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The American College
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(A Mentor Institution)

Madurai, Tamilnadu, India

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The American College
Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

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(A Peer-reviewed International Journal)

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Editorial...

In a world that's more interconnected than ever, literature serves as a bridge between cultures, ideas, and experiences. This special issue brings together sixteen compelling articles spanning global literature, Western classics, cinematic storytelling, linguistics, and the philosophy of bioregionalism. The articles are selected from the International Conference held in March 2024 titled *Myriad Mysteries: Contemporary Global Perspectives on Language & Literature.* It is not just a collection - it is a flamboyant canvas that showcases the multifaceted nature of human expression. Each piece invites us to dive deep into the currents of thought that shape our understanding of the world and our place within it.

The explorations of global literature and Western traditions offer a dynamic dialogue between the familiar and the unfamiliar. Articles delving into global narratives challenge us to widen our perspectives, highlighting voices and stories that might otherwise remain unheard. They invite scholars to question the boundaries of the canon and consider the richness that comes from embracing a truly diverse literary landscape. Conversely, the examinations of Western literature provide fresh lenses through which to view well-trodden texts, uncovering nuances that resonate with contemporary issues and sensibilities. Cinema, language, and linguistics further enrich this dialogue. The pieces on film illuminate how visual narratives complement and expand upon literary themes, emphasizing the power of storytelling across mediums. They prompt us to consider how movies adapt, reinterpret, and sometimes even redefine the source material, creating new avenues for analysis and appreciation. The articles on language and linguistics delve into the very fabric of communication, exploring how words shape reality and influence cultural identity. Bioregionalism ties these threads together by grounding our discussions in the context of place and environment. It prompts a reflection on how geography and ecology influence literature, encouraging a deeper awareness of the interconnectedness between humans and the natural world. The focus on bioregionalism adds a layer of urgency and relevance, especially in the face of global ecological challenges. It invites scholars to consider how narratives can inspire a greater sense of responsibility and stewardship for our shared planet.

Collectively, these sixteen articles underscore the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in literary scholarship. They beckon us to move beyond siloed thinking, embracing the complexity and interconnectedness of the subjects we study. By weaving together insights from different fields, we enrich our understanding and open up new possibilities for interpretation and discourse. This issue is a testament to the vibrancy of literary studies and its capacity to adapt, evolve, and remain profoundly relevant. As scholars, we have the privilege and responsibility to delve into these conversations, to question, to interpret, and to contribute to an ever-growing body of knowledge. Let us embrace the diversity of thought presented here, recognizing that each narrative adds a valuable thread to the understanding of literature. Together, we can foster a more inclusive, dynamic, and impactful scholarly community.

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Some Thoughts on Global Literature

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In Defence of the Global

These days, if you describe anything as "global" you'll quickly attract suspicion and criticism. For many, "globalisation" has become a dirty word, evoking a monolithic conspiracy of Western economic and political interests that advance their cause in the name of democracy and human values while oppressing the subaltern and the authentically local. Why should Western "neo-liberals" impose their brand of imperialism on the rest of the world? Including, of course, their culture—both in the broader sense of their "way of living" and in the narrower sense of their art, literature, and music.

The supporters of this viewpoint tend to ignore some inconvenient truths.

One is that the strong will generally end up bullying or trying to influence the weak, and there are other "imperialisms" at work in the world today—Russian, Islamist, and Chinese—that are more dangerous and less tolerant.

Another is that the "Western model", despite the horrors of McDonaldization and Coca-colonization, is widely seen to offer a better life overall, taking into consideration not just the materialistic side of things but also freedom of expression and personal fulfilment. Health care may be good in Cuba, consumerism may be booming in China, life may be pleasant for the citizens of the Gulf States (and for the foreign expats who maintain them in their high standard of living), but just try criticising the government in any of those places… The world is currently in turmoil, and millions are looking for a better, safer place to live, but they are not knocking at the doors of Russia, China, or Saudi Arabia.

Yet both the proponents and opponents of globalisation are wrong on one point. Globalisation is not new. It has existed before, in many parts of the world, and there are few healthy cultures that are *not* the result of a degree of "mongrelisation", whether it be through immigration of people or adoption of intellectual influences, or both. Such a thing as an advanced "pure culture" hardly exists. The Roman Empire, for instance, overwhelmed

its neighbours wherever it could. And yet: "Superficially, Rome and its institutions triumphed, but they were complemented, enriched, subverted and transformed by the cultures of the subjugated peoples" (Jarman 2012a, 228).

European material, cultural, and intellectual development would have been quite different without inputs from outside: a frequently cited example is the introduction into Europe of the concept of zero, from India via the Arab world. The story may be even more complex than that, involving what were originally Babylonian ideas filtering through to India at the time of Alexander's incursions, a claim that is controversial (especially in India!) but actually strengthens rather than weakens the argument: that good ideas travel. (Or, they usually do. The Mayans of Central America also invented the zero, but the rest of the world didn't become aware of their achievement until much later.)

In the essay that I have just quoted from, which was based on a talk that I gave at a conference on globalisation in Egypt, I argued that we actually need both: a distinct individual culture *and* an openness to unfamiliar ways of doing things.

We need a culture of our own to give us (1) filters through which to experience and give order to our environment (2) survival rules for existing in our particular society (3) a feeling of who we are and where it is that we belong (232-33).

And we need an openness to other cultures, to what is new, unfamiliar, and challenging, in order to grow and develop.

I dared to advocate a kind of culturally tolerant universalism: "A way needs to be found to proclaim and defend universal, humanistic values while at the same time leaving space for separate and different cultural traditions" (234).

What better area in which to explore this possibility than literature?

World Literature

In 1827, the great German writer and polymath Goethe, in his recorded conversations with his pupil Johann Peter Eckermann, expressed his enthusiasm for writings from other cultures: "I am more and more convinced that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times in hundreds and hundreds of men." He added: "National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature (*Weltliteratur*) is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach" (Goethe, 350-51).

Marx and Engels, in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, were among those to heed his words:

> The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature (39).

Goethe's *Weltliteratur* was sniffily Eurocentric, with the ultimate touchstone being the ancient Greeks, "in whose works the beauty of mankind is constantly represented. All the rest we must look at only historically, appropriating to ourselves what is good, so far as it goes" (Goethe, 351). Until comparatively recently, European and American anthologies of "world literature" were indeed heavily focused on the literatures of the "major" European traditions, and I can remember how excited I was, as a student in the Sixties, to discover major writers from Africa or Latin America, whose works were now being made available by pioneering publishers like Penguin and Heinemann.

Another breakthrough was the *Penguin Companion to Literature* series. Volume 1 (1971) covered British & Commonwealth Literature; volume 2 (1969), European; volume 3 (1971), United States & Latin American Literature; volume 4 (1969), which was especially interesting, Classical and Byzantine, Oriental and African. Yet the problems of "pigeonholing" writers in specific categories soon revealed themselves. Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Tagore, and Raja Rao all appear in both volume 1 and volume 4; T.S. Eliot in both volume 1 and volume 3; Vladimir Nabokov only in volume 3, although he also wrote extensively in Russian; and so on.

The Problem of Language

Before literature from other parts of the world can be used to help us address issues that affect all of us, two problems have to be surmounted.

The first is (obviously) the problem of language. To fully appreciate a work of literature, we need to understand the language it is written in. Consider this from the point of view of the reader who is confronted with a text that is in a language that is not his or her own.

Reader 1 has an excellent, albeit not quite perfect, command of a foreign language: fluent, but with individual lexical gaps, and minor weaknesses in grammar and idiom. Faced

with a literary text, he or she will be able to read it, but may not appreciate it fully; may not have a "feeling" for it; may ask him- or herself "Why is there such a fuss about this? What makes this text so special? It's not bad, but why didthe guy get a Nobel Prize for it?"

Reader 2 has a rough and ready knowledge of the basics of a language, through lessons at school, mixing with native speakers, or watching hours and hours of TV soaps! The language may belong to the same linguistic family as the reader's mother tongue, meaning that some words are (or at least seem to be) recognisable. They will have to work to understand the foreign-language text, are not likely to enjoy it, and will miss some or even most of what the text would have to offer to a better-equipped reader.

Reader 3 has little or no ability to decipher anything in the foreign language, and will simply be lost.

If Readers 2 and 3 (and to some extent Reader 1) are to derive enjoyment and benefit from a foreign-language text, it will need to be translated. But translation comes with its own problems.

Almost inevitably, something will be lost in translation. Jerry Pinto (2024) has described the process by means of an allegory: A young woman sets out from Monolingua to cross the River of Meaning that separates her people from the Altalinguals and bring back salt. The Altalinguals are willing to give her salt, but by their laws she may not transport it in any receptacle. Her only option is to build a boat made of salt. The return journey is arduous— she must navigate through the Current of Misunderstanding, the Whirlpool of Connotation, the Rapids of Literal Interpretation… The river eats away at her boat, and by the time she reaches Monolingua not much of it is left. But she will try again.

A translation of a significant literary work cannot be expected to be as good as the original, in fact, the more faithful it is, the more tedious it is likely to be. Just occasionally a translation will be praised as being the equal of the original, or even its superior: Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, for instance, or Vladimir Nabokov's translation of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. Joseph Conrad enthused over the remarkable translation of Proust by C.K. Scott Moncrieff, writing to him: "I was more interested and fascinated by your rendering than by Proust's creation" (quoted in Findlay).

I can't judge the truth of any of those claims. But they miss the point anyway. The task of a literary translation is not to compete with the original, or to replace it, but to capture its essence, conveying an impression of what makes the work significant, whether that be its power, richness, beauty, or subtlety. A good translation will be a version of the original in a different language, a re-telling, not a painstaking imitation. It will not pretend that an exact equivalent can be found for every word in the source text, and that (for example) words referring to what we call "love", "honour", or "duty" will have the exact same meaning, associations, and resonance in every language and every historical period.

The task of a good literary translation is to reveal to us as much as possible of the content of the original, as accurately as possible, and in a manner close to that chosen by its author. The perfect or "definitive" translation doesn't exist. Perfect for whom? Definitive only until a better one comes along! I have a delightful little book of translations into German of the famous Shakespeare sonnet "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"—no fewer than 154 of them, and all of them are successful in their different ways (Gutsch).

Which brings us to the second problem.

Is knowing what the words seem to mean necessarily the same as fully understanding the text? Wittgenstein provocatively wrote that "If a lion could speak, we could not understand him" (*Philosophische Untersuchungen*, 1947-49, II, xi; N.B. St. Jerome, who supposedly befriended a lion, is the patron saint of translators). This is because the lion's words do not stand in isolation. They can only be understood in the context in which the lion uses them, a context governed by the world that the lion lives in, situations as *he* experiences them, *his* perceptions, *his* desires, *his* priorities. In a word: his culture.

The Problem of Culture

There can be no total access to an alien reality from the outside. You would have to become part of it, which would entail abandoning hardwired ways of thinking and feeling. It has to be one or the other, since keeping two systems of reality in one brain is impossible—except perhaps in extreme schizophrenia?(It is a bit like the notorious optical illusion of a drawing that depicts either an old woman looking left or a young woman turned away, looking over her right shoulder, but not both at the same time. You have to choose which one to see.)

The question posed in 1974 by the philosopher Thomas Nagel, "What is it like to be a bat?", can only be answered, if at all, by speculation as to what it would be like for a *person* to be one—the resources of the human mind being inadequate to the task of conceiving what it is like for a *bat* to be a bat (169).

The problem can also be explained by a simple metaphor. We experience the world through the (let us say) blue-tinted spectacles of our culture. Members of a different culture view the same "reality" through the yellow-tinted spectacles of *theirs*. If we wish to understand their view of the world we must put on their "yellow spectacles", but we cannot remove our own blue-tinted ones, and so what we will see will be neither yellow nor blue, but *green*.

This is an extreme position, of course. Someone translating a literary work from a different culture, or just trying to understand a good translation of that work, will not be intending to submerge themselves completely in the other culture, but they will still need to navigate a way through the Otherness, and they will sometimes be confronted with that which (in the context of their own culture) is peculiar, incomprehensible, unappealing, or even unacceptable.

Let me give two examples, one banal but widespread, one more specific but challenging.

Colours vary from culture to culture. Different cultures divide up the natural colour spectrum differently ("blue" and "green" may be covered by one word, for example), and they may have strikingly different colour aesthetics: thus, Culture A will delight in bold primary colours (which others might find garish and irritating); Culture B will go for pastel shades (which others might regard as whimsical and childish); Culture C will prefer conservative black, grey, dark blue (which others will often see as dull and gloomy).

Different colours will have different associations. Grey is a depressing colour in the West but a cheerful one among many American Indians, in each case presumably because of the association with rainclouds, which are more appreciated in dry zones than in wet ones.

Or take the colour red:

The Russian word for red, *krasni*, was, in the past, also used to describe something beautiful, good or honourable. Today, *krasni* is used to indicate something that is red in

colour, while *krasivi* is the modern Russian word for "beautiful." However, many important sites and cultural artefacts still reflect the combined usage of the word, and a name that incorporates this root might still be considered something elevated in status. In fact, the Russian word for excellent—*prekrasni*—shares the root "kras" with these other words (Kubilius).

In English, red can have both positive associations (red roses for the girlfriend) and negative ones (to see red, a red rag to a bull).

When a writer uses colour in their narrative, they may be trying to drop a hint or create a mood, but if so, in what direction? The translator must tread cautiously here.

The second example is the (for modern Western readers) troubling conclusion of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, when Rāmasends his beloved wife Sītā away because of idle rumours about her chastity. He does not believe the stories, but they nevertheless make him "unhappy" (511).

An ancient Roman might have understood Rāma's action, in fact Julius Caesar divorced his wife Pompeia in response to rumours about her, and his explanation has since become a proverb: "Caesar's wife must be above suspicion"; a medieval knight might have understood, too. But modern readers of the story, brought up to believe in the primacy of romantic love, will feel little sympathy for Rāma. Why does he do it? Is he a great man with a flaw or a blind spot? An Othello who *doesn't* come to a tragic end?

Approaching the story in this parochial way is to look through the wrong end of the telescope. Rāmais an ideal man, an ideal prince, who eventually discovers that he is a god. His behaviour can *only* be right. To understand why he behaves in a manner that we happen to find wrong, we must take into account the moral universe in which he exists—which is not ours—and consider the concept of *dharma*. Arshia Sattar, the translator of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, arguably the earliest surviving version of the tale, has a helpful explanatory footnote:

> *Dharma*, one of the central concepts in Hinduism, is impossible to translate into English with a single word. It encompasses ideas of the right, the good, truth, law (temporal and spiritual) as well as the "ought". Where possible in this translation, I have used the English words "righteous" or "honourable". In sentences where these adjectives could not be used with felicity, I have retained the Sanskrit *dharma* (36, footnote).

Many cultures have tricky concepts that are difficult to translate. English, for instance, has "fair play", which has both a moral and an aesthetic dimension of meaning, and many rich historical associations, especially in the British context.

It will often be hard to understand events or feelings depicted in the literature of a different culture—and easy to *misunderstand* them. In some cases, the academic discipline of intercultural communication may be of help. From 2005 to 2013 I led a postgraduate research project at my university tasked with creating an online database of analyses of "intercultural" films and TV dramas, from *A Passage to India* to *Zorba the Greek*. The analytic framework for the project was provided by the so-called "cultural dimensions" identified by Edward T. Hall, Geert Hofstede, Fons Trompenaars, and other luminaries of intercultural communication.

We worked with a catalogue of twenty dimensions, covering specific areas of life and behaviour in which cultures nurture in their members what may be radically different positions, with an obvious potential for misunderstandings and conflict when different cultures interact. Our dimensions included time management, individualism-collectivism, attitudes to personal space, the degree of willingness to accept unresolved or ambiguous situations, traditionalism-secularism, attitudes to power and authority, and so on (for a complete listing, see Jarman 2012b).

The analyses focused particularly on film scenes that presented actual misunderstanding or conflict caused by cultural differences, but they also included scenes showing straightforward behaviour, not involving any interaction with a different culture, that Western audiences would have difficulty with. These were mostly, but not always, taken from non-Western films.

For example, in the Yugoslav film *The Beauty of Sin* (dir. Živko Nikolić 1986), the young couple Luka and Jaglika, simple country folk, are shamelessly, and almost comically, exploited by their "friend" George (107-8). Why do they put up with it? Are they idiots? The answer is that they trust him unconditionally because he was the Best Man at their wedding, and thus granted a unique status in their lives, even though he is an opportunistic crook who has done nothing to deserve that trust. (This is the cultural dimension Ascribed versus Achieved Status.) The (implicit) contrast here is between the traditional culture of

Montenegrin mountain villagers and that of "sophisticated" urban people, most of whom would be scornful of the naivety of Luka and Jaglika.

That is merely an *explanation*. But let us take a further step, a step towards empathy for the young couple and constructive self-reflection, by asking the "sophisticates" whom they themselves would trust (and how far). Their priest? Their child's teacher? Their local policeman or Member of Parliament? Because even in more cynical "modern" cultures Ascribed Status behaviour has not completely died out.

This kind of analysis can be applied not just to films, but also to works of literature that were produced in cultures that are remote from us in time or space. Opening up a global, non-local perspective offers us enhanced intercultural communicative competence, greater tolerance and understanding of the Other, and—the ultimate reward and justification—self-knowledge.

Global Literature?

It would be possible (though immensely difficult) to compile a listing of all the "essential" authors in all languages. Harold Bloom sensibly titled his own magisterial study not *The Canon of World Literature* but *The Western Canon* (1994), and he included earlier (non-Western) works only if they had been influential in the Western tradition, e.g. Gilgamesh, the *Bible*, the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Koran*, and *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night*. His choice of "canonical" works of the most modern period (what Bloom calls "the Chaotic Age") is, as he himself admits, subjective and controversial. He includes 17 works by writers in Yiddish and 17 by Hebrew authors, but only six works in Arabic (admittedly, three of them are by the peerless Naguib Mahfouz).

Under the heading "INDIA (in English)" (no writers from other Indian language traditions are listed by Bloom) we find only R.K. Narayan's *The Guide*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's *Heat and Dust*. With their complex backgrounds, Rushdie, "an Indian-born British-American novelist" (Wikipedia) who spent only his childhood years in India, and Prawer Jhabvala, "a British and American novelist and screenwriter" (Wikipedia) from a German Jewish family, who married an Indian and lived in India for 24 years, are hardly the best exemplars of *Indian* writing in English.

On the other hand, writers like these are fine exemplars of global literature, positioned by their personal experience to be able to promote understanding across cultures, to encourage empathy, and to appeal beyond a narrowly defined readership. Not every writer is as "international" as Rushdie or Prawer Jhabvala, but there are many who, though less accessible, deserve to be more widely read outside the tradition in which they are based, and from whom we can learn a great deal, including much about ourselves.

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Frontier Myth and the Contemporary Western

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Abstract

Ever since its emergence in the 19th century in the United States, the genre of Western has endured several major changes to the storytelling form. The genre's traditional setting of the American frontier, the so-called Old West, with the ideas it embodied with its idealised characters and narratives, were one of the myths that both shaped and reflected the American cultural consciousness. Before it became a myth, though, the frontier was an important place and time for the USA until its closing in 1890. Among the first to ponder its cultural significance was Frederick Jackson Turner with his essay The Significance of the Frontier in American History in 1893, bringing attention to how the nature of the frontier shaped the American character. The subsequent idea of the frontier allowed the Western genre to emerge, gain widespread popularity, and become a major source of entertainment in the US; to resemble myth more than accurately represent history. This paper aims to map out the relationship between the frontier myth and the genre of Western from its conception, with focus on its contemporary audio-visual forms.

The period of the American frontier, also known as the Old West or the Wild West, refers to the era of continuous westward expansion of the first American settlers from the East Coast of the current United States. The exact timeframe of the era depends on one's angle of approach; it can be said that the frontier emerged as soon as the first European colonies were established, beginning with Jamestown in 1607. The year 1890 can be deemed as the 'official' closing, as the 1890 US census stated that due to the distribution of population, the frontier had disappeared (Turner 2008, pt. I), even though the last remaining traces of the frontier's line were still present in the 1910 census.

The commonly understood Old West era, however, refers to the subperiod beginning around the Civil War, typically marked at its end in 1865, to the year of the frontier's

official closing. Despite the "amateurish nature of the census of 1890", stemming from the fact that the Census Office of 1890 could not exactly be described as "a highly professional organisation", given the lack of expertise of many of its members (Nash 99) – which puts to question both the data gathered and their interpretation at the time – "this census report helped propagate the myth that after 1890 there was no frontier, no West that was distinctively different from other parts of the nation. Although unsupported by reality, the myth became firmly entrenched in the minds of millions of Americans" (100).

The census influenced Frederick Jackson Turner to develop his Frontier Thesis, first presented in his 1893 essay *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*. Turner was the first theorist to point out the impact of the American frontier in shaping the cultural character of the United States, describing it as one of the greatest factors that have contributed to its evolution and distinguished it from its European origin. The social development of the US, according to him, "has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character" (Turner 2008, pt. I). Many traits that we could still readily observe in the American people today are ones that Turner attributed to frontier life, individualism being the chiefest among them. He further states that the most important effect of the frontier is its promotion of democracy, which the high level of individualism has always been connected to (ibid.).

Turner defines the frontier as "the meeting point between savagery and civilisation" (ibid.), and undoubtedly, that is the image many still envision when encountering the term. His Frontier Thesis sparked decades of subsequent scholarship on the topic, both in terms of expansion on and criticism of his thought, as well as introducing the core concepts behind what we term the frontier myth (or the myth of the West). Another scholar that needs to be mentioned when discussing this subfield of American studies is Henry Nash Smith and his publication *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. The frontier, or indeed the West as such, in Smith's and Turner's work is built around several ideas. Firstly, there is no specific geographical location assigned to it, but it is a space of continuous change brought on by new settlers expanding westwards. Secondly, the West/frontier is typically

considered representative of the whole nation, "a special place from which its future could be built" (Paul 312). The third idea is the geographical region in question is connected to "an agrarian ideal that for a long time has been seen as standing for authentic Americanness" (ibid.). Next is the reflection of values associated with a particular lifestyle, which may be connected to notions of pre-/anti-modernism, traditionalism, and folk culture – as Turner mentions, the West is a way of life, of society, rather than a region (2008, pt. II). The last idea addressed by Paul is that there is a pastoral aspect to the myth, defining the pastoral as what lies between the concept of the city and the wilderness. (Paul 312)

Slotkin, scholar of the New Western History movement (built on criticism of Turner's thesis), defines the frontier myth itself as "the conception of America as a wide-open land of unlimited opportunity for the strong, ambitious, self-reliant individual to thrust his way to the top" (1973, p. 5).

Paul further states that two basic principles comprise the myth: agrarianism and expansionism. With the first, the West is often imagined as "a kind of garden […] symbolising pastoral simplicity and economic independence based on subsistence farming;" with the other as "a site of individual and collective quests for land and dominance", even if there is a significant overlap between the two, and Westerns have often used combinations of both versions to construct different narratives, it can be perceived as intrinsically connected (Paul 314).

Belton argues that "when the frontier began to disappear, the Western began to replace the West, continuing, albeit in a purely mythic way, to shape American character" (Belton 245). The myth was brought to life even before that in the form of literature and later Wild West Shows, though Belton cites the rise of cinema as what made Westerns a part of mass culture. While this popularity experienced significant fluctuations during the 20th century, the genre is still far from gone and forgotten, with both popular new films and video games being produced and attracting younger audiences.

Our focus is on the works of the previous decade, the 2010s. It has been well over a century since Turner formulated what impact the frontier had on the American people; it is, therefore, pertinent to ask, how much of the original myth can still be observed in contemporary Western? Even a surface reading of many contemporary Western narratives

suggests that present ideologies that are today considered 'problematic' or 'old-fashioned' are in some way criticised, and the reality of the frontier myth itself is depicted in a more graphic, supposedly more realistic way. Is there, therefore, anything that has remained the same?

The following three films (significant for their impact on popular culture) and their heroes can be considered through the lens of Slotkin's definition of the frontier myth: Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained* (2012) and *The Hateful Eight* (2015), and Alejandro G. Iñárritu's *The Revenant* (2015).

Only the latter extensively uses the land/geography as a source of conflict between man and nature. Its protagonist, Hugh Glass, is in every way the archetypal, ideal hero in the eyes of the myth – a strong, self-reliant frontiersman, an individual who can just as well survive without any community, despite the weather conditions and the geography itself making apparent that there is strength (and any other benefit) in numbers. While the core motif of the narrative is revenge, the message that the riches of the land are there for any man strong and ambitious enough to take them is present – it is, after all, the reason for Glass' expedition. But with the traits of the characters portrayed and the conditions of the setting, the quest for dominance over the land, the expansionist element is present in its most traditional sense, while the agrarian is minimised.

Tarantino's Westerns are more centred around human relationships and societal structures that are presented through these relationships. *Django Unchained* is more about an individual trying to navigate through an already-established civilisation, seemingly possessing neither an agrarian nor an expansionist element. But we can certainly deduce the myth to have influenced the minds of the characters/society portrayed in the work. The protagonist, Django Freeman, his mentor Dr. Schultz, and the antagonist, Calvin J. Candie, all possess qualities that Turner thought to have come from the frontier, and likewise the ones Slotkin establishes in his definition. The narrative showcases that despite there being no need for survival and needing to forage and hunt for resources, an individual still needs to have the innate characteristics of a frontiersman to 'successfully' make it in society. We can conclude the quest for dominance is still present – over the land at least in the sense of capitalists and gentry (i.e., Candie's character) wanting to have mastery over it by default – but more importantly, the quest for dominance over other people and power (or in the case of Django himself as a freed slave, any agency) in society.

In *The Hateful Eight*, there is the matter of the weather (and therefore land, nature) being the initial catalyst for the plot. The characters, though, do not try to fight nature in any notable capacity, instead seeking shelter from it. The setting is mostly limited to a single room, and thus we can again observe the myth mostly in the consciousness of the characters. Despite multiple people being confined together, there is never any sense of community among them; each of them remains an individual (even though there are allegiances among them, they cannot act upon). The quest for dominance again pertains to dominance over other individuals; strength, ambition, and cunningness more than anything else, are used to gain leverage. There is no rising to the top of society in this narrative, only being the most powerful person – and the last one standing – in the room.

None of the films thus truly possesses the agrarian element of the myth, and in all three expansionism is more present in the mindset of characters rather than achieving domination over the land. The high level of individuality that lies at the core of the original myth, present in each protagonist (and not only in them) in the selected films, the competency and self-reliance of these characters, the desire to prevail over either the land, society, or other individuals, is still what drives contemporary Western narratives and heroes forward.

The chosen films reflect a shift from agrarianism to a stronger emphasis on expansionism; the very core of the myth, however, still has a place in the genre and might be completely inextricable from it. Further discursive analysis could reveal whether the aforementioned shift occurred as a result of trying to make Western narratives more palatable or relatable to contemporary audiences, and/or whether it merely more accurately reflects the current state of the US society in terms of their economic and political situation, highly competitive job market conditions, or multitude of similar factors. It might very likely suggest the myth is still just as present in the subconsciousness of the real nation as it is in the minds of these characters.

To conclude, while the frontier myth can be taken out from the setting of the American frontier, there is no way to remove the myth from the Western and have it remain the same genre. As such, works of Western will always offer (ideological) commentary related to the myth (be it implicit or explicit, incidental or intentional) – and tracking how this commentary evolves with newer works of Western in the future might provide an insight

into how American society thinks of their past, and how that reflects their current socio-cultural and political stances.

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Cents and Sensibility in Bollywood and Kollywood:
A Musical Analysis of the Indian Film Industry's
Jane Austen Adaptations

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Abstract

Indian film adaptations of Jane Austen's formative works Pride and Prejudice, Emma, and Sense and Sensibility have captivated international audiences by transporting relational and situational dramas of eighteenth century British gentry, famously captured by Austen, into Indian cultural backgrounds. Kollywood's take on Austen's Sense and Sensibility, Tamil-language Kandukondain Kandukondain (2000), follows the trials of a Tamil Nadu family. The soundtrack of this film, composed by A.R. Rahman, was highly sought after by the Saregama record company and features heavy use of Carnatic ragams and jazz idioms. Bride and Prejudice (2004) re-situates the famous Bennet family in Amritsar, and with a primarily English, part-Hindi and Punjabi dialogue, was released to U.K. and American audiences before reaching international cult status. This film features a romantic comedy take on Austen's Pride and Prejudice, with a score composed by Anu Malik who makes heavy use of dholak drums and orchestral references to evergreen 1950s Bollywood films. Aisha (2010) serves as a Hindi-language retelling of Austen's Emma, and is heavily influenced in tone by American pop film classic Clueless. Amrit Trivedi, the composer of Aisha's soundtrack, was particularly praised for his innovative incorporation of jazz, blues, electronic, and funk musical elements.

The music of these three films continues to capture listener's hearts. In this paper I explore the musical elements in each film within three short case studies, comprising of the songs "Smiyai", "A Marriage Has Come to Town," and "Suno Aisha." Comparing Indian classical and folk musics represented in the soundtracks and the musical production choices geared toward international and globalized audiences, I position that — though not without problematic tokenization of sound — the musical soundtracks of the Indian film industry's Jane Austen adaptations mirror a similar complexity of political, social, and relational interplay represented in Austen's novels. In doing so, I emphasize the increasing

relevance and importance of interdisciplinary analysis between the fields of music and literature.

Music and literature have both provided footholds for reflection and connections in popular and academic discourse alike. In this paper, I discuss the benefits of interdisciplinary interaction between the fields of literature and music, particularly through comparative analysis. I reference the Indian film industry, broadly conceived, as a case study of an interdisciplinary site that interweaves music and literature toward useful ends.

It would be naïve to suggest that I could summarize the encompassing impact of the Indian film industry and related footprint of *filmi* soundtracks on the musical world of national and global Indian film listenership. Here, I utilize the term *filmi* as applied by ethnomusicologists Brian Diettrich, Jayson Beaster-Jones, Jane Freeman Moulin, and Michael High Webb in their edited collection *Bollywood Sounds: The Cosmopolitan Meditations of Hindi Film Song* (2011). In this collection, the authors stress the link between the visual mediation of film songs and incorporation of these songs into filmic narratives. I take a similar route with my analysis, instead focusing on the musical and sonic mediation of film songs and incorporating these songs into the cross-disciplinary narrative between music and literature across cultures and time, using three formative novels by Jane Austen and the Indian film industry's adaptations of the same as a case study. Despite apparent disparities between the contexts of Austen's narratives and their treatment by Bollywood, Tollywood – and Hollywood, for that matter – I argue that the musical soundtracks of the Indian film industry's Jane Austen adaptations demonstrate a sonic, globalized interpretation of the complexity of political, social, and relational narrative interplay that are characteristic of Austen's writings.

As explored by cultural scholars Meenakshi Bharat, Christine Geraghty, Stella Butter, and Suchitra Mathur (2020, 2022; 2006; 2015; 2007), Indian film adaptations of Jane Austen's formative works *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, and *Sense and Sensibility* have made international waves by transferring Jane Austen's stories of Regency England to twenty-first century neoliberal India, and in a parallel way, connecting Bollywood and Hollywood music idioms. Set in the context of the Austen-mania that evolved in the 1990s, these three films fall into the category of crossover, transnational, and intertextual cinema. Tamil-

language Kollywood's take on Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, *Kandukondain Kandukondain* (2000), follows the ins-and-outs of life for sisters of a Tamil family. The soundtrack of this film, composed by A.R. Rahman, was a commercial success and features heavy use of Carnatic ragams and jazz idioms. *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) re-locates the *Pride and Prejudice* Bennet family to Amritsar and was released to a U.K. and U.S. audience before reaching international cult status for translating Austin's "master text" of cultural currency to an association with "the populist 'masala' formula of Bollywood" (Mathur 3). This film leans on the romantic comedy genre, with a score composed by Anu Malik. The soundtrack features heavy use of dholak drums and orchestral references to evergreen 1950s Bollywood films. *Aisha* (2010) serves as a comedic and pop-culture-spritzed Hindi language retelling of Austen's *Emma*. Amrit Trivedi, the composer of *Aisha's* soundtrack, was particularly praised for his innovative incorporation of jazz, blues, electronic, and funk musical elements.

My first case study *Kandukondain Kandukondain* ("I Have Seen It/I Found It") expresses the ups and downs of relationships and life stages among a family of women in Karaikudi. In the conceptualization of the soundtrack, A.R. Rahman intentionally includes sonic references to the "traditional" and sonic references to the "modern." The duality of these references is easily identified in the song "Smiyai." This song begins with an acapella choral soli. The vocalists sing in rhythmic unison, with one vocal part singing the main melody and the other singing one note in a drone format. Most of the time the harmony comprises of intervals of thirds and fifths, outlining the chordal structures of the harmony. Interestingly, this vocal harmony in thirds is characteristic of East and West African music, which was trending as a popular sound in the early 2000s, when Rahman composed this score. At twenty seconds, more musical elements layer on that signal to the "modernness" of sound: a funky vocal bass line, syncopated rhythms, a slide guitar reminiscent of coastal California soul, and snaps on beats two and four — typical of a Western jazz context and not a Tamil context — where the emphasis is usually collectively felt on beats one and three.

These sounds coded as modern contrast the more traditional sonic elements that enter at forty seconds in "Smiyai." Here, Indian percussion instruments enter in a marked shift of style. At "paadinallu," sung at minute one, the semitone alternation in the vocal melody is more reminiscent of Tamil folk vocalizations - or perhaps even a classical gamakam form of

odukkal kampita, a technique of Carnatic music that includes vocal emphasis from below on repeated tones. A.R. Rahman intentionally weaves nods to various forms of music clearly into this piece. Rarely are the contrasting sonic styles represented simultaneously. Instead, they trade off. This trade is especially apparent at forty-five seconds, where the instrumental interlude solos are traded between the guitar's three-note ostinato, or repeated pattern, played as a hemiola — a rhythm of two layered against three — and the Indian percussion sections. The vocal chromatic interjections at 1:55 are reminiscent of jazz scatting technique, but quickly evolve into a tonal alternation between major and minor modes representative of many Tamil folk genres. Throughout this song, A.R. Rahman weaves threads of Western music styles into folk and classical styles of Tamil Nadu with intentionality: the music is catchy, and the techniques are clear enough to be heard with special notice to the contrast of modern and traditional-coded sounds. The contrast between modern and traditional-coded ideologies are echoed in the character development of Austen's Dashwood sisters in *Sense and Sensibility*.

As a second case study, the internationally acclaimed *Bride and Prejudice* has been well-studied by cultural theorists for its intention and global impact. I would assert that the soundtrack of this film significantly contributes to the film's high profile in the public and scholarly eye. For example, cultural theorists and media studies scholars Roy Sohinee and Suchitra Mathur summarize the work this film does in the media circuit: it raises issues with some of the fundamental assumptions about Austen's nineteenth-century improvement ideology, it highlights conflicts between social and individual identity in a modern neoliberal Indian context, and it paves the way for many cross-over works with diasporic reach (Sohinee 2016; Mathur 2007). However, these scholars also critique *Bride and Prejudice* for the way it utilizes Bollywood's global cultural monopoly to transport a tale of relative internalism — characteristic of the drama and conflicts Austen's characters face interpersonally and intrapersonally — to one of explosive externalism and showmanship, characteristic of Bollywood films' style and ethos. Therefore, many scholars note that *Bride and Prejudice* falls flat of Austen's original due to the postcolonial echoes in the way this film seems to champion neoliberal Eurocentrism (Sohinee 3).

Musically, the score of *Bride and Prejudice* leans heavily on Western symphonic orchestration, a significant trend in the filmi genre. In her work, ethnomusicologist Anna Morcom summarizes the relationship between Hollywood's Western-classical leaning orchestral music and Bollywood filmi music: the "symphonic style of Hollywood film music has become a standard part of the background music, and some of the instrumental sections of songs, in Hindi films since around 1950" (Morcom 64). Here, Morcom highlights the link between songs in films and the films' ongoing background scores. She emphasizes the important role of recording technology in film music's creation as a regionally specific seminological system rather than a universal language (Morcom 65). I agree with Morcom's evaluation, particularly as the musical context of a film has grown increasingly tied to its regional site of production.

For example, since the 1950s, Bollywood-style films made increasing use of Western orchestration and symphonic instruments to signal cultural and capital connection with the Hollywood Golden Age films of the 1930s and 1940s. The Tollywood, Kollywood, and Malayalam film industries started adapting Western symphonic orchestration to their soundtracks later and were generally more intentional about maintaining a regional sense to their narratives and soundtracks. However, I observe an interesting parallel to this phenomenon. In the past twenty years or so, regional film industries, particularly Tollywood and Kollwood, have increasingly integrated musical references to global musics and popular musics of the U.S. and U.K. For example, EDM music, American Southern delta blues, and new wave jazz have made their way into many Indian film's soundtracks as a statement of newness, freshness, and connection of universal tried-and-true narrative themes to the current global context of globalized, neoliberal media consumption.

In effect, soundtrack composers are translating "tales as old as time" into contemporary musical arrangements more reflective of the interconnectedness of global networks. As socio-political anthropologist Arjun Appadurai puts it, modernity has forced both readers and listeners to take part in "work of the imagination" that is mediated by mass migration through technology, integration through imagined communities, and disjunctures between different imagined landscapes (Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 3). I assert that these works of the imagination have become increasingly apparent in the treatment of Western musical idioms by the Indian music film industry, especially within the past fifteen years.

These debates simmer up in the soundtrack of the *Bride and Prejudice*. Composer Anu Malik makes use of dholak drums, serving as a sonic cue of the celebratory nature of Bollywood song-and-dance sequences. Alongside this, Malik also incorporates use of lush, sweeping Western orchestral arrangements that serve as a reference to 1950s evergreen Bollywood films. One song that highlights this duality from the film is "A Marriage Has Come to Town." The Western style of vocals at the beginning of the song, complete with a breathy, non-nasal tone quality and vibrato as a stylistic choice is paired with the dholak drum's entrance at forty seconds. Just a few seconds later, the orchestral accompaniment enters, paired with the female vocalist in a sweeping, lush string arrangement. Characters within Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*face the similar challenge of coming to grips with social and cultural networks that are changing, modernizing, and increasingly imagined.

My final case study centers on *Aisha*, the comedic and pop-culture savvy adaptation of Austen's *Emma*. Composer Amrit Trivedi incorporates jazz, blues, electronic, and funk musical elements into his pieces. The soundtrack's title track "Suno Aisha" incorporates all these elements. The initial moments in the song feature syncopated ostinato rhythms and move into a funk-inspired groove. At twenty-eight seconds, a brass band enters with punctuated melodic hits reminiscent of New Orleans brass jazz bands. Electronic 90's record scratch effects punctuate the texture and add a layer of nostalgia to the piece. I suggest that the nostalgia created is intentionally directed toward the sounds of 90's U.S. urban culture — also an internal reference to *Clueless*, the cult classic Hollywood adaptation of *Emma*. Continuing the "tuning in" to these global pop culture movements, minute 1:33 includes a record scratch effect, characteristic of 80s and 90s American hip hop culture. An electric guitar with a wah-wah pedal introduces a funk element before the instrumental bridge. An electronically manipulated flute in the instrumental bridge adds a brief nod of traditional Bollywood filmi orchestration to the mix.

The remaining soundtrack numbers of *Aisha* each correspond to a particular globalized sound. The styles represented in the soundtrack range from acoustic guitar-picking singer-songwriter indie to soft electronic wave, driving hard rock to Spanish-influenced flamenco rock. The sheer representation of musical genres represented in this soundtrack codes the sonic space of *Aisha* as one that is relevant in the current popular world. In the film, this

multifaceted soundtrack thrives in a globalized community where listeners are aware of various global music styles and serves as a parallel for the complex and at times ironic situations the characters encounter in their social and relational lives. I experience the musical variety of Trivedi's compositions here as reflecting a certain ironic humor in the fast-paceness and unexpectedness of life around us. Scholars of Austen's works have also highlighted this humor and situational navigation regarding the complexity of social and relational interplay in Austen's books. By this nature, Trivedi's soundtrack bears a unique sonic reflection of Austen's *Emma*.

The music within *Kandukondain Kandukondain*, *Bride and Prejudice*, and *Aisha* continues to capture listener's hearts. In this paper I explored the musical elements in each film within three short case studies, comparing Indian classical and folk musics represented in the soundtracks and the musical production choices geared toward international and globalized audiences. In summary, I position that — though not without problematic tokenization of sound — the musical soundtracks of the Indian film industry's Jane Austen adaptations mirror a similar complexity of political, social, and relational interplay represented in Austen's novels.

As I hope has become evident throughout this paper, the regional variations of culture, language, and materials of Bollywood, Kollywood, etc., are translated into the sonic space of each film's soundtrack, songs, and connection to thematic narratives Jane Austen's novels are famous for. However, media scholar Meenakshi Bharat highlights the potential tokenization and problematic continuities in comparing the competing "influence of Austen and the global cinematic adaptation…of Austenian social concerns to the particularities of the contemporary upper-middle-class urban existence in India." (Bharat 15). It is indeed wise to be thoughtful of the unfounded application of intertextual, cross-cultural, and cross-discipline comparison, especially in a creative space so fraught with potential for postcolonial representation and misrepresentation. However, this cross-disciplinary exploration serves as an exciting tool of cross-cultural, intertexual analysis in spaces which are increasingly interdisciplinary, such as the fields of language, literature, and music studies.

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Linear v. Circular: The Western Canon &The Black Author

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Abstract

Walter Ong's, Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word, is a thought-provoking commentary on the relationship between writing-based and oral-based cultures. On one level, Ong's analysis considers the literal implications of both modes of communication. Ong argues that knowledge-sharing is far more advanced in written-based societies in comparison to their oral-based cultural counterparts—chiefly due to literature's ability to physically freeze knowledge in time, allowing individuals to critique and dissect concepts that have been immortalized in a physical medium. Though compelling, at first glance, Ong's notion that written culture is synonymous with linear growth—i.e. an optimized means of promoting development and intellectual evolution—it is important to recognize that this philosophy is inherently Western-centric and (un)intentionally devalues the content and means of communication used by authors from the peripheries. Moreover, Ong's characterization of oral based communities characterizes orality as a comparatively "circular" practice in relation to literacy-centric cultures, due to oral-based communication's emphasis on the re-visitation of concepts in order to share or intellectually process them. This paper, in an effort to critique Ong's Western-centric notion that literacy-oriented societies have found the most optimal means of interpersonal communication and intellectual discourse, draws upon John Edgar Wideman's, Hiding Place, and Ernest Gaine's, A Gathering of Old Men, and discusses how these novels' utilization of "mock" oral storytelling—and these authors' masterful explorations of the interiority and growth of their novels' central characters—specifically in the context of Black American life, and encourages today's audiences to consider what real "progress" actually entails.

Introduction

At face value, the terms "orality" and "literacy" appear to be contradictory in both their literal meanings and cultural connotations. To thinkers such as Walter Ong, the relationship between these two concepts represents a dichotomy between the linear and the circular—

that is to say, the difference between written communication, as the most effective facilitator of "progress" and analysis, and oral communication, which may "stunt" rather than promote meaningful intellectual development. This line of thinking is often underscored by sentiments that privilege, whether deliberately or unintentionally, canonical Western narratives over those of authors from the peripheries. Of course, while Ong does make several valid arguments in his piece, Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word, his perspective has not been unequivocally accepted without receiving its share of critique—particularly by authors whose writings deviate from the literary conventions of the "Western canon". In fact, the writings of veteran Black authors such as John Edgar Wideman and Ernest Gaines, whose stories repeatedly revolve around the same geographies and communities throughout their bodies of work (the circular model of communication and analysis), directly contradict Ong's thesis that written (or "literacy-based") practices (which are essentially linear in nature) are the optimal means of initiating social and intellectual growth. Simply put, codifying ideologies or stories in writing— which allows one to capture and therefore analyze and potentially build upon a static, on-paper concept—is not inherently superior to oral-based cultures, as orality still allows a given audience or thinker to conduct dynamic and complex critique and analysis of a given set of ideas, even if said ideas have not been captured through a physical medium. Through a succinct examination of John Edgar Wideman's, Hiding Place, and Ernest Gaine's, A Gathering of Old Men, alongside interviews and extant academic literature, this paper explores how Wideman and Gaines— through their usages of "mock" oral storytelling narratives—contradict Ong's notion that "literate" culture's promotion of a more "linear" means of storytelling and knowledge-sharing is the ideal method of critical analysis and most effective facilitator of intellectual progress.

Literacy and Orality in the context of this paper

First and foremost, it is important to acknowledge the potentially contradictory fact that this paper examines the relationship between orality and literacy while primarily using hard-copy novels as points of evidence. As paradoxical as this may appear, as previously stated, Wideman and Gaines, although using physical, literary mediums, attempt to replicate

the pathos of oral storytelling as they address everything from the 20th century plight of the Black American subject to the cosmogony of Black urban life in the waning years of the Great Migration (Snead 149). Moreover, this paper does not simply focus on these two concepts (orality and literacy) in a literal, textbook, sense. This essay instead focuses on what these two concepts represent in the broader context of storytelling and even the pursuit of intrinsic growth and development.

Wideman

The main beauty of Hiding Place, outside of its incredible replication of the simultaneous engagement between real-time action and consciousness, is the fact that the story only takes place in one location: Homewood. Through Clement, Tommy and Bess, all of whom inhabit the same community and never depart from it, Wideman explores a range of complex human emotions and encourages the reader (the Black reader in particular) to look in the mirror. As one essay writer aptly quoted, "[it is] many paintings in one, overlapping, hiding and revealing each other. Many scenes occur at once, a crowd hides in a single body," Wideman manages to do so much with such a limited playing field. (Hume 703). What is interesting about likening Wideman's style to painting is that like oral storytelling, visual arts such as paintings are something to be revisited and explored, rather than built upon (according to Ong's assertions about literature). In this sense, it is evident that despite Wideman's choice to use literature as his artistic medium, and the fact that by definition, he is a literate subject, the content of his writing cannot be so easily categorized. Wideman's writing questions this binary of literature being a medium through which evolution occurs only through forward motion.

Within Hiding Place, Wideman's troubled character, Tommy, is an excellent example of how Wideman uses one, localized question, "Why stay in Homewood?", to develop a deeper, philosophical study of Black Urban life outside of this small, fictional hub. While Tommy is ostensibly "stuck" in Homewood, his continued presence is not treated as a point of failure. Unlike the classic notion of migrating from rural (or decayed urban life) to a bustling metropole, Wideman is rather content lingering in the same geographic zone. Moreover, both the linguistic repetition of his storytelling, as well as his constant exploration of the same central location is actually evocation of survival and resilience, rather than a linear

flight from "point A to point B". Likewise, Wideman uses Tommy to juxtapose the fluidity of the mind against the stagnation and rot of the city, which, if one is feeling generous, is almost an apt comparison between the dynamic (albeit slowly evolving nature of) oral storytelling and the set-in-stone nature of classical literature, which, while relished for its timelessness, remains almost stagnant, and in a literal sense, collects dust on the shelf.

Gaines

When it comes to Ernest Gaines' storytelling in A Gathering of Old Men, he shares two commonalities with Wideman: 1) an emphasis on exploring the so-called interior of his characters and 2) the cyclical nature of remaining at "Home." It is the latter of these two points that this paper will address.

One of the most important themes within A Gathering of Old Men is time. The "old men" who act as the majority of the novel's narrators all bring something different to the table. Some are war veterans, others have been and always will be stewards of the land, but all of them remain, at heart, historians—forever wrapped in past. Most of these men have never permanently left the plantation, yet they live lives that bring them their fair share of fulfillment. Their legacies and livelihoods are tied to "this" land. Even the most pivotal action of the novel-- the slaying of a white man and the subsequent "reckoning" that follows—begins and ends on the plantation. What is most intriguing about the characters of A Gathering of Old Men is that even though most of them have lived in the same place for decades, the amount of life that they have lived, the amount of pain they have endured, and most importantly the evolution that they undergo as men, is all inspired by the goings-on of one place.

Again, situating the Western ideal of linear growth against the backdrop of A Gathering of Old Men's events, it becomes clearer that this is not a one-size-fits-all ideology. The novel itself is about home and standing one's ground in the face of adversity. In other words, it is about playing defense, not offense—building up, not out. At the same time, A Gathering of Old Men is not entirely about protecting legacies and "old ideals." It is about remembering the past, then growing in order to protect all that it represents. After years of being brutalized and ridiculed, the plantation's Black male residents have come to redefine their perceptions of manhood. The name of the game is no longer survival

(which would undoubtedly lead to a different outcome such as a mass exodus from the plantation), but instead reprisal. These men are fueled by the past, by the memories that paint vivid portraits over each and every brick and tombstone, and the compounded traumas that they have endured during their years on the plantation.[1]

As the "gathering" operates as a sort of sharing circle in which each member can reflect on their past joys and moments of pain, and each participant's interior is explored and laid bare before the group, it is evident that the actions of the past fuel the present. While some recount their lack of action in the face of fear, and others stare longingly at the overgrowth that has swept away the graves of long-gone ancestors, lifetimes of stories come to light without a single soul having had to leave the immediate area. Like Homewood, the plantation, though not the lap of luxury, sustains its residents, not only with resources, but a sense of community and history as well. And, like Homewood's residents, most of the plantation's residents feel compelled to remain and live out their days on the land that their ancestors have occupied for generations. Naturally, one would be compelled to ask the linear-minded question: Why remain in such a place that brims with its fair share of negative memories, even active hostilities. Simply put, it is a matter of legacy, and the sheer fact that they remain on the plantation, generation after generation, which testifies to their resilience, strength, and growth, which ultimately allows them to adapt to meet whatever new challenges arise along the way.

What is interesting about this idea of remaining in (and for some characters returning to) one place is the fact that this was very much the model by which Gaines himself lived. A simple internet search of Gaines shows that he was both born in and died in the exact same town, in his home state of Louisiana. To the Western-minded reader with a strong inclination toward pursuing a life of constant movement (forward or upward), Gaines' life choice may raise eyebrows. Like Tommy, why would Gaines remain in a place that no doubt carried so many lingering emotional burdens? Why not leave and search for new prospects? Some may even attribute Gaines' lack of physical mobility to

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[1]It is important to note that Antebellum plantations in the US were not designed as spaces for transient labor. This particular fact makes the general setting of a plantation an even more symbolic location, as it in itself represents a very confined space of life and movement—a space that promotes a more circular rather than linear life journey.

unimaginativeness or a lack of drive. However, Gaines became a bestselling author, while developing a body of work that repeatedly centers around the same (if not incredibly similar) locales-which is proof that one does not necessarily have to be a globe-trotter or cosmopolitan.[2] Success and progress do not necessarily have to be quantified in assets or stamps on a passport, but they can instead be represented through recognizing and learning from the past.

Conclusion

In essence, while Walter Ong's arguments in Orality and Literacy were certainly groundbreaking for their time, they do not fully capture the nuance of orality. Likewise, the literal (i.e. practical) aspects of his comparisons of orality and literacy are certainly difficult assertions to combat if one is not a linguist. However, if one zooms out and looks at these models not simply as literal methods of communication, but as representative of the dynamic between the more linear Western canon (and therefore Western notions of success) and the circular nature of less "conventional" authors who write from the peripheries, then there are certainly holes when it comes to treating Ong's theories as the lay of the land. This is not at all to discredit the works of Ong, but instead an invitation to question his central arguments and acknowledge that a circular approach to storytelling and even life is not always an inferior approach to a linear one.

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[2]Stephen King is also recognized as a prominent author whose novels are frequently set within the same roster of towns, famously the fictional town of Derry, Maine.

The Linguistic Violence in Gendered and Sexist Language

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Abstract

Gender, like every other socio-cultural construct, is reflected through language. It is well represented through instances from everyday life in society, culture and media. However, language not only reflects gender but also constitutes the reality of gender. Language is the most conspicuous and predominant bearer of sexism. William C Gay, in his concept of Linguistic Violence, classifies sexist language as an abusive form of linguistic violence. Linguistic violence occurs not just through evident speech acts of bullying and verbal abuse, but also through subtle expressions of common gendered terms and phrases that seems casual and harmless unless studied carefully. This paper attempts to identify and analyse the gender connotations in language through examples of sexist and gendered verbal expressions with reference to three performance poems titled "Shrinking Women", "Perfect" and "Smile". Although the analysis will focus on the gender implications of language, and how certain expressions, in quite elusive ways, manifest linguistic violence, which is as real and traumatic as that of the forms of physical and psychological violence. Language can be a major factor in perpetuating gender injustices. Therefore, it is important that language accommodates more positive and inclusive changes to meet the needs of an everchanging and constantly developing society.

Key words: *Gendered Language, Sexist Language, Linguistic Violence, Sexism, Performance Poetry*

Language constitutes the reality of socio-cultural positions and gender roles as much as it reflects people's positions in society. However, the dynamic quality of language is that it can simultaneously challenge the preestablished and normative social conditioning. Feminists and researchers working on gender and language have been using language as a tool to create social change.

In Norwegian philosopher William C Gay's propositions on linguistic violence, sexist language is identified as one of the three abusive forms of linguistic violence, which is broadly classified into subtle forms, abusive forms, and grievous forms. Abusive forms of linguistic violence employ the use of offensive words and expressions that are aimed to hurt, degrade or discriminate a targeted individual. Therefore, mentioning sexist language as an abusive form of linguistic violence implies that the violence is direct and personal. Feminist social psychologist Nancy Helen classifies sexist language into three types, "language that ignores women, language that defines women narrowly, and language that depreciates women" (Weatherall 13). The paper will analyse sexist language with reference to three performance poems based on these ideas.

In her poem "Smile" Rhiannon McGavin narrates her experience of being told to smile by a random man on the street. The poem, beginning with her statement "People don't give girls enough credit." (McGavin 00:00:10-12), goes onto substantiate it through instances referring to the lack of representation of women in society, academics and literature. On her way home from school, she ponders over the description of characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird* which she had read in school, deep in thought, and frowning a little, when suddenly a stranger – a grown man – asks her to smile. Rhiannon imitates the loud and bossy voice in which he told her, "Smile, sweetheart!" (McGavin 00:00:45-47).

Telling a stranger to smile, just because she is a girl or a woman, is weird. The poet attacks the sexist attitude behind these thoughts. The man asked her to smile and look happy just because he assumed that girls look better when pleasant and lovely, rather than thinking or frowning. The form of linguistic violence discussed here is subtle but oppressive; it reflects the sexist thoughts and norms prevalent in the society. It is also an example of language that defines women narrowly and ignores them as individuals with autonomy and free will. Rhiannon lists reasons why one should never tell a woman to smile, primarily because "she does it for herself, /Or someone she feels comfortable with" (McGavin 00:01:35-37). The fact that nobody is entitled to another individual's body should be enough reason to refrain from making such sexist remarks. These lines from the poem that "It's not your mouth. / It's not yours to kiss, / To consume, / To find comfort …" says it all (McGavin 00:01:45-50).

Lily Myers' poem "Shrinking Women" is about the titular women who shrink in order to make space for others around them. The poet's mother being one such woman, is the subject of the poem. The poem explores the concept of women's relationship to their body, food and language. Myers wonders if she has a lineage of shrinking women. Shrink, here, means to become smaller, weaker and belittled in terms of size, power and ability.

Patterns of sexism and gendering in language are reflected in the following instances from the poem. Myers' father describes his new girlfriend, who as a teenager was overweight, as "crazy about fruits" (Myers 00:01:02-05). The language in description of the woman here is sexist as she is being depreciated for her efforts to be healthy and fit. Another reason for more women taking efforts towards fitness could be a concern with appearance, which is the consequence of trying to fit into the beauty standards set by the society.

Myers also comments on the different ways in which she and her brother were raised. "My brother never thinks before he speaks. I have been taught to filter." (Myers 00:01:25-29). Their relationship with language iterates the preconceived social norms that have been repeatedly practised and actualised. Most women are restricted the liberty and opportunities to speak their mind unlike men. Myers tells her brother that he learnt from their father "to roll each thought off your tongue with confidence", often losing his voice from shouting so much, whereas she learned from her mother to filter, absorb and shrink (Myers 00:01:46-48). This idea is further elaborated in the discussion of women tending to be apologetic inherently. She finds that all the questions she asked in her class begins with the word 'sorry'. The poem serves the idea that women and men use language in different ways, and their communication takes place across a socio-cultural divide.

"Perfect" by Maia Mayor depicts the constant criticism that the poet encounters, from her mother who wants her to be 'perfect' like her. It is a four-minute poem that begins slow and gradually races in speed to match the rants of abuse. Mayor gives a picture of how the abuser constantly attacks, through judgement and comparison, every aspect of her personality. The mother prefers Maia to be 'a good girl' by the societal standards rather than living the life she wants. The mother's language depreciates and narrowly defines ideal women as 'perfect' than real. The lines, "Stop chewing on your nails / No wonder you

haven't attracted any males" are sexist abusive accusations (Mayor 00:01:03-08). She wants Maia not to be a rebel, and instead "to obey and say yes and okay" with a wide smile on her "less than average face" (Mayor 00:02:23-27). By asking her to be docile and obedient, the mother's choice of words reflects her sexist beliefs imposed on Maia.

The analysis of language reflecting sexism and gendering with reference to the poems implicates that language can be a major factor in perpetuating gender injustices. It can both constitute as well as challenge forms of linguistic violence like sexist language. Therefore, it is important that language accommodates more positive and inclusive changes to meet the needs of an everchanging and constantly developing society.

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Myth in the Fiction of Rohinton Mistry

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Abstract

Man and myth have been in close contact from time immemorial. Myth is the part of human imagination. It is created and carried by human beings from one generation to another. At the beginning, it has been passed through oral form, when man has learnt the art of writing it is recorded in written form. It creates fascination and is ensnared with a particular culture or religion. Myth has been derived from the Greek word 'mythos' which means fable, tale, talk or speech. Watts defines myth as "A complex of stories –some no doubt, fact and some fantasy – which for various reasons, human beings regard as demonstration of the inner meaning of the universe and of human life" (7). Myth in general term is taken as a narrative or story related to some supernatural beings which many believe but it really does not exist. In literature it is used to make the narration fascinating. In the present research paper, the researcher makes an endeavor to discover the events of myth which Mistry employs in his fictional works to make his text fascinating.
Keywords: Myth, Parsi, Culture, Home, Host and Fascination

Introduction

Myth has always remained the most important element of literature when the classical literature is peeped into, myth is found to be pervasive. Myth is the imaginative creation of literature, it is used by the writers for symbolic purpose sometimes it is used as a pattern to explain the parallel situation. Most of the time it is employed by the writers to create fascination in the narration. Rohinton Mistry who is an Indo- Canadian writer uses myth in his literary works. In his novel *Family Matters,* that revolves around Nariman Vakeel who is a retired Professor of English Literature (79 years old) and is bed ridden due to fracture in his ankle. He has two step children Coomy and Jal and a biological daughter Roxana. He lives at the place of daughter Roxana who is married to Yezad. They have two children Murad and Jehangir, Nariman enjoys his time with his grandchildren telling them many tales some of them are myths.

The particular known myth that is much enjoyed by Jehangir is of Zuhaak who was the cruel king and he had on his shoulders two snakes. Zuhaak daily wanted the brains of the two young men to eat. Faridoon, the great valour, came to combat with him as his father was killed by Zuhaak and he wanted to take revenge of the death of his father .Fariodon defeated him in the confrontation and tied him in strong chains. The angel Sarosh advised Faridoon to bury him under Mount Damavand. The myth further goes on according to Parsi tradition that daily during the night Zuhaak struggles to break the chains with his supernatural strength. He succeeds in breaking the chains. As the sun is about to rise, the cock warns by its crowing that Zuhaak is about to get free and there is a threat that he will unleash his killing spree over the universe. The good angel Sarosh sends the spider to weave the web which Zuhaak finds difficult to break. This incident happens daily in the absence of Faridoon. Nariman reminds Jehangir that the Parsis consider cock and spider as sacred and they never kill them. "Well, Parsis don't kill spiders, and they only eat the female chicken, never a cock – you must know that, from the story of Zuhaak the Evil One" (Mistry 142).Nariman emphasises that it is the spider and the cock that keep the universe safe from the destruction of Zuhaak. "Thus the bond between man and nature is renewed each day. In this archetype mythmaking, Mistry appears to be making the point that is important for human beings is to remember their origin through such devices" (Bharucha 52).

The myth in Parsi is narrated by Nariman that Parsis don't keep cats as pet as they fear water and keep themselves dirty: "No. No cats. Parsi families never keep cats. They consider them bad luck, because cats hate water, they never take a bath" (Mistry141).

Tales from Ferozsha Baag, is the collection of eleven stories and that is the first book of Mistry.In the story, *Lend Me Your Light*, Mistry uses the Greek myth of Tiresias who is blind and sees the future. He has employed the myth symbolically as Tiresias was blind and could see the future. But in the story Kersi who is the alter ego of Mistry and has vision cannot simply visualize that he has to maintain a balance between his home and host culture. Just before boarding the flight the day before leaving for Canada, he has excruciating pain in his eyes. Mistry has the myth in a pattern to bring home the message that the migrants should try to maintain balance between his home and host culture and under the influence of host culture he should not be submerged into it. Mistry uses the myth

to make Kersi understand that he should not follow the footsteps of his friend Jamsheed who has moved to America and has assimilated into American culture and the culture of his home land is hateful to him. White asserts "The myth will offer the novelist a shorthand system of symbolic comment in modern events" (12).

Conclusion

The Parsi myth of spider and cock which is employed by Mistry appears to be fascinating and makes his narration engaging. It is a well known fact that myth is far away from the reality but is used by the writer to make his works fascinating as well as to inform the readers about his Parsi culture and beliefs. The second Greek myth of Tiresias used by Mistry symbolically to give his readers a message that there should be a balance between home and host culture particularly in those who migrate.

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Mythology and Feminism in
Kavita Kane's *Ahalya's Awakening*

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Abstract

Kavita Kane's Ahalya's Awakening (2019) offers a gripping and persuasive narrative about mythical figures such as Ahalya at the heart of the story. Analysing the events of the novel under the lens of feminism and mythical fiction, the novel sheds light on the life of Ahalya as she challenges the rigid notions of what constitutes as femininity as she navigates her life trying to reclaim her agency. The article hopes to further discuss the lack of limited autonomy in women, against the conditions often surrounding the state of women in mythology and diminished control in their lives. This article delves into the common grounds of mythology and feminism in the novel, examining how the author directs the intricacies and representation of stereotypes.

Keywords: Mythology, Feminism, Stereotypes, Feminist Representation, Female Agency.

The novel follows Ahalya as she falls from grace and goes from being one of the most coveted women on the planet to being hated overnight all because of misconstruing her image as a 'cheater' often bearing the heavy weight of the label of the woman who is a symbol of female cheated on her husband. She either serves as a cautionary tale or is brought up in narratives to serve as a lesson about a woman who gets punished because she dared to go against the prescribed gender norms, someone whom society should be wary of as a wayward symbol, in other cases, she is often relegated to the background of the important narratives. Kane's narratives illuminate this often lesser-known mythical figure into focus and structures the plot in such an integrated way that it captures all the emotions

of the central character. Kane's writing style characterizes a delicate balance between scholarly accuracy and innovative reimagining, wherein she proficiently navigates the mythological narratives while introducing them with contemporary relevance. Central to her approach is a meticulous research methodology that underpins her narratives, ensuring to capture the essence of the original mythic source material while also offering interpretive latitude for creative exploration. Kane's main argument through these storylines and subjects is to encapsulate the feelings and apprehensions of the main character she does not shy away from portraying them. The central character remains in focus all the time to make it point that she is not drowned out or overshadowed by other narratives. As Kane retraces the fabled rise and fall of Ahalya, she also raises many much-debated questions on the autonomy of the women and the infamous titles they bear when they step out of their saidboundaries. When observing the novel under a feminist lens allows one to unravel the many intricacies in the narrative which breaks away from the realm of mythological fiction, under the feminist lens the reader may also unearth, a wide range of themes including how mythology has often been used to perpetuate stereotypes about women and how these, invisible boundaries exceed the pages and often translates into real life. Hence, Ahalya's pursuit of happiness in the world almost becomes a vehicle to explore every woman's pursuit of happiness additionally to also for exploring the constraints of gender roles, marriage, and the limited agency available to women's mythology.

In India, a mythology which truly serves as a glimpse into the past serves as a rich reservoir of cultural narratives. Oftentimes through mythology societal norms and values are made to last. Occasionally, societal norms are often one-sided and gender biased. In the context of gender dynamics, mythology has frequently been employed as a tool to develop and propagate patriarchal ideologies, as these mythological standards often are accepted at face value and go unquestioned, consequently perpetuating damaging stereotypes against women. These circumstances are not unique to Indian mythology but are a part of a larger reoccurring pattern globally across any culture so it is safe to say that they occur through different narratives manifest globally, albeit with cultural nuances.

In India, where mythology holds an almost consecrated and sacred status because it is closely connected with spirituality and tradition, its grasp on societal perceptions is

particularly one that is obvious and noticeable. Throughout, Indian mythology, for instance, the depiction of female characters often falls within the boundaries of the archaic gender norms, reducing women to subservient roles, and reinforcing archaic understanding notions of what constitutes purity. To the point where only domesticity and passivity become the only trait that is appreciated in women. So often cases through these depictions, mythology becomes the deciding factor in what constitutes femininity. So Kane through her narratives challenges the legitimacy and hierarchies of these often one-dimensional narratives on and about women. Because mythology is seen with such an emotive reverence this mythology which is held further extends its influence, because these narratives are often considered undisputable and infallible.

Ahalya's story is one such story of such character that is thrown under the bus and succumbs to the archaic notion of purity and chastity in a woman. A character that is often depicted as traditionally depicted as an instructional tale for those who step out of the prescribed gender roles. But Kane portrays her not as a warding symbol but as a victim of male deception rather than as a condemned individual who received divine punishment for her transgression. Kane's reimagining shifts the blame from Ahalya to the system that does not embed gender stereotypes into mythology. Through Ahalya, Kane interrogates the concept of purity and chastity imposed upon women.

Instances highlighting feminism in *Ahalya's Awakening* is the depiction of Ahalya being her crusader and defender for her agency and autonomy. She stands up to her mom, taking up her stand against a marriage of convenience to Indira, against her wishes. She asserts her right to have a marriage of true love and falls in love with Gautama who by the standard of the world is far from perfect and is not fit to marry the princess as he is a seer. When Ahalya marries Gautama the world thinks their match is incompatible and mismatched. Through this Kane provides insight into how she is unapologetically herself with her choices. By her actions, Ahalya emerges as a multifaceted character who probes into societal norms and expectations placed on her. Kane portrays Ahalya as a woman who yearns for intellectual stimulation and emotional fulfilment, through her choice of groom, Gautama. Through this Kane paints a picture of someone who is assertive in their choices and firm in her convictions. Thereby transcending the confines of traditional gender roles. For instance,

when Ahalya reflects on her marriage to Gautama with her mom, she muses " You're unkind, and what you are insinuating is untrue. We love each other, and nothing you say will make any difference'" (Kane121).

Furthermore, Kane presents Ahalya as a casualty of societal injustice rather than a willing participant in her alleged transgression. Kane's description of Ahalya's meeting with Indra, which leads to her transformation into a stone, is portrayed as a misunderstanding rather than an act of adultery. Ahalya's innocence is indicated and established in Kane's depiction, by her guileless belief that she is meeting her husband, Gautama, when in fact, she is deceived by Indra disguised as him. Kane highlights the injustice of Ahalya's punishment and challenges the narrative of female liability and male privilege. Moreover, Kane critiques the double standards ingrained in the characterization of Ahalya as a "cheater" while exempting and clearing Gautama of his failings as a husband. Ahalya confronts her husband's neglect and emotional distance, accusing him of neglecting his duties as a husband: " It is my fault. But then, did you see my disempowered position as your wife, my resentment and repressed anger, my struggle to avoid conflict, the claustrophobia I felt? It was me, not you, Gautam, don't you see? " (Kane241). This confrontation not only exposes Gautama's shortcomings but also underscores Ahalya's requirement for emotional interaction and mutual respect within marriage which was considered outrageous by Gautama. In addition, Kane undoes the traditional notions of purity and chastity associated with female characters through Ahalya. Ahalya's transformation from a stone back into a woman symbolizes the regaining of her agency and identity, conquering the stigmatization imposed upon her. Kane's portrayal of Ahalya as a complex and resilient figure endorses a more nuanced understanding of women's experiences and struggles.

Ahalya's Awakening represents a feminist reimagining of a mythological narrative, offering a subversive critique of patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes. Through Ahalya's character arc, Kane challenges the notion of female passivity and victimhood, while also questioning the unequal power dynamics often portrayed in mythology. By breaking away from traditional depictions of Ahalya and reframing her story through a feminist lens, Kane invites readers to reconsider rooted beliefs about women's roles and

agency in Indian mythology. By infusing these marginalized characters with agency, intricacy, and individuality, Kane's writings unseat conventional readings of mythology. In essence, Kane's work serves as a promoter of critical engagement with mythology. Through her revisionist approach, she highlights the transformative potential of mythological reinterpretation. Thus, in the current trends of contemporary mythological scholarship, Kavita Kane occupies a crucial position, signifying an ideological shift towards the understanding of mythology's role in shaping gender norms.

Since, the enduring relevance of age-old myths in contemporary India embodies itself in myriad ways, involved in the fabric of everyday life and notifying cultural practices and social norms of the past. So, Kane through these adaptations serves not only as a creative retelling of ancient tales but also as a vehicle for cultural evaluation and serves as a reflection of the society itself. Through her nuanced exploration of society through mythological themes, Kavita Kane gives rise to this ongoing dialogue, on how mythology borders between tradition and modernity very well influences the gender norms and reinforces stereotypes. Therefore, Kane's works correspond to enrich the reader's understanding of the past while illuminating its relevance for the present.

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War and Melancholy: A Parallel Reading in Georgi Gospodinov's *The Physics of Sorrow*

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Abstract

The paper delves into the theme of war and melancholy, drawing parallels between the lives of soldiers and the mythical Minotaur in Georgi Gospodinov's The Physics of Sorrow. The Minotaur, torn between human and bull, represents the search for identity and a desire for everyday life. Soldiers on the brink of war grapple with issues like honesty, patriotism, family, and forbidden relationships, as portrayed through the character of Georgi as he nav igates the hardships endured during and after war. The paper delves into the societal and political implications of war within the context of Bulgaria's Socialist era, examining the people's faith in God and their mixed feelings of devotion and fear toward the government, particularly within the educational system. The paper discusses the psychological effects of war on military members and their families, exploring themes of trauma, stress, and mental disturbances. The complex interplay of themes like abandonment, sin, war, and the quest for a safe place profoundly impacts the characters' lives, shedding light on the moral and ethical dilemmas faced by individuals caught in the violence of war. It explores the complexities, offering insights into various aspects of human experience amidst war and sadness.
Keywords: War, Myth, Socialism, Soldier, God

War emerges from conflicts between nations or internal factions within a country, unleashing profound struggles, fears, and sorrows for families who send their beloved into battle. Those who are involved in warfare confront intricate psychological challenges, while the looming specter and horrors of conflict warp familial bonds. The uncertainty surrounding their safe return burdens families with melancholy, casting a shadow until their loved ones are reunited.

Bulgaria is rich in its cultural and traditional practices. The land has undergone several changes throughout its history of being captivated by several reigns. Bulgarian literature not only addresses war, politics, and economic issues but also explores the feelings, emotions, and physical and mental states of its people. The author Georgi Gospodinov unveils the melancholy spread over the Bulgarian people through the novel *The Physics of Sorrow*. Gospodinov talks about a mythical character, the Minotaur, a half-human and half-bull, and its struggles. The mythical Minotaur expresses the elements of melancholy and the longing for familial connection. The author draws parallel lines between the Minotaur and the soldiers, who share a common yearning for connection and reunion with their families.

The novel *The Physics of Sorrow* brings out the sorrow of the Minotaur and highlights the life of the soldiers on the brink of war, along with the absurdity and emptiness. The paper explores the themes of war, melancholy, family, and identity. It discusses how war affects families, soldiers, and individuals, drawing parallels between the struggles of the Minotaur and the struggles faced by soldiers. It examines the impact of war on displacement, relationships, and societal structures and the suppression of religious freedom during socialist rule.

The author uses the myth of the Minotaur to express the themes of fear, abandonment, and identity. Through the lens of the Minotaur, the author delves into the profound sense of abandonment experienced by the mythical creature, whom humans and animals reject. The Minotaur is portrayed as a figure in constant struggle, searching for its identity amidst abandonment and accusations.

The mythical Minotaur is born due to Queen Pasiphae's affair with a bull. King Minos, Pasiphae's husband, receives the bull from the sea god Poseidon but fails to fulfill his promise of returning it, thereby incurring Poseidon's wrath. As punishment, Poseidon

causes Pasiphae to fall in love with the bull, ultimately leading to the birth of the Minotaur. King Minos's fidelity is tested, and the Minotaur stands as the sinful manifestation of King Minos's negligence towards Poseidon, the sea god.

King Minos is concerned about his reputation among his fellow citizens. Queen Pasiphae grapples between her husband and her child, and the Minotaur fights between reality and his conflict of attachment towards his parents, as he finds difficulty in forming a healthy emotional bond towards them. The Minotaur feels sad and abandoned as his parents have locked him in a labyrinth. He undergoes punishment without indulging in unfair activities. The Minotaur spends his days in the labyrinth deprived of any human contact, affection, and parental love. Nicole Tessmer, a researcher, in his article "Myth, Ritual, and the Labyrinth of King Minos" talks about the human sacrifices given to the Minotaur for every seven years and states the following: "Each year, the myth states, seven girls and seven boys were chosen to enter the labyrinth as tributes to become food for the Minotaur" (Tessmer 1). Throughout the mythological story, the Minotaur is treated as a monster. Gospodinov defends the Minotaur by calling it his brother, who longs to reunite with his parents amidst the internal conflicts and external chaos. The Minotaur, as well as his family, undergoes a state of melancholy due to King Minos's disobedience towards the sea god, Poseidon.

War forces people to evacuate to safer destinations. Displacement due to war is chaotic; people are compelled to leave their homes in search of food and shelter. Georgi is abandoned in a mill as a child while his mother has to migrate to a safer place along with Georgi and his seven sisters amidst the turmoil of war. The mother grapples with the dilemma of whose life to prioritize: that of the lost one or the remaining children. Finally, the elder sister summons the courage to find her brother. War leads to the disintegration of families, accompanied by the constant threat of life and death. Gospodinov compares Georgi to the mythical Minotaur by drawing parallels between ancient myth and contemporary suffering through loss, abandonment, and resilience.

Soldiers are often hailed as heroes for their sacrifices in defending their homeland, yet their dedication comes at the cost of separation from their families. They endure profound melancholy as their lives are uncertain, and the prospect of a safe return remains a fantasy.

The emotional strain of their circumstances not only affects the soldiers themselves but also extends to their families. In the absence of love, care, and emotional support, worsened by the trauma of war, some soldiers find themselves vulnerable to moral lapses within their marriages.

Georgi, the narrator's grandfather and a Bulgarian soldier, currently fights in a Hungarian town with his troops as it temporarily falls into the hands of the Germans. In the heat of combat, fate intervenes, and Georgi suffers an injury that renders him dependent on the care of a compassionate Hungarian widow. A bond forms between them, guided by the warmth and empathy the Hungarian widow exerts on him. This unexpected connection blossoms into a forbidden love, leading Georgi into a moral dilemma that paves the way to betray his marital vows. Haunted by guilt and tormented by the weight of his actions, Georgi decides to leave behind his uniform and weapons with the widow as a symbol of their forbidden love. Grappling with mixed emotions of sadness and suffering, Georgi returns home. Georgi's actions are parallel to the actions of Queen Pasiphae, who had an affair with the bull. Pasiphae considers the Minotaur a symbol of the sin committed within her marriage. Out of guilt, she couldn't shower love and care towards the Minotaur.

During the socialist rule, the term 'God' is forbidden in public places. People fear and obey the government more than God. Punishments are severe, even for minor mistakes. The narrator's grandmother wraps the Bible in newspapers to hide it from people. The profound impact of political ideology on individual freedom is highlighted through the actions of the grandmother as she hides the Bible and parents who ask their children not to talk about God in public venues. Schools promote the concept of government and comrades rather than faith in religion and spiritualism; this is brought out in the following lines, "[t]he word "government" begins with G. There is no God in our government!" (Gospodinov 52). The oppressive socialist regime and the people's fear of government, along with their hidden faith in God, symbolize the enduring struggle to preserve faith in the face of ideological suppression. King Minos's negligence toward God is reflected in the actions of the contemporary socialist regime, which neither advocates spiritualism nor faith in God.

The tales of Georgi, the soldier torn between duty and desire, and the mythical Minotaur, grappling with the anguish of abandonment, reflect the profound human experience amidst

the chaos of war. The veil of melancholy falls upon soldiers and the mythical Minotaur alike as they embark on quests to reunite their families, torn apart by the longing for love, care, and familial connection. Whether battling within oneself or on the battlefield, suffering remains constant. Georgi's yearning for familial connection echoes the Minotaur's quest for identity and parental care, revealing the universal truth that suffering knows no boundaries, whether on the battlefield or within one's soul. Through their parallel narratives, the search for love, belonging, and redemption illuminates the resilience amidst the darkest times.

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Parental Alienation Syndrome and Linguistic Alienation in Ken Liu's *The Paper Menagerie*

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Abstract

The paper studies the role of Language in the Parental alienation syndrome of Jack in the short story, The Paper Menagerie. Parental alienation and estrangement often focus on the influence or manipulation of one parent on the child to alienate the other parent but the loss of communication between the caregiver and the child is not taken into account. This study attempts to discuss the connection between the language alienation of the parent and the parental alienation syndrome of the child. It also attempts to discuss the alienating parent role of Jack's father and Mark in Jack's parental alienation syndrome. The unjustified parental estrangement from the part of Jack in the story is also discussed to analyze the 'irrational' or 'without legitimate basis' mentality of the child. The different stressors in the child such as cultural conflicts, and inter-relational problems, are also discussed concerning the parent alienation syndrome of Jack. The study analyzes Jack's detachment from his mother using Dr. Gardner's eight symptoms of Parental Alienation Syndrome. It tries to put forth a claim that the linguistic alienation of Jack's mother is the prime factor for Jack's Parental Alienation Syndrome rather than other factors such as the alienating parent, other people, and social factors.

Keywords; Parental Alienation, Linguistic Alienation, Alienating Parent, Family Estrangement, Inter-Relational Problems.

The Paper Menagerie, a short story by Ken Liu is based on a Chinese immigrant mother and her hybrid son, Jack. It shows the flawed relationship between Jack and his mother. Jack being a hybrid in an American society tries to assimilate completely into the culture and disown his Chinese roots. In the process of assimilation, he alienates his mother because she is his only source and symbol of Chinese heritage. Jack alienates his mother and prefers the ways of his father and his American friend. The alienation is unjustified because his mother does not harm or neglect Jack. She loves and cares for Jack and hopes that he will do the same for her. Her hopes are shattered by Jack's unjustified parental alienation syndrome.

The causes of alienation and its effect have been discussed from the post-colonial perspective but not from a medical perspective. In the concept of post-colonialism, Jack alienates his mother because of his internalized colonial mentality. He mimics the neo imperials, the Americans and acts white than the whites. His resentment towards his mother is said to stem from his assimilation into American culture. There is no ambivalence in his treatment of his mother. Even though it explains his resentment towards his mother because of his hybridity, it does not explain the reason for alienating his parents just to assimilate in American society.

The alienation can be analyzed through the lens of Parental alienation syndrome, a psychosocial condition. Parental alienation is a technique whereby one parent consciously turns the child against the other parent with the intention of damaging the child's relationship with the other parent. This is predominant with children who have divorced parents in legal situations. There is a custody battle and therefore one of the parents encourages the child to alienate the other parent. The American Psychiatric Association has proposed the inclusion of Parental alienation syndrome in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition.

Parental alienation syndrome (PAS) is not limited to children with divorced parents, studies say PAS can also be seen with families of different dynamics. Jack, in the short story, undergoes PAS where his family does not involve divorced parents. Therefore, this research studies Jack's parental alienation syndrome where the social factors are different from regular cases that involve divorced parents. Even though Jack's parents are not

divorced or separated, they exhibit an uncommunicative relationship. Jack's father regards his wife in low esteem and infantilises her. He was one of the main factors for Jack's parental alienation syndrome. Along with Jack's father, Mark who is Jack's friend also plays an important role in the same. This paper does not stop at studying the PAS of Jack but also strikes a connection between PAS and Linguistic alienation. In Jack and his mom's case, language has been the prime source for Jack's PAS. It can also be inferred that language has played a role in his father's disinterest in the mother. The inability of the English language to accommodate the mother's feelings and experience has created the alienation between her and Jack. The research analyzes Jack's PAS based on his mother's linguistic alienation. It also discusses his perceptual change at the end of the story.

Dr. Richard Gardner, an American psychiatrist put forth the tenets of Parental alienation syndrome. PAS can be distinguished from parental alienation. Parental alienation syndrome is unjustified hatred towards the alienated parent. In many cases of parental alienation, there is child abuse to which the child reacts in the form of alienating the hated parent, whereas in parental alienation syndrome, the child's hatred towards the targeted parent is irrational. Jack's attitude towards his mother can be studied through the lens of Parental alienation syndrome. He liked his mother and her culture in the beginning, but later there is a drastic shift in his behavior which can be explained by Gardner's eight symptoms of PAS.

Earlier, Jack adored his mom and her Origami but suddenly she dislikes them. He says that his mom's breath was special because it gave life to the paper toys. He spends time talking and playing with his mom. There is a sudden change in behaviour after his meeting with his friend Mark. This is a symptom of parental alienation syndrome in which the child stops his adoration for his non-preferred parent. A child with PAS does not have direct reasons for his sudden resentment towards the non-preferred parent but borrows the reasons of the preferred parent.

In Jack's case, it is not just his father who indirectly helps his parental alienation but also his friend Mark. Jack is humiliated by Mark for his Chinese heritage. Mark also ridicules Jack for his mother's manner of marrying Jack's father. Asian women married Western men in search of new lives after the economic and social backdrop of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Jack's mom was one of them, who was shown to Jack's father via a

catalogue. Mark says his toys "cost more than what your dad paid for your mom!" (Liu 31). Gardner also says that the child "parrots the language of the alienating parent" (Lewis and Child Custody Evaluation Services of Philadelphia, Inc). The child uses the words of the preferred parent in the process of alienating the targeted parent. Jack, in a literal sense, loses interest in the Chinese language and only talks in the English language, the language of the alienating parent. In Jack's case, the alienating parent is both Jack's father and his friend Mark. Earlier, Parental alienation was associated only with children with divorced parents but in recent times, it is also studied in intact family structures. Similarly, other factors are also taken into consideration when analyzing the alienation campaign of the child. The alienating parent is not the only source of reason for the child to alienate the targeted parent but also other people who manipulate the child. Therefore, Mark is also considered as the alienating parent as further research is being done on other people being an alienating parent in parental alienation (Verhaar et al.)

The alienating parent uses persuasive techniques to manipulate the child into working against the target parent. Mark humiliates Jack's Chinese language and culture. Jack undergoes language cringe in front of Mark. He wanted to say "xiao laohu" (Liu 31) but instantly stopped because he felt his Chinese language was inferior to the English language. Mark also fuels this process by saying his origami toy is trash and manipulates him into buying his Obi-Wan toy. By using the techniques of coercion and persuasive, Mark manages to alienate Jack from his Chinese language and culture. This eventually leads him to alienate his mother.

Jack demands his mother to speak in English, and when she cannot speak, Jack stops to speak with his mom. When his mom shows her affection by asking him if he likes the food in Chinese language, he shouts "English…. Speak English " (Liu 32). Later, his mom touches his forehead and asks if he has got fever, he shudders her hand away and says, "I am fine. Speak English" (Liu 33). This shows his aggressive behavior and lack of impulse control which is also one of Gardner's eight symptoms of PAS.

Parental Alienation Syndrome of Jack can be proved here because the alienated parent, his mother has not neglected or abused him. His detachment from his mom is put under parental alienation syndrome because he alienates his mother for no justified reason.

His father also acts as a passive alienating parent as he supports Jack's irrational demands and behaviours. When Jack shouts at his mom to speak in English, Jack's father tells her to act accordingly. He also says that he has gone easy on her and she deserves to be treated in the way Jack treats her. Language also plays a role in Jack's father's detachment from his wife. Jack's mother's language alienation caused a separation between her and her husband which is the same case with Jack's parental alienation syndrome.

Apart from the language cringe Jack encounters, the linguistic alienation of his mother also plays a major role in the parental alienation situation addressed here. Jack's mother's inability to communicate in English also led to their flawed relationship. Linguistic alienation happens when a person cannot articulate the desired feelings and experiences in the target language.

This gap occurs for those whose language seems inadequate to describe a new place, for those whose language is systematically destroyed by enslavement, and for those whose language has been rendered unprivileged by the imposition of the language of a colonizing power. (Ashcroft et al. 9) Jack's mother finds the acquired language, English, to be incapable of portraying her feelings and culture. She says to Jack that when she says "love", she feels it in her lips but when she says "ai" (Liu 33), she feels it in her heart. Thus, her literal alienation is a result of linguistic alienation. In the words of Ashcroft, the colonized people's language is considered inferior and destroyed by enslavement, whereas, Jack's mother's language is destroyed by parental alienation. She cannot speak the Chinese language outside her home because no one would understand her and she is not allowed to speak inside the house because of parental alienation. Therefore, it is evident that parental alienation and Linguistic alienation are closely connected. Jack's mother's linguistic alienation is the result of parental alienation. Jack's PAS can also be discussed by Gardner's eight behavioural components of an alienating child listed in *The Parental Alienation Syndrome: A Guide for Mental Health and Legal Professionals.* He says the child engages in a campaign of denigration. The past good memories of the targeted parent are erased and he/she is filled with remorse rejecting all kinds of communication with the alienating parent. Jack erased his memories of making origami with his mother. He denies his past adoration for origami and his mother. His way of rejecting his mom's advances differs from the

typical rejection of communication by a child with PAS. He says he would only talk with his mother if she spoke in English. In this manner, Jack's PAS is rooted in his mother's linguistic alienation.

The child with PAS also has "weak, Frivolous, and absurd rationalizations" (Great Valley Publishing Company, Inc.). He/she is said to complain about the alienating parent's appearances, eating habits, and food preparation etc., Similarly, Jack is infuriated by his mom's food preparation. He doesn't want the Chinese food his mom prepared but wants to eat only American food. There is also an instance where Jack pushes away the chopsticks. It is evident that he dislikes his mom's food preparation and eating habits emphasizing his PAS.

There is a lack of guilt in the early stages of Parental alienation in the child but later the child attains realization. According to Amy J. L. Baker, there are "different pathways" (Great Valley Publishing Company, Inc.) to attain this realization. She says, the affected child either gets a sudden epiphany or understands "the truth" gradually, thereby recognizing the love of the alienated parent. The attained truth is in stark contrast to the child's prior truth and therefore there are guilt and other painful emotions involved. In Jack's case, the epiphanies are his mom's death and a letter from her.

After his mom's death, he finds his mom's letter which she had written in Chinese for him. At this point, he did not throw away the letter just because it was from his mom and was written in the Chinese language. He asks for help from every person who gets down from the Chinese tour buses. He asks, "Nin hui du zhongwen ma?" (Liu 38), which means if someone could read Chinese for him. Unlike earlier, he desperately wants to listen to his mother's words. When he understands his mother's love for him through the letter, there is a sudden rush of guilt in him. He asks the lady to trace the word "ai" (Liu 43) and tries to learn the word by practising the word multiple times. Later, he says the lady has left him and his mother on the bench alone. When he understands his mom's feelings and experience, the parental alienation disappears. He feels his mom's presence even when there is a literal alienation of her body through death.

Therefore, it is evident that there is a connection between linguistic alienation and parental alienation in some cases of PAS. In analysing the relationship between Jack and his mom, it can be inferred that the lack of communication and experience plays a more

important role in some cases of Parental alienation than the alienating parent in alienating the target parent. Thus, the linguistic alienation of one parent can cause the child to indulge in the process of alienating that parent.

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The Representation of Trauma in American Young Adult fiction—Eleanor and Park : Navigating Trauma and Resilience

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Abstract

This paper offers a perceptive examination of trauma and resilience in Rainbow Rowell's Eleanor and Park, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of the book's title characters. It investigates how trauma affects the psychological processes and behavioral patterns of young people through the use of textual and discourse analysis. Based on Michael Rothberg's theory of "traumatic realism," the analysis places the book in larger cultural contexts and looks at how the characters' coping strategies are shaped by their cultural upbringings. A major element that highlights the value of social support during trying times is the development of Eleanor and Park's relationship. In conclusion, the essay makes the case that Eleanor and Park goes beyond standard young adult fiction by providing a sophisticated examination of trauma and resilience, greatly advancing our knowledge of teenage experiences.

Keywords: *Eleanor and Park, Young adult literature, Trauma, Resilience, Realism, Coping mechanisms, Cultural identity, Social identity theory, Adolescence, Social support.*

Rainbow Rowell's groundbreaking work of young adult fiction, *Eleanor and Park*, captivates readers with its realistic depiction of adolescent experiences and examination of trauma. The realistic and genuine storytelling style of Rowell enables readers to fully immerse themselves in the lives of Eleanor and Park, the characters. Beyond simplistic depictions, the book tackles difficult themes including bullying, broken homes, and social pressures. It offers a sophisticated examination of trauma and how it affects young minds. Because of Rowell's dedication to reality, readers are able to empathize with Eleanor and Park's hardships on a deep level and develop strong bonds with them. Readers see the complexity

of trauma and its emotional fallout via their points of view. The novel explores the characters' inner battles and coping strategies while sensitively portraying trauma. Additionally, the concept of trauma intersects with Eleanor and Park's marginalized backgrounds, providing a distinctive prism through which to evaluate the difficulties experienced by young people.

The novel set in Omaha, Nebraska, tells a compelling narrative of strength and vulnerability. Readers are transported into a world where love and friendship become powerful tools for overcoming misfortune and discovering oneself as they follow the emotional journeys of the characters. Rowell's examination of trauma and resilience in the narrative raises the novel to the level of young adult literature, providing remarkable insights into the complexity of puberty and the long-term consequences of trauma on young lives. The objective of this trauma-focused analysis of *Eleanor and Park* is to further our understanding of how young adult literature depicts and deals with the intricacies of trauma. The examination seeks to reveal the many ways in which trauma modifies the characters' internal worlds by concentrating on their emotional reactions and behavioral shifts. The research explores the emotional landscape of the characters Eleanor and Park through a comprehensive examination of language, tone, and imagery, providing insights into the significant impact of traumatic experiences on their psychological well-being. Additionally, the research examines the psychological impacts of trauma on the protagonists' perceptions, thoughts, and mental processes through the application of discourse analysis. This method illuminates the many psychological nuances at work by enabling a deeper investigation of how trauma affects the characters' relationships and behaviors."Traumatic realism mediates between the realist and antirealist positions in Holocaust studies and marks the necessity of considering how ordinary and extraordinary genocide intersect and coexist," according to Michael Rothberg, who coined the term (Rothberg121). His theory of 'traumatic realism' entails analyzing the ways in which historical traumas are portrayed in literature and other cultural forms. This research offers a framework for comprehending how trauma is addressed in literature. In the end, the analysis aims to contribute to knowledge on vulnerability and resilience in adolescence in relation to American young adult literature.

The cultural background is deftly woven into Rainbow Rowell's characters' trauma experiences. Eleanor's heartfelt contemplation of her family's turmoil highlights her emotional

turmoil: "I'm already part of this family. I'm like a charter member" (Rowell 23). This discussion with her mother reveals the rift that her stepfather Richie has created. Eleanor feels as though she doesn't belong in her family because of her unusual appearance, which makes her feel like an outsider in American society: "Not just new—but big and awkward. With crazy hair, bright red on top of curly" (Rowell 41). Eleanor's distinct appearance is acknowledged by Park, which reinforces their internal conflict by reflecting society norms. These passages highlight the ways in which the characters' cultural backgrounds shape their sense of self and coping strategies and affect how they react to adversity.

Eleanor's guarded behavior is a result of prior trauma, as seen by her unwillingness to share personal information. As demonstrated by the discussion regarding his mother's ethnicity, Park also experiences racial discrimination from his peers: "His mom's Chinese... She's not Chinese, she's Korean" (Rowell 26). Park is even more determined to stay unseen as a result of this interaction, which exposes the casual prejudice that permeates their school. Both individuals struggle with solitude, which is made worse by social and familial expectations. Eleanor's selection of "Caged Bird" by Maya Angelou is a reflection of her sense of captivity at home and represents Omaha's racism and xenophobia. Park, on the other hand, has a different perspective on love than Eleanor, which was influenced by his loving family.

In Eleanor and Park's narrative, adult challenges resulting from racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds are realistically portrayed. They serve as mutual coping mechanisms for each other, providing comfort in one other despite their difficulties. In order to effectively cope, Lazarus and Folkman's model suggests looking for emotional support. Eleanor and Park's worlds appear to be very different, despite their proximity. But their shared empathy and quiet communication allow them to get along. "If I ever hear you call her that again, I'll kill you...I'll literally kill you" (Rowell100) is a powerful example of how he defends Eleanor against bullies. The importance of music in their life serves as a symbol for their shared experiences, which strengthen their emotional bond.The novel dives into Eleanor and Park's emotional fragility, using physical intimacy to illustrate their profound emotional connection in the face of tragedy. When Park holds Eleanor's hand on the bus, it represents their deep awareness and understanding: "When he touched Eleanor's hand,

herecognized her." He knew (Rowell 43). The tactile depiction emphasizes their emotional relationship and fortitude in the face of trauma. Through periods of joy and misery, Rowell depicts the characters' complex emotional journey, emphasizing how they find peace in one another and in escape, particularly through Park's music collection. Eleanor struggles with her damaged sense of self, and Park manages her cultural identity. By utilizing Park's reflective story, Rowell illuminates the psychological intricacies resulting from traumatic experiences.

According to Tajfel, social identity theory emphasizes how belonging to a group affects an individual's conduct. From escape to acceptance, both characters find themselves and heal. As the bus challenges social norms, it becomes crucial to their relationship. True love finds Eleanor, reinforced by English class debates. Park's mother's evolving viewpoint highlights common problems "Trying to ignore the presence of a problem may help temporarily, but it is a good idea to accept its existence and plan accordingly," Naomi said (54). Eleanor's hardships resonate with Park's mother, who was reared in a large, impoverished family in Korea. This causes Park to change her perspective and acknowledge Eleanor's tenacity. Eleanor's gift of *The Catcher in the Rye* illustrates their closeness and their common experience of feeling alienated. Park overcomes racial identity issues by showing courage and speaking up for Eleanor. Their development in American culture is shown in their changing acceptance of social norms. It is said that holding hands symbolizes their deep bond and is analogous to touching something delicate yet living "Holding Eleanor's hand was like holding a butterfly" or the pulse," (Rowell 35). Their relationship's depth and vigor are encapsulated in this metaphor. Eleanor, feeling deceived, agrees to her father's offer of temporary housing, taking a little solace from her difficult family life. According to Waterman's idea of self-discovery metaphors, these metaphors help people understand identity creation by drawing a comparison between it and the process of discovering something (1984).

The use of self-discovery metaphors, as suggested by Bench, implies that individuals uncover intrinsic aspects of themselves that were always present (Bench, 170).The choice Eleanor made to leave her violent family is reminiscent of themes found in books like *The Catcher in the Rye*, where protagonists try to get away from their situations in order to

become independent. Park agrees with Eleanor's choice, signifying his maturation into adulthood and his capacity to operate a stick shift as a metaphor. Eleanor's eventual outreach through a postcard suggests her desire to heal and embrace love, symbolizing her growth and self-discovery, despite her initial hesitation to return Park's affection. Eleanor's symbolic love letter to Park, sent at the end of the characters' emotional journey in *Eleanor and Park*, suggests that she is ready for acceptance and healing. In contrast to Park's candid communication, Eleanor's maturation and self-discovery after disaster are symbolized by this small yet important gesture. By adopting Rothberg's idea of "traumatic realism," Rowell's story goes beyond typical young adult literature. It does this by carefully balancing the need to depict pain truthfully with the recognition of artistic limitations. The book offers a sensitive bridge between authentic experiences and creative portrayal, deftly examining the characters' coping strategies and internal monologues. The study of traumatic realism goes beyond narrative to create a reflective space for exploring the interaction of historical truths and artistic depictions of suffering. Through Rowell's sympathetic writing, *Eleanor and Park* adds depth and resonance to young adult literature, encouraging readers to interact with the complexity of emotional trauma in a profoundly authentic way.

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Exploring New Historicism in George Orwell's *1984*

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Abstract

This paper draws attention to the keyword 'New Historicism' which has been fathered by Stephen Greenblatt. The discourse of New Historicism, absolute control of the Party and the manipulation of memory through Doublethink as well as the subjugation of language by implementing Newspeak in George Orwell's 1984 is studied in detail in this analysis. This analysis champions the approach taken by new historicists whereby texts are analysed by merging both literary and non-literary documents which the writer of a certain text could have drawn references from at the time of writing. This paper delves into the means by which the Party blurs out historical records. It also highlights the interplay of language and history in forming the consciousness of the present totalitarian society in the novel by drawing on the ideas put forth by the school of New Historicism. By intrinsically dissecting these ideas, this study analyses the relationship between history, language, memory and interpretation of the past.

Introduction

George Orwell, the pen-name of Eric Arthur Blair, was born on 25 June 1903, in Bihar, India. His father worked in the opium trade as an official servant when it was legal in Imperial India. He moved to England with his mother and elder sister at the age of one. He started his education at St. Cyprian's. Later, he won a scholarship to Eton College where he did not thrive and consequently left. After his academic failure at Eton, he enrolled in the Indian Imperial Police and went to Burma in 1922. He returned home in 1927, with a newfound hatred and disapproval of imperialism and a resolve to start a career in writing. In 1928, he moved to Paris and wrote numerous short stories and articles which both turned out to be failures. In 1937, he went to Spain as a volunteer against General Franco. His experience in Spain made Orwell believe in Socialism for the first time while instilling an enduring hatred of totalitarian political systems**.** His first-hand experience of war and

persecution by the Marxist Worker's Party of Marxist Unification led to his disillusionment which resulted in his conviction that there is no justification for totalitarianism. This drove him to write "1984" which he published in June 9, 1949.

In 1984, an oppressive totalitarian society headed by the Party under the absolute control and indoctrination of Big Brother is portrayed. The dystopian novel paints Orwell's vision of a dark and negative future of mankind where it is divided into three states- Eastasia, Eurasia and Oceania. According to Hitchens (2002) "The concept of 1984 was heavily influenced by Orwell's own perception of the evils of the totalitarian government of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. It exhibits the social and political conditions of Orwell's time and contains his warning against the perils of the one-party system." (95-100)

Absolute Power by Manipulation of History and Subjugation of Language

The setting of George Orwell's book where the Party seized complete control over its citizens, Oceania and the ethos of Orwell's social reality is of profound significance in the discourse of New Historicism. Orwell's own experiences and perceptions of the social and political turmoil of his time influenced the dystopian elements like totalitarian regime, loss of individualism, societal control and lack of privacy envisioned by him in the novel.

In particular, the rise and progressive growth of Stalinism under Joseph Stalin's totalitarian regime in the Soviet Union and the rise of fascism in Europe had a bearing on Orwell's depiction of the repressive Party in the novel 1984. Having participated in the Spanish Civil War and having witnessed the horrors of dictatorship first hand, Orwell wrote, "I have seen British imperialism at work in Burma, and I have seen something of the effects of poverty and unemployment in Britain. But…I should say that the horrors of the Russian regime have far exceeded them"(Orwell,7). He gave a loud utterance to the perilous aftermath of totalitarianism on human rights and freedom in his novel.

Indoctrination of its subjects and limiting the language to a simplified and narrow version were used as tools of control, both in the novel and in the surroundings of Orwell. Orwell was aware of these means of seizing control by the regime during World War II and the Cold War and he was conscious of the power it held not only in swaying the opinion of the public but also in manipulating their memory as well. To voice out his concern for the

inherent indoctrination and absolute control over language which in turn made the public subconsciously develop a submissive and blind subservience to the totalitarian power, he portrayed the citizens of Oceania who, in the same way, revered and unquestioning upheld the authority of the repressive Party headed by Big Brother.

Addressing the use of language as a tool of oppression, Orwell came up with the term 'Newspeak' in the novel. The implementation of Newspeak by the Party in the novel portrays the importance of language in nourishing freedom of thought and the treacherous manner in which freedom of thought and human faculty can be repressed by rendering the language to an overly simplified form, dismissing the need for richness in language which is a poignant depiction of freedom of speech and exercise of the human faculty.

In *1984*, Newspeak was designed to diminish thought rather than to help expression, halting the evolution of language wholly. Its devolution and implementation was designed to make one involuntarily and helplessly unable to think profoundly about any subject and this limitation promoted by Newspeak was utilised by Big Brother, the authoritative figure to further his cause of cementing his motto "War is Peace; Freedom is Slavery; and Ignorance is Strength"(Orwell 9).

The political climate of the 20th century was the main influence that can be seen in George Orwell's *1984*. Two figures in particular were responsible for the dystopian theme of the novel. The authoritarian regimes of the Nazi party in Germany and Soviet Russia were the driving forces. The Party headed by Big Brother in *1984* is analogous to the two totalitarian regimes thus mentioned. The terrors of World War II and the unrest caused by fascism were envisioned in the future reality of *1984* where the Party was the perpetrator of evils which completely disregarded human rights and freedom. Orwell claimed that the dilapidated reality and discord caused by the Russian regime "have far surpassed them [British imperialism and poverty in Britain]" (Orwell 7).

The Party in Orwell's novel resembles the totalitarian regimes mentioned above in an intrinsic way. Manipulation of memory by means of reality control which was given the term 'Doublethink' is exercised by the Party. It entailed the act "of consciously inducing unconsciousness, and then, once again, to become unconscious of the act of hypnosis thus performed"(Orwell 43). There are four ministries operating within the Party, as follows: 1.) Ministry of Truth, 2.) Ministry of Peace, 3.) Ministry of Love and 4.) Ministry of Plenty.

They are somewhat similar to the different authoritative cells which exercised power on the citizens so as to enable the authoritarian forces of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union to seize complete control over its citizens, did much to further the cause of the Party. Hence, the realistic implications of totalitarianism in the novel is the main concern of Orwell which was echoed throughout the story, firstly by the bearing it had on the mindset of the citizens and by the irony of titles he had given to the ministries- each of them performed the exact opposite function which their title suggested they did. For instance, the Ministry of Truth metes out lies and manipulates historical accounts and media so as to make all documents conform with the claims of the Party and to cement Big Brother's prestige as a hero who stood for the general well-being of his citizens, much like the eloquent propaganda and distortion of the existing accurate information pertaining to the war during Orwell's time.

Orwell had personal experience and firsthand witness of the distortion of truth in addition to the power of propaganda to achieve political ends. Political terminology, according to Orwell, "is created to make lies sound true and murder respectable" (Orwell 180). This viewpoint of Orwell conveys his disapproval and awareness of the distortion of truth and language subjugation through the concepts of 'Newspeak' and 'Doublethink.'

Orwell's depiction of surveillance of the state in *1984* not only with the usage of technology but also by the machination of the indoctrinated 'Thought Police' can be considered parallel to Nazi Germany where the 'Gestapo', the secret police force, spied on the people by dressing up in ordinary clothing and blending in the public. Also, similar to the way in which the 'Thought Police' was often prompted by hints given to them by the indoctrinated public, including the children who often tipped off the secret force and reported their own parents, the Gestapo in Nazi Germany also relied on denunciations in which members of the public provided secret information on people they knew. The social reality of Europe after the war which saw the eventually rising communism as well as the tensions of the Cold War which was evidently escalating day by day also had an impact on the surveillance state portrayed in the novel. Being moulded and given form by his participation in the Spanish Civil War, the perils of a totalitarian government were perceived with brevity by Orwell. The disapproval of totalitarianism by the author and the exhibition of the many perils of dictatorship are echoed in the novel.

Orwell's writings depict his self-imposed obligation to educate the public about the perils of totalitarianism and it also displays his fear and anxiety of the possibility of the history of discord repeating it itself in the near future as well. The tactics and repercussions of the Party's dominance over history and memory can be explored through a study of François Hartog's notions of regimes of historicity. Hartog's notions shed light on the Party's distortion of past accounts because according to him, "different historical periods have distinct ways of relating to the past".

In *1984*, the Party establishes its own regime of historicity by repeatedly making changes to accounts which record past events in order to align with the political ends of Big Brother. Their motto, "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past," embodies this manipulation of history and the collective memory of the citizens by seizing control over the narrative of history itself(Orwell 37). By controlling history, the Party subsequently cements its control and authority over the present and the future as well.

Stephen Greenblatt's idea of cultural poetics, also known as new historicism provides clarity and a deeper comprehension in understanding the Party's control over past accounts, language and memory. Greenblatt states that literature is one of the cultural practices that are studied so as to grasp how establishment influence people. This new historicism or cultural poetics is exhibited in *1984* through the Party's control over historical narratives by having absolute power over interpretation of all accounts and manipulating the accuracy of historical events. According to Greenblatt, "meaning and value are created and modified in specific historical contexts" (Greenblatt 18).

Michael Foucalt's concept of power discourse also furthers understanding on the totalitarian control over memory in *1984*. By machinating 'Newspeak' and 'Doublethink' to clip the freedom and manipulate the memory of its citizens, the Party limits language and curbs their thought process altogether. Newspeak limits language so that the citizens will not be equipped with a language comprehensive enough to discern the deplorable state of their living conditions and Doublethink enables the people to continue holding contradictory views, altering their memory and rendering them receptive to the Party's indoctrination. Foucalt says "Power is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the

'privilege,' acquired or preserved, of the dominant class"(Foucalt 141). Thus, by controlling collective memory, the Party asserts dominance and cements its repressive totalitarian system.

The exploration of the Party's control over history and language which results in the manipulation and control of memory and the social reality in George Orwell's *1984* through the discourse of New Historicism headed by Stephen Greenblatt and other theories put forth by critics like Michael Foucalt and François Hartog displays the profound influence and important role history, language and memory manipulation play in a totalitarian establishment. The ways in which the Party gains control over the public by means of manipulating historical accounts and limiting language in turn affect interpretation of the past and this consequently adversely affects the collective memory of the public. Thus, the interplay between history, language, memory and interpretation of the past is of significant importance not only in the dystopian novel but also in George Orwell's totalitarian real life setting.

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Borderless Bodies: Graphic Medicine and Ethnographic Study of the Graphic Narrative *Lissa*

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Abstract

In the evolving landscape of post-humanist thought, traditional notions of health as a purely biological construct and the body as an autonomous entity are being increasingly challenged. The emergence of chronic diseases, such as cancer and organ failure, underscores the intricate web of determinants encompassing social, environmental, pathological, and economic factors. This article contends that a nuanced understanding of health necessitates a departure from the universalizing concept of the body, instead demands a focused examination of the entangled determinants shaping bodily well-being. Focusing on the graphic narrative Lissa, this article examines the dynamic movement of bodies and diseases across porous boundaries. The graphic narrative, serving as a form of graphic medicine/ ethnography, provides a unique lens to examine the scaled and entangled issues of gender, race, ethnicity, and class. In doing so, Lissa magnifies the complexity of health narratives, challenging the autonomy of Western individual perspectives on health and illness. In essence, this article argues that health is inherently relational and can no longer be confined within the traditional boundaries of medicine. The analysis seeks to dismantle the murky line between bodies and borders, shedding light on the systemic factors (social, political, cultural, and environmental) influencing health outcomes in an interconnected world.

Keywords: Health, Bodies, Porous Boundaries, Lissa, Graphic Medicine, Ethnography, Borders.

Introduction

Health has been considered purely biological, and the body as a mechanical, autonomous individual entity, especially since the Enlightenment. As Doyal notes, "it is always individuals who become sick, rather than social, economic, or environmental factors that cause them to be so". A shift in focus therefore necessitates viewing disease not in the traditional purview of medicine but rather as "a way of describing a relation between a body, history, and an environment" (Fitzgerald and Callard, 3). Health, illness, and the body need a new interpretation in today's world, where the idea of national borders and bodily

boundaries are not fixed or exist in isolation but rather in movement. Since the concept of physical borders is changing in the light of increased transnational activities, the notion of health and illness requires a new lens. The causes of chronic diseases such as cancer and organ failure can be social, environmental, pathological, and economic. The preceding determinants are entangled in intricacies, which require the body to be studied in specific locations rather than universalizing the concept of the body. The biomedical notion of the body as a uniform entity needs to be challenged by new terms like "biosocial differentiation", which refers to "the way in which culture, history, politics, and biology (environmental and individual) are inextricably entangled and subjected to never-ending transformations" (Lock and Nguyen,1). Since the body's location is significant, the notion of borders also needs to be understood. Borders are subjected to transformations to accommodate the changing demands in the neoliberal world, where borders are becoming more porous in terms of their function. This facilitates the interaction of more bodies across borders as well as the spread of diseases and the conditions that support them. As pointed out by Margaret M. Lock and Vinh-Kim Nguyen, "the human body in health and illness is not an ontological given but a moveable, malleable entity -the elusive product of nature and culture that refuses to be pinned down", which again emphasizes the indeterminate boundaries of both the nation and the body (29).

This article examines the graphic narrative *Lissa: A Story about Medical Promise, Friendship, and Revolution* in terms of this movement through the characters of Anna and Layla, whose lives depict the complex interconnectedness of healthcare systems in the US and Egypt. The article also intends to study that bodies are more susceptible in terms of the prevailing socio-economic condition of each country and how health is affected systemically. Geopolitical boundaries and corporeal boundaries blur in this time of transnational exchanges, which makes it difficult to determine where our relational ties begin and end. The concept of borders that exist between nations is changing, which has a direct impact on the bodies that reside within the borders or move across them. The graphic narrative is studied as a graphic medicine/ethnography, demonstrating that health is an entangled issue of gender, race, ethnicity, and class, magnifying the complexity of any autonomous Western individual narrative of health and illness. Health is relational and no longer viewed within the boundaries of nations or biomedicine.

Graphic Medicine/Ethnography

The term 'graphic medicine' gained prominence when Dr. Ian Williams coined it in 2007. This marked a significant moment in recognizing the potential of comics in healthcare. Over time, publications such as David B.'s *Epileptic* and Marisa Acocella Marchetto's *Cancer Vixen* contributed to the growth of the field of graphic medicine. One of the primary aims of the *Graphic Medicine Manifesto* is that it "resists the notion of the universal patient and vividly represent multiple subjects with valid and, at times, conflicting points of view and experiences" (Czerwiec et al. 2). It has shown how notions of health and illness vary from individual to individual and from country to country and thus "disrupts the 'objective' case study" by "exploring the myriad ways that health and disease can be represented in graphic form" (Czerwiec et al. 3). Graphic medical narratives situated across different countries open up many possibilities as they disrupt the notion of a universal body. Therefore, "a multi-sited ethnographic approach readily opens up for questioning ontological assumptions about what is assumed to be "real" and fundamental, as well as epistemological assumptions about how we know what we know" (Lock and Nguyen, 2018). The merging of graphic medicine and graphic ethnography opens up new narrative possibilities, allowing researchers and creators to explore health-related topics in a visually rich and culturally nuanced manner. This interdisciplinary approach acknowledges the importance of context and cultural sensitivity in understanding health behaviours and experiences.

Ethnography is generally defined as "the scientific description of nations or races of (people), and their customs, habits, and points of difference", where "-graph" is defined as "denot(ing) processes or styles of writing, drawing or graphic representation" (Murray 314 &361). As such, an ethnographic study takes into account the entangled factors of global health like gender, race, ethnicity, and class, which gives an alternative to Western medical narratives and demonstrates the embodied experience of an individual. Along these lines, visual ethnography, which includes photography, film, and now graphic storytelling, provides a more holistic understanding of cultural practices. Comics and visual narratives have the distinct ability to evoke empathy and understanding. Combining graphic medicine with graphic ethnography enhances the potential to convey complex cultural narratives surrounding health, fostering a deeper connection between the readers and the subject matter.

Graphic ethnography, a form of visual anthropology that uses graphic or visual elements to convey ethnographic research and narratives, has a relatively recent history. In the late 20th century, there was a broader "visual turn" in anthropology, with scholars emphasizing the importance of visual methods in understanding cultures. This period saw an increased use of photography, film, and other visual tools to complement traditional written ethnography. The use of comics and graphic novels as a form of ethnographic representation gained traction in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Ethnographers started exploring the potential of combining visual elements with narrative storytelling to communicate complex cultural phenomena. Utilizing the affordances of comics and ethnography, *Lissa* becomes one of a kind in the field of graphic medicine/ethnography as rightly stated by Hamdy and Nye, "In *Lissa*, we draw on the unique capacity of comics to move seamlessly between micro and macro scales, to layer different periods, and to juxtapose disparate geographical contexts to foreground perspectives from the Global South and to examine how populations in places such as the U.S. are unwittingly implicated in health outcomes in these seemingly unrelated sites" (14). As such, the graphic narrative, *Lissa,* is a collaborative project. Written by Sherine Hamdy and Coleman Nye and illustrated by Sarula Bao and Caroline Brewer, it is an example of what Susan Merill Squier points to as "porous pathography", which is the "product of multidisciplinary collaborations, exemplify a variety of novel work practices, and addresses issues that extend beyond individual concerns and feature multiple subjects and complex and multi-scale contexts"(125). Its authors, Sherine Hamdy and Coleman Nye, examine "how social contexts shape medical decisions in very different sites – Coleman in the US, Hamdy in Egypt-and on very different issues -Coleman on genetic risk for cancer and Hamdy on kidney failure and organ transplantation" (264)- while their work is translated through the art of Sarula Bao, Caroline Brewer, and Marc Parentaeu. The Brown University and Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) collaboration is unique in the sense that *Lissa* is hybrid in its scope, both in content and in form. *Lissa,* the first book in the University of Toronto Press's ethnoGraphic line, addresses a wide range of issues, including how comics serve as a useful tool for teaching and learning and how the comic format can be successfully appropriated across cultural boundaries. Consequently, *Lissa* , based in both the US and Egypt, uses the graphic or comics medium to address health and

illness issues in a way that a traditional narrative is unable to do because the visual mode seamlessly connects people who are dispersed throughout the globe.

Text and Context

The graphic narrative *Lissa* is divided into three parts: Cairo, Five Years Later, and Revolution. The narrative begins in Cairo with Anna and Layla. While Anna's father works as an executive for an American oil company in Cairo, Layla's father works as a doorman in a wealthy Egyptian house. Both of them develop an unlikely friendship by spending their time together and sharing their fears and worries. Anna's mother is diagnosed with terminal breast cancer, and Layla's family faces constant injunctions from the house owner. Anna shifts back to Chicago after the death of her mother, leaving Layla back in Cairo.

Five years later, Anna joins college in the US, and Layla joins medicine back in Egypt. Anna discovers that her mother's cancer can be a result of an inherited BRCA gene mutation. She is put through the test by Myriad Genetics, an American medicine company that has a patent to perform gene tests. She eventually finds that she is not susceptible to the mutation but to make sure that she is safeguarded from any future risk, she undergoes a preventive double mastectomy without even telling Layla. Meanwhile, Layla moves on with her studies in Cairo when her father, Abu Hassan, is diagnosed with kidney failure. He undergoes kidney dialysis, which offers only a temporary solution, and eventually, an organ transplantation needs to be done. The Egyptian healthcare system doesn't have a donor list, and her family cannot afford the cost as well. Her brother Ahmed who was working in Saudi Arabia, returned to Egypt after being diagnosed with Hepatitis C. Abu Hassan is unwilling to receive kidney from the family members as he believes that only God has authority over the body, and finally, he succumbs to kidney failure. All the while, there is correspondence between Anna and Layla, but Anna doesn't share the details of her mastectomy as she thinks Layla is not supportive of it.

The political backdrop of *Lissa* is the Egyptian Revolution of 2011. Layla, after realizing the systemic inequities in the Egyptian healthcare system, decides to join the youth movement to save her country from the corrupt Mubarak regime. Anna also joins in Layla's activities by helping the wounded and injured and documenting the dead bodies. Both of

them renew their bond at the time of the revolution, and Anna finally confides her surgery to Layla. Meanwhile, Ahmed is injured in the conflict, losing one of his eyes. *Lissa* ends with both Anna and Layla walking through the streets of Cairo, admiring the murals and graffiti, an expression of the revolution.

Lissa follows a realistic depiction of the friendship of Anna and Layla and also the atrocities of the Egyptian revolution. Some of the graphic innovation employed in the panelling depicts the ups and downs of their friendship, and the employing of collage form in a nuanced way depicts the systemic and relational nature of health and illness. The realistic portrayal serves for an educational purpose to make readers understand the health crises caused in the lives of people affected by war and other injustices.

Collage as a Graphic Method

The use of collage as a graphic modality brings out the multi-dimensionality, incorporating various elements into a page spread. In *Lissa* the employment of the collage technique underscores the idea of entanglement and shifting assemblages that contribute to the health of the individual. Collage "brings about an exchange of ideas…have a polysemous and polyvocal quality…" (Gibbons 431). The meaning of collage as a method of experimentation during modernism, when it is employed in *Lissa,* conveys a medical radicality, shows how the graphic narrative is different in its approach by integrating activism into the text. The mural by Ganzeer, who was a street artist during the Egyptian Revolution, is an example of the assemblage of whatever has been discussed in the text. The mural features photographs, Arabic calligraphy, and a unique integration of icons representing people and ideas. The splash pages in *Lissa* represent how the idea of relationality works in the context of health and illness, and the form of collage is useful in understanding what Karen Barad writes as "a shift from thinking of relationality as a process of interaction to intra-action" as we see the various elements strewn over the page communicating to each other, which leads to a more comprehensive understanding(9). The non-linearity of the elements in the splash pages creates the possibility of endless signifiers that encourage a more detailed reading of the collaged text. It shows the body is at once in dialogue with many entangled factors across borders and how it is effective and

affective at the same time, evoking an agentive response from the part of readers. The non-hierarchized quality of collage makes it easy to understand that health injustices and disparities are a systemic problem that connects us as it helps to "dislocate the fixed terms of that hierarchy into new and persuasive configurations, thus calling into question from within"(Crow 33). The images have the ability to convey succinctly more than words can, and the individual interpretation and tracking of the images spread across the splash page ensure heterogeneity of experiences and textured reading.

Collage further illustrates what Farhad Manjoo writes in *Welcome to the Post -Text Future,* where "the text recedes to the background" , the visual succeeding the written(9). Readers are engaging with the collage both on a personal and political level. The collage employed in *Lissa* in the form of murals, graffiti, and calligraphy makes the novel a site of collaboration in all its aspects. It also indicates the scope of the graphic medicine/ ethnography itself and how they become important sites of discussion since people from across the world can read much through the visual language over the written in few pages, which makes the form impactful and agential. The use of collage to depict the lives of Anna and Layla in the US and Egypt, respectively, emphasizes their enmeshed realities, and therefore the form foregrounds the health crisis embodied in the graphic narrative.

Borders and Bodies

Borders are a site of transformation, with increased global interventions as part of international treaties and exchanges, accompanied by the constant movement across borders. As pointed out in *The Shifting Border*, "while physical borders remain in place, their meaning changes, -contradicting conventional expectations of both reified national borders and global borderless territories where rights are supposedly protected through international agreements and treaties" (Ayelet, 822). Borders not only serve an administrative purpose but constitute a much larger function, and crossing the borders is not merely physical but rather works now through global capital sovereignty, which has a clear impact on the health of individuals. Thus, " borders are seen as processes, as floating signifiers, as waypoints and conduits in the flow of people, ideas, goods, capital, and threats to the body politic", which necessitates the importance of reimagining and reinterpreting the idea of the border (Wilson and Donnan,17).

In light of the aforementioned idea of the shifting border- in the context of global health- it is quite significant to acknowledge, "how bodies constitute territory and borders, and demonstrate that the body is a territory with porous, contested, and political borders" (Gokariksel et al., 1). The world has become a shifting site of vulnerability and war and offers a compelling backdrop for recent scholarly research that has reconfigured our understandings of territory, borders, and bodies. The borders are undergoing redefinition, extending to the limits of the body. It is important to understand "how conditions of violence, neoliberalism, economic changes, and geopolitical tension reconfigure relationships between intimate daily life, the body, and national and global political projects" (Gökarıksel et al., 259). The borders and bodies thus become reconstituted further in the process and therefore need a renewed approach. So the emphasis lies not on the inherent nature of body but on its interactions and its abilities to impact and be influenced. This can be especially understood through the ideas of the ill body, the revolutionary body, and the migrant body in *Lissa*. The ill bodies in *Lissa*, which is located in Egypt and the US, is afflicted with chronic illnesses like cancer and organ failure, and goes through various medical circumstances. Access to healthcare in the mentioned countries varies differently due to several reasons, economic stability being one of them. The notion of the body is also different. In Egypt, mutilating one's body is considered to be an act of reprobation. The revolutionary climate of a country can impact the health of an individual with increased toxicity in the environment and increased casualties, which degrades the overall health of a nation. The migrant body is in a liminal state and is at once displaced from the home and the foreign country. An infected migrant body is considered a risk, which makes it difficult to get a job or other health benefits, making them susceptible to living a life below the standard. Thus, the inextricable link between the body and the borders is drawn out.

Borders come into being with certain discursive practices, it is purely operational in function. According to Achille Mbembe, "In this regime of dematerialized movement, no border is a priori impassable . Borders are fundamentally no longer effective"(85). Borders are not fixed, but rather have become porous in nature. When it comes to the health of an individual, these borders become quite permeable, but in both direct and indirect ways. The direct ways are the health care system of a country and the flow of people and goods

from and within the country and the indirect ways refer to the various treaties, agreements and transnational exchanges across countries. *Lissa* illustrates how this comes into play and how everything exists on a transactional level due to the fluidity of borders. As Mbembe states, "borders are no longer merely lines of demarcation separating distinct sovereign entities. Increasingly, they are the name we should use to describe the organized violence that underpins both contemporary capitalism and our world order in general" (5). In the name of health, bodies are subjected to multiple infringement. The question of who owns the body is increasingly being debated since, in the name of health, many multinational corporations form ties with the government, deciding in advance an individual's choice concerning health. In *Lissa,* Anna's gene testing for potential BRCA cancer gene mutation is undertaken by Myriad Genetics, which has access to the genetic information of the citizens of the country. When it comes to Egypt," the Egyptian bodies have been rendered expendable, either through military sacrifice, labour exploitation, medical mismanagement, or the literal profiteering off of blood and organ harvesting in Cairo, a city which remains one of the world's largest organ trafficking hot-spots" (Shimazono 7). Bodies in Egypt are thus subjected to violence inflicted in the context of the 2011 Egyptian uprising, the exploitation of the bodies as migrants and for organ transplantation and exposure to the toxins in the from of chemical pesticides, fertilizers and other toxic wastes, which underlines the insidious transaction of diseases. Therefore, "Large and small spaces are not only colliding. They are also becoming entangled, thus redrawing the maps to which we have become accustomed" (Mbembe 91). The agreement between the US and Egypt facilitates a heightened risk of the transmission of diseases.

The major understanding about the body in the post-human world is that "bodies are not everywhere the same because humans are inextricably entangled with historical, environmental, social, cultural and political contexts, thus dislodging an assumption that bodies are readily "standardizable" (Lock and Nguyen 27). Our body is caught within this physical, cultural, and social embeddedness, which becomes the embodied subjectivity of an individual, problematizing the notions of health and illness. The transformation of the border also reflects onto the body as well. The body in its enactment in the functional borders becomes a "social body", "understood as a flux of relational forces that affect diverse bodies, objects,

ideas, and processes, temporarily folding these forces in the creation of a discrete mass"(Duff 102). The phrase "temporarily folding" underscores the shifting nature of borders and bodies since the conventional understanding keeps shifting with changing times that needs to take into consideration the fact that the "health of a patient is enmeshed in a complex system of individual behaviours, family and community relationships, environmental surroundings, ecological limitations, and structural injustices" (Fitzgerald and Callard 4). Thus, a deterritorialization of the body occurs in the changing times when the borders dissolve. In the study of the *Lissa,* borders become an interesting point of departure since there is a constant flow across the borders -in terms of resources- which has a huge stake in the health of the individual.

Revolution, Migration, Kidney Transplant: The Egyptian Story

Lissa is set in the background of the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, which was part of the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring refers to a couple of uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa as a result of the authoritarian and corrupt governments in these countries. It broke out in Tunisia in December 2010 when a young man self-immolated himself due to unemployment and corrupt police forces, a reference to which is made in *Lissa.* This incident served as inspiration for the revolution, which later extended to Syria, Yemen, and Egypt. In Egypt, the government under President Hosni Mubarak rigged elections to win, which led to a popular uprising in the country in which many youths participated. The Mubarak regime mercilessly suppressed the movement, killing and injuring thousands of people. But he had to step back finally, and the rule came under the Egyptian military.

When a revolution is happening in a country, it affects the overall well-being of a nation as well as the world at large. It creates economic instability, environmental damage and disruption of social security . Moreover, the healthcare system breaks down and there is a heightened risk of the spread of diseases. The above-mentioned factors play a role in the health of an individual. The individuals who are directly or indirectly involved in the conflict either get injured or become one amidst the piles of bodies that cannot be even identified. In countries like Egypt, where a proper health care system is not in function, it becomes all the more challenging, as rightly pointed out by Murray et al., "the fundamental

challenge in quantifying the health impacts of conflict is that health information systems, particularly civil registration systems that record the event and cause of death, often cease to function in populations affected by conflict" (1). Tahrir Square in Cairo becomes an important place where bodies are mutilated and violated. Bodies are injured and wounded and become unrecognizable in the time of revolution. As pointed out by Swanson,"bodies were at the forefront of demonstrations of the so-called 'Arab Spring' - bodies of protestors, bodies of martyrs; bodies marching defiantly, bodies inhaling tear gas; bodies waving banners, bodies absorbing blows of police baton" (1). The smoke and other poisons in the environment will eventually take a toll on the health as well. Layla remembers Ahmed whose body was "just taken from them" after he was brutally attacked by the police forces (225). The revolutionary body is the site of resistance and refusal. Health and revolution are inseparably interlinked. The body participates in the activity to overthrow the corrupt system and the body is subjected to annihilation in the process. Mubarak is referred to as a malignant tumour that needs to be excised which indicates the use of medical metaphors. In another set of panels demonstrating how the Egyptian people are exploited for their labour and organs , the pamphlets and banners of the revolution depict it. The banner reads, "Cancer is everywhere and they extract our natural gas" (149). Therefore, revolutions and diseases easily flow, and everyone is susceptible in each particular context. It is after hearing about the atrocities of the Egyptian revolution and how the health of her father was affected as part of the overall health of the nation that she decides to join the youth movement to protest against the government and unethical practices that severely deteriorated the health of its citizens. *Lissa* ,thus embodies activism both on the political and medical fronts.

After understanding the complicated nature of her father's disease or in Hamdy's words the "political etiologies" that have contributed to her father's illness, she decides to join the youth movement (299). The relationship between health and political revolution as Layla is seen reflecting on the above causes which eventually links to her holding a poster of the revolution. It gives a representation of the factors that have led to the hospitalization of Abu Hassan, Layla's father was diagnosed with kidney failure. But the family doesn't have the economic capacity to afford a kidney transplant. The healthcare system in Egypt doesn't cover such expenses and the concept of an organ transplant is against the belief system of

the family. But here the primary question is the factors that have possibly led to Abu Hassan's kidney failure and demonstrates the multitude of factors.

Here, Abu Hasaan's tubes are connected to the causes. The depiction of tubes, pipes, and electric wires is indicative of the interrelatedness that governs the disease. The social, political, and environmental factors that affect individual health at a large scale are depicted above. Due to the construction of the Aswan High Dam across the Nile for the generation of electricity, the downflow of water decreased due to which the otherwise silt-rich valley that supported agriculture reduced drastically and the Egyptians had to use chemical fertilizers for cultivation , the fund for which came from the US. Another instance in *Lissa* that highlights the entangled nature of health is when Layla finds herself in a dialysis ward listening to a young man describe the limitations of the technological remediation of kidney disease. "I know a man who donated his kidney to his brother nine years ago", he says, "The brother died five years ago and now the man is in renal failure. It's not transplants we need. We need clean air, clean water, food" (127). Hamdy refers to how the "local biologies" make organ transplantation ineffective due to the toxic environment and the inappropriate medical infrastructure (10). This patient's critique highlights how medical interventions into the individual's body are insufficient and incomplete if there are no interventions into the broader social, political, and environmental determinants of illness. The construction of dams has altered water ecosystems, fostering stagnant waterways that facilitate the growth of schistosomal-transmitting snails, posing health risks to farmers and communities dependent on these water sources. This dependence may lead to an increased use of toxic pesticides. The Camp David Agreement of 1973, signed between the US and Egypt, initially aimed at providing surplus wheat to Egypt, evolved into a profitable arrangement for the U.S. corporations, causing dependency on imported wheat. Facilities for storing and shipping this wheat have become breeding grounds for fungi, resulting in harmful toxins such as ochratoxins and aflatoxins, impacting liver and kidney health.

Moreover, the implementation of structural adjustment policies by the IMF and World Bank has dismantled the Egyptian welfare state, diverting resources away from public health, as evident in the deterioration of healthcare facilities. In the face of these challenges, Layla, confronted with the systemic roots of her father's suffering, contemplates joining

revolutionary efforts after encountering a flyer from the April 6 Movement. This narrative highlights the complex web of socio-political factors contributing to health challenges and the recognition of the need for systemic change.

The bottom part of the picture shows the air pollution and the toxic waste dumped by the US in countries like Egypt, which together contribute to several health problems. The national borders become permeable to outside interferences and transactions that increase life-threatening diseases, severely impairing bodily boundaries too, again pointing to the concerns that borders "are instead things we produce that we have to produce through specific intra-active configurations and performances" (Barad 14). The reconfiguration of the borders for purposes that cater to the interests of the dominant is a violation of the border itself and an infringement on the bodies as well. To stop the spread of infectious diseases, it is required to register bodies at borders. However, what about the deliberate poisoning of bodies living outside of borders who then flee to other countries in search of employment and then have to come back because of their vulnerable bodies?

Ahmed, brother of Layla, is the perfect example that exemplifies how the body is subjected to violations and injustices in many forms. He goes to work in Saudi Arabia. He is part of the disillusioned youth in Egypt whose jobs have been lost due to the US-based oil drilling company where Anna's father works. This company thus creates havoc in the health sector, the environment, and the economy of Egypt. But he is sent back to Egypt after he is diagnosed with Hepatitis C virus. Thus, he is not able to fend for his family anymore. His living becomes stagnant due to his health. But he is not willing to accept the fact that he is infected with the disease and dismisses it by remarking, "But we Egyptians are strong! Our bodies have enough room for us and the parasites too!"(63). He couldn't donate his kidney to his father due to the disease, "First I'm not a candidate to make a living in my own country! And now I'm not a candidate to save my own father's life!"(124). He went to Saudi Arabia by swatching the blood tests in Egypt but he was finally deported when he was diagnosed abroad.

Ahmed questions the establishment of borders, suggesting that bio-censoring can be viewed as a method that regulates the movement and confinement of individuals. The biometric technologies employed by the countries are a technique of border control

practicing the idea of border and regulation of migration, which draws attention to the fact that borders develop through such practices and it is "an ongoing process enabled by contact rather than isolation"(Barth 10). Ahmed is one among "irregular migrants" who are "always potentially subject to border control and, possibly, deportation"(Olwig et al.5). When considering marginalized bodies, the notion emerges that their existence inherently involves transgressing boundaries or facing the potential intrusion of external elements into one's internal space. Towards the end, he is seen using tablets like Tramadol, which indicates the rampant misuse and misregulation of medicines as the source is unknown, pointing to the illegal imports across borders. He finally becomes a bunch of youth protesting the revolution and he loses one of his eyes. In the end Layla remembers him by remarking, "parts of their body are just taken from them" (225) which can be contrasted with Anna, who voluntarily removes her breast as she has access to the resources in the US.

Breast Cancer and the Bio-medical Assemblage in the US

Anna has been living in Cairo since her father was an executive in an American oil company. Her mother has been suffering from terminal breast cancer. After her mother dies she moves back to the US when she discovers that the inherited gene is responsible for cancer. In the US, gene testing is available to check for potential BRCA gene mutation. She takes the test out of fear even though there is no insurance coverage for gene testing. Myriad Genetics, a conglomerate, conducts the testing by accessing the DNA of test subjects. This raises ethical concerns about who owns the body and brings us back to Abu Hassan's position that he should not mutilate his body because God owns the body, highlighting moral limits on body ownership. It also points to the biomedical assemblages surrounding breast cancer. Anna after finding out she doesn't have the inherited gene to reduce her susceptibility further undergoes a preventive double mastectomy cancelling out any possible risk estimates. Anna at such a young age is exposed to abundant information online. Due to the tremendous leaps in the American health system there are numerous possibilities for treating a particular disease that raise the problem of drawing boundaries regarding one's body.

The DNA of an individual interacts with multiple causes. Here, Anna's friend who is undergoing chemotherapy says, "With cancer, it's hard to tell the difference between the

cure and the cause"(129). Cancer can be caused by gene mutations that can be inherited or acquired. The interaction of the gene with outside chemicals can drastically affect its structure. On the left page is an assemblage of things that are used on a daily basis without us realizing the chemical's potential to disrupt the genetic makeup of an individual. The various household and personal products, pesticides and chemical fertilizers, dairy products, cosmetics, and plastics ,all has a stake in determining one's health .Medicines such as cytokines that are used to treat cancer -developed from military weapons (mustard gas) funded by the US Department of Defense-itself increase systemic toxicities. On the right page, there are the Big Pharma pills, the "red tape" of insurance companies, the gene patents obtained by biotech companies like Myriad Genetics, and "pink ribbon" corporate charity campaigns are depicted. It's ironic that these initiatives have led to pinkwashing and increased corporatization of the issue because the corporations benefit unjustly from them. Towards the bottom of the picture, the family cancer history is shown, which indicates the innumerable factors that contribute to the indeterminacy in understanding the specific cause of cancer. Therefore, from the spread, it is not easy to distinguish between cause and cure since the body interacts with chemicals on a drastic scale, as "the body itself becomes an expanded, multiple infrastructure, where intervention can happen at many different scales" (Mbembe 10). It is also important to see the insidious link between the US government and the various other commercial companies marketing in the name of the "pink ribbon" charity campaign who are equally involved in making matters worse. The tube that is inserted in the cancer patient is ultimately linked to all these factors, and thus the cause and the cure become indistinguishable.

This has concerns in Egypt as well. The term "Big Pharma" typically refers to large multinational pharmaceutical companies, often based in developed countries, including the United States," whose sphere of action is not one country or one region, but the globe" (Mbembe 2). These companies are involved in the research, development, manufacturing, and marketing of pharmaceutical drugs. They export and distribute their medications to various countries, including Egypt. However, concerns may arise regarding the affordability of these medications, the potential exploitation of healthcare systems, and the influence of multinational corporations on healthcare policies. Local governments and healthcare

systems therefore become unavailable to people like Abu Hassan who wishes "This is how Egyptian medicine should be! Free, high-quality healthcare for all" (70). The healthcare system is in such a state that the disease is found only after organ failure.

Egypt relies on the US as one of its wheat suppliers. Global trade and supply chains mean that products, including wheat, move across borders. This interconnectedness can result in the transfer of various elements, including potential contaminants, from one region to another. So these chemical pesticides and fertilisers move across the borders affecting bodies across the world. Moreover the US dumps its toxic waste in places like Egypt which adversely affects the quality of health of its people. Reliance on American pesticides, pharmaceutical products, and military aid may create a level of dependency on external sources. This can challenge national boundaries as decisions about health, agriculture, and defense may be influenced by external actors, impacting a country's ability to independently shape its policies.

Conclusion

The article mainly aims to problematize the existing conception regarding health and illness in a time where bodies and bodies exist in flux. By portraying the lives of characters Anna and Layla, the study seeks to decipher the complex interconnectedness of healthcare systems in the United States and Egypt. Bodies across borders vary in their experiential realities and therefore, health is not universally distributable.

The subsequent sections of the article predominantly discuss the health sector in Egypt, which is affected both by political unrest in the country and also by the disruption caused by US intervention in the form of military, food supplies, and other insidious factors. It has led to the economic crisis in Egypt, causing its youth to lose jobs, take jobs in other countries, and be a part of the political turmoil. While in the US, due to an abundance of resources in medical care, there is an excessive exploitation of the vulnerability of the patient in tackling their chronic diseases beforehand. The exporting of wheat infested with chemicals becomes part of the diet not only in the US but also in Egypt. Borders become temporary makeshift for bodies, politically but when it comes to health, borders are no longer functional. Now there is a need to look both inside and outside the state, the different political, social, and cultural factors at work to understand the bordering practices, which take into account the local and global at large.

In terms of implementation, the article urges reform in health policies between individual nations and on a global level, taking into consideration ethical concerns across geopolitical borders. The graphic medicine/ethnographic form serves as a useful tool for educational purposes and for raising awareness and advocacy. The graphic narrative studied within the field of graphic medicine is specifically located in Egypt, where the ethnography study is at par reflecting the historical biases of culture. *Lissa* is unique thus in creating a visual representation where a collaboration is seen both in the form and content of the work speaking at length about the current crisis of the healthcare system, demonstrating ways to approach the study with more responsibility on the part of academicians as well as political leaders.

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Gendered Identities and Cyborgs: A Posthuman analysis of *WALL-E* as a Deconstruction of Gendered Boundaries

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Abstract

The incessant blurring of the boundaries between the robot and the human is the crux of the posthuman era. This paper explores the concept of posthumanism in the animated film WALL-E (2008), focusing on the blurring boundaries between humans and robots depicted within the narrative. Posthumanism as a philosophical and cultural framework asserts that traditional distinctions between humans and technology/robots are becoming more complex. The text chosen makes for a compelling example to address this phenomenon as it portrays a world where robots exhibit characteristics traditionally associated with humanity, including emotions, curiosity, and agency. According to Nick J. Fox, post-humanist environmentalism seeks to nurture a societal climate where human and nonhuman capacities are embraced to sustain Earth's resources (Fox, 2019). This paper demonstrates how the film challenges anthropocentric perspectives, inviting viewers to reconsider what it means to be human and to exist in a world where machines are not merely tools but integral components of our daily lives. The paper would also aim to shed light on the evolving nature of gender roles and identities in a technologically mediated age, encouraging a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of our relationship with machines as well as with one another.

Keywords: Posthumanism, Cyborgs, Anhropocentrism, AI-Powered Tools, Posthuman Narrative.

In a not-so-distant future, humanity is entrapped in a technological embrace, a society where the boundaries between man and machine blur into a seamless continuum. The film *WALL-E* emerges as a compelling narrative, not just of robots and artificial intelligence, but of the intricate dance between sentient beings—WALL-E and EVE—whose journey transcends mere mechanization, delving into the realm of human-like emotions. With our increased dependence on technology and AI-powered tools, here we have a story showcasing

sentient beings like WALL-E and EVE drawn to each other with human-like emotions. In this stark portrayal, they emerge as beacons of emotion and connection, grappling with the profound concept of love, a sentiment not confined to the realms of human existence. The study is relevant because we are slowly moving towards a posthuman society with the advancement of technology and AI. The film reminds us that living solely on anthropocentric terms is impossible and that it is essential to understand how to live in a mutually inclusive society comprising humans, animals, cyborgs and non-humans.

This research aims to study *Wall E* as a critique of the blurring of gender roles and identities between cyborgs and humans in a posthuman society. It endeavors to scrutinize *WALL-E* as a poignant critique of the erosion of traditional gender roles and identities among the cyborgs, exemplified by WALL-E and EVE, and the humans in a posthuman society. The film serves as a thought-provoking exploration of the fluidity and transformation of gender constructs, offering a nuanced commentary on the implications of a posthuman world where technology, identity, and societal norms converge.

The discourse surrounding the film *WALL-E* delves into various facets of posthumanism, cyborg existence, anthropomorphism, and the film's environmental and ideological implications. Ana Popović's analysis underscores the film's critical examination of humanity's treatment of the environment within a capitalist framework. The consequences of consumer-driven paradises and their impact on both humans and the planet are evident, emphasizing the pressing issues of the Anthropocene. The proposed solution involves renouncing anthropocentric ignorance and resisting hegemonic consumer systems, highlighting the film's engagement with broader socio-environmental discourse. The anthropocene is the major theme being dealt with in the film alongside environmental issues.

Madeline Merritt's in her article explores WALL-E as a posthuman entity emphasizing his exceptional qualities, such as his longevity and capacity for human-like characteristics, which challenge conventional distinctions between machines and humans. WALL-E's evolution into a cyborg, a hybrid entity fusing artificial and organic elements, is a pivotal theme, signifying his transition from a mere robot with a programmed directive to a complex and emotionally connected being. This is again explored by Nicola Balkind- the concept of anthropomorphism in cinema, elucidating how imbuing robots with human-like

qualities enriches narratives and engages audiences. WALL-E, an anthropomorphized robot, serves not only as a character but as a symbol and catalyst for the film's central message – the profound connection between humans and the Earth. The fragility of this role, deemed too delicate for humans to undertake, underscores the imperative to protect and preserve the environment.

This is further investigated by Eric Herhuth who delves into the complexities of desire within the context of programmed machines. Erice Herhuth elaborates not only on WALL-E's and EVE's humanlike characteristics but also the emergence of human like desire and want in them. Their character development exemplifies abstract desire, evolving from a simple directive of trash compaction to more complex actions, including collecting and imitating human culture. His pursuit of EVE and shared desire are central to the narrative. This analysis uncovers a tension between the reintroduction of recognizable forms of desire and sexuality by sentient robots, paralleling consumerist ideologies practiced on the Axiom.

The exploration of post-humanist theory in *WALL-E*, by Walter C. Metz unveils the film's theoretical depth. The non-human characters, WALL-E and EVE, devoid of gender distinctions, transcend human biology. WALL-E, originally a seemingly insignificant machine, evolves into a character capable of human-like emotions, emphasizing the unexplored potential within the posthuman realm. The notion of 'wombs' attributed to both WALL-E and EVE symbolizes the transformative power of technology and its role in posthuman narratives, urging viewers to reconsider the relationship between humans, technology, and the environment. While gender boundaries are experimented with in *WALL-E,* the characters also at the same time are given the traditional male and female lead. This paper analyses the aspect of how even when robots like WALL-E and EVE are given traditional male and female roles, they are given the liberty to develop their own sense of characteristics and not just adhere to the designated roles.

Upon closely reading the text, it was evident that the movie *WALL-E* showcased posthumanist elements. The film's main protagonists WALL-E and EVE are extraterrestrial cyborgs, one designed to clean the earth and the other to retrieve any source of life from planet Earth, in contrast to humans -the original inhabitants of the earth who lounge in space. The movie starts by juxtaposing a happy song with the bleak scenery of nonhuman

existence. The camera zooms into a lifeless earth surrounded by satellites and towers resembling skyscrapers but is in fact mountains of garbage being collected and stored away by WALL-E the robot. He is also friends with a cockroach which symbolizes that the Earth was no longer inhabitable to the point where only an animal like a cockroach would have been able to survive. WALL-E is saving things that once meant a huge deal to humans and trying to make meaning out of these things. He is a curious little robot that fancies human ways of living and dreams of finding love. This leads us to ask a very pertinent question where did the original 'inhabitors' of the Earth go? Humans were transported to space, aboard the Axiom because their ancestors realised that Earth was no longer safe to live on. It had proved to be very toxic and we are shown a clip of the President of the United States issuing a warning to the people saying that Earth was beyond saving.

Rosi Braidotti comments on how "As a hybrid, or body-machine, the cyborg, or the companion species, is a connection-making entity; a figure of interrelationality, receptivity and global communication that deliberately blurs categorical distinctions (human/machine; nature/culture; male/female; oedipal/non-oedipal)" (Braidotti, 200). Thus the hybrid or the cyborg here according to Braidotti is a much-advanced machine that blurs baseline hybridities to form interrelational connections for the betterment of the society. This has been explored in *WALL-E* in very innocent ways. WALL-E has advanced from a mere garbage-collecting robot to one that can feel emotions, watches *Hello Dolly*, and shows an increased engrossment in imbibing dancing, just like humans. It has also achieved a flair for understanding love and finding a partner to 'dance' or to 'hold hands' with, which are predominantly human actions. Thus there is no difference between the cyborg and the human. Moreover, in the case of *WALL-E*, the cyborg has adapted to be more like the human while the human has adapted to be more like the cyborg. In her book *A Cyborg Manifesto*,' Donna Haraway comments "The machine is us, our processes, an aspect of our embodiment. We can be responsible for machines; they do not dominate or threaten us. We are responsible for boundaries; we are they." (Haraway, 65). This is apparent and holds a heavy undertone in the film. Humans are seen as robotized to the point where they have lost agency over essential human functions of eating, walking, and drinking. They are seen as floating blobs that lack function and can be practically termed useless. The captain of the

Axiom, Captain B. McCrea even says at one point says "I cant just sit here and nothing, thats all I have ever done, that's all anyone on this blasted ship has ever done. Nothing!" (1:09:46-1:09:51).

Donna Haraway in her *Cyborg Manifesto* talks about how "It is not clear who makes and who is made in the relation between human and machine. It is not clear what is mind and what is body in machines that resolve into coding practices." (Haraway, 60). In the case of *WALL-E,* it is evident that the cyborgs/robots are the ones "who make" and humans are the ones "who are made". This is evident in the film when they show how the humans are more like robots than robots themselves. Haraway goes on to say, "machines could be animated—given ghostly souls to make them speak or move or to account for their orderly development and mental capacities. Or organisms could be mechanized—reduced to body understood as resource of mind." (Haraway, 61) The robots are seen as sentient beings having a bigger and better emotional range than the humans on board. So while humans made robots to make their living more accessible for them, as the years spanned, humans started resembling robots in basically everything they did. At one point in the film the humans are also given an automatic colour change for their uniforms because it is in 'trend'. Humans aboard the Axiom have not seen a life past their screens; they have not even explored the Axiom itself! They are seen as continuously glued to their screens and mechanical.

The robots can also be seen as allegorical symbols of Adam and Eve (EVE representative of the biblical character Eve herself). Both have been 'banished' and are trying to reclaim what was once lost: humanity. Walter C. Metz in his article "Wombs with a phew!" describes how both EVE and WALL-E have wombs. Wombs generally are attributed to women for their ability to birth a child. Still, in this case, they both have the ability to one, clean the earth of humans' waste and two, reclaim any source of life from the earth as, "both have wombs, (WALL-E's for compacting trash to build skyscrapers to clean up the earth and Eve's for holding the plant which represents our planet's botanical hope for re-forestation)" (Metz, 257). WALL-E being the last standalone cyborg on Earth to do the bidding of humans and EVE being the only robot to have returned to the Axiom with a plant, they alone had the chance to start civilisation and human life back on Earth, much like Adam and Eve.

However, we can see the subversion of gender roles here because it was not the supposedly "female" lead Eve that discovered or cared for the plant, it was instead WALL-E the robot "male" that cared for and nurtured for the plant. WALL-E and Eve, although donning traditional roles as male and female lead protagonists of the film; the film has subverted the characteristics of both the robots. WALL-E is seen as more docile, sweet and nurturing; while on the other hand, EVE is more functional and complex on the inside. EVE is a more advanced version of a robot, while WALL-E is tattered and dirty and not seemingly the latest version of robot models. EVE has a gun and if threatened she would not shy away from shooting and blow things up to smithereens. We can see throughout the film how WALL-E is in awe of EVE and cares for her even when she goes to auto mode as soon as she retrieves the plant.

"There is no fundamental, ontological separation in our formal knowledge of machine and organism, of technical and organic." (Haraway, 60) says Haraway which is true in the relationship between humans on the Axiom and the robots. She continues, "One consequence is that our sense of connection to our tools is heightened. The trance state experienced by many computer users has become a staple of science-fiction film and cultural jokes. Perhaps paraplegics and other severely handicapped people can (and sometimes do) have the most intense experiences of complex hybridization with other communications devices." (Haraway, 61) Humans on the Axiom are seen in this "trance-like" state as described by Haraway, depended on robots and as pointed out by Metz in his article, they are also disabled "wheelchair bound humans" (Metz, 254) It no longer makes sense to say "that it is just a robot" or hold on to an anthropocentric frame of mind. The film helps us to realise the importance of acknowledging that we no longer can distinguish between humans and robots. We are advancing so quickly to witness more anthropomorphized versions of robots and also humanoids. One of the other huge takeaways from the film is the slow destruction of planet Earth, because of overconsumption and consumerism. WALL-E, thus foreshadows the increasing unsustainability of life and the bleak future for humans on Earth due to inefficient waste management systems. The film is a huge reminder of how we are treating the Earth and that if we do not act fast, things can escalate to the point where Planet Earth cannot be redeemed.

WALL-E beckons us to confront the evolving landscape of our existence. It challenges us to reevaluate our perceptions of love, identity, and societal constructs in a future where the line between man and machine blurs into a harmonious one. This research endeavors to unravel the layers of meaning within the film, offering insights into the intricate interplay of technology, gender, and humanity in a society hurtling towards a posthuman reality. The research also paves the way to understand the role of gender in a posthuman society and how it gets subverted. The aim was to find a nuanced understanding of how traditional gender roles undergo a profound process of subversion. In the context of understanding what constitutes posthumanism, the film provides a unique lens through which to examine the transformative nature of gender dynamics, in our posthuman condition. EVE and WALL-E's interactions become a testament to the mechanised humans, upon which the fluidity of gender expression is painted, offering a vision of a posthuman society where emotional connections are privileged over rigid gender norms.

While the main focus is on gender roles, the film encompasses a broader array of themes, including environmentalism, consumerism, and capitalism. Limiting the study to one specific aspect may result in overlooking the intricate interplay between different themes within the film. The analysis of the film *WALL-E,* was exclusively interpretative, and different viewers may perceive and interpret the themes differently. The subjective nature of analyzing artistic works like films can lead to varying interpretations, making it challenging to establish definitive conclusions that apply universally. *WALL-E* is a specific film with its own narrative and context. While it offers a unique perspective on posthuman society, the findings may not be directly applicable to other films or real-world scenarios.

In conclusion, although *WALL-E* started off with a bleak setting comprised by sepia undertones, the film gradually shows a more positive change that has come over humans and their acceptance of wanting to learn Earth's ways from the robots. The film ends with stopmotion animation of humans coming back to Earth to reclaim what was once lost, to learn the ways of their ancestors and to plant 'pizza trees'. The film ends on a positive note showing the peaceful and mutual coexistence of human and cyborg moving towards an egalitarian and ecocentric society, the crux of the posthuman condition.

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Exploring Bioregionalism in Ruskin Bond's "Panther's Moon"

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Abstract

Ruskin Bond's short story "Panther's Moon" presents a vivid depiction of human-nature interactions within a specific bioregion. This research article explores the application of bioregionalism to the narrative, examining how the characters, setting and themes reflect principles of ecological interconnectedness, sense of place and cultural resilience. Through a close analysis of the text, this study illuminates how "Panther's Moon" contributes to our understanding of bioregional identity and environmental ethics.

Keywords: *Bioregionalism, Cultural Resilience, Human-Nature Interactions, Ecological Interconnectedness, Environmental Ethics*

Bioregionalism is a conceptual framework that emphasizes the importance of understanding and living in harmony with the natural world within distinct ecological boundaries. Bond's "Panther's Moon" provides a rich tapestry for exploring bioregionalism, as it immerses readers in the intricate web of relationships between humans, animals and the environment within a specific geographic region. This article aims to analyse how "Panther's Moon" embodies key principles of bioregionalism and contributes to the understanding of human-nature relationships and ecological stewardship.

"Panther's Moon" is a short story by Ruskin Bond, a renowned Indian author known for his works primarily set in the Indian subcontinent, particularly in the picturesque Himalayan region. Published in 1977, "Panther's Moon" is a tale that captures the essence of rural life in the hills, with its lush landscapes, intimate communities and the ever-present influence of nature.

The setting of "Panther's Moon" is predominantly in the rural villages of the Himalayan foothills. Bond's depiction of this setting is rich in detail, painting a vivid picture of the natural beauty and tranquillity of the region. The villages are nestled amidst forests, fields and streams, and are inhabited by a diverse cast of characters, including farmers, herders and artisans.

One of the central features of the setting is the wilderness that surrounds the villages. The dense forest and rugged terrain are home to a variety of wildlife, including leopards, panthers and other predators. This wilderness serves as both a source of danger and wonder, as the villagers navigate their lives in harmony with nature, but also face the constant threat of encounters with wild animals. Altogether, the setting of "Panther's Moon" is a rural Himalayan landscape characterised by its natural beauty, wilderness and close-knit communities. Through his evocative descriptions, Bond brings this setting to life, immersing readers in the sights, sounds and textures of life in the hills.

In "Panther's Moon" Bond skilfully portrays the intricate interplay between the geographic, ecological and cultural characteristics of Himalayan foothills. The Himalayan foothills are characterised by their rugged terrain, with steep slopes, deep valleys and winding rivers. The villages in "Panther's Moon" are often situated in these valleys or on gentle slopes, offering breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains. The region experiences distinct seasons, with cold winters and mild summers. Snowfall is common in the higher elevations during the winter months, while the valleys enjoy temperate weather. The landscape is dominated by dense forests of oak, pine, rhododendron and other indigenous trees. These forests provide habitat for a diverse range of wildlife, including leopards, panthers, bears, deer and numerous bird species.

The ecological diversity of the Himalayan foothills is remarkable, with a variety of ecosystems ranging from alpine meadows to subtropical forests. This biodiversity is crucial for the health of the region's ecosystems and supports the livelihoods of local communities. The rivers and streams that flow through the foothills are essential sources of water for both humans and wildlife. The presence of apex predators like leopards and panthers plays a significant role in regulating the ecosystem by controlling herbivore populations and maintaining a balance within the food web.

The cultural landscape of the Himalayan foothills is shaped by the diverse ethnic communities that inhabit the region, each with its traditions, languages and beliefs. In "Panther's Moon," Bond portrays the cultural richness of these communities through the customs, festivals and daily rituals of the villagers. Agriculture and animal husbandry are central to the economy and way of life in the villages. Villagers cultivate crops such as rice,

wheat, maize and millet on terraced fields carved into the hillsides. They also rear livestock such as goats, sheep and cattle for meat, milk and wool. Traditional craftsmanship is another important aspect of the cultural heritage of the region. Villagers engage in activities such as exquisite handicrafts that reflect their artistic skills and cultural heritage.

In "Panther's Moon," the specific features of the bioregion, namely the Himalayan foothills, greatly influence the behaviours and attitudes of the characters.

The characters in the story have a deep connection to the natural environment that surrounds them. The rugged terrain, dense forests and abundant wildlife shape their daily lives and interactions. They rely on the land for their livelihoods, whether it's through farming, herding or gathering resources from the forest. This connection fosters a sense of reverence and respect for nature, as well as a keen awareness of its power and unpredictability.

The presence of apex predators like leopards and panthers in the region instils a sense of vulnerability among the villagers. They must constantly be vigilant and cautious when venturing into the forest or working in the fields, knowing that they share their habitat with these formidable predators. This awareness influences their behaviours, such as travelling in groups for safety or taking precautions to protect themselves and their livestock.

Bisnu looked around for the monkeys but they were nowhere to be seen. 'Strange,' he thought. 'I wonder why they have disappeared.' He was startled by a sudden sharp cry, followed by a fierce yelp. He knew at once that Sheroo was in trouble. (Bond, 35)

The challenging environment of the Himalayan foothills fosters a strong sense of community among the villagers. They rely on each other for support, cooperation and mutual aid in times of need. Whether it's coming together to fend off a wild animal attack or helping each other during times of hardship, the villagers demonstrate a deep sense of solidarity and kinship that is shaped by their shared experiences in this rugged landscape.

Living in such a harsh and unforgiving environment requires a great deal of adaptability and resilience. The characters in "Panther's Moon" demonstrate these qualities as they navigate the challenges of life in the Himalayan foothills. They must constantly innovate and find creative solutions to overcome obstacles such as harsh weather, scarce resources or encounters with wild animals. The resilience is born out of necessity and is deeply ingrained in the character of the villagers.

Overall, the specific features of the bioregion depicted in "Panther's Moon" profoundly influence the behaviours and attitudes of the characters, shaping their relationships with each other and with the natural world around them. Bond skilfully captures the intricate interplay between human society and the environment, highlighting the ways in which geography, ecology and culture intersect in this unique and captivating landscape.

In "Panther's Moon," the interconnectedness of human and non-human elements within the bioregion is a central theme that underscores the symbiotic relationship between the characters and their natural environment. The villagers rely heavily on the natural resources provided by the bioregion for their survival and livelihoods. They depend on the forest for firewood, timber, medicinal plants and fodder for their livestock. Additionally, they cultivate crops and rear animals on the fertile land, utilizing the water from rivers and streams for irrigation and drinking. This interdependence highlights how human well-being is intricately linked to the health and vitality of the surrounding ecosystem.

Despite the potential dangers posed by wild animals such as leopards and panthers, the villagers coexist with these creatures in relative harmony. They respect the natural order of the forest and recognize the importance of maintaining a balance between predator and prey populations. In "Panther's Moon," this mutual respect is evident in the villagers' cautious approach to wildlife encounters and their efforts to avoid unnecessary conflict with the animals that share their habitat. The short story portrays a nuanced understanding of the interconnectedness of human and non-human elements within the bioregion. Through rich descriptions and empathetic storytelling, Bond highlights the complex web of relationships that exist between humans, wildlife and the natural landscape, underscoring the importance of fostering mutual respect, harmony and environmental stewardship in maintaining ecological balance and cultural vitality.

In "Panther's Moon," the alignment of characters' actions and decisions with principles of bioregional ethics reflects a deep understanding and respect for the interconnectedness between humans and the natural environment.

Throughout the story, the characters demonstrate a strong sense of stewardship and conservation towards the land and its resources. They engage in sustainable practices such as rotational grazing, agroforestry and soil conservation techniques to ensure the long-term

health and productivity of the ecosystem. By actively caring for the land and minimising their ecological footprint, they embody the principles of bioregional ethics that prioritise responsible stewardship and wise use of natural resources.

Despite the potential dangers posed by wild animals such as leopards and panthers, the characters exhibit a respectful and harmonious attitude towards wildlife. They recognise the intrinsic value of all living beings and strive to coexist peacefully with the natural inhabitants of the bioregion. Instead of resorting to violence or aggression, they employ non-lethal methods such as scare tactics or deterrents to deter animals from their settlements, thereby upholding the principle of non-harm towards wildlife.

The characters in "Panther's Moon" exemplify the principle of community cooperation and solidarity in their interactions with one another and their shared environment. They come together as a tight-knit community to support one another in times of need, pool their resources and collaborate on collective initiatives for the common good. This sense of communal responsibility fosters a spirit of mutual aid and reciprocity that aligns with the bioregional ethic of interconnectedness and interdependence.

Overall, the alignment of the characters' actions and decisions with principles of bioregional ethics in "Panther's Moon" reflects a holistic and integrated approach to living in harmony with the natural world. Throughout their behaviours and attitudes, the characters uphold values of stewardship, respect, cooperation and cultural reverence, contributing to the sustainability and vitality of their bioregional landscape.

"Panther's Moon" serves as a compelling lens through which to examine the principles of bioregionalism and their relevance to contemporary discussions of ecological stewardship. By delving into the characters, settings and themes of the novella, this research article demonstrates how "Panther's Moon" contributes to the understanding of human-nature interactions within specific bioregional contexts.

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Threads of Fear: A Study on Weaving Extremism and Psyche of the Character 'Parvaiz' in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*

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Abstract

Handling fear is a skill everyone is equipped with. The potency of this skill in every individual differs by the kinds and degrees of fear they face in their lives. In general, fear of death is the utmost terror that everyone faces in their life. Terror management theory focuses on how such fears influence the human psyche. It makes the individual believe that they play an important role in this world. Parvaiz in Home Fire quests for belonging and ends up in a situation where he doesn't belong. He tries to follow his father's path whom he considers as a hero is a jihadist and gets trapped in a problematic situation. Kamila Shamsie in her work Home Fire skillfully weaves the theme of extremism implying how death anxiety makes a person misconceive the patriotic sentiment with his emotions. Terror management theory could be analyzed through the experiences of Parvaiz where he managed to overcome this fear and escape the trap of extremism. This paper solely deals with 'Parvaiz' and his struggle to overcome death anxiety that stems from his father's demise, the deaths he witnessed and his journey to overcome this fear to finally find his identity. It also examines how people turn towards extreme beliefs to escape the fear of death and gives measures for anxiety by applying the terror management theory.

Keywords: Death anxiety, Extremism, Belonging, Identity and Terror management.

Fear is the most basic and important emotion that every human possesses. It may lower the self-esteem of an individual which makes them question their self-worth. Terror management theory prominently known as TMT, in psychology, examines the psyche of humans and howthey cope with the fear of death. It explores how it brings down the

positive energy of the people and helps to manage the terror life creates. This theory was proposed by Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon and Tom Psyszczynski in their book *The Worm at the Core: On the Role of Death in Life.* It suggests that the entire group of people, i.e., society may put down or initiate ideas to give assurance to the people regarding the thoughts of death by giving them comfort and insisting that their memories and ideas will live on after they are gone. It also provides measures to manage this fear and helps to overcome this fear by understanding the value of life.

Death anxiety in literature is perceived through the exploration of themes of mortality, cultural beliefs and symbolic immortality. Authors portray how individuals cope with the fear of death and they use plots to explore how this thought of death affects the actions of people. Kamila Shamsie is one such author who was born in Karachi, Pakistan. Witnessing conflicts, partition and deaths from her childhood and moving to a foreign place as an adult might have influenced her to write on sociopolitical issues, alienation, death anxiety, trauma and many more. Her works Home Fire, Burnt Shadows, Kartography and the rest are known for love, political issues, displacement and childhood memories with a trace of fear of death. All her writings are acknowledged with awards such as the Women's Prize for Fiction, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award for Fiction, the Windham-Campbell Prize in Fiction and so forth.

Her award-winning novel *Home Fire* is known for its narrative and complex themes that deal with social and political issues that affect any human life. The areas such as the Muslim diasporic identities which talk about the issues of belonging and identity, A Marxist analysis (Haque, Syrrina, et al., 7928) that focuses on the power structure in *Home Fire*, British Muslim Identity (Banerjee, 290) which points out the issues faced by immigrants, has been explored in this work of Kamila Shamsie. Analyzing death anxiety through examining the themes of extremism and understanding the characters' psyche would be a novel study that could be done using the terror management theory. This paper aims to analyze the character Parvaiz and how his experiences and thoughts of death make a huge turn in his life.

Home Fire is a contemporary retelling of Antigone, the Greek tragedy by Sophocles, which is set in present-day Britain. This story revolves around three siblings: Isma, Aneeka and Parvaiz. The plot starts with 28-year-old Isma Pasha being interrogated for her hijab and Muslim background at Heathrow Airport. Isma raises her twin siblings after the death

of their parents. Parvaiz is involved with a jihadist group which leads Aneeka to make bigger decisions that intertwine their life with politics. Isma tries to help Parvaiz by upholding Civil law when he tries to escape the extremist group which takes a negative turn and affects their lives. The novel explores the themes of identity, loyalty and sacrifice in the context of radicalization.

Parvaiz Pasha, one of the main characters in the novel is a reference for the character Polynices in Sophocles' *Antigone*. Both the characters try to honour their fathers whereas Parvaiz's way leads to radicalization. Parvaiz's father Adil is a jihadist who is killed in a drone strike in Syria. The death of his father creates a sense of heroism and martyrdom which makes Parvaiz more interested in learning about his father. Parvaiz has never seen his father "I never knew my father" (100) but heard about through his late mother and grandmother as a 'feckless husband' Emanuel. Farooq is a member of the extremist group ISIS who exploits the vulnerability of Parvaiz and manipulates him to join ISIS by using his father as bait "Or Farooq would talk and Parvaiz would listen to those stories of his father for which he'd always yearned" (102). He tells Parvaiz about his father as a loyal member of the jihadist group. TMT implies that individuals cope with existential anxiety by connecting with cultural symbols. This idea connects with Parvaiz's fascination with his father's past and the fear of mortality serves in a positive aspect.

TMT suggests that people seek belongingness and cultural validation to cope with the fear of mortality (Cox). Farooq's manipulation of Adil's death promised a sense of purpose and belongingness to Parvaiz "The only response Parvaiz had was tears, and Farooq turned him over so that Parvaiz could see that the older man was crying too. 'They did this to your father for months,' Farooq said" (Shamsie, 109). He trusts Farooq and tries to help the people of Pakistan. He considers the death of his father a great sacrifice which gives him the courage to help the people of Pakistan following his father's footsteps (Chambers 205).

As the youngest son, he lacks the privileges his sisters had, intensifying his longing for paternal affection. Seeking escape and identity, he falls prey to jihadist manipulation. He creates a cover-up story of joining a music school in Syria and secretly joins the extremist group with the help of Farooq. He joins the media unit of ISIS unaware of the reality of extremism. Parvaiz heard about his father's mortality rather than witnessing which shows the level of unawareness he has about the ISIS group. The frustration of Adil's

death makes Parvaiz join ISIS proving one of the ideas of terror management theory which points out that people would adopt extreme beliefs when they are strongly confronted by thoughts of death.

The plot takes a turn after Parvaiz joins the media unit of ISIS with only limited knowledge provided by Farooq. He gets startled initially but then realizes that he is manipulated by Farooq to join the troop. When he learns the nature of this group, he gets devastated. The work of the media unit is to film the live execution done by the extremist group. The blood of people is shed in front of his camera. He struggles with the pain of betrayal and the guilt of joining ISIS. Parvaiz is not able to help a woman in one bomb incident even after she begs him because her face is not veiled. This turns his decision upside down.

TMT acknowledges that when an individual faces the idea of mortality they would rethink their decisions. Parvaiz is upset and realizes that he made a wrong decision in joining this group. His regret is intense. The search for his identity began as he understood how this group left his father to die and the deaths of similar people created anxiety in him which led to discovering his purpose and identity. His fear of dying is overwhelmed by the guilt and desire to escape the horror he has found himself in. He joined ISIS looking for a sense of purpose and connection to his father's death but the cruelty and the harm they cause to innocent people makes him realize his mistake. He feels trapped, scared and longs to join his family.

Throughout the novel, Parvaiz struggles with battling loyalties between his family, community and his newfound jihadist identity. He grapples with the feeling of guilt and shame for betraying his British identity but also feels trapped with the extremist group. He fears being a part of such horror rather than his death. When he realizes the costs of his actions, he attempts to leave the group and return to Britain which leads to tragic consequences. This also leaves an irreversible impact on his life showing the inescapable nature of mortality. Farooq kills Parvaiz when he realizes that Parvaiz is trying to escape and leave the group (Emanuel). This shows the impact of extreme beliefs that affect the psyche and life of humans. After Parvaiz's death, he was assumed as a terrorist which shows how the stereotype was conquered and changed his whole identity. "How many Parvaiz Pashas will it take for the government to wake up?" (Shamsie 158). TMT inspires

us to understand the complexities of human life without jumping to concluding judgments.

In conclusion, fear of death enlightens the character Parvaiz and makes him find his identity. His psychological journey demonstrates how he struggles to find his belonging and faces the effects of his actions. The thoughts of his father's death made him take extreme decisions and the death anxiety he faced by witnessing people's execution brought him to the realization of reality. Through this character 'Parvaiz' Kamila Shamsie beautifully weaves the sociopolitical ideas and the human quest for identity in the aspect of mortality by examining the individual's psychology. Fear gives him courage; fear baffles his decision and fear kills him consequently. TMT encourages people to overcome the fear of death and makes them live a peaceful life by assuring them that they belong to this world and society and ensuring that they may live through their words and memories even after their death which reduces their death anxiety.

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Bioregionalism: A Kaleidoscopic Approach to Tash Aw's Select Texts

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Abstract

Literature, Ecology and Place reflect an innovative and contemporary inquiry into literary writings. They serve as a tool to explore the individual's association with the region where one exists. Tash Aw's The Harmony Silk Factory and The Map of the Invisible World reflect the Chinese diaspora and survival in Malayasia. The ecoregional writings confine to Malayasia and Indonesia. Its people are pillaged due to colonization and various political upheavals. Their struggle to forge a space is in a state of constant flux. The place based writing renders a generous description of the people and their survival amidst the plantations and jungles. The vivid descriptions of nationality, history, culture and folklore are nostalgic reflections. The narrative intersperses with magical qualities add flavours to the cultural expressions and beliefs. The resilience of coolies, miners and plantation workers demand for wages and labour rights show the communist insurgence. Settings being the mines, plantations and jungles reflect the hardships of the labourers. Further the narratology discusses the ethnic groups and their divisions according to the language and dialects. The South East Asian writings employ English as a language of expression having outgrown from colonial origins. The Indian linguist Braj Kachru's conceptulization of three concentric circles is analysed to critique the Anglophone writing.

Keywords: Ecology, Cultural Identity, Agency, Representations, Space, Reinhabitation, Constructivism

The outlook of Bioregionalism emphasizes one to live in harmony with one's local environment or boundaries of specific geographic region. Various indigenous cultures and environmental movements gave their roots to the concept. It decentres the community-based governance and sustainable practices with regard to ecological, social and cultural aspects. People have the free will to enjoy as well as to preserve the environment where they exist. Ecological concerns are intertwined with people, living and culture. The Anthropocene is

dethroned to make the land sustainable for all living organisms. So all earthlings live in a state of inter-beingness and have to strive to dispel discordance. The inhabitants of the bioregion master the living restricting the usage of the resources. The term bioregion literally means 'life–place' was originally coined by Allen Van Newkirk in 1975. According to him, "Bioregions are tentatively defined as biologically significant areas of the Earth's surface which can be mapped and discussed as distinct existing patterns of plant, animal, and habitat, distributions as related to range patterns and complex cultural niche-habits, including deformations, attributed to one or more successive occupying populations of the culture bearing mammal" (Manoharan 8). It was further elaborated by the field biologist, Raymond Dasmann, in his influential oeuvre, *Environmental Conservation* in 1984.

The current issue Manipur ethnic violence requires immediate attention. The bioregion is a land inhabited by two ethnic groups for several decades. The violence between the two ethnic groups have accumulated the biodegradable waste, war detritus, and nuclear waste have exploited the resources by burning and polluting the ecosystem. Ecoconcerns render a different dimension of accessing this issue. Both the ethnic groups have the equal rights to participate in equal living and usage of the region. Preferably the tribals and indigenous groups can be the best preservers of their ecosystem. Similar is the case with Tash Aw's *The Harmony Silk Factory*.

The Malaysian writer Tash Aw records the ethnic riots that sprung between two ethnic groups Hakkas and Hokkiens near Slim River in 1920. The Southern Chinese settled in Malaya as coolies to work in mines. The Chinese diaspora records the circumstances of fleeing from floods, famine, and crushing poverty from their land. The illiterates made a hazardous journey across the South China Sea. They became expert in surviving the most difficult conditions. The new place and settlement offered them hope. Among the northern and southern Chinese, language plays a vital role. It determines their friends and enemies. Most of the settlers speak Hokkien and a few Hakkas. Hakkas are low class with distinct criminal tendencies. Influenced by the British English, they evolve a new English-speaking variety. They lack 'h' sound in their language and the resulting 'f' which comes out in its place. For instance, may God in heaven help you is uttered as 'May God in fevven felp you'. Braj Kachru's representation of the three concentric circles claims English as

pluricentric. Nations like China and Japan use English as EFL. Since British was ruling Malaya, it gave birth to a Chinese English variety spoken in the valley. Recent history celebrates liberation theology, so Kachru also demands for liberation linguistics. So this Hokkien variety of English renders a glimpse of Anglophone writing.

Inter sectionality examines the interconnections and interdependence of heterogeneous groups procuring a different mindset towards the place depending on their ethnicity, class and social locations. The ethnic community begins to grow and is rooted in the Kinta valley, which is situated in Ipho. The valley has no roads and has an extreme hot climate. No outsiders can survive such an extreme weather. Especially when it is rainy, the valley becomes marshy and transportation becomes more difficult for the inhabitants. The survival is also difficult but only the people of the valley could withstand such terrible conditions. A key bioregional concept is reinhabitation, which "involves becoming native to a place through becoming aware of the particular ecological relationships that operate within and around it," as well as "evolving social behavior that will enrich the life of that place, restore its life-supporting systems, and establish an ecologically and socially sustainable pattern of existence within it" (Evanoff 58). Their long-time settlement has yeilded them to such tough times and it has made them natives to that geographical space where they inhabit.

Constructivism emphasises the active role of individuals in constructing, understanding and gaining knowledge through experiences and interactions. The recent displacement of Gazans calls for bioregional concern. Bioregionalism decentralizes community-based governance. In the case of Gazans, they have settled and multiplied in the land for decades together which is their life-territory. The political and community-based power dynamics turns Gaza into a state of debris and its people homeless calls for global concern. Their ontological identity is constructed considering Gaza as their home. It is their identity and their sense of belonging to that space. According to constructivism, people actively build their own mental representations of reality. In Malaya, the Chinese Ethnic community makes physical, mental and community representations in the settled space for their survival. It represents their ethnic, social and cultural identity. These settlers have very close association with the nature as well. Bioregionalism provides space for cultural diversity and focuses only on natural features. The dichotomy of nature versus culture forms a symbiotic

relationship. The goal of bioregionalism is to achieve a co-adaptive sustainability between local cultures and local environments.

Memory is a conscious predilection of an individual. The geographical space of birth and living are part of one's memory and spacial identity. Such identity is unconsciously embedded in one's mind. The protagonist Johnny Lim known as the Chinaman in the valley has come to associate himself to the place called Ipoh deeply. One aspect of the plot describes the company touring to the land of Seven Maidens. They are confused about the direction to head North or South. But the protagonist Johnny Lim feels the land under his foot and directs them. He can foretell the storms and rain. He knows which river is deep and the diverse trees in the deep forest. He can carry himself at ease in the deep forest and thickets. The jungle is his home like Kurtz living in the heart of Congo. Johnny's life, survival, social and even his livelihood has deep associations with nature.

The literary narrative examines the author employing the technique of Magical realism. He deliberates dream like quality where the main characters tour to the land of Seven Maidens. In order to weave the fictional narrative the author employs nature. Eco feministic view is also obvious in the novel. There is intersection of gender and environmental issues. The novel introduces a place called Seven Maidens. The name shows the association of feminine in the in the natural world. The seventh island is visible only at the twilight of dawn. Such narrative in the text adds more to the ecoaesthetic characteristics in writing. It describes the land, seas and forests to depict man's survival. It also depicts the company converting the uninhabited island for their abode.

The literary composition *Map Of The Invisible World* explores the identity crisis of the protagonist Adam. His identity crisis is due to his forced separation from his family during the political upheaval. His nationality, ethnicity, personal history and personal space are at stake. Adam located in Kuala Lumpur is in search of his sibling Johan who is relocated to Jakarta. To add more flavours to his narrative he uses Indonesian history, culture and folklore to showcase its heritage. The novel also has a generous depiction of Southeast Asian landscape. Landscape plays a vital role for the writer to convey sense of belonging and embedded memories. Contrary to this conception, is the poem by Australian poet AD. Hope's "Wandering Island". The poem bemoans the insensitiveness of the Australian

aboriginals. They fail to see the beauty of the rich landscapes and the natural life around them.

Considering Agency as an important factor, the body is represented with regard to the space. The body gains its representation and identity through the geographical place where one belongs to or one is rooted. So are the Hokkiens, Meiteis, Gazans, or any tribal groups. Diasporic dispersion, politics and other reasons fragment identity but it gets absolute in the space. Tailoring in Folk psychology, it encompasses understanding of mental states, emotions, desires that define behaviours in a space. The political and genocides derails such representations causing havoc to man and to the environment. Hence the rediscovery of life places is one of the advocacy of Bioregionalsim.

Bioregionalism extends to ontological disposition too. An individuals' mental make up, identity, behaviour, life style, attitude, apprehensions and existence are shaped and reshaped in the space. The voluntary or involuntary means of relocation strengthens the spatial identity. The ethnic identity is forgrounded and determines the nature of being. The Chinese identity construction in Malayasia and Indonesia are superimposed by the novelists. The social contact with the colonizers develops a social variety Chinglish. Myriad perspectives of Bioregionalsim are envisoned to critique the ecoregional discourse.

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