of Daedalus, most notably transmitted through Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, to construct Bruce Bechdel as a figure defined by craftsmanship, aesthetic obsession, and emotional control. Bechdel invokes this mythic origin to interpret her father's compulsive restoration of the family home, transforming domestic space into an artistic project governed by rigid order. The purpose of this intertext is to provide a symbolic vocabulary through which paternal authority can be understood beyond personal recollection. By filtering lived experience through a pre-existing cultural narrative, Bechdel demonstrates that memory is not autonomous but mediated. This panel exemplifies postmodern intertextuality by denying the primacy of lived experience and replacing it with textual inheritance. Meaning is produced through the relation between myth and memoir rather than



through biographical immediacy. The panel thus enacts the core premise of text-to-text relations, where identity is constructed through dialogue with earlier narratives.

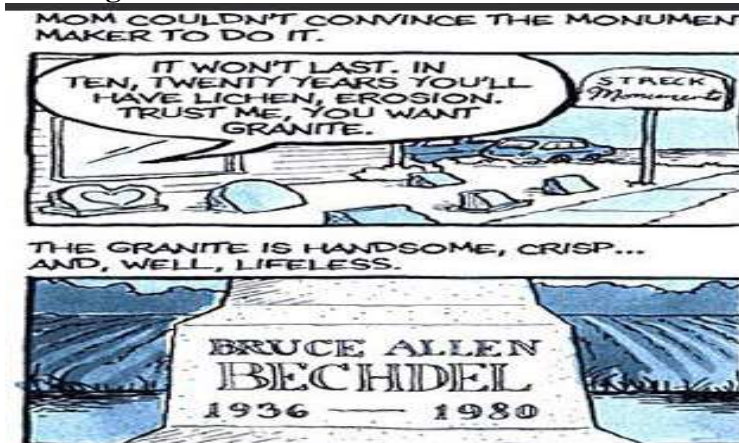
Figure 2: Icarus Visuals



It extends the Daedalus–Icarus myth through a modern visual translation, depicting an airplane scene that echoes the act of flight. The classical source functions not as a static reference but as a mutable narrative that adapts across historical contexts. Bechdel employs this intertext to explore the ambivalence of artistic inheritance, positioning creative freedom alongside emotional risk. The purpose of invoking the myth in this panel is to interrogate the transmission of artistic ambition from father to daughter. The visual reworking of myth foregrounds postmodern adaptation, where meaning arises from transformation rather than fidelity to origin. This panel demonstrates how text-to-text relations operate visually, allowing ancient narrative structures to shape contemporary autobiographical understanding. The interaction between myth and image destabilizes the notion of originality. As such, the panel reinforces the postmodern claim that all narratives are palimpsestic constructions.

The third chapter begins with the introduction of Bruce Bechdel’s death through an initial narrative account marked by uncertainty and restraint. Rather than presenting death as an objective historical fact, Bechdel frames it as a narrated event open to reinterpretation. The origin of this uncertainty lies not in external texts but in the narrative’s own self-reflexivity. Bechdel’s purpose is to resist authoritative closure and to expose the constructed nature of autobiographical truth. This panel establishes internal text-to-text relations, as later narrations revise and contest this first account.

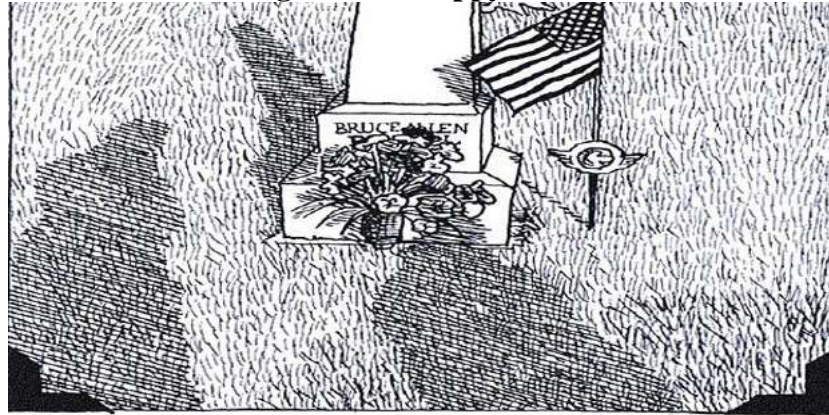
Figure 3: First Account of Bechdel’s Death





The repetition of death narration aligns with postmodern skepticism toward historical certainty. Meaning emerges through comparison between multiple textual representations rather than through factual resolution. The panel thus situates *Fun Home* within postmodern historiographic discourse.

Figure 4: A Happy Death



A HAPPY DEATH

The scene explicitly inserts Albert Camus's *A Happy Death* into the visual field, introducing existential philosophy as an interpretive framework. Camus's novel, rooted in absurdist thought, provides a discourse on mortality that complicates emotional response. Bechdel invokes this text to frame Bruce's death as a philosophical problem rather than a purely personal loss. The purpose of this intertext is to distance memory from sentimentality and to allow abstraction to coexist with grief. The panel literalizes text-to-text relations by embedding one written work inside another. Autobiography becomes inseparable from philosophical reading. This interpenetration of texts exemplifies postmodern hybridity. Meaning is produced at the intersection of memoir and existential literature. This chapter also deals with Bruce Bechdel's death with altered narration, reinforcing narrative plurality. The repetition recalls Roland Barthes's argument that texts resist singular meaning and invite readerly participation. Bechdel's purpose is to demonstrate that truth is provisional and contingent upon narration. The panel functions intertextually within the memoir, as each retelling becomes a response to earlier versions. This internal dialogue destabilizes narrative authority. Meaning emerges through textual accumulation rather than narrative certainty. The panel thus embodies postmodern textual openness and aligns closely with the article's emphasis on text-to-text relations.

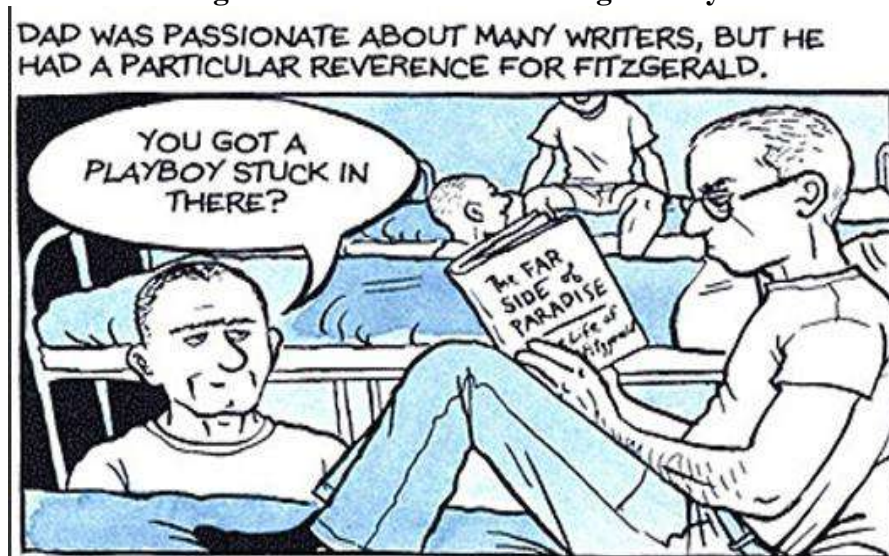
Figure 5: Re-Narration of Death





It reproduces Alison Bechdel's childhood diary entries, characterized by linguistic qualifiers such as "I think" and "probably." Originating as personal records, these diaries expose early epistemological doubt. Bechdel includes them to critique the assumption that autobiographical writing guarantees truth. The diary becomes a text subject to later reinterpretation rather than a reliable origin. This panel demonstrates how identity is mediated through writing from an early age. The interaction between diary and memoir establishes a layered textual relationship. Meaning is constructed through revision rather than recollection. The panel reinforces the postmodern claim that selfhood is textually produced. This panel juxtaposes childhood diary entries with adult narration, creating a dialogue between temporal selves. The origin of meaning lies not in either text independently but in their interaction. Bechdel's purpose is to demonstrate the fragmentation of subjectivity across time. The adult narrator rereads the child's writing, transforming memory into interpretation. This temporal intertextuality aligns with postmodern theories of the divided self. Identity emerges as a composite of multiple textual moments. The panel exemplifies text-to-text relations by showing how past and present narratives coexist and contest one another.

Figure 6: Adult Alison Reading a Diary



In *That Old Catastrophe*, panel seven foregrounds erasure and rewriting within diary entries, visually emphasising textual instability. The panel echoes Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality as the intersection of multiple discourses. Bechdel's purpose is to reveal how language fails to stabilise experience. The act of erasure transforms writing into a visible process rather than a finished product. Meaning emerges through revision, correction, and overwriting. The panel reinforces postmodern scepticism toward linguistic transparency. Identity is shown to be layered and provisional. Text-to-text relations become the primary mode of self-construction. Similarly, In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower has references to Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, a foundational modernist exploration of memory. Bechdel invokes Proust to conceptualise memory as recursive and involuntary rather than linear. The purpose of this intertext is to align her memoir with literary traditions that challenge chronological narration. By adapting modernist memory into graphic form, Bechdel demonstrates a postmodern reconfiguration of earlier aesthetics. The panel establishes dialogue between modernism and postmodernism. Meaning arises through adaptation across genres and media. The panel exemplifies intertextual continuity and transformation.

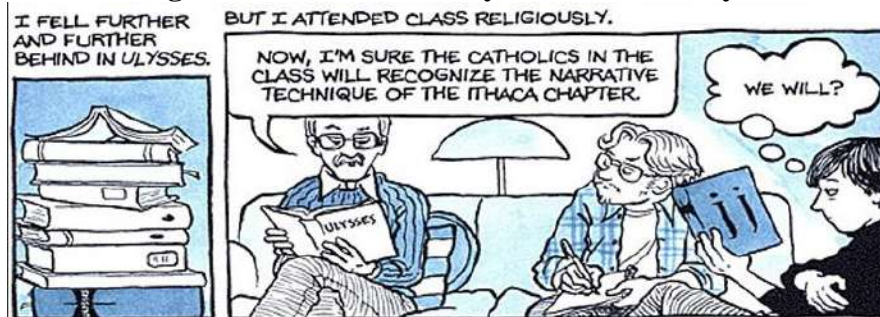


Figure 7: Reading as Identity Formation



This figure depicts reading as a formative practice within the Bechdel household. The literary canon functions as an origin text through which emotional understanding is mediated. Bechdel’s purpose is to show that identity formation occurs through textual consumption rather than direct interpersonal communication. Reading becomes a substitute for emotional intimacy. The panel underscores the memoir’s argument that selfhood is intertextually inherited. Meaning arises through engagement with existing texts. This reinforces the postmodern claim that identity is culturally scripted rather than biologically determined.

Figure 8: Reference to Ulysses or James Joyce



The same chapter also explicitly invokes James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, aligning Bruce Bechdel with Stephen Dedalus. Joyce’s modernist narrative of alienation provides a framework for interpreting Bruce’s emotional distance. Bechdel uses this intertext to situate personal history within canonical literature. The purpose is not homage but analysis, allowing literature to function as an interpretive lens. The panel demonstrates how autobiographical meaning is produced through literary analogy. Text-to-text relations replace direct psychological explanation. The memoir thus operates as literary criticism as much as life writing.

Figure 9: House as a Textual Archive





This figure renders the Bechdel home as a textual archive filled with books. Domestic space becomes a site of literary accumulation rather than emotional exchange. Bechdel's purpose is to demonstrate how texts mediate family relationships. The house itself functions as an intertextual environment. Meaning emerges from the spatial arrangement of books and objects. The panel reinforces the memoir's postmodern emphasis on mediation. Family history is constructed through cultural artefacts. Text-to-text relations shape lived space. In *the Canary- Coloured Caravan of Death* panel thirteen presents Alison's coming-out letter alongside Bruce's silence. The epistolary origin emphasises confession and disclosure. Bechdel's purpose is to foreground absence as meaning. Bruce's lack of response transforms silence into a textual gap. Meaning emerges through reader interpretation rather than authorial explanation. The panel aligns with postmodern reader-response theory. Identity is negotiated through incomplete communication. Text-to-text relations operate through presence and absence.

Figure 10: The Great Gatsby



This figure from *the Ideal Husband* invokes F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, a canonical American narrative of self-fashioning and illusion. Bechdel uses this text to critique Bruce's performance of masculinity and social respectability. The intertext transforms autobiography into cultural analysis. The purpose is to expose the constructed nature of identity. Meaning arises through literary mediation. The panel reinforces postmodern scepticism toward authenticity. Text-to-text relations frame personal history within national myth. Finally, in *the anti-hero journey* chapter returns to the Icarus myth in an unresolved airborne image. The mythic origin is revisited but not concluded. Bechdel's purpose is to refuse narrative closure. Meaning remains suspended rather than resolved. The panel embodies postmodern openness and indeterminacy. The memoir concludes through relation rather than revelation. Text-to-text relations persist beyond the narrative's end. The panel fully realises the postmodern logic announced in the title.

Conclusion

Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* demonstrates that autobiographical meaning is not derived from lived experience alone but is produced through sustained text-to-text relations. The memoir systematically filters memory through classical myth, modernist literature, existential philosophy, and internal self-referential narration. By invoking Daedalus, Camus, Proust, Joyce, and Fitzgerald, Bechdel constructs identity as a palimpsest of prior narratives rather than an originary self. Each panel operates as an intertextual node where personal history is mediated by inherited cultural scripts. The graphic form intensifies this process by allowing visual adaptation to function alongside literary allusion. Narrative repetition and revision foreground the instability of autobiographical truth. Memory emerges as interpretive rather than factual. Domestic space, reading practices, and silence become textualized sites of



meaning production. The memoir resists closure, emphasizing relationality over resolution. Postmodern indeterminacy replaces confessional certainty. *Fun Home* thus functions simultaneously as memoir, literary criticism, and intertextual archive. Identity is revealed as a construct assembled through dialogue with other texts. Meaning arises not from origin but from relation. The work affirms postmodernism's central claim that the self is written through texts. *Fun Home* ultimately exemplifies how life writing becomes intelligible only through textual inheritance.

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The Role of Indian English in Bama's Karukku: A Study through Kachru's 'World Englishes'

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Abstract

The paper identifies the portrayal of Indian English in Bama's seminal work Karukku, to reveal the multifaceted layers of linguistic and social significance embedded within the text. Bama's narrative provides an essence of the English language, with the Indianness added to the text. Salman Rushdie's idea of "Chutnification" can be seen in this work of Bama Faustina Mary. With Braj Kachru's 'World Englishes' as a theoretical framework, this study analyses Bama's autobiographical work Karukku to demonstrate how marginalized voices challenge the linguistic hegemony of "Standard English", which shapes the cultural norms & educational systems, often forcing the speakers of non-dominant languages to adopt the majority accepted language for success. The study further highlights how Dalit voices have historically been excluded from mainstream English literature. This seminal work of Bama redefines the contours of Indian Writing in English by foregrounding lived experiences and marginal identities. Karukku, originally written in Tamil and later translated into English, demonstrates the linguistic transformation by retaining regional idioms and oral narrative styles. Ultimately, drawing on Braj Kachru's Model, the study shows how English in postcolonial contexts like India is not only a colonial inheritance but also a localized medium shaped by the socio-cultural realities of the people. This non-standardized language form shifts from imitation to innovation, offering a vision of English as a plural and evolving medium for empowerment and social transformation.

Keywords: Language, Medium, Plurality, Indian English.

Introduction

Many of the most innovative works in the English language are produced by non-native speakers of the language. Indian Writing in English has always been one such form that adapted English as a medium for writing. The most appreciated aspect of Indian English writers is their presentation of Indianness in the English language. Bama's autobiographical novel, *Karukku*, presents a narrative that transcends linguistic boundaries, exploring the complexities of identity and belonging in postcolonial India. The central idea of this seminal work is the use of Indian English as a linguistic phenomenon that reflects the intersection of socio-linguistic aspects. The paper seeks to analyze the role of Indian English in *Karukku* and, through Braj Kachru's idea, explains that English is not a single standardized language but can take many forms, adapting to its social, linguistic and cultural contexts. Bama's *Karukku* occupies a significant place in Indian literature as a groundbreaking autobiographical narrative that offers an insight into the lived experiences of Dalit women in contemporary South India. The autobiographical work, *Karukku*, published in Tamil in 1992 and later translated into English, *Karukku*, not only serves as a testimony to the struggles and resilience of marginalized communities but also challenges dominant discourses surrounding caste, gender and language. The background of this study encompasses broader discussions surrounding the politics of language and representation in postcolonial literature. As English continues to evolve as a global lingua franca, questions of linguistic authenticity, cultural



appropriation and decolonization come to the forefront, demanding critical engagement and scholarly inquiry. By examining the role of Indian English in Karukku, this study seeks to contribute to ongoing conversations about the complexities of language choice in contemporary Indian Writing in English. Linguistics and literary critics have analyzed the use of Indian English in Karukku, contextualizing it within the broader framework of language politics and cultural identity. Also exploring how Bama's innovative use of language challenges traditional notions of linguistic purity and authenticity, while also foregrounding the hybridity and fluidity of Indian English as a mode of expression. It is evident that the contemporary Indian writers are bilingual and often root their works with the touch of nostalgia for their mother tongue, which ultimately result in the Indianization of the English language. The analysis of aesthetic and narrative dimensions of Karukku, examines Bama's storytelling techniques, symbolism and imagery. Scholars also explore how the novel's lyrical prose and evocative imagery create a powerful sense of place and atmosphere, inviting readers to immerse themselves in the world of rural Tamil Nadu and the struggles of its inhabitants. Scholars such as Anupama Rao and Gopal Guru have examined the emergence and evolution of Dalit literature in India, situating Karukku within the larger trajectory of Dalit literary movements. They highlight the novel's groundbreaking portrayal of Dalit experiences and its contribution to the articulation of Dalit identity and consciousness in contemporary Indian society. Feminist scholars like Susie Tharu and Lalita have examined Karukku through a feminist lens, highlighting the novel's exploration of gender oppression and patriarchal violence within Dalit communities. They emphasize Bama's portrayal of female agency and solidarity, foregrounding the voices and experiences of Dalit women as central to the narrative.

Braj Kachru's 'World Englishes'

Braj Kachru's 'World Englishes' is the most relevant theoretical framework with which this novel Karukku by Bama is analyzed. As there were some linguists who argued that English language should have a single 'Standardized form', with which they demanded the non-native speakers should speak and write, Kachru stated that the language English does not have a single standardized form. He then added that English language is capable of adapting in different regional and social realities. Analyzing Bama's Karukku through Kachru's 'Three Circle Model' provides a lens to understand the linguistic play embedded within the text. Kachru's model categorizes English usage into three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. The countries where English being the native language falls under the Inner circle of the Kachruvian circle model. The countries with the colonial background or with the language rooted in their life in all sorts like, education and government are categorized with the Outer circle, country like India having its colonial history is situated within the Outer circle of Kachru's Three Circle Model. The countries without the colonial background and the only form of English language are EFL-English as Foreign Language, are represented in the Expanding circle of Kachruvian model.

In *Karukku*, references to inner circle English are minimal. The characters rarely interact with individuals from Inner Circle countries and their linguistic influence is limited. The Outer Circle, representing countries like India, where English serves as a second language, is central to the linguistic landscape of Karukku. Indian English is a distinct variety characterized by its fusion of British colonial English with indigenous languages and cultural influences, permeates the dialogue and narrative. Bama's use of Indian English reflects the socio-cultural and linguistic contexts of Tamil Nadu, where the novel is set, and mirrors the language spoken by Dalit communities navigating their identities in postcolonial India.



Through the depiction of Indian English, Bama highlights the complexities of language choice, identity negotiation and social mobility among marginalized communities. While the Expanding Circle is not explicitly depicted in *Karukku*, the influence of English as a global lingua franca is subtly present.

Research Question

1. What role does the Indian English play in conveying the complexities of linguistic hybridity within the narrative framework of Bama's *Karukku*?

Analysis

Through the exploration of Indian English in Bama's *Karukku*, the novel serves as a literary representation of linguistic hybridity, offering a vision of English as a plural and evolving medium. There are different forms of English have been spoken all over world, including the speakers of Inner circle, Outer circle and the Expanding circle as stated by the prominent linguistic figure Braj Kachru. The Indian English is deeply rooted in the colonial history of India, marked by the British rule and subsequent processes of decolonization. Indian English, as a distinct linguistic variety, reflects the assimilation of British colonial language with the indigenous linguistic elements, resulting in a unique form of expression. Bama's use of Indian English in *Karukku* reflects this linguistic hybridity and underscores the complex interplay between colonial legacies and indigenous cultures. In Bama's *Karukku*, Indian English emerges as a potent tool of resistance against hegemonic structures of power and domination. Through the subversion of linguistic norms and conventions, Bama challenges the marginalization of Dalit voices and experiences, reclaiming agency and visibility for historically oppressed communities. The use of Indian English not only disrupts dominant discourses but also empowers marginalized voices to assert their identity and agency within the socio-political landscape of post-colonial India.

The paper analyzes how the marginalized voices challenge the linguistic hegemony that shapes the institutional and educational systems by forcing the non-native speakers to adopt the majority accepted language for recognition. In the work *Karukku*, one could see the use of untranslated Tamil vocabulary, such as the name of food, caste titles and some other nouns. There are words like 'sabai', 'kummi', 'nadar' and 'panaiyal' mentioned in the text that are being untranslated. This practice of using Tamil(regional) language in the Indian Writing in English can be interpreted in many ways. First, the writer does not want to change her cultural identity. Second, the writer may refuse to polish her Dalit writing and experience for the Western readers or the native speakers. In this autobiographical work by Bama, the readers could identify the colloquial use of language and narrative. There is use of words like 'bycket', meaning bucket and 'Marudai' meaning Madurai, words like these are mentioned as how the women of the place speak.

As the past history of Indian Writing in English has its root from colonization, the voices captured were of the privileged classes and not the marginalized. The present challenge lies in decolonizing the language, examining the linguistic hybridity. Bama's work expresses the utilization of bilingual terms mixing native to vernacular words, that really conveyed the essence of Indianness in her works. Braj Kachru's "World Englishes" is the framework with which this work is analyzed. According to this theory, Kachru places India in the Outer Circle, where English is not only a second language but also developing as an indigenized variety. The future hopes rely towards the pluralistic form. The uniqueness of the work like Bama's *Karukku*, is because the language is no longer being a single standard form, but focusing on pluralistic Indianness in English. "World Englishes" as Braj Kachru



states, refers to the idea that English is not a single standardized language but has multiple forms shaped by different cultures.

Bama navigates between multiple linguistic and cultural worlds, grappling with questions of authenticity, legitimacy and acceptance. Through the lens of Indian English, Karukku illuminates the fluid and contested nature of identity formation, highlighting the tensions between tradition and modernity, rural and urban, and insider and outsider perspectives. While Indian English serves as a vehicle for empowerment and resistance in Karukku, its usage also poses challenges and controversies within the literary and academic spheres. It is been debated that authenticity and appropriateness of using Indian English as a medium of expression, raising questions about linguistic purity, aesthetic value and audience reception. However, Bama's bold experimentation with language challenges conventional notions of literary form and opens up new avenues for exploring the richness and diversity of Indian literary traditions. Bama's use of language authentically reflects the lived experiences of Dalit communities in Tamil Nadu. She incorporates Tamil phrase, idioms and expressions, grounding the narrative in the cultural and linguistic context of the characters. This authenticity lends depth and richness to the portrayal of Dalit life and challenges dominant narratives that marginalize or erase non-dominant linguistic varieties. Through the use of Indian English, Bama asserts the agency and dignity of Dalit voices. The language becomes a tool of resistance against hegemonic structures that seek to suppress or silence marginalized communities. By writing in Indian English, Bama refuses to conform to the linguistic norms imposed by dominant social groups and asserts the right of Dalit people to express themselves on their own terms.

The role of Indian English in Bama's Karukku extends beyond mere linguistic representation to encompass broader themes of resistance and social change. Through the innovative use of language, this work Karukku stands as an instance on how language can be reclaimed. With the study through Kachru's 'World Englishes', one can conclude that English is no longer a fixed language, but a flexible and evolving medium shaped by socio-linguistic aspects. Karukku stands as a testament in literature to challenge, inspire and transform, the Indian English as a dynamic and evolving form of expression in the global literary landscape. The study depends completely on the translated English version rather than the original version in Tamil. This leads to a partial loss of the linguistic essence of this work, resulting as a limitation of this study. As mentioned, this work by Bama is a translated work, the future scholars can examine this work with translation studies and another scope is exploring this work through Edgar Schneider's 'Post Colonial Englishes'.

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Tracing the Interior Self: A Study of Identity and Existential Quest in Margaret Atwood's *Journey to the Interior*

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Abstract

This article focuses on the trace of inner self in the persona of the poem 'Journey to the Interior', taken from the poetry collection The Circle Game which is penned by most prolific and contemporary Canadian writer Margaret Atwood. This poem sheds light on the interior Self which is one of the major important themes focussed by many Canadian writers. Every human being has the desire to know about themselves. At times they raise the questions like, Who am I? Why I am here? What is the purpose of my existence? Like this we can add the questions which arise in one mind. The quest for self peeps in one's mind when they feel that they are being alienated by someone or when they find it difficult to know their position in the place where they dwell. Their journey in search of their Self continues until they get their answer.

Keywords: Self, Interior, Existence, Alienated, Journey.

Introduction

One of the most eminent inexhaustible Canadian writers Margaret Atwood (born November 18, 1939) is an essayist, teacher, environmental activist. She has authored numerous novels, poetry, short stories, children books, graphic novels. She has won numerous awards for her writing. Her one of the novels, "Cat Eye", was short listed for Booker Prize (1989). She has been awarded Booker prize twice for her novel "The Blind Assassin" (2000) and "The Testaments" (2019), a sequel to "The Handmaid's Tale" (1985).

Tracing the Interior Self

The poem, 'Journey to the Interior', is taken from the poetry collection *The Circle Game* written in 1966. This poetry collection received the Governor General's Award in 1966. In the opening of the poem the poet highlights the "similarities" and in the second part of the poem she points out the "differences" in the poet's journey.

The poet begins the poem by describing the beauty of the Canadian landscape. The speaker of the poem notices the 'hills' which look like a wall to her eyes. The speaker visualises:

...that the hills
which the eyes make flat as a wall, welded
together, open as I move
to let me through; become
endless as prairies... (*Eating fire (EF)*, 15)

As the speaker walks towards the hill she sees the hill from the distance which is grouped together like a wall but when she nears it she finds, "endless as prairies". The prettiness of the landscape behind the hill is magnificent. It is that, "...the trees/grow spindly, have their roots/often in swamps" (*EF*,15). The foresaid poetic lines are the best example for illusion.



What we see and what we experience in this world may not be true at times like the speaker in the poem undergo.

The speaker feels that there were only the hills but as she nears it she witnesses the green environment blooming with its beauty. In *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature (SR)*, Atwood states that, Canada is a country which contains, "...high ratio of trees, lakes and rocks to people, images from Nature are almost everywhere". (30)

The journey will never be the same as we think. When an individual is searching for their self they undergo some illusions. Whatever we see is not real like the speaker experiences in this poem. She finds a smooth "cliff" from far but she came to "known/as rough except by hand".(15) Likewise there are many situations which make us to enter into such illusion during our interior journey. For some their journey,

...is not the easy going
from point to point, a dotted
line on a map, location
plotted on a square surface...

The travellers assist themselves with the map during their journey for their clear understanding about their path and direction. Their journey may be:

surrounded by a tangle
of branches, a net of air and alternate
light and dark, at all times;
that there are no destinations
apart from this. (EF, 15)

Life is a journey where we ascend and descend and also enter into the "light and dark" phase of life. The path of journey will not be the same as it is printed in, "a dotted/line on a map, location/plotted on a surface". The speaker says that she is surrounded by the branches which are intertwined. Though she experiences all such dark phase she articulates that, "... there are no destinations/apart from this". (EF, 15)

The second part of the poem is structured in a way of which the speaker compares and contrasts the landscapes of Canada with her interior (mind) journey. Most of the prominent writers of Canada make use of nature in their writing. This is also evident in Margaret Atwood's poem 'Journey to the Interior'. In order to know the speaker's self, the poet made the comparison of nature with the protagonist's interior journey. In the book of 'Survival' the writer states that: Poems which contain descriptions of landscapes and natural objects are often dismissed as being more nature poetry. But Nature poetry is seldom just about Nature; it is usually about the poet's *attitude* towards the external natural universe. That is, landscapes in poems are often interior landscapes; they are maps of a state of mind. Sometimes the poem conceals this fact and purports to be objective description, sometimes the poem acknowledges and explores the interior landscape it presents. (30)

There may be the distraction in a journey like, "the brambles under the chair /where it shouldn't be" or the "... lucent/white mushrooms and a paring knife/on the kitchen table", but one should never leave their destinations without reaching it. The speaker of the poem declares that though she tries hard to attain her destinations she feels as if she is, "walking in circle again". This line represents that she did not identify her self.

The foot stamp of others in the path of our journey should not distract us. Even a "sentence" will be a distraction for the people who are travelling into their interior. The mention of "sentence" in the poem denotes the journey in one's mind.



The speaker asserts that, “I am sure / I passed yesterday”, which gives the hint that she has started her mind journey a day before but still the travel becomes “sodden as a fallen log” without any progress. Due to the poor progress in her mind journey she raises the question, “(have I been/ walking in circles again?)”.(EF, 16)

She confesses that many have undergone this type of interior journey, “but only/some have returned safely”. The consequence of one’s mind travel is witnessed in the foresaid poetic lines. The power of one’s mind is unpredictable and at the same time when it is tangled and immersed in its thought, it’s very hard enough to pull the mind to put it in its track. The mind journey is dangerous, it will make the person to lose their conscious and many psychological problems may attain at this situation.

A compass is useless; also
trying to take directions
from the movements of the sun,
which are erratic;

The landscape traveller’s seeks help from the map or from the erratic movement of the sun or any compass during their journey. But the foresaid things will not help the traveller who is journeying through their interior. The poet intensely highlights that at times not to trust the nature because the “... Canadian writers as a whole do not trust Nature, they are always suspecting some dirty trick. (...) nature has betrayed expectation, it was supposed to be different”. (SR, 31)

The word which is uttered in the region, where, no one is there to pay attention is also of no use. This plight happens in the speaker’s interior journey too. She says:

words here are as pointless
as calling in a vacant
wilderness (EF, 16)

The poet concludes the poem by pointing out that, “Whatever I do I must/ keep my head. I know/ it is easier for me to lose my way/ forever here, than in other landscapes” (EF, 16). She feels comfortable to lose herself in her interior journey rather than losing her Self in other landscapes. Homi K. Bhabha, an Indian scholar and critical theorist in his “*The Location of Culture*”, asserts that :

...the challenge to see what is invisible, the look that cannot ‘see me’, a certain problem of the object of the gaze that constitutes a problematic referent for the language of the Self. (46)

The interior journey helps one to know oneself better and at the same time it affects the person psychologically and results in trauma and other mind disorder. Here, the poet tries to conceive the thought that, the place, where she travels is her own land. She is firm enough that even if she is lost in her interior journey she will accept it but will deny losing her Self in other landscapes.

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Reclaiming Voice and Power: A Feminist Reading of *The Last Queen* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

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Abstract

*This article explores how women in history were able to find ways to redeem themselves when they chose to do so. In a society largely controlled by men, women often remained subordinate, yet many found a sense of acceptance within these limitations. The purpose of this article is to highlight the struggles of women both royal and impoverished and to show how they moved toward a form of self-liberation without directly breaking the social restrictions placed upon them. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's bestselling historical novel *The Last Queen* presents women who are imperfect and often submissive, yet resilient. Through the challenges and hardships they face, these women gradually discover their inner strength. This strength becomes the foundation of their sense of fulfillment and happiness. Divakaruni's novel suggests that a woman possesses the power to shape her own life, regardless of her position or status within society.*

Keywords: Feminism, Oppression, *The Last Queen*, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

Introduction

Indian writing in English reflects Indian tradition, culture and history through the simple depiction of life in India. Women novelists play a vital role in enhancing the quality of Indian English fiction. These women novelists add feministic perspectives and dimensions contributing to the widening of the spectrum of issues considered in their novels. Indian women writers look to explore feminine subjectivity with their themes ranging from childhood to complete womanhood. While recent Indian English fiction has been trying to give expression to the Indian experience of modern predicaments, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni through her works brings to light the forgotten past. The author's works resonate with Indian thoughts and ideas. Feminism means putting an end to women's silent suffering and not simply standing up against the opposite sex. This idea of feminism is immensely articulated in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Last Queen*. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is a profound Indian – American author. She is born in Calcutta in 1956. She has moved to the United States of America for higher studies and completed Ph.D from the University of California. She is a poet, novelist, activist, professor and speaker. Her notable works are *Arranged Marriage* (1995), *the Mistress of Spices* (1997), *The Palace of Illusions* (2008), *The Forest Enchantments* (2019), *The Last Queen* (2021), and *Independence* (2022). Her works have been translated into thirty languages. She has received The American Book Award, Premio Scanno Prize and PEN Josephine Miles Award. She highlights the social lives of women, their struggles, patriarchal dominations and searching their identity. In the novel, "*The Last Queen*" was written by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni published in 2021. It is a historical novel, and the story revolves around Maharani Jindan Kaur (the last Queen of Punjab). She is the youngest wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After his death she became a ruler and the mother of Maharaja Dulip Singh. This novel exposes how a girl from a small village became a Last Queen and tried to secure the Sikh Empire to her dying breath.

**Jindan's Childhood**

Maharani Jindan Kaur is the daughter of a dog trainer. She lives in a small village in Lahore. She has a younger brother, Jawahar, elder sister Balbir, and her mother Biji. They are poor. They do not have enough food to eat. So, Jawahar starts to learn to steal food, frequently. Her father, Manna lives in Badshahi Qita in Lahore. Jindan is a bright student in her school. Jindan becomes a beautiful woman. Manna decides to take her with him to Lahore.

Queen's Marriage

Maharaja Ranjit Singh takes Jindan to horse riding on his favourite horse Laila. She falls in love with Ranjit Singh. Maharaja was also impressed by Jindan's intelligence and beauty. She is married to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Within two years, Maharaja Ranjit Singh passed away leaving the Sikh disarray and without a strong heir. At the age of 20, Jindan became a queen.

Queen's Struggles

The novel, *The Last Queen*, is divided into four sections. There is Girl, Bride, Queen Rebel. Her life is different in each Phase. After becoming a Queen and fighting to secure her kingdom against the British Empire. Generally, the Queen never comes out, but she becomes the first queen to step out, remove her veil, and hold political discussions in public. She directly speaks to Khalsa troops about two wars against the British. Fearing rebellion, British rule deprived this rebellious queen of her rights and they separated from her son, Dulip. After that, they put her in jail and exiled. Even though her strong influence and mentally power never fades away. Jindan is an obedient wife and innocent girl, and then she turns into a courageous queen. She struggles a lot for justice. She quietly observes and learns the lifestyles of Royal families. She was disgraced by both men and women but does not bother about it.

Women in *The Last Queen*

Through this novel, Divakaruni highlights deconstructing the idea of women fostered by society. Each female character is involved in a struggle; however, it is not clearly understood who they are fighting against the British. Usually the woman does not live independently. They always depend on a father or brother or husband or son. They never fight for their rights. Rani Jindan is an example for each and every woman, one who starts to fight for her rights. In the family as well as in society, she remains humble and obedient before the men who hold power and authority. She acts according to the Fakir's advice, 'A wise person allows herself to be used when it suits her purpose. She pretends weakness, then 'waits for the right moment to take control' (Divakaruni 201).

Divakaruni through the characters of Guddan, Pathani, Balbir, Chand and to a certain extent even the powerful Mai Nakkain and Jindan portrays women's natural frailty. Every woman is different with an individual system of beliefs and faiths, be it enforced or accustomed. When the Sarkar dies, Guddan expresses her desire to become a sati as she knows very well that she will not have the strength to endure the harsh future alone as a widow, especially as a royal one.

'I'm not being brave. Just the opposite. Do you know how hard life is for a widow? Even—or maybe especially—for those who were queens? We'll be powerless—shunned, perhaps even murdered, so that our valuables can be confiscated by the treasury. But as a sati, I'll follow my husband to heaven, while on earth; a temple will be built in my name' (Divakaruni 167,168).



It is natural for a man to seek companionship; no one questioned the Sarkar's many marriages. Instead, they were accepted as political alliances. Even when he married for his personal desires, no one raised any objections. As a widow, Jindan falls in love with Lal Singh and wishes to marry him. But society never accepts her marriage. She was also forced to abort the child that was in her womb, and she accepted it as her fate. Through this novel, Divakaruni highlights the dominations and struggles of women.

Conclusion

The subordination of women originally began as a form of special treatment that considered their physical differences, safety, and personal needs. Gradually, however, this concern turned into a system of control. Men began to justify the domination of women by referring to biological differences, and over time many women also came to accept these differences as natural. As a result, women became accustomed to playing a submissive role both within the family and in society. Yet every woman possessed her own hopes, aspirations, and ideals. In the novel *The Last Queen*, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni presents several female characters, each of whom faces her own struggles and challenges in life. Although their success may not always appear obvious to the readers, these women eventually fulfil their dreams in different ways. The female characters in *The Last Queen* discover their own forms of happiness and redemption through their personal experiences. A common quality shared by the women in the novel is their sense of acceptance. Divakaruni portrays women who adapt to the social order rather than openly questioning it. Their silence should not be interpreted as weakness. Instead, it reflects their awareness of the importance of maintaining balance and harmony within the family and the larger society. These women do not suddenly rebel or experience dramatic awakenings. For them, gender inequality and the idea of female inferiority do not completely block their progress. Rather, these conditions become part of their lived reality and contribute to their personal growth and inner strength. The women accept the expectations that society places upon them and transform these limitations into opportunities to shape their own lives and achieve a sense of fulfillment.

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The Inner Journey of Womanhood in Preeti Shenoy's *The Secret Wish List*

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Abstract

Preeti Shenoy's The Secret Wish List, highlighting the silent struggles of women shaped by patriarchal expectations. The novel presents the life of an Indian middle-class woman whose identity is shaped by obedience, sacrifice, and social expectations. The study analyzes how the creation of a secret wish list becomes a symbolic act of resistance, enabling the protagonist named Diksha, to reconnect with her forgotten desires and reclaim her individuality. By exploring the themes of gender discrimination, emotional suppression, and self-realization, this paper argues that The Secret Wish List reflects the lived experiences of many women in contemporary society. The novel ultimately emphasizes that empowerment begins with self-awareness and that harmony between duty and desire is essential for a meaningful and fulfilling life.

Keywords: Forgotten Desires, Familial Duties, Patriarchy, Suppression, Self Discovery.

Introduction

Literature is often described as the mirror of society, reflecting human thoughts, emotions, cultural values, and social realities of a particular time. At the same time, the Indian literature, one of the oldest and richest literary traditions in the world, reflects the country's diverse cultures, languages, and historical experiences. In modern times, Indian English literature has gained global recognition through writers like R.K. Narayan, Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Aravind Adiga, who explore both traditional and contemporary issues. Among contemporary Indian women writers, Preeti Shenoy has emerged as a prominent voice known for her simple yet emotionally resonant style. Her narratives focus on ordinary individuals navigating emotional struggles in a society shaped by tradition and patriarchy. Through relatable characters and accessible language, she connects deeply with a wide readership. One of her most impactful novel, *The Secret Wish List* (2012), explores the inner life of a woman caught between societal duty and personal desire. The novel presents a compelling portrait of female suppression, emotional neglect, and the quiet courage required to reclaim one's identity. This study aims to analyze the themes, character development, and social implications of *The Secret Wish List*, focusing particularly on the conflict between duty and desire in the life of the protagonist.

Between Duty & Desire

In *The Secret Wish List*, Preeti Shenoy presents the inner transformation of Diksha, a woman whose life has long been governed by duty, obedience, and patriarchal control. Through the symbolic act of creating a **wish list**, Shenoy traces Diksha's gradual movement from silent endurance to self-awareness and autonomy. The novel highlights how ordinary desires, when suppressed, become acts of resistance against deeply ingrained gender norms. Initially, Diksha's wish list is written half in jest, filled with playful and seemingly trivial aspirations. However, as she continues, the list begins to reflect deeply personal longings that she has never allowed herself to acknowledge due to years of oppression under her husband, Sandeep. When her friend Vibha reads the list, she is struck by the simplicity of the wishes



traveling alone, learning salsa, wearing a bikini, or experiencing independence. Ironically, these desires represent freedom, Vibha has long enjoyed. The list exposes not Diksha's excess, but her deprivation.

The "wish list" becomes a turning point, forcing Diksha to confront the extent of her confinement. Married to a rigid, conservative man, she has lived an overprotected life devoid of personal choice. Vibha's encouragement, even while she is grieving the loss of her husband Mohan, reinforces the urgency of living authentically. Vibha insists that life is too short to suppress one's desires, emphasizing the novel's powerful theme of female friendship as a source of emotional strength and transformation. Motivated by Vibha, Diksha decides to begin fulfilling her wishes, starting with salsa classes. Dance becomes a metaphor for bodily autonomy and self-expression an experience denied to her throughout her marriage. Her interaction with Gaurav, the dance instructor, introduces her to a world beyond domestic confinement. Though hesitant and fearful of Sandeep's reaction, Diksha experiences joy, excitement, and a renewed sense of youth. Attending classes secretly and choosing clothes that reflect her individuality mark her first steps toward independence. Sandeep's controlling behavior and emotional neglect remain constant obstacles. His financial dominance and rigid worldview leave no space for Diksha's growth, reinforcing the unequal power dynamics within their marriage. Vibha's suggested that Diksha to keep her dance class as a secret and her offer to cover the fees reflects deep female solidarity. This act of support highlights how women often become each other's emotional lifelines within oppressive structures. As Diksha's world expands, she reconnects with her past. An email from her school friend Tanu evokes memories of lost opportunities and alternate life paths. Tanu's independence intensifies Diksha's self-reflection, while the reappearance of Ankit, her childhood love, stirs long-buried emotions.

However, Ankit's role in Diksha's life is not romantic escape but emotional affirmation reminding her of the woman she once was and could still become. A parallel shift occurs within Diksha's domestic sphere when her mother-in-law is hospitalized after a fall. In an intimate conversation, the older woman reflects on her own early marriage and sacrifices, creating an unexpected bond between them. This exchange dismantles traditional stereotypes of the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law relationship and reveals shared female experiences of endurance and compromise. For the first time, Diksha voices her marital struggles aloud and feels genuinely heard. Despite moments of connection, Sandeep's indifference persists. His public humiliation of Diksha shatters her fragile confidence, but sustained encouragement from Vibha, Tanu, and Ankit helps her regain self-worth. Dance gradually becomes more than a hobby it turns into a means of empowerment. Diksha advances to higher levels, conducts workshops, and earns independently, challenging the economic dependence that once trapped her. The culmination of Diksha's transformation lies in her decision to separate from Sandeep. This choice is not an impulsive rebellion but a conscious assertion of dignity and self-respect. She chooses a life where her dreams are not silenced by duty alone. In raising her son Abhay, she instills values of equality and respect, determined to break the cycle of patriarchal conditioning.

Conclusion

The Secret Wish List offers a realistic portrayal of women's silent struggles within patriarchal family structures. Preeti Shenoy highlights how women are praised for sacrifice but discouraged from pursuing personal happiness. Through Diksha's transformation, the novel challenges traditional definitions of duty and femininity.



Through the protagonist's journey, Preeti Shenoy critiques the societal structures that normalize female sacrifice while denying women agency. *The Secret Wish List* ultimately affirms that self-discovery, even when delayed, is possible. By listening to her inner voice and honoring her desires, Diksha transforms from a woman defined by obligation into one who claims ownership of her life. This study concludes that Diksha's journey represents a universal experience of women negotiating identity, responsibility, and freedom. *The Secret Wish List* ultimately asserts that choosing oneself is not an act of rebellion but a necessary step toward living a meaningful and empowered life.

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Broken Innocence: The Representation of Childhood in *The God of Small Things*

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Abstract

*This paper examines the thematic and social dimensions of *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy, a significant work in contemporary Indian English literature. The novel explores the complex intersections of caste, gender, family relationships, and social hierarchy within the socio-cultural context of Kerala. Through a nonlinear narrative structure, Roy presents the tragic experiences of the twin protagonists, Estha and Rahel, whose childhood memories reveal the oppressive nature of rigid societal norms. The study highlights how the novel critiques the "Love Laws" that regulate human relationships and reinforce social inequalities. Particular attention is given to the forbidden relationship between Ammu and Velutha, which exposes the deeply rooted caste discrimination in Indian society. The paper also analyzes the themes of childhood innocence, trauma, and memory that shape the psychological development of the characters. Furthermore, the research explores Roy's use of poetic language and innovative narrative techniques that contribute to the emotional depth of the novel.*

Keywords: Childhood, Trauma, Innocence, Social Oppression, *The God Of Small Things*

Introduction

Indian literature is one of the oldest and most diverse literary traditions in the world. It reflects the rich cultural, social, historical, and linguistic diversity of India. From ancient epics and classical poetry to modern novels and postcolonial writings, Indian literature has continually evolved to represent the complexities of Indian society. The tradition includes works written in many languages such as Sanskrit, Tamil, Hindi, Bengali, and English. In particular, Indian writing in English has gained global recognition for its ability to portray the cultural and socio-political realities of India to an international audience. During the postcolonial period, many Indian writers began to explore themes such as identity, colonial legacy, social inequality, gender discrimination, and caste hierarchy. Writers like Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, and Jhumpa Lahiri have contributed significantly to the development of Indian English literature by presenting powerful narratives that examine both personal and societal conflicts. Their works highlight how historical forces and cultural traditions influence individual lives. Therefore, *The God of Small Things* not only tells a personal family story but also reflects broader social realities within Indian society. By blending poetic language, nonlinear narrative techniques, and deep psychological insight, Roy presents a powerful critique of social injustice. As a result, the novel has become an important text in the study of contemporary Indian literature, postcolonial studies, and cultural criticism.

The Fragility Of Childhood

While analyzing *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy, I observe that the novel presents childhood as a delicate and vulnerable stage of life. In my interpretation, the story of the twins Rahel and Estha clearly shows how innocence is gradually affected by the harsh



realities of society. As I read the novel, I notice that the children initially experience the world with curiosity, imagination, and simplicity. Their perspective reflects the natural purity of childhood, where small moments and emotions hold deep meaning. However, as I continue my analysis, I realize that this innocence is slowly broken by social discrimination, family conflicts, and traumatic events. Through my study of the novel, I argue that the author powerfully portrays how childhood, which should normally be a time of happiness and freedom, becomes overshadowed by pain, confusion, and emotional isolation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy stands as a remarkable contribution to modern Indian English literature. Through its intricate narrative structure and emotionally powerful storytelling, the novel presents a profound exploration of social inequality, caste discrimination, gender oppression, and the lingering impact of colonial history. Moreover, the novel emphasizes the significance of memory and the lasting impact of childhood trauma. Ultimately, *The God of Small Things* remains a powerful literary text that challenges readers to reflect on issues of power, inequality, love, and human dignity. Its exploration of personal and social conflicts continues to resonate with contemporary readers and scholars, making it an important subject for academic study and critical analysis within the broader field of Indian literature.

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Family, Memory and Silence in *Clear Light of Day* by Anita Desai

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Abstract

Clear Light of Day by Anita Desai explores family relationships, memory, and emotional isolation in post-independence India. Set in Old Delhi, the novel focuses on the Das family, especially the strained relationship between the sisters Bim and Tara. Through flashbacks and memories, the narrative reveals the emotional struggles of the characters. The novel shows how past experiences influence personal identity and relationships. It also highlights themes of family conflict, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Anita Desai is a prominent Indian English novelist known for her psychological exploration of human relationships. She was born on June 24, 1937, in Mussoorie, India, and grew up in Delhi. Desai studied English literature at Miranda House, University of Delhi. Her works often focus on themes such as loneliness, family conflict, identity, and emotional isolation. Some of her notable novels include *Cry*, *the Peacock*, *Fire on the Mountain*, and *Clear Light of Day*.

Keywords: Family Relationships, Memory, Emotional Isolation, Post-independence India.

Introduction

Clear Light of Day (1980) is one of the most significant novels written by Anita Desai. The novel focuses on the life of the Das family, particularly the sisters Bim and Tara, and their brother Raja. Set in Old Delhi, the story moves between the past and present to explore childhood memories and adult conflicts. Desai's writing is deeply psychological, revealing the inner emotions of her characters. The novel deals with the complexities of family relationships, especially the emotional distance that develops over time. Through the experiences of the characters, Desai highlights themes such as loneliness, responsibility, forgiveness, and the influence of the past on the present. The narrative structure of the novel, which frequently moves between past and present, shows how memories shape the characters' lives.

Family Relationships and Emotional Conflict

One of the central themes in *Clear Light of Day* is family conflict. The relationship between Bim and Tara is particularly important in the novel. Bim remains in the family house in Old Delhi, taking responsibility for her mentally ill brother Baba and managing the household. Tara, on the other hand, escapes from family responsibilities by marrying and moving away. Bim feels betrayed by her siblings because she believes they abandoned her. Raja moves away to Hyderabad, while Tara chooses a comfortable life with her husband. Bim's resentment grows over time, especially toward Raja, who becomes financially successful but seems distant from the family. Desai portrays Bim as a strong yet emotionally wounded character. Her bitterness reflects the pain of feeling abandoned by the people she loves. The novel shows how misunderstandings and lack of communication can create emotional barriers within families.

The Role of Memory

Memory plays a crucial role in the novel. Much of the story is told through flashbacks that reveal the childhood experiences of the Das siblings. These memories help the reader



understand the present conflicts between the characters. The childhood scenes show moments of happiness, innocence, and companionship. However, as the characters grow older, these memories become sources of regret and sadness. Bim constantly recalls the past, especially the time when the family was united. For her, the past represents both comfort and pain. While Bim sees the past as a reminder of abandonment, Tara gradually realizes that her sister's anger is rooted in loneliness and sacrifice. Memory therefore becomes a tool for understanding and reconciliation.

Historical and Social Context

The novel is also influenced by the historical changes that occurred in India during the twentieth century. The impact of the Partition of India is indirectly reflected in the narrative. The political and social changes of that time create an atmosphere of uncertainty and transformation. Old Delhi itself becomes an important symbol in the novel. The old house where Bim lives represents the past, tradition, and memory. As the city changes, the house remains a reminder of the family's history. This setting emphasizes the contrast between the past and the present. Desai uses the city and the house as symbols of continuity and change. While the world outside is evolving, the characters struggle to come to terms with their emotional past.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

The final part of the novel moves toward reconciliation. Tara's visit to the old family house forces both sisters to confront their past. Tara begins to understand Bim's feelings of loneliness and responsibility. Bim eventually realizes that holding onto anger will not change the past. She begins to see her brother Raja and sister Tara with more compassion. This realization marks an important turning point in the novel. Forgiveness becomes the key to emotional healing. Desai suggests that understanding and empathy are essential for maintaining family relationships. The novel ends with a sense of hope, as Bim recognizes that despite conflicts and misunderstandings, family bonds can still survive.

Conclusion

Clear Light of Day is a powerful exploration of family relationships, memory, and emotional reconciliation. Through the experiences of the Das siblings, Anita Desai portrays the complexities of human emotions and the lasting impact of childhood memories. The novel demonstrates how misunderstandings and silence can create distance within families, but also how forgiveness can restore emotional connections. By blending personal experiences with historical context, Desai creates a deeply reflective narrative about the passage of time and the importance of empathy. Ultimately, the novel emphasizes that understanding the past is essential for achieving peace in the present.

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Exploring Women's Struggle and Resilience in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

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Abstract

*This article examines the themes of women's struggle and resilience in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini. The novel portrays the lives of Afghan women living under social, cultural, and political oppression. Through the experiences of Mariam and Laila, the author highlights the hardships faced by women in a patriarchal society. Despite suffering from violence, discrimination, and loss, the female characters demonstrate remarkable strength and courage. This article explores how Hosseini presents the struggles of women and emphasizes their emotional resilience, making the novel a powerful representation of female endurance and hope.*

Keywords: Women's Struggle, Resilience, Afghan Society, Gender Inequality, Patriarchy.

Introduction

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini is a powerful novel that explores the lives of Afghan women during periods of political conflict and social restrictions. The story focuses mainly on two female characters, Mariam and Laila, whose lives become connected through circumstances of suffering and survival. The novel reflects the harsh realities faced by women in Afghanistan, including forced marriage, domestic violence, limited freedom, and gender discrimination. However, despite these hardships, the novel also highlights the resilience and emotional strength of women. Through the characters' struggles, Hosseini portrays how women find courage, support, and hope even in the most difficult situations. This article aims to examine how the themes of struggle and resilience are represented in the novel and how they contribute to its emotional and social significance.

Women Oppression in Afghanistan

One of the central themes in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is the oppression faced by women in Afghan society. The novel shows how social traditions and patriarchal norms restrict women's freedom and independence. Mariam, one of the main characters, experiences rejection and discrimination from childhood because she is born as an illegitimate child. Later, she is forced into marriage with Rasheed, a much older man who treats her with cruelty and violence. Mariam's life reflects the suffering of many women who have little control over their own choices. Similarly, Laila's life is affected by war and political instability. After losing her family, she is also forced to marry Rasheed for survival. Through these experiences, Hosseini portrays the limited opportunities available to women and the harsh consequences of patriarchal control. The novel is set during important historical periods in Afghanistan, including the Soviet invasion, civil war, and the rule of the Taliban. These political events greatly affect the lives of the characters. War creates destruction, poverty, and displacement, making life even more difficult for women. Under Taliban rule, women face severe restrictions such as limited education, forced wearing of burqas, and prohibition from working or traveling alone. By presenting these historical realities, the novel shows how political systems can intensify the suffering of women. The characters' personal struggles are closely connected with the larger social and political environment.

**Friendship and Female Solidarity**

Although the novel portrays suffering and oppression, it also highlights the importance of friendship and solidarity among women. The relationship between Mariam and Laila becomes the emotional center of the story. Initially, Mariam feels jealous and distant from Laila, but over time they develop a strong bond of understanding and support. Their friendship helps them endure the cruelty of Rasheed and the hardships of their lives. This relationship represents the power of female solidarity.

Spirit and Sacrifice - Love and Friendship

Individual spirit is one of the most powerful themes in the novel. Both Mariam and Laila demonstrate incredible emotional strength despite experiencing pain, loss, and injustice. Mariam's character shows quiet endurance throughout her life. She tolerates years of suffering but ultimately performs an act of courage to protect Laila and her children. Her sacrifice becomes a symbol of love and bravery. Laila also represents resilience through her determination to survive and create a better future for her children. The love between Mariam and Laila transforms their lives and gives them emotional strength. Their relationship helps them overcome fear and isolation. Hope is also symbolized by the possibility of a better future for Afghanistan. By the end of the novel, Laila returns to Kabul to contribute to rebuilding society, suggesting that even after destruction, renewal is possible.

Conclusion

A Thousand Splendid Suns is a deeply moving novel that portrays the struggles of Afghan women living under social oppression and political conflict. Through the characters of Mariam and Laila, Khaled Hosseini highlights the harsh realities of gender inequality and domestic violence. At the same time, the novel celebrates the resilience, courage, and compassion of women. Friendship, sacrifice, and hope become powerful sources of strength that help the characters survive their hardships. Thus, the novel not only exposes the suffering faced by women but also honors their enduring spirit. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* remains an important literary work that raises awareness about women's rights, human dignity, and the power of resilience.

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From Silence to Strength: A Feminist Reading of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Last Queen*

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Abstract

A feminist reading of The Last Queen by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni explores the life and struggles of Maharani Jindan Kaur through the lens of gender, power, and resistance. The novel revisits history to highlight the silenced voice of Jindan Kaur, the last queen of the Sikh empire and the wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. This study examines how the author reconstructs Jindan's character as a strong and politically active woman who challenges patriarchal norms within the royal court and society. It focuses on the ways in which Jindan asserts her authority, resists male domination, and struggles to protect the throne for her son, Duleep Singh. The novel also reveals how historical narratives often misrepresent powerful women by portraying them negatively. Through a feminist perspective, Divakaruni reclaims Jindan's voice and presents her as a symbol of courage, leadership, and resilience. The study further analyzes themes of female agency, motherhood, and political resistance in the novel. Ultimately, the text highlights the importance of revisiting history to acknowledge women's contributions and challenge patriarchal interpretations. Thus, The Last Queen emerges as a significant feminist reinterpretation of history that restores dignity and power to a forgotten female figure.

Keywords: Silence, Strength, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, *The Last Queen*.

Introduction

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is a prominent contemporary writer known for reinterpreting historical narratives and myths through women's perspectives. Her novel *The Last Queen* narrates the life of Maharani Jindan Kaur, the last queen of the Sikh empire and the wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Historically, Jindan Kaur has often been marginalized or misrepresented in traditional records dominated by patriarchal perspectives. Divakaruni's novel seeks to reclaim her voice and present her as a powerful, intelligent, and resilient woman who resisted both patriarchal structures and colonial domination. A feminist reading of *The Last Queen* highlights the struggles of women against social oppression, gender discrimination, and political exclusion. By foregrounding Jindan's perspective, Divakaruni reconstructs history through feminist ideas and challenges the male-centered narratives that have silenced women's contributions.

Feminist Reinterpretation of History

Feminist criticism often attempts to recover women's voices that have been ignored or distorted in historical accounts. In *The Last Queen*, Divakaruni revisits the history of the Sikh empire and presents it through the life of Maharani Jindan Kaur. Traditional historical texts often portray her as manipulative or politically ambitious in a negative sense. However, the novel reframes these characteristics as signs of leadership, intelligence, and courage. Through a feminist lens, Jindan emerges not merely as a queen or wife but as a political strategist who plays a significant role in the governance of the kingdom. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, she takes on the responsibility of protecting the throne for her young son, Maharaja



Duleep Singh. Her determination to secure political stability challenges the assumption that women are unfit for political authority.

Patriarchal Constraints and Gender Inequality

One of the central concerns of feminist criticism is the exploration of patriarchal systems that limit women's freedom. In *The Last Queen*, Jindan's life is shaped by rigid social structures that expect women to remain obedient, silent, and confined to domestic spaces. From her early life, Jindan experiences the restrictions placed upon women in a patriarchal society. Even within the royal court, women's influence is expected to remain indirect and invisible. However, Jindan refuses to accept such limitations. Her refusal to remain silent and passive becomes a key act of feminist resistance.

Female Agency and Resistance

Another significant aspect of feminist interpretation is the emphasis on female agency—the ability of women to make independent choices and shape their own destinies. Jindan's character embodies this agency throughout the novel. Despite being surrounded by powerful male figures and colonial authorities, Jindan refuses to surrender her authority. She actively participates in political decision-making and challenges those who attempt to manipulate or silence her. Her resilience demonstrates that women can be powerful agents of change even within oppressive structures. Her resistance becomes even more significant when the British attempt to control the Sikh kingdom. Rather than submitting to colonial authority, Jindan continues to oppose British interference and struggles to protect her son's throne. Her courage illustrates how women's resistance can intersect with broader struggles against political domination.

Conclusion

A feminist reading of *The Last Queen* reveals how Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni challenges patriarchal historical narratives and reclaims the legacy of Maharani Jindan Kaur. Through the portrayal of a strong and determined female protagonist, the novel explores themes of resistance, agency, motherhood, and political empowerment. Divakaruni's retelling demonstrates that women have always played significant roles in shaping history, even when their contributions have been ignored or suppressed. By foregrounding Jindan's voice and experiences, *The Last Queen* becomes not only a historical novel but also a powerful feminist text that reasserts the importance of women's perspectives in literature and history.

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Urban Aspirations and Rural Realities in *The White Tiger* By Aravind Adiga

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Abstract

The White Tiger presents a striking portrayal of contemporary Indian society by exploring the tension between rural poverty and urban ambition. The novel narrates the story of Balram Halwai, a young man born into poverty in a small village who eventually becomes a successful entrepreneur in Bangalore. Through Balram's personal journey, Adiga highlights the deep divide between rural and urban India and exposes the social realities of inequality, corruption, and class hierarchy. This paper examines how the novel represents rural realities such as poverty, social exploitation, and lack of opportunities while simultaneously portraying cities as symbols of aspiration, economic mobility, and modernization. The study also explores important themes such as class struggle, globalization, and the symbolic contrast between "Darkness" and "Light," which represents the divide between impoverished villages and prosperous cities. By analyzing these elements, the paper argues that Adiga challenges the idea that economic progress automatically brings social equality. Instead, the novel reveals the moral dilemmas and ethical complexities involved in the pursuit of success in modern India.

Keywords: Aravind Adiga, *The White Tiger*, Rural Poverty, Indian English Literature.

Introduction

Indian English literature often reflects the social and economic realities of postcolonial India. Many modern writers use fiction to examine the effects of poverty, social hierarchy, and rapid economic change. Among such works, *The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga stands out as a powerful critique of class inequality and social injustice in contemporary India. The novel won the Man Booker Prize in 2008, gaining global recognition for its bold and realistic portrayal of Indian society. The narrative is written in the form of letters by Balram Halwai to the Chinese Premier. In these letters, Balram narrates his life story and explains how he rose from extreme poverty in a rural village to become a wealthy entrepreneur in Bangalore. This epistolary narrative style allows Adiga to present Balram's personal experiences while also commenting on larger social issues. A central theme in the novel is the division between what Balram calls the "Darkness" and the "Light." The Darkness refers to the rural areas of India where poverty, illiteracy, and social oppression dominate daily life. The Light, on the other hand, represents the prosperous urban centers associated with wealth, technology, and opportunity. This paper explores how the novel presents both rural hardship and urban ambition through Balram's life story. It examines the realities of rural poverty, the attraction of urban life, and the moral consequences that arise from the pursuit of success in a rapidly globalizing society.

The Rural Reality: Poverty and Social Oppression

The novel begins in the village of Laxmangarh, which represents the difficult living conditions of rural India. Life in the village is shaped by poverty, caste discrimination, and exploitation by powerful landlords. Balram's family, like many other families in the village,



struggles to survive and remains trapped in a cycle of debt and labor. The landlords known as the “Four Animals”—the Buffalo, the Stork, the Raven, and the Wild Boar—control the economic and social life of the villagers. They impose heavy rents and maintain their power through fear and authority. As a result, the villagers remain dependent on them and have little chance of improving their situation. Adiga also highlights the lack of basic facilities in rural areas. Essential services such as proper education, healthcare, and infrastructure are either absent or poorly managed. For example, Balram’s father, who works as a rickshaw puller, dies due to inadequate medical care in a government hospital. This incident reflects the neglect faced by rural communities. Education, which could provide a path toward social mobility, is not accessible to many poor children. Balram initially shows great academic potential and is called a “White Tiger” by a school inspector, symbolizing his uniqueness and intelligence. Social hierarchy and economic pressures keep them trapped in a system where advancement seems almost impossible.

Urban India as a Space of Aspiration

While rural India is depicted as a place of hardship, urban spaces in the novel represent opportunity and ambition. Cities such as Delhi and Bangalore symbolize the economic growth and modernization that emerged in India during the era of globalization. When Balram moves to Delhi to work as a driver for a wealthy family, he encounters a completely different world. The urban elite live in luxury, surrounded by expensive cars, large houses, and modern lifestyles. This environment stands in sharp contrast to the poverty of the villages. Cities also represent the influence of globalization. Urban areas are filled with multinational companies, shopping malls, and technological industries. Gurgaon, for example, is portrayed as a modern city with corporate offices and commercial complexes, representing the aspirations of India’s emerging middle class. However, Adiga does not present urban prosperity as entirely positive. He suggests that the wealth enjoyed by the elite often depends on the labor of the poor. Thus, the novel reveals that urban success often exists alongside hidden forms of exploitation and inequality.

The Symbolism of Darkness and Light

One of the most powerful symbolic ideas in the novel is the contrast between Darkness and Light. The Darkness refers to the rural regions where people live in poverty, ignorance, and oppression. In contrast, the Light represents the cities associated with wealth, technology, and economic progress. Balram frequently describes India as “two countries in one.” One India consists of wealthy urban centers with modern infrastructure and opportunities, while the other consists of impoverished villages struggling with unemployment and neglect. This symbolic division highlights the deep inequalities within Indian society. Although cities appear to offer opportunities for upward mobility, structural barriers such as class and caste often prevent the rural poor from achieving genuine equality. Through this symbolism, Adiga critiques the assumption that economic growth automatically leads to social progress. He suggests that modernization often coexists with inequality.

The Rooster Coop: A Metaphor for Social Entrapment

Another important concept in the novel is the “Rooster Coop.” Balram uses this metaphor to describe the system that keeps servants obedient and trapped in their social roles. He compares servants to chickens kept in a cage at a market. Even though the chickens see others being slaughtered, they do not attempt to escape. Similarly, servants remain loyal to their masters because they fear punishment and worry about the safety of their families. The Rooster Coop therefore represents psychological and social control. The poor remain trapped not only because of economic circumstances but also because of fear and conditioning.



Balam ultimately breaks free from this system by murdering his employer and stealing money to start his own business. However, his escape raises serious moral questions about whether success achieved through violence can be justified.

Globalization and Changing Social Dynamics

The novel also reflects the impact of globalization on modern India. Economic liberalization has created new opportunities for business, technology, and entrepreneurship. Cities such as Bangalore have become centers of global commerce and innovation. This economic transformation attracts migrants from rural areas who hope to find better opportunities. Balam's journey from Laxmangarh to Bangalore reflects the larger migration patterns seen across India. However, these symbols often hide the continued existence of poverty and inequality. Adiga therefore questions whether globalization truly benefits all sections of society or simply strengthens existing social hierarchies. One of the most controversial aspects of the novel is its portrayal of moral ambiguity. Balam achieves success through actions that society would normally consider immoral, including betrayal and murder. However, Adiga suggests that Balam's actions cannot be judged in isolation from the social conditions that shaped his life. Growing up in poverty and oppression, Balam sees crime as the only way to escape the system that confines him. This perspective challenges readers to reconsider their ideas about morality, justice, and success. In a deeply unequal society, the line between right and wrong may become blurred.

Conclusion

The White Tiger offers a powerful critique of contemporary Indian society by examining the relationship between rural hardship and urban ambition. Through the story of Balam Halwai, the novel exposes the harsh realities of village life while highlighting the powerful attraction of urban prosperity. Adiga demonstrates that the divide between rural and urban India is not simply geographical but deeply social and economic. While cities promise opportunity and advancement, they often reproduce the same systems of inequality that exist in rural areas. By portraying Balam's transformation from a poor village boy into a successful entrepreneur, the novel reveals the moral complexities involved in social mobility. Ultimately, Adiga challenges the optimistic narrative of economic progress and forces readers to confront the persistent inequalities that shape modern India.

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Empowering Dreams Transforming Indian Families through in Sudha Murthy's *Dollar Bahu*

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Abstract

This paper examines how Suga represents empowerment and transformation through the lens of Indian family structures and gender roles. It explores how the narrative reflects shifting attitudes toward gender equality, individual ambition, and social mobility. By analysing the characters' experiences, the study highlights how literature captures the ongoing transformation of traditional family systems in contemporary India.

Keywords: Dreams, Transformation, Family, Sudha Murthy, *Dollar Bahu*.

Introduction

Modern Indian literature frequently explores the intersection of personal aspirations, family expectations, and the evolving dynamics of gender roles. These themes reflect the broader social transformations occurring within contemporary Indian society, where traditional values coexist with modern aspirations. The novel *Suga* by Modi offers a compelling narrative that highlights the challenges faced by individuals striving to pursue their dreams within the boundaries of family responsibilities and cultural norms. Through its characters and social context, the novel illustrates how personal empowerment often emerges through negotiation with deeply rooted traditions. The concept of empowerment in Indian literary narratives often involves the struggle between individual ambition and collective familial expectations. Families in India have historically played a central role in shaping identity, career choices, and social behaviour. In *Suga*, this familial structure becomes a crucial framework within which characters attempt to redefine their roles and aspirations. The novel portrays how dreams of personal growth and independence are influenced by generational perspectives, socioeconomic circumstances, and cultural expectations.

Human Relationship in *Dollar Bahu*

Human relationships form the emotional and thematic core of *Dollar Bahu*. In the novel, Sudha Murthy explores the complexities of familial bonds, particularly within the framework of a traditional Indian joint family. The narrative highlights how economic status and material success influence interpersonal relationships and perceptions within the household. Through the characters and their interactions, Murthy illustrates the fragile nature of respect, affection, and recognition when they become intertwined with financial prosperity. One of the most significant relationships depicted in the novel is that between the mother-in-law, Gouramma, and her daughters-in-law. Gouramma's admiration for Jamuna, who lives in the United States and represents financial prosperity, contrasts sharply with her indifferent treatment of Vinuta, who remains in India and lives a modest life. This unequal treatment reveals how material wealth often shapes emotional priorities within families. Murthy uses this contrast to critique the tendency of society to associate success and dignity primarily with economic achievement rather than with personal virtues such as kindness, humility, and responsibility. The relationship between Vinuta and the rest of the family further demonstrates the emotional consequences of such biased attitudes. Despite her dedication,



patience, and care for the family, Vinuta is frequently overlooked and undervalued. Her quiet resilience reflects the silent sacrifices made by many individuals within traditional family structures. Through Vinuta's character, Murty emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence, empathy, and mutual respect in sustaining meaningful relationships. This realization leads to a gradual transformation in her perception of her family members and their relationships. Murty thus highlights how personal experience and reflection can challenge preconceived notions and lead to greater emotional awareness. Ultimately, *Dollar Bahu* portrays human relationships as dynamic and deeply influenced by social values, economic aspirations, and cultural expectations. Sudha Murty uses the story to remind readers that genuine relationships are built not on wealth or status but on compassion, understanding, and mutual respect. By presenting both conflict and transformation within the family, the novel underscores the enduring significance of empathy in maintaining harmonious human connections.

Conclusion

Suga presents a thought-provoking exploration of empowerment, dreams, and social transformation within the framework of Indian family life. Through its depiction of complex relationships and evolving gender roles, the novel illustrates the challenges faced by individuals attempting to balance personal ambition with cultural expectations. The characters' struggles reveal the intricate ways in which family structures shape opportunities and influence the pursuit of identity. The analysis of the novel demonstrates that empowerment is closely linked to the ability to challenge restrictive norms while maintaining meaningful connections with family and community. As traditional gender roles continue to evolve, literature plays a vital role in reflecting.

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Women's Identity and Self-Realization in *Ladies Coupé* by Anita Nair

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Abstract

Indian English literature has increasingly focused on the representation of women's experiences and struggles in patriarchal society. Ladies Coupé by Anita Nair is a significant work that explores themes of female identity, independence, and self-realization. The novel narrates the story of six women travelling together in a ladies' compartment of a train. Through the narration of their personal experiences, the novel presents a realistic portrayal of women's lives in contemporary Indian society. The protagonist Akhilandeswari (Akhila) undertakes both a physical and psychological journey to discover whether a woman can live independently without male support. The novel critically examines patriarchal norms, marriage, sexuality, and social expectations imposed on women. This research paper analyses the major themes, narrative structure, symbolism, and feminist perspective in the novel. The study demonstrates how the narrative promotes women's empowerment and highlights the importance of personal choice and self-identity.

Keywords: Feminism, Identity, Patriarchy, Self-discovery, Women Empowerment.

Introduction

Indian English fiction has witnessed remarkable contributions from women writers who have explored issues of gender discrimination, identity, and social inequality. Among such writers, Anita Nair occupies a significant place for her realistic portrayal of women's emotional and psychological struggles. Published in 2001, *Ladies Coupé* portrays the lives of six women who meet during a train journey. The novel revolves around Akhila, a forty-five-year-old unmarried woman who has sacrificed her personal desires for her family. She undertakes a journey to find an answer to a question that has troubled her for many years: Can a woman live alone and still lead a happy life? During the journey, she meets five other women, each narrating her life story. These narratives represent diverse female experiences in Indian society. Through their stories, the novel highlights issues such as domestic oppression, sexual exploitation, emotional loneliness, and the struggle for self-respect. The ladies' compartment becomes a symbolic space where women freely express their suppressed voices

About the Author

Anita Nair is one of the prominent contemporary Indian writers in English. She was born in Kerala and has written novels, short stories, travel writings, and children's literature. Her works frequently focus on social realities and psychological conflicts faced by women. Some of her important works include: *Ladies Coupé*, *Mistress*, *The Better Man*. Her writing style is characterized by emotional depth, realistic characterization, and strong feminist undertones. She often explores the complexities of relationships and the search for identity in modern society.

Overview of the Novel

The story of *Ladies Coupé* is structured around a train journey from Bangalore to Kanyakumari. Akhila travels alone in a ladies' coupe, where she meets five other women. Each woman shares her life experiences, which influence Akhila's perception of life and



independence. The novel uses a frame narrative technique, where the main story is Akhila's journey while the other women's stories form sub-narratives within the main plot. These stories provide insight into the social, emotional, and psychological challenges faced by women. The six women characters in the novel represent different social backgrounds and age groups. Their stories collectively reflect the broader condition of women in Indian society. The train compartment acts as a safe space where women can openly discuss their fears, desires, and struggles.

Major Characters

- **Akhilandeswari (Akhila)** is the protagonist of the novel. After the death of her father, she becomes the primary breadwinner of her family. She sacrifices her personal life for the sake of her siblings and mother. Despite fulfilling her responsibilities, she feels emotionally empty and isolated. Her journey becomes a process of self-discovery and personal transformation.
- **Janaki Prabhakar** represents the traditional Indian woman who believes that women should depend on men for protection and security. She moves from dependence on her father to dependence on her husband and later her son.
- **Margaret Shanti** is a chemistry teacher trapped in a controlling marriage. Her husband dominates her life and undermines her self-confidence. She eventually finds subtle ways to assert her power and regain control over her life.
- **Prabha Devi** belongs to an affluent family but struggles with her identity. She has always lived according to social expectations. Learning to swim becomes a symbol of her attempt to gain independence and confidence.
- **Sheela** is a young girl whose observations reveal the early awareness of gender discrimination. Her character highlights how social norms begin influencing girls from childhood.
- **Marikolanthu** represents marginalized women in society. She experiences poverty, sexual exploitation, and social rejection. Her story reveals the harsh realities faced by lower-class women.

Themes in the Novel

Feminism and Women's Empowerment

One of the central themes of *Ladies Coupé* is feminism. The novel challenges traditional gender roles and highlights women's struggle for autonomy. Through the stories of six women, the novel demonstrates how social norms restrict women's freedom.

Search for Identity

The search for identity is a key theme in the novel. Akhila's journey represents the struggle of many women who try to balance personal desires with social expectations. Listening to the stories of other women helps her understand that independence and happiness depend on personal choices.

Patriarchy and Social Norms

The novel critiques the patriarchal system that expects women to sacrifice their dreams for family responsibilities. Many characters suffer because of rigid social expectations related to marriage, motherhood, and obedience.

Marriage and Self Discovery

The novel explores different types of marriages—some oppressive, some supportive, and some emotionally empty. It questions the belief that marriage is the ultimate goal for women. The train journey symbolizes a journey toward self-realization. Through the experiences of other women, Akhila gradually discovers her own desires and aspirations.

**Symbolism in the Novel**

The ladies' compartment represents a safe space where women can share their experiences without fear or social judgment. It becomes a symbolic platform for women's voices and collective support.

The Train Journey

The train journey symbolizes transformation and change. It represents the movement from dependence to independence and from silence to expression.

Swimming

For Prabha Devi, swimming symbolizes freedom and personal confidence. It represents breaking away from social restrictions and exploring new possibilities.

Narrative Technique

The narrative structure of the novel is similar to a storytelling tradition where multiple characters share their life stories. This technique allows the author to present different perspectives on womanhood. The novel also employs psychological realism, focusing on the emotional and mental struggles of the characters. Through introspective narration, the author highlights the complexity of women's inner lives.

Feminist Perspective

From a feminist perspective, the novel highlights the oppression of women in patriarchal society. It portrays how women are often expected to conform to roles defined by society. However, the novel also emphasizes resilience and empowerment. The women characters gradually realize their inner strength and challenge traditional expectations. The narrative ultimately encourages women to define their own identities and make independent choices. *Ladies Coupé* holds an important place in contemporary Indian English literature because it presents realistic portrayals of women's lives critiques patriarchal social structures Encourages female independence and self-confidence highlights the psychological struggles of women The novel also reflects the emergence of the "New Woman" in modern literature—someone who seeks equality, self-respect, and personal freedom.

Conclusion

Ladies Coupé is a powerful exploration of women's identity and empowerment. Through the experiences of six women, the novel presents a vivid portrayal of the challenges faced by women in contemporary society. The journey of Akhila symbolizes the awakening of female consciousness and the courage to question social expectations. The novel ultimately suggests that women must discover their own identity and live according to their own choices rather than conforming to societal pressures. Thus, the novel stands as an important feminist work that encourages women to seek independence, dignity, and self-realization.

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Identity, Power and the Illusion of the American Dream in Salman Rushdie's *The Golden House*

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Abstract

Salman Rushdie's novel The Golden House explores the themes of identity, power, corruption, and the changing nature of the American dream in the twenty-first century. The novel follows the mysterious Golden family, who arrive in New York after escaping from their past in India. They reinvent themselves with new identities and attempt to build a luxurious life in America. However, their lives are filled with secrets, conflicts, and personal struggles. Through the narrator René, Rushdie examines how wealth, politics, and ambition influence personal identity and social relationships. The novel also reflects the political atmosphere of contemporary America and criticizes the rise of populism and social instability. By blending realism with satire and cultural references, Rushdie presents a powerful commentary on modern society and the fragile nature of identity.

Keywords: American Dream, Power, Political Satire, Cultural Conflict, Modern Society.

Introduction

Salman Rushdie is one of the most influential writers in contemporary English literature. His works often combine historical events, political commentary, and imaginative storytelling. In *The Golden House*, Rushdie presents a story that reflects both personal and political realities of modern society. The novel is set in New York City and narrated by Rene Underlined, an aspiring filmmaker who becomes fascinated by the mysterious Golden family. The family suddenly appears in the wealthy neighbourhood of Greenwich Village. The father, Nero Golden, arrives with his three sons and decides to leave behind their past identities. Each member of the family adopts a new name inspired by Roman history. At first, the Golden appear to represent success and prosperity in America. They live in luxury and attract attention because of their wealth and influence. Their secrets gradually destroy the image of perfection they tried to create. Through this narrative, Rushdie examines the idea that identity can be constructed, reinvented, and sometimes completely fabricated.

Literature Review

Many critics consider *The Golden House* as a reflection of contemporary political and cultural conditions. Scholars often highlight Rushdie's use of satire to criticize modern politics and social instability.

Some critics argue that the novel reflects the uncertainty of modern identity in a globalized world. The characters attempt to reinvent themselves, but their past continues to influence their present lives. Other critics focus on Rushdie's portrayal of the American dream. The Golden family arrives in America believing that wealth and success can erase their past. Thus, critics view the novel as both a family drama and a political commentary on modern society.

The Theme of Reinvented Identity

One of the most important themes in the novel is identity. When Nero Golden and his sons arrive in America, they decide to abandon their real names and create new identities.



This decision represents their desire to escape from their past and begin a new life. Nero Golden becomes a powerful businessman and attempts to build a new image of success. His sons also create new personalities and lifestyles. However, these identities are only surface-level transformations. Their inner struggles and past experiences continue to affect their lives. Rushdie uses this idea to show how identity in the modern world can be fluid and unstable. People may change their names, professions, or lifestyles, but they cannot completely erase their past.

The Illusion of the American Dream

The novel also explores the idea of the American dream. The Golden family believes that America offers unlimited opportunities for success and freedom. Their luxurious lifestyle seems to confirm this belief. However, as the story progresses, the dream begins to collapse. The characters experience personal conflicts, emotional struggles, and moral failures. Their wealth does not protect them from tragedy or dissatisfaction. Rushdie suggests that the American dream is often an illusion. While success and wealth may create the appearance of happiness, they cannot guarantee true fulfillment or stability.

Political Satire and Social Criticism

Another important element of the novel is political satire. Rushdie indirectly comments on the political climate of modern America. The rise of populist leaders and extreme political movements forms an important background to the story.

Through satire and symbolism, Rushdie criticizes the growing influence of fear, intolerance, and manipulation in politics. The novel suggests that political power can shape public opinion and create divisions within society. By linking the story of the Golden family with political events, Rushdie shows how personal lives are often affected by larger social forces.

The Role of the Narrator

The narrator, Rene, plays a significant role in the novel. As an aspiring filmmaker, he observes the Golden family with curiosity and fascination. He dreams of turning their story into a film. Rene's perspective allows readers to gradually uncover the secrets of the Golden family. At the same time, his role as an observer highlights the idea that reality itself can be interpreted and shaped like a narrative. Through Rene's storytelling, Rushdie explores the relationship between truth, perception, and artistic imagination.

Family Conflict and Personal Tragedy

Although the novel includes political commentary, it is also deeply focused on family relationships. The members of the Golden family struggle with identity, ambition, love, and jealousy. Each son represents a different personality and life path. Their conflicts reveal the emotional tension within the family. The arrival of Vasilis, Nero Golden's new wife, further complicates these relationships. As secrets from the past begin to emerge, the family structure slowly collapses. Rushdie uses these events to show how hidden truths eventually surface despite attempts to conceal them.

Conclusion

The Golden House is a complex and thought-provoking novel that explores identity, power, and the illusion of success in modern society. Through the story of the Golden family, Rushdie examines how individuals attempt to escape their past and create new lives. However, the novel shows that identity cannot be completely reinvented and that personal history continues to influence the present. At the same time, Rushdie uses satire to criticize the political and cultural conditions of contemporary America. By combining family drama with social commentary, *The Golden House* presents a powerful reflection on the challenges of identity and the uncertain nature of the modern world.



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The Study of Humanity and Communal Violence in Kushwant Singh’s “*Train to Pakistan*”

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Abstract

Khushwant Singh was a prominent Indian author, journalist, historian, and lawyer. Kushwant Singh’s Train to Pakistan is a historical novel that vividly depicts the human tragedy of the Partition of India. The Partition of India in 1947 resulted in widespread violence, migration, and social disruption. Train to Pakistan presents a powerful literary representation of this historical tragedy. The novel portrays the transformation of a peaceful village into a site of communal conflict. This paper examines themes such as communal violence, moral conflict, and human sacrifice. Through the analysis of characters and symbols, the study argues that the novel ultimately emphasizes the endurance of humanity even during times of hatred and political chaos.

Keywords: Partition, Communal Violence, Humanity, Sacrifice.

Introduction

Train to Pakistan by Khushwant Singh is one of the most powerful novels that depicts the tragedy of the Partition of India in 1947. The novel is set in the fictional village of Mano Majra, where Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs initially live in harmony. However, political tensions and communal violence gradually destroy this peaceful coexistence. Through vivid characters and emotional narration, Singh exposes the brutality of Partition and highlights the importance of humanity during times of crisis. The village of Mano Majra initially represents unity and harmony among different religious groups. Sikhs and Muslims live together peacefully without hatred or discrimination. This peaceful coexistence reflects the fundamental human values that existed before the political tensions of Partition.

Humanity and Sacrifice

One of the central themes of the novel is humanity beyond religious identity. The character Juggut Singh ultimately sacrifices his life to save the Muslim refugees travelling by train. His action represents hope and compassion even during violent times. At the beginning of the novel, the village of Mano Majra shows strong human unity. Sikhs and Muslims live together like one family. They celebrate festivals together and depend on each other in daily life. This peaceful coexistence reflects the basic human values that existed before communal politics destroyed harmony. “*Jugga’s body jerked as the rope snapped tight.*” (Singh 181). This moment shows that individual courage and love can overcome communal hatred. Many Sikh villagers feel sad and helpless when their Muslim neighbours are forced to migrate to Pakistan. This shows that ordinary people do not naturally hate each other; communal violence is often influenced by external political forces.

Communal Violence in *Train To Pakistan*

Train to Pakistan by Khushwant Singh powerfully portrays the horrors of communal violence during the Partition of India in 1947. The novel is set in the small village of Mano Majra where Sikhs and Muslims live peacefully for generations. At the beginning of the story, religion does not divide the villagers, and they share a strong sense of community.



However, the political events of Partition slowly bring hatred, suspicion, and violence into their lives. The relationship between Jugga and Nooran a Muslim girl love beyond religious boundaries. Their love proves that human emotions are stronger than communal divisions created by politics. The turning point in the novel occurs when trains carrying the bodies of murdered people arrive from Pakistan. These trains symbolize the brutal reality of communal riots taking place across Punjab. “*The train came in loaded with corpses.*” (Singh 63) This shocking incident spreads fear and anger among the villagers. The peaceful coexistence between Sikhs and Muslims begins to break down as people become influenced by revenge and communal propaganda.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Train to Pakistan is not just a story about Partition but also a powerful commentary on human morality. Khushwant Singh presents the devastating impact of communal violence while emphasizing that humanity can still survive in the darkest moments. The novel remains an important literary work that helps readers understand the emotional and social consequences of Partition.

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Psychological Conflict and Alienation in Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock*

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Abstract

Cry, the Peacock by Anita Desai is an important novel in Indian Writing in English that explores the psychological turmoil and emotional isolation of the protagonist Maya. The novel presents a deep study of human psychology, particularly focusing on loneliness, fear, and marital alienation. Maya lives in constant anxiety because of a prophecy made by an astrologer that either she or her husband will die in the fourth year of their marriage. This fear gradually leads her into mental instability. Anita Desai skillfully portrays Maya's inner conflicts, emotional sensitivity, and inability to adjust to the rational and detached personality of her husband Gautama. The novel uses rich imagery and symbolism, especially the cry of the peacock, to represent Maya's inner pain and longing. This paper analyses the psychological aspects of the novel and examines themes such as alienation, marital conflict, death anxiety, and the search for emotional connection. The study also highlights Anita Desai's narrative style to psychological fiction in Indian English literature.

Keywords: Psychological conflict, Alienation, Loneliness, Marital relationship, Fear of death Inner consciousness.

Introduction

Cry, the Peacock (1963) is the first novel of Anita Desai. The novel is widely recognized for its psychological depth and its exploration of the inner life of the protagonist. Anita Desai is known for her ability to portray the emotional and mental struggles of her characters with great sensitivity. The story revolves around Maya, a young woman who suffers from deep emotional loneliness and psychological anxiety. Her life is strongly influenced by an astrologer's prophecy made during her childhood. According to the prophecy, either she or her husband will die in the fourth year of their marriage. This prediction creates a deep fear in Maya's mind and slowly begins to affect her mental stability. Maya is married to Gautama, a calm and intellectual man who does not share her emotional sensitivity. While Maya desires love, affection, and understanding, Gautama remains detached and rational. This difference in personality creates a wide emotional gap between them. The novel explores the psychological tension created by Maya's fear of death and her sense of isolation within marriage. Anita Desai uses poetic language, symbolism, and imagery to describe Maya's inner world and emotional suffering.

Literature Review

Several scholars have analyzed *Cry, the Peacock* from different critical perspectives. Many critics consider the novel an important example of psychological fiction in Indian English literature. Some scholars focus on the psychological condition of Maya and interpret her actions as the result of extreme emotional isolation and fear. They argue that Maya represents individuals who are unable to find emotional fulfilment in their relationships. Other critics highlight the theme of marital alienation in the novel. They observe that Maya and Gautama represent two contrasting personalities. Maya is emotional, sensitive, and imaginative, while Gautama is logical and detached. This difference leads to



misunderstanding and emotional distance in their marriage. Some literary critics also examine the symbolic elements in the novel. The cry of the peacock, for example, represents intense desire, suffering, and loneliness. It reflects Maya's emotional state and her longing for love and understanding. Thus, critics generally agree that Anita Desai's novel is a powerful exploration of human psychology and emotional suffering.

Major Themes in the Novel

One of the central themes of the novel is psychological conflict. Maya constantly struggles with her fear of death and her emotional loneliness. The prophecy made by the astrologer creates a deep anxiety that affects her thoughts and behavior. Her mind becomes filled with fear and imagination, and she gradually loses the ability to think rationally. Maya experiences intense loneliness throughout the novel. Even though she lives with her husband, she feels emotionally isolated. Gautama is unable to understand her feelings or share her emotional needs. This alienation creates a deep sense of sadness and frustration in Maya's life. The relationship between Maya and Gautama represents the theme of marital conflict. Maya expects emotional support and affection, but Gautama remains distant and philosophical. Their inability to understand each other leads to emotional separation and psychological tension. The astrologer's prophecy creates a strong fear of death in Maya's mind. She constantly thinks about the possibility of death and becomes obsessed with it. This fear slowly destroys her mental stability and eventually leads to tragic consequences. The cry of the peacock is an important symbol in the novel. The peacock's cry represents pain, longing, and emotional intensity. It reflects Maya's inner suffering and her desire for love and connection.

Analysis

Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* is primarily a psychological novel that focuses on the inner experiences of the protagonist. Unlike many traditional novels that emphasize external events, this novel explores the emotional and mental life of its central character. The narrative style allows readers to enter Maya's mind and understand her fears, anxieties, and desires. Her thoughts are often poetic and imaginative, reflecting her sensitive personality. Gautama, on the other hand, represents rational thinking and philosophical detachment. He believes in logic and reason, which prevents him from understanding Maya's emotional needs. The contrast between these two characters highlights the difficulty of communication and emotional connection within marriage. Maya's gradual mental breakdown is portrayed with great psychological realism. Her fear of death, combined with her loneliness and lack of emotional support, eventually leads her to commit a tragic act. Through this story, Anita Desai explores the complex nature of human emotions and the destructive effects of loneliness and fear.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *Cry, the Peacock* is a remarkable psychological novel that explores the inner world of its protagonist. Through the character of Maya, Anita Desai presents a powerful study of loneliness, fear, and emotional alienation. The novel highlights the importance of understanding and emotional communication in relationships. Maya's tragic fate demonstrates the consequences of psychological isolation and lack of empathy. Anita Desai's rich language, symbolism, and psychological insight make the novel an important contribution to Indian Writing in English. The work continues to attract critical attention for its deep exploration of human emotions and its portrayal of the complexities of the human mind.



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Transgressing Tradition: Trauma and the Search for Self in Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces Of Night*

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Abstract

*In contemporary Indian women's writing, the complex interplay between patriarchal trauma and the reclamation of identity is explored in this paper. The historical and ongoing domestic subjugation experienced by women, enforced through mythic archetypes and societal expectations, is expressed by a profound medium in Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night*. The deep psychological scars left by rigid gender roles are articulated in this study by analyzing the three generations of women-Devi, Sita, and Mayamma. Insights into the processes of silence, endurance, and eventual resistance offered by these narratives serve as vehicles for examining social justice and female agency. A critical perspective on the role of folklore and mythology as both a source of trauma and a tool for healing is provided by this paper, offering a hopeful vision of empowerment through the deconstruction of traditional "feminine" ideals.*

Keywords: Trauma Narratives, Female Agency, Indian Myth, Patriarchy, Literature, Identity Politics, Healing.

Introduction

Deep insights into the female experience, particularly within the context of cultural and domestic challenges, are offered by the themes of trauma and healing in Indian literature. A compelling platform for exploring these themes is provided by Githa Hariharan's debut novel, which is rich in its use of mythology and social realism. The experiences of marginalized women within the household get further complicated when personal trauma arises from the suppression of desire and the enforcement of "wifely duties." This paper aims to examine how trauma and healing are portrayed through the lens of mythic storytelling in Indian literature. In what ways is the "thousand-faced" nature of female suffering depicted, and how does mythology exacerbate this trauma? How do the processes of healing and self-actualization manifest when the protagonist defies traditional marital structures? Towards trauma, healing, and patriarchy, how do these narratives reflect broader societal shifts in post-colonial India?

Trauma in Feminist Narrative

Profound psychological effects resulting from the erasure of individual identity are involved in the trauma discussed in contemporary feminist theory. The interplay between individual domestic trauma and the collective weight of tradition is emphasized on recent theoretical advancements. In *The Thousand Faces of Night*, the journey towards healing is explored through characters who are continuously re-living and re-playing the stories of "virtuous" women like Gandhari and Sita, which act as a "traumatic memory" for the modern woman.

Literary Analysis

The character of Mayamma represents the generational trauma of physical and emotional abuse, where her identity is entirely subsumed by her role as a mother and daughter-in-law.



Devi's return from the West to a traditional household explores the trauma of "unbelonging." The intersections of ancient myths and modern reality are reflected in the portrayal of her psychological unrest. The process of recovering from patriarchal trauma, which can be achieved through personal growth or the rejection of societal norms, is often signified by healing in literature. Individuals striving to restore balance in their lives strive through the aftermath of domestic ma. In Hariharan's work, healing is not found in reconciliation with the husband, but in the return to the "Mother" represented by Devi's return to her mother, Sita, at the end of the novel. A vision of healing that incorporates the struggle against systemic gender injustice is provided. By walking out of a stifling marriage, the protagonist illustrates how trauma disrupts the psyche, but also how the act of "leaving" acts as a catalyst for restoration. The deep psychological scars left by years of societal conditioning were underscored by the personal aspects of recovery provided by the final chapters of the work.

Conclusion

Within cultural and historical contexts, a profound understanding of how female wounds are navigated is provided by exploring trauma and healing in *The Thousand Faces of Night*. The complexities of womanhood and the multifaceted journey towards healing are illustrated vividly through the rich narratives offered by authors like Githa Hariharan and Anita Nair. A profound psychological impact resulting from both personal experiences and systemic injustices is portrayed by trauma in these narratives. The importance of addressing domestic and societal injustices as integral to the healing process was underscored along with insights into the psychological aspects of recovery.

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Caste Discrimination in *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy

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Abstract

*Caste discrimination has been one of the most persistent social problems in Indian society. Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* powerfully exposes the cruelty and injustice created by the caste system. Set in the village of Ayemenem in Kerala, the novel shows how deeply caste hierarchy affects the lives of individuals. This paper examines the theme of caste discrimination through the character of Velutha, a Paravan (Untouchable), and his forbidden relationship with Ammu, a Syrian Christian woman. Roy demonstrates how society strictly controls personal relationships through what she calls the "Love Laws," which dictate who should be loved and how much. By presenting the tragic consequences faced by Velutha and Ammu, the novel criticizes the rigid caste structure that continues to shape social and cultural life in India. Through its narrative, the novel reveals how caste discrimination destroys human dignity, freedom, and love. Introduction *The God of Small Things*, published in 1997, is a widely acclaimed novel by Arundhati Roy. The novel won the prestigious Booker Prize and brought international attention to Roy's powerful storytelling. The story is set in Ayemenem, a small town in Kerala, and revolves around the lives of the twin siblings Estha and Rahel and their family. Although the novel focuses on family relationships and childhood memories, one of its most important themes is caste discrimination. The novel highlights how social rules determine the position and dignity of individuals based on their birth.*

Keywords: Caste, Discrimination, *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy.

The tragic love story between Ammu and Velutha becomes the central example of caste oppression in the novel. Their relationship violates the social order of caste hierarchy, leading to devastating consequences. Through this narrative, Roy criticizes the deep-rooted inequalities present in society. Velutha is one of the most important characters in the novel and represents the suffering caused by caste discrimination. He belongs to the Paravan community, which is considered an "Untouchable" caste. In traditional Indian society, people from this caste are treated as socially inferior and are denied basic rights. Despite his low social status, Velutha is intelligent, hardworking, and talented. He works as a skilled carpenter in the Paradise Pickles and Preserves factory owned by Mammachi. His mechanical skills and creativity make him an important worker in the factory. However, society refuses to recognize his abilities because of his caste. Velutha's father, Vellya Paapen, also reflects the deep influence of caste oppression. He remains extremely loyal to the upper-caste family and accepts their authority without question. His behavior shows how caste discrimination can become internalized by the oppressed themselves. Even though Velutha is respected for his skills, he is never treated as an equal member of society. His position remains limited because the caste system determines his identity. The "Love Laws" and Social Control One of the most powerful ideas in the novel is the concept of the "Love Laws." Roy explains these laws as social rules that determine "who should be loved, and how, and how much." These laws reflect the strict boundaries created by caste, religion, and social class. The relationship



between Ammu and Velutha directly challenges these laws. Ammu belongs to a Syrian Christian family, which is considered socially higher than Velutha's caste. Their romantic relationship therefore becomes unacceptable to society. For Baby Kochamma and Mammachi, this relationship is seen as a disgrace to the family. They believe that a lower-caste man touching a woman from a higher community violates the purity of their social status. Their reaction shows how strongly caste prejudices influence their thinking.

The breaking of the Love Laws threatens the established social order of Ayemenem. As a result, society responds with extreme punishment. The tragic fate of Velutha shows how social and political systems support caste discrimination. When Baby Kochamma falsely accuses Velutha of kidnapping and rape, the police arrest him without proper investigation. Instead of providing justice, the police brutally beat Velutha to death. This incident demonstrates how authority figures often protect social hierarchy rather than challenge it. The police do not question the accusations because Velutha belongs to a lower caste. Roy uses this event to highlight the cruelty of institutional power. The system does not treat Velutha as a human being but as someone who must be punished for crossing social boundaries. This moment becomes the turning point of the novel and exposes the harsh reality of caste oppression. Roy also connects caste discrimination with gender inequality. Ammu, as a divorced woman, already occupies a weak position in her family. She does not have financial independence or social authority. Because of these limitations, Ammu becomes vulnerable to criticism and judgment. When her relationship with Velutha is discovered, society blames her for bringing shame to the family. The punishment faced by Ammu is severe. She is rejected by her family and forced to live in isolation. Her tragic life reflects how women are often controlled by social expectations. Through Ammu and Velutha, Roy shows how both caste and gender discrimination work together to limit human freedom.

In *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy presents a powerful critique of caste discrimination in Indian society. Through the character of Velutha and his tragic relationship with Ammu, the novel reveals the destructive consequences of rigid social hierarchies. Roy demonstrates how the caste system controls personal relationships, restricts social mobility, and denies individuals the right to dignity and love. The concept of the "Love Laws" symbolizes the invisible yet powerful rules that govern society. The tragic fate of Velutha and the suffering of Ammu highlight the cruelty of a system that values social status more than human life. Ultimately, the novel reminds us that true social progress can only occur when individuals challenge oppressive systems and recognize the equal humanity of all people.

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The Girl Of My Dreams: Trauma, Obsession, and the Collapse of Romantic Idealism

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Abstract

*Contemporary Indian popular fiction increasingly merges romance with psychological intensity. Durjoy Datta's *The Girl of My Dreams* exemplifies this hybrid form by combining romantic narrative with elements of psychological thriller. This paper argues that the novel destabilizes conventional romantic idealization by presenting love as a manifestation of trauma, obsession, and fractured identity. Through the protagonist Daman, who survives a life-altering accident and begins dreaming of a mysterious girl, the narrative blurs the boundary between illusion and reality. The "dream girl" functions not as a traditional romantic heroine but as a symbolic projection of suppressed guilt, unresolved memory, and psychological fragmentation. By examining themes of illusion, trauma, and identity crisis, this study demonstrates how the novel critiques the fantasy of perfect love and exposes the darker dimensions of romantic imagination.*

Keywords: Romantic idealism, psychological fragmentation, Trauma, Obsession, Illusion vs Reality.

Introduction

Modern Indian English fiction has moved beyond simplistic love stories to incorporate psychological depth and narrative complexity. Durjoy Datta, known for addressing youth and emotional conflict, often explores the intensity of romantic relationships within unstable mental landscapes. *The Girl of My Dreams* represents a significant departure from conventional romantic narratives by embedding psychological suspense within its love story. The novel centers on Daman, a young man who survives a severe car accident but suffers memory loss. After the accident, he begins experiencing vivid dreams about a mysterious girl. As these dreams intensify, they influence his real-life decisions and relationships. The central narrative tension arises from uncertainty: Is the girl real, or is she a projection of Daman's disturbed psyche? This paper examines the novel as a critique of romantic idealization and an exploration of trauma-induced psychological distortion. The narrative structure deliberately destabilizes certainty. The reader experiences confusion parallel to Daman's mental state. Memory gaps, recurring dreams, and shifting perceptions create an atmosphere of psychological ambiguity. Unlike traditional romance plots that move toward emotional clarity and union, this narrative moves toward uncertainty and fragmentation. The dream sequences interrupt linear storytelling, suggesting that the subconscious mind intrudes upon conscious reality. The structural blurring of dream and reality mirrors Daman's fractured identity. Thus, the narrative technique itself reinforces the psychological theme of instability.

Illusion versus Reality

A dominant theme of the novel is the collapse of boundaries between illusion and reality. Daman's emotional attachment to the dream girl becomes stronger than his connection with real individuals around him. His inability to distinguish between imagined



experience and actual events highlights the fragile nature of perception. Romantic fiction often idealizes the beloved as a source of hope and redemption. However, in this novel, the dream girl becomes a destabilizing force. She generates anxiety, suspense, and danger rather than comfort. Through this reversal, the text critiques the cultural fantasy of the “perfect beloved.” Love here is not pure transcendence but psychological entanglement.

Trauma and Identity Crisis

The car accident functions as both a literal and symbolic rupture. It marks a break in Daman’s physical life and psychological continuity. Memory loss signifies the breakdown of stable identity. Without access to his past, Daman becomes vulnerable to illusion. The dream girl emerges from this fractured state. She may be interpreted as:

- A manifestation of repressed memory
- A projection of guilt
- A symbolic representation of unresolved trauma

Rather than healing Daman, she intensifies his confusion. The mind attempts to reconstruct meaning, but in doing so, it produces distortion. The novel thus positions trauma as the catalyst for psychological instability and romantic obsession.

Character Analysis

Daman embodies emotional vulnerability and mental disorientation. His obsession with the dream girl reflects his desperate search for coherence. He clings to the dream as a substitute for lost memory and stable identity. His psychological decline demonstrates how trauma can reshape perception and distort emotional attachment. He is not merely a romantic hero but a representation of fractured consciousness.

The dream girl defies conventional characterization. She is mysterious, unpredictable, and occasionally manipulative. She does not function as a passive object of affection but as an active psychological force. Symbolically, she represents:

- Hidden fear
- Emotional guilt
- Obsessive desire
- Psychological fragmentation

Instead of embodying perfection, she exposes instability. The novel thereby subverts the romantic trope of the ideal woman.

Symbolism and Psychological Depth

Symbolism deepens the novel’s psychological dimension:

- The Accident – Disruption of life’s continuity
- Memory Loss – Loss of identity and self-coherence
- Dreams – Intrusion of the subconscious
- The Dream Girl – The embodiment of unresolved trauma

Through these symbols, the novel suggests that the greatest conflict occurs within the mind rather than in the external world.

Critique of Romantic Idealism

Traditional romantic narratives portray love as transformative and redemptive. However, this novel destabilizes that expectation. Love becomes obsessive rather than liberating. Emotional intensity transforms into psychological threat. By portraying romance as intertwined with trauma, the novel critiques the cultural myth of flawless love. The dream girl is not a fantasy of perfection but a mirror reflecting emotional instability. Thus, the text moves from romantic fantasy toward psychological realism.

Conclusion



The Girl of My Dreams operates at the intersection of romance and psychological thriller. Through the character of Daman, the novel explores trauma, obsession, and identity fragmentation. The dream girl functions not merely as a romantic interest but as a projection of suppressed memory and psychological disturbance. By blurring illusion and reality, the novel challenges conventional romantic storytelling and exposes the darker dimensions of emotional desire. Ultimately, it suggests that when trauma shapes perception, the mind itself becomes the most dangerous terrain.

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Trauma, Alienation, And the Fragile Psyche in Anita Desai's *Echoes in the Banyan Tree*

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Abstract

Indian English literature has often served as a medium for exploring the complex relationship between the individual and society. Among the many writers who contributed to this literary tradition, Anita Desai occupies a unique place due to her deep psychological insight and sensitive portrayal of human emotions. Her short story Echoes in the Banyan Tree explores the subtle yet powerful themes of alienation, memory, emotional trauma, and the struggle for personal identity within traditional social structures. This research paper examines the narrative through the perspectives of psychological criticism and symbolic interpretation. The story illustrates how individuals often experience emotional isolation even within the seemingly secure environment of family life. Desai presents the inner turmoil of characters whose identities are shaped by the expectations and traditions of their families. The banyan tree in the story functions as a powerful symbol representing continuity, history, and the oppressive weight of inherited traditions. The concept of "echoes" reflects the persistent influence of the past on the present psychological state of the characters. Ultimately, the paper argues that Desai's work expands the scope of Indian English literature by focusing on the inner emotional world of individuals and highlighting the psychological consequences of cultural and familial pressures.

Keywords: Psychological Conflict, Alienation, Memory, Indian Domestic Life, Anita Desai

Introduction

The evolution of Indian English literature has witnessed a shift from themes of nationalism and social reform to the exploration of personal identity and psychological complexity. While early writers often focused on political and social issues, later authors began to examine the emotional and psychological dimensions of human experience. One of the most influential writers in this tradition is Anita Desai, whose works are known for their introspective depth and subtle exploration of the human mind. Rather than focusing on dramatic external events, Desai's narratives often portray the quiet struggles of individuals who feel alienated from their surroundings. The short story Echoes in the Banyan Tree exemplifies Desai's unique literary style. The narrative explores the emotional experiences of characters living within a traditional family structure where social expectations often suppress personal desires. The banyan tree becomes a central symbol that reflects both protection and confinement. Just as the banyan tree spreads its roots widely across the ground, the past continues to exert influence over the present lives of the characters. The primary objective of this research paper is to analyze the psychological depth of Desai's narrative and to explore how themes of alienation, memory, and identity are represented through symbolism and narrative technique. Anita Desai as a Psychological Novelist To fully appreciate the significance of the story, it is important to understand the literary contribution of Anita Desai to Indian English literature. Desai is widely recognized for introducing psychological realism into Indian fiction. Her works frequently explore the inner emotional



states of characters who struggle with loneliness, anxiety, and identity crises. Unlike many writers who focus primarily on social issues, Desai places greater emphasis on the individual's mental and emotional experiences. Her characters are often sensitive individuals who feel overwhelmed by the expectations imposed by society. Through careful characterization and detailed psychological analysis, Desai portrays the subtle ways in which individuals experience emotional conflict within everyday life. This focus on the inner world of the characters distinguishes her work from traditional narrative styles.

Theme of Psychological Trauma

In *Echoes in the Banyan Tree*, psychological trauma is presented not as a result of dramatic events but as the gradual outcome of emotional neglect and social pressure. The characters experience feelings of isolation and frustration that develop slowly over time. These emotional wounds are not always visible to others, but they profoundly influence the characters' perceptions and behavior. Desai portrays trauma as an internal condition that arises from the inability to express one's true feelings. The characters often suppress their emotions in order to maintain harmony within the family structure. This suppression of emotions leads to inner conflict and psychological distress. The characters struggle to reconcile their personal desires with the expectations imposed by tradition. By focusing on these subtle emotional tensions, Desai highlights the importance of psychological understanding in literature.

Alienation within the Family Structure

Through this portrayal, the story reflects a universal human experience—the feeling of loneliness even in the presence of others. Symbolism of the Banyan Tree The banyan tree serves as the most significant symbol in the story. In Indian culture, the banyan tree is associated with longevity, wisdom, and spiritual significance. Its extensive root system symbolizes continuity and permanence. However, Desai uses this symbol in a complex and multifaceted way. While the banyan tree provides shade and protection, it also creates an environment that can feel dark and restrictive. In the context of the story, the tree represents the weight of tradition and the influence of the past. The characters live under its symbolic shadow, which reflects the powerful hold that family history has on their lives. The spreading roots of the banyan tree suggest that the past is deeply embedded in the present. It cannot easily be escaped or ignored. Thus, the tree becomes a metaphor for the intricate relationship between memory, tradition, and identity. Memory and the Concept of Echoes The title of the story emphasizes the importance of memory and its continuing influence on human consciousness. The “echoes” in the story represent the voices of the past that continue to resonate in the present. These echoes may include childhood memories, family traditions, and past emotional experiences. Desai suggests that individuals are constantly shaped by these echoes. Even when people attempt to move forward, the past remains present in their thoughts and emotions. This concept reflects the psychological reality that memory plays a crucial role in forming identity. Past experiences influence how individuals interpret their present circumstances. Through this theme, Desai illustrates the powerful relationship between time, memory, and emotional experience. One of the most remarkable aspects of Desai's writing is her narrative technique. She often employs a style that emphasizes introspection and emotional depth.

Narrative Technique and Literary Style In *Echoes in the Banyan Tree*, Desai uses descriptive language and symbolic imagery to create a reflective atmosphere. The narrative focuses more on thoughts and feelings than on physical action. This technique allows readers to experience the characters' psychological states directly. The story unfolds gradually,



revealing the emotional layers of the characters' experiences. Desai's writing style is characterized by simplicity and subtlety. She avoids dramatic confrontations and instead reveals conflict through small gestures, memories, and observations. This restrained narrative style enhances the emotional impact of the story and encourages readers to reflect on the characters' inner lives. Identity and the Struggle for Self-Understanding The search for identity is another central theme in the story. The characters struggle to understand themselves within the framework of family expectations and social norms. This conflict between individuality and conformity creates a deep psychological tension. The characters feel the need to express their own desires, but they are constrained by traditional values. Desai portrays this struggle as a universal aspect of human experience. Every individual must negotiate the balance between personal freedom and social responsibility. Although the story does not provide a clear solution to this conflict, it highlights the importance of self-awareness and introspection in the process of personal growth. Contribution to Indian English Literature The literary contribution of Anita Desai extends far beyond the individual story. Her works have significantly influenced the development of psychological realism in Indian English fiction. By focusing on the emotional experiences of ordinary individuals, Desai expanded the thematic scope of Indian literature. Her stories demonstrate that profound literary insights can emerge from the examination of everyday life. Through *Echoes in the Banyan Tree*, Desai reveals the hidden emotional struggles that exist within traditional social structures. Her work encourages readers to recognize the importance of empathy and psychological understanding.

Conclusion

The short story *Echoes in the Banyan Tree* presents a subtle yet powerful exploration of psychological trauma, alienation, and identity within the framework of Indian domestic life. Through symbolic imagery and introspective narrative techniques, Anita Desai reveals the complex emotional realities that shape human experience. The banyan tree symbolizes both the continuity of tradition and the emotional constraints that may arise from it. The echoes of memory serve as reminders of the past that continue to influence the present. By highlighting the inner struggles of her characters, Desai invites readers to reflect on the delicate balance between personal freedom and social expectation. Ultimately, the story demonstrates that the human psyche is shaped not only by external circumstances but also by the internal echoes of memory, tradition, and emotion. Through her sensitive portrayal of psychological conflict, Desai has secured a lasting place in the canon of Indian English literature.

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Memory and Childhood Trauma in *The Better Man* By Anita Nair

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Abstract

*This paper explores the theme of memory and childhood trauma in the novel *The Better Man* written by Anita Nair. The novel presents the life of Mukundan, a middle-aged man who leaves his job in the city and returns to his native village of Kaikurussi in Kerala. Even though he expects peace in the familiar environment of the village, he soon realizes that the memories of his childhood still affect his thoughts and emotions. Mukundan's relationship with his strict and dominating father created fear and insecurity during his early years. These memories continue to shape his personality even in adulthood. Through Mukundan's experiences, Anita Nair shows how childhood trauma can influence a person's emotional development and identity. The novel also suggests that true healing is possible only when individuals confront their past and learn to understand their memories. Mukundan's journey towards self-realization highlights the importance of emotional acceptance and personal growth.*

Keywords: Memory, Childhood Trauma, Psychological Conflict, Identity, Indian Society.

Introduction

Indian English fiction often reflects the emotional struggles of individuals living within complex social and cultural situations. Among contemporary writers, Anita Nair is known for portraying human emotions with great sensitivity. Her works frequently explore themes such as identity, relationships, and personal transformation. One of her important novels, *The Better Man*, focuses on the inner journey of its protagonist Mukundan. The story begins when Mukundan resigns from his job in the city and returns to his ancestral home in the village of Kaikurussi. At first, this return appears to be a simple decision to live a peaceful life away from the pressures of the city. However, the quiet atmosphere of the village gradually forces Mukundan to face memories from his childhood that he has long tried to ignore. The novel therefore explores how past experiences continue to shape an individual's emotional life. Mukundan's memories of his childhood, especially his fear of his father, play an important role in shaping his personality. Through this character, Anita Nair shows that the past cannot easily be forgotten because it remains deeply connected to one's identity.

Memory and Personal Identity

Memory plays a crucial role in shaping human identity. Our past experiences influence how we think, feel, and respond to different situations. In literature, memories often help readers understand the emotional background of a character. In *The Better Man*, Mukundan's memories are closely connected with his sense of self. As he spends time in the village, small events and places remind him of incidents from his childhood. These memories slowly reveal the emotional struggles that he experienced while growing up. Anita Nair uses these memories to explain why Mukundan often feels uncertain and insecure. His past experiences have shaped his behaviour and made him hesitant in many situations. Through



this portrayal, the novel highlights the lasting influence of childhood experiences on adult life.

Childhood Trauma in the Novel

One of the most important themes in the novel is childhood trauma. Mukundan's father is presented as a strict and authoritative figure who expects obedience from everyone in the family. Instead of expressing affection, he controls the household through discipline and fear. Growing up in such an environment makes Mukundan feel emotionally isolated. As a child, he rarely had the freedom to express his feelings or opinions. Because of this constant fear, he develops a quiet and reserved personality. Even though Mukundan becomes an adult and moves away from the village, these childhood experiences remain in his mind. They continue to influence his decisions and relationships. The novel shows that emotional wounds from childhood do not disappear easily but often remain hidden within a person's memory.

Inner Conflict and Self-Reflection

As the story progresses, Mukundan begins to reflect more deeply on his past. The peaceful setting of the village provides him with the time and space to think about his childhood experiences. These reflections create a strong inner conflict within him. On one hand, Mukundan wishes to move forward and live a peaceful life. On the other hand, the memories of his father and his childhood fears continue to disturb him. This conflict becomes an important part of his emotional journey. Through Mukundan's reflections, Anita Nair shows how individuals often struggle to understand their own past. The novel suggests that ignoring painful memories does not solve emotional problems. Instead, people must confront their past in order to find clarity and peace.

The Role of Bhasi in Mukundan's Transformation

An important character in Mukundan's journey is Bhasi, the village barber. Bhasi is not only a barber but also a thoughtful listener who patiently hears the problems of the villagers. When Mukundan begins to share his memories and fears with Bhasi, he finally finds someone who understands him. Bhasi encourages Mukundan to speak openly about his childhood experiences. These conversations help Mukundan realize that his fears are connected to the memories he has carried for many years. By talking about these memories, he slowly begins to understand himself better. Bhasi therefore plays an important role in Mukundan's emotional transformation. Through this relationship, the novel shows that communication and understanding can help individuals overcome emotional pain.

Social and Cultural Background

The village of Kaikurussi is not just a setting for the story but also an important part of Mukundan's journey. The village represents tradition, community life, and cultural values that shape the lives of the people who live there.

Through detailed descriptions of village life, Anita Nair presents a realistic picture of rural society in India. The relationships between the villagers show how social expectations and family traditions influence individual behaviour.

Mukundan's return to the village allows him to reconnect with these cultural roots. At the same time, it helps him understand how his childhood experiences were shaped by the social environment in which he grew up.

Healing and Personal Growth

As Mukundan gradually faces his past, he begins to understand that his childhood fears no longer control his present life. This realization marks the beginning of his emotional healing. Instead of running away from his memories, he learns to accept them as part of his



life. This acceptance helps him gain confidence and emotional stability. His journey reflects the idea that personal growth often begins with self-understanding.

Anita Nair therefore presents Mukundan's story as a process of transformation. By confronting his past, Mukundan slowly moves towards a more balanced and peaceful state of mind.

Conclusion

The *Better Man* by Anita Nair provides a thoughtful exploration of memory and childhood trauma. Through the character of Mukundan, the novel shows how early experiences can have a lasting influence on a person's emotional life. Mukundan's journey from confusion and fear to self-awareness highlights the importance of understanding one's past. The novel suggests that emotional healing becomes possible only when individuals are willing to confront their memories and accept them. By combining psychological insight with a realistic portrayal of village life, *The Better Man* offers a powerful reflection on identity, memory, and personal growth.

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Representation of Social Inequality in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

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Abstract

Social inequality is a widespread issue that affects many aspects of life, including income, education, healthcare, employment, and social status. Social inequality creates divisions among people and can limit the chances of individuals to improve their quality of life. The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy is a landmark novel in Indian English literature that explores the deep-rooted social inequalities in Indian society. The study examines how the novel represents various forms of inequality such as caste discrimination, gender oppression and class division.

Keywords: Social Inequality, Caste Discrimination, Patriarchy, Arundhati Roy.

Introduction

Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* is widely regarded as one of the most influential works of contemporary Indian literature. The novel won the 1997 Booker Prize and attracted global attention for its exploration of complex social realities in postcolonial India. The novel particularly focuses on the intersection of caste, class, and gender inequalities. Through the tragic experiences of the characters 'Ammu, Velutha, and the twins Estha and Rahel', the author highlights how deeply rooted social hierarchies restrict human freedom and relationships. The author uses personal tragedies and forbidden relationships to demonstrate how social rules and traditions control individual lives.

Social Inequality in *The God Of Small Things*

Social inequality has historically been a defining feature of Indian society. The caste system, which categorizes individuals based on birth and occupation, has created rigid hierarchies that determine social status and access to resources. Although the Indian Constitution abolished untouchability after independence, caste discrimination continues to influence social relations. In addition to caste, gender and class inequalities further reinforce social hierarchies. Patriarchal norms restrict women's freedom and limit their access to education, employment, and social mobility. Economic disparities also contribute to unequal opportunities and reinforce existing power structures. Arundhati Roy uses her novel to highlight the persistence of these inequalities in post-independence India. One of the most significant themes in the novel is caste discrimination. The character Velutha belongs to the Paravan community, traditionally considered "Untouchable" in the caste hierarchy. Despite his intelligence, creativity, and mechanical skills, Velutha remains socially marginalized because of his caste identity. Arundhati Roy portrays Velutha as a compassionate and talented individual who is denied dignity and equality by society. His presence in the Ipe household reflects the contradictions of social hierarchy. Although the family employs him and appreciates his skills, they never accept him as an equal. The relationship between Ammu and Velutha becomes a direct challenge to caste boundaries. Their love affair violates what the novel calls the "Love Laws," which dictate "who should be loved and how much." These unwritten social rules enforce the caste hierarchy and punish those who attempt to cross its



boundaries. The tragic outcome of this relationship highlights the brutal consequences of defying caste norms. Velutha is falsely accused of kidnapping and assault and is brutally beaten to death by the police. His death symbolizes the violent enforcement of caste hierarchy and the systematic oppression of Dalit communities. Through Velutha's character, Roy illustrates how caste discrimination operates not only through institutional structures but also through social attitudes and cultural norms.

Gender discrimination is another crucial aspect of social inequality depicted in the novel. Roy portrays a patriarchal society in which women's lives are controlled by male authority and social expectations. Ammu's character represents the struggles faced by women in a patriarchal society. After marrying an abusive husband and eventually divorcing him, she returns to her parental home with her two children. However, she is treated as a burden by her family and denied economic independence. Ammu's lack of social power highlights the vulnerability of women who challenge patriarchal norms. Her relationship with Velutha becomes an act of rebellion against the restrictions imposed on her life. Other female characters also experience gender-based oppression. Mammachi, for example, suffers years of domestic abuse from her husband, Pappachi. Despite her entrepreneurial success in managing the family's pickle business, she remains subordinate to male authority. Baby Kochamma represents another dimension of patriarchal oppression. Her unfulfilled romantic desires and social frustrations contribute to her bitterness and manipulative behavior. Through these characters, Arundhati Roy exposes the ways in which patriarchal structures limit women's autonomy and reinforce gender inequality.

Economic inequality is another important theme in the novel. The Ipe family belongs to a relatively privileged social class within the Syrian Christian community. Their ownership of a pickle factory provides them with economic power and social status. However, Roy reveals the contradictions within this class structure. Although characters such as Chacko publicly support socialist ideals, they continue to maintain hierarchical relationships with workers and lower-class individuals. Chacko's character embodies this contradiction. While he claims to be a Marxist intellectual, he exercises patriarchal authority within the family and exploits female factory workers. His behavior demonstrates how ideological beliefs often fail to challenge deeply ingrained social hierarchies. Arundhati Roy uses these contradictions to critique the gap between political ideology and social reality. The novel also explores how marginalized individuals are silenced within dominant social structures. Characters such as Velutha, Ammu, and the twins Estha and Rahel are denied the ability to express their experiences openly. Velutha's voice is largely absent from the narrative, reflecting the historical silencing of Dalit communities. Similarly, Ammu's voice is suppressed by family authority and social stigma. The twins represent another form of marginalization. Their traumatic childhood experiences demonstrate how social injustice affects individuals from an early age. Arundhati Roy's narrative style allows readers to understand the emotional and psychological impact of social inequality on these marginalized characters.

Arundhati Roy employs innovative narrative techniques to convey the themes of the novel. The fragmented, non-linear structure reflects the fractured memories and psychological trauma experienced by the characters. Symbolism plays a crucial role in emphasizing the novel's themes. The river in the story represents both life and destruction, serving as a metaphor for the unpredictable consequences of social actions. The History House symbolizes the weight of historical and social forces that shape the present. It reflects the idea that individuals cannot escape the influence of social hierarchies and historical



oppression. These narrative techniques enhance the novel's exploration of social inequality and deepen the reader's understanding of the characters' experiences.

Conclusion

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* offers a profound exploration of social inequality in Indian society. Through its portrayal of caste discrimination, gender oppression, class hierarchy, and marginalized voices, the novel reveals the destructive consequences of rigid social structures. The author's narrative demonstrates how institutionalized inequality shapes personal relationships and determines individual destinies. The tragic experiences of Ammu and Velutha highlight the severe consequences faced by those who challenge social norms. The novel serves as both a literary masterpiece and a powerful social critique. By exposing the injustices embedded within social institutions, Roy encourages readers to question hierarchical structures and advocate for a more equitable society.

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Environmental Crisis and Migration in *Gun Island* by Amitav Ghosh

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Abstract

The contemporary Indian literature addresses global concerns such as climate change, migration, and ecological imbalance. Gun Island by Amitav Ghosh is a significant contemporary novel that explores these pressing issues through a blend of myth, history, and modern reality. The novel follows the journey of Deen Datta, a rare book dealer, who discovers an old legend connected to the mysterious "Gun Merchant." As the narrative moves from India to Venice and other parts of the world, it reveals the interconnectedness between human history and environmental change. This paper examines how Gun Island portrays climate change, displacement, and the relationship between humans and nature. The novel highlights the increasing environmental disasters caused by human actions and their impact on global migration patterns. Through its rich storytelling and cultural references, Ghosh presents the urgent need to recognize ecological responsibility. The study also explores how myth and folklore serve as powerful narrative tools in explaining contemporary environmental realities.

Keyword: Climate Change, Migration, Environmental Crisis, Indian Fiction, Globalization.

Introduction

Indian Writing in English has expanded significantly in the contemporary period, addressing not only national issues but also global concerns. Many modern writers focus on themes such as identity, environmental degradation, globalization, and cultural change. Among these writers, Amitav Ghosh stands out for his unique ability to combine history, myth, and environmental awareness in his works. *Gun Island* is a remarkable contemporary novel that deals with the urgent issue of climate change and its consequences. Published in 2019, the novel explores how environmental disasters are forcing people to migrate across borders in search of safety and livelihood. The narrative connects the past and the present by revisiting an old Bengali legend about the Gun Merchant who tried to escape the wrath of the goddess Manasa. The story begins in the Sundarbans, a region known for its fragile ecosystem and vulnerability to climate change. These incidents symbolize the imbalance in nature caused by human interference. Through this narrative, the novel presents an important message about the relationship between humanity and the natural world.

Myth and Folklore in the Novel

One of the most fascinating aspects of *Gun Island* is its use of myth and folklore. The story of the Gun Merchant originates from the traditional Bengali legend associated with the snake goddess Manasa. According to the legend, the Gun Merchant tried to escape the goddess's curse by traveling across the world. However, he could never escape fate, and the story became a symbol of human arrogance and divine punishment. Amitav Ghosh creatively reinterprets this legend in a modern context. The myth becomes a metaphor for humanity's attempt to escape the consequences of environmental destruction. Just like the Gun Merchant could not escape the goddess, modern humans cannot escape the effects of climate change.



The novel suggests that myths are not merely old stories but meaningful narratives that contain wisdom about human behavior and nature. By connecting the ancient legend with contemporary environmental issues, the author shows how traditional knowledge can help us understand modern crises.

Climate Change and Environmental Crisis

Climate change is the central theme of *Gun Island*. The novel presents various examples of environmental disruption occurring in different parts of the world. Rising sea levels, cyclones, wildfires, and extreme weather conditions are described as signs of ecological imbalance. The Sundarbans, where the story begins, is one of the regions most affected by climate change. Frequent cyclones and flooding have destroyed homes and livelihoods, forcing many people to migrate to cities or foreign countries. The novel portrays these environmental disasters as consequences of human activities such as industrialization, pollution, and deforestation. Through vivid descriptions and realistic events, the author shows how climate change is not just a scientific issue but also a human and social crisis. Communities that depend on nature for survival are the most vulnerable. Farmers, fishermen, and rural populations suffer greatly when ecosystems collapse. The novel therefore raises awareness about the urgent need for environmental protection and sustainable living.

Migration and Displacement

Another important theme in the novel is migration. Environmental disasters often force people to leave their homes in search of better opportunities. In *Gun Island*, several characters experience displacement due to economic hardship and ecological instability. The narrative highlights the journey of migrants traveling from South Asia to Europe in dangerous conditions. Many refugees risk their lives crossing seas and borders, hoping to find safety and employment. The novel shows the harsh realities faced by these migrants, including exploitation, uncertainty, and cultural isolation. By portraying these struggles, the novel emphasizes that migration is closely linked to environmental change. When natural resources disappear and living conditions become unbearable, people have no choice but to move. The story therefore reflects a global reality where climate change is increasingly becoming a major cause of migration.

Human Relationship with Nature

Gun Island also explores the complex relationship between humans and nature. The novel suggests that modern society has forgotten the importance of living in harmony with the environment. Technological development and economic growth have often come at the cost of ecological balance. Throughout the novel, unusual natural phenomena occur, such as aggressive snakes, strange weather patterns, and forest fires. These events symbolize nature's response to human exploitation. They remind readers that nature is not passive but powerful and unpredictable. The author encourages readers to reconsider their relationship with the environment. Instead of dominating nature, humans must learn to respect and protect it. The survival of future generations depends on this awareness.

Symbolism in the Novel

Symbolism plays an important role in *Gun Island*. The figure of the Gun Merchant represents human attempts to escape responsibility. His journey across continents symbolizes the global nature of environmental problems. Similarly, the presence of snakes in the story represents the power of nature and the consequences of ignoring ecological balance. Snakes, often associated with the goddess Manasa, act as reminders that nature has its own laws which humans cannot violate without consequences. Venice, another important setting in the



novel, symbolizes the vulnerability of human civilization. The city itself is threatened by rising sea levels, reflecting the broader danger posed by climate change to the entire world.

Conclusion

Gun Island is a powerful contemporary novel that addresses some of the most important challenges of the modern world. Through its engaging narrative and imaginative storytelling, the novel highlights the interconnected issues of climate change, migration, and environmental responsibility. By blending myth, history, and scientific reality, Amitav Ghosh creates a story that is both thought-provoking and relevant. The novel reminds readers that environmental problems are not limited to one country or region but affect the entire planet. Ultimately, there is a need for greater awareness and collective action to protect the environment. It encourages humanity to learn from the past and adopt sustainable practices for the future. The novel stands as an important contribution to contemporary Indian Writing in English and to global environmental literature.

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Transformative Power of Education in Sudha Murthy's *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read*

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Abstract

Sudha Murthy is a famous Indian writer, social worker, and philanthropist. She is known for her simple and inspiring stories about life and values. She has written many books in English and Kannada for both children and adults. Her works often focus on education, kindness, and social change. Through her writing, she encourages people to learn and improve their lives. Education has the power to transform lives by giving people confidence, independence, and knowledge. In the story "How I Taught My Grandmother to Read," written by Sudha Murthy, the author explains how education changed her grandmother's life. The grandmother feels helpless because she cannot read a novel on her own. This motivates her to learn reading and writing even at the age of sixty-two. With determination and the support of her granddaughter, she becomes literate. The story highlights that education is not limited by age and that learning can bring dignity, self-respect, and personal growth.

Keywords: Education, Transformation, Literacy, Determination, Empowerment, Learning.

Introduction

Education plays a vital role in the development of individuals and society. It helps people gain knowledge, develop skills, and build confidence. Education also enables individuals to become independent and make informed decisions in life. In the inspiring story *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read*, Sudha Murthy narrates a real-life incident from her childhood. The story revolves around her grandmother, who had never been to school but later developed a strong desire to learn how to read. This touching narrative highlights the transformative power of education and demonstrates how learning can change a person's life regardless of age. The story also reflects the social conditions of earlier times when many women in India were deprived of educational opportunities. Through a simple yet powerful narrative, Sudha Murthy emphasizes the importance of literacy and lifelong learning.

Background of the Story

The story is set in a small village in Karnataka where Sudha Murthy spent her childhood with her grandparents. During that time, a popular Kannada magazine published a serialized novel titled *Kashi Yatre*. The novel was widely loved by readers and followed the story of an elderly woman who dreams of visiting the holy city of Kashi. Sudha Murthy's grandmother was very interested in this novel. However, she could not read the magazine herself because she was illiterate. Every week, Sudha would read the story aloud to her grandmother. Listening to the story became a special and joyful routine for both of them. The grandmother eagerly waited for every Thursday when the next chapter of the story would appear in the magazine. This shows her curiosity and love for stories despite her inability to read.

The Realization of Illiteracy

One day, Sudha Murthy had to attend a wedding in a nearby village and could not read the latest episode of the novel to her grandmother. The grandmother was very eager to



know what happened in the story, but she could not read it on her own. She asked others around her to read it, but they were busy and unable to help immediately. At that moment, she realized the helplessness and embarrassment of being illiterate. She felt dependent on others for something as simple as reading a story. This experience deeply affected her and made her determined to learn how to read and write. It became the turning point that motivated her to seek education even at an old age.

Determination to Learn

After realizing the importance of literacy, the grandmother requested Sudha to teach her how to read Kannada. Although Sudha was only a young girl, she agreed to become her grandmother's teacher. Learning at the age of sixty-two was not easy. The grandmother had to start from the basics by learning the alphabet and simple words. She practiced regularly and worked very hard to improve her reading skills. Her determination and dedication demonstrate that learning is possible at any stage of life. The story clearly shows that the desire to learn is more important than age or circumstances. After several months of practice, the grandmother successfully learned to read. On the occasion of "Saraswati Puja" during the festival of *Navaratri*, she expressed her gratitude to Sudha. She touched Sudha's feet as a mark of respect, which is a traditional Indian way of honoring a teacher. Sudha felt emotional and embarrassed because she believed she was too young to receive such respect from her grandmother. However, the grandmother explained that she was honoring her as her teacher. She also expressed her happiness in being able to read the novel *Kashi Yatre* independently. This moment symbolizes the success of her determination and the transformative power of education.

Education as a Transformative Force

The story strongly highlights how education can transform a person's life. First, education provides independence. Before learning to read, the grandmother had to depend on others for reading simple things. The grandmother felt proud of herself after achieving her goal. Her ability to read gave her a sense of personal accomplishment. Third, the story emphasizes lifelong learning. It proves that learning is not limited to childhood or youth. Anyone who has the determination to learn can achieve success. Finally, the story highlights the importance of teachers. Even though Sudha was young, she played an important role in helping her grandmother achieve her dream. The story also reflects the social importance of education, especially for women. In earlier times, many girls in India were not allowed to attend school. As a result, many women remained illiterate throughout their lives. Through this narrative, Sudha Murthy highlights the need for equal educational opportunities for everyone. Education not only improves individual lives but also contributes to the development of society. The story encourages readers to support literacy and help others gain access to education. Even a small effort, such as teaching someone to read, can make a significant difference.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read* by Sudha Murthy is a powerful example of how education can transform lives. The story shows that education brings independence, dignity, and confidence. The grandmother's determination to learn at the age of sixty-two proves that learning has no age limit. Her journey from illiteracy to literacy represents the transformative power of education. Sudha Murthy's narrative inspires readers to value education and support lifelong learning. It reminds us that education is not only about acquiring knowledge but also about empowering individuals and improving their quality of life.



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The Journey from Displacement to Discovery: An Autobiographical Reading of *A Long Way Home* by Saroo Brierley

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Abstract

Autobiographical narratives often reveal powerful experiences of struggle, survival, and self-discovery. A Long Way Home by Saroo Brierley is an inspiring life story that describes the journey of a young boy who becomes separated from his family in India and later reunites with them after many years. The autobiography highlights the emotional impact of displacement and the search for identity. Despite being adopted by an Australian family and growing up in a different cultural environment, Brierley never forgot his early childhood memories. With the help of modern technology such as Google Earth, he began searching for his hometown and eventually succeeded in locating his family after twenty-five years. This study explores the themes of displacement, identity, resilience, and rediscovery presented in the autobiography. The narrative demonstrates how determination, memory, and technological tools can help individuals reconnect with their past and rediscover their sense of belonging.

Keywords: Displacement, Identity, Autobiography, Childhood Trauma, Belonging.

Introduction

Autobiographies provide valuable insights into personal experiences and social realities. *A Long Way Home* by Saroo Brierley tells the extraordinary true story of a boy who was accidentally separated from his family at a very young age. The narrative describes his difficult childhood experiences, his adoption by an Australian couple, and his long search to rediscover his biological family. The autobiography reflects important themes such as displacement, cultural identity, and the emotional connection between family members. Brierley's story is not only about survival but also about the human desire to find one's roots and understand one's past. This journey from displacement to discovery forms the central theme of the narrative.

Displacement and Childhood Challenges

One of the most significant themes in *A Long Way Home* is displacement. Brierley was born into a poor family in India and lived with his mother and siblings in difficult circumstances. At the age of five, he accidentally became separated from his brother at a railway station. This moment changed his life completely. He boarded a train that traveled a long distance and eventually arrived in the unfamiliar city of Kolkata. As a young child who did not know the language or the way back home, Brierley faced many difficulties. He wandered through the streets, searching for help and trying to survive. Later, he was placed in an orphanage where he was eventually adopted by an Australian family. This experience highlights the vulnerability of children who become lost or displaced due to poverty and social circumstances.

Identity and Life in a New Culture

After his adoption, Brierley moved to Australia and was raised by a loving family. His adoptive parents provided him with education, stability, and support. Although he adapted to



his new life, he often remembered fragments of his childhood in India. These memories created a strong emotional connection to his birthplace. As he grew older, he became curious about his past and wanted to understand where he came from. This reflects the complex process of identity formation experienced by many adopted individuals. Brierley's life represents the coexistence of two identitieshis present life in Australia and his childhood roots in India. The autobiography shows that identity is shaped not only by current circumstances but also by memories and personal history.

Technology and the Search for Home

A remarkable aspect of Brierley's journey is his use of technology to search for his hometown. As an adult, he began exploring satellite images using Google Earth. With only childhood memories of railway stations, landscapes, and travel distances, he spent several years carefully studying maps and train routes. His patience and determination eventually helped him identify a place that matched his memories. After confirming the location through online communication and social media, he discovered the village where he had been born. This discovery marked an important turning point in his life. The role of technology in the narrative demonstrates how modern tools can reconnect individuals with their past. It also highlights the power of perseverance and hope in achieving seemingly impossible goals.

Reunion and Rediscovery

The most emotional moment in the autobiography occurs when Brierley finally returns to India and reunites with his biological family after twenty-five years. His mother and relatives had believed that he was lost forever. The reunion was filled with joy, emotion, and relief. This moment represents the completion of Brierley's journey from displacement to discovery. It allowed him to reconnect with his roots and gain a deeper understanding of his identity. The story also emphasizes the enduring strength of family bonds, even after many years of separation.

Conclusion

A Long Way Home by Saroo Brierley presents a powerful autobiographical narrative about displacement, identity, and rediscovery. Brierley's journey from a lost child to a young man who successfully reunites with his family demonstrates resilience, hope, and determination. The autobiography highlights the emotional challenges faced by displaced children and the importance of memory and family connections in shaping identity. Furthermore, the story shows how modern technology can play a significant role in reconnecting individuals with their past. Ultimately, Brierley's life story reminds readers that the search for home and belonging is a deeply meaningful human experience.

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Feminism and Women's Oppression in *The Palace of Illusion*

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Abstract

This article examines the themes of feminism and women's oppression in The Palace of Illusions by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. The novel is a retelling of the epic Mahabharata from the perspective of Draupadi, offering a female voice that is often absent in traditional narratives. Through Draupadi's experiences, the novel highlights the patriarchal structures that control women's lives. Themes such as forced marriage, political manipulation, humiliation, motherhood, and the suffering of women during war are explored in depth. The article also examines the struggles of other women characters such as Gandhari and Kunti, revealing how social expectations and gender norms shape their lives. At the same time, the novel portrays Draupadi's resilience and determination to assert her identity within an oppressive society.

Keywords: Feminism, Women's Oppression, Draupadi, Patriarchy, Motherhood, War.

Introduction

The Palace of Illusions by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is a modern retelling of the epic Mahabharata from the perspective of Draupadi. In traditional versions of the epic, Draupadi appears mainly as a catalyst for the Great War between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. However, Divakaruni's novel gives Draupadi her own voice, thoughts, and emotions, presenting the story through a feminist lens. The novel explores how women in ancient society were often treated as instruments of political alliances and family honor. Draupadi's life reflects these realities: she is born into a patriarchal world, forced into decisions made by men, and made to suffer for actions that were never her own. Through her narrative, the novel highlights themes of female oppression, identity, resistance, and the emotional consequences.

Feminism is the Palace of Illusions

One of the central aspects of the novel is its feminist perspective. By narrating the story through Draupadi's voice, Divakaruni challenges the male-centered narrative of the original epic. Draupadi is not merely a silent queen; she becomes an intelligent, questioning, and emotionally complex character who reflects on her life and the injustices she faces. From her childhood, Draupadi seeks knowledge and independence. She listens secretly to lessons meant only for men, learning about politics and governance. This curiosity reflects her desire to shape her own destiny rather than remain confined to traditional female roles. However, despite her intelligence and ambition, the society around her continues to treat women as secondary beings. Women are expected to obey fathers, husbands, and societal rules without question. Through Draupadi's reflections, the novel critiques these expectations and presents a powerful commentary on gender inequality.

Draupadi as the Victim of the Patriarchal Society

Draupadi's struggles begin even before her marriage. Her father, King Drupad, views her primarily as a tool to fulfill his political ambitions. In the novel, her father's focus remains on his son, who is destined to avenge him against Drona. Draupadi grows up feeling



emotionally neglected because her father values political revenge more than her personal happiness. Drupad eventually organizes her swayamvara not only to find a husband but also to strengthen political alliances. Draupadi becomes a pawn in a larger political game rather than an individual with her own desires.

Forced Marriage to the Pandavas

One of the most striking examples of female oppression in the novel is Draupadi's marriage. After Arjuna wins the swayamvara contest, Draupadi expects to marry him alone. However, due to a misunderstanding involving Kunti's command, she is forced to marry all five Pandava brothers. Draupadi herself compares this situation to being treated like an object passed from one man to another. She feels that her personal choice and emotional desires are completely ignored. This event highlights how women in patriarchal societies often lack control over their own lives and relationships.

The Humiliation at the Kuru Court

One of the most powerful moments in the novel occurs during the infamous dice game. After everything in gambling, Yudhishtira gambles Draupadi herself and loses her to the Kauravas. Draupadi is dragged into the royal court and publicly humiliated. Despite the fact that she had no role in the gambling game, she is forced to bear the consequences of her husband's actions. The attempt to disrobe her in front of the assembly becomes one of the most painful symbols. Instead of remaining silent, Draupadi questions the legality and morality of the act. Her protest in the court represents one of the strongest feminist moments in the novel, as she challenges the authority of powerful men and demands justice.

Draupadi's Quest for Justice

Although Draupadi lives within a deeply patriarchal society, she refuses to remain passive. After the humiliation in the court, she accompanies the Pandavas during their exile in the forest. However, she does not do this merely out of wifely duty. Draupadi deliberately reminds the Pandavas of the humiliation she suffered so that they cannot forget the injustice done to her. Her constant reminders push them toward the eventual war against the Kauravas. Even though she understands that the war will cost her dearly—including the lives of her father, brothers, and sons—she still seeks justice. This determination reflects her resilience and her refusal to accept oppression silently.

The Plight of Women

The novel also explores the suffering of other women in the epic. Gandhari, the wife of Dhritarashtra, is traditionally known for covering her eyes as an act of devotion to her blind husband. However, the retelling presents another interpretation. Gandhari's blindfold may represent silent protest against the forced marriage imposed on her. By refusing to see the man she was compelled to marry, she expresses resistance within the limited power available to her. Kunti's story reveals another dimension of female suffering. Before her marriage, she gives birth to a son, Karna, through divine intervention.

Motherhood and Emotional Loss

Motherhood is another important theme in the novel. Draupadi becomes the mother of five sons, but she rarely gets the opportunity to raise them. During the Pandavas' exile, she leaves her children with her maternal family while she accompanies her husband's to the forest. As a result, she never fully experiences motherhood or develops a close bond with her children. By the time the war ends, Draupadi hopes to reconnect with them and live peacefully. However, tragedy strikes again when her sons are killed during the night attack by Ashwatthama. This devastating loss emphasizes how war destroys families and robs mothers of their children.

**The Cost of War**

The war in the Mahabharata is often celebrated as a heroic battle between good and evil. However, *The Palace of Illusions* emphasizes the human cost of war. Countless soldiers and innocent people lose their lives, and many women are left widowed and grieving.

Conclusion

The Palace of Illusions presents a powerful feminist reinterpretation of the Mahabharata by giving voice to Draupadi and other women characters. Through themes of forced marriage, humiliation, political manipulation, motherhood, and war, the novel exposes the oppressive structures that shape women's lives. Despite the limitations imposed on her, Draupadi emerges as a resilient and determined figure who refuses to remain silent in the face of injustice. Her story highlights both the suffering and the strength of women living in patriarchal societies. Ultimately, the novel demonstrates that women's voices, experiences, and struggles are essential to understanding history and literature. By reclaiming Draupadi's perspective, Divakaruni transforms an ancient epic into a powerful reflection on gender, identity, and human resilience.

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Widow's Struggle for Freedom in Bapsi Sidhwa's "WATER"

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Abstract

Widow's Struggle for Freedom" from the novel Water written by Bapsi Sidhwa highlights the harsh life of widows in traditional Indian society. The story describes how widows were forced to live in ashrams after the death of their husbands. They had to shave their heads, wear plain white clothes, and follow strict social rules. Society treated widows as unlucky and denied them basic rights and freedom. Many widows were very young, yet they were forced to live a life of loneliness and poverty. The novel shows the emotional pain, suffering, and social discrimination faced by widows. Through the characters, the author criticizes the unfair customs that oppressed women. Some widows hope for change and dream of a life with dignity, education, and independence. Their struggle represents the wider fight for women's rights and social reform. The work also reflects the influence of reform movements that supported widow remarriage and equality. Overall, the story conveys a strong message about humanity, justice, and the need to challenge harmful tradition.

Keywords: Widow, Struggle, Freedom, Water, Bapsi Sidhwa.

Introduction

The novel Water by Bapsi Sidhwa presents the painful life of widows in India during the early 20th century. In traditional Hindu society at that time, widows were often forced to live in isolation and follow strict social rules. The story shows how these women suffered emotionally, socially, and economically. The article "Widow's Struggle for Freedom" highlights the hardships faced by widows and their desire to live with dignity and freedom.

Life of Widows in Society

In the novel, widows are sent to live in a widow's ashram after their husbands die. They are expected to shave their heads, wear plain white clothes, and live a life of strict discipline. Society believes that widows bring bad luck, so they are separated from normal family life. Because of these customs, widows lose their identity, happiness, and basic rights. Young widows suffer even more. Many of them are still children when their husbands die, but they are forced to live like old women. They cannot study, work freely, or remarry. Their lives become full of loneliness and poverty.

The Desire for Freedom

Despite these harsh conditions, some widows in the story hope for a better life. They dream of education, independence, and the right to make their own decisions. The novel shows that these women are not weak; they have courage and a strong desire for freedom.

Through the characters, Bapsi Sidhwa criticizes the social traditions that restrict widows' lives. She shows that these customs are unfair and cruel. The widows' struggle represents the larger fight for women's rights Reform and Change and equality

Social Rights Reform

The story also reflects the influence of social reform movements in India. Reformers believed that widows should have the right to remarry and live normal lives. These ideas slowly challenged old traditions and encouraged society to change. By presenting the widows'



suffering, the novel raises awareness about injustice and the need for compassion and social reform.

Conclusion

“Widow’s Struggle for Freedom” from *Water* highlights the difficult lives of widows and their longing for dignity and independence. Through powerful storytelling, Bapsi Sidhwa exposes the harsh social customs that restrict women’s freedom. The novel ultimately encourages readers to question unfair traditions and support equality and human rights.

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Reconstruction, Identity and Resilience: A Critical Analysis of Mental Health and Recovery in Preeti Shenoy's *Wake Up, Life is Calling*

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Abstract

*Preeti Shenoy is a popular Indian author, blogger, speaker, and illustrator known for writing emotional and relatable stories about relationships, mental health, and everyday life. This paper analyzes themes of reconstruction, identity, and resilience in *Wake Up, Life is Calling* by Preeti Shenoy. The novel portrays the journey of Ankita Sharma, who struggles with bipolar disorder and the stigma surrounding mental illness. It highlights her experiences with trauma, treatment, and her efforts to rebuild her life and identity. The study explores how resilience, self-acceptance, and supportive relationships contribute to mental health recovery. Through Ankita's story, the novel emphasizes hope, healing, and the importance of understanding mental health in contemporary society.*

Keywords: Mental Health, Identity Reconstruction, Bipolar Disorder, Recovery, Healing.

Introduction

Mental health has become an important subject in contemporary literature, as writers increasingly focus on psychological struggles and emotional recovery. Literature often reflects the realities of society, and modern authors have begun to portray mental illness with greater sensitivity and awareness. One such author is Preeti Shenoy, whose works frequently explore themes of personal growth, emotional healing, and self-discovery. Her novel *Wake Up, Life is Calling* presents a powerful narrative about mental health and the journey toward recovery. The novel continues the story of Ankita Sharma, a young woman who is recovering from bipolar disorder and trying to rebuild her life after experiencing severe emotional trauma. Through Ankita's struggles, the novel highlights the challenges faced by individuals dealing with mental illness, including fear, social stigma, and the pressure to appear "normal." The themes of reconstruction, identity, and resilience play a central role in the narrative. Ankita's journey is not only about overcoming psychological difficulties but also about rediscovering herself and building a new sense of identity. The novel illustrates how recovery requires emotional strength, support from others, and the willingness to accept one's past experiences. This paper critically examines how *Wake Up, Life is Calling* portrays mental health recovery, focusing on the reconstruction of identity and the resilience required to move forward after psychological trauma.

Representation of Mental Health in the Novel

One of the significant aspects of the novel is its realistic depiction of mental health struggles. Ankita's experiences with bipolar disorder illustrate how mental illness can affect a person's thoughts, emotions, and daily life. After undergoing treatment in a psychiatric institution, Ankita attempts to return to a normal routine by continuing her studies and reconnecting with society. However, the process of recovery is not easy. Ankita constantly fears that she might relapse or lose control of her emotions again. These fears demonstrate the lingering psychological impact of mental illness even after medical treatment. The novel also highlights how individuals recovering from mental illness often face social stigma and



misunderstanding. Shenoy portrays mental health as a complex and deeply personal experience rather than simply a medical condition. Through Ankita's inner thoughts and emotional conflicts, readers gain insight into the struggles of someone trying to regain stability and confidence in life.

Reconstruction of Identity

Identity reconstruction is a central theme in the novel. After her mental health crisis, Ankita struggles with how she sees herself and how she believes others perceive her. She worries that her past hospitalization will define her identity and limit her future opportunities. The process of rebuilding her identity begins when Ankita starts focusing on her passions and talents. Writing becomes an important part of her life and helps her express her emotions and thoughts. Through creative expression, she begins to regain her confidence and sense of individuality. Another important aspect of identity reconstruction is self-acceptance. Ankita gradually learns that her mental health struggles are only one part of her life and do not determine her entire identity. Another important theme in the novel is the issue of mental health awareness and the stigma associated with psychological disorders. Many individuals suffering from mental health conditions hesitate to speak openly about their struggles due to fear of judgment or discrimination. Through Ankita's experiences, the novel raises awareness about the need for greater understanding and compassion toward people dealing with mental illness. It challenges the stereotypes that often surround psychological disorders and emphasizes that individuals with mental health conditions can still lead successful and fulfilling lives. By addressing these issues, the novel encourages readers to develop empathy and recognize the importance of mental health support in society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *Wake Up, Life is Calling* presents a compelling exploration of mental health, identity reconstruction, and resilience. Through the character of Ankita Sharma, Preeti Shenoy portrays the emotional complexities of recovering from psychological trauma and rebuilding one's life. The novel highlights the challenges faced by individuals dealing with mental illness, including social stigma, self-doubt, and the fear of relapse. At the same time, it offers a hopeful message by demonstrating the power of resilience, self-acceptance, and supportive relationships.

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Caste Discrimination in Arundhati Roy's "The God of Small Things"

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Abstract

*Arundhati Roy is an Indian writer best known for her novel *The God of Small Things*, which won the Booker Prize in 1997. She writes about social issues such as caste discrimination and injustice. This paper examines caste discrimination in *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. The novel portrays the rigid caste system and its impact on individuals and relationships in Indian society. The forbidden relationship between Ammu and Velutha exposes the cruelty of caste prejudice. Roy highlights how social norms marginalize Dalits and restrict personal freedom. The study shows that caste discrimination leads to social injustice and emotional suffering.*

Keywords: Caste Discrimination, Social Hierarchy, Dalit Identity, Untouchability, Social Injustice.

Introduction

Indian society has historically been structured by the caste system, which divides people into hierarchical social groups based on birth. This system determines occupation, social status, and personal relationships. In literature, many writers have explored the injustices created by caste oppression. One such powerful representation is found in *The God of Small Things*. The novel portrays the life of a Syrian Christian family in Ayemenem, Kerala, and reveals how caste prejudice shapes their lives. Roy uses the tragic story of Velutha, a Dalit carpenter, to demonstrate the cruelty and injustice embedded in the caste hierarchy. The novel also exposes how caste discrimination intersects with gender, class, and power in Indian society.

Representation of Caste System in the Novel

The novel portrays the caste system as a rigid and oppressive social structure. Even though the story takes place in modern India, the characters continue to follow traditional caste rules. Velutha belongs to the Paravan caste, which is considered untouchable. Despite being skilled and intelligent, he faces discrimination because of his caste. Velutha is allowed to work in the pickle factory but is never treated as an equal member of society. The discrimination he experiences reflects the deeply rooted caste prejudices in Indian society.

Velutha as a Victim of Caste Discrimination

Velutha is the most significant representation of caste oppression in the novel. Although he is talented, hardworking, and compassionate, his Dalit identity limits his opportunities and freedom. Velutha's relationship with Ammu becomes the central conflict of the story. Ammu belongs to an upper-caste Syrian Christian family, and her relationship with Velutha violates what Roy describes as the "Love Laws" rules that dictate "who should be loved, and how much." The crossing of caste boundaries is considered unacceptable by society. As a result, Velutha becomes the target of social hatred and violence. He is falsely accused of kidnapping and rape and is brutally beaten by the police. His death symbolizes the extreme consequences faced by those who challenge caste hierarchy. Roy uses this tragedy to criticize a society that values social status over human dignity.

**Intersection of Caste, Gender, and Power**

Roy also explores how caste discrimination intersects with gender oppression. Ammu, as a divorced woman, already faces social stigma. Her relationship with Velutha further intensifies the condemnation she experiences. The patriarchal structure of society limits Ammu's freedom and punishes her for challenging social norms. She is rejected by her family and eventually dies alone. Roy shows that women and lower-caste individuals are both victims of oppressive social structures. In the novel, power is often exercised by upper-caste characters who manipulate social institutions to maintain their dominance. Baby Kochamma falsely accuses Velutha to protect the family's reputation. This act demonstrates how caste prejudice can lead to injustice and violence.

Social Criticism in the Novel

The novel exposes the hypocrisy of a society that claims to be modern and progressive while still practicing discrimination. Through Velutha's suffering, Roy emphasizes the need for social change and equality. Roy also demonstrates how caste discrimination affects not only individuals but also entire communities. The trauma experienced by characters like Estha and Rahel reflects the long-term consequences of social injustice.

Conclusion

Caste discrimination is a central theme in *The God of Small Things*. Through the tragic story of Velutha and Ammu, Arundhati Roy exposes the cruelty and injustice of the caste system. The novel shows how rigid social hierarchies destroy human relationships and deny individuals their dignity and freedom. Roy's work serves as a powerful critique of Indian society and highlights the urgent need to challenge discriminatory traditions. Ultimately, *The God of Small Things* remains an important literary work that exposes the enduring impact of caste discrimination and advocates for a more just and humane society.

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Education through Empowerment in Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises*

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Abstract

Jaishree Misra is a well-known Indian novelist whose works often explore themes of love, family relationships, cultural traditions, and women's struggles in society. This paper explores the significance of promises, oaths, and covenants in ancient civilizations, emphasizing their role in social, political, and religious contexts. Promises functioned as mechanisms of trust, legitimacy, and societal cohesion, reflected in legal codes, sacred texts, and oral traditions. By analyzing examples from Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt, Classical Greece, and other early cultures, this study illustrates how the binding nature of verbal and written commitments influenced governance, diplomacy, and personal relationships. The research underscores that promises were more than moral obligations; they were essential instruments for maintaining order, enforcing justice, and sustaining collective cultural identity.

Keywords: Education, Empowerment, Jaishree Misra, *Ancient Promises*.

Introduction

Throughout history, the act of making a promise has held profound weight in human societies. Ancient civilizations relied heavily on verbal commitments and written covenants to regulate interpersonal behavior, political agreements, and religious devotion. These commitments served as guarantees of integrity and mechanisms to enforce social norms, often invoking divine authority or legal consequences. The purpose of this paper is to examine the multifaceted roles of promises in ancient societies and their enduring cultural significance. This paper examines the multifaceted role of promises in early civilizations, focusing on Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt, and Classical Greece, while drawing comparative insights from other cultures such as Ancient Israel and India. The study explores three primary dimensions: social and political significance, religious and moral implications, and literary and legal codifications. Understanding these dimensions demonstrates that ancient promises were not mere expressions of intention—they were foundational to societal stability and cultural continuity.

The Social and Political Function of Promises

Promises were not merely expressions of personal intention; they were foundational to social cohesion. In Mesopotamia, for instance, contracts and oaths—documented on clay tablets—regulated trade, marriage, and property rights. The Code of Hammurabi illustrates that promises backed by law could carry severe consequences if broken, ensuring trust and accountability. In Ancient Egypt, pharaonic decrees often took the form of solemn promises to the populace, promising protection, justice, or prosperity in exchange for loyalty and tribute. Similarly, in Classical Greece, oaths sworn by citizens, soldiers, and leaders reinforced civic duty and communal identity, underpinning democratic institutions and military alliances. Promises also played critical roles in diplomacy. Treaties and alliances across early states often relied on the sanctity of pledges, with violations threatening war or



divine retribution. These binding agreements demonstrate that promises were not abstract moral statements but tangible instruments shaping political landscapes.

Religious and Moral Dimensions

In addition to social and political roles, promises held religious significance. Ancient texts such as the Hebrew Bible, Vedic scriptures, and Mesopotamian myths frequently depict the divine oversight of human pledges. The concept of swearing an oath before a deity imbued commitments with moral and cosmic weight, making them inseparable from the spiritual obligations of the community. For example, in the Epic of Gilgamesh, promises of friendship and protection underpin narrative conflicts and resolutions, reflecting societal values. In the Vedic tradition, sacrificial rituals were often accompanied by vows that reinforced the social and cosmic order. These examples indicate that promises functioned as bridges between human conduct and spiritual authority, ensuring that ethical obligations were taken seriously.

Promises in Literature and Oral Tradition

Literature and oral tradition in antiquity often highlighted the ethical and societal implications of promises. Homeric epics, Egyptian wisdom texts, and Mesopotamian tales frequently depict characters whose fates hinge on the keeping or breaking of vows. Such narratives reinforced the moral gravity of promises, teaching audiences that personal honor and societal stability were intertwined. Through storytelling, societies transmitted lessons about trust, loyalty, and justice, ensuring that the ethical framework surrounding promises was internalized across generations. This illustrates that promises were simultaneously practical, moral, and educational tools.

Conclusion

Promises in Ancient Civilizations were multifaceted instruments that transcended mere words. They reinforced social cohesion, underpinned political alliances, codified ethical behavior, and bridged human and divine authority. By examining their legal, religious, and literary dimensions, this paper highlights the centrality of promises in shaping early human society. Understanding these ancient commitments offers insight into the foundational principles of trust, morality, and governance that continue to influence modern cultures.

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Exploring Fragmentation in Alice Smith's *Autumn*

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Abstract

This article examines the theme of fragmentation in Alice Smith's poem Autumn. Fragmentation is presented as an important literary technique used to express emotional instability, memory, loss, and the changing nature of human experience. Through fragmented structure, imagery, language, and themes, Smith reflects the psychological and emotional condition of the speaker. The article explores how fragmentation functions as both a stylistic device and a thematic tool, making Autumn a significant poem in contemporary literature.

Keywords: Fragmentation, Alice Smith, Autumn, Memory, Identity, Modern Poetry

Introduction

Alice Smith's *Autumn* is a reflective poem that deals with change, loss, and emotional uncertainty. The poem takes inspiration from the autumn season, which traditionally symbolizes decay, transition, and endings. However, instead of presenting these ideas in a smooth and continuous manner, Smith uses fragmentation to convey the complex nature of human emotions. Fragmentation in *Autumn* appears in the poem's structure, imagery, language, and themes. This technique helps the poet express the broken and unsettled mental state of the speaker. This article aims to explore how fragmentation operates in *Autumn* and how it enhances the poem's meaning and emotional impact.

Understanding Fragmentation in Literature

Fragmentation is a literary technique where ideas, images, or narratives are presented in broken or discontinuous forms. Instead of following a clear sequence, fragmented texts move in jumps and gaps. This technique became popular in modern and postmodern literature, where writers attempted to represent the fractured reality of modern life. In poetry, fragmentation may appear through Broken or irregular lines and stanzas Abrupt shifts in images or ideas in complete sentences or thoughts Non-linear movement of time Alice Smith uses these features in *Autumn* to reflect emotional disturbance and inner conflict.

Fragmented Structure in Autumn

The structure of *Autumn* is not linear or continuous. The poem does not follow a clear beginning, middle, and end. Instead, it is composed of short sections and scattered thoughts. This fragmented structure reflects the speaker's unstable emotional state. The stanza breaks occur unexpectedly, often interrupting the flow of ideas. These breaks force the reader to pause and reflect, emphasizing the gaps and silences within the poem. Such interruptions symbolize the disruption caused by emotional loss and change. The lack of a clear narrative order mirrors the way human thoughts function, especially during moments of sadness or reflection. Thus, fragmentation becomes a realistic representation of the mind.

Fragmentation of Imagery

Imagery in *Autumn* is presented in fragments rather than as a unified picture. Smith introduces images related to nature, memory, and personal emotions, but they appear suddenly and disappear quickly. Images such as falling leaves, fading light, cold air, and silence are not smoothly connected. Instead, they are placed side by side, allowing readers to



draw their own interpretations. This fragmented imagery reflects the broken emotional state of the speaker. Nature imagery in the poem also mirrors inner emotional fragmentation. The decay of autumn represents emotional emptiness, while the scattered images suggest confusion. A Smith's use of language plays a major role in creating fragmentation. The poem includes incomplete sentences, abrupt pauses, and irregular syntax. Many lines appear unfinished, suggesting that the speaker struggles to express emotions clearly. Ellipsis and silence are important features in the poem. What is left unsaid is as meaningful as what is spoken. These gaps in language reflect emotional suppression and unresolved feelings. The tone of the poem also shifts suddenly—from calm reflection to emotional intensity—creating a sense of instability. Such linguistic fragmentation deepens the emotional effect of the poem.

Loss and Change

One of the central themes of *Autumn* is loss. Fragmentation helps express how loss disrupts emotional and mental stability. Just as the poem lacks continuity, the speaker's life also seems disrupted. Autumn, as a season, represents endings and decay. Fragmentation reinforces this theme by breaking the poem into pieces, symbolizing emotional breakdown. Reader's Role and Interpretation Fragmentation requires active reader participation. Since the poem does not explain everything clearly, readers must connect the fragments to construct meaning. This makes the reading experience personal and engaging. The reader becomes part of the meaning-making process, interpreting gaps and silences based on individual understanding. This interaction increases the poem's depth and relevance.

Conclusion

Fragmentation in Alice Smith's *Autumn* is a powerful literary technique that enhances the poem's emotional and thematic depth. Through fragmented structure, imagery, and language, Smith effectively portrays themes of loss, memory, and emotional uncertainty. Rather than presenting a smooth narrative, the poem reflects the broken nature of human experience. Fragmentation allows the poet to express complex emotions realistically and meaningfully. Thus, *Autumn* stands as an important example of contemporary poetry that uses fragmentation to explore the human condition.

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A Call to Redefine ‘Development’: With the Ecological Eyes of Ruskin Bond’s ‘*Dust on the Mountain*’

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Abstract

We are in a world where the development has a significant role. Everything is measured by its development and it is unavoidable and unstoppable. The development always brings both facilitations and havocs. Majority of the times the humanity enjoys the benefits and the environment is inflicted. Ruskin Bond expresses his concern over the nature and condemns the damages that are brought upon the nature for the development. He criticizes the superiority mentality and brutal treatment of humans towards environment, because this superiority mentality permits them to destroy the nature in the name of development. In this work, he portrays the damages caused by the quarries and modernization. People just destroy the mountains, trees, and the ecology in order to gain the instant and temporary financial profits. The story is about the personal experience of the protagonist, Bisnu. It clearly explains that the modern developments do not uplift the life situation the humanity. Rather, they make the humankind to be deprived of the fundamental things like pure air, uncontaminated water, regularity of seasons, rain at appropriate time for cultivation, etc. It causes climate change, global warming, Change of the seasons, failure of monsoon rain, etc. The author clearly indicates the damages and calls for a conversion for respect the nature and to safeguard, not for its welfare but for the humanity’s well-being.

Keywords: Development, Environment, Cultivation, Monsoon Rain, Season Change.

Introduction

Ruskin Bond was born on 19th May 1934 at Kasauli in Himachal Pradesh, India. He is one of the greatest Indian writers in English and his contribution is well-known. He has begun his writing carrier at the age of seventeen. He has written a great number of novels, short stories, memoirs. The common features of his writings are, reflection of his life experiences, eco-centred and children literature. His contribution to the literature gained the awards like, Padma Bhushan in 2014, Padma Shri in 1999, Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puraskar in 2012, Sahitya Akademi Award in 1992, Sahitya Akademi Fellowship in 2021, Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012 and the Ramnath Goenka Sahitya Samman Lifetime Achievement Award in 2024. The short story *Dust on the Mountain* is one of his best works. It is one of the short stories in the collection of short stories called *Dust on the Mountain: Collected Stories*, published in 1990. It illustrates his love for the nature of his native place Himalayas. The protagonist, Bisnu lives with mother and his sister Puja in a small village called Tehri Garhwal and hails from an agricultural background. In this story Ruskin Bond explicates important problems like deforestation and breaking of mountain and extension of urbanization by destruction of ecosystem in the name of development.

The Lifeless Mountains

In general, the mountains are adorned with the trees, plants and herbs; everywhere it is green in colour which makes everyone to feel happy and pleasant. Moreover, they are identified with its mesmerizing greeneries, valleys, springs, fruits, flowers, etc. Nonetheless,



the experience of the Bisnu, the protagonist is entirely different and he is surprised and shocked to see the worst condition of the nature. The author explicates few reasons for the deforestation. First and foremost, it takes place for selfishness motto of expanding the living area by destroying the forest zones. The modern people mentality is to live comfortably in all the seasons. In order to make their life more comfortable, people are making multiple houses. It is not used throughout the year rather for only for a particular season. They build summer villas in the hill stations. They destroy the mountains and build many buildings personal reasons and for the commercial purposes. They cut down huge number of trees in order to build the luxuries houses, to make the facilities like road, electricity, parking, swimming pool, etc. In this process they not only cut down trees, but also destroy various types of precious herbs, plants, etc. These building are used as tourist villas to obtain huge amount of money and this increase the tourist attraction to the mountain areas.

Thus, the serenity of the place is lost and the cost of living is increased. The saddest expression of the fellow passenger of Bisnu in bus to Mussoorie says “The only forests that remain are in remote places where there are no roads.” (*Dust on the Mountain* 13). He views the development of making road in the mountain is the root cause for its destruction. The other reason of deforestation is the irresponsible action of people against the nature which cause a great danger of unquenchable wildfires. Bisnu and his mother witnessed that “Now there are fires everywhere... watching the fire spread. A red line stretched right across the mountain. Thousands of Himalayan trees were perishing in the flames.” (*DM*, 3).

The White Himalayas in Dust

The other important problem the author elucidates is the quarries of limestone. They are the one of the important threats to the nature. Usually the quarries are large open-pit mine where stone or minerals are extracted from the ground. It is done by blasting of explosives or cutting it by the machineries. In mining they dig deep pits which destroy soil and uproot plant life. Although the owner justify that it is a development and it offers jobs to people like workers in the limestone mine, transports labourers, loading and loading labourers etc., it is not a correct option. It is certain that it creates a lot of job opportunities, but they are temporary, immediate and short-term income generative ideologies. In the story, Bisnu and Chittru’s the very first sight of the quarry was, “The skeletons of a few trees remained on the lower slopes. Almost everything else had gone—grass, flowers, shrubs, birds, butterflies, grasshoppers, ladybirds... A rock lizard popped its head out of a crevice” (*DM*, 32). There only rock lizard has the sign of life and the author calls it as a “prehistoric survivor” (*DM*, 2).

Contamination of Air and Noise

The very first impression of Bisnu about the quarry was very shocking. The first experience was, “They knew they were nearing the quarries when they saw clouds of limestone dust hanging in the air. The dust hid the next mountain from view” (*DM*, 32). The dust filled in the air and there was no visibility at all. Typically, the Himalayas is white in colour during the winter. As per the words of Ruskin Bond, the author there was a failure of snowfall, but still it was white in colour. It seems to be a contradiction, in reality it is not, because the Himalayas was not covered with snow but with pollution of the white limestone dust. The mountains were sedimented with limestone dust and everywhere it was white in colour. Another thing is the noise pollution and the disturbance of the living being in around the mountain. A title of a chapter is ‘*The loudest motor horn*,’ by this we could understand the noise that the vehicles make in the mountain area. It is normal that in the mountain, roads are not straight and there are many bends. The vehicles supposed to flow the horn in order to avoid the accidents. Sometimes the horn of the vehicles is blown unnecessarily and with loud



tone. “He boasted that it was the loudest horn in northern India...for it was louder than the trumpeting of an elephant—it was music to Pritam’s ears.” (*DM*, 40). They never mind it in making noise pollution.

The Irregular Seasons

The very big consequence of the destruction of the trees and mountains is the change of the seasons. We cannot simply call it as the changes of the seasons of climate, rather it is a change of the life style of the people. It completely vicissitudes the life of the people itself. This affects strongly the livelihood the farmers and the people who depend upon the cultivation and it has a chain of reactions. It puts their life itself upside down. This is the focal point and the beginning of the story. The story commences with the hope of the protagonist, Bisnu that he would make a good cultivation as he is from an agriculture family. their family solely depended upon it for daily bread. That is the reason why “Bisnu kept his seeds ready for sowing. A good monsoon, and there would be plenty of maize and rice to see the family through the next winter” (*DM*,1). Unfortunately, there is a change a season and failure of rain. His hope is ruined and he has to leave to the other places in order to obtain money to maintain the family.

Failure of Monsoon Rain

The subsequent effect of the seasonal change is the failure of monsoon rain and snowfall which are the very important and essential factors for cultivation. Throughout the story we can trace out the effects of the failure of monsoon rain. “There were clouds the next day but they brought only a drizzle... But there were to be no downpours that year. Clouds gathered on the horizon but they were white and puffy and soon disappeared. True monsoon clouds would have been dark and heavy with moisture. There were other signs—or lack of them—that warned of a long dry summer” (*DM*, 5). Further, the failure of snowfall and monsoon rain triggered the water scarcity for the cultivation. This scarcity could be rectified only by the rain for what they have to wait a lot and by the time the condition of the ground was worse and harder. The author explicates “The old plough that was dragged over the hard ground by Bisnu’s lean oxen made hardly any impression” (*DM*, 1). Since the winter season did not give much rain, the hillsides lost its greenery and turned to be brown in colour and the land had turn to be very harder. It is also evident that the insufficiency of water for cultivation and irrigation affected the production too. The following situations express the same “Puja’s apricot tree usually gave them a basket full of fruit every summer. This year it produced barely a handful of apricots, lacking juice and flavour. The tree looked ready to die, its leaves curled up in despair.” (*DM*, 6). The same situation was found not only in Bisnu’s native place but also in Delhi too. The worry of the truck driver Pritam to Bisnu was that usually the production of his walnut tree was two baskets of walnuts. The change of seasons caused in the view by Pritam is, “it was a bad year for fruit. There was no rain. And the stream is too far away” (*DM*, 44). The failure of monsoon rain too affected the economic status of the people too. There is a situation was caused upon the monsoon rain and it fails, as a result, Bisnu, the protagonist had to go out of his village to the neighbouring town to find a job for welfare of his family. He decided to go to Mussoorie a touristic place with hope of getting job easily, as there is a strong touristic attraction during summer.

The bad effects of the failure of monsoon not only affected the human beings but also it is expanded to all the living beings. Usually, where there is proper monsoon, the trees have life and birds come over there for food and shelter. In Himalayas also the same, but the speciality as per the record of the author is that “The Himalayan barbet, who usually heralded the approach of the monsoon with strident calls from the top of a spruce tree” (*DM*, 6). When



the birds sing, it is an invitation to the farmers to get ready to prepare their land for the agricultural works. Since, there is no enough rain and life in the trees, the birds stopped their visit. Consequently, the trees were without any birds and the place was very quiet without the humming of the birds.

Health Hazards

It obvious that the pollutions bring the health hazards to the people. The dust from the quarries is not just a visual nuisance. It is described the work that the limestone quarries cause serious problems. "Bisnu could feel the dust under his eyelids and in his mouth. And as they approached the quarries, the dust increased" (DM, 32). It is highlighting the immediate health hazards for workers and nearby residents. This connects to broader concerns about respiratory diseases like silicosis from mining dust.

Conclusion

This book is concluded with the individual transformation and his decision to save the nature. It condemns the viewpoints of the people on mountain as a resource and a profitable thing. They want to gain as much as possible and to grab all the natural resources for their personal benefit. He criticises the perception of the people that the mountain is considered not as a living entity but as a commodity from which they could extract a lot of profit. It invites us to be conscious about the destruction to the nature and ecosystem, in the name of development and economic benefits. In addition, the author is very much distressed that the people never apprehend the consequences of the harm done to the ecosystem. it is because, our profits are short-term but the damage cause to the nature is irretrievable and permanent. Further, it calls everyone to embrace a new vision of development with respect, reciprocity, and reverence for the natural world. This is possible only when we adopt the attitude of a Christian Saint, the Patron of Ecology, St. Francis of Assisi. He treated the nature equal to him, even went one step ahead in accepting them as his brothers and sisters. For him, earth is mother, the rest of the things are his brothers and sisters. For example, in his poem called *Canticle of Creatures* address them as follow brother sun, sister moon, brother wind, sister star, brother fire, sister water etc. Only this brotherly care would give us the attitude of taking care the ecology and ecosystem and we do only the essential developmental works without affecting the ecosystem much.

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Psychology of Narcissism in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*

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Abstract

*This study deals with the character of Vasu in R.K. Narayan's *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* through a psycho-analytic lens, drawing primarily on the ideas of Sigmund Freud and Otto Kernberg. The analysis explores how Vasu's behavior reflects traits associated with narcissism, aggression, and ego-dominance, and how these psychological tendencies shape his relationships with the people and social space of Malgudi. The study considers key narrative moments to show how Vasu's excessive self-importance, lack of empathy, and destructive impulses create conflict both within himself and within the community. Kernberg's concepts of pathological narcissism and object relations help to interpret Vasu's inability to recognize boundaries or sustain meaningful human connections, while Freud's views on instinct, repression, and the unconscious provide a basis for understanding his self-destructive actions. Through this combined framework, the research argues that Vasu represents not only an individual psychological disorder but also a symbolic disruption of moral and social harmony. The study concludes that R.K. Narayan uses Vasu's character to highlight the dangers of unchecked ego, the collapse of ethical balance, and the tension between individual desire and communal responsibility.*

Keywords: Narcissism, Ego, Lack of empathy, Self-importance and Disorder.

Introduction

R. K. Narayan, whose full name is Rasipuram Krishnaswami Ayyar Narayanswami, is one of the most celebrated writers in Indian English Literature. He was born on 10 October 1906 in Chennai. One of his famous works *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* presents Vasu as a disruptive and unsettling presence or else peaceful social environment. He does not merely function as a conventional villain; rather, he appears as a psychologically complex character driven by ego, aggression, and a deep-rooted need for self-importance. His behavior challenges the moral and emotional balance of Malgudi, turning him into a figure of fear, domination, and emotional isolation. In contrast to the calm and cooperative world around him, Vasu stands as a symbol of unchecked ego and destructive self-assertion. This study analyzes Vasu through the psychoanalytic perspectives of Sigmund Freud and Otto Kernberg, focusing on how narcissistic traits such as grandiosity, emotional detachment, aggression, and destructive urges shape his personality. The paper shows how Vasu's actions gradually develop from arrogance and domination to narcissistic rage and eventual collapse. A brief mythological reading also supports the idea of Vasu as an asura-like figure (Bhasmasura) whose ego-driven nature ultimately leads to his ruin and moral corruption.

Review of Literature

Although *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* has been widely discussed by critics, most interpretations emphasize Vasu primarily as a symbol of chaos, collapse of moral order, or opposition to traditional values. Several studies consider him a representation of modern arrogance intruding into a stable social order, while others read him as a destructive personality whose values are incompatible with the ethical fabric of Malgudi. However, only



a limited number of readings explore Vasu from a strictly psychological and psychoanalytic perspective. Many analyses focus on social conflict rather than inner personality structure. This study contributes to the field by examining Vasu as a narcissistic personality type, using Freud and Kernberg as theoretical frameworks. Instead of treating Vasu simply as a symbolic antagonist, this approach explains his behavior as the result of deep psychological traits rooted in egotistical thinking, emotional emptiness, and aggressive ego dominance.

Methodology

This study follows a text-based literary analysis approach. The character of Vasu is examined by his various roles in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*. This paper denotes Freud's theory of narcissism and Kernberg's model of pathological narcissism. The aim is not to diagnose a clinical disorder, but to use psychological theory as a tool for literary interpretation. It focuses remains on how Vasu's traits function within the fictional world of the novel and shape his relationships, actions, and ultimate fate.

Freud's View on Narcissism

According to Sigmund Freud, narcissism is a psychological condition in which a person directs their love and emotional energy toward themselves rather than toward others. Freud explains that narcissism first appears as primary narcissism, which is a natural stage in early childhood when an infant sees itself as the center of the world and seeks satisfaction for its own needs. As a person grows, this self-focused energy is usually directed outward toward other people and objects, forming healthy relationships. However, in secondary narcissism, this emotional energy returns to the self, leading the individual to develop excessive self-admiration, self-importance, and a lack of empathy for others. Freud believed that such narcissistic tendencies could result from psychological conflicts or disappointments in relationships, causing the person to withdraw affection from others and invest it back into their own ego. Primary narcissism a natural stage in early development. Secondary narcissism when adults withdraw emotional investment from others and over-value their own ego.

Kernberg's Theory of Pathological Narcissism

Otto Kernberg extends Freud's ideas by describing narcissism as a personality organization marked by "Inflated self-image and superiority, emotional emptiness and lack of guilt, exploitation of others, chronic anger and coldness in relationships" (*Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism*, 36). According to Kernberg, narcissistic individuals create a false grand self to hide inner insecurity. They dominate others not out of confidence, but out of fear of weakness. Relationships become tools for control rather than mutual connection. Vasu's behavior strongly reflects this model. His boasting, emotional detachment, cruelty toward animals, and manipulation of Nataraj reveal a personality sustained by domination rather than empathy.

Vasu as a Narcissistic Character

In the early chapters, Vasu constantly praises his physical strength, hunting skills, and masculine power. He ridicules the intellectual and sensitive people, including Nataraj, and behaves as if he exists above moral or social rules. His speech is filled with self-glorifying statements and dismissive remarks about others. Freud's lens, reflects secondary narcissism, where the self becomes the exclusive center of emotional value. Vasu's pride is not simply confidence — it is a defense mechanism that supports his fragile self-image. His harsh treatment of animals and casual cruelty reveal aggression as an extension of ego.

When Vasu forcefully occupies the attic room, he shows complete disregard for Nataraj's fear and discomfort." his footstep seemed to me aggressively tenat" (*The Man Eater Of Malgudi*, 91) He uses intimidation, loud behavior, and psychological pressure to retain



control of the space. His lack of empathy demonstrates not only selfishness but also emotional coldness characteristic of narcissistic personalities. “I asked myself “Nataraj” are you afraid of this muscular fellow? and said authoritatively “yes” as much as to indicate” (*MEM*, 14s). Kernberg’s theory is clearly visible here: Vasu forms relationships only to benefit himself. Nataraj becomes an object rather than a person. The attic symbolizes Vasu’s desire to place himself above others, reinforcing his emotional dominance. The taxidermy room episodes reveal one of the most striking aspects of Vasu’s psychology. His profession allows him to exert power over life and death, turning living beings into preserved objects. The process reflects a deeper psychological need to control and conquer. From a Freud’s perspective, this represents aggressive narcissism, where destruction strengthens ego satisfaction. Kernberg would interpret this behavior as an attempt to stabilize a fragile identity by asserting superiority over helpless subjects. Vasu’s obsession with the temple elephant further exposes his desire to challenge values that unite the community.

Conflict with Social Morality and Order

Malgudi represents a world built on moderation, respect, and interpersonal harmony. Vasu rejects these values because he limits his ego-driven impulses. Instead of adapting to community life, he openly challenges it, seeing restraint as weakness rather than virtue. His desire to kill the temple elephant becomes both a personal and symbolic act. Psychologically, it marks the moment when narcissistic self-importance transforms into active aggression toward society and shared moral order. As opposition builds against him, Vasu reacts with intensified aggression rather than reflection. Freud’s concept of narcissistic rage explains this shift — when the narcissistic self is questioned, anger becomes a defense. Kernberg would interpret this as the collapse of emotional stability, where aggression replaces rational control. Vasu grows increasingly isolated, not because society rejects him, but because he is incapable of emotional relation. Vasu’s death is not the result of external punishment but of his own uncontrolled impulses. His end represents a form of self-inflicted collapse, where aggression ultimately turns inward. This aligns with Kernberg’s view that narcissistic personalities, driven by emptiness and hostility. The Vasu’s fate reveals the psychological instability hidden beneath his grand image of strength and superiority.

Conclusion

This study shows that understanding the antagonist is an important way to understand the whole novel. In *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, Vasu is not just a villain, but a psychologically complex character whose actions explain the deeper meaning of the story. By focusing on Vasu, the study gives a clearer view of how the conflict in the novel develops and why it ends in destruction. Using the ideas of Sigmund Freud and Otto Kernberg, this paper explains that Vasu’s behaviour is shaped by narcissism, ego, and aggression. Freud’s theory helps to understand his self-centered nature and inner conflicts, while Kernberg’s theory explains his emotional emptiness, lack of empathy, and need to dominate others. Together, these frameworks show that Vasu’s strength is only external, while internally he is unstable and self-destructive. Therefore, this study proves that psychological analysis is one of the best ways to understand an antagonist. By studying the antagonist gives a deeper and more complete understanding of the entire story.

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Reclaiming the Voice of Sita: Identity, Motherhood and Feminine Strength in Chithra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments*

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Abstract

*Contemporary works in Indian Writing in English frequently revisit ancient epics in order to reinterpret them from modern perspectives. One such important reinterpretation is *The Forest of Enchantments* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, which retells the Ramayana through the voice of Sita. Traditionally portrayed as a silent and obedient figure, Sita is reimagined in this novel as a reflective narrator who claims authority over her own story. This article explores how Divakaruni reconstructs Sita's identity through themes of voice, motherhood, and feminine strength. The study also examines the symbolic meaning of exile, where the forest becomes a space of transformation rather than punishment. Furthermore, the paper highlights the emotional and maternal connection between Sita and Mandodari, which introduces a powerful dimension of feminine empathy and solidarity. By presenting the epic from a woman's perspective, the novel reclaims suppressed voices and addresses contemporary concerns about women's identity, agency, and empowerment. Thus, *The Forest of Enchantments* demonstrates how mythological retellings can bridge the past and present while offering new possibilities for understanding women's roles and experiences.*

Keywords: Feminine Identity, Mythological Retelling, Motherhood, Feminine Strength.

Introduction

Mythological narratives form an important cultural legacy in Indian literature and continue to influence contemporary writing. Many modern authors revisit classical epics in order to reinterpret them through new perspectives, especially from the viewpoint of characters whose voices were marginalized in traditional narratives. One such significant reinterpretation appears in *The Forest of Enchantments* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. The novel retells the story of the Ramayana from the perspective of Sita, allowing her to narrate her experiences, emotions, and struggles in her own voice. In the traditional *Ramayana*, Sita is often portrayed as an ideal wife who silently accepts suffering and sacrifice. However, Divakaruni's narrative reimagines her as a complex and reflective woman who actively interprets her life and decisions. Through Sita's narration, the novel presents a deeper exploration of identity, resilience, and female agency. Sita becomes not merely a symbol of devotion but also a figure who reflects on the meaning of dignity, justice, and personal strength. The novel also redefines exile in the forest. Instead of portraying it as mere punishment, the narrative transforms the forest into a space of learning, endurance, and emotional growth. In addition, the story explores themes of motherhood and feminine empathy, particularly through the unexpected connection between Sita and Mandodari. By foregrounding Sita's perspective, Divakaruni reclaims a silenced voice and offers a powerful reinterpretation of a mythological legacy.

Reclaiming Sita's Voice and Identity

One of the most significant aspects of *The Forest of Enchantments* is the way it allows Sita to reclaim her voice. In many traditional versions of the Ramayana, the narrative



focuses primarily on Rama and the heroic aspects of the epic. Sita's experiences are often presented indirectly or interpreted through the perspectives of male characters. Divakaruni challenges this narrative structure by allowing Sita to become the storyteller. Through first-person narration, Sita reflects on her childhood, marriage, exile, and struggles. Her voice reveals her emotional depth, intelligence, and moral strength. Instead of being portrayed as passive, Sita becomes an active interpreter of events around her. She questions societal expectations and reflects on the limitations imposed upon women in patriarchal structures. Sita's narration also emphasizes the importance of self-awareness and personal dignity. By recounting her own story, she asserts her identity and refuses to remain a silent figure within the epic tradition. Her voice becomes a form of resistance against the historical marginalization of women's experiences in mythological narratives.

Exile and the Transformative Power of the Audience

In the traditional epic narrative, exile is often portrayed as a punishment or hardship imposed upon Rama and Sita. However, in *The Forest of Enchantments*, the forest becomes a powerful symbol of transformation and growth. Through Sita's perspective, the forest is not merely a place of suffering but a space that nurtures resilience and self-discovery. Living in the forest exposes Sita to nature in its purest form. She develops a deep understanding of the natural world and learns to adapt to challenging circumstances. These experiences strengthen her emotional endurance and allow her to discover inner strength. The forest also becomes a metaphorical space where Sita reflects on her identity and purpose. Away from the rigid expectations of royal life, she learns to appreciate simplicity and independence. Instead of perceiving exile as humiliation, Sita transforms it into an opportunity for personal growth and dignity. Thus, the novel challenges the traditional interpretation of exile by presenting it as a journey of empowerment rather than defeat.

Motherhood and Feminine Empathy

Motherhood is another important theme explored in the novel. Sita's role as a mother highlights her compassion, resilience, and emotional strength. Her relationship with her sons reflects her desire to nurture them with wisdom and moral values despite the hardships she has faced. The novel also introduces a unique dimension of motherhood through the character of Mandodari. Mandodari's interaction with Sita reveals an unexpected emotional bond that transcends political conflict and rivalry. Despite belonging to opposing sides, Mandodari expresses a sense of maternal concern toward Sita. This connection reflects a broader theme of feminine empathy and solidarity. Women in the narrative are able to recognize and understand each other's suffering beyond social or political boundaries. Through these relationships, Divakaruni highlights the emotional strength and compassion that unite women across different circumstances.

Feminine Strength and Resistance

Another central aspect of the novel is the portrayal of feminine strength. Sita's resilience is not expressed through physical power but through moral courage, patience, and self-respect. Even during moments of extreme suffering, she maintains her dignity and inner strength. Sita's decisions reflect her commitment to personal integrity and justice. She refuses to compromise her self-respect even when faced with societal expectations. Her strength lies in her ability to remain emotionally strong while confronting adversity. Through Sita's character, Divakaruni challenges the stereotype of women as passive or submissive figures.

Mythological Retelling and Contemporary Relevance

Mythological retellings play an important role in connecting the past with the present. By revisiting classical narratives, contemporary writers create opportunities to reinterpret



cultural traditions in ways that reflect modern concern. The *Forest of Enchantments* demonstrates how mythological stories can be reimagined to highlight marginalized voices. By allowing Sita to narrate her own experiences, the novel challenges traditional interpretations of the *Ramayana* and introduces new perspectives on gender, identity, and power. Such reinterpretations also resonate with contemporary discussions about women's rights and empowerment. By presenting Sita as a thoughtful and independent narrator, the novel emphasizes the importance of recognizing women's experiences and contributions within cultural narratives.

Conclusion

The Forest of Enchantments offers a powerful reinterpretation of the *Ramayana* by presenting the epic through Sita's voice and perspective. Through themes of identity, motherhood, and feminine strength, the novel transforms Sita from a silent symbol of sacrifice into a complex and resilient individual. Divakaruni's narrative highlights the emotional depth of Sita's experiences and emphasizes the significance of reclaiming marginalized voices in mythological traditions. The novel also redefines exile as a space of transformation and explores the power of feminine empathy through the relationship between Sita and Mandodari. By revisiting a classical epic from a woman's perspective, *The Forest of Enchantments* not only preserves an important cultural legacy but also addresses contemporary concerns about women's identity and empowerment. The novel ultimately demonstrates that mythological narratives continue to hold relevance when they are reinterpreted through voices that have long remained unheard.

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Redemption and Forgiveness in Khalid Hossain's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

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Abstract

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini explore the powerful themes of redemption and forgiveness through the lives of its central characters. Set in Afghanistan, the novel portrays the struggles of women living under social oppression, war, and personal suffering. The story mainly focuses on Mariam and Laila, whose lives become connected through hardship and shared experiences. Throughout the novel, both characters endure pain, betrayal, and loss, yet they develop strength through compassion and friendship. Mariam's life represents redemption as she transforms from a neglected and oppressed woman into a courageous figure who sacrifices herself to protect Laila and her children. Forgiveness is also an important theme, particularly in Mariam's ability to forgive her father and in the growing bond between Mariam and Laila. These acts of forgiveness help the characters overcome their emotional wounds. Through these experiences, the novel highlights the importance of love, sacrifice, and understanding in overcoming suffering. Ultimately, the story shows that redemption and forgiveness can bring hope and healing even in the most difficult circumstances.

Keywords: Sacrifice, Love, Suffering, Moral Redemption, Compassion, Forgiveness.

Introduction

The novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* written by Khaled Hosseini is a deeply emotional story that highlights the struggles, resilience, and strength of women living in Afghanistan. The narrative is mainly set in Kabul and presents the lives of two female protagonists, Mariam and Laila, whose lives become closely connected through marriage, suffering, and survival. The novel portrays the harsh realities of war, social restrictions, and gender inequality that women experience in Afghan society. One of the most significant themes explored in the novel is redemption and forgiveness. Redemption refers to the process of gaining self-respect and moral value through sacrifice, courage, or positive actions after experiencing suffering or mistakes. Forgiveness, on the other hand, refers to the ability to overcome anger, pain, or resentment and to accept others despite their wrongdoings. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, these themes are clearly reflected in the emotional journeys of Mariam and Laila. Through their struggles, sacrifices, and relationships, Hosseini demonstrates how individuals can discover redemption through selfless actions and how forgiveness can bring emotional healing. The novel ultimately shows that even in difficult circumstances, love, compassion, and sacrifice can transform human lives.

Redemption and Forgiveness in the Lives of Mariam and Laila

The themes of redemption and forgiveness are mainly expressed through the lives of the two central characters, Mariam and Laila. Mariam's life begins with rejection and loneliness. As an illegitimate child, she grows up feeling unwanted and ashamed. Later, she is forced to marry Rasheed, a much older man who treats her with cruelty and disrespect. Mariam spends many years suffering emotional and physical abuse, which makes her feel



powerless and hopeless. However, Mariam's life begins to change when Laila becomes Rasheed's second wife. At first, Mariam feels jealous and threatened by Laila's presence. Over time, their shared suffering brings them closer together, and they develop a deep emotional bond similar to that of sisters. Mariam begins to care for Laila and her children with love and protection, something she had never experienced in her own childhood. The turning point in Mariam's life occurs when Rasheed becomes extremely violent toward Laila. In order to protect Laila, Mariam makes the courageous decision to kill Rasheed. This act is not motivated by anger but by love and sacrifice. Mariam later accepts the punishment for her action, knowing that it will allow Laila and her children to escape and live safely. Through this ultimate sacrifice, Mariam finally achieves redemption. For the first time in her life, she feels a sense of dignity, purpose, and self-worth. Through Laila's actions, Hosseini shows that forgiveness is not simply forgetting the past but learning to move forward with compassion and strength. Laila's ability to forgive and rebuild her life reflects the emotional healing that forgiveness can bring. The relationship between Mariam and Laila also highlights the importance of friendship and solidarity among women. Their bond helps them survive oppression and violence, and their mutual support becomes a powerful source of strength. Mariam's sacrifice and Laila's gratitude illustrate how redemption and forgiveness can exist together, creating a deeper understanding of love and humanity.

Conclusion

A Thousand Splendid Suns explores the themes of redemption and forgiveness through the emotional journeys of Mariam and Laila. Mariam's transformation from a life of suffering to an act of courageous sacrifice represents the true meaning of redemption. Her final decision to protect Laila and her children allows her to reclaim dignity and self-respect. Similarly, Laila's character demonstrates the healing power of forgiveness. Despite the tragedies she experiences, she chooses hope, compassion, and renewal instead of bitterness. By continuing to live a meaningful life and helping rebuild society, Laila honors Mariam's sacrifice and represents the possibility of a better future. Through these characters, Khaled Hosseini emphasizes that redemption and forgiveness are powerful human values that can bring strength and transformation even in the most difficult circumstances. The novel ultimately reminds readers that love, sacrifice, and compassion can overcome suffering and lead to emotional healing and personal growth.

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