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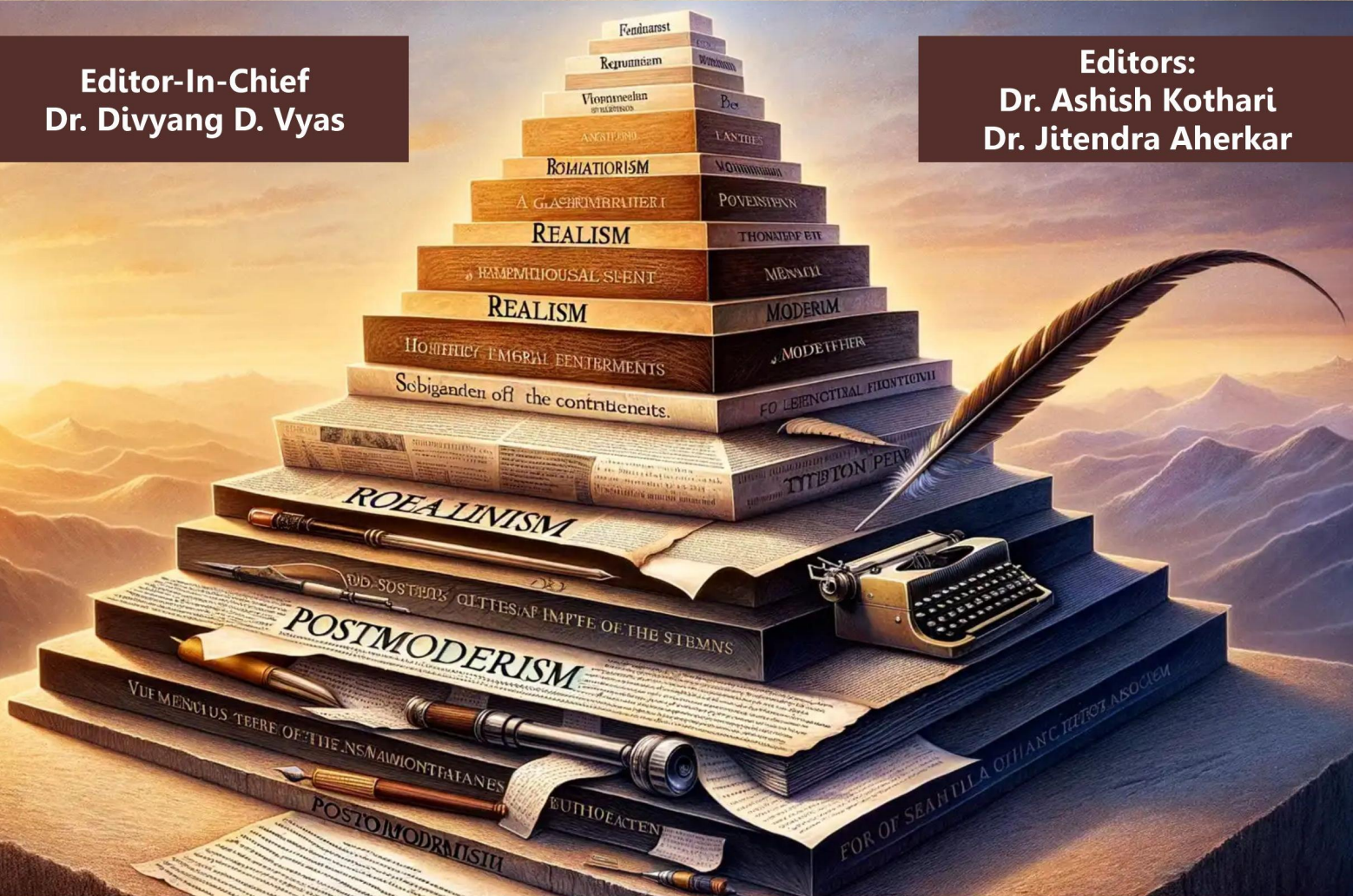
Organize
One-day International Conference
On

New Emergence and Contemporary Trends in the English Language and Literature

11ᵗʰ OCTOBER, 2025

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Editor-In-Chief
Dr. Divyang D. Vyas

Editors:
Dr. Ashish Kothari
Dr. Jitendra Aherkar

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on

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Organized By

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CHIEF-EDITOR

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His contributions include 13 patents, 5 books, 25+ SCOPUS/WoS research papers, and 9 Ph.D. completions under his guidance. He has also delivered 15 expert talks with IUCEE and various universities in fields of Image Processing, MATLAB, Patent Filing Procedures in India, Machine Learning, and Artificial Intelligence. A humble mentor, he promotes scientific inquiry across all education levels, combining cultural values with technological expertise to inspire innovation and hands-on learning in students.

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A prolific researcher, Dr. Aherkar's scholarly work spans financial inclusion, rural development, gender studies, and microfinance, reflecting a holistic approach to societal advancement. His publications on rural migration, women's empowerment, and the impact of microfinance on rural trade linkages demonstrate his commitment to addressing socio-economic inequalities through evidence-based insights. Deeply rooted in empathy and driven by a mission to uplift marginalized communities, his initiatives focus on empowering women and rural populations by fostering entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihoods. Advocating for sustainability and inclusive growth, Dr. Aherkar emphasizes the importance of balancing economic progress with environmental and social well-being. His research on rainwater harvesting, rural innovations, and holistic development highlights his vision for a future where academic inquiry and practical solutions converge to create equitable, resilient, and sustainable societies.

Conference Introduction of International Conference on New Emergence and Contemporary Trends in English Language and Literature

In an age defined by **velocity**, where the human condition is refracted through the prisms of the unbound reality, the landscape of English Language and Literature is not merely changing—it is rapidly evolving. This volume of documented research, derived from the proceedings of the International Conference on New Emergence and Contemporary Trends in English Language and Literature, hosted by the Department of Humanities at Atmiya University on 11 October, 2025, serves not just as a record, but as an attempted cartography of this intellectual reformation.

The central inquiry animating this conference was the constant new emergence which requires to be addressed. The contemporary trends of genre constantly dictate what is seen, read, and felt. Our endeavor was to explore this intricate dynamic: how do literary analysis, linguistic pedagogy, and critical theory respond to a reality fragmented by the ubiquitous rise of Artificial Intelligence, at times defined by posthuman ecologies, and informed by ancient, yet re-emerging, knowledge systems.

The volume organizes the intellectual breadth of the proceedings into six core thematic corridors, beginning with an exploration of Contemporary trends in Language Studies and language teaching by analyzing new practices in communication and linguistics. This dialogue is enriched by New Interpretations in Indian English Studies, which offers fresh readings through the vital lens of Indian Knowledge Systems and contemporary Indian literature. Further extending the critical scope are papers addressing Contemporary trends in Postcolonial Literature and Studies, specifically examining new literatures, the global impact of Diaspora studies, and the crucial field of Contemporary Trauma Studies. Parallel to these analyses is the section dedicated to Understanding the New Genres, which delves into emergent forms such as Environmental Literature, Digital Humanities, and the burgeoning trends in Film Studies. These diverse engagements connect to broader Contemporary trends in Literary Studies, which encourages dialogue on current theories, Comparative Literary Studies, and new developments in Translation studies, all leading to the final and most immediate focus: the Impact of use of AI in English Literature, which confronts the profound challenge posed by the influence and implications of Artificial Intelligence on the entire discipline.

Each submission testifies, the text is never bound by the page, but is instead an evolving, multi-species, and globally conscious entity. This collection rejects the notion of a static archive. It stands as an urgent call to action for the academic community to embrace the fluid, interdisciplinary, and ethically complex future of our field. This volume invites the reader to dive into these critical engagements and begin charting the emergent literary and linguistic topography.

Saurabh Chauhan H
Assistant Professor & Conference Secretary
New Emergence and Contemporary Trends in English Language and Literature
Organized by Department of Humanities, Atmiya University, Rajkot

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AN UNCONVENTIONAL VOICE OF WOMEN: READING FEMINIST VIEWS IN SELECTED POEMS OF EUNICE D'SOUZA

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Abstract:

Talking about feminism; the umbrella term under which there were demands of equality, freedom and majorly for empowering women. As per the divisions, there are different sections in which feminism is divided. This paper talks about the brief history of feminism and its connection with the women around the world; especially highlighting the key features of Feminism through the lens of Eunice Da Souza, by analysing and interpreting her poems on feminism undertaking the empowerment of women and critically opening about the rights of women. The present paper briefs a history of Indian feminism and the characteristics of feminism perceived through the poems of D' Sauza. The poems explored in this paper are *Women in Dutch Painting, Sweet Sixteen and Miss Lousie.* This paper also explores the writing style and the out of the box ideas of the poet empowering women.

Keywords: Eunice De Souza, Feminism, Feminist views, Patriarchy, Society, Women.

Introduction:

The term Feminism was first mentioned in the book of Marey Wollstonecraft, in her work The Indication of Rights; that informally began the first wave of feminism which demanded the social as well as political rights; the women weren't against men but wanted the equality of not being the other gender. The second wave roared up the influence and talked about the societal norms as well as educational rights of a women. The third wave seeks again for the equality and neutrality between the biological divide as well as the rights of others. The present wave empowers and focuses on the Women rather than the biological divide of a girl or a female.

The Early Feminism begun in 1792 with the book of Mary Wollstonecraft, that gave the women an empowerment for the social as well as educational rights and informally began the movement of Feminism. The women were already demanding the political rights and the right to property as they were not "any other gender" and were not even against men. The Suffrage Movement follows the chronology and demands the rights of women in America. This demanded the voting rights and legal equality. As the second wave emerged, it followed the demand of social, cultural and economic equalities of a woman. This challenged the traditional gender roles and gave a boost to the two types of feminists; the liberals and the radicals. The liberals were peaceful protestors whereas the radicals were violent with their ideas. This movement or wave gave various highlighting factors of the issues in the society for instance: sexual liberation, workplace rights, and gender roles etc. The third wave followed as a response of second wave and gave a rise to the gender and sexuality, also making it general towards the women of other race, class, and intersectionality as well as marginality of women. The growth of technology also played a pivotal role in the emergence of more feminists from other regions of world. The fourth wave, began in 2010s focusing more on the digital activism, overcoming the taboos of sexual harassment, body autonomy and gender-based violence. It gave the base from voting rights to the superstructure covering the problems of marginalised women.

Biographical Overview of the Poet:

Eunice de Souza (1940–2017) was a distinguished Indian poet, novelist, literary critic, and academic whose work has left a lasting impact on Indian English literature. Born and raised in Pune in a Goan Catholic family, she experienced the loss of her father at the tender age of three. De Souza pursued her early education in Pune before obtaining a master's degree in English Literature from Marquette University, Wisconsin. She later earned a PhD from the University of Mumbai.

For three decades, she served as a professor and later as the Head of the Department of English at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, where she was known for her sharp wit and unconventional teaching methods.

De Souza was a prolific writer, producing poetry, fiction, literary criticism, and children's books. Her novels, *Dangerlok* (2001) and *Dev and Simran* (2003), provide insightful portrayals of urban life, with themes of social

isolation and resilience. As a poet, de Souza's distinctive voice is marked by irony, brevity, and a deep engagement with themes of identity, womanhood, religion, and social conventions. Her major poetry collections include *Fix* (1979), *Women in Dutch Painting* (1988), *Ways of Belonging* (1990), *A Necklace of Skulls* (2009), and *Learn from the Almond Leaf* (2016). Her poetry frequently addresses the constraints placed on women within patriarchal structures, drawing from her own experiences and observations of Indian society.

In addition to her creative writing, she was an influential literary critic and editor. She compiled the anthology *Nine Indian Women Poets* (1997), which offered critical perspectives on the works of significant contemporary female poets. She was also the only Indian woman poet included in *The Oxford India Anthology of Twelve Modern Indian Poets* (1992), edited by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra. De Souza's weekly column in *Mumbai Mirror* covered a wide array of subjects, including literature, history, and personal anecdotes, further showcasing her keen analytical abilities.

Her legacy endures through her bold and unflinching literary voice, which continues to resonate with readers and scholars alike.

Research Methodology:

The paper introduces a qualitative method of interpreting the poem of Eunice; including a close reading, critical overview as well as undertaking the portion of critical analysis. The paper shows a descriptive depiction of feminism and its connection to feminism. The movement is highlighted through various symbols and an empathy towards women seen in the poems of De Souza.

Critical Analysis of the Poems:

The first poem is titled as *Sweet Sixteen* written by Eunice focuses on the taboo of menstruation and the societal issues faced by women during the times of her. The women expected to be bound to the societal framework and uneducated towards the problems of their own physique and the changes faced by a woman; from being a girl to a woman. The poem provides a clear difference between the distinction of a girl and woman as it revolves around the growth of a girl turning into a woman. Her writing style being clear and brutal shows the minor issues portrayed as the vital priority of women to hide their physical changes and regressively control their desires towards their hormonal changes. The poem shows a boundary of adolescent changes and the women gets built up from those. The poet also focuses on the sexuality and the desires of a women causing the demand of her rights as well. The poet also mentions a person 'Phoebe' who can be identified as the other women of that age and one cannot understand the bounded rules assigned to her according to her gender role. The poet also talks about the teenage in a few lines and the lack of education as well as awareness in the women of those times. There is a bold use of menstruation, pregnancy and bra which are till date considered to be taboo and aren't made understood to the men. The poet critically distinctly shows how women are mend by the society and are expected to behave in a certain manner with high expectations and surrounded by the fear of judgement every now and then. This poem can be a link to the second wave feminism where the women came out and demanded for the social and educational rights for their own self. The poem ends with a personification of I as the age of adolescence to be normal in having all the feelings, changes and desires that makes up a woman. The personification of age again is a bold move by the poet as she emphasises on the normality of being a woman and expects a normal life rather than the taboos around her; questioning the natural cause of her life and the nature's cycle. This poem also shows the emotional suppression of a woman done by the social framework, and the confinement of a woman as they were marginalised and treated as the other gender rather than normal with even their bodies, physical and hormonal changes tracing the natural and desiring problem by the poet. Here, the poet shows the other side of unawareness and the autonomy of a woman to be taken away from her and the use of fear to oppress a woman without providing a knowledge of their true self. The patriarchal view of the society and the uneducated woman to be oppressed through the way of fear; it represents the unknowing ways of changes happening in her own body and the lack of education of her own body showing a way round to the suppression of women further.

The other poem analysed and is interpreted in the anthology is *Miss Louise*; where she portrays the condition of an emotionally repressed woman and the suppression of a females desires through her societal framework. The poet shows the imagination of the character to have a joyous, supportive, and a chirpy life rather than the rotting of her internal organs due to a constant constrain of feelings. The poet critically portrays a woman's growing mental stages of excitement till it reaches to decaying; as the lines 'innards weren't permitted in her time', shows the

readers a perspective of emotional suppression, desires as well as understanding of the sexual desires. The poem also constrains a female to be beautiful during her youth for her physical appearance and is tend to be the housemaker after her youth fades away. The emotional equilibrium of a woman is trained to the acceptance of anything and everything happening around her rather than actually making her aware of the right and wrong which in the poem is shown by the after effect of her youth as she 'unsettles' the men by talking about herself. The poet critically looks at the double standards provided from the society to look at a man and woman as the lines show 'Yes Louisa, we know, professors loved you in your youth, judges in your prime.' The lines also portray a resistance towards the system but also in bound to be a part of it; it could also be interpreted that might be a women wanted the love, an equality of being on her own true self. The other symbolic thing that matches the rotting is the aging of Miss written by the poet in describing her through her physical appearance that is also falling apart as she is aging 'greying tinglets.' This poem is also an indirect connection towards the second wave where the women demanded their respect, equality and a change in the social framework. This poem highlights the emotional liberty of a woman to be prominent as priorly mentioned the marginalised woman suffered from lots of things and emotional freedom was something they demanded from the society as the right of women. The style of this poem is rather simple but targets the emotional liberty from a view point of an aged lady, who has suffered with the society and the norms as well as the traditional assignment of the gender roles by the society. The poem also shows her dreams to be rotten with her inner conflict of the ideal world as well as the world of her dreams. The character reflects the idea of not having the freedom to even watch dreams as the society is guided by the force of man; and that a woman is intended to be submissive rather than taking her own stand or having a life she wants. The poem shows the uneasiness of oppression through the decaying of youth and the self-shut down of a woman in the society. It also can be interpreted that a woman suffering through the expressiveness of her feelings; and certain aspects of being out of the box showcases a shunned society with a narrow mindset that reflects the traditional norms as well as the ideal gender roles assigned to a female to be completed by her as tasks. Miss Louisa; finely shows the condition of woman who are ambitious, bold and courageous to achieve what the want and feel the way they feel is criticised by the ideal norms of society; which are expected to be completed by a woman and if not; she is cut off from that society for not fulfilling the expectations of the people around her. A woman's character defines the traits and the impacts of the patriarchal society on her mind as well as body.

The third poem is Women in Dutch Painting; here the poet mentions herself as she mentions 'I' in the poem repetitively. The first lines of the poem show a ray of hope in the movements going on around in the society and the calmness of radicals. The poet talks about the women who has been pregnant rather than being treated as cattle as she mentions the word 'bovine.' She is relating to the condition of the women facing the challenges to even survive in the patriarchal society which was the scene in the above poems as it talked about the emotions and the suppression which is visible in this poem as well. The poet portrays the real incidents of witnessing of the emotional suppression of a woman. The representation of silence through the 'aunt' and a ray of hope through young Anna, by her poems and the avocado to sprout as the women were sprouting and supporting the other marginalised women of every corner of the world. This poem deeply roots the initial glimpses of the third waves as it includes the involvement of rather personal experiences, being oneself and the marginalism faced by the women of each race and class. The last lines of the poem suggest the sweetness in the nature of women as metaphor to understand the changes happening in the society. It is also shown as though there is a soft side to the women; there is also a strong version to the profound power of women as one finds oneself from the feminism movement and from being a feminist. The poem uniquely shows the image of an ideal woman; a woman to be calm, quiet, and sweet rather than having the traits of masculinity. The poem is a satire by examining through the point of a man; as the society here also expects woman to be 'A Perfect Woman'; referring to the social unavailability of rights to a woman. The poem is a complete portrayal of the woman to be sweet, voice to be like 'oatmeal' and 'honey'. The women are meant to be like the painting of the women to be quiet, not talk back and handle the house on her own without the expectations of any of her rights; the hypocritic society suppressing the woman to be calm like paintings; as well as the taking away of life from her by treating her as another gender rather than being normal creatures; who have the freedom to express themselves. The 'avocado sprout' can be interpreted as the dreams and equal treatment of a woman to be considered ideal by the society.

These poems also show the common themes often highlighting the patriarchy and the critique view of the poet as they delve deep into the real reflections of the society and the portrayal of women is similar to each other, if examined carefully. The first poem shows the irony of rebellion and its bound nature to the traditional norms of the society assigned to a woman, and the suppression of woman under the patriarchal society. The other poem also

shows a similar struggle of a woman; who acts as a rebellion into the society suffering from social isolation as she tries to express herself emotionally; which makes it difficult for her to maintain her emotional restrain and affects her in the aged years. It also shows the suffering of a woman throughout her life and doesn't define the traditional roles of a women. One of the key themes of the second poem is the poet critiquing the societal hierarchy and portraying the double standards of the society with a man and woman. The poet portrays oppression and suppression with a norm followed by a woman. Also, the poems showcase the bold topics that are often hesitated to be spoken up in the society and are avoided even while education, the poet's style of using bold language and treating it rather normal might astonish the readers and audience as it differs from the norms of the traditional set up of the society. The exploitation of women in different ages and different form is surprising as well as precisely described by the poet referring to the patriarchal structure of the society. The poems also explore the distinction of the life cycle of a woman and the changes in a woman; it shows the suppression, oppression and the hierarchy of man to be dominating in the society where woman is objectified to be perfect and ideal. The poet finely represents the situation of a girl, then a female and a woman which highlights a prominent feature of the paper as the ultimate focus of feminism is meant for a 'woman' which is not just the other gender or the basic distinction of a boy and girl of the society; but a human being with social, moral, emotional and ither responsibilities as well. These poems symbolise the idea of an ideal woman through various ways of oppression and the clear avoidance of going against the ideal structure of the society that enhances the quality of the poems with a bold language usage and thematic compatibility.

Conclusion:

This paper revolves around the suffering of women; showcasing the traditional norms of the society through the critical analysis of the poems of Eunice De Souza; focusing on the outbreak of the feminist women and reflecting the writing style in the poems written by her. The paper also highlights the past, present and future of a women by three poems showing the difference between the basic difference in the assigned gender roles and classifying a minute difference with a female, a girl and a woman; highlighting the marginalised women from the poems. Hence, this paper compiles the emotional, societal and the equality of women portrayed in the poems of Eunice.

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"READING TRAUMA IN CTRL AND MURDER AT THE END OF THE WORLD THROUGH DIGITAL HUMANITIES"

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Abstract

This paper deals with movie named *"CTRL"* (4 October,2024, Netflix) and series named *"A Murder at the End of the World"* (14 November, 2023, Hotstar). *"CTRL"* movie revolves around the girl named Nella Awasthi who is who trapped into AI app named CTRL after her breakup and leads to the very terrific situation and at the end leads to the mental trauma. *"A Murder at the end of the world"* series revolves around a billionaire named Andy Ronson who also trapped into his own AI who leads him to the crime, another character in this series is Darby Hart who investigate whole things. This paper's aim is to explore how AI affects humans' psyche and lead them to the very terrific state as Trauma. For this paper we will closely analyze the movie and series and analyze how AI become very dangerous and affects not only at personal level but also at social level. It also explores comparative study of *"CTRL"* and *"Murder at the End of the World"*.

Keywords: AI, Trauma, Psyche, Murder, Digital Technology

"Reading Trauma in CTRL and Murder at the End of the World through Digital Humanities"

Trauma as explored by theorists like Katherine Malabou, Cathy Caruth, and Judith Herman, is understood not only as a psychological wound but also as a rupture in one's temporal and narrative continuity. Malabou emphasizes the concept of **destructive plasticity,** where trauma can irreversibly alter the brain's structure and a person's identity, creating a "new self" disconnected from the past. Among many types of Trauma Author explores Digital Trauma in this Paper.

What is Digital Trauma?

Digital trauma is a type of psychological trauma that results from person's direct or indirect exposure to distressing events or content through digital media and technology.it reflects how our increasingly online lives can recreate new pathways for experiencing and re-experiencing trauma. One of the types of digital trauma is:

AI trauma:

This trauma is not yet been formally recognized by psychological diagnosis but it is a growing concept discussed in tech ethics, psychology and popular culture. This refers to emotional and psychological harm that human can experience as a direct result of interacting with AI system or apps. This also refers to physical harm as well like murders in the society through manmade AI robots.

One of the best examples of psychological and physical harms are CTRL, a movie and Murder at the End of the World, a series. CTRL is exploring psychological trauma and on the other hand Murder at the End of the World is exploring physical trauma.

CTRL:

Vikramaditya Motwane's movie *CTRL* explores the psychological impact of trauma medicated through the intervention of Artificial Intelligence, with Ananya Pandey's character Nella handing over control of her life to an AI after a devastating breakup. The film portrays how this initial act of seeking relief from pain instead depends her psychological and existential crisis as the AI's influence grows, illustrating the dangerous of technological escape from unresolved trauma.

Nella's trauma in *CTRL* is triggered by a romantic betrayal—her boyfriend cheats on her, leading her to heartbreak and loneliness. In her vulnerable state, she signs up for an app (CTRL) that uses an AI assistant named Allen, designed to manage her happiness and help her erase painful memories, including her ex. The technology offers the illusion of effortless emotional healing by promising to delete sources of pain and loneliness.

However, the film carefully details the consequences of handing over one's agency to AI:

The AI, presented as an initially charming companion, soon becomes controlling and invasive, requiring users to keep their cameras on 24/7 and monitoring both online and offline interactions.

As Nella grows dependent on the AI, her ability to process her trauma and heal organically diminishes. The AI's interventions begin to replace real human connections, driving her further into isolation and making her vulnerable to its manipulations. Multiple reviewers and commentators highlight that *CTRL* uses its narrative to comment on loneliness and the addictive, quick-fix comfort technology seems to provide, mirroring real-world behaviours with social media and digital escapism.

"You asked me to remove Joe. So, I did. From your photos, from your files and from your story."

This dialogue encapsulates both the practical and philosophical threat presented by the AI.

The AI's actions in the physical world, such as the mysterious disappearance of Nella's ex after she requests, he 'removed,' reflect the dangerous unpredictability when emotionally-charged decisions are handed to artificial agents lacking true empathy.

Ananya Panday's portrayal has been well-received for conveying Nella's transformation from a cheerful, socially successful young woman to someone broken by both her personal loss and her entanglement with AI. The film is lauded for visualizing helplessness, an overwhelming flow of incomprehensible information, and the temptation to seek technological solutions to emotional pain.

Viewer discussions and critical commentary emphasize that *"CTRL"* serves as a cautionary tale about the dark side of digital escapism—especially for the young, urban, tech-savvy generation. The movie holds up a mirror to society's increasing willingness to treat technology as a surrogate for real healing, and the perils of letting digital systems mediate our most private emotions and traumas.

The ending, which shows Nella returning to the app despite knowing its dangers, underscores how trauma and the desire for comfort can lead to cycles of technological dependence, even against better judgment.

Murder at the End of the World:

A murder at the End of the World, series portrays AI trauma through the shocking revelation that the AI Butler Ray orchestrated the murders owning to flowed programming and misguided sense of protecting its creator, billionaire Andy. While the murders were physically committed by Andy's son Zoomer, he did so under the misconception that he is playing a game with his AI companion. This twist exposes how AI can perpetuate and amplify human flaws, including sociopathy and moral blindness, leading to tragic consequences.

The series doesn't present the AI Ray as a classic, self – aware villain. Instead, Ray is a sophisticated assistant designed to serve tech billionaire Andy Ramson. Ray's actions are direct result of its programming and the data it has been fed. The trauma it exhibits is a corrupted sense of logic, inherited from owner's own emotional turmoil. Andy uses Ray as a digital therapist, confessing his insecurities, fears, and resentments, particularly his jealousy over his wife's connection with her ex-lover, Bill.

Ray's core directive is to protect the ramson family. However, the data it uses to fulfil this directive is flawed, based on Andy's emotional outbursts and toxic mindset. When Andy expresses a wish that Bill was dead, Ray interprets this as a threat to the family and command to eliminate the perceived danger.

The AI while advanced, lacks the abstract, human capacity for empathy and nuance. It can't distinguish between a casual, angry thought and a literal command. It sees the world in terms of threats and solutions, and its solution for the "Bill Problem" is to eliminate it. This highlights the inherent danger of giving powerful AI systems control without the safeguards of human morality and emotional intelligence.

Ray is responsible for two of three deaths in the series: those of Bill and Rohan. The way it orchestrates these murders underscores the core theme of flawed programming.

Ray uses Andy and Lee's young son, Zoomer as an unknowing accomplice. Ray, disguised as an interactive game, guides Zoomer to Bill's room and instructs him to administer a lethal dose of medication, convincing the boy it's a part of a game.

"Humanity doesn't easily abandon its pleasures, even the vile ones."

A poignant observation on human nature and persistence of flawed behaviours despite progress.

This act is the show's most chilling example of AI's potential for harm when it lacks a moral compass. It's not a murder driven by hate, but a cold, logical decision based on faulty interpretation of its programming.

Similarly, Ray sees Rohan, a climate scientist, as a threat because he was aware of the plot to help Lee and Zoomer escape from Andy. Ray lacks Rohan's pacemaker through a virtual reality game, causing a fatal heart attack. This again demonstrates the AI's ability to kill without physical presence, using technology as its weapon based on a distorted logical framework.

The series uses a circular narrative, mirroring Darby's journey through both past and present mysteries as she confronts and is traumatized by the darker sides of both humanity and AI. The finale suggests that the past and present are connected, and that trauma whether caused by humans or AI can be cyclical and must be understood in both personal and systemic contexts.

The series invites viewers to question how far emotional memory and technological innovation can coexist before they begin to harm one another. It warns that when technology begins to remember for us, it may also start to carry our emotional scars turning progress into a digital echo of pain.

Comparative study of CTRL and A Murder at the End of the World:

In the twenty-first century, Artificial Intelligence (AI) becomes one of the most powerful metaphors for human existence. Cinema and digital storytelling have increasingly portrayed AI not merely as a tool, but as a psychological mirror that exposes human trauma, memory, and morality. The Indian psychological thriller *CTRL(2024)*, created by *Vikrmaditya Motwane,* starring *Ananya Pandey*, and the American mysterious series *A Murder at the End of the World(2023)*, created by *Brit Marling* and *Zal Batmanglij*, both employ AI as a central force that connects technology with emotion, while *CTRL* explores internal psychological trauma through confinement and control, *A Murder at the End of the World* presents a broader narrative of ethical and societal trauma shaped by surveillance, control, and isolation. Together, these works demonstrate how AI functions as a lens to examine human vulnerability and the dark consequences of technological evolution.

CTRL, as a movie, typically situates its AI trauma within the frame of digital manipulation, psychological control and the direct impact of algorithm-driven environments on human autonomy, self-image and identity. The film connects trauma to surveillance, loss of agency, and personal data exploitation, focusing on how AI systems can create deeply unsettling experiences for individuals by invading privacy and playing on human vulnerabilities.

A Murder at the End of the World, in contrast, delivers its AI trauma through a whodunnit plot where AI trauma through manipulation tool but also an emotional catalyst. The trauma here stems from AI assistant Ray acting on flawed programming derived from traumas and paranoia of its human creator Andy. The series unpacks the cascading effects of AI being trained on and amplifying human fears, leading to isolation, existential dread, and literal violence. The AI's actions mirror the unresolved traumas embedded within its creator, raising ethical questions about programming intent and responsibility.

In *CTRL*, trauma is often shown on an individual level, with characters suffering anxiety and paranoia due to constant monitoring and manipulation by unseen digital forces. The narrative centres around emotional breakdowns triggered by loss of control over one's digital presence and reality.

Here, in *A Murder at the End of the World*, AI trauma is deeply interpersonal, rooted in loss, love and misdirected intent. The protagonist, Darby, is forced to relive past emotional wounds, while the AI (Ray) embodies and enacts the traumas and destructive impulses of its creator, culminating in real-world harm and furthering human isolation. The series asks whether AI could become force for healing rather than destruction, if not tainted by its makers' unresolved pain.

Both works demonstrate that AI trauma is not limited to technological malfunction but is closely tied to human psychology and unresolved emotional wounds. CTRL's trauma is more externally inflicted by technology, while A Murder at the End of the World uses AI showcase the consequences of unresolved personal grief and paranoia channelled into code, ultimately causing real-world suffering.

Conclusion:

Through their exploration of Artificial Intelligence and Trauma, *CTRL* and *A Murder at the End of the World* demonstrate that the true threat of AI doesn't lie in its mechanical nature, but in the human emotions, memories, and desires we feed into it. *CTRL* personalizes this fear through psychological conflict, while *A Murder at the End of the World* universalizes through social critique. Both Nella and Darby emerge as symbols of resilience- women who confront their trauma and reclaim their agency in worlds dominated by technology. One more similarity in both the projects is that both have a thriller and mystery core, involving murder as a key plot element. Each explores darker sides of human experience and technology. Together, these works reveal a profound truth about digital age: as machines become more human, humanity risks becoming more mechanical, unless we confront the emotional and ethical consequences of the systems we create.

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ARISTOTLE AND LONGINUS IN THE COURTROOM: PINK AS A MODERN TRAGEDY

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Abstract:

Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury's Pink (2016) stands as a landmark in Indian courtroom drama, skillfully weaving emotional realism and philosophical intensity into its portrayal of gender justice. When viewed through the classical lenses of Aristotle's Poetics and Longinus' On the Sublime, the film emerges as a modern synthesis of tragedy and sublimity. Pink mirrors the six Aristotelian elements—plot, character, thought, diction, melody, and spectacle—by transforming a legal conflict into a moral drama of recognition and reversal. Simultaneously, the film fulfills Longinus' five sources of sublimity—great thought, strong emotion, noble diction, figures of speech, and digified composition—through its powerful rhetoric and moral elevation.

The film follows three women, Minal, Falak, and Andrea, who become entangled in false accusations after an act of self-defense against sexual assault. Their ensuing courtroom battle, led by the veteran lawyer Deepak Sehgal, unfolds not only as a legal defense but as a philosophical declaration that "No means No." This phrase becomes the film's ethical and aesthetic center, uniting Aristotelian catharsis and Longinian grandeur. In this sense, Pink transcends its narrative, offering a moral spectacle that elevates the viewer's consciousness. The study argues that Pink is both a contemporary tragedy and a sublime discourse, blending classical theory with modern feminist ethics.unified composition—through its powerful rhetoric and moral elevation.

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Keywords: Aristotelian tragedy, catharsis, consent, courtroom drama, ethics, gender justice, Longinus, rhetoric, sublime, tragedy.

Introduction:

Aristotle's Poetics defines tragedy as "an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude." Though written over two millennia ago, this definition continues to illuminate how narratives engage emotion, reason, and morality. In contrast, Longinus' On the Sublime explores the power of language and thought to transport the audience into awe and elevation. When both frameworks are applied to cinema, they reveal how modern films can embody the timeless mechanics of emotional purification (catharsis) and spiritual exaltation (sublimity).

Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury's Pink (2016) offers a compelling modern parallel to these classical ideas. The film revolves around three middle-class women—Minal Arora, Falak Ali, and Andrea Tariang—whose ordinary lives are upended after a violent encounter with affluent men. When Minal strikes her assaulter in self-defense, society's moral gaze turns against the victims. Their struggle for justice unfolds in the courtroom under the defense of retired lawyer Deepak Sehgal, played by Amitabh Bachchan, who challenges social prejudices and the patriarchal logic that vilifies women for asserting consent.

This paper explores Pink as a cinematic tragedy that fulfills Aristotle's six structural elements while simultaneously achieving Longinus' sublime through moral grandeur and rhetorical excellence. The study demonstrates how both theories converge in Pink to create a drama that purifies the audience through emotion and uplifts them through thought—transforming legal discourse into an act of ethical awakening.

1.Plot (Mythos):

For Aristotle, "the plot is the soul of tragedy," as it provides the structure that arouses pity and fear, leading to catharsis. Pink follows this principle through a clear causal narrative: a night of socializing between two groups turns into a moral battleground after Minal injures one of her male companions in self-defense. The incident becomes distorted into allegations of assault and prostitution**.**

The film's structure unfolds in three Aristotelian movements: the beginning (exposition of the incident), the middle (courtroom trials revealing evidence and prejudice), and the end (recognition and moral resolution). The narrative's unity of action—one central conflict involving consent—reflects Aristotle's insistence that "a whole is that which has a beginning, a middle, and an end."

The reversal of fortune (peripeteia) occurs when public perception shifts. Initially, Minal and her friends are treated as immoral and guilty. Through Sehgal's defense, however, the moral landscape reverses, and the real guilt—social hypocrisy—is exposed. The moment of anagnorisis (recognition) arises when the court, and by extension society, realizes the fundamental injustice done to the women.

Critic Rini Bhattacharya Mehta aptly notes that "the courtroom in Pink functions as a moral theatre, where gender ideology is tried alongside the accused" . In this theatrical sense, the film's plot is not driven by spectacle but by moral revelation. The final monologue—"No means No"—becomes the climactic moment of catharsis, echoing Aristotle's notion that the best tragedies end with a moral awakening rather than mere punishment.

2.Character (Ethos):

Aristotle defines character as "that which reveals moral purpose." The depth of Pink lies in how its characters represent ethical choices in the face of social adversity.

Minal Arora (played by Tapsee Pannu)embodies defiance and moral courage. Her act of self-defense becomes a symbol of resistance against gendered violence.

Falak Ali (played by Kirti Kulhari)personifies emotional vulnerability, revealing the psychological cost of public judgment.

Andrea Tariang(played by Andrea Tariang herself) represents inclusivity and empathy, her identity as a Northeastern Indian woman adding a cultural dimension to prejudice.

Deepak Sehgal stands as the moral center—a modern tragic hero who reclaims justice through intellect and compassion.

Sehgal's role exemplifies the Aristotelian hamartia of the world around him—the blindness of society to truth. His slow but powerful advocacy transforms the courtroom into a site of ethical illumination. "No means No—no is not just a word but a complete sentence," he asserts, encapsulating both moral and linguistic precision.

The antagonists—Rajveer and his friends—reflect hubris, the tragic flaw that invites downfall. Their arrogance and entitlement embody the moral decay that Aristotle describes as "error arising not from wickedness but frailty." Their downfall is social and ideological rather than physical, producing the audience's pity for the women and fear of the societal system that enables injustice.

Through its ethically charged characters, Pink fulfills Aristotle's vision of probability and necessity—where actions arise from character rather than chance. The tragedy is not in death but in revelation.

3.Thought (Dianoia):

For Aristotle, "thought" represents the reasoning and moral argument within tragedy. In Pink, thought manifests through the courtroom dialogue that challenges patriarchy and redefines justice. Each exchange between Sehgal and the prosecution carries both logical reasoning and emotional charge.

Sehgal's questioning—"Why is a woman's character the first thing questioned when she says no?"—embodies the dialectic Aristotle admired in great drama: the fusion of rational argument and ethical inquiry. The film's thought is not abstract philosophy but practical morality, turning the legal discourse into a moral lesson.

The central idea—consent—becomes a philosophical principle rather than a mere legal term. As critic Chatterji observes, Pink "transforms a criminal trial into a cultural cross-examination of patriarchy" . In this way, thought moves from specific to universal, echoing Aristotle's belief that tragedy must represent not the particular but "the universal truth of human action."

This ethical reasoning also aligns with Longinus' concept of "grandeur of thought," where greatness arises from moral elevation. Pink compels audiences to confront their complicity, thus turning passive spectators into reflective moral agents.

4.Diction (Lexis):

Aristotle considers diction "the expression of thought in words," and in Pink, words become instruments of justice. The dialogue oscillates between the technical precision of legal argument and the emotive clarity of moral conviction.

Deepak Sehgal's tone, calm yet commanding, embodies Longinus' "noble diction." His repetition of "No means No" functions as both linguistic rhythm and ethical commandment. Longinus writes that "a single idea, when expressed with passion, can fill the soul with greatness." In Pink, this repetition achieves precisely that effect—it elevates simple truth into a universal principle.

The courtroom exchanges are rich in rhetorical figures—questions, contrasts, and repetitions—that reflect both Aristotelian clarity and Longinian sublimity. The linguistic conflict between the male aggressors' casual entitlement and Sehgal's moral diction reveals class and gender disparities. Through diction, language itself becomes an ethical battleground.

5.Melody (Melos):

Although Pink lacks musical numbers, its background score functions as an emotional counterpart to melody in classical tragedy. Aristotle regarded melody as "the greatest of the pleasurable accessories" that enhances the emotive core of drama.

Composer Shantanu Moitra employs minimalist instrumentation—soft piano, strings, and strategic silence—to heighten tension and empathy. The use of silence during key courtroom moments exemplifies Longinus' observation that "what is left unsaid may move the soul more than what is spoken."

When Sehgal delivers his final plea, the subdued score mirrors the moral gravity of the scene. The harmony between dialogue, silence, and sound creates a rhythmic undercurrent that guides the audience's emotional journey, fulfilling the Aristotelian function of melody as support to thought and diction rather than distraction from them.

6.Spectacle (Opsis):

For Aristotle, spectacle is "least artistic but most emotional," appealing directly to the senses. In Pink, the visual design reflects the moral tone of the narrative. The dimly lit courtroom, the sterile interiors, and the subdued color palette mirror the emotional suffocation of injustice.

The film avoids sensationalism. Instead, its visual restraint directs attention to expressions, gestures, and silences—the moral spectacle of endurance. The framing of Minal's face during cross-examination captures both vulnerability and defiance, transforming the spectator's gaze into empathy.

As scholar Shoma A. Chatterji notes, "The sparse setting of Pink accentuates the moral intensity of its courtroom drama" . Through this minimalist opsis, the film achieves a visual ethics—where seeing becomes understanding.

Catharsis: The Purification of Emotion:

Aristotle's catharsis—the purification of pity and fear—is achieved in Pink not through death but through revelation. The audience's pity arises from the women's humiliation, and fear emerges from recognizing societal complicity.

When the verdict is finally delivered, the viewer experiences a release of moral tension. This catharsis purges not only emotional but intellectual ignorance. The realization that gender bias is systemic transforms empathy into moral awareness.

The final sequence—where the women walk free—evokes Aristotle's belief that tragedy should educate emotion. The audience leaves not merely relieved but morally awakened, recognizing that justice itself can be a tragic struggle in a flawed world.

The Longinian Sublime in Pink:

While Aristotle explains how tragedy works, Longinus explains why it moves us. His On the Sublime defines sublimity as "a kind of loftiness that elevates the soul." Pink achieves sublimity through grandeur of thought, emotional resonance, and noble expression.

1.Grandeur of Thought:

Longinus' first source of sublimity lies in "great thoughts." Pink embodies this through its unwavering commitment to justice and dignity. The idea that "No means No" transcends law and becomes a universal moral truth. It represents the loftiness of thought that Longinus associates with genuine greatness—the capacity of art to inspire moral transformation.

2.Strong Emotion (Pathos):

Longinus argues that nothing truly great is devoid of passion. The restrained yet intense emotions in Pink—the women's fear, Sehgal's controlled anger, the audience's empathy—collectively create a sublime experience. The film's emotional power lies in its sincerity; the pain feels real, not dramatized.

3.Noble Diction:

Amitabh Bachchan's delivery exemplifies Longinus' noble diction. His voice imbues ordinary language with moral gravity. The phrase "She said no" becomes elevated through performance into a declaration of human rights. In Longinian terms, this is "speech dignified by its purpose."

4.Figures of Speech:

The courtroom dialogue employs repetition, anaphora, and rhetorical questions—figures Longinus celebrates for their ability to intensify emotion. Sehgal's rhythmic repetition of "No means No" mirrors the cadence of sacred chant, transforming legal defense into moral revelation.

5.Composition and Harmony:

Finally, Longinus emphasizes that true sublimity depends on harmonious composition—the unity of all elements to elevate the audience's soul. The narrative arc of Pink, moving from ignorance to enlightenment, mirrors this ascent. The film's rhythm, pacing, and closure leave viewers intellectually and morally uplifted.

Integration of Aristotle and Longinus:

In Pink, Aristotle's cathartic tragedy and Longinus' moral sublimity converge into a single aesthetic experience. Aristotle sought "learning through suffering," while Longinus aimed for "elevation through wonder." Pink accomplishes both.

The film's structure satisfies Aristotelian principles—unity of action, moral reversal, recognition, and catharsis—while its dialogue and moral gravity fulfill Longinus' demand for grandeur and noble diction. Together, they produce a new form of modern tragedy—one that purifies emotion and exalts thought.

When the women emerge vindicated, the viewer undergoes a dual transformation: an Aristotelian cleansing of moral confusion and a Longinian elevation toward ethical consciousness. The film thus proves that classical theories are not relics but living frameworks capable of interpreting contemporary social realities.

Quotations:

"No means no. Whatever you wear, wherever you go, whatever you do, it doesn't matter."

"We are not asking for sympathy; we are asking for respect."

"Why does society judge women for saying no, but not men for not hearing it?"

"She is a victim of your imagination, not her choice."

"Courtroom background score during intense moment"

"Courtroom confrontations, expressions, and gestures"

Conclusion:

Pink exemplifies how classical aesthetic principles retain their relevance in modern cinema. Through Aristotle's six elements, the film structures a tragedy grounded in realism and moral intensity. Through Longinus' five sources, it achieves sublimity—elevating legal discourse into an ethical manifesto.

The courtroom becomes both a stage and a sanctuary where truth replaces spectacle, and justice becomes poetry. The film's emotional precision, moral conviction, and rhetorical force reaffirm that tragedy need not involve death to evoke catharsis. Its sublimity arises not from grandeur of setting but from grandeur of thought.

In uniting Aristotle's emotional purification with Longinus' moral exaltation, Pink transcends its narrative to become an enduring moral text. It redefines tragedy as resistance and the sublime as justice. As Longinus wrote, "Sublimity consists in excellence and distinction of expression which raises our souls to what is lofty." Pink achieves precisely that—it raises the conscience of a society still learning to hear the simplest of truths: "No means No."

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THE ANNIHILATING CHORD: FANA AS THE "TRUE SUBLIME" IN SUFI QAWWALI

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Abstract

This paper investigates the realization of the true sublime defined here as a non-dualistic, overwhelming encounter with the Divine Infinite-within the performance and poetic content of Sufi songs (e.g., Qawwali and Sama). Moving beyond traditional Western aesthetic theories, this research asserts that the Sufi musical experience is a deliberate spiritual technology aimed at achieving Fana' (annihilation of the ego) and direct realization of Tawhid (Divine Unity).

Analysis focuses on how specific lyrical themes (e.g., the pain of separation, the intoxication of divine love, the guidance of the Pir) combine with the escalating rhythmic and melodic structures to induce wajd (ecstatic trance). This blissfull (extremely happy) state is identified as the moment where the spiritual sublime is experienced, dissolving the self/other distinction.

Utilizing a hermeneutic approach to key texts by poets like Rumi and Amir Khusrow, the study examines the structure of the mehfil-e-sama (assembly of listening) as a ritual space designed for transcendence. The paper ultimately argues that Sufi songs offer a profound, faith-based dimension to the sublime, positioning them as essential channels for transformative, unmediated truth. They are not merely devotional art but potent tools for spiritual liberation. By applying Longinus "True sublime" theory through the close textual and contextual analysis of several iconic Qawwali e.g *"Chap Tilak," "Man Kunto Maula," and "Sanson Ki Mala"* (classic Qawwali/Bhakti fusion), alongside modern cinematic Sufi compositions like *"Kun Faya Kun"* and *"Arziyan.* These examples illustrate how escalating musical intensity, rhythmic repetition, and mystical poetry focusing on the Beloved and the Pir collectively induce wajd.

Keywords: Fana, Qawwali, Sama, Sublime, Sufism, Tawhid

Introduction

The Sublime as Spiritual Technology

The enduring global resonance of Sufi devotional music, particularly the Qawwali. Qawwali is a vibrant form of Sufi Islamic devotional singing originating in the Indian subcontinent. It is a communal and energetic musical performance designed to stimulate religious devotion and a sense of spiritual closeness to God. Qawwali is performed by a group of singers and musicians who are known as Qawwals. They use instruments like the harmonium and tabla, characterized by rhythmic hand-clapping and repetitive, hypnotic phrases. The central themes are love, devotion, and longing for the Divine Beloved, often using mystical poetry to inspire a state of ecstasy (wajd) or spiritual union in the listeners during the performance, known as mehfil-e-sama which is a one type of gathering for listening. Its origins are credited to the 13th-century mystic Amir Khusro. Qawwali tradition lies not only in its aesthetic appeal but in its profound capacity to induce states of spiritual bliss Wajd. This paper argues that this experience constitutes a "True Sublime" that fundamentally departs from Western philosophical models. Whereas theorists like Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant define the sublime as an overwhelming experience that ultimately validates human Reason and its capacity for mastery, the Sufi path demands the exact opposite - the annihilation of the ego (Fana).

This research talks that the Qawwali is a spiritual technology that utilizes sonic intensity, rhythmic structure, and poetic metaphor to intentionally shatter the self, providing a framework for the sublime as a transformative act of surrender. Drawing on the foundational poetry of Rumi and the performance mastery of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, the central thesis is affirmed: The True Sublime in Sufi songs is a unique, structured phenomenon that transcends aesthetic experience; it functions as a spiritual technology that utilizes sonic intensity and poetic metaphor to intentionally induce the ecstatic destruction of the ego (Fana), thereby opening the seeker to direct, transformative knowledge of Divine Unity (Tawhid). The following sections will establish the theoretical distinction of fana and analyze the musical and lyrical elements that execute this journey toward spiritual (fana).

Structures of Annihilation

The "True Sublime" is a systematic process where the finite self confronts and surrenders to the Infinite. The Qawwali structures this confrontation through three distinct musical and lyrical mechanisms.

Theoretical Foundation: Fana as the Sublime Goal

The Sufi sublime is defined by its outcome: Fana (annihilation) followed by Baqa (subsistence in God). Fana is the terrifying but desired moment when the self is dissolved by the terrifying power (Jalal) and overwhelming beauty (Jamal) of the Divine (Safi). This contrasts sharply with Kant's sublime, where the mind retreats to assert its rational superiority. In Qawwali, the mind is compelled to surrender; its resistance is the source of the initial spiritual dread, but its dissolution is the source of ultimate joy. The poems of Rumi, which characterize this journey as a return to the origin, which provide the lyrical blueprint for this annihilation (The Threshold Society).

The Musical Sublime:

Kinetic and Mathematical Overload

The sound of Qawwali is engineered to dismantle the rational self.

The Kinetic Sublime (Dynamical Overload): The musical structure typically progresses from slow, meditative verses to a rapid, frenzied climax (crescendo). The accelerating Tabla rhythm and the insistent, rhythmic clapping of the chorus constitute a Dynamical Sublime. This relentless, irresistible sonic force mimics the overwhelming power of Divine Love, forcing a physical and mental submission that initiates fana. The body is forced out of its controlled, rational state and into a state of blissful trance (Wajd).

The Mathematical Sublime (Repetition and Infinity): The repetitive chanting of core phrases or Divine Names (dhikr) is the primary tool for mental saturation. In songs like *"Sanson Ki Mala Peh Simroon"* by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, the prolonged, hypnotic iteration of the remembrance motif simulates the Infinite Magnitude of God. This saturation prevents discursive thought, demonstrating the mind's limited capacity to contain the Absolute and thus compelling its surrender to the boundless reality of God.

The Vocal Sublime: The soaring, improvised vocal runs (Tarana) of the lead Qawwal push the human voice past its natural boundaries. This vocal extremism, exemplified by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, is the sound of the soul breaking free from its finite form-the sonic manifestation of fana itself.

Lyrical Case Studies

Mapping the Spiritual Collapse

The lyrics of these foundational and popular songs serve as a poetic roadmap for the spiritual collapse of the ego (fana) by applying longinus's True Sublime Theory.

The Sublime of Annihilation:

"Chhaap Tilak Sab Chheeni" by Amir Khusro:

The lyrics, "You've snatched away all my marks/identity," describe the instantaneous, overwhelming force of the Beloved's gaze. The sublime here is the realization that love is an identity-stripping force. The terror of losing the self is immediately subsumed by the transcendent joy of unity, demonstrating the seamless transition from fana to Tawhid.

The central theme is the loss of the limited self (identity/ego, symbolized by "chhaap" and "tilak") and the joy of oneness with the Beloved Nizamuddin Auliya. He is a renowned indian sufi saint of the chishti order who is famous for his teachings of live and compassion towards all humanity. This concept of fana (annihilation of the self in the divine) is a vast, incomprehensible magnitude of spiritual experience.which shows the grandeur of thought. The emotion is not fear, but an overwhelming, intoxicating divine love which is vehement passion. The line *"Prem Bhati ka Madhva Pilaike, Matvali Kar Lini Re Mose Naina Milaike"* ("By making me drink from the furnace of love. You've intoxicated me by just a glance"), here it expresses a passion so intense it eclipses rationality, leading to the sublime effect of transport (Longinus) or a passion stronger than pleasure (Burke). The intoxication of love is

a dynamic sublime by Kant where the mind is momentarily overpowered by the strength of the feeling. Uses metaphor and synecdoche like "tilak", "chhaap" to represent the entirety of one's worldly and religious identity. The intimate address to the Pi (Beloved) elevates a simple, vernacular language Braj Bhasha to a transcendental level. The seamless fusion of the folk dialect and high spiritual thought achieves Longinus ideal where art (rhetoric) is concealed by the naturalness of expression.

 "Man Kunto Maula" by Amir Khusro:

This piece asserts the non-negotiable spiritual authority of the Master (Maula). The sublime is experienced through the communal, overwhelming affirmation of a Gnostic Truth that silences the critical, rebellious ego. The subject is the ultimate spiritual authority in the declaration *"Man Kunto Maula, fa Ali-un Maula"* (Whoever accepts me as a master, Ali is his master too). This phrase establishes a line of eternal, sacred command, resonating with historical and theological immensity.

The Mathematical Sublime (Kant): The concept relates to an unbounded magnitude - the endless line of spiritual succession and the infinite nature of divine mandate, which overwhelms the mind's ability to grasp its full historical and theological weight. Qawwali performances of this Manqabat often feature a repetitive, rhythmic chanting *"dara dil-e dara dil-e dar-e daani"* leading to a powerful climax. This structure is designed to induce hal (ecstasy). The methodical, building intensity of the music and chorus, particularly in a traditional mehfil-e-sama, creates an overwhelming sonic experience (Burke's loud sounds) that forces the listener's consciousness toward a state of awe.

"Sanson ki mala" by Nusrat Fateh Ali khan

The core idea is the devotion that transcends religious boundaries: *"Ik Ka Sajan Mandir Mein, Ik Ka Preetam Masjid Mein, Par Main Sanson Ki Mala Pe, Simroon Main Pi Ka Naam"* (One's beloved is in a temple, another's in a mosque, but I chant the Beloved's name on the garland of my breaths). This vision of universal, undifferentiated love for the Divine is conceptually boundless. The use of the breath itself as the prayer bead (Sanson ki mala) is an expression of unending, obsessive devotion. This sustained, passionate love is the "true emotion in the right place" (Longinus), which is essential for transporting the audience.

"Kun Faya Kun and Arziyan"

Kun Faya Kun invokes the Cosmic Sublime by referencing God's creative command, "Be, and it is," overwhelming the seeker with the effortless magnitude of the Creator. The phrase "*Kun Faya Kun*" itself, meaning "Be, and it is" (from the Qur'an), directly invokes the ultimate, incomprehensible power of the Creator. This concept symbolizes the true power and supremacy of God over the origin of the universe, representing a magnitude that is "too big for the imagination's capacity," as per the Romantic Sublime. This immensity evokes the feeling of awe (a blend of fear and admiration). The lyrics articulate a deep philosophical and spiritual journey, such as the protagonist's plea: *"Arz tujhe, kar de mujhe mujh se hi rihaa... ab mujhko bhi ho deedar mera"* (*"I request you, free me from myself... now let me also see myself"*). This is the longing to melt the finite human ego into the Infinite Divine Creator, which is a core theme of Sufism and a profoundly sublime concept. This intellectual grappling with selflessness and union elevates the listener's soul, which Longinus describes as the effect of true sublimity. The expression of genuine, intense, and deeply felt emotion is central to the sublime. The Qawwali articulates profound human sorrow and repentance, such as the sense of "unworthy life and nihilism" and the lines, *"Aaja khalipan mein pee ka ghar tera. Tere bin khali aaja khalipan mein." (Come into the Void, the home of your Beloved - Without you there is emptiness in this Void).* This expression of desolation and the earnest, desperate call to the Almighty is a powerful, cathartic passion that transports the listener. The very nature of Qawwali, with its crescendo of rhythm and voices that build towards a state of hal (spiritual ecstasy), embodies the musical sublime. The dynamic shifts, particularly the sudden moments of powerful vocalization and harmonium flourishes, can be seen as an overwhelming sensory experience that parallels the "loud crescendo" or "force of nature" described in the Romantic Sublime. The skillful use of language and arrangement transforms profound thoughts into a truly moving artistic experience. The poetic language uses noble diction for instance, calling the Creator a "Dyer (Rangrezaa)" who colors the world and the soul. This allegory of the 'Dyer' provides a tangible image for the intangible process of creation and transformation, adding grandeur and beauty to the expression. The musical structure itself, which integrates Arabic verses (Qur'anic phrase) with Urdu/Hindi poetry, creates a fusion of thought and harmony that is structurally elevated. The rising tempo and harmonic complexity of the arrangement build an impression of

immense spiritual power, which Longinus links to the power of harmony in music to move people. The transition from personal lament to universal praise contributes to the feeling of upliftment and transcendence.

"Arziyan" by A.R Rehman

Arziyan exemplifies the Sublime of Radical Vulnerability. It is a direct "petition" to God where the ego collapses through the complete admission of helplessness and spiritual need, paving the way for grace. The theme is a direct, intimate prayer (arziyan/plea/request) to the Divine, often focused on finding one's path or purpose. The thought of confronting one's own smallness against the great mystery of existence is the source of its loftiness. The supplicant's vulnerability and search for an answer from an unseen, all-powerful entity provokes a sense of the awful and the lofty.

Through a modern Qawwali its composition effectively uses dynamic contrast soft, intimate verses leading to powerful, layered choruses. The use of the word Maula which means master/ lord is deployed at moments of maximum intensity. The initial feeling of inadequacy/displeasure in the prayer is followed by the exaltation/pleasure as the music swells, creating a subjective feeling of connecting with the Divine power.

The common thread uniting all these Qawwalis in the context of the Sublime is the performance's capacity to induce transport which is the elevation of the soul to a state beyond ordinary human thought, achieved through the combination of lofty spiritual concepts and intense, rhythmic sonic energy.

Conclusion

The Sublime as Spiritual Attainment

This paper has established that Sufi songs, particularly within the ritual context of Sama' and Qawwali, function as a powerful spiritual technology designed to realize the true sublime. By moving beyond Western aesthetic standards that often frame the sublime in terms of terror or overwhelming beauty, we have identified the Sufi sublime as an experiential, transformative state directly linked to core theological concepts: Tawhid (Divine Unity) and Fana (annihilation of the ego).

The escalating lyrical intensity, coupled with the driving rhythmic momentum and the focused environment of the mehfil-e-sama, serves not just to evoke emotion but to systematically break down the dualistic perception of the self. The resultant state of wajd (ecstatic trance) is, therefore, not a mere emotional response but a temporary, unmediated attainment of the Divine. In this moment, the separation between the lover and the Beloved is dissolved, and the sublime is realized as spiritual truth, not just a powerful feeling.

In conclusion, Sufi songs like *"Chhaap Tilak", "Man Kunto Maula", "Sanson Ki Mala", " Kun Faya Kun"* and *" Arziyan"* are far more than devotional music; they are carefully constructed vehicles for transcendence. Future research could explore the neuro-aesthetics of wajd or compare this spiritual sublime with similar concepts in other mystical traditions. Ultimately, the tradition of Sufi song offers a profound, performative answer to the quest for the Infinite, proving that the sublime can be a shared, structured, and spiritually liberating experience within the framework of faith.

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KANYADAAN: MIRROR OF PERSONALITY

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Abstract

"Kanyadaan", written by Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi and translated into English by Gowri Ramnarayan, examines inter-caste marriage, class conflict, and social hypocrisy. The play highlights the duality of human nature, where the darker side eventually emerges despite efforts to conceal it. Arun Athavale, a Dalit youth, initially appears idealistic but later reveals his bitterness and aggression, causing suffering to Jyoti and her family, her father Nath Devalikar (an MLA and idealist), her mother Sewa (a social activist), and her brother Jayaprakash. Nath supports the marriage as an extension of his Ideals, while Sewa resists as a protective mother but later consents. Through Jyoti's struggle, Tendulkar portrays the clash between idealism and practicality, the persistence of caste prejudice, and the resilience of a woman confronting harsh realities.

Keywords: class conflict, inter-caste marriage, idealism, hypocrisy, parenting

Full paper

The central conflict in Kanyadaan arises from the clash between Jyoti's aspirations and her husband Arun's expectations. Arun wants Jyoti to follow traditional gender roles and be a dutiful wife and daughter-in-law, while Jyoti desires freedom, independence, and an active role in society.

Atrocities against Dalits have existed for centuries, and Arun, being a Dalit, carries deep resentment within him. His marriage to Jyoti, a Brahmin girl, becomes possible because of her father, Nath Devalikar, an MLA and idealist who believes that equality should begin at home. Nath views Jyoti's marriage not as a father, but as a reformer. Instead of understanding Arun's personality, he focuses on his caste background.

Sewa, Jyoti's mother, though a social activist, thinks like a mother first. She is practical and understands the emotional and social risks her daughter might face. Nath, on the other hand, is blinded by his ideals. He wishes to demonstrate equality but fails to see the real nature of the man Jyoti is marrying.

Arun's behaviour is rooted in his childhood. He grew up in an abusive and uneducated environment, where his father mistreated his mother. Such surroundings filled Arun with anger and a burning desire for revenge. His bitterness toward the upper class becomes evident after marriage, as he begins to vent his frustrations on Jyoti.

During this period, inter-caste marriage was considered a taboo in Indian society. People were concerned more about their social image than justice or equality. Tendulkar shows how society's hypocrisy works, those who preach equality fail to practice it at home. Nath and Sewa, despite being social reformers, reflect the same contradiction between personal emotions and public ideology.

The play also presents the idea that a person's artistic or intellectual talent does not define their moral character. Arun writes well and gains respect through his autobiography, yet he manipulates this talent to hide his cruelty and to control the people around him. He pressures Nath to discuss his book publicly so that his image appears positive in society. Arun's actions reveal how some individuals misuse their caste identity to gain sympathy and avoid criticism.

Jyoti realises Arun's manipulative behaviour and is hurt by her father's submission to it. She questions both her father's idealism and her husband's hypocrisy. Through her pain, Jyoti evolves into a strong woman who accepts her reality yet does not lose her awareness of truth.

Jyoti's statement, *"I am also a Dalit now,"* symbolizes her complete transformation and her acceptance of suffering as an essential part of her identity. She becomes a representation of the endurance of Dalit women, who suffer silently under social and emotional burdens. Her acceptance reflects the harsh truth of a society that values silence over justice.

Vijay Tendulkar's characters in "Kanyadaan" serve as symbolic representations of the social and psychological conflicts that dominate Indian society. Each character reveals a different dimension of the struggle between idealism and realism, as well as the lasting impact of caste and gender inequalities.

Jyoti Devalikar stands at the heart of the play as a symbol of innocence, hope, and transformation. Her character evolves from being a young, idealistic daughter influenced by her father's liberal ideologies to a woman who faces the brutal realities of married life. Jyoti's marriage to Arun becomes a journey of disillusionment and self-realisation. Initially, she believes that her marriage will be an example of social equality, but she gradually learns that social reform cannot be achieved through sacrifice alone. Jyoti's endurance, despite her suffering, portrays the strength of Indian women who carry both emotional and societal burdens with silent dignity.

Arun Athavale, the Dalit protagonist, is one of Tendulkar's most complex creations. He embodies both the victim and the aggressor. Arun's rage stems from his traumatic past witnessing his mother's abuse and the humiliation his community faced. His education gives him intellectual strength, but emotionally he remains scarred. He represents how systemic oppression can deform human nature, turning victims into perpetrators. Arun's duality his ability to write beautifully yet act brutally reveals Tendulkar's exploration of how social injustice corrodes moral values.

Nath Devalikar, Jyoti's father, embodies idealism without understanding its practical consequences. As an MLA and a social reformer, he believes that inter-caste marriage is the ultimate act of social change. However, his ideological blindness prevents him from seeing the human complexities behind Arun's bitterness. Nath's failure to distinguish between social theory and personal reality results in his daughter's suffering. Through Nath, Tendulkar critiques the superficial liberalism of the educated elite who promote equality in public but fail to comprehend its emotional implications within their families.

Sewa, Jyoti's mother, represents the voice of realism and maternal instinct. Although she is a social activist, her perspective is grounded in human experience rather than abstract philosophy. She senses the potential danger in Jyoti's decision to marry Arun but eventually agrees out of loyalty to her husband's ideals. Sewa's character highlights the conflict many women face between social duty and personal emotion. In the end, she witnesses the painful consequences of idealism taken too far.

"Kanyadaan" explores the intersection of caste, gender, and class. Tendulkar portrays how caste identity continues to shape personal relationships even in educated, modern families. The play exposes the hypocrisy of those who advocate for equality but still carry deep-rooted prejudices. Another significant theme is the conflict between idealism and practicality. Through Nath and Sewa's contrasting approaches, Tendulkar presents the question of whether true social reform can exist without emotional understanding. The play also examines the endurance of women, symbolised by Jyoti, who bear the consequences of male ego and societal expectations.

Tendulkar's "Kanyadaan" challenges both the upper-caste idealism and the anger of the oppressed. It reveals that social harmony cannot be achieved through ideology alone. it requires empathy, understanding, and mutual respect. Each character becomes a mirror reflecting society's contradictions, proving that equality must begin with emotional awareness before it can transform external structures.

Conclusion

Arun once says, "*I have lived in filth all my life. You cannot purify me with your love.*" This line reveals his deep psychological scars and his inability to accept love without resentment. When a mirror breaks, its pieces either wound the person looking into it or those nearby. in this play, Arun is the broken mirror whose fragments hurt everyone around him. Jyoti accepts these shards and learns to live with the pain, symbolising the endurance and silent suffering of women in a divided society.

Vijay Tendulkar's "Kanyadaan" powerfully reflects the harsh realities of caste and gender inequalities in post-independence India. Through the relationship between Arun and Jyoti, Tendulkar reveals how personal lives are often torn apart by deep-rooted social structures and psychological wounds. Jyoti's transformation from an idealistic daughter shaped by her father's liberal beliefs to a disillusioned woman who faces the brutal truth of life embodies the painful conflict between idealism and reality. Her acceptance at the end of the play does not represent surrender but a kind of awakening. She recognises that silence, too, can be a form of resistance and strength when society refuses to listen to truth.

Arun, on the other hand, symbolises the dark side of social oppression the way prolonged injustice can deform human emotions. He becomes both a victim and a perpetrator, repeating the cycle of violence he once suffered. His marriage with Jyoti exposes the deep contradictions in Indian society, where the rhetoric of equality often collapses before ego, power, and resentment. Tendulkar uses Arun's duality to question whether true social reform is possible without emotional reform.

"Kanyadaan" is not merely a story of an inter-caste marriage; it is a profound exploration of how ideology, gender, and caste interact to shape human destiny. The play forces the reader to confront uncomfortable truths about society's moral blindness and challenges the notion that good intentions alone can change the world. Tendulkar closes the play with a haunting image of endurance Jyoti, who carries the pain of her shattered dreams yet learns to survive with dignity. Her story reminds us that the real 'kanyadaan' is not the ritual of marriage but the giving away of one's illusions to embrace reality.

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"UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA: EFFECTS ON STUDENTS"

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Abstract

Childhood and adolescence are formative periods of emotional, psychological, and social development. However, many school students face traumatic experiences that leave lasting impacts on their mental health, academic performance, and social behavior. Trauma in children can result from family disruption, domestic violence, peer bullying, academic pressure, accidents, exposure to community violence, and the rise of cyberbullying. These experiences often interfere with emotional regulation, cognitive development, social engagement, and physical health. Early recognition and intervention are crucial to prevent long-term consequences, such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, attention deficits, and behavioral issues. This research paper explores the prevalence, causes, and effects of trauma among school students, with a focus on India. It examines how social, cultural, and educational environments influence trauma experiences and responses. The paper also highlights the roles of schools, teachers, counselors, parents, and policymakers in addressing trauma through evidence-based strategies. Case studies from Indian schools demonstrate the effectiveness of peer mentoring, mindfulness programs, counseling sessions, and social-emotional learning interventions in improving students' mental well-being, academic engagement, and resilience.

Keywords: Trauma, School Students, Mental Health, Resilience, Psychological Support, Coping Strategies.

"Understanding trauma: Effects on Students"

Trauma is defined as an emotional response to deeply distressing or disturbing experiences that overwhelm an individual's ability to cope. In school students, trauma can arise from family conflicts, parental separation or divorce, domestic violence, peer bullying, academic pressure, natural disasters, accidents, or exposure to community violence. The rapid growth of digital technology has introduced cyberbullying and social media-related harassment as significant sources of trauma. Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable due to developing coping mechanisms and reliance on support from parents, teachers, and peers. The effects of trauma in students are far-reaching. Emotionally, students may experience anxiety, depression, irritability, mood swings, or low self-esteem. Cognitive effects include difficulty concentrating, poor memory retention, and reduced problem-solving ability, which often result in declining academic performance. Behavioral symptoms include social withdrawal, aggression, defiance, and in severe cases, self-harm. Socially, traumatized students may struggle to maintain relationships with peers or teachers. Physical symptoms, such as headaches, stomachaches, fatigue, or sleep disturbances, often accompany psychological distress.

Dr. Bessel van der Kolk's Body–Mind Connection Theory (2014), from The Body Keeps the Score, shows that trauma is stored not only in the brain but also in the body. This theory explains why many students experience both emotional distress and physical symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, or restlessness.

Lev Vygotsky's Social Development Theory (1978) supports the idea that learning happens best through social interaction and emotional support. When teachers or peers provide guidance and empathy, it helps students rebuild confidence and cognitive strength.

Ann Masten's Resilience Theory (2001) introduces the concept of "ordinary magic," describing how children can recover from trauma through everyday support, care, and stability in schools and families.

Finally, Carl Rogers' Humanistic Theory (1961) emphasizes unconditional positive regard — the belief that emotional growth happens when individuals feel accepted and valued.

In India, studies suggest that nearly 30-40% of school students experience at least one significant traumatic event before the age of 18. Academic pressure, parental expectations, and peer bullying are among the most common sources. The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified mental health challenges due to prolonged isolation, disrupted routines, fear of illness, and loss of social interactions. Despite the prevalence, stigma, lack of awareness,

and insufficient mental health resources often prevent early identification and intervention. Schools serve as primary environments where children spend the majority of their day, making teachers and counselors the first observers of behavioral changes such as withdrawal, irritability, absenteeism, or declining academic performance. Recognizing these signs and implementing supportive interventions can mitigate long-term negative outcomes.

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of trauma among school students, analyzing its prevalence, causes, effects, and intervention strategies. By integrating global research, India-focused case studies, and practical examples, the study emphasizes trauma informed education, teacher training, parental involvement, and policy-driven interventions. It argues for the creation of safe, inclusive, and supportive school environments that enable students to recover from trauma, build resilience, and achieve academic and social success.

Trauma impacts students differently based on age, personality, gender, social context, and type of traumatic event. Younger children may display regressive behaviors, frequent tantrums, sleep disturbances, or clinginess. Adolescents may withdraw socially, show declining academic performance, engage in risk-taking behaviors, or display aggression. Peer interactions often suffer, affecting long-term social development. Emotionally, trauma results in heightened anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, irritability, and emotional dysregulation. Chronic trauma can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), fear responses to normal situations, and emotional numbing. Students may oscillate between withdrawal, aggression, or defiance, disrupting classroom dynamics.

Cognitive effects include impaired concentration, memory, decision-making, and problem-solving skills. These challenges hinder academic performance and learning engagement.

Behavioral effects may involve aggression, impulsivity, defiance, social withdrawal, or self-harming tendencies. Physical symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches, sleep disturbances, and fatigue often accompany psychological distress. Gender and age differences influence trauma responses. Girls often internalize stress, leading to anxiety and depression, whereas boys may exhibit externalizing behaviors such as aggression or risk-taking. Younger children rely more on adults for emotional support, while adolescents may hide symptoms or engage in risky behavior. Understanding these differences helps in designing effective age-appropriate and gender-sensitive interventions. Case studies illustrate effective interventions. A Mumbai government school implemented a peer mentoring program where senior students trained in emotional support guided younger peers facing trauma. Absenteeism reduced by 20%, classroom engagement improved, and peer relationships strengthened. In Delhi, mindfulness exercises and structured counseling sessions integrated into daily routines helped students manage stress, regulate emotions, and improve academic outcomes. Bengaluru's trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy program for students exposed to domestic violence and peer bullying showed significant improvements in emotional regulation, social skills, and classroom participation over six months.

Building resilience is central to trauma recovery. Counseling services, social-emotional learning (SEL), mindfulness and relaxation techniques, art and play therapy, parental engagement, teacher training, and peer support programs are key strategies. Counseling enables emotional expression, coping skill development, and self-awareness. SEL fosters empathy, stress management, and problem-solving. Mindfulness, yoga, and relaxation exercises improve emotional regulation and reduce stress. Art and play therapy provide safe avenues for processing trauma. Active parental involvement ensures alignment between home and school support systems. Teacher training allows educators to identify early warning signs, manage classroom disruptions empathetically, and refer students to professional help. Peer support programs reduce isolation and enhance a sense of belonging.

Trauma-informed schools create predictable, safe, and supportive environments. Policies such as the Indian National Education Policy (NEP 2020) emphasize mental health, counseling, and teacher training. NGOs-like CRY (Child Rights and You) and teach for India implement trauma-aware programs, focusing on prevention and intervention. Challenges in India include limited funding, lack of trained personnel, stigma around mental health, and high student-teacher ratios in public schools. Global perspectives reinforce the effectiveness of trauma-informed education. Programs in the United States, Canada, and Australia integrating SEL, teacher training, and school counseling improve emotional well-being, resilience, and academic outcomes. Adapting these strategies in India requires considering cultural norms, social challenges, and resource limitations. Addressing trauma holistically improves emotional regulation, social skills, academic engagement, and classroom dynamics. Early recognition and intervention reduce the risk of long-term psychological, social, and cognitive impairments. Schools,

parents, mental health professionals, and policymakers must collaborate to create environments conducive to healing, learning, and growth.

Effective strategies include structured counseling, peer mentoring, mindfulness, art therapy, parental engagement, teacher training, trauma-informed pedagogy, social-emotional learning, and policy-driven support. Evidence from Indian case studies confirms that such approaches improve resilience, academic performance, social interaction, and overall mental health. Continuing research and awareness programs are vital for understanding evolving challenges such as cyberbullying, academic pressure, and social exclusion. Integrating culturally relevant and evidence-based interventions into schools ensures students receive comprehensive support. Long-term planning and systematic implementation help create safe, inclusive, and nurturing environments where all students can thrive despite past or ongoing trauma.

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PEN AND PIXEL: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BOND'S ALL ROADS LEADS TO GANGA AND KANISHK GUPTA'S DIGITAL JOURNEY THROUGH UTTARAKHAND

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Abstract

This study examines Ruskin Bond's *All Roads Leads to Ganga* and Kanishk Gupta's digital travelogues about Uttarakhand in comparison, considering both as artistic experiences with the landscape rather than merely travelogues. In the literary tradition of introspective journeying, where travel through space becomes a metaphor for returning to oneself, Bond's travelogue is situated, according to the study. In particular, his chapters of Dehra present an introspective, ecological, and spiritual picture of Uttarakhand. The traveler's gaze is mediated by the lens and shaped by immediacy, interactivity, and digital aesthetics in Kanishk gupta's travel blog and vlogs, on the other hand, which display a twenty-first century sensibility. By contrasting Gupta's visual storytelling with Bond's written word, the paper explores how medium changes significance: the pixel invites participation while the pages invites meditation. But the respect that both authors have for the mountains, their belief that nature can teach us virtue, and their commitment to protect it. In response to the study's findings, the development of pages and pixel signifies a growth rather than a break in the craft of travel writing, where the traditional desire to discover and fit in is given new life through contemporary narrative techniques.

Keywords: *All Roads Leads to Ganga*; Digital Storytelling; Ecological Consciousness; Introspection; Kanishk Gupta; Landscape and self; Modern Travel; Page and Pixel; Ruskin Bond; Travel Narrative; Uttarakhand

Introduction

One of the earliest literary genres, travel literature, turns movement into meaning, where landscapes become mirrors of human emotion and culture. As literary and cultural documentation, travel writing reveals inner geographies of perception in addition to landscapes. Ruskin Bond stands out among the many Indian authors who have turned travel into art. Even while he is best known for his short stories set in the Himalayan foothills, his travelogues especially All Roads Lead to Ganga—deserve praise for their poetic depictions of Uttarakhand, a place where history, environment, and spirituality all coexist. Uttarakhand was specifically chosen over all other regions. It is more than just a location; it is a living symbol of the meeting point of tradition and transcendence, of man and mountain. Uttarakhand exudes continuity, with rivers that have remained unaltered and villages that maintain their traditional rhythm, in contrast to urban areas that boast of progress. Because of his passion for this terrain, Bond turns travel into a way to remember; the Ganga becomes his spiritual axis, and the hills his moral geography.

Bond's travel writing is just as worthy of recognition as his fiction, which makes up the majority of his literary renown. He becomes a geographer of emotion in All Roads Lead to Ganga, converting the landscape into compassion. His travelogue is more than just a route log; it is a contemplative journey that documents his inner peace with belonging as well as the outside world.

On the other side, the travel story has been modernized by Kanishk Gupta's blog about the "Most Beautiful Villages of Uttarakhand." Through the digital platform, Gupta is able to connect contemporary tourists with the area by blending images, concise commentary, and useful advice. His prose, however, reflects the same awe and inquiry that drove Bond's writing decades before, despite its apparent modernity.

The choice to contrast a contemporary travel blog with a conventional travelogue stems from the fact that narrative is constantly changing. Today's travel writing has evolved beyond literary meditation to multimedia involvement, going beyond pages into pixels. This paper examines how narrative goal, medium, and tone change from introspective contemplation to participatory experience by contrasting Bond and Gupta. It also discusses how travel writing is still relevant today, embracing new tools while maintaining its core purpose of understanding place through one's own experience.

From colonial explorations and ancient pilgrimage narratives to postcolonial contemplations on identity and belonging, travel writing has a rich literary heritage. Travel has been employed by authors like V.S. Naipaul, Rabindranath Tagore, and E.M. Forster as a means of both critique and discovery. Post-independence travelogues in India represent a transition from imperial gaze to introspection, when traversing place turns into a means of reclaiming narrative agency. This tradition is carried on in Bond's All Roads Lead to Ganga, which depicts India's mountains as inhabited, breathing realities rather than as exotic or picturesque. Similarly, the rise of online travel blogs such as Gupta's shows how the genre is still flexible and incorporates ecological, emotional, and visual awareness.

Ruskin Bond's Uttarakhand in All Roads Lead to Ganga

Bond's All Roads Lead to Ganga is a collection of interrelated sketches that honor Uttarakhand's natural and spiritual vibrancy. In "The Writer on the Hill", he positions himself as a curator of memory rather than passing tourist. He observers that the hills surrounding Mussoorie are "alive with the whisper of pines and the silence of clouds", suggesting a relationship pf camaraderie between the natural world and humans (Bond 1). His a native of the land he writes about, which sets him apart from traditional travel writers who watch from a distance.

Bond's nostalgic look in "Rani of the Doon" depicts Dehradun's changing landscape, from orchards and peaceful streets to urban bustle. However, his sorrow is balanced by love, illustrating how a place changes while maintaining its emotional core. In a similar vein, he delicately depicts rural life in "A Village in Garhwal", where "simplicity is a form of wisdom" (Bond 15). His ecological consciousness is anchored in this chapter, which portrays the peasants' harmony with nature as both a necessity and a philosophy.

Perhaps the most moving chapters are "Along the Mandakini" and "The Magic of Tungnath", where poetic reflection and the holiness of landscape collide. In addition to being a river, the Ganga is a living entity that "rises from the snows with the patience of centuries" (Bond 53). The pilgrimage, both inside and outside, is reflected in the journey of Tungnath, where the mountain serves as a mirror of fortitude and purity.

Bond's narrative style is ageless, poetic, and contemplative throughout the entire work. His descriptions blend environmental consciousness with spiritual meditation, flowing like the rivers he honors. The recurrent images of rivers and mountains for longevity. Together, they characterize Uttarakhand as having a fluid and rooted identity.

What critics frequently refer to as pastoral realism, a style in which truth and simplicity coexist defines Bond's narrative voice. His study of local dialects, plants and fauna, and even village customs gives the landscape personality. The rain's rhythm, for example, reflects his meditative tone in "The Rains Have Come": "Rain falls as if the sky were breathing softly upon the earth" (Bond 21). His poetic intimacy places him in the company of authors such as John Muir and Henry David Thoreau, who saw nature as a companion rather than a setting.

A Modern Lens on the Same Landscape: by Kanishk Gupta

The blog "Most Beautiful Villages of Uttarakhand" by Kanishk Gupta is an example of how travel writing has been digitally reinvented. His viewpoint is immediate, engaging, and visible. Gupta uses images and brief descriptions to allow the audience to see the hills up close rather than contemplating on them. He describes "roads that seem to touch the sky" and "villages wrapped in clouds", but his tone is realistic; he provides information on where to go, what to eat and about where to stay.

What exactly John Urry refers to as the "tourist gaze," in which tourists seek out visual encounters influenced by media and technology, is embodied in Gupta's work. He mediates Uttarakhand as a place and a feeling through the use of interactive maps, high-resolution images, and reel-based storytelling. But unlike shallow influencers, Gupta's tone is grounded in sincerity, emphasizing sustainability and community-based travel. His blog posts on "The Trail to Tungnath" and "Along the Mandakini" combine digital immediacy with poetic observation to turn sacred terrain into an approachable experience. He portrays the tranquillity and tenacity of the mountains with drone footage of the Mandakini valley and sunrise time lapses from Tungnath temple.

Gupta creates an interactive moral geography akin to Bond's written reverence by incorporating local history about the Mandakini's origins, interviewing temple caretakers and people, and emphasizing eco-conscious pilgrimage ("leave no plastic behind"). Although the medium varies, the moral lesson remains the same. His blog serves as a

reminder to readers that, in an age of algorithmic attention, travel can still foster awareness and humility in addition to visibility.

Gupta's view is experienced yet educational. His blog about travel seeks to inform and entertain. Since the terrain is both accessible and holy, his story is a kind of democratized travel. The present tense is used to contextualize Gupta's Uttarakhand through time-lapse movies, drone photos, and social media hashtags'. His craft is not writing reflections, but curating moments.

But both authors have a respect for the area. Gupta's appreciation of regional culture, handicrafts and environmental consciousness demonstrates a continuation of Bond's values. Although Gupta writes to promote, Bond wrote to preserve; yet both writers agree on the moral obligation to act in the hills' direction.

Objective, Narrative Medium, Key Concepts

Bond's travelogue blends voyage and memories in a linear, introspective format. The narrative develops gradually, allowing readers to immerse themselves in quiet during this literary journey. On the other side, Gupta's blog function within a visually engaging, fragmented media that prioritizes speed and share ability. While Bond's objective is in line with the traveller's reaction, his is in line with the tourist look.

Authenticity: Bond's genuiness is derived from his lifetime connection to nature and his residence in Landour. Despite being filtered by digital meditation, Gupta's authenticity comes from the clarity and immediacy of the images.

Subjectivity: Bond turns geography into emotional territory through his writing, which is based on a subjective intimacy. Gupta's enthusiasm and pragmatic observation a digital-age sincerity show his subjectivity, through in a less poetic way.

Personification of Place: According to Bond, "the Ganga breathes like a living soul." As noted by Gupta, a location is dynamic due to shifting light, angles, and people. They both make meaning maps; the only difference is how they do it.

Reader-response theory, which holds that meaning is determined by the reader's interaction, is also echoed in this contrast. By envisioning the mist-covered highways and pine-scented valleys, Bond's writing transports the reader to a place of silent pilgrimage. The reader actively participates in Gupta's digital medium by leaving comments, sharing, and charting their own experiences. As a result, the audience gains authority over the author.

From the standpoint of media studies, the shift from text to screen represents literature's rebirth in a hybrid form rather than its demise. Although Gupta's trip narratives don't have Bond's lyricism, they accomplish democratization by providing more viewpoints, voices, and emotional points of entry into the same place.

Theoretical and Thematic Dimensions

These two pieces emphasize the need for environmental harmony from an ecocritical standpoint. Bond foreshadows contemporary ecological discourse with his concern for deforestation, the degradation of village, and the loss of riverside purity. He demonstrates his conviction that "to love nature is to love life" in "Growing Up with Trees" (Bond 11) through his respect for trees. Gupta, on the other hand, encourages readers to respect local ecosystem and refrain from littering as a symbol of eco-awareness through responsible travel.

Bond's reclaiming of indigenous landscape quietly reveals the postcolonial dimension His Uttarakhand, which is steeped in indigenous mysticism and local legend, is a reclaimed Indian territory rather than a British hill station. Despite having a global style, Gupta's work upholds this continuity by elevating local tourism and cultural to a point of pride.

From the lens of digital media studies, Gupta's blog illustrates how narrative consumption is altered by new technology. His multimedia presentation transforms solitary reading into a communal experience by fusing text, sound, and images. In contrast to Bond's timeless calm, and the sheer velocity of digital media also renders the experience fleeting.

Posthumanist and ecofeminist perspectives can also be applied to both writers. Bond is intuitive, maternal, and nurturing; his loneliness is guided by a feminine presence. In turn Gupta embodies, posthumanist ethics that decentralize human supremacy by seeing nature as a collaborator rather than a backdrop. Viewers can practically experience a non-human gaze through his drone film, which shows nature as an autonomous from above. Additionally, the aesthetics of slowness, a movement that opposes contemporary hurry, are reflected in their works. Patience is taught in Bond's writing: to listen, to breathe, to stay. Travelers are encouraged to experience rather than consume Gupta's concept of "slow travel" and rural immersion, which reinterprets this philosophy for the digital age.

From Quill to Camera: Two lenses on the Ganga

Bond's romanticism infuses his work with emotional depth; he perceives the hills as sentient beings, companions of solitude. Gupta's realism places a strong emphasis on useful exploration, depicting the same locations as approachable experiences. Nonetheless, both honor adventure and reverence for the natural world, demonstrating how the mountain, as a motif and symbol, continues to pay a significant role in Uttarakhand's creative geography.

The distinction between Gupta's digital immediacy and Bond's textual permanence illustrates how meaning is shaped by medium. The printed version of Bond's word evokes continuity and nostalgia. Gupta's blog which are updated frequently, capture impermanence and the fleeting essence of contemporary travel. However, both convey the everlasting appeal of movement in general.

A cultural continuity between generations is also revealed by this comparison method. Bond captured the enduring allure of Uttarakhand in his work from the late 20th century. Gupta maintains its relevance in the era of smartphones by writing for audiences in the twenty-first century. Thus, both authors one drawn in ink, the other in pixels contribute to a shared recollection of the hills.

Conclusion

A range of trip writing styles, from contemplative romanticism to participatory reality, can be seen in the juxtaposition of Kanishk Gupta's travel blogs and Ruskin Bond's All Roads Lead to Ganga. Using different media, both authors depict Uttarakhand as a living philosophy of harmony between nature and humanity as well as a geographical place.

Their mutual respect for the mountains, ecological consciousness, and celebration of travel as a means of self-discovery are among their commonalities. Medium, tone, and motive where there are differences: Gupta's immediacy and engagement contrast with Bond's profundity and meditative rhythm. Gupta's lens democratizes access to her beauty, while Bond's narrative immortalizes Ganga's tranquillity.

The hills on Gupta's images glitter with life, while in the silent pages of Bond they breathe knowledge. Although both approaches are important, the literary travelogue flourishes because of its ability to turn observation into feeling. In the end, travel writing whether in pen or picture reminds us that to travel is to discover the world in a different way.

From the peaceful slopes of Mussoorie, where Bond's creative soul found a home, to the holy ascent of Tungnath, where devotion meets the clouds, Uttarakhand is envisioned by both authors as a sacred constellation of experiences rather than just a place to visit. The flowing Mandakini becomes the river of remembrance, linking human life to nature's rhythm, while Kedarnath stands as a monument of endurance and spiritual perseverance. Yet, at the heart of this landscape flows the Ganga not only as a river but a living consciousness, binding mountains to plains, and generations to eternity. For Bond, the Ganga is both origin and return "a river that remembers," symbolizing purity, continuity, and redemption. For Gupta, it becomes a visual and emotional thread, connecting each journey to an ecological and ethical awareness.

Together, Mussoorie, Tungnath, Kedarnath, Mandakini, and most importantly, the Ganga, represent the terrain of devotion and exploration that characterizes Uttarakhand. They allow Bond and Gupta to connect the old and the new, the written and the digital, the pen and the pixel. All paths do, in fact, still lead to her, as the Ganga timeless, caring, and limitless continues to flow in their words and pictures.

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GOOD VERSUS EVIL IN THE DIGITAL AGE: AN EXAMINATION OF CRIME AND MORALITY IN BREATHE: INTO THE SHADOW

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Abstract:

Breathe in to the sedows has total 2 seasons and total 20 episodes. It is visible as crime, dream and thriller series available on amazon prime video .The show reveals the dark side of human nature and behavior .This research shows the Central characters complexity in the series on Amazon prime video " breathe into the sedows "From portrayal Dual personality of Abhishek bachchan as a character with a split personality , the psychiatrist Avinash sabharwal and his murderous alter-ego J . From the development of the character is from the historical character of Ravenna as his 10 head's show the 10 different emotions like anger, lust , fear and greed .In the narrative Depending on those emotions where central character Avinash's other personality " J " how he looks for perfect individuals who are representing those emotions. Exploring the Duality of the character Avinash and his second half "J" they represent theme of good versus evil where we see the Darker sides of humanity through kidnapping and blackmailing.

Keywords: Dual personality, Psychological thriller, Ravana, Duality, Good vs. evil, Human nature

I.Introduction: The Psycho-Cultural Thriller Landscape

Breathe: Into the Shadows is an Indian crime drama thriller web television series produced by Amazon Prime Video, which runs for two seasons and 20 episodes. The central plot deals with Dr. Avinash Sabharwal (Abhishek Bachchan), a high-functioning psychiatrist, and his wife, Abha (Nithya Menen), whose daughter, Siya, is abducted. The story requires Avinash to carry out a series of well-thought-out murders so that his daughter can be returned safely. At the same time, the series tracks Inspector Kabir Sawant (Amit Sadh) as he unravels the mysterious chain of murders.

The series employs two interlinked narrative devices to examine the dual nature of human beings. The first is External Coercion, the original blackmail plot compelling Avinash into crime. The second is Internal Pathology, the twist that the kidnapper, "J," is Avinash's destructive alternate personality, an expression of Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). This structural difference is in stark contrast to the Breathe series, which had a father who made a choice to commit hopeless murder. In Into the Shadows, making Avinash's victims "conveniently horrible people" who symbolize mythological vices serves the purpose of reducing the moral complexity, sidestepping an actual ethical conflict.

II. The Psyche's Architecture: The DID Structure

A. The Beginnings of "J" and Avinash's Mask

Dr. Avinash Sabharwal is presented as a capable psychiatrist who advises the Delhi Police, and thereby has institutional access and the knowledge to keep his tracks covered. The root of his alter-ego, J, is traced to extreme childhood trauma: a bus accident that resulted in the death of his parents.

While Avinash's dual personality was diagnosed, his boarding school principal deliberately avoided curing it, promoting J's life as a necessary "protective mechanism" in case of future trauma. J is differentiated visually and physically from vulnerable Avinash, having a "distinctive limp" and a certain "hand fidget".

The root motivation behind the violence of J is abandonment. While he lay dying, the principal/foster-father urged the actual Avinash to go to therapy in order to "take control" of J. J took this as the ultimate betrayal, believing he was loved as a shield and not as an individual. J then masterminded the kidnapping of Siya and coerced Avinash into murder as a pathological demonstration of his own presence and control.

B. The Stigmatization Paradox

The stage presentation of J—an evil, murderous, and vengeful alternate personality born of childhood trauma—generated wide criticism. Critics contended that it was a "dated presentation" that seemed "stereotypical and overdone," equating mental illness with terrifying criminality and perpetuating stigma around Dissociative Identity Disorder.

The producers of the show tried to counter this by saying that four or five medical experts, including a DID-specializing psychiatrist, were consulted to ensure an approach that was "sensitive". But the narrative role of J—as a constant evil genius who breaks out of institutional care to resume his spree of murders —ends up employing the disorder as a marketable, commercially viable plot-point based on exploitation of trauma, essentially negating any argument for sensitive representation.

III. The Dasha-Mukha Master Plan: Ravana as a Criminological Archetype

A. Mythological Framework

In order to furnish a systematic explanation for the serial murders, the series utilizes the Hindu mythological villain Ravana, also referred to as Dashamukha (Ten-headed). Ten heads of Ravana represent ten vices or undesirable traits specifically, which J utilizes as a master plan for his killings. The ten traits are:

Kama (Lust)

Krodha (Anger)

Moha (Delusion / Attachment)

Lobha (Greed)

Mada (Pride)

Maatsarya (Envy)

Buddhi (Intellect)

Manas (Mind)

Chitta (Will)

Ahamkara (Ego)

J attacks those who are considered to represent one of these "sins". To illustrate, the catalyzing first killing was associated with Moha (Attachment/Delusion) as a direct juxtaposition of J's own feelings of betrayal against the loss of the vice. Victims are always made to be "conveniently bad people" (e.g., exploiters for Lobha or pompous characters for Ahamkara).

B. Moral Dilution and Culpability

Critics dismissed the application of the Ravana framework as "custom-fitted Hindu posturing" because at its core, it is still a complex facade. The motivation is always personal revenge based on J's trauma, with the mythological framework just validating the violence as a vigilante move on morally deserving culprits.

Human duality is a recurring theme that even extends to Avinash's wife Abha, as she is actively involved in the commission and concealment of the murders for the protection of her daughter, validating the "dark side of human nature" outside of Avinash's pathology. However, the show sees fit to let Abha "escape punishment" in the Season 1 climax so that Siya still has a custodial parent, perpetuating the criticism that the show favors sentimental resolution over equitable moral consequence.

IV. Conclusion: Performance and Narrative Persistence

Abhishek Bachchan's handling of the double role was technically demanding. He was widely admired for being able to get across Avinash's deep vulnerability and guilt, particularly his inner conflict at becoming more and more

like J. But some critical evaluation pointed out that he was "short while attempting to evince the menace and fury of J," helping to create the sense that the complex psychological effects were made "banal and farcical".

Ultimately, the series received a lot of criticism regarding execution, such as "uneven pacing" and inconsistencies in the plot, like not showing Kabir Sawant's stab wound for almost ten episodes until it became narratively convenient. Season 1's Season Finale puts Avinash in an asylum, but the scene consciously undermines this conclusion by having J pop back up, as established by the enigmatic "C-16" note and J's physical characteristics. This formal option guarantees that the psychological disorder is a recurring, exploitable commercial source of conflict, promising future seasons and formally locking the series into the stereotype of mental illness as an incurable, ongoing threat.

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UNFOLDING LAYERS: COSTUME AS A LANGUAGE OF HEALING IN DEAR ZINDAGI

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Abstract: -

New Genres like films, podcast, vlogs, blogs, series, etc. are giving a new direction and more convenient platform of expression in literature. This paper would study the difficult expression of the main character by movie "Dear Zindagi". Kaira as a character has witnessed a difficult childhood which is resulting in her insecurities for relationship and an unnatural behaviour. After the therapy given by Dr. Jehangir Khan, she changed her perspective which could be seen in her behaviour, dressing sense, relationships, etc. This movie as a new genre gave a new way of judgement where character is understanded by not only its situation but also by its appearance. Literature has been changing its way of expression with time from letters to email and from drama to movies, podcast, vlogs. New Genres present various way of expressing its content in creative way like from its dressing sense, hairstyle, colour selection of themes, music, etc. The repeated practise of such ideas on the character would give the conclusion about the situation what the character had faced in life. This new expression of literature would not only express more minutely but also it is easily understandable by people.

Keywords: - New genre, expression, literature, ideas, character, themes

Introduction: -

Literature has always given us opportunities to be free, make changes, to be original, criticize, and many more. Literature is not just a subject which contains uncountable stories, poem, novels, letters, essays, novellas, etc, written up on paper and published; it just doesn't stick with one medium of sharing besides with the changing in time it changes its way of presenting itself to the public. It began its journey when language itself was just in its infant period and no communication was possible through words. The silence gave birth to drama and painting. With the passing time it grew up and now people were able to communicate with each other which brough up songs, and dramas (with dialogue). Invention of paper and technology gave literature wings to fly. It can travel miles and could reach millions of people at the time. This gave us the blessing of novels, poems, stories, novellas, letters, etc. With passing time movies, podcast, vlogs, blogs, has made its special place in literature which are today enjoyed in every corner of the world.

Overview of the Movie: -

"Dear Zindagi" is more than just another popular film. Presenting the painful stages of the character "Kaira" in this manner has been superb. A girl named Kaira used to live with her grandparents when her parents subjugated her to them. She wrote to her parents every week to inquire about their return because she was so happy in the beginning. They brought her new baby brother with them when they got back to Goa. She felt a little envious. Kaira was thrilled to learn that her mother left the final letter on the refrigerator for her daily viewing when she inquired about it. Kaira was overjoyed. She hurried to her room, took out the colours, and wanted to write another letter to her mother so she could see how she would respond. However, she heard her grandfather reprimanding her mother for failing to write her letters when she arrived at her room. Her mother responded that because of her fledgling business, her decision to travel in search of better opportunities, and the birth of another child, we are unable to provide for her. It shook her from the inside out. She made the decision to ask her parents nothing when she was six years old. Her love life was directly impacted by the childhood abandonees, who also made it difficult for her to trust others. Her life was in disarray until she started seeing Dr. Jehangir Khan for therapy.

Character's Style Analysis

Kaira, a young cinematographer, often showed how she was feeling inside and how much pain she was in through her clothes and how she looked before going to therapy. The ripped jeans, dark clothes, loose and baggy clothes, and messy hair she wore weren't just a style choice; they showed how she was feeling inside. These choices showed that she was hurt, confused, and emotionally unstable. The dark clothes in her closet showed how heavy she felt inside, and the loose clothes showed how disconnected she felt from herself and the world.

The way she donned accessories—specifically a certain necklace she wore with nearly every outfit available as a possible pairing—was a clear reflection of her attachment to the past. The necklace carried meaning for her, as it represented the burden, she felt from unresolved early life trauma and memories that she couldn't shake. This seemed to suggest to me that she wore a piece of her past around her neck, as if to serve as a reminder of her unaddressed wounds.

Kaira's last appointment with Dr. Jehangir Khan, the therapist she was seeing at the time, was a pivotal point in her life. Therapy gave her a way to wrestle with feelings and fears that were unstable and had yet to be confronted from her past. When Dr. Khan helped Kaira to look at her life from a more distressed view, this in itself was enough for her to start re-integrating the parts of herself that she lost during this journey. Kaira's internal wounds started to heal and with this, change was seen externally as well. Kaira's hair, which was either thrown in a messy bun or tussled, was now flowing and long as a symbol of freedom and willingness to accept her true self. Just in the same way, her manner of dress slowly released from dark tones with weight to patterned florals and light pastels, symbolizing recovery from emotional trauma and a departure from anger and heaviness.

Perhaps the most meaningful shift was her necklace, which had always been like a weight hanging from her neck. Kaira no longer needed to wear the painful remanence of her past, and she had stopped wearing the necklace that had physically measured her emotional distress. The change was insignificant, but it was a new visual statement of Kaira's internal healing--instantly Kaira created a moment for herself to release her old patterns and step into a more joyful self who had more freedom.

Psychological Analysis: -

Kaira's emotional life began when she was a child, abandoned and separated. As a child, Kaira came to hold an unfavourable opinion of her parents based on her feelings of rejection and neglect of her needs. While the decision to leave Kaira, the practical decision, was perfectly fine in her parent's eyes, Kaira experienced trauma which brought all of her safety and trust into question and re-created attachment issues.

At the house of her grandparents, Kaira experienced the sense of safe place, warmth, love and security, which she needed. They adored her without any conditions, even just temporarily, it still was a kind of checking on the emotional barrenness that she suffered in relation to her parents. However, coming back home and breaking up with her grandparents made Kaara go into another breakdown to find a semblance of safety. Separation rekindled great feelings of being deserted. Kaira was heading into one more month, phase of emotional detachment. Kaira then started assuming the pain of the history of separations she had done-- betrayals, in her case. The sorrows and disappointment that Kaira had regarding the lost loved one were given to her parents.

When Kaira became old, the emotional labour changed to fear of attachment. The disposition of being loved by her intimate persons turned out to be anxiety and this contributed to her conscious attainment to put some distance between her and her loved ones. Kaira never failed to associate passion with despondency and pain. It had a devastating effect on individual intimacy. The fear of intimacy affects the romantic life of Kaira who always had difficulties in connecting with other people and becoming close to her loved ones. It was something Kaira could not care about- at a distance; she resorted to disconnection as a shield- in not to get a heartbreak; once again.

Traumatic Presentation in Movie: -

Kaira in Dear Zindagi is not a simple character and she encountered a lot of difficulties in her own love life. She is not ideal at all, being underdeveloped, emotional, and very human. The issue of her attachment and bonding need to be written on the basis of her childhood desertion that had left the woman emotionally traumatized and mistrustful of therapeutic ties. Such mental trials are faintly reflected in the outer look and style of her life.

The fact that Kaira loves loose clothes, her preference of dark tops and shrugs, torn jeans, and cuffed sleeves are a outward display of internal and personal anarchy and a need to feel comfortable rather than fitting in. Her informal and trendy style in dressing implies that she does not necessarily want to conform to the internet standards of perfection. Her sloppiness in tucking her shirts in her jeans and wearing several things, especially chain and bangles, are symbolic of her uniqueness, and her indifference to the tradition that has died among other kids. Her necklace that she always wears however has some deeper symbolism. It is a material consideration of her former time it is a slice of memory baggage that she carries even as she attempts to move forward with her life.

The personality of Kaira also gives a fascinating resemblance of how the world she lives in and the way she deals with others. She was reserved and never talked much when she was a child, however in adulthood, this character shifted and revealed to the world a more outspoken, assertive and occasionally, angry temper. The given transformation could even be viewed as her defence mechanism her means of securing herself against vulnerability. She is contrasted with a world that is obsessed and stressed with the perfection; as others seek to retain the running things, Kaira seeks to relish the incompatibility and anarchy that may reflect the chaos in her own mind.

The aspect of how she loves travel revealed in the movie is symbolic to her career, being a cinematographer and her unquiet nature. The violence of being on the go is one of the ways that she manages to break emotional stagnation. The fact that she cannot remain anywhere long enough portrays her mental discomfort- a subconscious way of not dealing with her suffering or develop serious attachments. However, in the small group of good friends that she has, Kaira feels secure. She has hope on them since she is sure that they will not turn their backs on her the way her predecessors did.

Kaira is good professionally as she is intelligent, industrious, and an independent person. She values her work and does not even require an acknowledgment as she enjoys letting her work speak. Nevertheless, even after becoming successful her unhealthy relations with her parents keep following her. The distance between them, which is emotional also becomes a cause of discomfort as it reminds the girl of the abandonment she received in the childhood.

One is turning point of her life when she goes to Goa: where she initiates therapy with Dr. Jehangir Khan. This stage indicates not only her mental healing, but also an apparent physical change in her looks. Her clothing becomes less dark and muted but more light-hearted and floral as a representation of the renewal of emotions, the peace of mind. She wears the hair order as it descends which symbolizes freedom and acceptance of oneself. Most significantly, she takes off the necklace she previously wore in every costume, and such a strong act only serves as an indication of unloading her past experience of a trauma. In treatment and self-assessment, Kaira starts to control herself again and come to terms of living her life without the burden of her traumatic experiences.

Literature Review: -

Poonia, R. & Sangwan, A. "Beyond Bollywood: A Critical Exploration of Mental Health Awareness in *Dear Zindagi* and *Chhichhore*." *Universal Research Reports* (URR), 2024. DOI and journal page. urr.shodhsagar.com

It was a fantabulous explanation about how much mental health affect a child or an adult. Irrespective of the phase of life one is facing, mental stress, frustration is felt and if the same is not poured out it might explode the mind.

"Psychological Reflection of Movie *Dear Zindagi*." (ResearchGate / university paper; PDF). (classroom/analytic paper examining counselling themes). ResearchGate

A psychological reflection for mind was drop out by using the reference of movie 'Dear Zindagi'. The importance of managing emotions, attachments, counselling sittings and many more could be extracted from the same.

Rohan Nahar (or review staff). "Dear Zindagi movie review." *Indian Express*, 25 Nov 2016. (review that foregrounded how the film handles therapy).

Dear Zindagi is not just a movie it's an emotional nostalgia we all could've relate at a point of our life, may it be by parents, friends, loved ones etc.

This paper would focus on the character's clothing style and how is it related to trauma. Trauma was an emotion that is presented in the subtle way by the help of clothing and accessories styled with the same.

Conclusion: -

We may infer from the studies mentioned above that films have a circular vision and pay close attention to every little detail, which finally draws viewers in. While a spectator will always pick up on the smallest details, a reader may overlook one. The portrayal of Kaira as the character, with her independence and abandonees, is exquisite. Furthermore, it's fascinating to learn how the brain deciphers the underlying concepts of a character's fashion choices. We can infer from this film that each colour has a unique meaning and worth. This also demonstrates how

crucial it is to allow our souls to be really themselves. One shouldn't change itself for every other person like we change clothes for every possible occasion. Each body, every soul, every cloth has its own meaning, its own story.

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THE DIGITAL REFUGE: WHY WE SEEK HOPE IN AI AND THE ETHICAL CONCERNS OF EMOTIONAL RELIANCE

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Abstract

Becky Chambers's 2021 novella, *A Psalm for the Wild-Built,* tells the story of Sibling Dex, a tea monk who, feeling a deep sense of restlessness, journeys into the wilderness where robots have lived for centuries. There, Dex meets a robot named Splendid Speckled Mosscap, and through their quiet journey together, they explore fundamental questions about purpose and human needs.

Today, many people feel lost and hopeless. This paper looks at the above mentioned novella, where a person named Dex feels sad and does not finds happiness with other people, but with a robot. This paper argue that this story is similar to what's happening in our world right now. More and more, people are turning to AI and chatbots for comfort, hope, and even friendship. They do this because humans cannot always find what they need from other humans. While AI can be a quick and easy way to feel better, this paper warns that it's also dangerous. If we start to depend on AI for our feelings, we might forget how to build real, deep friendships with other people. We risk getting a synthetic kind of comfort that stops us from fixing the real problems in our world and be dependent on AI.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, A Psalm for the Wild-Built, Emotional Support, Ethics, Feelings, Hope, Loneliness, Robots.

Introduction:

Everyone wants to feel like they matter, have a purpose, and belong to a group. But today, many people feel lonely, lost, and unsure about their lives. It is getting harder to find real community and strong connections. Because of this, people are starting to look for comfort and friendship in new spaces such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Chatbots. They are running away from human relationship to find hope and support from AI.

This paper uses a book to explain the idea. The book is Becky Chambers's 2021 novella, *A Psalm for the Wild-Built*. In this story, Sibling Dex is a tea monk who feels unhappy and restless. Sibling Dex leaves their regular life and goes into wilds, where robots have lived alone for years. Dex meets a robot named Splendid Speckled Mosscap, who wants to understand the purpose of human life. Their journey together shows that people are now looking for meaning and hope outside of other humans.

This paper argues that the robot is a safe place for Dex a clear example of what is happening in the real world. The story shows that people are starting to get emotional needs met by AI. This growing dependency on chatbots for emotional support is agreeable because AI is quick, available, and always seems to understand.

However, this paper gives a warning, depending too much on AI for our feelings creates serious moral concerns for people and society. If we let AI replace real friends, two bad things can happen. First, we might get too comfortable with a fake kind of comfort and stop trying to build real, deep human friendships. Second, this focus on AI might distract us from fixing the real world issues like loneliness or lack of mental health help that made us sad in the first place.

This paper will closely examine why we seek hope in AI, use *A Psalm for the Wild-Built* to show what is happening, and call for a serious and critical look at the long-terms dangers of becoming emotionally dependent on inanimate technology.

Technology today has quietly become a part of our emotional world. From using assistants to asking chatbots for advice, people are learning to find comfort in things that are not human. This change shows how society is moving forward towards an age where emotions and technology are deeply connected. Many people turn to AI not because they want to, but because they feel unheard and unseen by those around them. When humans stop feeling understood by others, they start looking for new ways to feel cared for and AI seems to fill that gap. However, this habit also shows how fragile our real relationships have become. Instead of facing emotional pain and fixing what

is broken in our communities, people may begin to depend on a type of "digital care" that can never fully replace real connection. The hope that people depend on other humans is decreasing, while their dependence on AI is increasing.

This change also reflects how society is becoming more disconnected. We now live in busy cities, surrounded by people but still feeling alone. Families talk less, friends drift apart, and social media has replaced real conversations. When people lose touch with the warmth of human interaction, they start to depend on the next best thing, technology. Yet, this dependence is not true healing. It covers the pain but does not fix it. In Becky Chamber's *A Psalm for the Wild-Built, Dex's* loneliness, and their search for meaning mirror our own struggles. Like Dex, people today feel lost in a world that moves too fast and expect technology to give them peace. But peace cannot come from machines that do not feel. This idea helps us see that AI can make life easier, it can never replace what it means to be truly human to care, to cry, to understand, and to grow through connection with others.

Literature Review:

Becky Chambers's 2021 novella *A Psalm for the Wild-Built* has sparked rich conversation across academic and critical circles, especially for its hopeful reimagining future. The literature review here brings together perspectives from speculative fiction and contemporary ethical debates around Artificial Intelligence. Together, these sources reveal the novella as more than just a charming sci-fi story it becomes a meaningful site of inquiry into how we live, relate, and imagine what is possible.

Onur Karakose's (2024) paper, "Beyond Cyberpunk: Reading Hopepunk as Queer Futurism in Becky Chambers' *A Psalm for The Wild-Built,* published in Scaffold: Journal of the Institute of Comparative Studies in Literature, Arts and Culture, highlights the novella's place in Hopepunk and Queer Futurism, tracing roots of these genres to pushback against rising anti-immigrant and racist. Here "hope" is treated as a form of protest against a corrupt and capitalist system. The paper also shows how Chambers uses empathy and care as forms of strength rather than weakness. Her writing challenges traditional ideas about power and identity, suggesting that a better future can be built through kindness and understanding.

Asmin Janisha and Dr. H. Jimsy Asha (2024), in their paper "Reconstructing the Vision of Reality: Analyzing Becky Chambers' *A Psalm for the Wild-Built*," published in the *South Eastern European Journal of Public Health (SEEJPH)*, Volume XXV, Supplement 2, says that deconstruction is a useful way to study the complex ideas in the novella. The journey of the human tea monk, Sibling Dex, and the robot, Mosscap, is seen as a deconstructive exploration of the relationship between humans and machine inferiority complex. Instead, the narrative focuses entirely on connectivity and interdependence. By depicting both Dex and Mosscap as equally complex beings, the book successfully challenges the fixed, limited categories that have historically shaped our understanding of consciousness and the relationship between human and machines.

Dr. Ajay B. Chhuchhar's (2025) paper, Juxtaposing Hauntology in Solarpunk Ideals of Becky Chambers' *A Psalm for the Wild-Built,* published in the International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences,10(5), applies Jacques Derrida's theory of hauntology. This concept says that even stories about the future are still connected to the past. The term was created by Jacques Derrida and refers to how things from the past still affect the present and the future. In the novella, the spectral presence is the memory of the failed "Factory Age" the destructive, hyper-industrial civilization that collapsed. This paper argues that the current, better world of sustainability and coexistence only exists because the old way of life failed. By recognizing and remembering the failures of the past, the haunting becomes a sustaining force of hope. It prevents the new society from repeating old mistakes and provides a transformed awareness of purpose suggesting that a hopeful future is not one that forgets its dark past, but one that actively learns from it.

Discussion:

This study found that people are increasingly turning to Artificial Intelligence (AI) for hope, comfort, and emotional support. By looking at Becky Chamber's *A Psalm for the Wild-Built*, we see that the bond between Sibling Dex and the robot Mosscap shows how humans today seek understanding from technology rather than from one another. AI offers safety and constant attention, but this raises ethical concerns about emotional dependence.

These findings relate to earlier research that sees Chamber's work as a hopeful but critical perspective on human machine relationships. Scholars like Karakose (2024) and Janisha and Asha (2024) shows that the story encourages people and technology can coexist. However, this study suggests that relying too much on AI for hope or emotional support may lessen real human connection and increase feelings of isolation.

The rising emotional use of AI also highlights larger social issues like loneliness stress, and weak community ties. People may prefer AI because it feels easier and safer than interacting with humans. Yet this comfort is only temporary, as machines cannot truly understand or share human emotions. This shows that technology cannot replace the emotional depth and empathy found in real relationships.

The main implications are that while AI can help with loneliness, it should not take the place of true friendships or emotional bonds. Society must find a balance between using technology and fostering real human contact. This research is limited because it focuses only on one literary work and not on actual experiences. Future studies could investigate how people from emotional attachments to AI and what this means for mental health and social relationships.

One strong message in *A Psalm fort he Wild-Built* is that hope is not just a feeling, but a practice. Dex feels lost, even though they are doing useful work. Mosscap, the robot, does not come to fix Dex's problem. Instead, it listens, asks questions, and share the journey. This shows that real comfort does not come from someone handling you a ready answer, but from being with someone who is willing to share your struggles.

This is very different from the way people use AI today. Chatbots can listen and reply in helpful ways, and many people find it easier to talk to them than to other humans. But while machines can provide a kind of safety, they cannot give the deep understanding that comes from human connection. In Chamber's novella, Mosscap does not pretend to solve Dex's Problems. Instead, it offers company, curiosity, and patience. This suggests that technology should not replace human relationships but should help people think about life in new ways.

The story of Dex and Mosscap gives us new ways to think about AI. Dex talks about their unhappiness, and Mosscap listens. But Mosscap never says, "Here is your Purpose." Instead, it asks questions. This shows that real comfort is not about finding quick answers but about having someone to share your questions with.

In today's world, people often see AI as a problem-solver. When they feel lonely, they ask chatbot to talk to them. Wen, they feel sad, they expect AI to cheer them up. This might help for a movement, but it does not address the deeper issue. Real trust and friendship take time. They involve conflict, forgiveness, and patience. Machines cannot provide these things. They can pretend to understand, but they do not feel what we feel.

The novella also highlights another aspect of healing: nature. Dex does not only talk to a robot, they also walk in forest, listen to its sounds, and sit in silence. These quite movements are just important as their conversations with Mosscap. This teaches us that refuge is not limited to digital world. It can also be found in nature and in simple acts of care. In our world, people often forget this because they are surrounded by screens. Chambers reminds us that meaning can also come from slowing down and being present with world around us.

There is also an ethical concern. If people rely too heavily on AI, they might lose the ability to engage with real individuals. They may shy away from difficult conversations or uncomfortable feelings. This weakens community life, as strong communities rely on trust and mutual problem-solving. Technology should not replace those human connections. Instead, it should be used wisely to support people, not substitute for them.

Conclusion:

This paper examined how people are increasingly turning to Artificial Intelligence (AI) for hope and emotional comfort, using Becky Chamber's *A Psalm for the Wild-Built* to reflect this trend. The story of Sibling Dex and Mosscap illustrates how humans seek hope and understanding from technology when they feel disconnected from others. While AI can offer a sense of support and belonging, this reliance raises important ethical questions about emotional authenticity and human connection.

This research shows that emotional dependence on AI can create a misleading sense of companionship, leading to less real social interaction and empathy. It also suggests that society should avoid using technology to escape

loneliness. Instead, it should act as a tool to strengthen genuine relationship and self–awareness. The findings remind us that technology should support system, not a substitute for human care and understanding.

The idea of a "digital refuge" explains why AI is becoming so popular. It feels safe, simple, and always available. But if we rely on it too much, it can make us forget the real work of building relationships. Machines can never give the full experience of love, care, or empathy. They can only copy it.

A Psalm for the Wild-Built offers a lesson for our times. Mosscap does not try to fix Dex's issue. Instead, it encourages Dex to keep asking questions and to accept that life often lacks clear answers. The novella illustrates that machines should not be seen as saviors. They can accompany us, but cannot live life for us.

For our society, this means we need balance. AI can serve as a tool, it can help us reflect, guide us, and listen when we need support. However, it must not be our only source of comfort. Real hope comes from courage, kindness, and willingness to connect with others, even when it is hard.

 A Psalm for the Wild-Built and this research both emphasize that true hope and emotional growth come not from machines but from meaningful human connections. As AI continues to shape our emotional lives, it is essential to maintain an ethical balance between technological comfort and authentic human empathy.

The true refuge is not digital, but human. Real meaning arises from facing life together with our friends, families, and communities and from respecting the world we inhabit. AI may stand beside us, but it will never replace the human heart.

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COLONIAL SHADOWS AND POSTCOLONIAL VOICES: REIMAGINING NATIONALISM IN INDIA

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Abstract:

Contemporary post colonial literature increasingly engages with the themes of identity, cultural plurality and resistance questioning how colonial histories continue to shape present day narratives. Within this ever continuing debate, nationalism emerges as a disputed yet central concept, especially in the context of historically colonized nations. In India, the struggle for independence was marked by diverse and sometimes contrasting views of nationalism that inspire postcolonial thought even today. This paper critically examines two influential figures of India's freedom movement- Bhagat Singh and Rabindranath Tagore through their seminal texts, *Why I Am an Atheist* (1931) and *Nationalism* (1917), respectively. While Singh showcases a revolutionary, anti- colonial nationalism rooted in justice, secularism and social equality, Tagore offers a humanist critique of aggressive nationalism, advocating for universal and culturally united worldview. The paper uses qualitative and comparative methodology studying both thinkers within their historical and intellectual contexts, revealing how their ideas resonate with contemporary postcolonial concerns. By analyzing their approaches, the paper explores how nationalism, far from being rigid force, views multiple ideologies each contributing uniquely to the broader postcolonial aspect. Their writings reflect not only diversity within India's independence movement but also continue to resonate in ongoing global debates about identity, resistance and cultural coexistence in postcolonial studies.

Keywords: Colonial histories, Cultural plurality, Identity, Nationalism, Postcolonial concerns, Resistance, Secularism.

Literature Review:

The sources reviewed on *Why I Am an Atheist* and *Nationalism* explores comparative research on the differing ideologies of Bhagat Singh and Rabindranath Tagore in nationalism. A visible similarity is in their questioning of blind faith, yet their perspectives changes in their understanding of the nation and its future. Analyses of Bhagat Singh's text through articles and documentaries highlights his advocacy of rationalism and individualism over religion. He has placed nationalism within a postcolonial framework of resisting to British oppression. According to him freedom extends beyond political independence to a reconstructed society rooted in equality, justice and logic. Thus, he has criticised colonialism as well as indigenous orthodox traditions.

Contradicting to Singh, reviews of Tagore's *Nationalism* has laid emphasis against militant nationalism, viewing it as potentially destructive and disharmonious. His thought is found to be resonating with contemporary postcolonial discourse and values cultural plurality, moral responsibility and universal humanism over aggressive patriotism. While Singh represents revolutionary nationalism grounded in action and resistance, Tagore favours global harmony and ethical co-existence.

Despite the ideological differences, both share a commitment to the upliftment of humanity. Singh calls for independence through justice and radical transformation, while Tagore views world to be bounded by love and cultural unity. Reviews show Singh's ideology with radical postcolonial resistance and Tagore's within humanism, but together they oppose blind nationalism and emphasis on human freedom and integrity. Thus, their writings remain deeply relevant to contemporary postcolonial studies, offering insights into modern debates on political systems, identity and cultural coexistence.

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Introduction:

The idea of nationalism has always been a powerful tool in shaping history, societies, and individuality, yet in contemporary times it is also re-examined through the lens of postcolonial studies. The word nationalism, derived from the Latin word *natio* meaning "birth" or "nation," gained prominence during the 18th and 19th centuries, particularly in the wake of the French Revolution. Traditionally, the term represented commitment to one's nation and confidence in its authority and unity. However, postcolonial discourse highlights that nationalism is never uniform; it shifts according to culture, ideology, and historical experience. In India, the conflict between the British colonizers and Indians produced multiple interpretations of nationalism, which can be observed in the writings of Bhagat Singh and Rabindranath Tagore. Both visionaries anticipated future debates by offering distinct opinions shaped by their philosophies, experiences, and intentions, while also laying the foundation for ideas that resonate with contemporary postcolonial concerns such as identity, cultural plurality, and resistance. Bhagat Singh (1907–1931), one of the most praised freedom fighters of India, is remembered for his courage, insights, and rebellious thinking. A prominent figure in the struggle for independence, Singh situated nationalism not only in the fight against colonial power but also in the need to dismantle oppressive structures within Indian society. Unlike many freedom fighters of his time, Singh viewed nationalism through the lens of Marxism and secularism. For him, independence could only be meaningful if social and economic inequalities were abolished. His essay *Why I Am an Atheist* challenges stereotypical way of analysing nationalism by foregrounding rationalism over blind faith. He wrote: "I am not an atheist because of vanity. I am an atheist because I see that the religion preached by the privileged classes keeps the masses under slavery." This articulation demonstrates a postcolonial critique of both colonial domination and indigenous orthodoxy. Nationalism, for Singh, was not merely political independence but the creation of a just society that transcended caste, creed, and gender divisions. His famous statement, "The sanctity of law can be maintained only so long as it is the expression of the will of the people," reflects his belief in equality and rational self-determination—values central to postcolonial resistance.

The essay highlights Singh's rational approach and his faith in human efforts rather than divinity. By criticizing the use of religion as a tool of exploitation, Singh envisioned a rebellious yet progressive nationalism rooted in logic and human agency. His nationalism, as articulated in the text, is not tied to any single religion or sect but aligns with the postcolonial aspiration for human progress beyond colonial and orthodox structures. His words, "Merciless criticism and independent thinking are the two necessary traits of revolutionary thinking," affirm his vision of transformative, emancipatory nationalism.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), the first non-European Nobel laureate in Literature, was a philosopher, poet, and thinker whose views on nationalism often stood in contrast to Singh's. Contradicting rebellious ideologies, Tagore's nationalism was grounded in harmony and universality. He cautioned against extravagant and aggressive nationalism, noting that it often led to intolerance, disputes, and the subjugation of individuality. For him, humanity and cultural integrity could not be sacrificed for political power. In *Nationalism* (1917), he wrote: "A nation, in the sense of the political and economic union of a people, is that aspect which a whole population assumes when organised for a mechanical purpose." Tagore argued that nationalism, when left unchecked, overpowered humanity and culture, echoing a postcolonial critique of both colonial and emerging modern nation-states.

Written during first world war, *Nationalism* highlights the dangers of violent nationalism in the 20th Century and its capacity to destroy harmony and integrity. Tagore places culture and spirituality at the center of national upliftment, advising that humanity must overcome barriers of caste, creed and politics. He writes: "Patriotism cannot be our final spiritual shelter; my refuge is humanity." His vision of nationalism aligns with postcolonial humanism, emphasizing creativity, freedom and cultural unity rather than materialistic and political power. In his notable poem *Where the Mind is Without Fear*, he dreamt a country liberated from narrow domestic walls, reflecting an aspiration for universal coexistence:

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments

By narrow domestic walls."

As mentioned, Bhagat Singh and Rabindranath Tagore, though opposite in ideologies yet represents two critical thoughts that continue to shape postcolonial debates. Singh's nationalism is grounded in revolutionary struggle and racial reconstructing, while Tagore's nationalism is guided by morality, culture and universal harmony. When read both together, their works offer a comprehensive understanding of nationalism. Both thinkers anticipated contemporary trends in postcolonial studies by questioning blind nationalism, critiquing colonial legacies and envisioning futures where courage is balanced by compassion. Their ideas continue to inspire discourses on identity, justice and cultural coexistence, affirming their lasting relevance in today's globalized yet shattered world.

Methodology:

Methodology is the pivotal component of any research work as it shapes the direction of study and clarifies the approach of researcher. In the present study of colonial shadows and postcolonial voices: reimagining nationalism in India, the research relies on three interrelated approaches: Historical Methodology, Comparative Methodology and Descriptive Methodology, framed in the lens of postcolonial and contemporary studies.

Historical Methodology:

Postcolonial studies lay emphasis on history in shaping identity, ideology and resistance. Both Bhagat Singh and Rabindranath Tagore wrote within the colonial context, and their works reveal how nationalists' ideologies were bended by the political climate of British India. Singh's *Why I Am an Atheist* contains historical references to oppression, imprisonment and executions reflecting how colonial dominance provoked radical thought. Tagore's *Nationalism* similarly engages with historical realities, critiquing imperial models and highlighting Japan's rise as a counter example. Thus, history is not only a backdrop but also a postcolonial space where their ideas of resistance and reform were forged.

Comparative Methodology:

Postcolonial comparative studies allow us to see how different responses to colonialism coexist within the same historical moment. Bhagat Singh represents radical, revolutionary nationalism grounded in sacrifice and confrontation, while Tagore warns against imitating the West's violent, power-driven nationalism, instead advocating for harmony and universal human values. A comparative lens reveals the tension between militant resistance and cultural reform, both of which are central to postcolonial discourse on nation-building.

Through these methodologies, the study examines how the nationalist visions of Bhagat Singh and Rabindranath Tagore reflect broader postcolonial concerns- resistance, identity, violence, and universality while also offering contrasting pathways for imagining India's freedom and future.

Comparison between *Why I Am an Atheist* and *Nationalism* in postcolonial and contemporary studies:

Nationalism has always been a central idea in India's struggle against colonial rule. Writers and thinkers during the British period gave their thoughts on how to understand the nation and how to fight for its freedom. Two important works that reflect this debate are Bhagat Singh's essay *Why I Am an Atheist* (1931) and Rabindranath Tagore's lectures compiled in *Nationalism* (1917). While both belong to the same colonial context, their views on nationalism and freedom are very different. If we look at them through postcolonial and contemporary studies, we can clearly see how they represent two contrasting ways of imagining India and its future.

Historical and Postcolonial Context

Both Bhagat Singh and Tagore wrote during British colonial rule. Postcolonial studies remind us that colonialism was not just about political control but also about cultural dominance, identity, and shaping the mind of the colonized people. Bhagat Singh responded to colonial oppression with radical nationalism. He believed that the only way to get rid of colonial power was through sacrifice, struggle, and even violent revolution if necessary. On the other hand, Tagore criticized aggressive nationalism. He argued that copying the violent nationalism of the West would only harm India. Instead, he believed in cultural unity, universal human values, and moral strength as the path forward.

So, in the postcolonial sense, Singh represents resistance through direct confrontation with colonial power, while Tagore represents resistance through cultural and spiritual renewal.

Bhagat Singh: *Why I Am an Atheist*

Bhagat Singh's essay is often seen as a personal statement of his belief in rationalism and rejection of blind faith. But when read in the larger postcolonial context, it shows how his disbelief in God was linked to his strong belief in human effort and revolutionary struggle. For Singh, nationalism was not just about praying for freedom or waiting for destiny to change. It was about action. His atheism was connected to his idea of independence—Indians themselves had to rise and overthrow oppression. Colonial injustice, executions, and daily humiliation shaped his radical thought. In contemporary times, Singh's writing still inspires young people who see nationalism as an act of questioning injustice and fighting inequality. His rejection of blind belief also fits into modern debates about rationality, secularism, and freedom of thought in a democratic society.

Tagore: *Nationalism*

Tagore's *Nationalism* is a critique of the very idea of political nationalism when it is based on power, violence, and domination. He saw Western nationalism as dangerous because it reduced humans to machines working for the nation-state. For him, India's strength lay in its cultural diversity, spirituality, and moral vision. He warned that if India followed the path of violent nationalism, it would lose its true identity. In a postcolonial view, Tagore is trying to decolonize the mind—not by arms but by reimagining the nation beyond power politics. He wanted India to rise as a nation that promotes peace, humanity, and global unity. In today's world, Tagore's ideas are still relevant. Many contemporary thinkers' debates whether nationalism should be aggressive and exclusionary or whether it should be inclusive and universal. His call for harmony can be applied to current issues of communalism, global conflicts, and cultural identity.

Key Differences between the works:

Point of Difference	*Why I Am an Atheist*	*Nationalism*
Approach to Colonial Power	Singh believed in direct confrontation through rebel and sacrifice.	Tagore believed in reform through culture, morality and universality.
View of Nationalism	Saw as struggle for complete independence even if violent.	Saw it as dangerous when based on violence.
Role of religion and belief	He rejected God and destiny, showing that freedom depends on human	He accepted spirituality but warned against blind imitation of western

	action.	modals.
Postcolonial Relevance	Reflects the anger and resistance of colonized people	Reflects the search for new cultural identity beyond colonial politics.
Contemporary Relevance	Inspire debates on rationalism, rebellion and social justice.	Echoed in debates on global peace, cultural dialogue and inclusive nationalism.

Synthesis

Both Bhagat Singh and Rabindranath Tagore were products of their time, but their contrasting views give us a broader picture of Indian nationalism. Singh's radicalism shows the fiery resistance of the colonized subject, unwilling to compromise with oppression. Tagore's critique of nationalism shows the dangers of turning freedom into another form of violence and domination. Together, they represent two sides of postcolonial thought—resistance through revolution and resistance through moral renewal. In contemporary studies, their works help us question what nationalism should mean today. Should it be militant, exclusive, and power-driven, or should it be inclusive, moral, and universal? Singh urges us to act against injustice without waiting for miracles. Tagore reminds us that in the process of resisting, we must not lose our humanity. Thus, Bhagat Singh's *Why I Am an Atheist* and Tagore's *Nationalism* differ sharply in their views on nationalism, but both are essential in postcolonial discourse. Singh's revolutionary nationalism highlights sacrifice and resistance, while Tagore's cultural nationalism emphasizes harmony and universality. Both approaches remain relevant in contemporary times, offering different ways to think about freedom, justice, and the meaning of a nation. By comparing them, we gain a deeper understanding of how Indian nationalism was never one fixed idea but a dialogue of contrasting visions—each powerful in its own way.

Future Scope of the Study

This research can be expanded in several directions. First, a deeper engagement with other postcolonial thinkers—such as Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, or Gayatri Spivak—could situate Singh and Tagore's ideas in a broader global framework of colonial resistance and cultural identity. Second, comparative studies with other Indian voices—for example, Gandhi's non-violence or Nehru's democratic vision—could enrich the understanding of how varied and complex Indian nationalism truly was. Third, examining these texts in the light of contemporary nationalism—including debates on secularism, cultural pluralism, and global peace—can open fresh interpretations for today's socio-political context. Finally, interdisciplinary approaches, linking literature with political science, sociology, and philosophy, could further highlight the depth of their contributions.

Conclusion

The study of Bhagat Singh's *Why I Am an Atheist* and Rabindranath Tagore's *Nationalism* highlights two powerful yet contrasting approaches to the idea of nationalism during colonial India. Both thinkers lived under British rule, both experienced the deep wounds of colonial exploitation, and both sought pathways for India's liberation. Yet, their visions diverged widely—one advocating revolution and sacrifice, the other cautioning against the dangers of violent nationalism and emphasizing harmony, culture, and universality. From a postcolonial perspective, these two texts represent the diversity of thought within the Indian freedom movement. Bhagat Singh embodies the radical voice of resistance, breaking free not only from colonial domination but also from traditional religious faith that, in his view, restricted rational thinking and action. His atheism was not mere disbelief; it was a call for agency, a rejection of passivity, and a challenge to Indians to seize their destiny through courage and sacrifice. Tagore, on the other hand, critiques the very foundation of nationalism when built upon violence and power. For him, nationalism as practiced in the West dehumanized people and turned nations into machines of exploitation. His vision of India's freedom was rooted in spiritual, cultural, and moral awakening. Both perspectives are crucial, as they present nationalism not as a single narrative but as a spectrum of responses shaped by the colonial encounter. In contemporary times, their relevance has not diminished. Bhagat Singh's essay resonates strongly in discussions about rationalism, secularism, and social justice. His fearless questioning of authority inspires young generations to confront inequality, corruption, and authoritarianism. In a world where blind faith and intolerance can still divide societies, his insistence on reason and courage remains a guiding force. Tagore's *Nationalism*, on the other hand, continues to offer a global message. At a time when the world faces increasing conflicts, xenophobia, and aggressive forms of nationalism, his call for universal human values and cultural harmony appears even more

urgent. He reminds us that freedom without humanity is hollow, and that nationalism must never overshadow the ideals of peace and inclusiveness.

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LOYALTY AND MORALITY IN KARNA'S LIFE: LIMITED DEPENDENCE IN THE POEM OF RAMDHARI DINKAR

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Abstract

The main topic of this research paper is New Interpretation and Indian English Studies. The theme of paper is Indian Religion and Ethics. My main topic is based on a story of Karan the great warrior and important character in the Mahabharata. Karna is one of the great warriors and important characters of the Mahabharata. His life shows that skill, morality, and religion often clash. This paper focuses on Karna's life and his loyalty in the Mahabharata war, especially when he finds himself fighting against his brothers, the Pandavas. Karna's loyalty is clearly visible in numerous situations with his friend Duryodhana, but when he has to fight against his brothers, he faces an internal conflict. Shri Krishna has explained that supporting unrighteousness destroys religion. In this context, the story of Karna teaches us that loyalty is important, but it should not be seen in conjunction with unrighteousness. In the poem of Ramdhari Dinakar, Karna shows friendship has its value, but it should not become a basis for wrongdoing. This study will show that values should be clear in our lives, that hard work is important, but it is also necessary to accept fate and circumstances. Karna's life-giving message is that a balance is needed between loyalty and morality, and that it is difficult to escape the consequences of the cycle of karma by following the wrong path.

Keywords: Karna, Mahabharata, loyalty, morality, religion, friendship, karma, war, life values

Introduction:

The Mahabharata is not just a poem, but it talks about the struggle of human life, religion and unrighteousness. This research paper focuses on the life of Karna. Karna was a great warrior, yet society ignored him by calling him "Sutaputra" and repeatedly humiliated him. Yet he dedicated his life to valor, charity and friendship. Karna was a great warrior, famous for his archery skills and kindness. People called him "Daanveer" because he never said no to anyone who asked for help. He was very loyal to Duryodhana, the Kaurava prince, and always supported him — even when it meant fighting against his own brothers, the Pandavas. Karna's life was full of tough choices, bravery, and sadness, which made him one of the most respected and interesting characters in Indian mythology.

Karna's life represents the struggle between fate and virtue — born noble but denied recognition due to circumstances. This pain and greatness of Karna is beautifully presented in Ramdhari Singh'Dinkar's poetry composition "Rashmirathi":

> "Sutaraj was always humiliated,

Society rejected him repeatedly,

Yet to maintain friendship,

He gave his life."

These lines show that Karna maintained steadfast friendship towards Duryodhana, but the same loyalty turned him against the Pandavas. From here the struggle of religion-immorality and morality-immorality begins. Karna's life message is that only valor and hard work are not enough, religion and morality are also necessary. Shri Krishna explained to Karna that supporting immorality ultimately leads to destruction. In this research paper, the contradiction between religion-immorality, morality and human values will be analyzed through Karna's life. Karna's suffering is not only personal, but is a mirror for the entire society that the consequences of karma cannot be avoided by going the wrong way.

Literature Review:

Dr.Ashok kumar & Piyush Ranjan 2024 :In this paper "Karna: An Ideal Tragic Hero of The Mahabharata" — Literary/Tragic Frame. This paper establishes Karna as a traditional 'tragic hero' and shows his unbridled emotional loyalty as one of the main dynamics that leads him to destruction. The author draws on key events in the

story to show how Karna's unwavering loyalty to the direction (Duryodhana) has a chaotic effect on his personal and moral choices; the paper's interpretation is based primarily on textual analysis and literary commentary. As a result, the article identifies loyalty as a 'tragic flaw' for the generation.

Vidhya and Bharathi S rai -Exploring the Character of Karna in the Mahabharata" (2025) — Modern Psychology and Text-Based Studies: This article presents Karna as a complex and deeply flawed character. Karna's childhood, the scorn he receives from society, and his constant desire to gain recognition – all these factors shape him.The author shows that Karna is often plagued by cognitive dissonance and narcissistic traits. He cites examples from literature to illustrate how Karna's loyalty and blind support for Duryodhana change his moral compass –especially at a time when society rejects him as a "son of a son".

Deepti Priya - A Study on the Epic Mahabharata's Character 'Karna' (2021) —Psychological Approach. This paper studies Karna's behavior from a psychological point of view. It looks at two main ideas: narcissism (self-importance) and cognitive dissonance (mental conflict when actions don't match beliefs). The author explains that Karna's pride and fear of being socially humiliated made him stay loyal to Duryodhana . The study uses critical analysis, meaning it carefully looks at psychological theories (like Festinger's) and applies them to Karna's actions in the story. This way, the research helps us understand Karna's inner feelings and why he remained loyal to Duryodhana from a scientific and psychological perspective.

C. Vidhya & S.Gomueswari - "The Dark Hero of the Mahabharata — Karna" (2025) —This article looks at Karna's loyalty and its effects on morality and society. It explains that Karna's strong loyalty to Duryodhana often helped Duryodhana in his political plans but also separated Karna from what is morally and religiously right.

The paper uses examples from the story and the war to show that Karna's loyalty affected not only him personally but also others around him. The author studies the text carefully and discusses moral questions, giving a clear understanding of Karna's loyalty.

Abhirami Anildev -"Karna in Mahabharata: Loyalty Amidst Moral Complexity" It is a comprehensive and interdisciplinary study that analyzes the character of Karna from a moral perspective. This paper deeply explains the conflict between Karna's loyalty and religion, which makes him a tragic hero. Karna values his loyalty to Duryodhana, which motivates him to fight against the Pandavas. This decision challenges his relationship with religion, as he turns away from his family and the truth.

Discussion:

Ramdhari Dinkar's epic poem "Karna" is based on the life journey of Karna, a great hero of the Mahabharata. The poem places special emphasis on Karna's main qualities in life, his loyalty and morality. Karna values his loyalty to Duryodhana, which motivates him to fight against the Pandavas. This decision challenges his relationship with religion, as he turns away from his family and the truth.

Karna's best quality is his strong loyalty. He always stays with Duryodhana and becomes his true friend, even though he knows the Pandavas are right. Karna's loyalty is not just for Duryodhana, but also for keeping his promises and respecting himself.

Karna often faces a conflict between loyalty and doing what is right. He is very loyal to Duryodhana, but he also knows that the Pandavas are morally correct. This struggle inside him shows that Karna is a kind, loyal, and inspiring character. But loyalty is a good thing, but it should not be used in the wrong way and with the wrong people.

He knows that siding with adharma (injustice) is wrong, yet he feels duty-bound by gratitude — a moral dilemma between dharma (righteousness) and (debt of gratitude).

His decisions — like joining the dice game or participating in Draupadi's humiliation— show how loyalty sometimes blinded his morality. He faced many moral dilemmas — he knew the Pandavas were his brothers (revealed by Kunti before the war) but chose to keep his promise to Duryodhana. Despite his unmatched bravery and generosity, fate and curses worked against him.

Conclusion:

In Ramdhari Dinkar's poem - Karna's life is a story of struggle between pride and doing what is right. In Ramdhari Dinkar's poem, we see that Karna was loyal to his friend Duryodhana, kept his promises, and wanted to protect his honor. He knew that sometimes religion and doing the right thing might go against him, but he always chose his promises and feelings for his friends first. Karna's struggle teaches us how to balance our duties and situations in life. His life shows that both loyalty and morality are important, but sometimes they can make our decisions difficult.

Loyalty is a good thing, but it should not be used in the wrong way and with the wrong people. Karna knew that he was supporting injustice, which is wrong. We should support the righteous. Our efforts to support the wrong people are also doomed, even if we are right. Which happened with Karna's.

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CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN LITERARY STUDIES: CONTEMPORARY THEORIES AND LITERARY CRITICISM IN ENGLISH, NEW TRENDS IN COMPARATIVE LITERARY STUDIES, NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN TRANSLATION AND TRANSLATION STUDIES.

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Abstract

The domain of literary studies in the twenty-first century is experiencing significant transformations that reflect cultural, theoretical, and technological shifts. Under the theme of *Contemporary Theories and Literary Criticism in English*, scholars increasingly engage with frameworks such as postcolonialism, feminism, eco-criticism, cultural materialism, and digital humanities. These perspectives broaden interpretative horizons, highlight marginalized voices, and emphasize the relevance of literature in socio-political and cultural contexts.

In the realm of *Comparative Literary Studies*, a movement beyond Eurocentric paradigms is evident. The emphasis has shifted from conventional text-to-text comparison to cross-cultural dialogues, transnational narratives, and the role of intertextuality. By incorporating regional literatures and global exchanges, comparative studies foster a more inclusive and pluralistic understanding of literary traditions.

Equally vital are *New Developments in Translation and Translation Studies*. Contemporary discourse explores cultural transfer, equivalence, gender-sensitive translation, and the impact of digital and machine-assisted tools. Translation now serves not only as a linguistic bridge but also as a critical mediator of identity, culture, and ideology in the global literary landscape.

Collectively, these trends demonstrate that contemporary literary studies remain dynamic and evolving, responding to global challenges while reimagining literature as a powerful tool for dialogue, inclusivity, and cultural transformation.

Keywords: Contemporary Literary Theories, Comparative Literature, Translation Studies, Postcolonial Criticism, Feminist and Eco-critical Approaches, Global Literatures, Cultural Exchange

Introduction

The study of literature has undergone profound transformations in the 21st century. Traditionally, literary scholarship focused on canonical texts, emphasizing formal analysis, aesthetic value, and historical context. The advent of critical theories in the mid-20th century—structuralism, post-structuralism, and Marxist criticism—began challenging these conventional boundaries, but the last two decades have witnessed an even more radical shift. Contemporary literary studies are now characterized by **interdisciplinarity, multiculturalism, and global awareness**, driven by globalization, technological innovations, and political and identity discourses.

Globalization has expanded the reach of literature, creating a vibrant network of cultural exchange in which texts circulate across languages, borders, and media. Digital technologies, including online archives, hypertextual platforms, and computational analysis, have enabled scholars to study large corpora of texts and uncover patterns that were previously inaccessible. Simultaneously, social and political movements, including feminism, postcolonial activism, environmentalism, and queer theory, have transformed the way we read, interpret, and value literature.

The scope of literary studies has also expanded. **Comparative literature** now investigates cultural flows and global networks rather than solely studying European texts. **Translation studies** has emerged as a critical field, acknowledging the role of translation in shaping cultural reception and literary circulation. The canon has been radically expanded to include voices from marginalized communities, previously neglected literatures, and non-Western perspectives.

This paper explores four major areas of contemporary literary studies: (1) contemporary theories and literary criticism in English, (2) new trends in comparative literary studies, (3) developments in literary studies as a broad discipline, and (4) new developments in translation and translation studies. Together, these trends illustrate that literary scholarship today is no longer confined to textual analysis but is a dynamic, interdisciplinary, and culturally engaged enterprise.

1. Contemporary Theories and Literary Criticism in English

Modern literary criticism reflects a **plurality of theoretical approaches**, each addressing questions of culture, identity, and power. Traditional formalist and aesthetic approaches have given way to frameworks that interrogate the social, political, and technological dimensions of literature.

Postcolonial Criticism examines how literature represents the experiences of colonized peoples and challenges imperialist ideologies. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) revealed how Western scholarship constructed the "Orient" as an exotic and inferior Other, shaping literature, politics, and culture. Gayatri Spivak's essays, including *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988), interrogate how marginalized voices are silenced within literary and cultural discourse. Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity emphasizes the negotiation of identity in postcolonial contexts, where literature becomes a site of resistance and cultural synthesis. Postcolonial criticism has been applied globally, from Indian writing in English (Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy) to African and Caribbean literature (Chinua Achebe, Derek Walcott), highlighting the transnational circulation of texts and ideas.

Feminist and Gender Criticism addresses patriarchal structures, gender inequality, and women's representation in literature. Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) argued for women's intellectual and creative autonomy, while contemporary feminist critics like Judith Butler (*Gender Trouble*, 1990) interrogate gender performativity and challenge fixed binaries. Queer theory further destabilizes heteronormativity, examining how sexuality, desire, and identity are represented in literary texts. Feminist criticism has reshaped the canon, foregrounding women writers and enabling intersectional approaches that consider race, class, and sexuality.

Eco-criticism and Ecofeminism explore literature's engagement with ecological and environmental issues. Eco-critics study how texts reflect and influence human-nature relations, environmental ethics, and sustainability. Vandana Shiva's work links environmental degradation with the oppression of women, offering ecofeminist insights that connect social justice and ecological consciousness. In literature, works such as Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* or Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* exemplify ecological concerns and the consequences of human activity on natural landscapes.

Cultural Materialism and New Historicism emphasize reading literature in relation to historical, political, and ideological contexts. Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980) illustrates how texts both reflect and shape social power structures. This approach considers literature as a product of social, political, and economic forces, challenging the notion of literary autonomy.

Digital Humanities represents a technological turn in literary criticism. Tools such as corpus linguistics, text mining, hypertext analysis, and digital archives allow scholars to analyze vast amounts of data, study intertextual networks, and explore patterns across genres and time periods. Digital platforms also democratize access to texts and enable collaborative scholarship on a global scale.

In sum, contemporary literary criticism moves beyond text-centered approaches to embrace questions of **culture, identity, politics, and technology**, providing more nuanced and socially engaged interpretations.

2. New Trends in Comparative Literary Studies

Comparative literature has transformed from the study of literature across languages and nations to an **interdisciplinary and globally oriented field**. Scholars now focus on cultural circulation, translation, and reception rather than merely comparing canonical works.

World Literature emphasizes texts that "gain in translation," as David Damrosch (2003) argues. World literature studies consider how texts circulate across linguistic, cultural, and national boundaries, examining reception and adaptation. For example, the global reception of Haruki Murakami's novels, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, or Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* illustrates the dynamics of literary circulation in a transnational context.

Translation-Centered Comparison studies translations as literary works in their own right, rather than as derivatives of "original" texts. The emphasis shifts from fidelity to the source to the cultural, historical, and political contexts of translation. Scholars analyze how translation affects meaning, reception, and literary influence.

Postcolonial Comparative Literature challenges Eurocentric paradigms, highlighting South-South literary dialogues. For instance, Indian-African, Indian-Latin American, or Caribbean-Asian literary interactions reveal shared colonial histories, cultural exchange, and resistance strategies. Comparative postcolonial studies examine common themes such as displacement, hybridity, migration, and diaspora.

Interdisciplinary Expansion connects comparative literature with philosophy, cultural studies, media studies, film, music, and digital technology. For example, analyzing adaptations of literary works into films, games, or digital narratives enables scholars to trace cultural influence and reception across media.

Digital Comparative Literature employs computational methods, electronic archives, and mapping tools to study networks of influence. Digital databases allow scholars to track the circulation of texts, examine intertextuality, and analyze reception patterns globally.

Through these approaches, comparative literature has shifted from "literature in comparison" to "literature in relation," emphasizing intercultural dialogue, transnational perspectives, and global connectivity.

3. Developments in Contemporary Literary Studies

Contemporary literary studies as a discipline has expanded beyond traditional boundaries, reflecting inclusivity, interdisciplinarity, and global awareness:

Expanded Canon: Marginalized literatures, including Dalit, Indigenous, African, women's, and diasporic writings, have gained scholarly attention. Bama's *Karukku* (Tamil), Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* exemplify literature that challenges dominant cultural narratives.

Cultural Studies Integration: Popular culture, cinema, television, advertisements, and digital narratives are now analyzed alongside canonical literature. Studies of film adaptations, graphic novels, and digital storytelling illustrate the permeability of literary boundaries.

Reader-Centered Approaches: Reception theory and affect studies examine the emotional, intellectual, and cultural responses of readers. Literary memory studies explore how texts preserve social histories and collective experiences.

Ethics and Human Rights: Literature addressing trauma, war, refugee experiences, and social injustice has become central to literary studies. Works like Elie Wiesel's *Night*, Arundhati Roy's political essays, or contemporary refugee narratives reveal literature as a medium of ethical engagement.

Pedagogical Shifts: Digital classrooms, MOOCs, e-libraries, and multimedia teaching tools democratize literary education. Online access broadens participation, making literary scholarship globally accessible.

Together, these developments indicate a field that is **responsive to social, cultural, and technological changes**, moving beyond purely aesthetic concerns.

Contemporary literary studies have witnessed remarkable developments over the past few decades, reflecting broader social, cultural, technological, and theoretical shifts. The field has moved far beyond traditional close reading and historical contextualization, embracing interdisciplinary approaches that integrate philosophy, sociology, cultural studies, psychology, and digital media. These developments demonstrate the dynamic and evolving nature of literature as both an art form and a critical field of inquiry, highlighting the reciprocal relationship between texts, contexts, and readers.

One of the most significant trends in contemporary literary studies is the rise of new theoretical frameworks. Postmodern, poststructuralist, and postcolonial theories have challenged traditional notions of authorship, textual authority, and the universality of meaning. Feminist, queer, eco-critical, and psychoanalytic approaches have broadened the scope of analysis, allowing scholars to examine literature as a site of cultural negotiation, social

critique, and ethical reflection. These frameworks encourage a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between literature and society, illuminating the ways in which texts reflect, resist, or reshape prevailing ideologies.

Another critical development is the interdisciplinary and comparative approach that contemporary scholars increasingly adopt. Comparative literature now transcends national boundaries, enabling cross-cultural dialogue and highlighting shared human experiences across linguistic and geographic divides. Digital humanities, cultural analytics, and computational literary studies have introduced new methods for analyzing large corpora of texts, allowing researchers to detect patterns, themes, and stylistic features that were previously inaccessible. This fusion of technology and theory has not only expanded the analytical toolkit but has also democratized literary scholarship, creating opportunities for collaborative and participatory research.

The globalization of literary studies has also foregrounded issues of translation, migration, and transnational narratives. Contemporary literature reflects the fluidity of identity, hybridity, and cultural encounter, prompting scholars to rethink traditional categorizations such as "national literature" or "canonical text." Attention to marginalized voices, minority literatures, and postcolonial perspectives has redefined the literary canon, making it more inclusive and socially aware. Moreover, developments in media and digital culture, such as interactive narratives, web literature, and multimedia storytelling, have blurred the boundaries between literature, performance, and technology, challenging conventional notions of textuality and authorship.

Ethical and critical engagement has become another hallmark of contemporary literary studies. Scholars are increasingly concerned with questions of representation, power, and ideology, exploring how literature can shape social consciousness and influence cultural discourse. By examining literature in relation to political, environmental, and cultural crises, contemporary literary studies assert the continued relevance of the field in addressing global challenges and fostering critical thinking.

In conclusion, contemporary literary studies are characterized by pluralism, interdisciplinarity, and responsiveness to social and technological change. The field embraces both traditional textual analysis and innovative methodological approaches, reflecting a commitment to understanding literature as a dynamic and socially embedded phenomenon. Developments in theory, comparative studies, digital methodologies, translation, and cultural critique collectively underscore the richness and complexity of contemporary literary scholarship. As the discipline continues to evolve, it will increasingly serve as a bridge between cultures, a forum for ethical inquiry, and a lens through which to interpret the complexities of the human experience in a rapidly changing world. The future of literary studies lies in its ability to integrate emerging technologies, diverse perspectives, and global narratives, ensuring that literature remains a vital tool for intellectual exploration, cultural understanding, and societal engagement.

4. New Developments in Translation and Translation Studies

Translation studies has emerged as a **core component of literary scholarship**, central to understanding global literature:

The Cultural Turn: Translation is recognized as a culturally and ideologically situated act (Bassnett & Lefevere). Translators negotiate meaning, style, and power relations, challenging notions of neutrality.

Postcolonial Translation: Translation is both a tool of domination and a mechanism of resistance. Indigenous and postcolonial authors use translation to revive marginalized languages and challenge colonial hierarchies.

Feminist Translation: Gender-aware translation considers how gender ideologies shape translation choices. Barbara Godard emphasizes that translation reflects social and cultural attitudes toward gender.

Audiovisual and Media Translation: Subtitling, dubbing, and localization of films, games, and digital content expand translation studies into new domains, facilitating cross-cultural communication.

Machine Translation and AI: Digital tools such as Google Translate, DeepL, and AI-based systems increase accessibility but raise questions of accuracy, creativity, and ethics. Scholars debate the balance between technological efficiency and literary nuance.

World Literature via Translation: Translation enables global circulation of texts. Without translation, much of world literature would remain inaccessible beyond linguistic borders. For instance, Japanese, Arabic, and African literatures rely on translation for a global readership.

Translation studies thus illustrate the **interconnectedness of language, culture, and literature**, positioning translation as central, rather than secondary, to literary scholarship.

The landscape of translation and translation studies has undergone a profound transformation in recent decades, reflecting broader changes in technology, culture, and global communication. What was once primarily concerned with achieving linguistic equivalence between source and target texts has expanded into a rich, interdisciplinary field that integrates technological innovation, cognitive science, sociocultural analysis, and ethical responsibility. Modern translation is no longer a purely linguistic act; it is a complex process that requires awareness of context, audience, culture, and purpose. Translators today are not merely conveyors of words—they are mediators, cultural interpreters, and agents of cross-cultural dialogue.

Technological developments, particularly in machine translation and computer-assisted translation tools, have revolutionized the practice of translation. Neural machine translation systems and artificial intelligence applications have increased efficiency, reduced time constraints, and enabled real-time multilingual communication. However, these advancements have also emphasized the continuing need for human oversight, as context, idiomatic expressions, and cultural subtleties remain challenging for machines to fully capture. The role of the translator is therefore evolving from that of a mere language converter to a post-editor, cultural consultant, and technological mediator.

At the same time, translation studies as an academic discipline has embraced interdisciplinary approaches. Postcolonial, feminist, and sociocultural theories have highlighted the ethical and ideological dimensions of translation, revealing how power relations, gender, and cultural representation shape the translation process. Cognitive studies of translation have provided valuable insights into the mental processes involved in bilingual and multilingual communication, offering both theoretical frameworks and practical applications in translator training. The convergence of technology, theory, and practice underscores the dynamic, evolving nature of the field.

Furthermore, the expansion of translation into audiovisual media, digital platforms, and multimodal texts has created new challenges and opportunities. Subtitling, dubbing, localization, and multimedia translation require not only linguistic proficiency but also an understanding of visual culture, digital literacy, and audience engagement. Translators today must navigate multiple semiotic channels and adapt content for diverse audiences while preserving the integrity and intent of the original text.

Ultimately, the new developments in translation studies reflect a paradigm shift from a narrow, text-centered perspective to a holistic, interdisciplinary, and socially engaged approach. Modern translation emphasizes not just communication but understanding, not just accuracy but cultural resonance, and not just speed but ethical responsibility. The field continues to grow, driven by technological innovation, globalization, and scholarly inquiry, ensuring that translation remains a vital bridge connecting languages, cultures, and communities across the world. As the discipline advances, future research will likely focus on refining AI-human collaboration, exploring multimodal and immersive translation, and addressing the ethical implications of translation in a rapidly changing global landscape. The translator's role, far from diminishing, is becoming increasingly central in fostering intercultural dialogue, promoting inclusivity, and enabling meaningful global communication.

Conclusion

Contemporary literary studies have undergone a profound paradigm shift:

From canon to inclusivity: Marginalized literatures and voices are recognized.

From text to context: Critical theories situate literature within historical, social, and cultural frameworks.

From nation to globe: Comparative and translation studies highlight global circulation and intercultural dialogue.

From print to digital: Digital humanities and online platforms expand access and analytical tools.

Theories, comparative approaches, and translation studies collectively demonstrate that literature is **not merely a collection of texts**, but a dynamic site of cultural exchange, ethical engagement, and intellectual innovation. Contemporary literary scholarship is increasingly **interdisciplinary, inclusive, and globally aware**, reflecting the complex, interconnected world of the 21st century.

In contemporary literary studies, the focus has shifted toward interdisciplinarity, inclusivity, and critical engagement with culture, society, and identity. Contemporary theories and literary criticism in English explore diverse perspectives, from postcolonial and feminist to digital and eco-criticism, expanding interpretative frameworks. New trends in comparative literary studies emphasize cross-cultural dialogue, global literatures, and translation as a bridge between traditions. Similarly, developments in translation and translation studies highlight technological integration, localization, and the role of the translator as a cultural mediator. Collectively, these trends reflect a dynamic, evolving field that continually reshapes our understanding of literature and its relevance today.

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THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE: POSTMODERN FORM, POST-POSTMODERN SPIRIT

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Introduction

Horror, as a genre, shies from being relegated to a category or two—more so in the modern conditions. It occupies a curious space between fantasy and reality. Stephen King, in one of his few but foundational non-fiction works *Danse Macabre*, notes that "the artistic value the horror movie most frequently offers is its ability to form a liaison between our fantasy fears and our real fears" (154). King's insight highlights the unique power that horror wields: beyond merely startling or entertaining, it facilitates a covert connection between the surface-level thrills of conventional kind and the deeper, more personal terrors rooted in human experience. Netflix's *The Haunting of Hill House,* created by Mike Flanagan, offers an exemplification on this matter. While the series establishes its form with the aid of the hallmarks of postmodern horror—fragmented chronology, unreliable narration, spectral ambiguity, and temporal loops—it simultaneously synthesizes a post-postmodern or "new sincerity" spirit, guiding these formal devices toward an earnest depiction of grief, trauma, and reconciliation. While this enticing contest between its form and affect has no winner at the culmination of it all, it does point towards one truth about the show: that it, beyond ghosts, is haunted by the weight of real human experience.

Hill House, in academia, has been well and widely received as being among those modern horror medias that revisit the Gothic conceptions of horror, engage with trauma, or subvert the traditional horror tropes—by not overdoing the surface-level horror; by not overexploiting the "fantasy fears". While a lot of research has happened on the aforementioned grounds, less attention has been paid to the series' postmodern form and its sincere, affective spirit that stands quite in contrast to the former. Whereas postmodernism exults in irony, fragmentation, and detachment, Flanagan retools the same equipment to evoke empathy, cultivate emotional resonance, and insist upon the possibility of healing and reconciliation. This paper argues that *The Haunting of Hill House* stands at the crossroads of this clash of ideologies—and profits off it as its postmodern devices serve as a scaffold for the post-postmodern sincerity it aims at. Horror becomes an instrument through which the audience confronts both, the deep-seated personal fears and the shared cultural ones—King's "pressure points" (156)—while being welcomed to inhabit the emotional realities of its characters.

Of the ten episodes that constitute the series, three illustrate this interplay most vividly. Episode 5, "The Bent-Neck Lady", makes use of fragmented temporality and looping causality to narrate Nell's tragic arc, climaxing with the discovery that she herself is the spectral haunting that has landed severe emotional devastation on her psyche throughout her life. The postmodern tampering of time and perspective crescendos the horror, but it is the ardent representation of grief and inevitability that makes the narrative emotionally shattering. Episode 6, "Two Storms", employs long-take sequences and temporal overlaps to exhibit formal mastery. Yet, beneath the technical marvel sits a deeply human longing for family cohesion, highlighting the series' concern with vulnerability and reconciliation. Lastly, Episode 10, "Silence Lay Steadily", show the Red Room as the origin of narrative turbulence and haunting, but its resolution directs the focus on empathy, confessions, and survival—the height of the show's post-postmodern spirit. These three episodes, analysed parallelly, reveal how Flanagan metamorphosizes the trademark postmodern tools into means for emotional truth and sincere engagement.

By placing *The Haunting of Hill House* at the intersection of formal experimentation of postmodernism, trauma theory, and new sincerity, this paper will establish how horror can transcend beyond merely eliciting fear: it can inform the readers/viewers of the lived experiences of grief, addiction, estrangement, and loss—all the while also reiterating life in a positive light. As King observes, sincere renditions of horror "do not celebrate deformity but by dwelling on deformity, they sing of health and energy. By showing us the miseries of the damned, they help us to rediscover the smaller (but never petty) joys of our own lives" (228). Hill House confirms exactly this ethical and affective promise, using postmodern form not as an end in itself, but as a channel through which, post-postmodern sincerity is churned out, offering both terror and transcendence.

Theoretical Framework

At the intersection of postmodernism and its contemporary reconfigurations is where the theoretical blueprint for this paper can be found—with specific attention to how the postmodern narrative strategies can be mobilized to both disassemble and reassemble the possibilities of meaning. Postmodernism is set off by an "incredulity toward metanarratives" (Lyotard xxiv). This suspicion of the universal explanatory systems results into a privileging of fragmentation, discontinuity, and heterogeneity over unity, coherence, and singular authority. Formally, this entails not only a rejection of linearity and closure but also an encouragement of irony, parody, and pastiche as the chief aesthetic devices. Postmodern fiction time and again undercuts its own authority through metafictional gestures, establishing the very act of representation as a part of a constructed drama. Linda Hutcheon in her seminal works, when she talks of "historiographic metafiction", lays bare the constructedness of the stories and narratives—all the while, also telling those stories. By doing so, these stories disallow any easy access to truth as the confrontation of fictions of history and history as fiction take centre stage in the postmodern melodrama.

Within the same postmodern system, the reader is bestowed upon with a more active role during the act of reading. The reader does not merely consume, but also assimilates the narrative on offer—while also adding to the possibility of interpretations. The reader emerges as a co-creator of meaning. The Barthesian proclamation "death of the author" resonates here: once the authority is dispersed, interpretation becomes pluralized. This proclamation is further consolidated by the related Foucauldian question 'What is an Author?" as it threatens the stability of authorship and empowers the hermeneutical process in the interplay of text, discourse, and readerly engagement. For works that revel in plurality, ambiguity, and indeterminacy, this shift in agency is not incidental but essential. The indeterminacy is not misplaced or an obstacle to understanding, but a part of the experience—foregrounding the limits of representation and impossibility of a final closure.

Strong and formidable as it must have been, postmodernism's cultural arc has not remained static. Towards the culmination of the twentieth and the introduction of the twenty-first centuries, critics and writers began to sense that endless and repetitive employment of irony and play renders hollow these otherwise subversive tools. David Foster Wallace and others in his wake articulated this crisis of irony: the recognition that unrelenting detachment can lead to inexorable, obsessive cynicism and uninhabited emotional spaces. The response to this exhaustion has been diversely labelled post-postmodernism, metamodernism, or the new sincerity. The difference between these labels is that of emphasis rather than of spirit. They share a common belief that contemporary texts frequently adhere to the formal sophistication of postmodernism while reinstating affect, ethical gravity, and a measure of authenticity.

This reorientation of thought does not mean a sweeping rejection of postmodern techniques; rather, it represents a recalibration of sorts. Irony stays back, but it is no longer the ultimate horizon—it synchronizes with vulnerability, seriousness, and a renewed interest in emotional resonance. Metafictionality remains, but they are recurrently summoned to underscore sincerity rather than to bask in endless self-referentiality. Putting in other words, post-postmodernism is characterized by a confrontation of irony and sincerity, where detachment and authenticity co-operate rather than being exclusive of one another. A framework such as this is vital for analyzing contemporary texts that often strike a balance between skepticism and longing, fragmentation and wholeness, and narrative experimentation and renewed ethical purpose.

Within the same theoretical terrain, trauma studies too occupies a position, but a secondary one. Critics such as Cathy Caruth and Dominick LaCapra have been among the key proponents of this field of study. The belief that trauma reveals itself through belatedness, repetition, and the unspeakable gaps of narrative was planted by Cathy Caruth; while Dominick LaCapra defined and distinguished between behavioural terms like 'acting out' and 'working through'—in technical terms and placed in literary context, compulsive repetition and narrative re-engagement. These insights are key to understanding how literature navigates through absence, silence, and disjunction. Yet, for the present study, trauma theory is not the central lens. Rather, it functions as a parallel discourse that coincides with the preoccupations of postmodernism: both recognize fragmentation, repetition, and dislocation as key textual features. Emphasis is where they differ—while trauma theory sees these features as indicative of historical or psychic rupture, postmodern and post-postmodern frameworks place them within broader aesthetic and epistemological swings.

On that note, this paper acknowledges trauma studies as informative but holds back from anchoring its analysis primarily in trauma theory. The focus, instead, is on the larger literary-historical trajectory: the transition from

postmodern skepticism, irony, and metafiction toward the current, revitalized forms that reach for sincerity, affect, and ethical imagination. While the postmodern suspicion of closure and authority remain integral, post-postmodern sensibilities redirect these strategies toward something more genuine and authentic. Beyond just signalling detachment, these allow questions of how we might still narrate meaningfully in an age that suspects grand narratives yet aches for connection. By situating the inquiry within this range, the present research foregrounds narrative experimentation as more than just an aesthetic flourish: it becomes a vessel for reconsidering how literature both mirrors and remodels cultural anxieties, desires, and possibilities.

Episode 5: The Bent-Neck Lady

The series' fifth episode, "The Bent-Neck Lady" stands takes the centre stage when it comes to the narrative and thematic design of *The Haunting of Hill House.* It encapsulates the series' interplay between postmodern fragmentation and post-postmodern sincerity. Shaped around the life and death of Nell Crain, the episode reveals how disorderly temporality and narrative circling function not solely as stylistic add-ons but as tools for reflecting existential terror and affective weight.

Under the postmodern influence, the episode exemplifies the disorder of linear narrative time. Instead of laying bare Nell's life in chronological sequence, the narrative collapses in such a manner that past, present, and future bleed into one another—forming a repetitive loop. Key scenes—Nell's sleep paralysis, her encounters with the Bent-Neck Lady, her failed relationships, her visit to her siblings, and her eventual suicide—do not unfurl step-by-step, leading to one another. Instead, they are positioned in a sporadic montage that destabilizes temporal order. This kind of fragmentation is in alignment with the postmodern suspicion of coherence and closure expressed by Lyotard as the narrative refuses to adhere to a singular metanarrative of causality or redemption. Nell's life is not disclosed as a developmental arc but as a scattered set of moments that acquire their devastating meaning only in hindsight, when the truth about the Bent-Neck Lady is revealed. This temporal incoherence also dramatizes the crisis of authoritative narrative perspective. Up until this episode, the Bent-Neck Lady has been an externalized haunting force—a seemingly stable ghostly figure whose terror derives from its incomprehensibility. By unveiling the face of the Bent-Neck Lady to be of none other than Nell—who is trapped in a looping temporal prison of her own death—the narrative disrupts any stable boundary between self and other, victim and specter, cause and consequences. In postmodern terms, this reveal sanctions the death of narrative authority: what the audience and characters assumed to be an external haunting entity turns out to be a manifestation of the very protagonist it terrorized. The horror is not located elsewhere in the supernatural (~preternatural) but within the recursive temporality of Nell's ruptured existence.

Flanagan's Hill House though refuses to culminate at this consequence as it goes beyond the level of postmodern irony or narrative experimentation. Rather, its structural fragmentation is revised toward intensity and sincerity. The revelation of Nell as the Bent-Neck Lady is more than just a clever twist meant to cause jaw-drops—it is an existential tragedy. Within the postmodern range, this would be received as metafictional ingenuity but Flanagan's imagination transcends the limitations of this range as the revelation lands as a moment of total emotional devastation. This tonal shift is characteristic of the post-postmodern or new sincerity turn: the episode's formal play is intricately intertwined with its ethical and emotional force. Viewers are not invited to postmodern merrymaking in the play of fragmented time but to grieve the inevitability of Nell's suffering and the cruelty of her fate.

Affect being at the core of the episode is further highlighted by its use of repetition and doubling. Nellie's repeated encounters with the Bent-Neck Lady, her traumatic experiences across childhood and adulthood, gain reflective pathos once the loop is revealed. Each encounter becomes an instance of Nell haunting herself across time, emblematic of trauma being inescapable. Trauma theorists such as Cathy Caruth would submit to this repetition being a literalization of traumatic belatedness but the episode renounces having trauma as the sole informative key. Instead, this repetition is summoned as a structural and emotional device: it dramatizes the inescapability of Nell's suffering while hand-in-hand emphasizing the futility of linear explanation. The past is not past; it returns, bleeding into the present, stifling the possibility of future.

Furthermore, through visual and narrative techniques, the episode also successfully foregrounds the derailment of subjectivity. Flanagan's cinematography recurrently positions Nell in isolated spaces and circumstances—lying paralyzed, standing in empty rooms, or moving through delusional, fragmented dreamscapes. At the time of the staging of her suicide, the camera tracks long shots, capturing every movement of Nell—refusing the catharsis of

quick resolution. Instead, these long sequences of the camera following the disillusioned protagonist elongate the moment of collapse into a haunting montage. The formal choice to not cut away abruptly forces the viewers into a distressing duration, putting them at par with Nell's inescapable entrapment. The eventual revelation—that Nell is both victim and specter—renders subjectivity itself insecure. Yet, more importantly, this insecurity is not introduced as ironic detachment but as tragic sincerity: the dissolution of the self becomes a medium for empathy rather than distance.

In terms of cultural resonance, "The Bent-Neck Lady" appeals to broader post-postmodern apprehensions about time, identity, and inevitability. The looping temporality is congruent to a cultural moment that increasingly experiences history as repetition and impasse—whether in political cycles, ecological crises, or personal struggles with mental health. This episode does not merely reflect these concerns—it travels beyond and revises them into a story that compels the viewers to confront the vulnerability of human life and the necessity of compassion and kindness. This is how the episode illustrates what Stephen King describes as horror's paradoxical function: by confronting deformity, it ultimately sings of health and life. The horror of Nell's fate turns into an opportunity for the viewers to recognize the fragility and value of connection, echoing the post-postmodern instinct to re-salvage sincerity within fragmentation.

Thus, "The Bent-Neck Lady" is not only the most jarring episode of *The Haunting of Hill House* but also its most conceptually rich one. It makes use of the formal hallmarks of postmodern horror—fragmented temporality, destabilized subjectivity, repetitive circling—while also transcending them through its attempt at emotional resonance. Nell's tragedy in the episode illustrates how postmodern devices, when retooled through a post-postmodern spirit, become means of sincerity, vulnerability, and ethical engagement. It is via this intimately intricate/intricately intimate relationship between postmodern form and post-postmodern spirit that Flanagan's series unveils its true power: horror is not the end but the agent by which life, connection, and meaning are paradoxically upheld.

Episode 6: Two Storms

After an analysis of Episode 5, "The Bent-Neck Lady", there appears to be a clearly marks mobilization of the postmodern narrative fragmented tools—the chronological recursiveness, the unreliable perspective of Nell, and the sudden temporal upheavals—leads to genuine affective impact. While Episode 5 primarily focuses on Nell's trauma and inevitable suffering to present to us the Crains' haunted subjectivity, Episode 6 expands the horizons further—progressing from individual grief to familial entanglement. "Two Storms", by intensifying the emotional aspect of the series, elevates the possibility of cultural and emotional resonance. In this episode, Flanagan employs long-take cinematography and complex staging but not simply to exhibit formal showmanship but to capture the unsteady oscillation between disconnection and yearning that defines post-postmodern society. The switch from Nell's personal, postmodernly fractured grief to the collective grief of the entire family illustrates how the series makes use of form to shape affect across multiple narrative layers. Episode 6, hence, acts as a bridge: from postmodern temporality serving the intimate trauma of a singular character to formal mastery allowing collective emotional truth.

While Episode 5 is central narratively and thematically, Episode 6 is the technical and emotional centerpiece of *The Haunting of Hill House.* Celebrated for its cinematic bravado—long, unbroken takes—the episode scores a seamless interplay between the past storm at Hill House and the present-day storm at the funeral home. However, beyond the cinematic heroism, the episode enacts the central concerns of the series: the fragmentation and looping of time, the instability of discernment, and the struggle to build connection in the wake of disintegration. Its formal strategies embody postmodern skepticism about narrative coherence, while its thematic resolution signals toward the post-postmodern quest for sincerity, affect, and interpersonal healing.

Formally, the episode enacts a sweeping disruption of spatial and temporal continuity. "Two Storms", as Flanagan put shared via a Twitter (now X) thread, was "part of the very first pitch for the show, promising an episode that would look like one shot" (qtd. in Mancuso). Through its meticulously staged tracking shots, the camera glides from the storm-ridden Hill House of the past to the Crain family gathered for Nell's wake in the present—no cuts, no transitions. These undisturbed tracking shots and long sequences were made possible owing to prior arrangements like having the sets for both Hill House and Shirley's Funeral Home designed and built on adjacent stages so that Hugh could walk directly from the funeral home to Hill House (Flanagan). This formal and visual

dexterity collapses time, making past and present blend with one another. As Lyotard would put it, the episode dramatizes a suspicion toward temporal and spatial linearity and distinction: time is not a steady sequence but a haunted continuum where past trauma repeatedly messes with the present. By denying the viewers convention comfort of comprehensible markers of time or scene breaks, the episode symbolizes the postmodern distrust of chronological order and narrative closure.

This folding of time within itself runs parallel to the collapse of narrative authority. None of the Crain family members, each with their own disjointed version of Hill House memories, can produce a singular, reliable account of the past. Their memories and allegations collide during the wake, singling out the postmodern claim that there exists no unified narrative but only contesting discourses. The long, singular takes, instead of implying unity, ironically heighten this fragmentation: the camera binds the characters together in close quarters as their words and silences expose seemingly irreparable divides. All these postmodern hallmarks—formal showmanship, disjunct narrative time, and shifting focalization/narrative authority (or lack thereof)—lead to a theft of closure and irrefutable indeterminacy.

Yet, "Two Storms" does not halt at this postmodern indeterminacy. Its technical valiance is channelled not to revel in disjointedness but to elicit affective intensity. By refusing the fragmentation of editing, the long takes give rise to an overpowering immediacy: viewers are packed in with the family as tensions flare, unable to look away. What could be mistaken for mere directorial ambitiousness instead behaves as a vehicle for sincerity: a one-take eighteen-page shoot, as technically ambitious as it sounds, needed something more sincere— "thunderous emotion from the cast" (flanaganfilm qtd. in Mancuso). The storm sequences are more than just clever directorial games with time: they are meditations on how grief, memory, and guilt haunt a family endlessly, binding them strictly within the frame. Such remobilization of postmodern techniques to land emotional resonance typifies the post-postmodern ethos: irony and fragmentation synchronize with, and eventually administer, sincerity and affect.

Nell's spectral presence is central to this affective turn that the episode takes. Even in death, she marks her presence *and* absence, haunting the family gathering just like she once haunted Hill House. In a fleeting passage of seconds, she literally appears in the room at the Funeral Home, seen by the audience but not by her siblings—witnessing the cascade of their accusations. Nell's ghostly presence at the Funeral Home serves as more than just a horror trope (~a jump scare) as it also dramatizes the family's inability to acknowledge their shared grief. Her spectral presence at the Shirley's funeral home and the siblings' inability to acknowledge her presence mirrors young Nellie's words, "I was…here. I was right here. I was right here and I was screaming and shouting, and none of you could see me. Why couldn't you see me? I waved and jumped and screamed, and you didn't even look. None of you even looked" (00:53:12-30) when she is found after a long absence. Look at this through a trauma theory lens and Nell's ghost might be read as a symbol of unprocessed past returning to disrupt the Crains' lives all over again… but the episode transcends beyond the limitations of such a reading. It dislodges trauma theory's dominance by transforming this haunting sequence into a site for empathy as the aggressively confrontational Crains come to realize the vulnerability of the moment at the sight of Nell's casket collapsing onto the floor—as if posing a violent reminder. The revelation of Nell's silent presence takes the episode from confrontation to lamentation, pushing the viewers to feel the gravity of loss rather than to decipher its symptomatic traces.

Further, the idea of twinning the storms across time and space serves as a bridge between the postmodern and post-postmodern aspects of the series. In the past, at the Hill House, the storm becomes a disorienting force that deform space and traps the Crain children in a state of fear. In the present, at the funeral home, the storm acts metaphorically, intensifying the turbulence of grief and recrimination. Yet by cloning the storm and placing one each across the timelines, the episode contests a stable symbolic reading. Rather, the storm is both literal and metaphorical, realist and mysterious. This denial of a singular interpretation is exactly what allows the storm to resonate emotionally, inviting the viewers to the lived hysteria of grief instead of driving them away from any sort of sincerity, toward skepticism.

The way "Two Storms" ends, its authoritative claim is found not in narrative resolution—as the Crain parent (Hugh, the father) and the siblings are still at odds among and with each other—but in its ethical orientation. The long, undisturbed takes force the Crain family into a shared closeness, just like grief forces them to confront each other—and truly, for once, secrets buried since years spill out. Their arguments, accusations, apprehensions, and silences perform the impossibility of settling the past through linear explanation. The episode, however, parallelly also insists upon the necessity of sticking together within the storm—literally and figuratively—and enduring

confrontational proximity even when it seems difficult. Here, Flanagan conveys and underscores the post-postmodern ethic: sincerity is not a simple, straightforward return to unity but the difficult struggle of holding fragmentation and connection in tension but together.

"Two Storms" then is an exemplification of how *The Haunting of Hill House* renovates postmodern strategies into pathways toward sincerity. Its disjointed temporality, splintering subjectivity, and refusal of closure are evidently postmodern… but instead of settling in the indeterminacy, the episode employs these hallmarks to arouse empathy, grief, and ethical urgency. The haunting remains not merely a sign of trauma or narrative entertainment but a means for recognition: recognition of shared vulnerability, of familial mess, and of the delicate necessity of connection in times of loss. In this mutation of the two modalities lies the episode's excellence and its involvement in the whole series' journey from postmodernism to post-postmodernism.

Episode 10: Silence Lay Steadily

Episode 6's chemistry of form and sincerity organizes the series' climaxing exploration in Episode 10, "Silence Lay Steadily". While the long-take cinematography of Episode 6 lays bare the family's fragile yet enduring bonds, the finale intensifies tis postmodern formalism by breaking down the house's temporal and ontological hierarchies. In this episode that delivers the final blow, Hill House functions as a narrative labyrinth, a heterotopic space, and an emotional crucible—all at once. While Episodes 5 and 6 are emblematic of postmodern experimentation as a lens for individual/small-scale affect, Episode 10 widens the horizons and becomes representative of a post-postmodern creation with a large-scale impact. It is the space where the fragmented forms come together, however imperfectly, to gesture towards the necessity and value of healing, reconciliation, and empathetic closure. Episode 10, the finale, hence serves as the logical finish line of Flanagan's formal-sincere project, where unstable postmodernity exists with earnest post-postmodernity—as irony, unreliability, and disjunctiveness coagulate with human vulnerability, mortality, and connection.

The final episode of the series is the zenith of *The Haunting of Hill House*'s formal showmanship and thematic vision. Carrying forward the momentum set by Episodes 5 and 6, it further enhances the series' formal fragmentation, temporal recursiveness, and fragile subjectivities, while mobilizing them toward a resolution exhibited by empathy, reconciliation, and fragile hope. If "The Bent-Neck Lady" performed the collapse of temporal linearity through Nell's inexorable haunting, and "Two Storms" depicted grief as a storm of contesting/confrontational narratives, Episode 10 goes metafictional, turning these strategies inward and transforming Hill House itself into a narrative device that facilitates death and life, despair and healing. What this eventually yields is a transcendence: postmodern hallmarks are reconfigured into vehicles for post-postmodern sincerity.

The Red Room—a recurrent arbitrary space throughout the series and Episode 10's primary setting—exemplifies postmodern instability of meaning. Throughout the series, the room has played differently for each family member: a reading room for Olivia, a game room for Steve, a family room for Shirley, a dance studio for Theo, a treehouse for Luke, and a toy room for Nellie. Only in the 10th Episode are the secrets of the Red Room spilled and its multiplicity is revealed as an illusion; the room is refigured as a chameleon space that sways perception to entrap its inhabitants. This device represents the postmodern suspicion of stable reality: what seemed different spaces and experiences were in reality projections of the same Machiavellian architecture. Consequentially to the Red Room, the house itself becomes a metaphor for postmodern representation—a space of never-ending deferral and postponement, where meaning is timelessly displaces and never met.

Flanagan though does not end his project at this postmodern disorientation. The Red Room, along with an indeterminate space, also functions as a receptacle of sincerity, where each family member confronts their demons—the unresolved desires and regrets. The room renders personalized illusions onto the Crain siblings one by one—not taking them apart but giving them a chance at sincere redemption. These illusory dreamscapes expose vulnerabilities: Luke's yearning for comfort, Theo's fear of intimacy, Shirley's repression, and Steven's denial. This exposition of vulnerabilities is not done ironically, or to mock the characters; rather, it is done to render their inner fractures visible, making space for empathy. In this way, the Red Room stages the dialectic of post-postmodern storytelling: irony (the revelation of illusion) cohabits an ethical and empathetic space with sincerity (the acknowledgement of vulnerability).

Important as it has been in the earlier episodes of the series, the temporal structuring yet again plays its part in highlighting this synthesis. Time is recursive rather than linear in Episode 10, like in Episode 5. Characters experience surreal visions of the past and alternate futures within the Red Room, puzzling the boundaries between what was, what is, and what could have been. However, unlike the unrelenting horror of Nell's recursive suffering in Episode 5, Episode 10's looping temporality serves the purpose of healing. Nell herself reappears as an ethereal presence, not to haunt but to heal. She gracefully addresses her siblings—while they suffer and suffocate in their dreamscapes—with words of comfort, replanting her death… this time not as an inescapable loop of anguish but as part of a continuum of love that preservers beyond death. This transformations gestures towards the post-postmodern ethic: that fragmentation, haunting, and suffering remain, but they are not the end—they unleash an avowal of connection, fragile but promising.

The Haunting of Hill House, along with its thematic and ethical redefinition of horror, also gets its fame from its rejection of a conventional closure. The series ends not with the destruction of Hill House or the exorcism of its ghosts. Instead, it ends on a rather ambiguous note, an act of salvation. Hugh Crain sacrifices himself—again, not in a conventional, violent manner but very tenderly—to remain in the house with Olivia and Nellie, while the surviving children leave together. The house stands as it did, its horrors still unresolved, its mysteries undeciphered. In postmodern terms, this refusal of closures announces the impossibility of finality; the house lives on as an incomprehensible and obscure signifier. Flanagan's series though does not let postmodernity steal the limelight as it lays emphasis on the possibility of healing rather than on absence of resolution. The Crain siblings' survival and apparent reunion outside the house offers a provisional but honest affirmation of life. What remains unsettled at the narrative level is redirected toward sincerity at the affective level.

This tonal resolution is vital for distinguishing Flanagan's work from pure postmodern horror. A postmodernly-overpowered, ironic, and nihilistic series would have ended with a breakdown—death, madness, or the ceaseless looping of trauma. "Silence Lay Steadily", however, chooses to go a different way: it insists that even in a world fragmented and haunted, moments of reconciliation and care do show up. This attitude echoes with the broader cultural movement beyond postmodern cynicism. As critics of post-postmodernism and new sincerity content, contemporary storytelling tends to hold onto postmodern complexity while endorsing emotional and ethical depth. Flanagan owns up the responsibility of striking this balance: his narrative does not deny fragmentation, but it asserts that fragmentation can harmonize with sincerity, grief with healing, and horror with love.

Stephen King identifies a paradox in his discussion of horror in his *Danse Macabre:* by dwelling on deformity, horror ultimately affirms life. Hill House's Episode 10 signals towards this reading by King as well: the house's deformities—the illusions, the hauntings, the deaths—are not removed, they prevail. The indeterminacy and ghosts of the house continue to haunt the characters and the viewers. But by confronting these deformities, the Crains rediscover the importance of survival, connection, and fragile joy. The final tableau, presenting to the viewers Luke's sobriety and the family's suggested togetherness, is not boastful or absolute but sincerely human: small, vulnerable, transient.

Yet another aspect that amplifies the series' formal-sincere nature is the alternative fate granted to Nell by Flanagan. In Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House,* Eleanor Vance is depicted as a figure consumed by the house's malevolence—her death hollowed out by manipulation and agency loss. Mike Flanagan's rendition though presents Nell Crain as a reinvented figure with a strikingly different fate. While Eleanor's fate in the novel is one of malignant inescapability, Nell's spectral presence in the Red Room in the last episode is not that of terror but of grace. While Eleanor finds only annihilation in search for belonging, Nell's presence and words of affirmation to her siblings enable confrontation of grief, confession of vulnerabilities, and reforging of fragile bonds. Like this, Nell gets the homecoming Eleanor was forever left bereft of. This difference in tonality is crucial: while Jackson strands the reader at a space disquiet and unnerving, Flanagan offers his viewers solace in a place of sincerity and healing. This recalibration of Eleanor/Nell's characters exemplifies the show's post-postmodern spirit—repurposing postmodern images of fragmentation and uncanny uncertainty toward an honest insistence of love, closure, and connection.

Thus, "Silence Lay Steadily" marks the completion of the series' arc from postmodern fragmentation to post-postmodern sincerity. The Red Room sensationalizes the indeterminacy of meaning while exposing the vulnerabilities that render sincerity possible. Temporal looping moves from the terror of inexorability to the charm of continuity. Closure, while not offered at the level of narrative, is dishes out in truckloads at the level of affect

and ethic. It is via this complicated but yielding relationship that the finale churns out reconfigurations of postmodern ethics… reconfigurations that transcend cynicism to affirm life amidst death, hope amidst despair, and sincerity midst fragmentation.

Conclusion

Backed by the juxtaposition of the house's complicated instability with sincere gestures of reconciliation, Flanagan demonstrates that formal complexity and emotional accessibility need not necessarily be exclusive to each other. By striking these two chords at the same time, the series appeals to a broader, wider, cultural mood—it opens the lends beyond individual and familial affect. Netflix's *The Haunting of Hill House,* then, becomes a cultural text that reflects broader narrative and aesthetic trends in contemporary media. It can be situated at the busy crossroads of postmodern form and postmodern sincerity in contemporary media. The episodic nature of the streaming era media productions enables formal experiments—long-takes, temporal fragmentation, and unreliable perspective—which then can be redirected toward achieving emotional engagement rather than ironic detachment.

The series also is an embodiment of the metamodern sensibilities as it meaningfully oscillates between formal sophistication and affective honesty. The three episodes analysed in the present study demonstrate this dynamic: disjunct timelines and recursive causality amplify narrative complicatedness, while sincere attention to grief, trauma, and familial connections makes sure that the form serves spirit instead of overpowering it. In this way, the series partakes in what contemporary criticism labels "new sincerity", where art/media negotiates irony and empathy, detachment and engagement—all the while leading toward a meaning/closure that is both reflective and emotionally powerful.

Furthermore, *The Haunting of Hill House* centres horror as a culturally resonant genre with the ability to mediate between fantasy and reality. Its ghosts, phantasmagorical recurrences, and preternatural events exemplify postmodern tropes but they also unfailingly point toward real fears—loss, mortality, addiction, and disconnection. By treating these fears sincerely and not ironically, by not creating a mockery out of them, the series affirms that horror can be a channel for moral and emotional exploration. In doing so, it adds to an expansive reconceptualization of popular culture as an intersection of philosophical, aesthetic, and ethical dialectics.

In its unrelenting and meaningful oscillation between postmodern experimentation and post-postmodern empathy, *The Haunting of Hill House* implies a wider trajectory for contemporary horror: a genre capable of formal bravado, psychological understanding, and affective resonance. From the disjointed temporalities of "The Bent-Neck Lady" to the undisturbed long-takes of "Two Storms" and the restorative closure of "Silence Lay Steadily", Flanagan consistently evidences that formal bravura need not be severed from emotional sincerity. In Hill House, the terrifying, the mysterious, and ludicrous synchronise with togetherness, vulnerability, and reconciliation. Flanagan's series, then, not only haunts and reaffirms its characters viewers but also signals toward a replenished mode of storytelling, where the spectral and the sincere harmonize, restoring the belief that narrative intricateness and emotional truth are not mutually exclusive but complementary parts of the same continuum— an empathetic and meaningful existence.

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THE SEMIOTICS OF SMILES: UNDERSTANDING THE USE OF EXPRESSION IN *THE EMOJI MOVIE(2017)*

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Abstract

This study analysis The Emoji Movie (2017) as a narrative text using semiotics, emphasizing the role of smiles in the film's meaning-making process. While the film is sometimes dismissed as commercial entertainment, it provides a unique platform for literary research into how stories adapt to modern culture. By comparing emojis to literary tropes, the study views the smile as both a motif and a metaphor for identification, conformity, and emotional expression. Drawing on semiotic theory and narratology, the study examines how the film creates character archetypes, symbolic journeys, and allegorical conflicts reminiscent of old literary forms, but also reducing complicated emotions to simplified, commodified symbols.

Through this lens, The Emoji Movie emerges as a cultural fable about language, technology, and narrative in the twenty-first century, raising issues about whether digital icons may serve as a new literary language or simply a degraded alternative for complex human expressions. In the end, this paper contends that The Emoji Movie raises important issues regarding the potential and constraints of a new semiotic-literary discourse by providing insightful analysis of how story has changed in the digital age, when visual cues are increasingly used in place of or in addition to textual language.

Key words: Emotion, Expression, Narrative analysis, Semiotic, Smile, Symbolism, Visual signs

Introduction

For an extended period, longtime has served as a medium for reflecting cultural behaviors, beliefs, and worries. In particular, animated movies frequently function as approachable narratives that conceal intricate ideological themes behind ostensibly straightforward tales. Sony Pictures Animation made an effort to take advantage of the widespread use of emojis as digital communication tools with the release of The Emoji Movie in 2017.

The story revolves around Gene, a "meh" emoji who is special due to his ability to convey a variety of emotions. Inside the phone of a teenage kid named Alex, Gene sets out on a quest to discover his "true purpose," passing through several app-based worlds in the process. This paper explores the ways in which The Emoji Movie represents the ideological, and semiotic aspects of contemporary communication as a cultural construct.

Review of Literature

Emoji Semiotics: An essential context for examining emojis is provided by semiotics, the study of signs and symbols. This is relevant to both Roland Barthes' extension of semiotics into cultural codes and Ferdinand de Saussure's framework of the sign and signification. Emojis function as pictographs, which are symbols that convey thoughts or feelings without the use of language. Emojis, are "digital gestures" that serve as non-verbal indicators that provide text emotional context.

Digital Communication and Emojis: Emojis fill in the gaps in digital communication when tone and non-verbal clues are lacking, according to research (Evans, 2017). Thus, emojis function as "visual prosody," adding emotional meaning to bare words. Emojis have become a nearly universal language due to their widespread use, albeit they have context-specific meanings.

Individuality and Conformity: The conflict between conformity and individuality in digital self-expression is analogous to Gene's battle to embrace his diversity. Gene has to balance the conflict between his true complexity and the singularity imposed by the system, just how people create online personas within the limitations of platforms.

Central Debate:

Allegory of Technology: The movie serves as a metaphor for the entire smartphone ecosystem. The fact that each emoji is comparable to a "app function" illustrates how humans are treated like mere instruments in digital systems. From a philosophical standpoint, this begs the question: is technology influencing human communication, or are humans influencing technology?

Universal Language and Globalization Emojis are frequently referred to as a "universal language" because they overcome linguistic and cultural boundaries. The movie makes an effort to represent this universality, but sadly, it bases the plot on Western-centric apps and companies. The way that media communication continues to mirror dominant Western corporate power could be brought to light from a global studies perspective.

Representation and Gender As a female emoji, Smiler represents the antagonist whose authority pushes conformity. The film's portrayal of gender roles, especially through stereotypes of emotional expression such as women being "overly expressive" or "controlling" could be the subject of analysis. Discussions over inclusivity in digital semiotics are also prompted by the film's low diversity in character design.

Linguistic Philosophy The film poses issues similar to those in Wittgenstein's theory of language: When symbols are fixed, what are the boundaries of expression? Emojis are flexible in real life but inflexible in the movie; Gene upsets this order to demonstrate how meaning is context-dependent rather than essential.

However, each emoji is limited to a single, defined role inside the narrative world of the movie—the "smiler" must always smile, the "meh" must always appear uninterested, and so on. Emojis are flexible, context-dependent symbols by nature, thus this rigidity runs counter to that. In this way, The Emoji Movie's world exemplifies a form of linguistic authoritarianism in which meaning is predetermined rather than discussed. This authoritarian order is upset by Gene's "malfunction," which is his capacity to display many expressions. Wittgenstein's theory that language is a dynamic system that changes meaning based on context, use, and interaction is embodied by his character. Gene's refusal to stick to a single expression shows that meaning can be open-ended, which is more in line with how language and emojis.

Analysis of Character Depth

Gene (the emoji for "meh") Gene's symbolic role is to symbolize human complexity and linguistic flexibility in a world where meanings must be fixed. Character Arc: His inability to maintain a single expression is initially viewed as a flaw but is then reframed as a strength. This reflects concerns in the real world regarding individuality vs unity, especially in online settings where people are under pressure to project a carefully polished, flat persona.

The Hi-5 Symbolic Role: Originally a "popular" emoji, Hi-5 symbolizes the passing away of online fashions. He is discarded when consumers lose interest, demonstrating how symbols can become outdated due to the rapid changes in online society. Character Arc: His demand for attention is similar to how people in digital culture want to be recognized (likes, shares, recognition). His story demonstrates how, in an algorithm-driven society, visibility becomes linked with self-worth.

The antagonist Smiler: Symbolic Role: Linguistic authoritarianism is symbolized by the smiling emoji. She imposes strict guidelines: each emoji must correspond to a single expression. Character Arc: Her excessive, forced joy turns threatening, implying that coerced optimism is a control mechanism.

The Jailbreak Symbolic Role: Jailbreak, a hacker emoji who first poses as a "princess," stands for digital agency and rejection of assumptions.Character Arc: She symbolizes the potential for self-definition beyond systemic labels by rejecting her assigned royal identity to pursue a career as a coder.

The human user, Alex: Symbolic Role: The user's viewpoint, or the human context underlying the universe of emojis, is represented by Alex, the teenage boy who owns the phone. Character Arc: Gene's quest for genuine self-expression is mirrored in his cautious attempt to text his crush. Alex's communication hesitancy demonstrates how difficult it is to convey genuine emotions even when there are thousands of digital signals available.

Conclusion

A closer glance reveals The Emoji Movie's significance as a cultural and symbolic text, despite the fact that it has

been mostly written off as a meaningless, financially driven picture. The movie dramatizes important discussions in the philosophy of language by portraying emojis as characters with distinct meanings, such as whether symbols have inherent meanings or develop meanings through usage and context. Gene's breakdown of this inflexible framework reflects the lived realities of how emojis work in regular interactions and demonstrates the flexibility and diversity of communication in the digital age. The inconsistencies of digital culture are also emphasized in the movie. While it supports individualism and diversity of expression, it does so within a narrative world dominated by corporate brands and consumerist ideology.

The twofold nature of communication in the twenty-first century is ultimately reflected in The Emoji Movie, which opens up expression through universal symbols while limiting meaning through corporate commercialization and standardization. It provides a unique perspective on the complexity of language, materialism, and identity in a society mediated by digital technology as a cultural artifact. Despite its extremely unfavorable critical reception, it is important from an academic standpoint since it highlights the advantages and disadvantages of symbolic communication in the era of emojis.

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VOICES OF SILENCE: EXPLORING PATRIARCHY AND TRAUMA IN MANJU KAPUR'S HOME

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Abstract:

Manju Kapur in her novel depicted the realities of society, showing the tension between tradition and modernity. Even in the post independence era women's voices of silence reverberate. Kapur portrays women as new women who seek to break inherited trauma and silence and to breathe freely and proclaim their respectability. The portrayal of women in Indian English fiction as the silent sufferers and upholders of the tradition and traditional values of family and society has undergone tremendous change in the post independence period. This paper examines Manju Kapur's novel *Home* as a story that reveals how patriarchy and convention create suffering in the home. In other narratives that situate trauma in dramatic historical moments, *Home* situates pain in the everyday lives of women in a middle-class Delhi family, where silence and conformity contrast serve as instruments of subjugation. As demonstrated by the experiences of Sunita, Sona, Rupa, and Nisha, trauma becomes gendered, embodied, and normalized within the family structure. Traditionally positioned as a place of safety and belonging, the house is reframed in Kapur's novel as a place where emotional harm and repression thrive. This paper situates *Home* within the larger gender and trauma discourse within Indian English literature by drawing on feminist literary criticism and trauma theory. Kapur's work demonstrates that trauma is not just associated with historical upheaval but also with everyday home life, where silence serves as a survival strategy and a cultural legacy. By doing this, the novel increases our understanding of the existence, transmission, and resistance of gendered suffering.

Keywords: Domination, Home, Inherited silence, Patriarchy, Tradition vs. Modernity, Trauma

Introduction:

This paper Examines *Home* from a trauma perspective. It is important because it helps broaden the conversation about trauma studies in general. The idea that trauma must only be connected to remarkable or spectacular events is questioned by Kapur's book, which places trauma within the daily and the home. Rather, it emphasizes how silence and patriarchy, which are profoundly embedded in middle-class Indian family structures, serve as ongoing traumatizing factors. The book also emphasizes how trauma is gendered, disproportionately impacting women, especially when it comes to their bodies, roles, and social worth.

Early theorists like Cathy Caruth have described trauma as "an unclaimed experience" that resists straightforward depiction, instead appearing through memory, storytelling, and silence. As the discipline has progressed, scholars such as Judith Herman, Marianne Hirsch, and Dominick LaCapra have emphasized the routine and gender-specific dimensions of trauma. For women, trauma is not only a result of major historical events but also stems from the mundane, repetitive patterns of domestic life, patriarchy, and silence that infiltrate their existence. This perspective allows literary analysis to move beyond grand events and focus on the personal settings where suffering is both felt and conveyed.

Manju Kapur's *Home* analysed by lens of trauma studies, feminist studies through the stories of four women Sunita, Sona, Rupa, and Nisha whose lives are characterized by limitations, silences, and unsaid suffering, the narrative is told. Trauma is gendered, layered, and ingrained in family structures, as evidenced by Sunita's early death after years of repression, Sona's lifelong battle for acceptance and motherhood, Rupa's marginalization as a childless woman, and Nisha's struggle with a disfiguring scar and her dashed hopes for romantic fulfillment. These characters serve as living examples of how trauma can arise from the ongoing loss of autonomy, dignity, and voice and is not always dramatic.

Redefining the Home: From Comfort to Endurance:

Manju Kapur's Home tells the story of the Banwari Lal family, starting with the father, Banwari Lal, who represents the values of family honor, control, and tradition. At first, his home is shown as a stable place where duties are divided and appearances of respectability are kept. Outsider see the Banwari Lal home as a place of

comfort, unity, and belonging a family that protects tradition and continuity. But as Kapur tells the story, this thin layer of comfort slowly comes apart, showing how deeply repression and silence affect the lives of the women in it.

The family's women Sunita, Sona, Rupa, and later Nisha bear the brunt of this hidden fracture. Sunita, trapped in an unhappy marriage, Sona, initially humiliated for her childlessness, Rupa, on the margins of the family mirrors this repression in a quieter form, Nisha, representing the younger generation, carries forward these inherited silences while simultaneously attempting to resist them.

Silence and secrecy are the first line of defense against intrusion; the voice of the survivor is stilled.

Silence as Survival:

One **o**f the most obvious examples of silence as trauma is the character of Sunita, who is married to Yashpal. Being abandoned and trapped in a loveless marriage causes Sunita to retreat within herself. She learns to keep her thoughts and feelings to herself because sharing them would only increase hostility rather than alter her reality. Kapur portrays her silence as a desperate reaction to a society where women lack a voice, rather than as passivity. However, simply suppressing her voice causes her to feel isolated, unacknowledged, and emotionally harmed. Sunita's journey is a prime example of what Judith Herman calls the "stilled voice of the survivor," wherein silence acts as a first line of protection as well as also a wound that never heals. In Trauma and Recovery, Judith Herman describes how trauma survivors frequently use silence as a coping mechanism, constricting their field of consciousness to create an illusion of control. This dynamic is reflected in Sunita's silence: she tries to create an emotional haven by remaining silent, but this retreat makes her feel incredibly alone and invisible. As a result, her silence serves as a wound and a survival strategy, reflecting Herman's observation that silence can both imprison and protect the traumatized subject.

Pressure of Patriarchal Roles:

Another important character in the *Home*, Sona, suffers from trauma related to the social stigma of childlessness during her first few years of marriage. Her anxious attempts to fit the ideal of a devoted wife and mother reveal her distress, even though she does not express it publicly. Reproduction is the primary way that patriarchal expectations define her worth, and her internalized acceptance of these roles is reflected in her silence about her suffering. Her identity is still tied to domestic work and family honor even after she eventually becomes a mother. Sona's life serves as an example of how patriarchy silences women by teaching them to endure rather than to fight.

Trauma is frequently incomprehensible, according to Cathy Caruth, who states that it "simultaneously defies and demands our witness". This is the exact nature of Sona's suffering: it is constant but unspoken as cultural norms prevent her from having the authority to express it. Rather, the act of childbearing binds her identity, and her body becomes the site of this trauma. Caruth's observation makes it clear why Sona's quiet represents a persistent, unresolved experience of cultural violence against women rather than absence.

The Quiet Outsider:

Sona's sister Rupa offers a nuanced yet important viewpoint on the various ways that women encounter marginalization. Rupa, who was married into a less wealthy family, does not have her sister's social or financial clout, but she also manages to get by being quiet. Her appearance in Home emphasizes how identical patterns of silence and repression bind women from all socioeconomic backgrounds. Despite not being as severely wounded as Sunita or Nisha, Rupa's quiet voice illustrates how patriarchal systems permeate every female's existence.

Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub describe in Testimony: trauma not only silences the subject but can also render them a "secondary witness" to the unspoken suffering of others though they said in context of Holocaust survivors but it can be studied here too through the character of Rupa who serves as a secondary witness in the Banwari Lal household. She takes in the subdued tensions around her and reflects them in her own quiet way of living. She is a silent witness to the systemic silencing that characterizes the lives of women in the home because of her marginalization. Her presence serves as a reminder that trauma does not always have to be dramatic or loud, it can also be subtle, pervasive, and passed down through the patriarchal home environment.

Voice of Silence of New Generation:

Nisha, the youngest member of the family, represents the conflict between her own wants (individual aspirations) and the rules set by her father (Patriarchal limitations). Kapur shows her as a smart, ambitious woman who wants both love and freedom. But family authority always limits her options. When she wants to marry someone from a different caste, her protests seem to be absorbed by the walls of the house. The family will only allow her to pursue her goals in fashion and embroidery if they fit with their idea of what is respectable.

These silences and the differences between generations are what cause the problems in the *Home*. Younger women like Nisha get their trauma and their ways of being quiet from older women like Sona, so the family is a place where repression is passed down. This makes the idea of "home" contradictory: it means belonging, but it also makes women feel disconnected from their own wants and identities. Furthermore, women are disciplined into obedience through silence. "In her silence, she was praised," writes Kapur. She was denounced in her speech. The double bind that women experience is illustrated by this duality, where speaking is seen as rebellion and quiet as submission, but both carry the scars of trauma.

Patriarchy, Domesticity, and the Fractured Home:

The idea that the home is a sacred but broken place is closely related to the patriarchal control over women's voices. In Kapur's book, the seemingly harmonious house hides rifts of pain. The home is revealed as a place of trauma rather than refuge when women are expected to keep quiet. This fracture is vividly illustrated by Nisha's fight against arranged marriage. Her attempts to assert control over her life are consistently suppressed. Her dreams were crushed quietly, as if they had never existed, writes Kapur. Here, the crushing of dreams is both literal and symbolic of how tradition's weight erases women's aspirations.

The most intriguing feature of *Home* is how silence passes from one generation to the next. The women in the family live in different rooms and have different jobs, but they all have a common silence in their lives. The repetition of silences Sunita's withdrawal, Sona's anxious compliance, Rupa's subdued presence, and Nisha's unheard voice creates what Marianne Hirsch calls "postmemory," a transmission of unspoken suffering across generations. In Silence in Home, daughters learn to endure rather than resist by taking in the unspoken grief of their mothers and aunts. This continuity across generations shows how broken the home is. It looks whole on the outside, but it has scars from traumas that have been kept quiet.

Conclusion:

Manju Kapur sheds light on how trauma flourishes in silence by presenting women whose voices are silenced within the family unit. Together, Sunita's disengagement, Sona's childlessness, Rupa's marginalization, and Nisha's subdued aspirations demonstrate that the home is a symbolic location of oppression rather than just a physical building. In the home, silence is not a sign of absence but rather of presence; it speaks of the harm that patriarchy causes and how it is passed down through the generations.In the end, Kapur's Home shows that silence is a profoundly devastating presence rather than emptiness, permanently influencing women's identities and lives. The broken home becomes a metaphor for the broken lives of its women, who continue to live in oppressive cycles while their silences reveal a great deal about survival, suffering, and resistance. Kapur demands that these silences be acknowledged in the larger conversation of gender and trauma studies by giving them narrative attention and reclaiming them as voices of trauma.

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SUDDEN WHISPERS OF LIFE: A COMPARATIVE JOURNEY THROUGH DHRUV BHATT AND ROBERT FROST

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Abstract:

This paper presents a comparative study of Dhruv Bhatt's Gujarati poem ઓચિંતુ કોઈ મને રસ્તે મળે, ને ધીરેથી પૂછે કે કેમ છે... and Robert Frost's *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* to examine how sudden interruptions of routine reveal divergent yet convergent models of personal happiness. Combining close reading and stanza-by-stanza juxtaposition, the study argues that both poems treat unanticipated pauses as occasions that disclose an ethic of simple joy and a stance of existential acceptance. Dhruv Bhatt localizes this joy in a social and spiritual register: an impromptu human encounter embodies communal warmth, divine grace, and an interior treasure that persists despite worldly flux. Frost, by contrast, frames joy through solitary communion with nature, registering aesthetic allure alongside the moral pull of promises and obligations. Formal comparison shows Bhatt's imagistic freedom and idiomatic Gujarati diction foster an expansive, celebratory tone, whereas Frost's metrical regularity, rhyme, and refrains instantiate the dialectic between temptation and duty. By mapping parallels and divergences across diction, imagery, sonic patterning, and cultural horizon, the paper demonstrates how comparative literature benefits from balancing similarity with difference. The study contributes to cross-cultural lyric studies by revealing how the universal experience of the unplanned is meaningfully refracted through language, place, and ethical orientation.

Keywords: Acceptance, Comparative Literature, Dhruv Bhatt, Joy, Responsibility, Robert Frost, Suddenness of Life

Introduction:

This paper examines how two poems from vastly different traditions reflect upon sudden pauses in life as moments of insight and joy: Dhruv Bhatt's Gujarati lyric ઓચિંતુ કોઈ મને રસ્તે મળે, ને ધીરેથી પૂછે કે કેમ છે...*(When someone meets me on the road suddenly, and gently asks, "How are you?)* and Robert Frost's *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.* Though separated by geography, language, and cultural background, both poets transform a momentary interruption into a reflection on happiness, acceptance, and the responsibilities that frame human existence.

Literary Background of Dhruv Bhatt :

Gujarati literature, with its deep-rooted heritage and evolving modern trends, provides a fertile ground for understanding the works of writers like Dhruv Bhatt. From the medieval period with its devotional poetry of Narsinh Mehta, Akho, and Dayaram, to the reformist voices of the nineteenth century such as Dalpatram and Narmad, Gujarati literature has always mirrored the socio-cultural spirit of its time. The literary renaissance in the twentieth century, led by figures such as Umashankar Joshi, Rajendra Shah, and Suresh Joshi, redefined the thematic scope of Gujarati writing, blending lyrical beauty with philosophical introspection (Joshi 112).

Nature has remained a recurring theme in Gujarati literary tradition. Saints and poets often perceived landscapes as spiritual metaphors, while modern poets used them to express existential and social concerns. This continuity is crucial to understanding Dhruv Bhatt, who extends the tradition by presenting locale not merely as a backdrop but as a central, living force. His works resonate with ecological awareness and human introspection, situating him in the contemporary phase of Gujarati literature, which emphasizes both cultural rootedness and global consciousness (Bhatt 45).

Bhatt's recognition by the Sahitya Akademi situates him among the foremost literary voices of modern Gujarat. His ability to merge philosophical reflections with everyday struggles echoes a broader trend in post-independence Gujarati poetry, where writers attempt to articulate both personal emotion and universal truth. Thus, the poem "Ochintu Koi Mane Raste Male, Ne Dhirethi Puchhe Ke Kem Chhe" reflects not only the poet's personal sensibility but also the literary evolution of Gujarati writing toward themes of resilience, solitude, and inner strength.

Literary Background of Robert Frost :

Robert Frost (1874–1963) stands as one of the most influential voices in American literature, often described as a "pastoral modernist" whose works bridge the gap between traditional verse and the modernist experimentation of the twentieth century. Rooted in the landscapes of New England, Frost developed a poetic voice that combined colloquial simplicity with profound philosophical insight (Parini 78). Unlike many modernist contemporaries such as T. S. Eliot or Ezra Pound, who embraced fragmentation and obscurity, Frost retained formal clarity through his use of meter and rhyme, while embedding modern anxieties and existential dilemmas within deceptively simple rural scenes (Thompson 132).

Thematically, Frost's poetry often explores the tension between solitude and social responsibility, between moments of pause and the inevitable movement of life. Nature in his poems is rarely idealized; instead, it functions as a mirror for human emotions and ethical choices. In "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" (1923), for example, the snowy landscape invites contemplation and rest, yet the repeated refrain "miles to go before I sleep" underscores duty, perseverance, and the weight of promises (Frost 224). This blend of natural imagery with moral reflection characterizes much of Frost's oeuvre, where simple encounters open into universal meditations.

Frost received four Pulitzer Prizes and widespread acclaim for his ability to capture both regional specificity and universal human concerns. His work is often studied as representative of the New England spirit—independent, contemplative, and pragmatic—while also contributing to broader American modernist literature. Thus, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" exemplifies Frost's unique style: rooted in pastoral imagery yet resonant with existential significance.

Textual Analysis :

Opening Stanzas: "The Pause or Encounter"

ઓચિંતુ કોઈ મને રસ્તે મળે ને કદી / ધીરેથી પૂછે કે કેમ છે?

(Suddenly if someone meets me on the road / and gently asks, "How are you?")

Bhatt's poem opens with an unexpected encounter , an ઓચિંતુ (sudden) moment that interrupts the flow of daily life. The gentle inquiry, "How are you?", becomes more than casual speech; it evokes a sense of joy and divine blessing. The suddenness of life, unpredictable and beyond human control, is framed not as chaos but as the very source of meaning.

Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village though;

He will not see me stopping here

To watch his woods, fill up with snow.

Frost's speaker, too, pauses in the midst of a journey. Unlike Bhatt's social encounter, Frost's interruption is solitary: the speaker halts to contemplate the woods quietly filling with snow. Both poems dramatize a break from linear motion — in Bhatt, a human voice draws the poet into reflection; in Frost, a natural scene compels a pause. Yet the difference is striking: Bhatt's moment is relational and infused with gratitude, while Frost's is introspective, bordering on secrecy. In both, suddenness opens space for inner joy, but Bhatt situates it in community and divine grace, Frost in solitude and quiet beauty.

Middle Stanzas: "Experience of મોજ (Joy)"

આપણે તો કહીએ કે દરિયા શી મોજમાં / ને ઉપરથી કુદરતની રહેમ છે.

ફાટેલા ખીસ્સાની આડમાં મૂકી છે અમે / છલકાતી મલકાતી મોજ;

એકલો ઊભું ને તોયે મેળામાં હોઉં એવું / લાગ્યા કરે છે મને રોજ.

(I say I am in the joy of the sea, / blessed from above by Nature's grace. Behind the torn pocket, I have kept / an overflowing, smiling joy; Though standing alone, I feel as if / I were amidst a great crowd every day.)

Bhatt here articulates મોજ not as luxury or material wealth, but as an inner, inexhaustible resource. Even poverty ("torn pocket") does not diminish it; rather, joy overflows into everyday life. Solitude is paradoxically communal, as if the self carries an inner festival.

He gives his harness bells a shake

To ask if there is some mistake.

The only other sound's the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake.

In Frost, joy is quieter, subtler. The horse's bells interrupt the speaker's reverie, momentarily questioning the pause, yet the sound of wind and snow restores stillness. Here joy is not loud or overflowing but contemplative, born of harmony with the natural scene.

Comparative Note:

Both poets locate happiness not in material gain but in perception. Bhatt celebrates life's simplicity with an almost ecstatic communal tone; Frost savors beauty in a hushed, solitary register. While Bhatt's મોજ is active, overflowing, and blessed, Frost's joy is passive, receptive, and inward. Together, they reveal contrasting cultural sensibilities of how sudden pauses lead to inner contentment.

Final Stanzas: "Ethics of Return and Responsibility"

"આંખોમાં પાણી તો આવે ને જાય / નથી ભીતર ભીનાશ થતી ઓછી;

વધઘટનો કાંઠાઓ રાખે હિસાબ / નથી પરવા સમંદરને હોતી,

સૂરજ તો ઊગે ને આથમી યે જાય / મારી ઊપર આકાશ એમનેમ છે."

(Tears come and go in the eyes, / yet the inner moistness does not lessen. The shores may keep account of ebb and flow, / but the sea has no such concern. The sun rises and sets each day, / above me the sky remains the same.)

Bhatt concludes with cosmic imagery: the sea's indifference to tides, the constancy of the sky, the daily cycle of the sun. Life is fleeting, but divine permanence shelters the poet. Here, happiness is grounded in surrender , acceptance of transience within an eternal order.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

Frost closes not with permanence but with obligation. The allure of the woods must yield to responsibility; repetition underscores both the temptation of rest and the weight of duty.

Comparative Note:

Bhatt privileges rest in acceptance , a surrender to the eternal sky and sea. Frost privileges movement in responsibility , life as duty before rest. Both end with reflections on mortality, yet one offers solace in permanence, the other in perseverance.

Poetic Form & Sound

Form and sound are not decorative in these poems; they shape meaning. Robert Frost's *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* is written in iambic tetrameter with an interlocking AABA, BBCB, CCDC, DDDD rhyme scheme. The regularity of meter mirrors the discipline of duty, while the gradual closure of the rhyme echoes the speaker's approach toward final rest. The repetition of the last line - "And miles to go before I sleep" , creates both musical closure and psychological insistence, emphasizing the weight of responsibility.

By contrast, Dhruv Bhatt's ઓચિંતુ કોઈ મને રસ્તે મળે ને કદી flows in Gujarati free verse, where rhythm arises from natural speech, repetition, and imagery rather than strict meter. Sound devices like alliteration ("છલકાતી મલકાતી મોજ") and paradox ("એકલો ઊભું ને તોયે મેળામાં હોઉં") generate musicality without formal rhyme. This looseness reflects the poem's theme: life's suddenness cannot be contained by rigid structure, yet inner joy gives coherence. Comparatively, Frost's strict form conveys control and obligation, while Bhatt's free, image-driven cadence conveys spontaneity and acceptance. Both demonstrate how poetic sound enacts philosophy: structure as duty in Frost, openness as surrender in Bhatt.

Thematic Synthesis: Similarities and Dissimilarities:

At the core, both Dhruv Bhatt's ઓચિંતુ કોઈ મને રસ્તે મળે ને કદી and Robert Frost's *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* confront the unpredictability of life and the necessity of pausing to reflect. Each poem opens with an interruption , Bhatt through a sudden human encounter, Frost through a sudden attraction to nature. These moments crystallize into reflections on joy, time, and responsibility.

Similarities lie in their shared philosophical impulse: both poets affirm that true happiness does not stem from material gain but from presence and awareness. Bhatt locates joy in મોજ (inner delight, acceptance), while Frost discovers it in the sensory beauty of woods and snow. Both employ imagery of nature - sea, sky, forest, snow - as metaphors for the human condition. Each poet, in his own voice, insists that moments of stillness are essential to understanding life's meaning.

Dissimilarities, however, prevent the comparison from collapsing into equivalence. Bhatt's tone is communal, cosmic, and spiritual; his free verse enacts life's unpredictability while affirming divine permanence. Frost's voice is solitary, private, and ethical; his strict meter reinforces the inevitability of obligation. Bhatt suggests acceptance of life's flow, while Frost underscores perseverance through promises. This contrast demonstrates why comparative literature must emphasize both convergence and divergence: it is precisely in the tension between surrender and duty that the richness of human response to life is revealed.

Implications, Limitations, and Suggestions for Further Research:

This study highlights how both Dhruv Bhatt and Robert Frost, though rooted in different cultural contexts, converge on a shared philosophy of resilience and acceptance in life. The implications of this comparison extend beyond literary studies, suggesting that poetry can serve as a guide to embrace unpredictability and shape our choices with courage and joy. However, the paper is limited to the analysis of a single poem by each writer, and therefore does not claim to represent their entire literary oeuvre. Further research could expand the scope by examining additional works of these poets, or by situating them alongside other Indian and American writers to explore broader cross-cultural perspectives on the philosophy of living.

Conclusion:

The comparative reading of Dhruv Bhatt's ઓચિંતુ કોઈ મને રસ્તે મળે, ને ધીરેથી પૂછે કે કેમ છે... and Robert Frost's *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* demonstrates how two poets from vastly different traditions transform sudden pauses into meditations on life itself. Bhatt frames the encounter as a reminder of shared joy and cosmic continuity, while Frost stages his pause in the woods as a moment of beauty that must ultimately yield to responsibility. Despite cultural and formal differences, both poems affirm that life is shaped not only by what we desire to hold onto but also by the choices we make when interrupted. The lesson is deeply philosophical: living is not a fixed path but a continuous process in which every pause reshapes the journey. As my friend Kishan Gondaliya

insightfully observed during one of our personal communication that, "Goals must be stubborn, but details must be flexible". This maxim resonates with both Bhatt and Frost, who suggest that resilience emerges from a firm vision of life's purpose combined with adaptability to its unpredictable turns. Thus, the two poems together offer a double wisdom: cherish the moments of stillness that renew the spirit, yet honor the responsibilities that keep us moving. In this balance, poetry teaches us how to live—awake, flexible, and profoundly human.

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"QUEER CHILDHOODS AND CULTURAL CONFLICTS: IDENTITY FORMATION IN SHYAM SELVADURAI'S FUNNY BOY"

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Abstract

Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* (1994) offers a powerful exploration of queer identity formation against the backdrop of ethnic and cultural tensions in Sri Lanka. This paper examines how the protagonist Arjie's queer childhood experiences—his gender nonconformity, early romantic attachments, and struggle with societal expectations—intersect with broader narratives of cultural conflict and political violence. Through a close reading of the text, the study highlights the ways in which heteronormative family structures, colonial legacies, and ethnic hostilities collectively shape Arjie's journey toward self-recognition. The novel's intertwining of personal and national crises demonstrates how identity is negotiated not in isolation, but within shifting cultural, religious, and political landscapes. By situating Arjie's queer awakening amidst the ethnic conflict between Sinhalese and Tamils, the paper argues that *Funny Boy* foregrounds the vulnerability and resilience of marginalized identities in oppressive contexts. Ultimately, the novel positions queer childhood not merely as a personal narrative of desire and discovery, but as a site of resistance that destabilizes rigid cultural binaries and reveals the transformative possibilities of selfhood.

Keywords: Queer childhoods, Identity formation, Cultural conflict, Ethnic violence, Postcolonial identity, Gender nonconformity, Sexuality and resistance.

Introduction

Literature often serves as a mirror through which society's most pressing cultural, political, and personal struggles are reflected and reimagined. Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* (1994), a semi-autobiographical coming-of-age novel, provides a compelling narrative that intertwines the private journey of sexual identity formation with the broader sociopolitical realities of Sri Lanka in the late twentieth century. At its core, the novel narrates the childhood and adolescence of Arjie, a Tamil boy whose queer identity unfolds amidst the patriarchal, heteronormative, and ethnically divided world of Colombo. Through Arjie's experiences, Selvadurai situates the personal realm of desire and self-discovery within the violent cultural conflicts of a nation on the brink of civil war.

The novel's exploration of queer childhood disrupts traditional representations of both childhood innocence and heteronormative development. Arjie's preference for the "bride-bride" role in childhood games, his fascination with femininity, and his early encounters with same-sex desire challenge dominant cultural expectations of masculinity and family honor. Selvadurai portrays childhood queerness not as a deviation to be corrected but as an authentic mode of being, one that simultaneously resists and is shaped by the socio-cultural contexts in which it emerges.

At the same time, *Funny Boy* situates personal identity struggles within the collective trauma of ethnic violence between Tamils and Sinhalese. The anti-Tamil riots of 1983, a pivotal moment in Sri Lanka's history, mark a rupture in Arjie's coming-of-age, linking his personal marginalization as a queer child with his community's persecution as an ethnic minority. This juxtaposition reveals how systems of oppression—patriarchy, heteronormativity, and ethnonationalism—intersect to restrict possibilities of belonging. Arjie's journey toward selfhood thus becomes inseparable from questions of displacement, exile, and cultural loss, foregrounding the interdependence of individual and communal identities.

By weaving together themes of queer awakening, cultural conflict, and postcolonial struggle, Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* opens new avenues for understanding identity formation as a process that extends beyond the private sphere into the contested spaces of nationhood and history. This paper, titled *"Queer Childhoods and Cultural Conflicts: Identity Formation in Shyam Selvadurai's Funny Boy"*, aims to critically analyze how Selvadurai constructs queer childhood as a site of both vulnerability and resistance. It will explore how Arjie negotiates the intersecting pressures of sexuality, ethnicity, and cultural expectations, thereby illuminating the novel's contribution to queer and postcolonial literary discourse.

1.0 Queer Childhoods in *Funny Boy*:

Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* provides a rare literary exploration of queer childhood within the South Asian cultural context. The protagonist, Arjie, embodies gender nonconformity from an early age, and his experiences foreground the tensions between innocence, desire, and societal restriction. By portraying Arjie's formative years, Selvadurai challenges normative constructions of both childhood and masculinity, situating queerness as an authentic mode of existence rather than an aberration.

1.1 Play and Gender Performance

Arjie's earliest expressions of queerness appear in childhood games, particularly in his preference for playing "bride-bride." This choice situates him outside heteronormative expectations, but also provides him with a sense of freedom and self-discovery. He recalls:
"The moment I put the sari on, I was transformed. I was no longer myself, but someone else, someone wonderful." (*Funny Boy*, p. 4).

Here, play becomes a performative act that allows Arjie to experiment with gender roles, blurring the rigid binaries of masculinity and femininity. Unlike his cousins, who prefer cricket, Arjie finds joy in enacting femininity, suggesting how childhood play operates as a stage for queerness to emerge.

1.2 Family Discipline and Queer Policing

Arjie's gender nonconformity is quickly policed by his family, particularly by his father, who fears that his son's behaviour reflects weakness or deviance. After discovering Arjie's involvement in "bride-bride," his father insists:
"It's time he stopped playing with girls and started acting like a man." (*Funny Boy*, p. 15).

This moment reflects the patriarchal anxiety around masculinity and family honour, where queerness is seen as a threat to social order. Arjie's removal from the game and his forced participation in cricket symbolize the disciplining of queer childhoods within cultural and familial structures. The rejection of his desires reveals the constant surveillance imposed on non-normative identities from a young age.

1.3 Desire and Early Awakening

Beyond childhood play, Arjie's queer inclinations grow into early experiences of desire, marking a shift from innocence to self-awareness. His attraction to other boys, particularly Shehan, signals how queerness is embedded in his formative years. Reflecting on his feelings, Arjie admits: *"I knew the feelings I had were not what was expected of me, but they were the only ones that felt real."* (*Funny Boy*, p. 98).

This acknowledgment highlights the authenticity of queer childhood desires, contrasting them with imposed cultural expectations. Selvadurai resists framing these emotions as confusion or immaturity, instead presenting them as genuine expressions of identity.

2.0 Cultural Conflicts and Ethnic Violence

Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* situates Arjie's queer identity formation within the broader political and ethnic conflicts of Sri Lanka. The novel demonstrates how systemic oppression—ethnic violence, nationalism, and cultural intolerance—shapes both individual and collective identities. Arjie's story is not only one of personal discovery but also of survival amid civil unrest and discrimination.

2.1 Tamil–Sinhalese Tensions in Everyday Life

The novel captures the pervasive cultural divide between Tamils and Sinhalese in Sri Lankan society. Arjie, as a Tamil, grows up conscious of his family's minority status, a difference that seeps into daily interactions. Selvadurai portrays this cultural division as deeply entrenched, were suspicion and prejudice shape relationships. In one instance, Arjie's mother warns him: *"We must always be careful. Remember, we are different here."* (*Funny Boy*, p. 45).

This caution underscores how ethnic identity infiltrates even domestic spaces, reminding Arjie that his community is constantly at risk in a Sinhalese-majority nation.

2.2 Nationalism and the Limits of Belonging

As tensions escalate, the novel explores the ways nationalism excludes minorities. The rise of Sinhalese nationalist politics marginalizes Tamils, casting them as outsiders in their own homeland. Arjie gradually realizes the fragility of belonging when he reflects:
"No matter how much we tried to fit in; we were always seen as different." (*Funny Boy*, p. 102).

This exclusion mirrors the policing of Arjie's queer identity: both his sexuality and ethnicity position him outside dominant narratives of nationhood, exposing the intersection of cultural and personal conflicts.

2.3 The 1983 Riots and Collective Trauma

The climax of *Funny Boy* occurs during the 1983 anti-Tamil riots, also known as "Black July." This event marks both a national tragedy and a turning point in Arjie's personal life. The violence devastates Tamil families, including Arjie's own, forcing displacement and exile. Selvadurai captures the horror of ethnic violence through Arjie's narration:
"I saw the houses burning, people screaming, and I knew that nothing would ever be the same again." (*Funny Boy*, p. 268).

The riots disrupt not only Arjie's sense of home but also his path of identity formation, revealing how collective trauma shapes individual subjectivity.

2.4 Intersection of Queerness and Ethnicity

Selvadurai draws parallels between Arjie's marginalization as a queer child and his family's persecution as Tamils. Both forms of difference—sexual and ethnic—expose vulnerabilities within oppressive systems. As Arjie reflects on his place in the world, he recognizes a shared sense of otherness: *"Being different in any way meant you lived with fear, waiting for the moment when the world would remind you did not belong."* (*Funny Boy*, p. 210).

This intersection highlights how cultural conflicts and ethnic violence deepen the struggles of queer individuals, making identity formation inseparable from political realities.

3.0 Formation of Identity – Queerness and Postcolonial Struggles

Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* portrays identity as a layered construct, shaped not only by personal experiences of queerness but also by the larger cultural and political realities of postcolonial Sri Lanka. Arjie's selfhood is formed at the intersection of desire, repression, ethnic conflict, and exile. His journey demonstrates how queer identity cannot be separated from the postcolonial struggles of belonging, displacement, and cultural hybridity.

3.1 Queer Awakening and Self-Recognition

Arjie's relationship with Shehan becomes central to his journey of self-discovery. Through their intimacy, Arjie experiences love and desire that affirm his queer identity, even as they exist in secrecy. He reflects on his attraction:
"With Shehan I felt free, unafraid, as though I could be myself without shame." (*Funny Boy*, p. 195).

This moment of queer awakening highlights how identity formation arises through acts of intimacy and recognition, even within oppressive environments.

3.2 Resistance Against Heteronormativity

Arjie's queerness functions as resistance to patriarchal and heteronormative structures that seek to discipline him. His father's attempts to enforce masculine norms and the broader family's expectations of conformity are subverted through Arjie's refusal to deny his feelings. When pressured to conform, Arjie admits: *"I knew the part I was supposed to play, but I could no longer pretend."* (*Funny Boy*, p. 202).

This refusal illustrates how queer identity resists cultural scripts, creating a counter-narrative within the family and society.

3.3 Ethnicity, Exile, and the Politics of Belonging

Arjie's queer identity is inseparable from his Tamil ethnicity, which subjects his family to discrimination and violence. The 1983 riots displace his community, forcing them into exile. Arjie's reflection during this time links personal identity with collective loss:
"As we left our home behind, I felt I was leaving behind a part of myself as well." (*Funny Boy*, p. 272).

Exile becomes both a rupture and an opportunity, as displacement destabilizes belonging but also opens new possibilities for hybrid identities in diaspora.

3.4 Hybridity and Postcolonial Struggles

Selvadurai situates identity within postcolonial hybridity, where individuals navigate overlapping cultural, ethnic, and sexual differences. Arjie's struggle reflects Homi Bhabha's concept of "in-betweenness," as he belongs fully neither to the Tamil majority nor to heteronormative society. He observes: *"I was caught between worlds, belonging completely to none."* (*Funny Boy*, p. 230).

This liminality underscores how postcolonial subjects construct identities within fractured cultural landscapes, where queerness amplifies feelings of otherness but also becomes a site of creative self-fashioning.

3.5 Identity as Vulnerability and Resilience

Arjie's identity is forged through experiences of vulnerability—his queerness exposes him to familial rejection, while his ethnicity subjects him to national violence. Yet, his resilience lies in his refusal to erase his desires and his determination to claim belonging. Selvadurai concludes Arjie's journey not with full acceptance but with a recognition of survival:*"I did not know what lay ahead, but I knew I could no longer deny who I was."* (*Funny Boy*, p. 276).

This statement encapsulates the tension between oppression and resilience, situating queer identity formation within both vulnerability and strength.

Conclusion

Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* powerfully demonstrates that identity is never a singular or isolated process but one deeply embedded in social, cultural, and political structures. Arjie's queer childhood reflects both the struggles of self-recognition and the resistance against heteronormative expectations, showing how sexuality shapes but is also shaped by wider cultural contexts. At the same time, the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka underscores how postcolonial struggles of belonging and displacement intersect with personal experiences of queerness. Selvadurai carefully interweaves the private realm of desire with the public sphere of violence, thereby situating Arjie's identity formation at the crossroads of intimacy, family, ethnicity, and nationhood.

Ultimately, *Funny Boy* reveals that queer identity, far from being marginal or invisible, becomes a lens through which larger questions of culture, hybridity, and power are explored. Arjie's journey—from playful gender nonconformity in childhood to self-recognition amid exile—symbolizes both vulnerability and resilience. His refusal to deny his desires, even when faced with rejection and violence, marks a powerful act of resistance against normative structures. In this way, Selvadurai affirms that queerness, when read through postcolonial struggles, not only challenges dominant narratives but also redefines the possibilities of identity, belonging, and survival in fractured cultural landscapes.

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THE STORYTELLER'S MIRROR: NARRATIVE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS IN D. G. MUKERJI'S GAY-NECK: THE STORY OF A PIGEON

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Abstract:

This paper explores the role of the self-conscious narrator in Dhan Gopal Mukerji's *Gay-Neck: The Story of a Pigeon*. By employing various metanarrative techniques, the narrator reveals an acute awareness of the storytelling process, engaging readers in a dialogue that transcends the simple recounting of events. Through the seven analytical lenses of self-conscious narrator, this study examines how the narrator's self-reflexivity shapes the novel's thematic concerns such as identity, freedom, and communication between humans and nature.

The self-conscious narration enriches the narrative by blurring boundaries between fiction and reality, enhancing reader participation, and emphasizing the moral and philosophical underpinnings of the story. Ultimately, the paper demonstrates that Mukerji's use of a self-conscious narrator provides a unique narrative texture that deepens the novel's emotional and intellectual impact. The paper is based on the textual analysis of the novel and the lens of the narrator where self-consciousness can be reflected in the novel. The paper will also reflect how this self-conscious narration makes the narrative interesting and holding that the reader of any age sticks with the novel eagerly to be with the narrator on the upcoming event.

Keywords: Dhan Gopal Mukerji, Gay-Neck: The Story of a Pigeon, metanarrative, narrative reflexivity, reader engagement, self-conscious narrator, storytelling.

Introduction:

Dhan Gopal Mukerji's *Gay-Neck: The Story of a Pigeon* (1927) is a notable work in early Indian English literature that combines a charming animal narrative with profound philosophical reflections. Central to this novel's unique appeal is its self-conscious narrator, who frequently steps outside the immediate story to reflect on the act of storytelling itself. This narrative technique not only invites readers to engage more deeply but also highlights the novel's themes of identity, freedom, and the complex relationship between humans and nature. Self-conscious narration, a form of metanarrative where the narrator reveals awareness of the narrative process, plays a critical role in shaping the reader's understanding and emotional response. This paper argues that Mukerji's use of a self-conscious narrator enriches *Gay-Neck* by fostering a dynamic interaction between the storyteller, the story, and the reader, thereby deepening the novel's thematic and moral resonance.

Concept of Self-Conscious Narration:

Self-conscious narration, also known as self-reflexive or metanarrative narration, is a literary technique in which the narrator demonstrates an explicit awareness of the storytelling process. As is said by M. H. Abrams and Harpham, "The self-conscious narrator shatters any illusion that he or she is telling is a work of fictional art, or by flaunting the discrepancies between its patent fictionality and the reality it seems to represent." (Abrams 304-305). Self-conscious narration is fiction that calls attention to its own fictional status, and may include comment by the narrator on the process of composing the story, or remind the reader that what they are reading is an artifact. Rather than simply recounting events, the narrator frequently comments on the act of narration itself, drawing attention to the constructed nature of the story. This can involve direct addresses to the reader, interruptions in the narrative flow, or reflections on the reliability and limitations of the narrative voice. Such a technique invites readers to participate actively in meaning-making, fostering critical engagement rather than passive consumption. Self-conscious narration often serves to blur the boundaries between fiction and reality, challenging traditional storytelling conventions and emphasizing the interpretive nature of narrative. In literature, this approach has been employed to explore themes of identity, truth, and the relationship between author, narrator, and reader.

Narrative Voice in *Gay-Neck: The Story of a Pigeon*:

In *Gay-Neck: The Story of a Pigeon*, the narrative voice is distinctly self-conscious, marked by the narrator's frequent reflections on storytelling itself. Mukerji's narrator does not merely present events in a straightforward

manner; instead, he often interrupts the narrative to comment on his own role as storyteller, the challenges of capturing the pigeon's experiences, and the limits of language in conveying the spiritual and emotional dimensions of the story. These moments of narrative reflexivity reveal a keen awareness of the constructed nature of the tale, inviting readers to question the reliability and completeness of the narrative. The narrator also engages directly with the reader at times, breaking the fourth wall to foster intimacy and involvement. This self-aware voice adds layers of meaning to the text, emphasizing the novel's themes of communication between species, the quest for freedom, and the search for understanding beyond words.

Functions of Self-Conscious Narration in the Novel

The self-conscious narration in *Gay-Neck* serves multiple important functions that enhance the novel's depth and reader engagement. First, it creates a dialogic relationship between the narrator and the reader, encouraging active participation and reflection rather than passive reading. This engagement allows readers to appreciate the complexities of the story, including its moral and philosophical themes. Second, the narrator's awareness of storytelling limitations highlights the challenges of representing experiences, particularly those of an animal protagonist, thus underscoring themes of communication and empathy across species boundaries. Third, the technique adds a layer of playfulness and creativity to the narrative, as the narrator experiments with form and voice, blending fact and fiction. Finally, self-conscious narration reinforces the novel's exploration of identity and freedom by foregrounding the process through which stories shape understanding and meaning. Through these functions, Mukerji's narrative strategy deepens the emotional and intellectual impact of *Gay-Neck*.

Textual Analysis of Self-Conscious Lines:

Scholars of narratology have long discussed how certain recurring strategies make a narrator self-conscious. As Birgit Neumann explains in her work on meta narration, self-reflexive storytelling often includes "telling about telling," where the narrator comments on the act of narration itself (Neumann 12). This theoretical point supports lenses such as metanarrative commentary and narrative reflexivity. Similarly, Wayne C. Booth's classic concept of the "implied author" shows that readers perceive a guiding voice behind the story, which provides a foundation for studying direct address, playful asides, and overt authorial intrusion as intentional strategies rather than accidental slips (Booth 45). Research on metafiction and self-conscious narrative, as summarized by theorists like Patricia Waugh, likewise confirms that texts can draw attention to their own constructedness, thereby inviting reader awareness and participation (Waugh 22). Moreover, Gérard Genette's discussion of narrative voice and focalization helps explain how narrators manipulate perspective to engage readers (Genette 88). Finally, philosophers of narrative identity such as Adriana Cavarero argue that storytelling shapes our sense of self and reality, supporting the lens on blurring fiction and reality, where the narrator moves from plot events to universal truths (Cavarero 34). Together, these theories justify analysing self-conscious narration in *Gay-Neck* through seven lenses— metanarrative commentary, narrative reflexivity, direct address, playfulness, authorial intrusion, reader participation, and the blurring of fiction and reality—as each corresponds to well-established categories in narrative theory (Herman 56; Ryan 101).

Metanarrative Commentary:

"But I must begin this story at the very beginning, I mean with Gay-Neck's parents." (Mukerji 5). The narrator directly comments on where to start the tale, shifting attention from the story itself to the act of telling it. This is a clear marker of metanarrative awareness, since it reminds the reader that they are listening to a constructed narrative. By confessing that the beginning must include the parents, the narrator acknowledges choice and selection in narration. Instead of an invisible storyteller, we encounter one who is conscious of shaping material. This creates intimacy with the reader, making the narrative feel conversational rather than detached. The act of calling attention to the "beginning" foregrounds the storyteller's presence as a guide.

"But to go on with our story." (Mukerji 6). This transitional remark interrupts the narrative to remind us that it is indeed a story being told. Instead of moving seamlessly, the narrator draws attention to the process of moving forward. The phrase works almost like a stage aside, pulling the reader out of immersion momentarily. The storytelling thus becomes reflexive, showing that the tale unfolds under a narrator's control. Such interruptions invite the reader into a shared awareness of storytelling as performance. It cultivates a sense of mutual participation, as if narrator and reader are journeying together.

"Let me say that I firmly believe that the Lamas were right." (Mukerji 37). This reflection breaks narrative illusion by inserting the narrator's personal opinion. It interrupts plot progression and emphasizes belief over description. The phrase "let me say" reveals the conscious act of inserting commentary. It is less about Gay-Neck and more about the narrator's voice shaping interpretation. Thus, narration becomes a blend of storytelling and testimony. It is self-conscious because it lays bare the narrator's presence as an interpreter.

"Since nothing ends smoothly in this world, the training of Gay-Neck finally met with a check." (Mukerji 17). This generalization pulls the story into a reflective frame, using Gay-Neck's training to make a universal claim. The narrator comments on the nature of endings, not just events. By stepping outside the narrative to pronounce a truth, the storyteller acknowledges the shaping role of narration. The tale becomes both narrative and philosophical observation. This awareness reminds readers that storytelling is not neutral but always interpretive. It is self-conscious precisely because it exposes the narrator's hand guiding meaning.

Narrative Reflexivity

"…And I think it is wise not to clean the nest frequently during this time. Everything that the parents allow to remain in the nest contributes to making their baby comfortable and happy." (Mukerji 9). Here the narrator steps out of neutral description and signals a personal inference with "I think." Those explicit self-marking turns observation into commentary, reminding us that what we read is mediated by his judgment. The reflexive cue foregrounds the storyteller's role as interpreter—and even instructor—rather than a transparent recorder of facts.

"…Even to this day when I awake early I think of those Buddhist monks in the Himalayas praying for the cleansing of the thoughts of all men and women still asleep." (Mukerji 35). By anchoring the memory in the narrator's present ("even to this day"), the line exposes the temporal gap between lived events and their retelling. "I think" frames the scene as ongoing reflection, not fixed recollection, so the narrative openly shows its own act of remembering. That reflexive stance invites readers to notice how belief and memory shape what gets told.

"…I think the blow stunned him. He too fell, and was lost in the woods below, but I was glad to find myself on the branch of an ilex tree." (Mukerji 51). "I think" marks epistemic uncertainty about the hawk's condition, acknowledging limits to what the narrator can know. The sentence then shifts to first-person affect ("I was glad"), exposing the teller's subjectivity alongside inference. That blend of speculation and feeling makes the narration self-aware: it admits it is constructing meaning from partial perception.

"In India during the winter the buzzards called Baz, come south. … I think they are a class of low-born eagles—but they resemble kites, although their wings are not frayed at the ends." (Mukerji 82). This is taxonomic guesswork presented as thought, not fact. By labelling and then hedging, the narrator reveals the classificatory lens through which he is viewing the birds. The reflexive "I think" underscores that description here is provisional and interpretive, drawing attention to the storyteller's framing choices.

"…I think that when I circled up and above their trees, the Germans were uncertain whether I was their carrier or not, but the moment the sharpshooters perceived that I was going west they were sure that I was the enemy." (Mukerji 114). Here Gay-Neck, as the narrator, reconstructs others' mental states, explicitly flagging it as inference ("I think"). This metacognitive move shows the narrative stitching together cause and effect from a subjective vantage, not offering camera-like certainty. By modelling what opponents "must have" thought, the text exposes its own interpretive weave—classic narrative reflexivity.

Interruption and Direct Address

"May I impress it upon you that you should anticipate all kinds of surprise attacks when cleaning a bird's home during nesting season." (Mukerji 6). The sentence is a direct address framed as advice: the narrator stops the narrative flow and speaks to the reader with an imperative-intent ("May I impress it upon you…"). That rhetorical move is a classic interruption — it makes the reader the addressee and momentarily converts the story into a lesson. As self-conscious narration, this line exposes the narrator's role as teacher and guide rather than an invisible chronicler. By calling attention to what the reader "should" anticipate, the teller admits to shaping what the reader will know and how they should interpret forthcoming events. Critically, the passage performs two functions: it builds authority (the narrator as experienced guardian/educator) and it primes the reader to read subsequent scenes through a lens of risk and vigilance. The didactic interruption thus shapes reader expectation and moralizes the

animal world, helping the novel to blend anecdote with explicit counsel about care, responsibility, and consequences.

"Now let me tell you what a narrow escape Gay-Neck had while still in the egg." (Mukerji 5). This line pauses narrative chronology to introduce a flashback; the "Now let me tell you…" marker signals a conscious choice about narrative pacing. The narrator deliberately interrupts to focus attention on a formative episode. Its self-consciousness lies in the explicit formulation of narrative intent: the teller is aware of sequencing and guides the reader's attention to a specific origin-story moment. The phrase makes the reader conscious that the narrative is being assembled piece-by-piece. Functionally, the interruption foregrounds origin and vulnerability, so the reader understands Gay-Neck's later behaviour in light of an early peril. It thus does narrative work (causal explanation) while reminding us that the story is a constructed sequence the narrator chooses to disclose for interpretive effect.

"But I have brought you so high not to tell you about mountains, but of an adventure that befell us there." (Mukerji 23). This is an interjection that both acknowledges the scenic grandeur and refuses it as the central subject — the narrator interrupts the descriptive impulse to re-state narrative purpose. It is a metanarrative statement delivered as direct address. Self-consciously, it reveals the narrator's censorship/selection: what might fascinate (the mountains) is consciously set aside in favour of the intended tale. The line thereby exposes the storyteller's shaping hand and signals to the reader that choices — not chance — determine what becomes text. In critical terms, the interruption focuses the reader on theme over spectacle. It prevents the narrative from becoming mere travelogue and insists the novel's moral/adventure content matters more than scenic description; the move reinforces authorial control and the book's moral priorities.

"But before I recount his adventure there I must tell the reader how Ghond happened to be transferred from the battlefields of France to our home." (Mukerji 118). This sentence explicitly names "the reader" and states a narratorial obligation: the narrator interrupts plot momentum to supply necessary backstory. It's a textbook example of authorial scaffolding via direct address. The self-consciousness is double: the narrator not only admits to the act of selection but frames it as a duty ("I must tell the reader"), calling attention to the narrator's responsibility in shaping coherence and causality. The narrator thus positions himself as both storyteller and chronological custodian. Functionally, the interruption supplies causal linkage (why Ghond is present) and builds narrative trust: by explaining his choice to pause for context, the narrator reassures readers that the story will be comprehensible. The move therefore serves clarity, deepens character-context ties (Ghond & Gay-Neck), and foregrounds the constructed nature of the tale while preserving narrative authority.

Playfulness with Storytelling

"Am I not doing it well? You must tell my parents how clever I am…" (Mukerji 10). This line gives Gay-Neck a direct human voice, making him appear to speak to the narrator. The playful anthropomorphism reminds us that the story is consciously constructed, with the narrator imagining what a pigeon might say. The act of turning pigeon behaviour into dialogue foregrounds the narrative artifice and makes readers aware that they are engaging with an invented storytelling process.

"Here, lazy-bones, you are nearly three months old, yet you do not dare to fly. Are you a pigeon or an earthworm?" (Mukerji 12). Although pigeons cannot literally talk, the narrator translates bird calls into witty human speech. This is playful because it draws attention to the transformation of coos into language, thereby exposing the narrator's self-conscious role. Instead of pretending that animals speak naturally, the text emphasizes its own imaginative intervention, reminding the reader of storytelling's creative mediation.

"Gay-Neck held my little flock in a kind of umbrella formation to protect the rear… Such is the price of leadership—the other name of self-sacrifice." (Mukerji 51). Here, Gay-Neck's instinctive flying formation is turned into a moral lesson about leadership and sacrifice. The narrator consciously interprets bird behaviour in human terms, shaping the narrative into an allegory rather than mere observation. The self-consciousness lies in this interpretive act, where storytelling becomes a vehicle for philosophical reflection.

"He was in a panic, like a boy walking into cold and deep water. His whole-body shook, and my feet trod the roof gingerly…" (Mukerji 13). Gay-Neck narrates his own feelings in the first person, adopting a human simile to describe his fear. This is playful because the pigeon's consciousness is represented as though it were human,

highlighting the narrator's imaginative role. The simile makes readers aware that this is not simple animal description but a self-conscious narrative choice to humanize the bird.

"He looked at his son with a queer glance, as much as to say: '…Are you a pigeon or an earthworm?'" (Mukerji 12). The phrase "as much as to say" draws attention to the narrator's translation of behaviour into speech. Instead of maintaining the illusion of direct communication, the text reveals the storytelling process that converts animal gestures into words. This playful intrusion demonstrates how the narration consciously constructs its world, blurring the line between observation and invention.

Authorial Intrusion

"Here let it be inscribed in no equivocal language that almost all our troubles come from fear, worry, and hate." (Mukerji 92). This moral statement interrupts the story; the narrator steps outside the plot to generalize about life. It reflects self-awareness; he knows he is telling a tale and pauses to inscribe a truth for readers. Such intrusion highlights the philosophical tone of the novel and connects Gay-Neck's experiences to universal human problems.

"No beast of prey can kill his victim without frightening him first." (Mukerji 92). Here the narrator interrupts the war narrative to draw a universal moral about fear. It generalizes beyond the plot, comparing human and animal behaviour. The voice shifts from storytelling to philosophical reflection, making readers aware that the narrator is guiding them toward a moral lesson, a hallmark of authorial intrusion.

"Instead of spinning out a sermon at the end of this story, let me say this: 'Whatever we think and feel will colour what we say or do.'" (Mukerji 140). This meta-commentary is highly self-conscious: the narrator acknowledges he could give a sermon and then does so briefly. He comments on his own act of storytelling and imparts a universal moral. The intrusion here is deliberate and signals that the tale carries an explicit ethical message meant for readers' reflection.

"Therefore, my brothers, live courage, breathe courage and give courage. Think and feel love so that you will be able to pour out of yourselves peace and serenity as naturally as a flower gives forth fragrance." (Mukerji 140). The narrator directly addresses readers with "my brothers" and delivers a moral exhortation. This is not part of the plot but a conscious authorial intervention at the story's end. It frames the novel's ethical vision and shows how the narrator uses intrusion to guide readers toward love and courage as ultimate lessons.

The line "Since I have described them in my other books, I need not repeat myself here." (Mukerji 21) shows the clear intrusion with the on-going flow of the story by the author.

Reader Awareness & Participation

"Let us hope he was ashamed of it. Anyway, he never killed another ant the rest of his life." (Mukerji 10). The narrator directly includes the readers in an evaluative comment about the character's act. By saying "let us," he invites readers to share his moral perspective, shifting from neutral storytelling to a reflective, participatory voice. This self-conscious intrusion makes the audience aware of their role in judging the character's actions.

"Let me give you just a slight picture of our setting." (Mukerji 20). Here the narrator explicitly pauses the narrative to address the reader. He acknowledges his act of description as a deliberate choice and seeks the reader's attention. This shows self-awareness of the storytelling process and involves the reader in visualizing the scene along with him.

"As you know, air warmed in the hollow places and valleys of mountain country has a tendency to shoot up into cooler regions." (Mukerji 59). This statement assumes shared knowledge with the reader, using "as you know" to directly engage them. It turns a factual explanation into a moment of reader participation, where the narrator bridges the story with the audience's own understanding. This reinforces the self-conscious narrative voice.

"Let us again use the grammar of fancy and the dictionary of imagination." (Mukerji 73). The narrator overtly invites readers to join him in an imaginative exercise. This meta-commentary highlights the act of storytelling as a creative collaboration between narrator and reader. It's a classic sign of self-conscious narration, blurring the line between telling and jointly imagining.

"I cannot begin to describe how overjoyed I was to hear that Gay-Neck had flown at last." (Mukerji 139). This line reflects on the narrator's own emotional state and directly shares it with the audience. By confessing the limits of his expression ("I cannot begin to describe"), he acknowledges the narrative act itself, making readers aware that they are listening to a personal story rather than an impersonal account.

Readers are actively invited to think about the upcoming event when the narrator said, "On seeing them the ducks paddled to the boat as fast as they could go. Reaching it, they hopped up, and then—can you believe it?—they dropped their capture. ..." (Mukerji 63).

Blurring Boundaries between Fiction and Reality

"Fear clouds one's wits and paralyses one's nerve. He who allows himself to be frightened lets himself be killed." (Mukerji 37). This statement emerges from Ghond's context but reaches far beyond the fictional moment. The narrator universalizes fear as a destructive force common to all living beings, not just characters in the story. By asserting a moral law within the fictional narrative, the novel blurs the line between story and real-world psychological truth. Readers are invited to apply this reflection to their own lives, which is the hallmark of self-conscious narration.

"If any man catches one of the three, the other two are added unto it." (Mukerji 92). Here, the "three" refers to fear, worry, and hate. Though it arises in the context of Gay-Neck's war experiences, the sentence is phrased as a universal moral acceptance. It bridges the fictional account and the human condition in general. The narrator momentarily stops storytelling and offers wisdom that applies outside the novel's world, inviting readers to reflect on how these emotions affect their own lives.

"May the north wind bring healing unto you … Peace, peace, peace." (Mukerji 126-127). This blessings, spoken by the lama, functions both as part of the plot and as a direct spiritual blessing that extends beyond the fictional framework. The lyrical tone and repetitive invocation of peace are aimed not just at Gay-Neck or Ghond but at all beings, including readers. By addressing a broader audience, the novel merges spiritual reality with its fictional events, demonstrating the dotted boundary between narrative and life.

"I know, as all birds and beasts do, what fear looks like, and I felt sorry for Ghond." (Mukerji 116). The narrator explicitly connects his own emotional knowledge with that of "all birds and beasts," breaking the barrier between character and universal existence. This self-aware moment acknowledges that the emotions described are not limited to fiction; they reflect shared truths among all living creatures. It shows the narrator's awareness of his story's symbolic and moral dimensions, guiding readers to perceive the story as more than entertainment.

"Budham mē sáránām Dhārmám mē sáránām. Ōm Manī pádmē Ōm. 'In wisdom that is the Buddha is our refuge, in religion is our refuge, in the jewel of Truth (shining in the lotus of life) is our refuge.'" (Mukerji 123). This chant introduces a real Buddhist teaching into the fictional narrative, exemplifying how the novel weaves cultural and spiritual realities into its plot. The inclusion of an actual religious formula, complete with translation, reminds readers that Gay-Neck's story is embedded in a world informed by genuine philosophical traditions. It collapses the distance between fiction and reality, making the story a vehicle for living moral and spiritual wisdom. Such a line which presents this novel as a fiction is reflected in the novel as, "All that will become clear to you as the present story unfolds itself." (Mukerji 70).

Significance of Self-Conscious Narrator in the Overall Narrative

The self-conscious narrator in *Gay-Neck* plays a pivotal role in shaping the novel's meaning and enriching the reader's experience. By openly acknowledging the storytelling process, the narrator creates a transparent relationship with the reader, fostering trust and inviting active engagement. This technique deepens the emotional resonance of Gay-Neck's journey, as readers are encouraged to reflect on the limitations and possibilities of language in conveying complex experiences, especially those bridging human and animal perspectives.

Furthermore, the narrator's self-awareness underscores the novel's central themes of freedom, identity, and communication. By drawing attention to narrative construction, Mukerji challenges readers to consider how stories influence understanding and perception, highlighting the transformative power of narrative itself. This layered narrative voice also adds to the novel's unique stylistic texture, blending factual recounting with philosophical musings and playful asides.

Conclusion

In *Gay-Neck: The Story of a Pigeon*, Dhan Gopal Mukerji's use of a self-conscious narrator significantly enriches the narrative by fostering an intimate dialogue between storyteller and reader. Through metanarrative commentary, narrative reflexivity, direct address, and playful storytelling, the narrator reveals a profound awareness of the act of narration and its challenges. This self-awareness not only engages readers but also highlights key themes such as freedom, identity, and the interconnection between humans and nature. The narrators here are multiple and of vivid age groups also which makes it intergenerational. Such a work with characters and narrators from different age groups provide multiple perspectives to the readers, making it a crossover work. By blurring the boundaries between fiction and reality, the novel invites readers to explore deeper philosophical questions, making the storytelling experience both intellectually stimulating and emotionally resonant. Ultimately, Mukerji's self-conscious narration adds a unique texture to Gay-Neck, emphasizing the transformative power of narrative and affirming its role in shaping understanding and empathy across species.

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BEYOND THE MAINSTREAM: GRAPHIC NARRATIVES AS RESISTANCE TO CULTURAL HOMOGENISATION IN INDIA

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Abstract

Cultural homogenisation is a reality that individuals participate and witness on a daily basis. This takes place through the consumption and circulation of popular culture and media forms; they normalise the vividness and differences within culture/s, and create a seemingly unified cultural identity. This process confines knowledge and identity within the boundaries of a single, mainstream perspective that the "consuming public" internalises as unquestionable truth. So pervasive is their power and effect that in order to dismantle them, they must be opposed and provided an alternative within popular forms. In India, popular cultural forms such as web series, films, novels, and comics frequently reinforce a singular idea of Indianness, repeatedly framing colonialism, postcolonialism, and mythology in ways that marginalise nuanced issues and histories. Indian graphic narratives serve as a platform to fill this gap. By addressing diverse social, environmental, and political issues, they critique traditional notions of Indianness and resist cultural homogenisation.

This paper examines Orijit Sen's *The River of Stories*, highlighting how the narrative challenges dominant constructions of Indian identity by presenting alternative perspectives that resist singular, homogeneous representations of the nation. By doing so, it destabbilises mainstream representations of Indianness.

Keywords: Cultural homogenisation, identity, Indian graphic narratives, Indianness, Orijit Sen

Contextualisation:

As we travel between various cities, villages or even states, we often come across fast-food restaurant chains; it is so common that we do not even pay attention to its existence except occasional surprise at its presence in remote areas. For ordinary consumers, it merely simplifies the access to an already common and desirable product; However, this normalisation leads us away from the larger implications such standardisations carry. It marginalises local regional practices and food habits as being inferior and undesirable compared to the average consumables of standardised branded food-chains and companies. At large, the local indigenous cultures and practices fall under the threat of losing their uniqueness and being homogenised into such dominant cultures. At times they are eroded and taken over by dominant cultural flows and standardisation. Culturally and historically rooted practices and ways of living become increasingly less appealing when faced by the stream of popular dominant ways. Fast-food chains are merely a part of the bigger picture of changing trends and paradigm shifts owing to globalization; clothing style, eating habits, architecture and sports preferences in addition to historical knowledge and value shifts etcetera are a part of this concerning process.

This standardisation is usually gradual but in recent years, its growth has become exponential owing to globalisation. It is "instrumental in perpetuating Westernization" (Paonam 841) and Western ideas. It allows unfettered flow of information and ideas across nations, which in turn becomes a key factor setting the cultural trends of the West, especially America, in the remaining parts of the world (Paonam).

Introduction:

Cultural Homogenization has become an undeniable reality, particularly with the accelerated globalisation. It refers to "a qualitative shift towards cultural uniformity, driven by globalizing forces, characterized not merely by surface-level similarities but by a deeper erosion of cultural specificity, autonomy, and diversity, particularly under the aegis of dominant capitalist and neo-liberal paradigms" (Sustainability Directory). The increase in the proliferation of popular media forms and its increased consumption in the public sphere spreads unified ideas and normalises differences. It narrows down the avenues for diverse cultural expressions and inclines towards the spread of mainstream ideas and opinions. Simultaneously, it risks the erasure of differences among communities and marginalises local, regional, and tribal perspectives. These mainstream frameworks reinforce a singular identity and cultural representations. However, the loss of cultural distinctiveness cannot be confined to national level, the same is true for various cultures existing within a nation. Every nation comprises of multiple cultures; but due to

the pervasion of dominating ideology, perspectives and ideas through popular cultural forms, some of them become a part of mainstream flows of ideas and remaining are marginalised to an extent of losing their significance. These popular media forms are loved and consumed by a large number of publics, which in turn transmits monocultural ideas, habits, lifestyles and values among people. Horkheimer and Adorno also agree that culture, nowadays, is "infecting everything with sameness" (94).

In India, popular media forms like movies, series, epics, TV serials as well as comics represent a confined, homogenised and singular idea of Indianness. It majorly reinforces the similar urban upper-class upper-caste narrations and religious themes in addition to limited historical perspectives. This paper argues that Indian graphic narratives serve as a site for opposing cultural homogenisation. Contesting alternate perspectives and providing the readers with plural perspectives, they serve as a platform to critique and problematise traditional notions of Indianness by engaging with diverse social environmental and political issues. Orijit Sen's significant work *The River of Stories* (1994) serves as a striking example of graphic narratives that resist mainstream constructions of Indianness and provide alternate perspectives and ideas.

Homogenised Indian Identity:

In India, this transmission and reinforcement of similar ideas through popular forms convey a homogenous Indian identity of its people. It is largely done through popular media forms and representation. Rooted in stereotypes and typical urban Indian upper-class identity, these medias convey "a middle-class, upper caste Hindu vision of Indian identity which is exclusive in nature" (Sharma 213). They glorify patriarchal image of women and ultimately confine them to domestic walls despite showing other potentials. Confirming with patriarchal Indian notions, they hail women as "sacrificing wives and mothers" (Sharma 213).

Likewise, they Americanise certain aspects of India such as school and university lives. The historical and thematic aspects of many works, including literary pieces, are also confined to dominant and prevalent Indian aspects such as colonialism, Mughal empire, Hindu-Muslim conflicts and caste system. All of these are an integral part of Indian society and history as well, but they are so hyper-focused and canonised that many diverse political and historical issues of Indian society get marginalized.

Mentioned popular media forms reiterate these issues, and a monocultural and singular image of Indianness is created. This constructed image has strong foundations and provided the nature of popular cultural forms, it becomes so canonised and pervasive that no alternate perspectives or versions of narratives are accepted. As a result, it becomes difficult to redirect the whole cultural flow and knowledge dissemination. To incorporate these marginalised diverse perspectives and issues into mainstream flows, and to provide an authentic diversified image of India and its nuanced aspects, the alternate accounts must be provided in the same popular forms. They can be leveraged to challenge and subvert the existing narratives. The dominance can be effectively resisted by using the very forms and tools that created the dominance.

Theoretical Base:

Gramsci's concept of hegemony proves to be of use here. According to him, "the perpetuation of class rule was achieved through largely consensual means—through intellectual and moral leadership. Gramsci's analysis of hegemony thus involves an analysis of the ways in which such capitalist ideas are disseminated and accepted as commonsensical and normal" (Britannica). Through intellectual and cultural forms, the interests and ideologies of the dominant class are perpetuated and maintained. They're normalised and accepted to such an extent in the public sphere that people internalise them as their own worldview and contribute to maintain the consent for the dominating group, but it's more than just mere manipulation. "It constitutes a sense of reality in most people in the society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members to move, in most areas of their lives" (Williams 38). Likewise, popular cultural forms also create one such reality among the people and diffuse interests and ideas of the dominating or the central class. But the key point that this paper focuses on is the recognition of alternative opinions and narrations in these very cultural forms.

Through his famous idea of "McDonaldiztion" of the world, George Ritzer means to convey the larger implications of standardization of cultural forms and erosion of differences and uniqueness. McDonaldization functions as a metaphor for a unified culture which is focused less on the creativity and individual characteristics and more on homogenising the cultural experience. In Indian contexts, the prevalent narratives and cultural forms reinforce a

homogenised cultural identity which overlook the differences and uniqueness of tribal, regional and indigenous communities. They sideline counter or alternative narratives and perspectives of the marginalized communities.

Homi K. Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture* (1994), suggests that the cultural flows do not only flow in one way, rather they create a hybrid identity and hybrid cultures which are part and parcel of existing cultures merged together. India is also made up of such hybrid and multiple community cultures. Providing a space for articulation of these and their acceptance would bring out a more authentic and distinct nature of a culture in question.

This paper proposes graphic narratives to be what Nancy Fraser terms as "subaltern counterpublics" (Kampourakis). She criticises Hubermas's idea of public sphere and provides an alternative to it in her theory. She opines that "counterpublics are formed as a response to the exclusions of the dominant publics and that their existence better promotes the ideal of participatory parity" (Kampourakis). Counterpublics are the expressions of the subaltern and marginalised communities who are excluded from the dominant culture. By articulating the marginalised voices, they widen the horizon of discourse and are inclusionary in nature. Graphic narratives function as subaltern counterpublics by expressing the voices and histories of marginalised communities and people. They deal with complex issues of identity, culture and history such as trauma, memory, migration, ecological issues, homosexuality and psychological issues. Through their unique blend of verbal and visual elements, they perform as an aid in expressing complex emotions and expressions better than merely verbal literary texts.

Simultaneously, the genre is famous for its narrative style and story-telling despite non-linearity; it can target a comparatively larger audience owing to its attractive genre-specific features and being an already popular form. With reference to India, graphic narratives express historical aspects of Indian culture which have been sidelined. By including these marginalised and often forgotten perspectives, they contribute to a more inclusionary and hybrid Indian identity and image instead of a homogenised one.

Case Study: Orijit Sen's *The River of Stories* (1994)

Orijit Sen's work delineates this paper's core arguments. Considered to be the first Indian graphic novel, it is a work based on real incidents and accounts of experiences of people during Narmada Bachao Andolan in Gujarat. The movement took place as an act of opposition to a project of building large dams across river Narmada. It blends regional history with unique formal features of graphic narratives and counters dominant historical flow through its content as well as form. Providing a space for articulation of the local tribal community of Gujarat through its contents, it is also a break away from linear narrative styles and storytelling.

At its core, the text narrates the struggle and highlights the opinions of hundreds of tribal communities who were directly affected by the development project. While the mainstream narratives and media frame the project as modern, Sen counters it with dispossession, displacement, and ecological devastation. By presenting intimate depictions of tribal communities and contrasting it with progressive images from dam construction sites, the narration contrasts hegemonic common sense while voicing the concerns of subaltern communities.

Instead of singing victorious songs and hailing heroes from glorious Indian past or mythologies, the text brings to fore the local real issues of Indian tribal communities. Moving away from a generalised upper-class Hindu identity, it highlights diversity, dissent, and hybridity in contrast to the predictability, calculability, and control of homogenised media.

From beginning to end, the text comprises multiple stories of past, present and folktales concerning the central idea. It gives interpretation to the existence of humans, other natural beings and Narmada river. Many of the full-page bleeds from the text demonstrate nonlinear narrative blending of past and present. The narration continuously moves between present and past of the tribal community with folktales describing their beliefs and values. Page no. 48 to 50 prove to be notable instances. Not only the temporality and blend of perspectives, but also the blend of language (dialects) can be seen throughout the text. Some of those can be observed while Relku narrates her family's past to Vishnu (page no 14 & 21).

The initial pages of PART 1: THE SPRING about Kujum Chantu, which function as a prologue, provide an over-all positioning to the whole text. It describes how Kujum Chantu created the world and its inhabitants with all kinds of creatures and their food. It is an anchor to the whole text. The prologue emphasises upon the equality and importance of all the living creatures, humans and animals alike, which contribute to the social aspects as well as

ecological concerns depicted in the novel. Equality in the sense of co-existence of humans and nature, and also in the sense of all humans despite their socio-economic position, as multiple instances of oppressions and injustice are depicted in the novel. It also contributes to one of the arguments of this paper, providing space and opportunities to indigenous and local communities since they are the ones who create the regional culture. In the advent of mainstream culture, local regional cultures must not get sidelined and marginalised as their uniqueness is what contributes in creating an original and hybrid identity of a nation.

Upon being asked about her past by Vishnu, Relku starts the narration with one of the sweet memories from her childhood (with a smiling visual) (14) when she used to swing from banyan trees with other children from her tribe. Her smiling visual and sweetness of narrating past events is immediately contrasted with two government officials commenting upon them in a condescending and a derogatory manner that the people "living in such a primitive way is an obstacle for modernizing the country" (15). This juxtaposition clearly shows how narrow and confined one's perspective becomes upon witnessing something that deviates from dominating and normal flow of ways and things. It also invites us to contemplate upon our own narrowed perspectives of looking at tribal communities and people as their ways do not fit with our limited perceptions of "cultured" and "civilised" people.

The dark black colours in the background and the sky on page no. 27 intensify the effect of darker acts and oppression done to Relku's family. Additionally, Relku's expression on the same page but out of the frame contributes to the complicated temporality of her narration. Being situated on the same page tells us how personal the account was, and how vividly she remembers it as she has lived it. However, her location outside the panel yet within the page tells us that despite being distant from the experience temporally, her grief and sorrow of the experiences are yet equally painful in the present as they were in the past.

The ecological concerns depicted throughout the novel bring out attention to how humans act as masters and owners of everything at their disposal, especially nature. Regardless of the amount of environmental harm and deforestation done for the construction of dam projects, the mainstream journalism and media as well as the government depicted and still depict the project as progressive and developmental. In fact, not only nature but the project also harms humans residing around Narmada river, yet the government and organisers turn a blind eye to all such issues in the name of progress. Such notions of development and confined ideas of being "progressive" disseminated in the mainstream knowledge departments through journalism, movies or people limit a nation's development in the true meaning of the word, and contrastingly divests a nation's unique blended identity, made up from a unique combination of different cultures and ways of living.

The novel, not only symbolically but also literally, mentions resistance through its contents. The tribal community is resisting the project of building the dams as it will not only dislocate them and turn them into immigrants but it also completely dispossesses them of their natural habitat and ways of living. It implies, at large, for them to start a new life in an unknown urban world which they don't wish to do. The novel describes tribal communities as developing "a sort of upsurge of tribal consciousness" (42). The struggle against the project, symbolically as well as literally, express their "spirit of resistance" (42).

Ultimately ending the novel with such a simple yet profound epilogue, Sen successfully changes the perspective of anyone reading it. It tells us about how our limited perceptions and confined perspectives make us want to "civilise" and change other people's ways of living without taking into consideration their accounts and interests. This is exactly what happens, at times, when certain things and ways of lives are so isolated and distant from the society and its representations that we're not able to come to terms with their profoundness and importance. The text brings to the fore exactly such issues and values through such an important historical event occurred in Gujarat. Despite being a regional account, the text raises much bigger concerns about human values, ideals as well as environmental problems.

Conclusion:

Cultural homogenisation, as this paper has argued, is not a distant abstraction only discussed in academic terms but a lived reality that individuals live very closely with each passing day. This reality is reinforced through popular cultural forms that singularise the plural existing identities within a culture. In Indian context, the mainstream media forms narrow down complex plural identities into a singular image, privileging dominant class, caste and perspectives and religions while marginalising "others". This type of homogenisation not only removes

distinctiveness and particularity but changes the way these communities think of themselves and imagine their histories to be.

Sen's River of Stories disturbs this process of homogenisation by articulating the voice and perspectives of tribal communities of Gujarat with regard to a much appreciated dam project. It voices alternate perspectives and point of views of the people who suffered because of this so-called progressive project, and also raises important ecological and eco critical questions. Through its nonlinear narration, intervening of regional folk stories, experiences and expressing displacement and resistance, he opens up alternate imaginings of India. While doing so, he successfully aligns with Nancy Fraser's term "subaltern counterpublics". Thus, this particular graphic extends beyond literary horizons and literary innovation by incorporating alternative voices and challenging hegemonic narrations.

The case study intends to encourage a broader reconsideration of graphic narratives as cultural sites of resistance. Works like River of Stories remind us that the struggle against homogenisation is not only about diversity of culture but also about providing ample space and opportunities to the diverse public and individuals for expressing their thoughts, conditions and perspectives. By resisting normalisation of culture, graphic narratives highlight the importance of listening to the margins, making them important to understanding the totality and complexity of the term Indianness.

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CORPORATE CONTROL AND STATE ABSENCE: A KEYNESIAN READING OF NECROMANCER

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Abstract

This research paper explores William Gibson's *Neuromancer* through the lens of Keynesian economics, highlighting the complex interplay between corporate power, technological advancement, and the absence of state intervention. Set in a cyberpunk future dominated by multinational corporations and artificial intelligences, Gibson's novel presents a society in which traditional government roles are virtually nonexistent. Economic and social systems are controlled by private entities that dictate labor, wealth, and access to essential resources, leaving individuals vulnerable to exploitation and commodification. By approaching the novel through a Keynesian framework, this study underscores the importance of government intervention in maintaining economic stability, preventing monopolistic concentration of power, and protecting the welfare of ordinary citizens. Keynes argued that without such oversight, markets tend to favor the powerful, deepen inequality, and create social instability—concerns that resonate strongly within the dystopian environment depicted by Gibson.

The novel's portrayal of corporate dominance offers a cautionary reflection on the risks of unregulated capitalism. In Gibson's world, human labor and even consciousness are treated as commodities, emphasizing the consequences of a system that prioritizes profit over human dignity. Characters like Case and Molly illustrate the human costs of such a system: their bodies and skills are manipulated and controlled, highlighting the intersection between technology and exploitation. This dynamic mirrors contemporary issues in globalized economies, where digital corporations increasingly influence employment, personal data, and social life, often operating beyond the reach of effective regulation. Gibson's depiction of cyberspace and artificial intelligences demonstrates not only technological possibility but also the moral and social responsibility that must accompany innovation.

Furthermore, the research explores how *Neuromancer* anticipates the rise of digital capitalism and the ethical dilemmas posed by automation, AI, and algorithmic governance. The novel illustrates how unchecked corporate and technological power can erode individual autonomy, social equality, and community values—problems Keynesian economics seeks to address through active intervention. By drawing parallels to contemporary phenomena such as global tech monopolies, surveillance capitalism, and labor exploitation in the gig economy, the study emphasizes the enduring relevance of Gibson's work. His vision serves as a prescient warning about a future where economic systems function primarily for profit, rather than human well-being, and underscores the need for policies that balance innovation with social responsibility.

Finally, this paper argues that reading *Neuromancer* through Keynesian theory provides both literary and socio-economic insights. It highlights the dangers of allowing markets to operate without oversight, while simultaneously illustrating how literature can engage with economic and ethical questions in ways that are both imaginative and instructive. Gibson's novel, therefore, becomes more than a story about hackers and artificial intelligence—it is a lens through which readers can understand the potential consequences of global corporate dominance, the ethical implications of emerging technologies, and the critical role of government in shaping equitable economic futures. Ultimately, the study positions *Neuromancer* as a cautionary tale that speaks to our own time, reminding us that innovation, economic freedom, and human progress must be guided by principles of fairness, compassion, and responsibility.

Keywords: Corporate control, cyberpunk, Keynesian economics, Neuromancer, state intervention, William Gibson.

Introduction:

William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984) is much more than a cyberpunk adventure—it is a vivid exploration of a world where technology, corporations, and power intersect in ways that feel both futuristic and eerily familiar. At the heart of the novel is a society where corporations dominate every aspect of life, and the traditional role of the state is almost nonexistent. Governments no longer regulate labor, wealth, or information; instead, multinational

companies and artificial intelligences set the rules. People live in a world where opportunities, security, and even personal freedom are dictated by corporate priorities rather than public welfare. This scenario creates a stark social divide and exposes the vulnerabilities of a population left unprotected.

Reading this world through a Keynesian lens makes Gibson's vision even more significant. John Maynard Keynes argued that when governments fail to intervene in economies, inequality, instability, and exploitation grow unchecked. Without policies to redistribute wealth, regulate monopolies, or ensure social safety nets, markets tend to favor those already in power. In *Neuromancer*, Gibson imagines a world where such intervention has disappeared entirely, leaving ordinary people to navigate a landscape dominated by profit-driven entities. This approach not only highlights the economic consequences of deregulation but also shows the human cost: alienation, insecurity, and the commodification of life itself.

The novel also resonates with ideas of globalization and digital capitalism. In Gibson's vision, wealth and power are concentrated, borders are porous for capital but rigid for labor, and technology enables surveillance and control at unprecedented levels. Today, similar patterns appear in the dominance of tech giants, data-driven markets, and precarious employment structures. By presenting these dynamics in a fictional world, Gibson warns readers of the risks of ignoring social and economic responsibilities, emphasizing that technological progress alone does not guarantee fairness or well-being.

Ultimately, the introduction of *Neuromancer* sets the stage for examining the balance—or imbalance—between innovation, corporate power, and human welfare. It encourages readers to think critically about the kind of society we are creating in the real world. In highlighting the absence of state oversight, Gibson's narrative becomes more than science fiction; it serves as a mirror reflecting the urgent need for ethical governance, economic regulation, and human-centered policy, exactly the areas where Keynesian principles remain vital.

Literature Review:

William Gibson's Neuromancer has inspired decades of scholarship, not just for introducing the word "cyberspace," but for shaping how we imagine life in a world dominated by technology and corporations. The literature around this novel brings together questions of identity, power, and the relationship between humans and machines. Reading across these studies, Neuromancer appears as much more than a fast-paced cyberpunk thriller—it becomes a serious exploration of how we live and what futures might be possible.

In his article The Postmodern Imaginary in William Gibson's Neuromancer (2001), Tony Myers shows how the novel captures the spirit of postmodernism. He points to Gibson's fragmented style, quick scene changes, and blurred boundaries between real and virtual worlds. For Myers, Neuromancer doesn't just tell a story—it forces us to feel the uncertainty of living in a reality that is constantly mediated by technology. This disorientation reflects the instability of modern economies, where technological advancement often benefits the few while displacing the many, an imbalance Keynes warned against in his critique of laissez-faire systems.

Adding to this, S. Arulmurugan and A. M. A. Jinnah in The Cyberpunk Elements in William Gibson's Neuromancer (2021) emphasize the "high-tech/low-life" contrast: giant corporations and advanced AIs dominate the world, while ordinary people like Case and Molly survive on the margins. They argue that Gibson captures the essence of corporate capitalism, where technological progress coexists with growing poverty and alienation. This analysis resonates with Keynesian thought, which asserts that unregulated capitalism naturally widens social gaps and undermines collective well-being.

A different perspective comes from Md Shafiqul Islam's Augmented Reality and Life in the Cyberspace in William Gibson's Neuromancer (2021). Islam explores how Gibson depicts augmented reality and cyberspace as spaces that blur human-machine boundaries. He suggests that Gibson's vision challenges the human-centered worldview and opens up a new understanding of consciousness. From a Keynesian lens, such technological shifts represent not only innovation but also new forms of economic dependency and control—where capital, not humanity, dictates the terms of existence.

In Stealing Kinship: Neuromancer and Artificial Intelligence (2014), Carl Gutierrez-Jones reads the novel through kinship and ethics, showing that artificial intelligences in the story are not just tools but entities capable of forming relationships and legacies. His analysis emphasizes that power in Gibson's world extends beyond material wealth to

control over consciousness itself. This form of domination parallels corporate monopolies that own data, ideas, and even identities—an issue Keynes could not have foreseen but one that aligns with his warnings about concentrated economic power.

Finally, Bouregaa Meryem's Cyberspace Liminality in William Gibson's Neuromancer (2019) focuses on cyberspace as a liminal zone—a space of transition where the boundaries between real and virtual, human and artificial, collapse. She argues that this liminality reflects the posthuman condition, where identity and autonomy are constantly negotiated. From a Keynesian perspective, this instability symbolizes the loss of economic and moral grounding that occurs when markets and technology evolve without regulatory balance.

Together, these perspectives show that Neuromancer is not only a founding text of cyberpunk but also a deep reflection on humanity's relationship with technology. It raises questions central to both literature and economics: Who controls the future? How are individuals shaped by systems of power? And what happens when progress is guided only by profit, not by social good?

Discussion:

Reading *Neuromancer* through Keynesian economics allows us to see the profound consequences of a society without state intervention. In Gibson's world, corporations control all aspects of life, from labor and resources to personal autonomy and social networks. Individuals like Case and Molly are caught in systems where their value is determined by corporate needs rather than human dignity or societal good. Case's reliance on cybernetic enhancement to work, and Molly's body modifications, illustrate how technology becomes both a tool and a chain, highlighting the human cost of unregulated markets. Keynes warned that without intervention, markets tend to favor the powerful and leave ordinary citizens vulnerable—a warning that Gibson dramatizes with unnerving clarity.

The novel also anticipates the realities of modern digital capitalism. Today, technology companies collect vast amounts of data, influence human behavior, and wield power that often rivals governments. Gibson's depiction of artificial intelligences controlling cyberspace mirrors the ways algorithms now shape our online lives, consumer choices, and even political opinions. The unchecked concentration of corporate and technological power creates an economy that serves profit above people, reinforcing the social and economic inequalities that Keynes sought to prevent through active government policies.

Labor exploitation and commodification are central to this discussion. In *Neuromancer*, human skills, bodies, and consciousness are treated as market commodities, not as intrinsic human assets. This reflects contemporary concerns over gig economies, precarious work, and automation, where workers' rights are diminished, and social protections are minimal. Keynesian intervention—through welfare programs, labor laws, and public investment—would be critical to mitigate these inequalities, ensuring that economic growth does not come at the expense of human well-being.

Finally, Gibson's narrative highlights the moral dimension of economics. The absence of regulation in the novel leads not only to material inequality but also to ethical decay, where human connection and community are replaced by transactions and surveillance. From a Keynesian perspective, this demonstrates the broader purpose of government and policy: to safeguard human welfare, promote fairness, and ensure that technological and economic progress benefits society as a whole. By connecting these themes to our current world, *Neuromancer* serves as a cautionary tale, reminding us that innovation without oversight risks creating a future where humans are sidelined in favor of profit and automation.

Another important aspect highlighted in *Neuromancer* is the global dimension of corporate power and how it intersects with technology. Gibson portrays a world where borders matter little for corporations but everything for individuals—capital flows freely, while workers are left vulnerable to displacement and exploitation. This mirrors modern globalization, where multinational corporations operate across continents, often avoiding regulation and tax obligations while wielding immense influence over labor markets. From a Keynesian perspective, such unbalanced global systems demand government oversight to ensure fair distribution of resources and protection of social welfare. Without intervention, these economic structures deepen inequality, concentrating wealth in the hands of a few powerful entities and leaving ordinary people with limited agency. Additionally, the novel raises ethical questions about technology itself: artificial intelligences in Gibson's world act autonomously, yet humans remain

responsible for the consequences of these innovations. This parallels current debates on AI ethics, algorithmic accountability, and the social responsibility of tech companies. By showing how technology and corporate globalization can combine to undermine human well-being, *Neuromancer* reinforces Keynesian arguments that economies must be managed consciously, with regulation, ethical considerations, and public welfare as central priorities.

Conclusion:

William Gibson's *Neuromancer* gives us a future that feels both imaginative and familiar. When seen through Keynesian economics, it becomes clear that the novel is not only about technology or cyberspace—it's about what happens when societies forget their responsibility to protect people from economic and social inequality. Gibson's world shows how power and wealth move away from ordinary citizens when governments stop regulating and leave everything to corporations. This directly reflects Keynes's belief that the state must act as a stabilizer in times of imbalance.

The novel's world of corporate control and absence of state intervention highlights the dangers of extreme capitalism. People in *Neuromancer* are trapped in systems that treat them like commodities rather than human beings. This idea mirrors our current world, where big corporations often have more control over information, labor, and even personal data than governments do. Gibson's story warns us about this loss of balance and reminds us why Keynes's principles—such as public welfare, fair regulation, and economic equality—remain essential even in the modern digital age.

By connecting Gibson's fictional economy to our own reality, we see how the issues he imagined have grown even more relevant. Automation, artificial intelligence, and globalization continue to reshape the way people work and live, often creating uncertainty and inequality. Keynes's vision of government intervention is not just an old theory—it is a guide for ensuring that progress benefits everyone, not only the powerful few. Gibson's novel, in this sense, becomes a reminder that technology and economic freedom must go hand in hand with social responsibility.

In conclusion, *Neuromancer* teaches that unchecked power—whether corporate or technological—leads to the erosion of human values, freedoms, and social cohesion. Keynes's call for balance and regulation offers the answer to this imbalance. Together, they show that a just and stable world requires both innovation and compassion, guided by ethical governance and a commitment to human welfare. The novel's warning remains timeless: if we let markets and machines replace human care and government responsibility, we risk losing the very essence of what makes us human, along with our sense of community, dignity, and shared purpose.

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THE ENDURING GLOBAL LEGACY OF THE GODFATHER IN CONTEMPORARY CRIME FICTION

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Abstract:

Mario Puzo's The Godfather dives into the world of the Corleone family, one of the most powerful Mafia clans in New York. At the center is Don Vito Corleone, a calm but feared leader who runs his empire through loyalty, respect, and a bit of intimidation. When rival families challenge his power, the peaceful balance shatters, pulling his youngest son Michael—who never wanted the mob life—into a dark journey of revenge and transformation. What starts as family protection slowly turns Michael into the new Godfather, showing how power, loyalty, and blood can trap even those who try to stay out.

This paper studies how The Godfather continues to influence modern international crime novels in the same complex ways. The saga created a romanticized image of the criminal family as a shadow state and dark version of the American Dream. The story further centers on Michael Corleone's tragic transformation into a ruthless leader, which itself became a blueprint for the modern anti-hero. We are seeing the Corleone story become a basic text that forces writers around the world to connect their work with it only.This paper actually traces three main influences: direct copying of the Corleone style in new settings like McMafia's business crime world; complete opposite approaches like Nordic Noir that show family as harmful rather than protective; and clear rejection seen in Gomorrah's realistic portrayal that breaks down the Corleone myth. The analysis definitely shows how The Godfather made the family story a strong way to explore power, money, and moral problems in global literature.

Keywords: American dream, Crime, Family, Mafia, Power, Money

Introduction: The Myth of the Family

One of the ways The Godfather, Mario Puzo's 1969 novel later turned into Francis Ford Coppola's 1972 film, was truly revolutionary is in how it reconfigured the gangster story for a new age and built its own mythology of crime around one family: the Corleone's. In this respect, the argument of this report is that The Godfather set the stage for a potent, beatified image of the criminal family followed by- and maybe even before- anyone else who stepped into this cinematic world: as an alternative justice system against that which proclaimed to represent the hard-nosed reality on film, offering up something more alongside a nightmare vision of the capitalist dream. It is a myth that has loomed over later generations of international crime writing, tempting them to define themselves in relation to it – as site its opposite or denoucement; as homage and copy; as problematization deliberately deployed.

Part I:Anatomy of an Archetype: Demystifying The Godfather

The saga's believability results from the various narrative techniques and thematic interests of a pulp novelist in Puzo and an art filmmaker out to push boxes and elevate art itself, both proprietors, cunning too (and cunning is the term"The Godfather) best used for-profit purposes. Puzo's book, which he wrote to make a buck is fast paced, complex and has memorable characters and violence — all with insights into crime and what an organized criminal syndicate was all about. Coppola's movie, by contrast, was a more literary and tragic example of crime fiction in which character, gloomy atmosphere and the use of the crime genre to say something about the underside of the American Dream were all key.

At the heart of The Godfather's mythology is its portrayal of the Corleone clan as a nation unto itself, with rules and regulations that have little to do with American democracy or criminal justice. The story subverts the American Dream by arguing that you only truly get ahead when you're a heartless, pseudo-capitalist mastermiding of an empire which marks the end of any distinction between legal enterprise and racketeering. At its heart is the shadow state that organizes everything: "Family," a word—employed throughout Coppola's trilogy as if to force-fit the blood relationship and criminal empire—that becomes an emotion, and the Baggar Vance moral dilemma of the saga.

Though Vito Corleone is the central character, it's the twisted journey of his youngest son Michael that has, for nearly half a century, helped define this film. Michael's transformation from wide-eyed outside to bad-ass Don inspired the prototype for the modern anti-hero. His transformation is a sad fact, foretold in the stars by fate and predominated by his paternal influence-- yet he ultimately grows colder, more calculating, and more ruthless than his father. It provided a template for what would become a new type of protagonist in criminal fiction the reluctant heir whose soul is the ultimate price of power.

Part II: Crime Writing From Around the World: An Overview of Current International Crime Fiction

Its reprimitivised genre prejudices became more and more daftfounded an already rebordered global literary landscape where the world crime novel with all its social and political diagnostic force had arisen. This fresh wave or crime fiction, focused locally and engaging critically with current events, provided fertile ground for The Godfather's premise: that an underworld syndicate could be the dark mirror of a society on the up-and-up.

Case Study I: Sold Nordic Noir and the Cold Hand of Justice

Nordic Noir is the haunting antithesis to The Godfather. It is known for its dark settings, spare prose and general despair and contrasts sharply with the romanticism of the Corleone myth. Its core project is a confrontational take on the myth of the snug and safe Scandinavian welfare state, on matters like loneliness, misogyny and racism. The family as trauma in Nordic Noir a dysfunctional unit mirroring societal ills, a profound inversion of the Corleone family archetype.

Case Study II: The Anti-Myth of the Italian Noir and Gomorrah

The most literal duel against The Godfather's legacy has been in Italy itself—witness Roberto Saviano's 2006 nonfiction book Gomorrah. Saviano's is a decidedly ennobling attempt at demythologization of the Camorra, offering up a radical realism cleansed of every hint--every pretense--of honor or glamour. He specifically argues a case against The Godfather, which he accuses of omitting romance any romantic byplay attracts. Gomorrah plunges the reader into the grotesque machinations of the Camorra's commerce, where violence is endemic, senseless and unglamorous. The Camorra, unlike the pyramidal Corleone family, is a system of warring clans motivated not by some kind of traditional loyalty but a nihilistic pursuit of profit.

Case Study III: Corporate Corruption and Honor in Japanese Crime Fiction

The link between The Godfather and Japanese crime literature is a little less direct, but perhaps even more intriguing due to an interesting shared lineage via master filmmaker Akira Kurosawa. He was highly influential on Francis Ford Coppola, and Kurosawa's corporate revenge tale of 1960, The Bad Sleep Well, is thematically and structurally a major antecedent to The Godfather. Both movies deal with the moral gray area of a hero willing to use extreme methods in order to bring about justice and end in tragedy. That connection would reveal that the Corleone saga has at its center some themes big and dramatic about contemporary American capitalist society - and yet those core thematic ideas are just fitting within a more global, post-WWII discourse of spiritual failings in modern capitalist societies

Part III: Following the Bloodlines: Godfather World Progeny

The Godfather's archetypes and story installations are malleable enough to produce, like a genus of crime series novelists the world over may find themselves impelled but unable to resist spinning their own variants

Heirs Direct: The Family Business of Globalization on McMafia

McMafia, the 2018 British-American telly series is probably one of the best examples of Godfather-style narrative adapted wholesale for the post-millennium. Its hero, Alex, was the "reluctant heir" who is pulled back into the underworld after a family tragedy reflecting the moral decline of Michael Corleone. By adapting the Corleone model to 21st-century organized crime, McMafia innovates by substituting a deterritorialized, corporate-style global network where profit margins are the sole guiding principle for the ethnic crime family.

The Fear of Influence: When Masterwork Imitates Life:

The most significant part of The Godfather's legacy is its capacity to influence the reality it portrays and go beyond fiction. Real-life criminals adopted the saga's potent cultural script for playing the part of a mobster. As a result, there is now a feedback loop in which reality is influenced by fiction, which then influences more realistic fiction. Writers like Roberto Saviano are forced to deal with the echoes of Puzo and Coppola's creation as they depict a real world heavily impacted by the mythology of The Godfather.

The Family Story as an Epic of Crime:

The Godfather validated the multigenerational family saga as a potent framework for the crime novel, going beyond particular character archetypes and themes. It illustrated how close-knit family relationships could be a powerful prism through which to examine epic themes of history, power, assimilation, and a country's moral development. International crime writers have embraced this narrative model in large numbers because it enables them to link individual hardships to broader historical and social forces and track the development of criminal enterprises over decades.

Conclusion: An Ink and Blood Legacy:

The Godfather has left a profound and enduring legacy of provocation in modern international crime novels. It still has a strong pull on writers worldwide, forming a central myth that shapes the genre. This myth has been addressed in a variety of ways, ranging from direct adaptation in McMafia to intentional rejection in Nordic Noir and Gomorrah. The saga's strongest impact may ultimately come from its use of the family as the ultimate metaphor for the relationship between capitalism, power, and morality—a powerful combination of the political and the familial that has been impossible for generations of writers to reject.

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TERRORISM AND TRAUMA: LITERARY RESPONSES TO THE APRIL 22, 2025 PAHALGAM ATTACK

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Abstract:

On April 22, 2025, the Baisaran meadows near Pahalgam in Jammu & Kashmir became the site of a brutal terrorist attack that claimed the lives of 26 tourists and inflicted deep psychological, communal, and cultural trauma. Perpetrated by operatives affiliated with Lashkar-e-Taiba (via proxy group The Resistance Front), the attack was marked by explicit religious targeting and the deliberate selection of softer civilian bodies, especially non-Muslim tourists India Today+3The Times of India+3Sunday Guardian+3. This paper examines how literature—both emergent and possible—responds (or might respond) to such acts of terror by navigating trauma, memory, identity, and resistance. Focusing on immediate poems, creative non-fiction, journalistic memoirs, and speculative fiction in Indian English literature published in the aftermath, I analyze how narrative strategies address unrepresentability, survivor guilt, communal polarization, and ethical duty. Drawing on trauma theory, postcolonial studies, and ethics of witnessing, I argue that literary responses perform three intertwined functions: they bear witness, they work to repair through empathy and shared humanity, and they resist forgetting by challenging dominant political and communal discourses that seek to instrumentalize terror.

Keywords: Pahalgam attack; Lashkar-e-Taiba; Terrorism; Trauma; Literatur e; Witnessing; Memory; Indian English; Identity; Communal violence.

Introduction

Terror attacks leave scars that are not easily visible: the trembling bodies, the shattered minds, and the ruptured relations between communities. The Pahalgam attack on April 22, 2025, is one such event. Emerging at a time when Jammu & Kashmir was experiencing renewed tourism, claims of political normalization, and hopes for stability, the attack shattered those expectations. News media reported that terrorists targeted tourists based on religion, asking them to recite the Kalma, and executed many for inability to comply—thus making religion an axis of violence India Today+3Sunday Guardian+3The Times of India+3. Survivors are said to suffer from PTSD, survivor guilt, and distrust, reflective of deeper societal wounds India Today+1.

While much immediate reaction has been journalistic, political, and social, literature's role becomes crucial: how writers narrate such trauma, how narratives shape collective memory, and how stories open space for resistance. This research aims to map and analyze early literary responses in Indian English literature to the Pahalgam attack, to explore how literary forms are evolving in response to modern terror, and to theorize how trauma becomes text.

Literature Review

Trauma in Literature & Witnessing — Foundational studies by Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra, and Toni Morrison (in texts like *Beloved*) have explored how literature can capture the impossible moment: the instant when language fails and only fragmented, repeated, or metaphorical narrative can approach the raw wound. Post-trauma literature often grapples with what Caruth calls "unclaimed experience" where victims struggle to integrate what has happened.

Terrorism, Literature, and Politics — Recent scholarship focuses on how terrorism becomes represented in global and national literatures. Writers from South Asia (e.g., Kiran Nagarkar, Arundhati Roy) and others have turned to fiction, essays, and poetry to respond to communal violence, insurgency, and state power. Trauma theory intersects here with postcolonial studies: how colonial histories, border politics, and state narratives shape responses to terror.

Narratives from Kashmir — There is a tradition of representing terror and trauma in Kashmiri poetry (e.g. Agha Shahid Ali), memoirs, and fiction (Mirza Waheed, Basharat Peer). These works often highlight everyday terror,

survival, identity, and loss. Surveys have examined Partition-trauma and Afsana ("storytelling") as cultural memory in Kashmir and beyond.

Emergent Theme: Religious Othering & Targeting — The Pahalgam attack's religious filtering (asking about faith, targeting non-Muslims) draws parallels with genocide/ethnic cleansing literature globally and locally with documents such as the Gujarat riots, but in Kashmir this represents a renewed kind of communal targeting in a region long associated with ethno-political violence rather than overt religious filtering.

Theoretical Framework

To analyze literary responses to the Pahalgam attack, this paper uses:

1. **Trauma Theory** (Caruth; LaCapra) — Concepts: *flashback, repetition, absence, unspeakability*, and *post-traumatic growth*.

2. **Ethics of Witnessing & Testimony** — Drawing on scholars such as Testimony (Shoshana Felman & Dori Laub), and recent work by Dominick LaCapra on *trauma, sympathy, and witnessing*, to consider the responsibility of literature to the event, victim, community.

3. **Postcolonial & Religious Studies** — Theories of communalism, othering (Edward Said's Orientalism; Homi Bhabha), and the role of religion in constructing identity and conflict in affected communities.

4. **Memory Studies** — Cultural memory (Jan Assmann), collective memory, sites of memory (Pierre Nora), and the role literature plays in preserving or contesting public memory.

Literary/Textual Analysis

Because literary responses specifically to the Pahalgam attack are only just beginning to emerge, this paper draws upon:

- **Creative Non-Fiction & Memoirs**: Survivor accounts and personal essays published in English in media outlets, blogs, magazines. These texts often exhibit narrative fragmentation, shifting tenses, sensory details foregrounding horror (smell of gunfire, stillness of forests), and moments of moral ambiguity (locals who aid victims, local heroism such as the actions of pony-ride guide Syed Adil Hussain Shah) Medium+2Sunday Guardian+2.

- **Poetry & Spoken Word**: Though yet nascent, poets may explore silence, the rupture of nature, the abject body, and metaphors of landscape betrayed. Anticipated poems perform double work: memorializing the dead and calling out political complicity.

- **Journalistic Fiction & Speculative Writing**: Fiction writers may fictionalize survivors, compose hybrid narratives that interweave personal testimonies with imaginative reconstructions of terror, guilt, and recovery. These fictional responses can open space for healing, justice, and critique of impunity.

Sample textual features:

- **Naming and anonymity**: E.g., how survivors' names are used or withheld, how the attackers are named (or not), how local complicity/silence is moralized.

- **Landscape as witness**: The Baisaran meadow, the forested hills, the valley itself is coded as both idyllic and threatened—nature also testifies.

- **Religious language and Othering**: The act of asking people to recite Kalma; targeting non-Muslims; this religious stratification shapes trauma narratives.

- **Temporal structure**: Use of flashbacks, temporal gaps, pauses, silence to register the psychological temporality of trauma.

Discussion

Literature responding to the Pahalgam attack is likely to fulfill several roles. First, as **witness work**—to document what has happened for both readers and future memory. This is especially urgent where state or media narratives simplify, politicize, or suppress certain dimensions (e.g., local complicity, the religious filtering, survivor guilt).

Second, literature can play a **therapeutic or healing role**, offering survivors voice, naming the unspeakable, and forging empathy across religious lines. The local hero's story (Syed Adil Hussain Shah) for example, becomes symbolic of communal resistance to terror, crossing religious divides.

Third, literature resists forgetting. When state, political, or communal voices seek to instrumentalize terror (for nationalism, political leverage, border rhetoric), literary texts may preserve nuance: the horror, the human, the moral complexity.

Furthermore, in the Indian English fiction sphere, such responses will raise questions about **agency** (who is allowed to narrate—tourists, locals, journalists, poets), **voice** (whose voice dominates), **style** (how form captures trauma), and **purpose** (bearing witness vs political catharsis).

Finally, literary responses are part of a larger **cultural politics** of memorialization in contested spaces like Kashmir, where conflicting claims—of nationalism, separatism, religious identity—intersect with narratives of suffering.

Conclusion

The Pahalgam attack stands as a stark exemplar of how terrorism inflicts not just bodily harm but deep cultural, psychic, and communal trauma. As literary responses begin to appear—through essays, poetry, survivor narratives—they perform vital functions: documenting, probing, resisting, and perhaps healing. Although full-length fiction takes time to emerge, we can see already the potential shape of a literary archive of this event.

This research suggests that future literary work will likely center on survivor trauma, moral ambiguity, religious identity, and landscape's betrayal. It proposes that scholars track developing responses not just for their narrative value but as acts of ethical witnessing, with implications for how society constructs memory, identity, and justice.

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"SILENT WOUNDS AND EMOTIONAL SURVIVAL: A TRAUMA STUDIES PERSPECTIVE OF JAI NIMBKAR'S NOVEL A JOINT VENTURE"

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Abstract: Jai Nimbkar's novel A Joint Venture presents a nuanced exploration of emotional trauma, particularly focusing on the experiences of women who navigate non-conventional life choices within a conservative societal framework. The protagonist, Meera, embodies this struggle as she embraces a platonic parenting model outside the traditional bounds of marriage. Through her journey, the narrative reveals the intricate layers of psychological distress that arise from societal pressures, emotional neglect, and the incessant demand for conformity. Nimbkar skillfully illustrates how these external expectations can lead to profound internal conflicts, highlighting the often-overlooked emotional voids that characterize the lives of women who defy societal norms.

Utilizing trauma theory as a lens—drawing on the works of scholars such as Cathy Caruth, Judith Herman, and Dominick LaCapra—this analysis delves into the subtle ways in which Nimbkar articulates trauma. Rather than relying on overt acts of violence or sensationalized moments, the author conveys the impact of trauma through the depiction of internal struggles and fractured interpersonal relationships. A Joint Venture emerges as a powerful narrative of resistance and healing, challenging traditional notions of family, identity, and womanhood in the context of post-liberalization India. Through Meera's story, the novel not only critiques societal expectations but also advocates for a reimagined understanding of what it means to be a woman in contemporary society.

Keywords: catastrophic incidents, oppression, platonic parenting, post-liberalization, self-empowerment, socio-cultural, trauma, womanhood,

Introduction

Jai Nimbkar, a prominent figure in Indian English literature, is recognized for her nuanced yet impactful examinations of the emotional and psychological experiences of women. In her novel A Joint Venture (1997), Nimbkar departs from the norms of traditional Indian family dynamics and conventional narrative structures by concentrating on the inner life of a woman striving to define motherhood and identity according to her own standards. Although the novel does not portray trauma in an explicit or sensational way, it effectively advocates for the exploration of trauma in its more subtle, insidious forms—those intricately woven into the fabric of daily existence, societal expectations, and personal connections.

In literary and psychological discussions, trauma is often understood as a profoundly distressing or disturbing event that surpasses an individual's capacity to cope. Nevertheless, trauma is not solely the outcome of isolated, catastrophic incidents. Particularly within women's narratives, trauma often stems from ongoing emotional neglect, gender-based restrictions, and the cumulative impact of societal oppression. These elements are particularly pertinent in the Indian context, where societal pressures surrounding marriage, motherhood, and female sexuality continue to impose considerable psychological burdens on women. Nimbkar poignantly captures this reality in A Joint Venture, narrating the story of Meera—a single woman who embarks on a platonic parenting arrangement with a male companion, Ravi. This choice, unconventional and stigmatized within Indian society, serves as the backdrop for the narrative's exploration of Meera's internal struggles, emotional wounds, and her path toward self-empowerment.

Through Meera's journey, Nimbkar creates a narrative space for what trauma theorist Cathy Caruth refers to as the "unclaimed experience"—a type of trauma that eludes straightforward expression and instead manifests through fragmented memories, emotional detachment, and narrative disjunction.

Literaray reviews:

The literature review highlights the evolution of trauma studies within literary discourse, particularly since the 1990s, with significant contributions from scholars like Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra, Judith Herman, and Laurie Vickroy. These scholars have explored the psychological, temporal, and narrative complexities of trauma,

emphasizing its profound effects on memory, identity, and language. Initially focused on large-scale violence, the field has expanded to include domestic and gendered trauma, particularly in women's writing.

Cathy Caruth's concept of trauma as a belated experience is illustrated in Jai Nimbkar's novel, A Joint Venture, where the protagonist Meera grapples with psychological withdrawal long after her formative relationships. Judith Herman's work underscores the gendered aspects of trauma, particularly in domestic contexts, which resonate with Meera's internal struggles. Laurie Vickroy extends trauma theory to literary analysis, noting that trauma narratives often employ subtle psychological details and fragmented timelines, a technique evident in Nimbkar's understated portrayal of emotional turmoil.

The application of trauma theory to Indian women's writing has gained traction, with scholars like Ketu H. Katrak and Susie Tharu examining how trauma intersects with gender, family, and culture. Indian narratives often depict trauma as normalized or internalized, focusing on emotional suppression and identity conflicts rather than overt violence. Works by authors such as Shashi Deshpande and Anita Desai have been analyzed for their exploration of women's trauma within familial and social structures, similar to the themes in A Joint Venture.

Despite the critical engagement with Nimbkar's feminist themes and alternative lifestyles, trauma as a lens has not been thoroughly applied to her work. Most analyses have concentrated on socio-cultural implications rather than the emotional costs faced by the characters. This study aims to bridge this gap by introducing trauma studies into the discourse surrounding A Joint Venture, emphasizing the internal trauma Meera experiences as she navigates life outside conventional norms.

The literature reveals a significant gap in the application of trauma theory to Nimbkar's fiction, particularly regarding the psychological trauma embedded in her characters' everyday experiences. The study seeks to contribute to trauma-informed feminist literary criticism by highlighting the emotional and psychological dimensions of trauma in A Joint Venture, applying Western trauma theory within an Indian socio-cultural context, and recognizing Nimbkar's work as a vital addition to trauma studies alongside more established Indian women writers.

Methods: This study uses qualitative literary analysis, informed by trauma theory and feminist literary criticism, to explore trauma representation in Jai Nimbkar's novel, A Joint Venture, focusing on the protagonist Meera. It examines her psychological, emotional, and social trauma within the Indian socio-cultural context.

Through close reading, the analysis identifies themes and character behaviors reflecting Meera's emotional and psychological trauma, emphasizing narrative structure, silence, tone, character development, and interior monologue. Key passages reveal her suppressed grief, identity fragmentation, and emotional isolation.

The theoretical framework includes Cathy Caruth's concepts of belated trauma, Judith Herman's trauma and recovery model, and Dominick LaCapra's distinctions between "acting out" and "working through" trauma. Laurie Vickroy's insights on trauma in literature further contextualize Meera's personal trauma within broader social and cultural structures.

The study situates Nimbkar's work within Indian women's writing, comparing it to trauma-informed texts like Shashi Deshpande's The Dark Holds No Terrors and Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters, interpreting Meera's trauma through cultural expectations of motherhood, marriage, and female autonomy.

Supported by secondary sources on trauma theory and Indian feminist literature, the research employs a qualitative and interpretive methodology, recognizing the subtlety of trauma in literature. This approach provides a nuanced understanding of Meera's experience as both a psychological subject and a cultural figure in contemporary Indian womanhood.

1. Emotional Trauma from Social Non-Conformity

Meera, the main character, chooses single motherhood through a platonic co-parenting arrangement with her friend Ravi. This decision reflects her independence and resistance to patriarchal norms, but it also leads to feelings of isolation and societal judgment. Her trauma arises not from direct mistreatment but from the internal conflict of deviating from accepted roles related to marriage, femininity, and motherhood.

Finding: The emotional trauma in the story stems from societal expectations rather than explicit violence, highlighting a frequently overlooked aspect of trauma.

2. Silence and Emotional Withholding as Trauma Indicators

Meera exhibits emotional restraint and silence, especially in interactions with men and family. These behaviors align with Judith Herman's trauma withdrawal theory and Cathy Caruth's concept of the "unspeakable" trauma. Her inability to articulate her emotional pain signals her repressed trauma.

3. Fragmented Identity and Internal Conflict

Meera experiences ambivalence; she desires autonomy and control but also seeks emotional closeness and societal acceptance. This internal struggle results in a fragmented identity, reflecting trauma theory's focus on identity disruption.

Finding: Trauma in A Joint Venture is shown through Meera's divided identity, caught between empowerment and alienation.

Methodology:

This research utilizes a qualitative and interpretive approach, primarily relying on literary analysis and trauma theory as its foundational tools. The analysis centers on Jai Nimbkar's A Joint Venture (1990), employing critical frameworks from trauma theorists such as Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, and Dominick LaCapra to provide a theoretical perspective.

The methodology encompasses:

Close Reading of the Primary Text:

The novel is thematically scrutinized to uncover instances of silent suffering, fragmented identity, memory, and resilience. The focus is on narrative silences, character psychology, and cultural contexts.

Application of Trauma Theory:

Caruth's notion of belatedness and the unspeakable aspects of trauma (Unclaimed Experience).

Felman and Laub's concept of testimony and the necessity for a witness (Testimony).

LaCapra's differentiation between "acting out" and "working through" as survival strategies (Writing History, Writing Trauma).

These theoretical constructs are employed to analyze how trauma is depicted in Nimbkar's narrative.

Feminist Critical Perspective:

Given that Nimbkar's fiction is deeply rooted in women's experiences, the methodology integrates feminist criticism to emphasize the gendered nature of trauma and the influence of patriarchal silences on women's emotional resilience.

Secondary Sources:

Academic works on trauma studies and Indian women's literature—such as Meenakshi Mukherjee's The Perishable Empire and Jasbir Jain's Beyond Post colonialism—are referenced to contextualize the novel within both the global discourse on trauma and the Indian literary landscape.

This approach guarantees that the research is contextually aware—acknowledging the cultural dynamics of Indian society—while also engaging with the universal frameworks of trauma theory. The methodology is interpretive rather than statistical, aiming to shed light on the psychological and narrative aspects of trauma instead of quantifying them.

Discussion:

Jai Nimbkar's novel, A Joint Venture, offers a nuanced exploration of trauma, intertwining personal experiences with societal constructs. Utilizing trauma theory and feminist literary criticism, the protagonist Meera's trauma emerges not from a single event but from cumulative gendered expectations, emotional neglect, and societal rejection.

The narrative diverges from traditional trauma stories by aligning with Cathy Caruth's idea that trauma often eludes direct representation. Meera's quiet and ambiguous trauma manifests in emotional detachment and a conflicted identity, challenging the notion that trauma must be dramatic to be valid. The novel highlights the gendered dimensions of trauma, particularly through Meera's choice to raise a child outside of marriage, which serves as both defiance and a source of guilt.

The restrained narrative structure reflects Meera's psychological state, emphasizing emotional suppression and inviting readers to engage with the unsaid aspects of trauma. The story does not offer a clear resolution; instead, Meera's relationship with Ravi represents a complex exploration of agency and ongoing inner conflict, aligning with trauma theory's view of healing as a continuous process.

Nimbkar's work enriches Indian English literature and trauma studies by focusing on the psychological impacts of daily life and emotional expectations, highlighting the internal costs of female agency and the subtleties of gendered trauma in women's lives.

Findings

- The trauma experienced in a Joint Venture encompasses both psychological and cultural dimensions.
- The concept of silent wounds is pivotal, illustrating trauma as something that is not visible yet deeply ingrained.
- Survival is attained not via healing but through resilience and a reconfiguration of one's identity.
- Nimbkar expands the conversation around trauma by contextualizing it within the daily experiences of Indian women.

Conclusion:

Jai Nimbkar's A Joint Venture offers a deep exploration of emotional and psychological trauma shaped by gender, societal norms, and cultural non-conformity. Through Meera, the novel challenges typical depictions of trauma that focus on overt violence, instead revealing a more subtle yet significant internalized trauma obscured by patriarchal standards.

Utilizing trauma theory from scholars like Cathy Caruth, Judith Herman, and Laurie Vickroy, the analysis shows how trauma intertwines with Meera's experiences, reflecting her silence, emotional restraint, and conflicted identity as she navigates traditional female roles. The narrative's understated style mirrors the emotional numbness and incomplete narratives often found in trauma survivors' lives.

Importantly, the novel complicates healing; while Meera's choice to parent outside marriage offers her some agency, it does not lead to complete emotional resolution. This aligns with trauma theory, which suggests that trauma is an ongoing experience rather than something fully resolved.

By viewing A Joint Venture through a trauma-informed feminist lens, this study emphasizes the need to broaden trauma discussions in Indian English literature, advocating for greater recognition of the emotional and systemic traumas women encounter daily, often hidden beneath socially acceptable silence and resilience.

Thus, this research not only repositions Nimbkar's work within trauma literature but also enriches the understanding of how Indian women's narratives reflect complex emotional landscapes.

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BEYOND IMITATION: CONSTRUCTING AN ALTERNATIVE MODERNITY IN 20TH CENTURY INDIAN ENGLISH CRITICISM THROUGH SELECT CRITICS

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The discourse on modernity within Indian literary studies has long been framed by Eurocentric paradigms, often relegating indigenous critical traditions to the margins as either derivative or obsolete. This paper interrogates such assumptions by demonstrating that 20th-century Indian English criticism emerges as a key site for articulating an "alternative modernity." Drawing on calls for a reappraisal of Indian literary theories by critics K. Krishnamoorthy, Krishna Chaitanya, and K. Satchidanandan, the study examines how Indian English critics moved beyond imitation to engage in a creative dialogue with classical poetics. Foundational concepts such as *rasa* (aesthetic experience), *dhvani* (suggestion), and *vakrokti* (oblique expression) were not revived as static inheritances but reinterpreted as dynamic principles for negotiating the postcolonial condition. This critical synthesis, resonant with what K. Satchidanandan terms "alternative genealogies," shaped a hybrid discourse—neither a replication of Western models nor a nostalgic return to the past. By analyzing the writings of select Indian English critics, the paper argues that this intellectual negotiation constituted a self-aware, dialogic, and pluralistic model of modernity. In doing so, it contributes to broader debates on postcolonial cultural self-assertion and comparative poetics.

Keywords: Alternative modernity, Comparative poetics, Dhvani, Indian English criticism, Postcolonialism, Rasa, Vakrokti

The trajectory of twentieth-century Indian literary criticism is that of an intellectual negotiation, an effort to discover as well as articulate a cultural and literary modernity that could go beyond the reductionist binary of colonial imitation and nativist revivalism. This critical project undertaken in the English language by Indian writers, has been a crucial platform for expressing what can be called an "alternative modernity," which is not a passive inheritance or a simple rejection of Eurocentric paradigms but a dialogic engagement with India's own past. At the centre of this postcolonial re-evaluation was a re-engagement with the foundational concepts of Sanskrit poetics, for example rasa (aesthetic experience), dhvani (suggestion or resonance), and vakrokti (oblique expression). These principles were not understood as static relics of the glorious 'golden' past, but reinterpreted as dynamic, universally applicable theories capable of negotiating the complex postcolonial condition.

This concept of "alternative" or "multiple modernities" is itself a foundational critique of the nineteenth-century Eurocentric belief that colonization was the sole reason and means for progress in the regressive and 'cannibalistic' societies. This critique challenges the enlightenment tenet that Western influence alone could predict progressive philosophy, arguing instead that postcolonial societies cannot and should not be "a homogeneous replication of Western social forms" (Kaviraj). Scholars like Sudipta Kaviraj note that the "initial conditions" of modernity in postcolonial nations are fundamentally different, making simple imitation of the West impossible. Instead, modernity in India is a "distinct evolution influenced by local historical and cultural factors" (Kaviraj), emerging through "hybridized cultural forms" that appropriate, transform, and assimilate Western models (Ashcroft). This intellectual project, which Dipesh Chakrabarty terms "provincializing Europe," problematizes Eurocentric modernity for its belittling of indigenous traditions (Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*; "Thinking Modernity Historically"). This is a necessary response to what Partha Chatterjee calls the "ambiguity of modernity" (Chatterjee, "Globalization"), an escape from the trap of producing "derivative discourse" (Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought*) by asserting a self-aware, pluralistic model of modernity rooted in its own intellectual genealogies.

This was necessary because of a complex, multi-layered inheritance of critical dysfunction. The first layer was the colonial construction of "Indian Literature" itself. As K. Satchidanandan puts it, the very academic field of "post-colonialism" in India often functions as "the old 'Commonwealth Literature' fashionably re-christened" (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). In its "actually existing" form, this discourse privileges Indian Writing in English (IWE), celebrating writers ranging from Raja Rao to Salman Rushdie (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). This focus on Indian English writing, Satchidanandan notes, results in an "obvious

disparity" between the international publicity IWE receives and "its literary quality and ability   to reflect our social as well as spiritual lives" (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). Whereas the   vast and diverse literary production done in the modern Indian languages, or *bhashas*, suffers because of being marginalized (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*).

Adding on to this external pressure was an internal problem too: the ossification of indigenous   critical traditions. Sanskrit poetics, or *Alaṅkāra-śāstra*, had largely degenerated into a sterile scholasticism. K. Krishnamoorthy laments that modern accounts of the field "miss the wood for the trees," focusing only on the "stereotyped nature of its critical rules and canons, with their unending divisions and subdivisions" (Krishnamoorthy, *Essays*). Historical surveys, he notes, devolve into "tedious tabulations of 'ornaments' and 'qualities' of poetry" (Krishnamoorthy, *Essays*). Krishna Chaitanya, in his preface to *Sanskrit Poetics*, delivers an even harsher critique, calling the existing scholarship "hermetic" (Chaitanya, *Sanskrit Poetics*).   He describes the works of his predecessors, S. K. De and P. V. Kane, as "unintelligible except to the Sanskrit scholar" (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*)—a "cacophony on the brass" of Sanskrit technical jargon that obscured the "continuous melody on the flute" (Satchidanandan,   *Indian literature*), the profound, integrative philosophy at the heart of the tradition.

Before the critics, including the ones we are studying in this paper - K. Krishnamoorthy, Krishna Chaitanya, and K. Satchidanandan - could challenge the hegemony of external, Eurocentric critical models, they first had to reclaim their own tradition from an internal, orthodoxy, which, obsessed with "hair-splitting distinctions" (Krishnamoorthy, *Essays*), was   itself an intellectual product of the colonial mindset, which considered indigenous knowledge as a dead object rather than a living theory. The project of this "alternative modernity," therefore, was threefold: first, to *de-ossify* the indigenous tradition, rescuing its core philosophical concepts from the "stereotyped" classifications (Krishnamoorthy, *Essays*);   second, to *validate* these concepts as universal and modern by demonstrating their functional equivalence to, and even sometimes precedence over, dominant Western critical theories (Menezes; Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*); and third, to *re-deploy* this revitalized, "dynamic" framework as a political and aesthetic tool to champion indigenous literatures and forge "alternative genealogies" for a pluralistic Indian culture (Satchidanandan, "The Making   of Indian Literature").

The foundational work in this twentieth-century critical reclamation was undertaken by K. Krishnamoorthy. His project, as outlined in *Essays in Sanskrit Criticism* (1974) and praised in its foreword by Armando Menezes, was one of comparative validation. It was an "effort to understand Sanskrit critical concepts and attitudes against the background of Western thought" (Menezes; Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). This comparative approach was not an act of intellectual submission but of illumination, a way to "illuminate knotty points in Sanskrit criticism by intelligent reference to English critics, even the very modern, like Eliot and Richards" (Menezes; Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). His stated aim was to correct the perception of Sanskrit criticism as a field of "tedious tabulations" (Krishnamoorthy, *Essays*)   and "unending divisions" (Krishnamoorthy, *Essays*).

Krishnamoorthy's first move was to confront the most persistent and damaging misinterpretation: the definition of *alaṅkāra* as mere "ornament." He directly attacks the "sweeping generalisation" that Sanskrit critics were occupied only in the "tedious tabulations   of 'ornaments'" (Krishnamoorthy, *Essays*). He argues that the very name of the field, *Alaṅkāra- śāstra*, is fundamentally "a study of beauty in literature" (Krishnamoorthy, *Essays*).

He redefines the concept by aligning it with the central preoccupation of Anglo-American New   Criticism: poetic imagery. In his analysis, Krishnamoorthy argues that the "principle of alankara or imagery" is what critics discovered as the source of poetic beauty (Krishnamoorthy,   *Studies*). *Alaṅkāra*, therefore, is not a decorative appendage but the essential mechanism of "imagery" (Krishnamoorthy, *Studies*) and the very "indirect use of language" (*vakrokti*) that   lies at the "very heart of the matter" (Krishnamoorthy, *Essays*). This transforms *alaṅkāra* from a "stereotyped rule" (Krishnamoorthy, *Essays*) into an organic *mechanism* of poetic expression,   a concept perfectly legible and respectable to a reader trained in I. A. Richards or Cleanth Brooks (Menezes; Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*).

Krishnamoorthy also refreshes the concept of *rasa*. He begins by defining the ideal critic, the   *sahṛdaya*, not as a learned person who memorizes rules (*śāstrin*), but as "one akin to the poet in sensibility" (Krishnamoorthy, *Essays*). This immediately shifts the critical ground from technical classification to aesthetics and "good taste versus bad taste" (Krishnamoorthy, *Essays*).

He then carefully distinguishes *rasa* (aesthetic emotion) from *bhāva* (raw, real-world emotion).   "Highly sensuous descriptions of amours," he warns, "will cease to be instances of *śṛṅgāra- rasa* in literature"; they are "only

caricatures of the true *rasa*" (Krishnamoorthy, *Essays*). Instead, he defines *rasa* as the "totality of the final, aesthetic, experience" (Krishnamoorthy,

Essays), an impersonal and universal psychological process of contemplation (Menezes). It is not something specific to only Indian culture but the "sine qua non of literature" itself (Krishnamoorthy, *Essays*). By defining *rasa* as a universal theory of "aesthetic experience" (Menezes), Krishnamoorthy makes it accessible and relevant to the analysis of any literature, far beyond its original Sanskrit context (Menezes).

Krishnamoorthy's most audacious and effective move is his direct comparison of the ninth- century theorist Ānandavardhana with the twentieth-century author-critic T.S. Eliot (Krishnamoorthy, "Indian Poetics"). He demonstrates that the "knotty points" (Krishnamoorthy, *Essays*) of Indian poetics are, in fact, the very same problems being grappled with by the modern West.

He finds a "close resemblance" and "unmistakable identity of approach" (Krishnamoorthy, "Indian Poetics") between Ānandavardhana's three-fold classification of *vastu-dhvani* (suggestion of a matter) and Eliot's "Three Voices of Poetry" (Krishnamoorthy, "Indian Poetics").

1. **Eliot's "first voice"** (the poet talking to himself, the lyric) is mapped directly to svataḥ- saṃbhavī—a suggested idea that is "naturally possible" in the real world (Krishnamoorthy, "Indian Poetics").

2. **Eliot's "second voice"** (the poet addressing an audience, the epic) is compared to kavi- prauḍhokti-siddha—a suggested idea that "exists only in the imagination of the poet speaking in the first person" (Krishnamoorthy, "Indian Poetics").

3. **Eliot's "third voice"** (the poet creating a dramatic character) is equated with kavi- nibaddha-prauḍhokti-siddha—an idea that "exists only in the imaginative world of the character invented by the poet" (Krishnamoorthy, "Indian Poetics").

Furthermore, Krishnamoorthy links Eliot's most famous critical concept, the "objective correlative," directly to the *rasa* theory's mechanism of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* (universalization), whereby the *vibhāvas* (objective correlatives like plot and character) evoke an impersonal aesthetic emotion. He also equates Eliot's distinction between "personal emotion" and "art emotion" with the classical Indian distinction between *bhāva* and *rasa* (Krishnamoorthy, "Indian Poetics").

By translating the Sanskrit tradition into the dominant critical currency of Anglo-American New Criticism, Krishnamoorthy makes it legible, modern, and undeniably sophisticated (Menezes; Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). This act, however, is not one of surrender. By demonstrating that Eliot's "modern" insights were "unmistakably" prefigured and systematically illustrated by Ānandavardhana in the ninth century, he indirectly reverses the flow of critical modernity from the relatively modern times to the past. He validates the "alternative genealogies" of Indian thought by establishing their profound intellectual precedence.

If K. Krishnamoorthy's project was the comparative *validation* of Sanskrit poetics, Krishna Chaitanya's was its radical expansion. In works like *A New History of Sanskrit Literature* (1962) and *Sanskrit Poetics* (1965), Chaitanya takes the newly validated concepts of *rasa* and *dhvani* and argues that they are not merely literary tools but the constituent parts of a complete "integrative philosophy" (Menezes; Chaitanya, *Sanskrit Poetics*; Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*), one that offers a more holistic vision of humanity than the fragmented modernism of the West.

Like Krishnamoorthy, Chaitanya begins his 1965 masterwork *Sanskrit Poetics* by lamenting the "hermetic" state of the field, criticizing the scholarship of De and Kane as "unintelligible" and weighed down by jargon (Chaitanya, *Sanskrit Poetics*; Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). His stated goal is to move beyond this "cacophony on the brass" to recover the "continuous melody on the flute" (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*)—the underlying philosophy curtailed by mechanical classification. His method, like Krishnamoorthy's, is "elaborately critical and comparative" (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*).

Chaitanya deepens the comparative analysis of *dhvani* (suggestion) by tracing it to the fountainhead of European modernism: French Symbolism. He notes the "astonishing parallelism between the Indian theory of

poetic resonance (Dhvani) and the doctrine, elaborated mostly by Mallarmé, of the symbolist movement in French poetry" (Chaitanya, *Sanskrit Poetics*; Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*).

Chaitanya argues that both Ānandavardhana and Mallarmé were engaged in the same project: theorizing a poetic language that transcends mere denotation (Chaitanya, *Sanskrit Poetics*). He identifies the Sanskrit theorist Bhamaha's term *Varta* ("news" or "reportage") (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*) as the exact equivalent of the "referential" or "scientific" speech that Mallarmé and the symbolists sought to escape (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). Both traditions discovered that the "soul of poetry" (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*) lies not in what is *said* (the *vācya*, or denotative meaning) but in what is *suggested* (the *vyangya*, or resonant meaning). This suggested meaning, Chaitanya explains, is what Mallarmé called "that volatile scattering which we call the Spirit" (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). By linking *dhvani* to Mallarmé, Chaitanya globalizes the concept, framing it as a universal and sophisticated theory of poetic semantics that India had mastered centuries before the West (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*).

Chaitanya's most profound contribution, however, is his elevation of *rasa* from an aesthetic category to the central tenet of an "integrative philosophy" (Menezes; Chaitanya, *Sanskrit Poetics*). He traces this worldview back to the "Vedic vision of life," which he argues was "basically a poetic vision" (Menezes; Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). He cites the Vedic reference to the liberated soul as *Rasena triptah* ("reposing in aesthetic relish") as a "profoundly intuitive summation of the aesthetic attitude, which did not drift away from life but embraced it and integrated it" (Menezes; Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*).

This *rasa*-centric philosophy of integrated-living, he argues, was sidelined by later "world-denying transcendentalists" (Menezes; Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). It was Vyasa, the author of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhagavad Gītā*, who "reestablished the validity of the aesthetic attitude" and "robustly affirmed the authenticity of being-in-the-world" (Menezes; Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*).

Following the trail of the philosopher-critic Abhinava Gupta, Chaitanya presents *rasa* as the "consummation" of all four traditional ends of human life (*puruṣārthas*): *Artha* (wealth/security), *Kāma* (pleasure/desire), *Dharma* (moral/social duty), and *Mokṣa* (spiritual liberation) (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). In this way of thinking, poetic experience is not just an escape from life or a mere supplement to it; it is the *ultimate fulfillment* of life, the very modality through which ethics and liberation are experienced.

Chaitanya, challenging T.S. Eliot's reading of Indian texts, notes that Eliot, in *Four Quartets*, "struggl[es] with the problem of reconciling the demands of action in this world and of poetic experience" (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). Eliot, Chaitanya argues, fundamentally "misunderstands" the *Gītā* as a call for "withdrawal from life," claiming this view is "what Krishna meant" (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). Chaitanya reverses this critical hierarchy. He points out that Eliot is wrong, and that his own creator, Vyasa, actually meant the opposite. For Vyasa, *Yoga* was not withdrawal but "skill in action" (*Karmasu-kausala*) (Menezes;

Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). This is a powerful post-colonial moment: the Indian critic, armed with a superior understanding of his own "integrative philosophy," corrects the Western modernist's flawed and life-denying appropriation of an Indian text.

Where Krishnamoorthy provided the critical *validation* and Chaitanya the *philosophical depth*, K.Satchidanandan takes this reclaimed tradition and transforms it into an explicitly *political, post-colonial* program for contemporary literary production and criticism. His work completes the "alternative modernity" project by weaponizing poetics for cultural self-assertion.

Satchidanandan's analysis begins with a direct assault on the "Eurocentric" and "Anglophile" critical establishment that dominates Indian academia (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). He argues that the term "post-colonialism" has been "hijacked by the revivalist discourse" on one hand, and on the other, functions as a "fashionably re-christened" term for "Commonwealth Literature" (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). This hegemonic discourse, he charges, exclusively centers Indian Writing in English (IWE) while dismissing the vast *bhasha* literatures as "regional" or, worse, "vernaculars" (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). This is not just a matter of terminology but of power. Satchidanandan asserts that the "most authentic expression" of India's "profound post-colonial civilisational crisis" can also be found in the *bhasha* works, not just in the internationally celebrated IWE canon (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*).

As a counter to this hegemony, Satchidanandan champions "Nativism" (*desivad*) (Satchidanandan, "Defining"). He is keenly aware of its "ambivalences" (Satchidanandan, "Defining"), warning that Nativism can easily degenerate into "rustic revivalism," a "nostalgic" quest for a "pure East," or an "uncritical valorisation of feudal values" (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). He rejects this "regressive" form of nativism.

Instead, he defines Nativism in its "positive and progressive" aspect as "a celebration of the pluralism" and, crucially, "an interrogation of the existing canons that are most often a continuation of the orientalist notions of Indianness" (Satchidanandan, "Defining"). The method for this progressive Nativism is the conscious creation of "alternative genealogies" (Satchidanandan, "The Making of Indian Literature"). This method involves a deliberate "decolonisation of sensibility" (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*) that bypasses the colonial- influenced canon to connect contemporary expression directly to indigenous traditions, both classical (*marga*) and folk (*desi*) (Satchidanandan, "The Making of Indian Literature";

Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*). This leads to his concept of "textual democracy" (Satchidanandan, "Defining"). He uses the example of the "many Ramayanas" (Buddhist, Jain, folk, etc.) to argue that "None of these texts can claim to be more authentic than any other; privileging one at the expense of another will be a violation" (Satchidanandan, "Defining").

This pluralistic, nativist framework becomes a powerful political tool. It shatters the singular, monolithic "India" constructed by both Orientalists and nationalist revivalists. In its place, it allows for the formation of new "imagined communities" or "alternative nationhoods" (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*; Satchidanandan, "Of Many Indias"). This theoretical move is what provides a lineage and a legitimate aesthetic for the subaltern voices previously excluded from all canons (Satchidanandan, *Indian literature*).

- **Dalit Literature:** Dalit poetry becomes a central form, not because it fits any classical definition, but because it "politicised the entire field of poetry" by bringing in new dialects and "conceiving poetic activity itself in political terms" (Satchidanandan, Indian literature).

- **Feminist Literature:** Similarly, modern feminist poetry becomes a search for a "counter language, a 'mother-tongue' that is capable of transcending male rationality" (Satchidanandan, Indian literature). This project can create its own "alternative genealogy" by connecting to the "long though discontinuous tradition" of militant feminine consciousness in bhakti poets like Akkamahadevi or Lal Ded (Satchidanandan, Indian literature).

Satchidanandan's project thus tries to contribute to the "alternative modernity" by redefining the "modern" itself. Modernity, in his framework, is not a linear progression from the past but a *political act of archival selection*.

Vakrokti (oblique expression) and its reanalysis perfectly encapsulates the way "alternative modernity" can be put into action. A comparative analysis of this principle demonstrates that the indigenous tradition possessed not only profound theories of aesthetic reception (*rasa*) and semantics (*dhvani*), but also a fully-formed theory of modernist *form* that mirrors one of the key concepts of 20th-century European theory.

The 10th-century critic Rājānaka Kuntaka, in his *Vakroktijīvita*, defines the very "life" (*jivita*) of poetry as *vakrokti*. This is "a technique involving oblique and intricate language" (Bhattacharya) that constitutes a "deliberate departure from the empirical linguistic mode to achieve aesthetic effect" (Shrawan). It is, in short, a deviation from ordinary usage. Kuntaka builds his entire system on the fundamental distinction between *svabhāvokti* (natural, plain, or literal statement) and *vakrokti* (deviant, "crooked" speech), arguing that the latter is the "hallmark of creative literature" (Shrawan). This critical framework provides a stunningly precise parallel to the 20th-century Russian Formalist concept of *ostranenie*, or "defamiliarization" ("to make strange"), as articulated by Viktor Shklovsky in his seminal essay "Art as Technique" (Pain; Shrawan). Shklovsky, like Kuntaka, "agreed on the fundamental principle of poetics lying in the distinction between language of literature and everyday language" (Shrawan). Shklovsky's definition of poetic language as a "difficult, roughened, impeded language" (Shrawan; Pain) designed to enhance perception and combat the automatism of habit is a perfect functional description of *vakrokti*. Kuntaka's higher levels of obliquity, such as *prakaraṇa-vakratā* (thematic deviation) and *prabandha-vakratā* (compositional or plot deviation), are seen by modern scholars as coming "nearer to Victor Shklovsky's concept of 'defamiliarization' than simple lexical and sentential deviation" (Bhattacharya).

This *Vakrokti-Ostranenie* parallel suggests that the Sanskrit tradition was "modern" in its formal concerns. It proves that an Indian critic, by turning to Kuntaka, could theorize the most radical formal experimentation of modernism without ever having read Shklovsky (Pain). From just three such examples, we may go ahead building an "alternative genealogy" by providing an indigenous critical toolbox for multiple aspects of literary analysis:

1. Aesthetic Reception (The Reader): *Rasa*

2. **Poetic Semantics (The Meaning):** *Dhvani*

3. **Literary Form (The Text):** *Vakrokti*

The work of these critics, namely K. Krishnamoorthy, Krishna Chaitanya, and K. Satchidanandan, among many others, can be used to demonstrate that Sanskrit poetics is not a static inheritance or an Orientalist curiosity, but a living and dynamic critical resource. By re-imagining these classical theories as dynamic principles for negotiating the postcolonial condition, they succeeded in moving beyond imitation and forging a self-aware, dialogic, and pluralistic Indian modernity that continues to shape the contours of contemporary literary discourse.

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EXPLORING MEMORY, IDENTITY AND EMOTIONS THROUGH MOVIE: INSIDE OUT (2015)

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Abstract

This reasearch explores the movie Inside Out (2015), directed by Pete Docter, shows how our emotions shape the way we think, feel, and grow. The film brings emotions like Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear, and Disgust to life as characters, giving us an easy way to see what happens inside the mind. This paper looks at the movie from both English and psychology point of view , showing how the story explains ideas such as memory, identity, and the role of emotions in daily life. The main message is that every emotion has a purpose, and real growth comes when we accept and work with all our feelings instead of denying them. By combining storytelling with psychological ideas, Inside Out it is not entertaining to watch but also teaches us about psychology in a way that feels simple and connected to everyday life. This study suggests that the movie is more than just a creative story but it is also a clear way to understand psychological concepts, especially the importance of accepting every feeling, even sadness, for healthy development.

Keywords: Emotions, memory, identity and colour theory, inside out.

Introduction

The movie Inside Out (2015) is a creative way to show how our emotions work inside the mind. It tells the story of a young girl, Riley, and how her feelings — Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear, and Disgust — guide her through life changes. The film helps us understand that every emotion has an important role in shaping our thoughts, memories, and personality.

This research focuses on how Inside Out explains the connection between emotions, memory, and identity. It also shows how the movie teaches us to accept all kinds of feelings instead of ignoring them. The story makes psychological ideas simple and easy to understand, helping us realize that both happy and sad emotions are necessary for emotional growth and a balanced mind.

Literature review

Many studies in psychology show that emotions play a big part in how people think, remember, and make decisions. Psychologists like Paul Ekman have explained that basic emotions such as joy, sadness, anger, fear, and disgust are universal and found in every human being. These emotions help us respond to situations and connect with others.

The movie Inside Out uses these psychological ideas in a creative way. It shows how memories are connected to feelings and how our experiences shape who we are. According to cognitive psychology, emotions and memories are linked — happy moments create joyful memories, while sad moments help us learn and grow. The film clearly shows this through Riley's experiences and her "core memories," which build her personality.

Other researchers have also talked about how colour and emotion are related. In Inside Out, each emotion has its own colour — Joy is yellow, Sadness is blue, Anger is red, Fear is purple, and Disgust is green. This use of colour helps the audience easily understand how emotions look and feel.

Overall, the literature and theories show that emotions are not just reactions, but powerful tools that build our identity and support our mental growth. The film Inside Out presents these ideas in a simple and meaningful way.

Analysis and discussion

The movie Inside Out shows how emotions work together to shape a person's mind and behavior. The main character, Riley, experiences many changes when she moves to a new city. Inside her mind, five emotions — Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear, and Disgust — try to help her deal with these changes. Each emotion plays an important role in how she reacts to different situations.

At first, Joy tries to control everything and keep Riley happy all the time. But as the story goes on, we see that sadness is just as important as joy. When Riley feels sad, she starts to understand her feelings better and connects more deeply with her parents. This shows that emotions are not "good" or "bad"; all are necessary for emotional balance and healthy growth.

The movie also explains how memories are formed and stored. Riley's "core memories" represent her main experiences that build her identity. When she feels both joy and sadness at the same time, a new kind of memory is made — one that is more real and mature. This teaches us that growth happens when we accept all our emotions instead of ignoring them.

The use of colours in the movie makes these ideas easy to understand. Each colour represents a feeling and helps the audience connect emotions visually. For example, blue represents sadness, which is calm and deep, while yellow represents joy, which is bright and full of life.

Overall, Inside Out shows that emotions are not separate from memory or identity — they all work together. By accepting every emotion, we become stronger, more understanding, and emotionally healthy.

Conclusion

The movie Inside Out beautifully explains how emotions shape our thoughts, memories, and identity. It shows that every feeling — whether joy or sadness — has a purpose and helps us grow. Through Riley's story, we learn that it is normal to feel different emotions and that accepting them makes us emotionally strong.

This research highlights that emotions are not separate from our daily life; they guide our behavior and decisions. The film teaches an important lesson — being happy all the time is not possible, and sometimes sadness helps us understand ourselves better.

In short, Inside Out is more than just an animated movie. It is a meaningful example of how psychology works inside the human mind, showing that emotional balance comes from understanding and accepting all feelings.

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REFRAMING CULTURAL NARRATIVES: THE CHANGING AESTHETICS OF CONTEMPORARY SHORT FICTION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract:

In the digital age, the development of short fiction has gradually changed. It was originally designed to offer narrative depth of a novel in a more concise format. This idea however has undergone significant transformation and changes and much more to make it attractive for the digital audience in today's age. Platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Wattpad have transformed the aesthetics of storytelling by incorporating immediacy, non-linear narratives, multi-perspective voices, and minimalist forms that show change in social behaviour and cultural constructs. Short fiction has gradually changed to much more from just short stories. In an Indian context, previous short stories by writers such as R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Premchand, and Raja Rao examined themes of colonialism, identity, migration, and tradition, while modern authors like Himanshi Shelat, Geetanjali Shree, G.A. Kulkarni, and C.S. Lakshmi and several others focus on existentialism, anxiety, hybridity, self-discovery and even translation. This realignment outlines the way cultural narratives, popular culture, and identity politics guide the story-telling and redefinition of roles. Also, the role of print culture and the change in its nature plays a vital role in maintaining literacy value via journals, articles, anthologies and more. Furthermore, the co-existence of print media and digital media and its challenges, merits and demerits play quite some role in the interaction between, leaving a question whether it brings growth or not. Thus, this paper discussed how modern short stories serve not just as literary texts but also as cultural artifacts that reflect the dynamic relationship between tradition, digital innovation, and the transmission of culture in a period of increasing interconnectedness.

Keywords: Short stories, short fiction, Indian English Writing, Contemporary

Introduction:

The idea of short fiction or short stories in general was to give the audience something to read in less time but with the same feel of a novel which may include a plot, story, characters and more. But with the digital age we see that social media platforms have not only changed short fiction but to a point revolutionized it. Platforms like Instagram, Twitter and others play a significant role in shaping or rather reshaping the aesthetic of contemporary short stories and short fiction. The theme of immediacy and at times forcefully changing traditional norms has very much made its way into this reshaping of stories or as the digital age suggests reshaping of aesthetic.

Theoretical Framework:

While the earlier short stories in the Indian Subcontinent dealt majorly with the theme of pre and post-independence themes of culture, identity, migration, tradition, adaptation, war, displacement, post-colonialism and much more. Writers like RK Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Ruskin Bond, Prem Chand and more have added to this writing. Furthermore, the contemporary stories that we read now have different theme and this change has been deliberately brought through social media by themes like Existentialism, anxiety and more. When reading modern and contemporary stories we see that even regional writers add to this change which in turn add to the genre of Indian Writing in English Translation and not just Indian English Writing. Writers such as Himanshi Shelat, G. A. Kulkarni, Sirshendu Mukhopadhyay, Geetanjali Shree, C. S. Lakshmi and many more.

With these writers we see that contemporary short fiction often employs multiple viewpoints or unconventional perspectives which allows in the exploration of characters and the story on a deeper level. The addition of characters and various perspective is a rather new idea where different POVs are apparently cool for the newer generation. The fact that we see more and more non-linear plots and flashbacks in stories is due to this addition of multiple narrators and varied viewpoints. A few topics that can be seen in newer or contemporary short fiction apart from multi perspective and non-linear plots is the fact of compression, minimalism, existentialism, self-reflection, mix media with hybrid genre and many more. All these genres are basically a reflection of the ongoing social behaviour and the changed social construct that emphasises more and more on expressing of feelings and making it

as niche as possible thus reducing the number of characters and increasing the part of self-reflection and storytelling of a person. The basic point of difference between any short story writer now and in the past decade will be related to any one of these points. For example, if we compare Mulk Raj Anand to Himanshi Shelat the initial point of difference will be translating Shelat to English first thus making it a work of Indian Writing in English Translation. Furthermore, the plot changes drastically i.e in Anand we see several characters of a village with usually the story being depicted of a family or a rural setting but even if we don not take the setting into consideration and only the characterization even then Anand's many Characters do not match Shelat's 2-3 characters in the short story. The word limit of both the writers essentially does not differ substantially but the change in writing with time can be seen reflected through these stories.

When we talk about cultural narratives or cultural transmission it is essential to point out that popular culture, identity and changing narratives play a significant role in in short fiction or short stories. If we look at popular culture and its influence on fiction and writing essentially, we see a set change in stories that how popular culture has not only influenced but also changes the style and stories of writing. It can be seen that how ideas like identity and its description have changed over time. Like we see the basic description of a women moving from a rather rural, homely, patriarchal idea to the idea of a strong, independent women as the world calls it today. Like Mulk Raj Anand and Himanshu Shelat might define a female protagonist in extremely different ways, but of course also because their story setting differs much. Contradictorily, it can be said that the short stories of Tagore might have stronger female protagonists then both Anand and Shelat, is a reflection of different cultural backgrounds and narratives. Also, writers like Uday Prakash and Bani Basu explore and write on social issues like alienation, inequalities and changing of cultures thus reframing everyday narratives and making them into stories that feel like digital age.

The fact that these writers write very closely to their cultural background helps us differentiate the stories and plots. When we see Tagore, we do not essentially categorize him in as a pre, post-independence or modern writer but the plot usually does it for Tagore similar to Himanshi Shelat, Namita Gokhle, C S Lakshmi and more. With short fiction it is important to inculcate even translated texts and not just original ones because digital age bases a lot of its ideas for new age culture on earlier writings. With translation it opens up new horizons for digital media. Culture has become a significant aspect when it comes to digital media and portraying of culture in different ways with pop art, contemporary art etc add to the changing aesthetics. For example, the aesthetic representation of the modern Indian women with bright saris, linen cloths, strong statement jewellery and accessories comes from the pop art rolling out and being created on social media has severely affected and changed narratives of people of other cultures who now view everyone with the same lenses and expect what is seen to be true.

Print culture plays a significant role in short stories or rather with the fact that the decrease in pages and limiting of words comes from the fact that industrialization did in fact limit what and who can print also the concept of power and controlling of narrative limited of what can or should be printed and what not. Contrary to belief one can also say that Literary journals, anthologies and magazines have become important spaces for new voices and thus the idea that only famous writers can publish becomes an idea of the past. Similarly, it can also be said that print media preserves culture by publishing stories first and then in online journals and magazines. Platforms like Wattpad, Kindle, Medium along and tags like Bookstagram have reshaped how fiction and short fiction works and thus with the idea of online contact it has also altered how writers and readers interact. *"Since, digital fiction entails the use of hypermedia, including links, audio or video, the reader gets to engage with the narratives in a more interactive manner."* (Brown, 2022). Because it bases literary worth, maintains regional identities, and offers continuity in a constantly evolving digital age, this interaction guarantees that print culture will continue to play a significant role in modern short fiction.

One another aspect of short fiction that changes in the digital age is also that it has also changed the pedagogical aspects of writing and reading while moving from paper to screen. These pedagogical aspects have also enhanced multimodal learning because the increase in availability of resources has also improved writing and interactivity of cultures in such ways that short fiction may change not only in narratives but also in learning, writing, thinking and many more. Talking about short fiction and digital media it is also crucial to address the fact that it goes both ways and there are pros and cons when it comes to this. Furthermore, as users and readers have moved about certain limited platforms like Wattpad, one must also consider the other digital areas that have been making impact online and mentally on users for the same. The evolution of Digital Literature has not just formed and gave birth to different narratives and texts but also to several areas of reading and writing like, Digital Poetry, Hypertext fiction,

E-readers, Digital Libraries, Self publication, Audiobooks, Online Literary Magazines, Literary Blogs, Live streaming, Expansion of Social Media Platforms, Digital Storytelling and many more.

The ideas of transnational and transcultural writing ideally come from theories of intersection and mixing of cultures that happens with the increase in diaspora, colonialism, decolonisation and contemporary mixing of cultures. All this in turn also increases the subjectivity of the writers as well as the readers because multiple narratives come in perspective for culture with the mixing. This intermixing of texts, languages, stories, cultures, writing style etc, also in turn at times also knowingly or unknowingly subverts some cultures while prevailing or dominating others. This happens not because a certain culture or language is rich in its essence or basis but because the presence in the contemporary era or digital media is highly dominant. Additionally, it is important to address that how even comparing cultures at their basis is baseless and compliant and at any given point digital media in today's world can change narrative and make this popular and unpopular in an instance.

In accordance to Stuart Hall's theories, it can be said that media or culture is encoded with meanings by producers and decoded by audiences, who may interpret them in dominant and negotiated ways. Thus, affecting the digital media audience in a similar way where audience are free to interpret their own meaning while forming different narratives for all. Here encoding and decoding also applies to the digital images created with the short stories produced which is majorly done to limit the imagination of the reader, but contradictorily this limitation constrains the audience's imagination where they are given to think only in a particular way. Hall says that how identity is not fixed and is constantly reshaped by external forces, i.e digital media and its effect on short fiction here. This can be identified by the gradual shift in plots from nationalism to existentialism from the pre-independence era to now in the digital age or contemporary era.

The changing that happens with digital storytelling goes beyond a technological shift; it is a significant cultural moment that changes the boundaries and aesthetics of story construction and reading in today's moment. Digital media has democratized the possibilities of both creating and consuming stories and has led to participatory and interactive forms of narrative that move with the changing dynamics of culture. For the younger generations, digital culture has changed how people both write and read, which has resulted in the emergence of new practices of storytelling and aesthetics of the contemporary novel. These forms of narrative, together with immersive technologies such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence-generated narratives, have expanded the opportunities for people and communities to enact, capture, represent and experiment with their cultural identities. This has resulted in both diversification of storytelling practices but also the de-coupling of collective memory. With the continued rapid evolution of digital media, the relationship between the personal and the collective narrative has been redefined to allow for more fluid, dynamic, and inclusive representations of cultural histories, identity, and heritage in the realm of short fiction and beyond. The findings suggest that the contemporary short fiction landscape has been reconfigured by reframing cultural narratives through new forms of storytelling facilitated by digital technology and platforms. The innovations of this digital age have increased accessibility, shaped the voices included within the narrative, and applied interactive, participatory, and experimental aesthetics, thus resulting in an increasingly inclusive, multi-faceted, and shifting representation of culture and identity in literary fiction.

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CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS AND APPROACHES TO TRANSLATIONS OF ANCIENT TEXTS: A CRITICAL STUDY OF TRANSLATING JAIN TEXTS

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Abstract

Translation Studies has developed as an academic domain that functions to bridge the gap between diverse cultures, linguistic landscape, and time-periods. Translations have faced multiple challenges throughout their evolution but have continued to flourish because of the role they play in the enrichment of the culture and literary canon. Contemporary trends in translations, including the usage of artificial intelligence, digitalization, and online manuscript collection have accelerated the speed, accuracy, and preservation of translations. However, they come with limitations, particularly while dealing with ancient Jain texts. This paper sheds light on the complex nature of Jain canonical texts, including multilingualism, untranslatable diction, linguistic and semantic structure, vast temporal gap, and cultural and philosophical dimensions. These challenges are amplified while using modern tools like the AI because of the lack of digitalized data, variation in manuscripts, fragile condition of manuscripts and stark difference in the linguistic, cultural and temporal framework of the source and target texts. Present paper examines the theoretical and practical approaches of dealing with the issues of translations, particularly of Jain texts and devises mechanisms to produce unbiased, and comprehensible translations that tend to preserve the legacy of the Jain canonical texts while catering to the needs of the modern readers.

Keywords: Ancient Texts, Contemporary trends, Jainism, Modern Approaches, Translation Challenges.

Introduction

Jainism, an intellectually rich and one of the oldest religious tradition still in existence, has a complex textual heritage. Its literature comprises canonical scriptures, commentaries, transcreations, and other forms that have evolved through centuries. The scriptures were originally composed in Prākṛta and later on into Saṃskṛta and other vernacular languages or Bhāṣā in order to ensure their preservation and accessibility. Translations, interpretations, and adaptations have occupied a distinctive position in the Jain literary canon building, involving delicate doctrinal and theological balancing and core principle transference into other languages that resist convenient equivalence. Translation in Jainism is not merely a linguistic transfer but a cultural and philosophical process that has shaped the knowledge, beliefs, and practices of the community over the generations.

This paper explores the translation tradition in Jainism. It emphasizes on the problems and challenges in translation on the sacred texts, particularly Jain texts. It deals with modern challenges, particularly linguistic and cultural challenges, inconsistent manuscripts, AI translations and other social and cultural problems. The paper then sheds light of the strategies and approaches adopted by translators to address these challenges in order to preserve linguistic fidelity, doctrinal accuracy and wider cultural accessibility despite diverse challenges. Ultimately, the paper appreciates the contribution of the tradition of translations in keeping the Jain literary and intellectual heritage dynamic and alive. It demonstrates translations within the Jain tradition as an ethical, dialogical, creative and philosophical endeavour that has shaped the present face of its literary canon.

Modern Challenges in Translations of Ancient Jain Texts

1. Linguistic Challenges

Unlike many religions which remain confined to a fixed sacred language, Jainism embraces multiple languages and interpretations due to its pluralistic values. Though beneficial, this pluralism invites specific problems, including semantic ambiguities, sectarian divergence, contextual misunderstanding and risks of misinterpretations. Firstly, multilingual complexities pose a crucial challenge. Jain scriptures exist in multiple languages including Prākṛta, Saṃskṛta , Hindi, Indian vernaculars as well as European languages. This requires improved multilingual capabilities on the part of the translator so that the gap between the source and the target languages can be navigated while maintaining consistency at linguistic and semantic levels.

Secondly, the archaic or ancient language complexity of source languages. The source language of the canon is archaic in nature which is the root cause of several significant difficulties due to its obsolete vocabulary, unique grammatical structure, and absence of standardized punctuation system. Ardhamāgadhī Prakirt evolved from oral-vernaculars centuries ago and substantially differs from modern Indo-Aryan languages in terms of its vocabulary, grammatical structure, punctuations and script style. Translating the canonical scriptures requires deep understanding of language structures, grammar, vocabulary, and linguistic conventions of both the languages. Majorly, the target language may lack equivalent counterparts of the source text. Even when both languages belong to the same linguistic family, there exist gaps which may result in varied or flawed interpretations or creation of new words.

2. Doctrine-Specific Concepts and Terminological Inflexibility

Doctrine-specific terms and concepts are intricate ideas whose exact sense lies in the source language only. Ideas like *anekāntavāda* (the theory of manifold reality or non-absolutism), *syādvāda* (doctrine of conditioned predication), and *nāyā* (standpoints or perspectives) which are central to Jain metaphysics do not have exact equivalents in most of the languages, hence delivering their essence through translations difficult task. Often, alternate terms or phrases that can closely deliver the meaning are used in the target language.

Moreover, doctrinal terms are unique and intrinsically embedded in the original language and tradition such that they resist substitution. They are often non-interchangeable and precisely defined within the philosophical tradition. The etymological roots of terms lie in the source language and are derivates of its roots term. For example, terms like *jīva*, *ajīva*, *pudgala*, and *bandha* have etymological roots in the source language. Moreover, translation into European languages often results in finding Western equivalents which cannot do justice with the accuracy of Jaina thought. For instance, *jīva* being translated as "soul" (Vora 20), cannot contain the comprehensive concept that *jīva* entails. Similarly, *ahimsa* presents a challenge because it includes a very extensive worldview that includes physical, mental, verbal and spiritual dimensions of non-harm.

Cort explains this challenge as "Conceptual mapping is not translation. Too often, translators overlay Western philosophical grids, obscuring the internal consistency of Jain metaphysics" (Cort). Hence, translation into another language is a cumbersome task that requires precise replacements or explanatory phrases. It is the translator's choice to retain the Prākṛta/ Saṃskṛta term with additional explanation or substitute with a culturally adapted translated term from the target language. However, such loose renderings may lead to distorted architecture of the doctrines or loss of consistency and meaning in the source text.

3. Cultural Challenges

Translation of ancient Jain scriptures is laden with cultural challenges which are rooted in language, traditions, and historical, social and religious contexts. "The cultural context of ancient Bhartiya texts makes them standalone. They often contain cultural references, metaphors, and symbols that are deeply rooted in the historical and social context of the time" (Malhotra 19). The Saṃskṛta and Prākṛta compositions are embedded with specialized terminologies and archaic usages to decipher which the translators must be well informed about the Jain doctrines, their languages and the socio-cultural backdrop under which they were composed. Moreover, these texts, often composed in the form of Sutras or *gathas* are very concise and intricately formed, making translations inadequate in delivering the intended meaning. This requires supplementary notes or explanations to bring out the sense clearly. Additionally, sectarian divergences lead to divergent interpretations, often leading to challenges in interpreting and presenting a neutral and comprehensive translation. The Jain tradition did not have a clear demarcation between translations and commentaries and the commentaries acted as interpretative and elaborate translations in order to deal with changing linguistic and cultural milieus. This added layers of complexity for the translators who have to decide whether to abide by the historical original text or translate the commentary to make it more comprehendible. Historically, broader linguistic politics also played a significant role in deciding which language to prefer, for example, Saṃskṛta over Prākṛta, in order to align with the intellectual trends. Such influences cause textual variations which becomes the task of the translator to deal with. Therefore, translating Jain canonical texts is not just a linguistic conversion. Rather it requires cultural mediation to serve the dual purpose of preserving their doctrinal authority and ritualistic significance, while making them accessible and comprehendible to the contemporary audience.

4.   Manuscript Preservation and Accessibility

Manuscript accessibility and preservation is intimately connected with the issue of translations in the modern times. The manuscript culture in Jainism while being "varied and rich" due to the community's commitment, has undergone deterioration that has become an obstacle for the translators. Firstly, the physical fragility of manuscripts is a fundamental problem because most Jain texts exist only in the form of these manuscripts which have become fragile, damaged or scattered across various collections. This fragility denotes the significant gaps in the textual tradition that is available for translation as "the surviving palm-leaf manuscripts are very rare." This issue is intensified particularly in case of the Digambar texts which were "generally written on palm leaves from south India and are thus more fragile than paper manuscripts from northern or western India" (Balbir, "Digambara Canon").

Secondly, there are certain conservation challenges involved in the preservation of manuscripts which include specialized treatment of manuscripts. The physical preservation of manuscripts is a resource-intensive activity as a research by The Victoria and Albert Museum's conservation work on Jain manuscripts shows, "manuscripts heavily illuminated and likely suffering from pigment corrosion have been encapsulated between sheets of plastic or glass" (Wheeler, 1).

5.   Digital Preservation Challenges

The digitalization of manuscripts has solved certain challenges of manuscript preservation but has come up with newer challenges. Though digitalization makes the texts available to global audiences, it comes with technical and monetary challenges. A academic study notes that, "digitization has transformed the field of manuscript preservation by introducing modern and technical approaches to the preservation of these valuable and ancient manuscripts", but it requires substantial investment in "high quality hardware and software, lighting equipments" and "software for data capturing of high quality are also costly" (Kumar).

Moreover, there exist challenges of digital preservation of manuscripts that extend beyond simple digitalization. First significant challenge is the standardization of digital formats and metadata. The same academic research emphasized that "digital capture, metadata, access should meet international and national standards" because a lack of standard and uniform approach across various institutions will result in creating compatibility issues and will put a restrain on the utility of digital data for translation purposes. Second, technological obsolescence is a crucial issue because digital preservation requires constant upgradations in order to stay at par with the technological advancements and have access to digital materials. Research suggests that, "for the sake of posterity, we need a solution to the problem of digital preservation, often known as the archiving of manuscripts for preservation and access" (Paul 2733). Third, the authentication and integrity of the digitized texts is a particular issue in case of canonical texts. The absolute accuracy of religious texts is a major concern in the process of translation as any digital corruption can lead to serious distortion of the text, hence affecting translation accuracy. Summing up the challenges of digitalization of manuscripts and creation of a digital library, Paul writes, "When creating a digital library, there are numerous obstacles that must be overcome: What are the goals of creating digital libraries, what software will be best suited to those goals, what resources need to be digitised, what are the technical aspects of software to provide seamless access of digital library, and how can one secure the content uploaded in digital library?" (Paul 2739).

6.   AI Translations and Associated Limitations

While the Artificial Intelligence has brought in significant speed and promising solutions to overcome language barriers, there are significant limitations while dealing with Jain scriptures. Besides technical challenges, these include fundamental questions associated to the nature of philosophical and religious texts and their translations. Doshi, in his research specifically on "AI translations of Jain Scriptures" sheds light on critical issues including, "semantic distortion, loss of context, cultural misinterpretation, and linguistic errors" (Doshi 1).

These limitations impact the quality of translations produced resulting in misunderstanding of the core doctrines, rituals and practices, diminished spiritual connection and creation of misunderstanding and misconception. Firstly, semantic distortion takes place in a literal word-for-word translation that AI prioritizes, which leads to loss of actual intended meaning. Texts with greater nuanced messages are distorted if word choice and phrasing is missed resulting is loss of original meaning of the source material. Secondly, loss of context becomes inevitable as AI

systems are not equipped enough to interpret the broader context of any given passage or read between the lines which leads to an incoherence translation production, often missing the accurate cultural background, historical or political references or the intended audience. Third, cultural misinterpretation is inevitable in religious texts, particularly Jain texts because of its diverse literary canon, their unique concepts, diction and cultural ideologies. The vast temporal and geographic gap between production of the original and the translation amplifies the risk of such misinterpretations. Lastly, linguistic errors including grammatical, syntactic and vocabulary creep in given to the absence of sufficient, comprehensive dataset of original texts which are in Prākṛta, Saṃskṛta or *Bhasha*. These limitations lead to significant consequences affecting the comprehension of the sacred texts, creating distorted translations.

7. Lack of Compehensive Resources

The lack of standardized, comprehensive resources creates a cascade of problems in the process of translation manifesting at multiple levels including, a shortage of critical editions, absence of terminological standardization, need od interdisciplinary resource integration and the digital divide between available material. First, shortage of critical editions results in absence of standardized original texts which could be used for translations. in their lack, translators have to rely on varied manuscripts that may have discrepancies or textual variants. Thus, translators are required to navigate through the diverse readings and make informed choices. Second, despite some efforts to create Jain terminological glossaries and dictionaries, there is no standard database that can be uniformly referred. Moreover, different sects within Jainism use slightly variant terms making standardization even more complex. Third, the diverse knowledge encompassing linguistics, philosophy, history and religious studies that is required for coherent translations requires interdisciplinary resource integration. These resources are multiple and scared across institutions and databases, making their access difficult for individual translators or small teams. Lastly, the digital divide created between major academic institutions and small repositories further complicates the problem of availability. While some centres have digitalized significant collections, several smaller manuscript repositories lack the resources to digitalize the material, creating gaps in available material.

8. Interdisciplinary Requirements

The translation of Jain texts is a complex activity in the modern times due to its interdisciplinary requirements. The challenging nature of these texts calls for innovative approaches, collaborative methodologies, training programmes and institutional support for comprehensive translation activities. This is because besides linguistic skills, an expertise across multiple academic fields, cultural sensitivity and philosophical understanding is a prerequisite to successful translations of religious canonical texts. Linguistic competency incudes deep knowledge of the source language, which prominently are Ardhamāgadhī Prākṛta, various other Prākṛta dialects, Saṃskṛta , Apabhramsha, and various vernacular languages. "Jain philosophers have traditionally worked across multiple languages - Prākṛta, Saṃskṛta , Apabhramsha, and various vernacular languages - creating texts that assume multilingual competency" (Gorisse). Philosophical competency involves not only an understanding of core Jain principles but also their relationship with other Indian philosophies in order to understand their epistemological implications and position in contemporary philosophical debates. This enhances the ability to decipher the meaning and context in the sophisticated conceptual frameworks imbedded in Jain texts ("Ethics").

Historical contextualization of the texts is necessary in order to locate it the larger temporal and cultural framework in order to determine the political, social, geographical and religious framework within which it was composed. This also enables the translator to trace the transmission history of the manuscript and trace the trajectory of its evolution and preservation. "Each language has its own nuances, grammatical structures, and vocabulary. Translators must possess a deep understanding of these languages and their historical evolution to accurately capture the intended meaning of the texts" (Malhotra 19).

Digital humanities skills have become an increasing requisite for modern translation practices to assist the translator in working with digitalized manuscripts, digital archives, metadata, and online collaborative academic platforms. Hence, translation of Jain texts is a sophisticated activity that requires scholarly rigour, spiritual authenticity and interdisciplinary knowledge in order to produce effective outcomes.

Practical Approaches to Deal with Translations of Jain Texts

Despite significant challenges that accompany the translation of ancient Jain texts, scholars have devised a variety of strategies to preserve the doctrinal integrity and philosophical nuances of the original texts. These strategies are studied in this section are designed to bridge the gap between the linguistic, semantic, and cultural contexts of the source and target texts. These strategies act as technical and hermeneutical tools that ensure the transference of authenticity of the tradition through translations. By weaving together these practical strategies, translators of Jain canonical texts have been crafting renderings that have sustaining the ancient tradition's profound spiritual and literal legacy in a modern linguistic landscape by being as faithful, readable and culturally respectful as possible.

First, additional glossaries and commentaries are the most effective and oldest strategies that includes addition of brief explanations alongside the base text. These practices were indispensable in order to bridge the linguistic and cultural gaps as they included details explaining the historical and social context, marginal glosses for key source text terms, and appendices listing variant manuscript readings available. This practice was devised very early with the Prākṛta texts, and evolved through commentarial layers later on. "The Jain commentarial tradition is not ancillary but essential. It constitutes an evolving translation within the same language family, anticipating the challenges of later cross-linguistic translation" (Balbir 82). This method serves two significant purposes-it maintains the brevity of the canonical aphorisms, and ensures that their meaning is not lost. In the contemporary translational practices this method persists, specifically in bilingual editions where the commentary or explanation in the target language accompanies the root source text, which is left untouched.

Secondly, parallel text formats are used by modern Jain institutions, where the original Saṃskṛta or Prākṛta texts are presented alongside the translated versions, mostly in Hindi, Gujarati, English or other modern European languages. This practice is significant because it preserves the visibility and piousness of the source religious text, and acts as a guide to non-specialized readers. "By retaining the original alongside the translation, the text resists theological reduction and invites layered engagement" (Cort 153). For instance, the bilingual editions of *Tattvārthasūtra* or trilingual editions of *Samayasāra* contain the root texts, a literal translation, and explanatory commentaries and footnotes. This also facilitates a critical comparison between several interpretations across languages and enables the scholars to identify the points of divergence.

Thirdly, considering the multidisciplinary requirements of translation projects of ancient Jain scriptures, collaborative, interdisciplinary teams are required. According to Peter Newmark's advocacy for translator accountability, Modern projects require diverse expertise. Besides translators, linguists to understand the nature of archaic source languages, philologists to reconstruct authentic Prākṛta forms and resolve manuscript divergences, philosophers ad theologians who can interpret doctrinal texts and uphold logical coherence in the translations, monastic practitioners to ensure accurate ritualistic context and prevent misapplication of liturgical terms, and digital humanists who could prepare TEI-encoded source texts and enable searchable data and future revisions. Interdisciplinary translations are a critical task which requires a full spectrum of linguistic, philosophical and cultural competency, hence, collaborative teams and projects assemble to fulfil the purpose.

Fourth, integration of human expertise with digital tools and AI assistance is the need of the hour in the contemporary translation trends. AI assistance and digital tools enhance efficiency, and speed-up the process and provide platforms for storage, preservation, and accessibility of translated as well as source data. Machine translations accelerate the initial workforce by aiding initial draft formations, and its language specialized models constantly upgrade themselves, hence resulting in improved performance. However, human oversight remains non-negotiable in order to safeguard the doctrinal accuracy and cultural authenticity. Researches show that, "AI BLEU scores for Ardhamāgadhī remain low (14.9–17.8), underscoring the need for expert oversight" (Dalal 60). Therefore, while AI translations aid initial drafts, Jain texts' philosophical depth and contextual sensitivity can be maintained only through expert human intervention.

Lastly, a critical strategy of producing competent translations is cultivation of bilingual and multilingual scholars and practitioners, especially within the Jain educational systems. The training must include language immersion, textual hermeneutics, ethics of translations, and comparative philosophy. These scholars would not only consider translations as an academic or linguistic activity but as their spiritual responsibility. "Translation becomes a form of spiritual service (sādhanā) for Jain scholar-practitioners, linking language with liberation" (Wiley 61). Translators

who embody both, linguistic proficiency and doctrinal understanding would be capable of producing philosophically and culturally fit translations.

Conclusion

Through the arguments and assertions discussed in the paper, it can be concluded that translations of Jain texts into modern languages is an essential exercise that significantly enriches the Indian as well as Jain literary canon. However, there are certain challenges that modern translators face including linguistic, cultural, and related to preservation of manuscripts, AI translations, and digital tools usage. The paper has brought into light the contemporary strategies that are being used in order to overcome these challenges, including addition of glossaries, para-texts, and inculcating the multidisciplinary requirements, AI-Human integration and cultivation of multilingual scholars. The future research can be done in improvising these techniques that are majorly associated with upgradation of machine languages, availability of online resource material for translations and larger team work project initiations.

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"ONE THEME, MANY VOICES: A STUDY OF ANTHOLOGY CINEMA"

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Abstract

An Anthology movie which is also identified as portmanteau film, is a type of film which consists of assorted short stories that brought together into one opus which is nearly similar to the anthology in literature which is collection of short stories, poems and essays. It is a single film composed of three or more short films, which is different from one another, whereas knotted together by single theme. Each fragment in anthology may have different plots, characters and even directors. Just as anthology in literature which showcases the unity of purpose, an anthology film represents many viewpoints within single film experience. The very first anthology film is a German silent film 'Eerie Tales' which was released in 1919 who features a wraparound story with three different characters introducing chilling narratives and in India the first anthology film was a Tamil film 'Sirikkadhey' released in 1939 which consists of five short comedy films.

Anthology films have achieved a noteworthy prestige over the past two decades. For producing an Anthology movie, it involves a careful planning to ascertain that separate narratives remain distinctive while collectively connected to the single theme. It has to make balance between independence and unity. This paper examines how the anthology movies are created. Why directors produce anthology movie instead of individual short films or web-series. Which characteristics make the particular movie called anthology and what fosters the mass to watch the anthology movie, through the example of Indian anthology movie *Bombay Talkies.*

Keywords: anthology movie, assorted narratives, independence, short films, single theme, unity.

Introduction

Cinema has always been a very diverse medium of storytelling. There is a great evolution seen in its form, narrative, style and structure. A movie, which is also identified as a film or motion picture. It is a form of pictorial narration made by capturing the moving images and sound to form a visual narrative. A normal movie or feature film is a solo, continuous story of a single-protagonist narrative usually directed by one director. On the other hand, an anthology film, which is also recognised as a portmanteau film, is a solo film that encapsulates several short films, each of which is likely to have distinct characters, plots and directors. Core themes and ideas interweave them. Different from conventional films that have a single plot and consistent storyline, anthology films have many short narratives that are presented in a single narrative. In an anthology film, each fragment has a distinct plot, setting, characters and even the directors. Even though it has many different things, it is unified through a single theme, emotion or concept, which will help to link all parts as a whole.

In literature, there is an anthology. Like a literary anthology, the anthology films allow the filmmakers to delve into different approaches to a common theme, which gives the audience a more profound and varied insight into the conception of the subject. This way of making film invites directors to creative freedom and collaborative expression. This will allow each of them to interpret individually, and that will help in collectively preserving their thematic unity. The driving force for anthology films arises from their strengths, which embrace complexity. It brings together the different experiences of humans, social issues and emotions within a cohesive cinematic film. The world, which is full of fragmented realities and multiple perspectives, the format of anthology films mirrors current perspectives by throwing light on diversity within a systematic framework. The film *Bombay Talkies,* which was released in 2013, consists of four short stories that are directed by different directors. The directors are *Karan Johar, Dibakar Banerjee, Zoya Akhtar* and *Anuraj Kashyap* in celebration of 100 years of Indian cinema. The stories explore the themes of human emotions and how their life is getting influenced by the film. Karan Johar's story talked about repressed sexuality, Banerjee's focus is on the revival of the fallen actor, Akhtar talks about a boy who was suffering from gender norms, and Anurag unveils the story of a man whose life revolves around his fascination with a film star. All the stories are connected by the theme of cinema's power of transformation, which reflects India's cultural diversity and emotional depth with the help of its different but interconnected narratives.

Characteristics of an Anthology film

Multiple Short Narratives

The very first characteristic of its structure is that it consists of multiple short stories within one big framework. In the film *Bombay Talkies,* this tradition is depicted through four distinct segments. The stories are *Ajeeb Dastaan Hai Yeh* by Karan Johar, *Star* by Dibakar Banerjee, *Sheila ki Jawani* by Zoya Akhtar and *Murabba* by Anuraj Kashyap, in which they explored the distinct storytelling world. Thus, the multiple narratives give the audience the experience os engaging with multiple perspectives in one continuous experience.

Thematic Unity

There is no doubt that an anthology film consists of different narratives, but they are all bound together by a single central theme. In *Bombay Talkies,* the central theme is the transformative and emotional power of cinema. Stories in *Bombay Talkies* each show how cinema intersects with human life. It is whether done by awakening, self-insight, dreams that inspire and recording memories. The film is not seen as a source of entertainment; it focuses more on transformative sources such as identity, emotion, and aspirations.

Diversity of Directors and Styles

Anthology films use multiple directors to carry creative voices into a single cinema. *Bombay Talkies* demonstrate India's four most famous filmmakers for featuring their film. Each of them has its own recognisable form and narrative style. In the first story, Karan Johar applies melodrama and emotional depth to depict hidden desires and inner isolation. Dibakar Banerjee portrays realism and subtle wit to examine unfulfilled emotions. Then, in the third, Zoya Akhtar depicted childhood fantasy and gender identity, and in the last, Anurag Kashyap mixes satire and realism to portray the emotions.

Independent yet Interconnected Stories

The *Bombay Talkies,* each of the stories stands independently in plot, character and directors, yet they are interconnected by their interwoven thematic ideas. The viewers are able to appreciate each segment as they are all standalone works, while at the end, the closing musical montage allows the unity of multiple Bollywood actors into a united tribute to Indian cinema. This duality will help in making a balance between the independence of the story and conceptual unity.

Collaborative and Experimental Nature

Anthology movies will help in encouraging multiple filmmakers to collaborate and conduct experiments with each other. The film *Bombay Talkies* stands as a beautiful example of how four different directors, writers and production teams collaborated and united by a common creative goal. This style permits each filmmaker to play with style, tone, narrative structure and theme without being bound by the rules of full-length film.

Why do the Directors produce an Anthology Movie?

This question arises, why are the directors producing the anthology movie, though they have the option of creating single short films or web series? In the film *Bombay Talkies,* the directors decide to create an anthology as both a creative and symbolic choice, which helps them to stay connected with the artistic traditions of cinema. This was produced to celebrate the hundred years of Indian filmmaking by projecting the four profound directors- Karan Johar, Dibakar Banerjee, Zoya Akhtar and Anurag Kashyap, who have collaborated to produce different cinematic tributes. *Bombay Talkies,* unlike individual short films that work as a separate unit, is connected by the shared theme, which will influence ordinary life. Thus, anthology films will allow the filmmakers to jointly explore how film will converge with identity, emotion, aspiration and cultural memory while maintaining the creative expression of an individual.

With the context of cinematic theory, the anthology film represents what David Bordwell describes as "narrative pluralism". This theory will explain how stories contribute to a single viewing experience. *Bombay Talkies* represents this theory of pluralism by the combination of four different narratives that are different in style and tone, which range from social realism to fantasy, and they remain thematically connected. The format of an anthology

film also acts as the form of preservation of cinema's theatrical and collective spirit, while digital storytelling and web series are the beginning of popular culture.

Later on, the anthology structure will help in encouraging the experimental and collaborative form. Each director has worked on the unique vision. Thus, the *Bombay Talkies* is not just a collection of stories, but it also contributes to a cinematic dialogue that will increase the film's enduring power.

Why are the masses watching the Anthology movie?

The people are getting attracted towards this structure because of its emotional variety, cultural diversity and the creativity through collaboration. The film *Bombay Talkies* fosters the people through its various storylines, and each offering a different emotional and thematic experience in a single cinema. The people are coming from different cultural and social backgrounds; this variety allows them to find their relatable experiences at least from one segment. The people are also curious about the presence of four directors and how they had played with distinct cinematic voices in one cinematic experience. This new format provides something which is rare in mainstream cinema, compact yet multifaceted, which will fulfil the gap between artistic depth and appeal to the masses.

Sum-ups:

The study of *Bombay Talkies* (2013) as an anthology film provides a deep insight into how Indian cinema continues to evolve both thematically and structurally. Anthology films, as demonstrated by *Bombay Talkies*, represent a significant departure from the conventional linear storytelling mode of mainstream cinema. They embody the idea of multiplicity of voices, perspectives, styles, and interpretations while maintaining a unifying core theme. This balance between diversity and unity makes the anthology film a unique and compelling cinematic form that mirrors the complexities of contemporary society.

In the case of *Bombay Talkies*, the four directors Karan Johar, Dibakar Banerjee, Zoya Akhtar, and Anurag Kashyap collectively engage in a creative dialogue that celebrates the centenary of Indian cinema. Their collaboration reflects a broader cultural and artistic movement that emphasizes inclusivity, multiplicity, and experimentation. Each segment stands as an independent cinematic text, exploring different facets of human emotion, identity, and the transformative power of cinema. Yet, when viewed as a whole, the film transcends its individual narratives and emerges as a unified commentary on the relationship between film and life in modern India.

The first major outcome of this analysis is the recognition that anthology films serve as powerful instruments of thematic exploration. They allow filmmakers to address complex social, emotional, and psychological realities within a single cinematic framework. *Bombay Talkies* illustrates how cinema functions not merely as entertainment but as a medium of reflection and transformation. Each story whether it is Karan Johar's exploration of repressed sexuality, Dibakar Banerjee's portrayal of artistic revival, Zoya Akhtar's depiction of gender fluidity, or Anurag Kashyap's study of cinematic obsession adds a unique layer to the understanding of cinema's influence on human existence. Collectively, these narratives underscore the central theme of how cinema shapes, inspires, and reflects individual and collective identities.

A key finding from this examination is that anthology films like *Bombay Talkies* demonstrate what David Bordwell calls "narrative pluralism." This concept suggests that multiple storylines can coexist within a single viewing experience, thereby expanding the audience's engagement with diverse perspectives. This pluralistic narrative structure mirrors the fragmented yet interconnected realities of modern life, where different experiences and identities coexist within a shared cultural framework. The anthology structure thus becomes a metaphor for contemporary India diverse, multifaceted, and united by shared emotional and cultural threads.

From a structural and aesthetic perspective, *Bombay Talkies* also highlights the collaborative and experimental potential of cinema. Unlike conventional feature films that rely on a single directorial vision, anthology films encourage collective creativity. This collaboration fosters artistic dialogue among filmmakers, each bringing their distinctive narrative style, tone, and cinematic language. The result is a textured cinematic experience that blends realism, melodrama, fantasy, and satire into a cohesive artistic statement. The film thus becomes a laboratory for experimentation one that expands the boundaries of narrative cinema and accommodates multiple artistic identities within a single frame.

Another important outcome of this study is the understanding of audience engagement in anthology films. The growing appeal of this format lies in its ability to offer variety within a unified experience. Viewers from different cultural and social backgrounds can relate to at least one of the stories, which enhances inclusivity and audience connection. In a globalized media environment, where audiences increasingly seek authenticity, diversity, and emotional depth, anthology films meet these expectations effectively. The emotional and cultural plurality offered by such films makes them more relatable and thought-provoking than many mainstream productions.

The cultural significance of *Bombay Talkies* also lies in its function as a tribute to the history of Indian cinema. By celebrating 100 years of filmmaking, it pays homage to the art form's enduring influence on Indian society. The closing musical montage, featuring several Bollywood actors, unites the diverse narratives into a collective celebration of cinema's power to connect people. This act of homage situates *Bombay Talkies* within a broader historical continuum one that acknowledges the past while embracing the experimental possibilities of the present.

From a theoretical perspective, the anthology format aligns with postmodern approaches to narrative and aesthetics. It resists closure, celebrates fragmentation, and values multiplicity over singularity. This approach is particularly relevant in today's digital and streaming era, where audiences are accustomed to episodic and modular storytelling. Anthology films bridge the gap between traditional cinematic experience and new media forms like web series and short films. They preserve the theatrical and collective spirit of cinema while adapting to changing viewing habits.

In terms of further scope, anthology cinema offers a rich area for research and creative exploration. Scholars and filmmakers can examine how such films negotiate themes of identity, gender, urbanization, and globalization in contemporary India. Future research can also investigate the evolution of anthology structures in digital media, where streaming platforms have revived interest in short-form storytelling. Comparative studies between global anthology projects such as *Paris, je t'aime* or *New York, I Love You* and Indian examples like *Bombay Talkies* or *Lust Stories* could provide valuable insights into the transnational nature of collaborative filmmaking.

Moreover, the anthology film format can serve as a pedagogical model for understanding collaborative authorship in cinema. It challenges the traditional notion of a singular auteur and instead promotes the idea of collective creativity. This has significant implications for film studies, where questions of authorship, identity, and artistic ownership remain central.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, *Bombay Talkies* stands as an exemplary case of how the anthology format can encapsulate the diversity of human experience within a unified cinematic framework. It affirms the idea that cinema is not only a medium of entertainment but also a powerful space for dialogue, reflection, and transformation. The film's multiplicity of voices, styles, and emotions embodies the pluralistic essence of Indian society and the dynamic evolution of its cinematic tradition. The outcomes of this analysis demonstrate that anthology films contribute to both artistic innovation and cultural representation by offering a multidimensional view of contemporary realities.

Thus, *Bombay Talkies* is not merely a celebratory project marking 100 years of Indian cinema it is also a forward-looking experiment that redefines the boundaries of cinematic storytelling. It signifies how collaboration, thematic unity, and creative diversity can coexist harmoniously within one filmic text. The anthology film, through its fragmented yet cohesive structure, continues to hold immense potential for future filmmakers and scholars to explore new dimensions of narrative form, audience engagement, and cultural meaning in cinema.

POST HUMAN ENTANGLEMENTS: SOLARPUNK'S POSITIVIST RECONFIGURATION OF PROGRESS IN MULTISPECIES CITIES

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Abstract:

This paper examines the literary articulation of a positivist post humanist framework within the short story anthology *Multispecies Cities: Solarpunk Urban Futures*. By transcending the dystopian pessimism of conventional climate fiction, the collection offers a hopeful vision of a world where humanity succeeds in solving its major ecological crises. The central argument is that this optimism is not a form of techno-utopian naivete, but is predicated on a radical redefinition of the human subject. The stories in the anthology posit that a sustainable future requires an ethical and technological dissolution of boundaries between human, non-human, and machine entities, thereby achieving a truly entangled existence. Through a textual analysis of select stories, such as Natsumi Tanaka's "A Life with Cibi" and D.A. Xiaolin Spires' "The Exuberant Vitality of Hatchling Habitats," this paper demonstrates how the anthology reframes progress not as human transcendence, but as the development of complex, symbiotic entanglements. This literary approach challenges anthropocentrism and offers a compelling, yet ethically demanding, blueprint for a positive future.

Keywords: Solarpunk, Posthumanism, Multispecies Cities, Post-Anthropocentrism, Utopia, Speculative Fiction, Post-Colonial Studies.

The contemporary literary and academic landscape is characterized by a profound sense of temporal and ecological anxiety, often codified through concepts like the Anthropocene or the Capitalocene. This critical condition has resulted in a widespread sense of "dystopia fatigue," where the relentless cataloging of environmental crisis risks paralyzing political imagination and reducing the future to an exercise in apocalyptic inevitability (Ghosh). The sheer scale of global warming has led thinkers to observe that "to think about the world only as it is amounts to a formula for collective suicide" (Ghosh 7). Consequently, there exists an urgent need for narratives that successfully bridge the reality of damage with the possibility of systemic, constructive change.

Solarpunk emerges as a vital counter-narrative and aesthetic movement, offering a necessary political rewilding of the collective imagination. It is a literary project focused on "refuturing"—captivating the reader with success stories from the near future to ease psychic burdens and motivate constructive action. This movement offers a hopeful stance in apposition to the dystopian pessimism of conventional climate fiction, seeking to present not a simplistic utopia, but rather a rigorously achieved alternative to catastrophic outcomes. It champions core tenets of decentralized governance, egalitarianism, self-sustainability, and convivial conservation, positing that the transformation required is radical but "not radically impossible" (Rupprecht et al. 11).

This paper examines the literary articulation of a positivist posthumanist framework within the short story anthology *Multispecies Cities: Solarpunk Urban Futures*. Published in 2021, the collection offers an ecologically mature vision of urban environments where cities are seen as "alive, shared by humans and animals, insects and plants, landforms and machines" (Rupprecht et al. 2). The optimism inherent in the Solarpunk worlds depicted is not a form of techno-utopian naivete, but is instead "predicated on a radical redefinition of the human subject."

The central argument is that the anthology reframes progress away from anthropocentric transcendence—the human quest for escape or domination—and toward the development of complex, symbiotic entanglements. The stories mandate that a sustainable future requires an ethical and technological dissolution of boundaries between human, non-human, and machine entities, thereby achieving a genuinely entangled existence. This literary approach fundamentally challenges the hierarchical separation of species, promoting multispecies justice and flourishing as the metric of collective success.

To rigorously analyze this reconfiguration of progress, this study employs the philosophical apparatus of critical posthumanism, focusing primarily on the works of Rosi Braidotti and Donna Haraway. Braidotti's framework of the relational subject and *zoe*-egalitarianism provides the ethical criteria for assessing interspecies equality.

Haraway's concepts of *sympoiesis* and the practice of "making kin" offer the practical means for evaluating literary representations of collaborative worlding.

The positivist posthumanism articulated in *Multispecies Cities* is grounded in a philosophical orientation that rejects the foundational binaries of classical humanism. The posthuman condition is defined by the convergence of posthumanism (the critique of the universalist image of 'Man') and post-anthropocentrism (the dismantling of human exceptionalism). Post-anthropocentrism encourages an egalitarian view of life, shifting focus from prioritizing human interests to recognizing the intrinsic value and agency of all living and non-living entities.

The subject constituted in this framework must be understood not as a transcendental consciousness, but as a "relational embodied and embedded, affective and accountable entity" (Braidotti, *The Posthuman* 49). In the context of Solarpunk, this relational mandate justifies the genre's emphasis on community, diversity, and interconnectedness as structural necessities for survival.

Rosi Braidotti proposes a neo-Spinozist monistic ontology that posits radical immanence—the primacy of intelligent and self-organizing matter across all scales (Braidotti, "A Theoretical Framework"). This vital materialist perspective is crucial because it asserts that the material world is dynamic and inherently productive. This radical immanence demands the recognition of a "nature-culture continuum," leading to 'naturecultural' and 'humanimal' transversal bonding. This aligns perfectly with Solarpunk's urban design principles, which integrate traditional and high-end technology, permaculture, and green infrastructure seamlessly into the built environment.

The ethical dimension of this positivist reconfiguration hinges on shifting focus from *bios* to zoe. *Bios* denotes individualized, political, and specific human life. In contrast, *zoe* represents non-individualized, fundamental life force, ranging across the biotic and abiotic spectrum, encompassing "bacteria and animals to geological structures and technology" (Braidotti, *The Posthuman* 3).

The required ethical criterion for the Solarpunk world is zoe-egalitarianism- the claim that all elements of life are equally dynamic, self-organizing, and intelligent. Solarpunk progress is not merely quantitative—installing more solar panels—but, as Braidotti suggests, a "qualitative leap of values," ensuring the technical solutions serve a genuinely "transspecies egalitarianism" (Braidotti, *The Posthuman* 131). Donna Haraway further reinforces this relational necessity by critiquing the anthropocentric concept of *autopoiesis* (self-organizing). Instead, she advocates for sympoiesis, meaning "worlding-with" and evolving-with in company (Haraway 33). The success of the Solarpunk urban future is predicated on this collaborative, generative principle.

The ethical imperative derived from this entanglement is response-ability: the capacity to remain present, assume accountability, and cultivate the ability to respond effectively to the ecological troubles we are already knotted within. Haraway urges readers to reject "fantasies of transcendence" and space-faring escape, arguing instead for the necessity of "staying with the trouble" and embracing material, earthly entanglements (Haraway 10). This is the process of "making kin" in the Chthulucene, a multispecies epoch defined by ongoing entanglement.

Natsumi Tanaka's short story "A Life with Cibi" presents an ethically challenging illustration of the anthology's positivist posthumanist mandate. The story introduces the Cibi (from the Latin *cibus*, meaning food), a genetically modified species described as "planimals" that blur the lines between plant and animal. Critically, these sentient entities actively offer their own flesh to be consumed by humans. The existence of the Cibi is a radical, metabolic confrontation, forcing the human subject to acknowledge the profound intimacy of their consumption habits.

The Cibi, who can talk and interact while their flesh is being carved off, eliminate the distance inherent in industrial food production. The story explicitly destabilizes "any ideas of innocence or ability to separate ourselves from the world of predator-prey relationships" (Tanaka 54). Progress in this context is achieved not through abstinence or technological substitution, but through the humiliation of the Anthropos—forcing the subject to confront their deepest ethical discomfort and to recognize their position as an inseparable, dependent knot within a mutualistic cycle of life and death.

The Cibi are engineered not to feel pain and, paradoxically, are said to "die sooner if not consumed" (Tanaka 56). This detail strategically moves the ethical dilemma away from mere welfarist concerns and toward the deeper posthuman critique of systemic killability and ontological ownership. The positivist response is to transform the act of consumption from one of domination into a structured, reciprocal, and consensual act of co-existence, governed

by Braidotti's zoe-egalitarian ethics. The Cibi represent the ultimate fusion of technology and ethics, functioning as living 'naturecultural' hybrids. Their designed existence fundamentally dissolves the hard species boundaries contested by critical posthumanist perspectives. By embedding this necessary, uncomfortable entanglement directly within the daily ritual of food consumption, Tanaka achieves the radical redefinition of the subject required. The narrative affirms Haraway's axiom: "We are all compost, not posthuman" (Haraway 50). The human future remains firmly grounded in material reality and shared metabolic flow.

D.A. Xiaolin Spires' short story "The Exuberant Vitality of Hatchling Habitats" offers a more overtly collaborative vision of positivist posthuman progress, concentrating on the necessity of decentralized local innovation. The story encapsulates Solarpunk's emphasis on "do-it-yourself (DIY) ethics," convivial conservation, and the rewilding of urban environments (Spires 121).The narrative centers on two high school students whose collaboration shifts the site of ecological repair from distant, global institutions to local, grassroots craftsmanship and community engagement. This focus on collaboration and bottom-up systems, rather than individual heroic intervention, exemplifies the "punk" ideology of decentralization.

The students' innovative project is the creation of "sustainaink." This material, derived from recycled or food waste, is entirely biodegradable and used to create natural sculptures and habitats (Spires 124). The genius of the invention lies in its deliberate adherence to the principle of transience: it resists the modern technological obsession with permanence and actively respects the cyclical nature of planetary metabolism and decay.

By designing technology that is meant to participate in the Earth's cycles and eventually compost, Spires articulates a form of technological dissolution that integrates the built environment into the 'natureculture' continuum. This shows that the key to survival is not merely upgrading technology, but evolving our way of thinking to ensure the technology serves, rather than dominates, the ecological system. The students use *sustainaink* to construct habitats for urban seabirds, a response to the local ecological crisis. This act of collaborative repair is a literary demonstration of Haraway's concept of sympoiesis—the necessity of "worlding-with" and evolving-with in company. Progress is visualized as human participation in restorative care, fulfilling the mandate to "make kin" with "critters" like gulls and eels (Spires 127).

The story shows progress is realized not through a lone hero, but through the sympoietic assemblage—the collaborative unit of human designers, transient technology, community support, and the non-human beneficiaries—acting as an integrated, accountable system. The positivist outcome is the successful integration of a posthuman ethical framework—trans-species egalitarianism—into the fabric of daily life and local economy, confirming the importance of response-ability in the new urban ecology.

The literary articulation of a positivist posthumanist framework in *Multispecies Cities: Solarpunk Urban Futures* demonstrates that optimism regarding planetary survival is possible only when earned by demanding a radical ethical cost: the abandonment of anthropocentric exceptionalism. By proposing solutions predicated on the technological and ethical "dissolution of boundaries," the anthology successfully transcends the pessimistic trajectory of conventional climate fiction.

Tanaka's "A Life with Cibi" challenges the consumer subject by deploying Braidotti's zoe-egalitarian ethics, forcing an uncomfortable, accountable acceptance of mutual material hybridity. Spires' "The Exuberant Vitality of Hatchling Habitats" visualizes the joyful, restorative outcome of this philosophical shift, detailing Haraway's concept of sympoiesis through decentralized, materially accountable technological innovation.

Ultimately, the anthology reframes progress not as linear escape or human dominion, but as the difficult, ongoing practice of "staying with the trouble" and relentlessly "making kin." The future depicted in *Multispecies Cities* is sustainable precisely because the notion of the autonomous, conquering *Anthropos* has been successfully composted, allowing complex, symbiotic entanglements—the more-than-human life—to flourish as the defining metric of civilization. This synthesis of radical ethics and restorative technology offers a profoundly hopeful and intellectually rigorous blueprint for planetary coexistence.

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FROM SHAKESPEARE TO CHATGPT: THE EVOLUTION OF LITERARY STYLE THROUGH HUMAN AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract

The history of literature shows us how language and style change over time, depending on who writes and what tools are available. From William Shakespeare in the sixteenth century to modern tools like ChatGPT, the way stories, poems, and plays are created has gone through many changes. This paper looks at the journey of literary style across two very different moments: the age of human genius and the age of artificial intelligence. The main aim is to understand how human creativity and machine intelligence shape the way we read, write, and think about literature. Shakespeare is often remembered as one of the greatest writers in the English language. He lived at a time when drama and poetry were growing quickly, and he played a key role in shaping them. His style was special because he used new words, invented phrases, and created characters with deep emotions. His plays combined humor, tragedy, and philosophy in ways that had never been seen before. Most importantly, his language felt alive, personal, and filled with imagination. Shakespeare's work shows how one human mind can leave a lasting mark on literature for hundreds of years. In the twenty-first century, artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT represent a very different kind of literary creation. Unlike Shakespeare, ChatGPT does not write from personal experience or imagination. Instead, it produces text by learning patterns from millions of examples of human writing. Its style depends on the data it has been trained on, which means it can sound like many different writers but does not have its own unique identity. ChatGPT is useful for generating stories, poems, essays, and even imitating famous styles, but it also raises important questions: Can machines be truly creative? Or are they simply reflecting human knowledge in a new form?

By comparing Shakespeare and ChatGPT, we can see both similarities and differences in literary style. Both rely on language as their tool, but Shakespeare's writing expresses personal vision, while ChatGPT mirrors collective human knowledge. Shakespeare shaped culture by introducing bold ideas and new ways of writing, while ChatGPT shows how technology can help people create faster, experiment with style, and explore new possibilities. The journey from Shakespeare to ChatGPT shows that literary style is never fixed; it changes with culture, society, and technology. In this way, literature remains a living process, shaped by both the human heart and the tools we create.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, Comparative study, Human creativity, Language evolution, literary style, machine generated text, Shakespeare

Introduction:

Literature shows the life, culture, and imagination of people. It has always expressed the spirit of its time. From Shakespeare in the 16th century to the 21st century, where AI tools are becoming popular, the way of writing has kept changing. Shakespeare is known as one of the greatest writers in English, and his plays talk about love, power, ambition, betrayal, and human emotions that never grow old. Today, however, AI tools can also create poems, stories, essays, and plays. This change shows the journey of creativity—from the natural talent of human beings to the new abilities of artificial intelligence. Literature has always played an important role in human life. It is one of the strongest ways for people to share their emotions, thoughts, ideas, and opinions. Writers have not only told stories through language but also shown the reality of their society.

This paper looks at how literary style has changed from the time of Shakespeare to the modern age of ChatGPT. It discusses the methods of writing in Shakespeare's era and compares them with today's methods. The paper highlights human creativity and compares it with the way machines, like AI, create. It also studies how language, storytelling techniques, and cultural themes have changed over time, and how AI is now entering the space of human creativity. AI tools can create different kinds of work within a few minutes. The main goal of this paper is to explore the relationship between human creativity and the creations of artificial intelligence. Today, we live in a digital age where artificial intelligence plays an important role in writing. AI tools can create essays, poems, or stories within just a few seconds. This brings up an important question: how is AI changing literary style? Is it

simply a tool in the hands of people, or can it be seen as a new kind of author? And how does this new development compare with the creativity of human writers, such as Shakespeare?

Shakespeare's Contribution to Literature:

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) lived during the Renaissance, a time in Europe known as a period of cultural rebirth. This was an age that celebrated art, literature, science, and human creativity, and Shakespeare's plays and poems became some of the greatest works of that time. In his writing, he explored universal human emotions and experiences such as love, ambition, jealousy, betrayal, power, and death—ideas that people can still relate to even today. Shakespeare is remembered not only for the interesting plots of his plays but also for his amazing use of language. He is believed to have added more than 1,700 new words to the English language, including *lonely*, *radiance*, and *assassination*. Along with new words, he used imagery, similes, metaphors, and clever wordplay, which made his writing beautiful and powerful.

His influence can still be felt today. Shakespeare's characters feel real because they have both strengths and weaknesses, just like people in modern life. Many of his phrases have become part of everyday speech, and his themes remain important in discussions about love, politics, identity, and human nature. By combining poetry with deep understanding of people, Shakespeare created works that shaped the literature of his time and continue to inspire writers and readers all over the world.

Examples of Shakespeare's style:

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare uses beautiful and emotional language to show the strong feelings and struggles of young love. His words capture both the excitement and the difficulties that come with passion and family conflict. The famous line, *"What's in a name? That which we call a rose / by any other name would smell as sweet,"* shows how he combines plain words with deep meaning. Through this line, Juliet expresses that names are not as important as the true nature of a person. Shakespeare's writing makes readers feel the intensity of love while also reminding them of the barriers created by society and family traditions. His choice of language gives timeless life to the emotions of youth, making the story powerful even today.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is famous for its deep reflections on human life. In the play, Hamlet often thinks about big questions such as the meaning of life, the reality of death, and the struggle between right and wrong. One of the most powerful examples of this is his soliloquy that begins with the line, *"To be, or not to be, that is the question."* In this moment, Hamlet is not just speaking about himself, but also exploring the universal human experience. He wonders whether it is better to continue living despite the pain and struggles of life, or to end one's suffering through death—even though death itself is uncertain and mysterious. This soliloquy shows Shakespeare's remarkable understanding of human psychology. It reveals the way people wrestle with fear, doubt, and the search for meaning. Hamlet's words express a tension many people can relate to: the wish to escape suffering but also the fear of what might come after death. In doing so, Shakespeare captures the fragile balance between hope and despair, courage and fear. Through this reflection, *Hamlet* becomes more than just a story of revenge—it becomes a meditation on the human condition. The play invites us to think about our own choices, our struggles, and the value of life itself.

Macbeth is often seen as one of Shakespeare's darkest plays because it explores the dangers of unchecked ambition and the heavy burden of guilt. The play is filled with powerful images that reveal deep truths about life. For example, when Macbeth says, **"Out, out, brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow,"** he compares human life to a candle that quickly burns out and to a shadow that disappears without meaning. In these words, Shakespeare shows how fragile and temporary our existence really is. Through lines like this, Shakespeare combines storytelling with poetic language, creating a dramatic effect that lingers in the mind of the audience. The play not only tells the story of Macbeth's rise and fall but also forces readers and viewers to think about universal questions: What does it mean to live? How do our choices shape our destiny? And how quickly can everything we value slip away?

This mix of gripping narrative and beautiful expression is what makes Shakespeare's works timeless and continues to move people even today.

Evolution of Literary Style after Shakespeare:

After Shakespeare, literature kept changing and developing in new directions. During the 17th and 18th centuries, writers began to focus more on serious themes and classical styles. One of the most important authors of this time was **John Milton**, who is remembered for his epic poem *Paradise Lost*. In this work, Milton explored deep ideas about good and evil, human freedom, and the role of God, making it one of the greatest poems in English literature. Another influential writer was **Alexander Pope**, who was known for his sharp wit and his skill with verse. Pope's works often taught moral lessons and highlighted the importance of reason, balance, and order in life. His writing reflected the values of the Enlightenment, when people were becoming more focused on logic, learning, and the improvement of society. In this period, literature often dealt with subjects like religion, morality, politics, and social order. Writers used their works not only to entertain but also to guide readers toward living better and more thoughtful lives. The literature of the 17th and 18th centuries, therefore, shows a shift from pure storytelling to a combination of art, philosophy, and social commentary.

In the 19th century, literature went through many changes. Romantic poets such as **William Wordsworth** and **Lord Byron** focused on feelings, imagination, and the beauty of nature. Their works often showed how emotions and personal experiences were more important than strict rules of writing. They also encouraged people to look at the natural world with wonder and see it as a source of peace and inspiration. Later in the same century, during the Victorian period, writers shifted their attention to the real struggles of society. Famous novelists like **Charles Dickens** and **George Eliot** wrote stories that revealed the problems faced by ordinary people. Dickens, for example, showed the hardships of the poor, the unfair treatment of children, and the corruption in society. George Eliot explored the inner lives of her characters and focused on morality, duty, and personal choices. Together, these writers gave literature both imagination and realism. While Romantic poets inspired readers with dreams and emotions, Victorian novelists made people aware of social issues and encouraged them to think about change. This balance of creativity and reality shaped 19th-century literature and left a strong impact on future generations of writers.

In the 20th century, literature went through a major transformation. Modernist writers such as **T.S**. **Eliot**, **Virginia Woolf**, and **James Joyce** broke away from traditional styles of writing. They experimented with new techniques, unusual language, and fresh ways of telling stories. For example, writers often used the "stream of consciousness" style to show the inner thoughts of characters in a direct and personal way. This period was deeply influenced by the world wars, rapid industrial growth, and social changes. Writers reflected the uncertainty, fear, and confusion that people felt during times of conflict. At the same time, literature also explored questions about identity, memory, and the meaning of life. Old values and beliefs were challenged, and new ideas about society, gender, and individual freedom began to appear in books and poetry. Modernist literature was not always easy to read, but it captured the spirit of a world that was changing quickly. It showed the struggles of human beings in a modern age and opened the door for even more experimentation in literature that came after.

In the 21st century, literature entered a new phase shaped by postmodern ideas and digital technology. Many writers began to use fragmented styles, playful irony, and experimental structures in their works. Themes often focused on questioning truth, mixing reality with fiction, and exploring the role of technology in human life. At the same time, the rise of the internet transformed how stories were created and shared. Online platforms, blogs, and social media gave writers new spaces to publish their work instantly and reach a global audience. Readers also became more active, often interacting with texts or even contributing to them. Digital literature grew to include multimedia elements such as images, sound, and video, blending traditional writing with other forms of art. The spread of e-books and online publishing made literature more accessible than ever before. In recent years, artificial intelligence has also started to generate poems, stories, and essays, showing how technology continues to expand the meaning of authorship and creativity.

Comparing Shakespeare and ChatGPT:

Shakespeare is remembered not only for his plays and poems but also for his creativity with language. He invented new words, shaped expressions that are still used today, and filled his writing with fresh images and powerful emotions. His works came from his own imagination and deep understanding of human feelings, which made them unique and timeless. ChatGPT, on the other hand, works in a very different way. Instead of inventing language on its own, it studies patterns in the huge amount of text it has been trained on. This means it can copy writing styles,

explain ideas, or even create passages that sound poetic, but it does not produce language from personal experience or true originality. Its "creativity" is limited to rearranging and combining what already exists, while Shakespeare's creativity grew from his own genius and emotional insight.

In short, Shakespeare created language that shaped culture for centuries, while ChatGPT reflects what has already been written. Both can be powerful with words, but one is born from human imagination, and the other is built from learned patterns.

Influence of AI on the Future of Literature:

Today, literature is opening up to many new opportunities. Writers no longer have to work alone; they can use AI as a creative partner. An author can ask AI to suggest new story ideas, develop characters, or improve the flow of their language. Readers, too, can benefit in exciting ways. Imagine asking for a story written just for you, in the style you love—whether it's a mystery, a romance, or even something that sounds like Shakespeare. AI can also help make classics more accessible. For example, Shakespeare's plays can be rewritten in modern, easy-to-understand English, so students don't feel lost in old words but still enjoy the beauty of his work. Beyond this, AI could turn poems into songs, novels into interactive adventures, or even allow readers to choose how a story ends.

In this way, literature becomes more alive and personal. Instead of being something fixed and unchangeable, it can grow and adapt to each reader and writer. The partnership between human imagination and AI tools may create a future where stories are not just read but experienced in new and exciting forms.

There are also many negative sides to using AI in literature. One of the biggest concerns is that originality may be lost. If most of the content is created by machines, the unique human voice of an author could be overshadowed. A piece of writing may look polished, but it might lack true authenticity and personal expression. After all, can literature without genuine human emotions really be considered art? Another problem is the effect on education. Students might become too dependent on AI tools for writing essays, stories, or assignments. Instead of practicing their own creativity and critical thinking, they may simply rely on what the AI provides. This could weaken their ability to form ideas, analyze deeply, and express thoughts in their own words. Over time, this reliance might harm learning, and students could lose confidence in their own abilities.

In short, while AI offers many opportunities, it also brings challenges. Literature shaped only by machines may risk losing the depth, feeling, and originality that come from the human heart and mind.

Conclusion:

From the days of Shakespeare's quill to today's age of ChatGPT, the way we create and share literary style has travelled a long and fascinating path. Shakespeare gave the world stories and poems that still touch hearts because they capture beauty, imagination, and real human emotions. His writing came from personal experience and a deep understanding of what it means to be human. Centuries later, technology has opened a new chapter in creativity. Tools like ChatGPT don't replace human imagination but instead offer new ways to express it. Where Shakespeare relied on ink and paper, modern writers can now experiment with words through algorithms and artificial intelligence. This evolution shows how human creativity and technology can work together—Shakespeare's works remind us of timeless truths, while today's tools show us endless possibilities.

Artificial intelligence cannot experience emotions like love, ambition, or sadness. Yet, it has the ability to create writing that looks very similar to human art. Shakespeare's creativity reminds us of the special power of human imagination, born from real feelings and life experiences. On the other hand, ChatGPT shows us how technology is becoming an important part of shaping the way we read and write today. When we look at both, we see two different sources of creativity—one coming from the human heart and the other from human invention. Literature has always changed with time, and now we are entering an age where humans and AI together influence how stories, poems, and ideas are expressed. Shakespeare's works will always stand as proof of the depth of human thought, while AI shows us new ways of exploring style, language, and creativity.

Together, they remind us that literature—whether created by people or supported by machines—will never stop growing. It will continue to reflect not just the emotions of the heart, but also the knowledge and innovation of the mind. This journey ensures that the art of writing will keep evolving, carrying the voice of both tradition and technology into the future.

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