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Wish You a Happy New Year!

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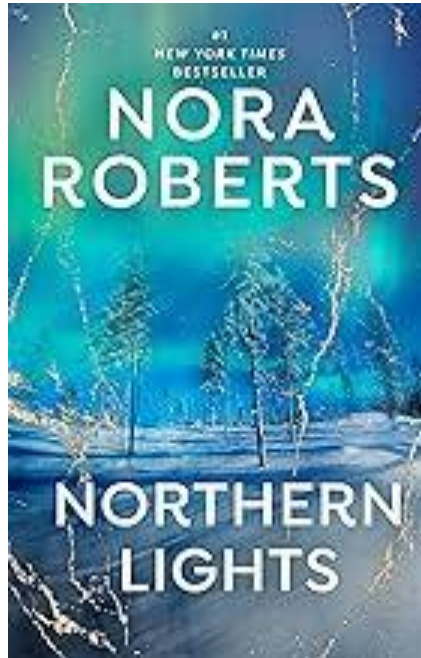
Exploring Gender Roles in Nora Roberts' *Northern Lights*: A Critical Analysis

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Courtesy: www.amazon.com

Abstract

In order to better understand the complex representations of masculinity and femininity within the framework of a romantic suspense story, this paper will critically analyze how gender roles are portrayed in Nora Roberts' novel *Northern Lights*. *Northern Lights* offers an engrossing setting for examining the junction of conventional and non-traditional gender relations since it is situated in the isolated Alaskan village of Lunacy. The protagonists of the book, Nate Burke and Meg Galloway, portray opposing but complimentary depictions of gender roles that complement society conventions while also defying them.

This study explores the characterization of Nate and Meg through a feminist literary analysis, revealing how their identities are shaped by the narrative and how it shapes them in turn. Nate, the male lead, defies traditional masculinity as he struggles with vulnerability, emotional depth, and the weight of past traumas; Meg, on the other hand, embodies a strong, independent female archetype, subverting traditional expectations of femininity through her assertiveness and resilience. The dynamic between these two characters is further examined to reveal how power, emotional labor, and mutual dependence play out within their relationship, reflecting larger societal attitudes towards gender roles.

This paper contends that the binary ideas of masculinity and femininity that are common in the romance genre are challenged by Roberts' nuanced and progressive depiction of gender roles in *Northern Lights*. This study adds to a better understanding of how modern romance novels may both uphold and challenge established gender standards by placing the book within the larger context of gender studies. According to the research, *Northern Lights* gives audiences a story that is both recognizable and surprisingly subversive by allowing more flexible and egalitarian gender portrayals to coexist with some traditional genre components.

To sum up, this paper's findings indicate that *Northern Lights* is an important text in Nora Roberts' body of work because of its examination of gender roles. It provides insights that are applicable to literary studies as well as the current cultural discussions surrounding gender, identity, and power dynamics. This study encourages more investigation into the ways that romance books, especially in the context of modern popular literature, can serve as a site of both resistance and reinforcement to conventional gender roles.

Keywords: Nora Roberts, *Northern Lights*, Gender roles, feminist theory, character analysis, gender dynamics.

One of the most well-known writers of modern romance and suspense, Nora Roberts, has never failed to enthrall readers with her sophisticated narrative and nuanced characterizations. Her 2004 book *Northern Lights* is a great illustration of how well she can combine suspense and romance with a profound examination of interpersonal connections. The novel, which takes place in the isolated and harsh town of Lunacy, Alaska, not only offers a gripping account of love and survival but also acts as a crucial platform for delving into the creation and portrayal of gender roles in popular literature.

Many academic studies have examined how gender roles are portrayed in literature, especially in the romance genre. This genre is a useful tool for examining cultural attitudes on gender since it frequently reflects society norms and expectations about what it means to be a man or a woman. Roberts challenges and conforms to conventional gender standards in her presentation of her characters in *Northern Lights*. The main characters of the book, Nate Burke and Meg Galloway, represent opposing but complimentary gender roles, which invite careful examination.

Historically, societal expectations have affected gender roles in romantic fiction, frequently perpetuating preconceived ideals of masculinity and femininity. But modern romance novels especially those written by writers like Nora Roberts, have started to defy these conventions by offering characters who are more deep and multifaceted. With a plot that blends romance, mystery, and suspense, *Northern Lights* provides a singular chance to investigate how gender norms are created and dismantled. Lunacy is a perfect book for this kind of study because of its harsh surroundings and remote community, which accentuate the conflicts between traditional and non-traditional gender roles.

Research Question

This study aims to answer the following research question: What effects do gender roles have on the story and how it is viewed within the romance genre? How are gender roles portrayed in Nora Roberts' *Northern Lights*?

The paper outlines the following goals in an attempt to respond to this query:

1. To examine how men and women are portrayed in *Northern Lights*: The emphasis will be on how Meg Galloway and Nate Burke are portrayed in regard to conventional gender stereotypes and how these portrayals change as the story progresses.
2. To investigate the gender dynamics within the main relationship: This goal entails analyzing how Nate and Meg's power relationships, emotional labor, and mutual reliance support or contradict traditional gender norms.
3. To investigate the wider ramifications of these gender representations within the romance genre: The research will place *Northern Lights* in the larger literary canon, contrasting

its gender perspective with that of other works in the genre and talking about its applicability to current discussions in society concerning gender identity and roles.

This paper attempts to contribute to the larger conversation on gender representation in literature by analyzing how Roberts develops and deconstructs gender roles in *Northern Lights*. In addition to shedding light on the intricate gender dynamics in the book, the analysis will provide insight into how modern romantic literature may be used to both uphold and subvert social conventions. Using *Northern Lights* as a primary case study, this research aims to expand our knowledge of the ways in which gender roles are negotiated and portrayed in popular fiction through a thorough textual analysis.

Gender roles in literature have been the focus of much scholarly investigation, especially in the romance genre. Romance books have historically been criticized for perpetuating stereotypical ideas of male and female roles, with male characters characterized as aggressive, assertive, and domineering and female characters as helpless, nurturing, and in need of saving. Researchers like Tania Modleski and Janice Radway have studied closely how these tropes in romance novels feed into patriarchal fantasies.

In *Loving with a Vengeance* (1982), Modleski examines the ways in which romance novels perpetuate gendered power hierarchies, contending that these stories frequently confirm male dominance and female subservience. A more sophisticated approach is used by Radway in her important study *Reading the Romance* (1984), which looks at how women interact with romance novels. Although these writings may reinforce traditional gender roles, the author argues that readers frequently use them to negotiate their own desires and identities within a patriarchal culture.

Studies conducted more recently have switched their attention to the ways that modern romance books challenge conventional gender stereotypes. Scholars such as Pamela Regis and Catherine Roach contend that strong, independent female protagonists and emotionally complex male characters are common features of contemporary romance novels, especially those penned by authors such as Nora Roberts, which frequently subvert patriarchal conventions. According to Regis' argument in *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* (2003), stories in the romance genre now feature women who assert their autonomy and agency alongside men who are free to show sensitivity and emotional depth.

Numerous studies on gender representation have focused on Nora Roberts, one of the romance genre's most successful writers. Roberts's strong, independent, and forceful heroines have won accolades from critics who see her as a departure from the stereotypical view of women in romance novels. Research examining how Roberts' writing mirrors and shapes the changing conversation about gender roles in popular fiction includes Jayashree Kamble's *Making Meaning in Popular Romance Fiction: An Epistemology* (2014). Kamble contends that by granting female characters the ability to be equal partners in relationships on an emotional and power-related level, Roberts' books, such as *Northern Lights*, frequently challenge the conventional romance formula.

This study uses feminist literary theory to analyze gender roles in *Northern Lights*, focusing on how literature perpetuates or challenges patriarchal ideologies. Key concepts like the "male gaze," gender performativity, and intersectionality of gender, race, and class will be used to examine how Roberts reinforces or subverts these dynamics through her character portrayals.

Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity will be used to analyze *Northern Lights* characters' gender roles within their environment and relationships. Intersectionality will be applied to explore how gender roles intersect with other social categories like race, class, and sexuality, providing a nuanced understanding of these roles.

The emphasis on Nora Roberts's series and wider achievements has meant that her romance novels, like as *Northern Lights*, have received little attention in feminist studies. A critical conversation about how she depicted the emotional and psychological complexity of her male characters has also been minimal.

This study looks at how Nora Roberts' book *Northern Lights* creates and breaks established gender stereotypes through her characters' interactions. It advances feminist literary theory, examines how gender intersects with other social categories, and provides a thorough grasp of how modern romance novels subvert social norms.

In order for analyzing how gender roles are portrayed in Nora Roberts' *Northern Lights*, this study uses a qualitative methodology, more precisely a textual analysis. A critical technique in literary studies, textual analysis concentrates on the themes, structures, and meanings that are woven throughout the story to understand and analyse texts. A deeper comprehension of the intricate dynamics at work in *Northern Lights* is made possible by this

method, which is ideal for examining how gender roles are created, acted out, and contested in literature.

Feminist literary theory, which offers a framework for analyzing the novel's representations of gender, will serve as the analysis's guide. Using a critical reading technique, one can find examples of how gender stereotypes are either upheld or challenged in the text. One should pay special attention to how the protagonists, Nate Burke and Meg Galloway, are portrayed. This study aims to identify the underlying gender messages woven throughout the story by concentrating on the interactions between these characters as well as their distinct character arcs.

Key aspects of the analysis will include:

1. **Characterization:** Analyzing how Nate and Meg are portrayed in relation to their gender identities, taking into consideration how they either uphold or defy established gender conventions. This will entail closely examining their deeds, conversations, inner monologues, and relationships with other characters.
2. **Gender Dynamics:** Examining the power, emotional labor, and mutual reliance in the core relationship between Nate and Meg. This will make it clearer how gender roles are negotiated in their relationship and how the story as a whole is affected by these negotiations.
3. **Narrative Structure:** Examining the ways in which the novel's environment and plot shape gender roles. This involves examining how the isolated Alaskan environment affects the characters' gender roles and how the romance and suspense aspects of the story interact to create these roles.
4. **Thematic Analysis:** Determining and examining the larger gender-related themes, such as resilience, independence, and vulnerability, as well as how these themes are shaped by the interactions between the characters.

Northern Lights is a standalone novel by Roberts, allowing for a detailed analysis of its characters and themes without considering gender roles across multiple books. The novel features diverse characterizations, such as Nate Burke challenging traditional masculinity and Meg Galloway defying conventional gender roles, providing rich material for gender analysis.

The romantic and suspenseful book *Northern Lights* explores the ways in which gender roles are depicted in many circumstances within a single story. Character conflicts are intensified by Lunacy, Alaska's untamed and isolated environment, which blurs the boundaries between conventional gender roles. The novel's examination of gender relations and Nora Roberts' wider contributions to the romance genre are aided by her purposeful character development and subversion of conventional gender stereotypes.

The analysis will be conducted in several stages:

The novel will be read aloud several times while significant conversations, scenes, and passages pertaining to gender roles are noted. Examples of adhering to or defying conventional gender norms will be highlighted. The notes will be organized and labeled based on themes such as vulnerability, emotional expression, power relations, and independence. This will help to uncover gender role patterns and offer a methodical analysis of the story.

The analysis will focus on the coded themes in relation to the novel's context, including its setting, plot structure, and genre conventions. It will also consider how the novel's unique elements, like its Alaskan setting, influence gender roles. The final stage will be interpreted in feminist literary theory, discussing how the novel challenges societal norms and the implications for broader discourse on gender in literature.

By employing this methodological technique, the study seeks to offer a thorough examination of gender roles in *Northern Lights*, so advancing our knowledge of how modern romance novels may both uphold and subvert established gender norms.

Analysis of Gender Roles

Nate Burke: A Study of Masculine Identity

The journey of *Northern Lights*' male protagonist, Nate Burke, entails a profound reworking of conventional masculinity. Nate's character, who was first revealed as a former Baltimore police officer tormented by the untimely murder of his partner, represents emotional complexity, vulnerability, and trauma qualities that deviate from the typical romantic novel portrayal of male heroes. Nate is shown as a man battling sadness, sorrow, and a deep feeling of loss rather than as an unbeatable character. Rather than being motivated by a thirst for adventure or conquest, his decision to move to the isolated hamlet of Lunacy, Alaska, is motivated by his urge to find comfort and escape his past.

Nate's emotional problems are fundamental to his growth as a character over the entire book. Roberts challenges the cliché of the stoic, emotionally detached male hero by candidly expressing his moments of vulnerability, self-doubt, and fear. Nate's willingness to face rather than repress his feelings and his slow acceptance of his vulnerability are hallmarks of his recovery process. This representation of masculinity is important because it challenges the stereotype that men should be powerful, silent, and unwavering by presenting a more complex and sympathetic picture of a male lead.

Although Nate holds a position of responsibility in his capacity as Lunacy's new chief of police, he leads with cooperation, empathy, and respect for the community. Nate takes a democratic and inclusive attitude to leadership, in contrast to the classic romance novel's autocratic male characters. Along with seeking counsel from his colleagues, he listens to the town's worries and is receptive to new ideas, even from the female lead, Meg Galloway. The idea that masculinity is fundamentally domineering and controlling is further challenged by this representation.

Meg Galloway: A Study in Independence

Characters that epitomize power, independence, and assertiveness are Meg Galloway, the female heroine in *Northern Lights*. Born to a lone mother in Alaska's harsh climate, Meg is portrayed as a lady with a strong bond with the land and skill at overcoming its obstacles. She demonstrates her skill, bravery, and independence in her work as a bush pilot, which has historically been a male-dominated vocation. Meg is shown as a woman who can take care of herself and does not need a man to give her protection or provide for her, in contrast to the helpless and reliant heroines frequently featured in romance novels. With a female protagonist that is confident, frank, and shamelessly herself, Meg's portrayal subverts conventional gender stereotypes. She voice her opinions without fear.

But Meg's power isn't interpreted as a denial of femininity. Roberts demonstrates that femininity and strength are not mutually exclusive by allowing her to be both sensitive and forceful. Meg is portrayed more comprehensively because of her kind disposition, her strong bonds with her friends and family, and her readiness to share her deepest feelings with Nate. The binary perspective of gender roles, which frequently forces women to choose between being powerful and feminine, is challenged by this multifaceted portrayal of Meg.

Exploring Gender Dynamics in Relationships

Equality in Nate and Meg's Relationship

Northern Lights revolves around the relationship between Nate and Meg, which is also a crucial location for examining gender issues. Mutual respect and equality characterize Nate and Meg's relationship, in contrast to many classic romance tales where the male protagonist is the dominating partner. Both characters exhibit a balance of power in their relationships from the beginning, never claiming to be superior to the other. They assist one another throughout the story, and their interactions and decision-making procedures reflect this relationship.

Meg's independence and Nate's emotional openness combine to form a relationship that goes beyond traditional gender norms. *Northern Lights* tells a story in which both characters help and save each other in various ways, defying the convention of a male hero "saving" a female heroine. Meg's comprehension and acceptance of Nate's frailties aid in his emotional recovery, while Nate's admiration for Meg's independence and strength ultimately influences her readiness to accept love and a relationship.

Each character contributes to the emotional health of the other, and they both share emotional labor in their partnership. In addition to being Meg's provider and guardian, Nate genuinely cares about her emotional well-being. In a similar vein, Meg is someone who seeks out and receives emotional care from Nate in addition to being a source of emotional support. The traditional gendered division of emotional labor where women are typically expected to shoulder the responsibility of nurturing and caregiving is challenged by this reciprocal dynamic.

Their relationship's egalitarian nature is accentuated by the backdrop of Lunacy, Alaska. Both Nate and Meg must possess the non-gender-specific skills of perseverance, adaptability, and resourcefulness in order to survive in the harsh surroundings. The characters are evaluated on their skills and deeds rather than their adherence to gendered norms in this environment, which provides a context in which traditional gender roles are less significant.

Subversion of Gender Norms

1. Breaking Stereotypes: Vulnerability and Strength across Genders

Instead of simply switching these traits between the characters, Roberts allows them to embody both traditionally masculine and feminine qualities, creating a more fluid and complex

portrayal of gender. In *Northern Lights*, characters who do not neatly fit into conventional categories of masculinity and femininity are presented. Nate's vulnerability and emotional openness challenge the stereotype of the emotionally distant male hero, while Meg's independence and assertiveness defy the trope of the passive female heroine.

The novel also challenges the notion that a female protagonist in a novel about romance should give up her freedom in order to pursue her love. Even though Meg and Nate's connection is essential to the story, Meg's independence is maintained. By the time the story ends, both characters have experienced personal development and fulfilment, and their relationship has complemented rather than replaced each of their unique personalities. The usual narrative arc of romance novels, in which female characters frequently give up their independence in pursuit of love fulfilment, is challenged by this inversion, which makes it noteworthy.

Traditional gender stereotypes are also questioned by the novel's depiction of leadership and power dynamics. Nate challenges the traditional perception of the strong, masculine leader by modelling empathy and teamwork. Comparably, Meg defies gendered presumptions about women's competence in typically male-dominated fields with her work as a bush pilot, a position of authority and responsibility.

2. Gender Fluidity in Character Roles

The way that supporting characters and the larger Lunacy community are shown in *Northern Lights* also gently conveys the idea of gender fluidity. The town's citizens, who at first seem to conform to gender norms, are shown to have a variety of characteristics and actions that make it difficult to distinguish between masculine and feminine characteristics. For instance, Otto, the town's sheriff, exhibits qualities typically associated with femininity deep concern and sympathy for the community despite coming off as stern and authoritative on the outside. In a similar vein, Lunacy's female characters are portrayed as strong, resourceful, and competent, defying the idea that these traits are exclusively associated with men.

Roberts questions the binary understanding of gender roles and implies that they are flexible and adaptive by letting characters exhibit characteristics that are often associated with the other gender. The novel's setting the harsh Alaskan climate highlights this fluidity even more, as it forces all characters male or female to demonstrate a variety of abilities and actions that go beyond conventional gender stereotypes.

In *Northern Lights*, gender roles not only play a major role in character development but also significantly influence the themes and direction of the story. Roberts crafts a tale that seems new and relevant by challenging conventional gender standards, appealing to a contemporary audience that values gender equality and nuanced character depictions more and more.

The development of the plot and the character's emotional arcs in *Northern Lights* are significantly influenced by the non-traditional gender roles. The ability to embrace vulnerability a quality that isn't usually highlighted in romantic fiction for male characters plays a crucial role in Nate Burke's transformation from a broken, guilt-ridden man to someone who regains his sense of self-worth and purpose. The story's emotional depth and resonance are enhanced by this vulnerability, which enables the narrative to explore themes of healing and human development. Just as crucial to the storyline is Meg Galloway's portrayal as a self-reliant, confident woman who defies culture norms. Her independence forces Nate to examine his own presumptions about gender and relationships, which propels the story along.

Northern Lights explores themes such as power dynamics, emotional labor, and the balance between independence and intimacy through the characters' gendered experiences. The novel challenges traditional romance narratives by presenting a shared relationship where power is shared and both characters contribute equally to each other's emotional and personal growth.

The harsh environment of Lunacy, Alaska, serves as a backdrop for the characters' gendered performances, blurring traditional gender roles and emphasizing that strength and vulnerability are not inherently tied to one gender, as both male and female characters must be resilient and resourceful. In *Northern Lights*, a novelistic romance, Nora Roberts presents a progressive picture of gender norms by giving her male protagonist the qualities usually associated with femininity such as emotional openness and vulnerability. Roberts presents a more realistic and balanced view of masculinity in *Northern Lights*, which departs from the conventions of typical romantic literature.

Roberts' novel departs from this model by emphasizing a partnership of equals, in contrast to Barbara Cartland's famous novels, which frequently portray male characters as alpha males. Meg's independence and resilience serve as a guide for Nate Burke, a character who changes as a result of his emotional journey. The story is enhanced by this reversal of conventional gender roles, which offers a more nuanced and realistic representation of love

and a partnership. The story is enhanced by this reversal of conventional gender roles, which adds to Roberts' distinctive and captivating body of work.

Roberts in *Northern Lights* continues to push the envelope by placing her story in a setting that fundamentally subverts conventional gender roles, even in contrast to other modern romance writers like Susan Elizabeth Phillips or Lisa Kleypas who have also examined more complex gender dynamics in their works. Lunacy's harsh, solitary existence necessitates that both characters acquire abilities and characteristics that go beyond conventional gender stereotypes. Because it not only examines gender roles but also how context and environment affect them, this narrative element sets *Northern Lights* apart from other books in the genre.

Northern Lights' portrayal of gender roles has significant cultural and social implications, as it defies traditional gender norms and expectations, contributing to ongoing discourse on gender equality and the fluidity of gender identities. *Northern Lights* challenges gender stereotypes by showcasing that traits are not fixed or inherently tied to one's gender. Nate's vulnerability and Meg's independence counteract the rigid gender roles prevalent in popular media. This portrayal encourages readers to question and re-evaluate their assumptions about gender, potentially leading to a more inclusive and flexible understanding of male and female identity.

Roberts' novel presents a strong, independent female protagonist who defies conventional gender norms as an example of empowerment for female readers. Meg's persona dispels the idea that being a woman and being strong, feminine, independent, and loving are mutually contradictory. Male readers who might feel limited by conventional norms will find strength in Nate's illustration of emotional weakness, which provides a more complex and realistic portrayal of masculinity.

Northern Lights challenges traditional gender roles in the romance genre, allowing other authors to explore more complex gender portrayals. This has implications for the publishing industry and readers, encouraging the production and consumption of literature that reflects a more diverse and inclusive range of experiences.

A novel called *Northern Lights* examines how gender roles are shifting in the twenty-first century. It emphasizes the rejection of strict gender binary thinking and the embracing of gender fluidity. The work supports the ideals of respect for one another and equality in contemporary relationships. In *Northern Lights*, Nora Roberts' depiction of gender roles enhances the story and offers a novel perspective on the romance genre. Roberts contributes to the evolution of gender roles in literature and culture by questioning conventional gender norms

and providing a more nuanced picture of masculinity and femininity. This helps to shape readers' conceptions of gender and encourages a more inclusive view of relationships.

The study looks at how gender roles are portrayed in Nora Roberts' *Northern Lights*, with an emphasis on how the book subverts gender stereotypes through its subject substance, narrative structure, and characters. The subversion of traditional gender norms, with both male and female characters breaking expectations, is one of the key results. Meg Galloway, the female lead, exhibits independence and confidence, whereas Nate Burke, the male protagonist, is emotionally weak and introspective. Their bond defies the conventional power dynamics in relationships by being marked by equality, respect for one another, and shared emotional labor. Because of the severe weather, which blurs the boundaries between traditional masculine and feminine roles and calls for strength, resiliency, and ingenuity, Lunacy, Alaska, is a place that greatly influences how the characters execute gender roles. Additionally, this setting requires emotional and psychological adaptability, further contributing to the subversion of gender norms.

Gender identities are flexible and context-dependent, and *Northern Lights* examines gender roles as multidimensional and variable. The characters Nate and Meg in the book have characteristics typically associated with masculinity and femininity, underscoring the mobility of gender roles. *Northern Lights* is a progressive work in the romance genre because of its complexity, which gives the characters and story more depth. Through questioning established conventions and addressing more significant cultural and social issues, the novel's depiction of gender roles adds to current conversations about gender equality and the flexibility of identities.

This study contributes to literary studies in several important ways, which focuses on *Northern Lights*, investigates gender in romance literature. It draws attention to the deep and complex examinations of gender roles found in romance novels, especially in the writing of Nora Roberts, who defies conventional wisdom and opens up fresh avenues for character growth and story structure. The study also highlights how the Alaskan wilderness affects characters' interactions, attitudes, and self-perceptions, highlighting the significance of place in forming gender dynamics in literature. This means that in order to provide a more thorough knowledge of character development and thematic content, future gender analyses in literature should take into account how contextual and environmental elements interact with gender roles.

The study examines how romantic books can subvert gender norms in society, which furthers feminist literary theory. It looks at how romance novels might interact with feminist

discourses and challenge patriarchal norms by examining how *Northern Lights* challenges established gender roles. The study also makes the case for more nuanced and varied depictions of gender in literature, contending that these stories are essential to dispelling myths, advancing gender parity, and creating a more welcoming literary environment. The study's conclusions add to the expanding corpus of work that aims to rethink how gender is portrayed in popular fiction.

Although this study offers an in-depth study of gender roles in *Northern Lights*, there are a few topics that still need to be investigated further:

1. **Comparative Studies with Other Romance Novels:** In order to determine the extent to which traditional gender norms are subverted in the genre, future study may examine *Northern Lights* in comparison to other contemporary romance novels written by other writers. Studying these things might reveal if Roberts' writing is the only example of a certain topic or characterisation, or whether they are shared by a wider spectrum of works.
2. **Gender Intersectionality:** While gender roles were the main focus of this study, future research should examine how *Northern Lights*' gender intersects with other social identities including ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation. An examination of the novel's dynamics and the identities of the characters would be more nuanced with an intersectional analysis, which would also provide light on the interactions between various types of privilege and oppression.
3. **Reader Reception and Cultural Impact:** Reader reactions to *Northern Lights* and how they affect cultural conceptions of gender roles are two further areas of interest. Future studies might look into how various audiences understand the gender representation in the book and whether or not it has affected readers' opinions on gender equality. To determine the novel's cultural relevance, these studies may include surveys, interviews, or analysis of reader reviews.
4. **Longitudinal Analysis of Gender Roles in Roberts' Works:** Considering Nora Roberts' extensive body of work, a research that compares and contrasts the development of gender roles in her works might provide insightful information on how she has portrayed gender throughout time. An investigation into these issues may also look at whether the themes found in *Northern Lights* are prevalent in her other books or whether they only apply to one particular period of her literary career.
5. **The Function of Genre Blending in Gender Representation:** The combination of romance and suspense elements in *Northern Lights* shapes the way gender roles are portrayed. Further investigation is needed to determine how genre blending impacts gender representation in other

works, especially in genres that are typically dominated by one gender. This could involve examining the ways in which suspense, mystery, or fantasy elements interact with romance to produce complex gender dynamics.

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Crossing the Borders: Resonating Memories and Homing in Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant*

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Abstract

Diaspora has been defined as the voluntary or involuntary dispersion of a social or ethnic group. Home signifies a dwelling and the structures of family and friends. There exists a nexus between migration and home. Diaspora connotes a process of estrangement and detachment from home which evokes images of trauma. The diasporic members experience a sense of loss of the homeland and a sense of alienation in the hostland. The dislocation fetches isolation, cultural conflicts and nostalgia for home. Memories are crucial to diasporic identity and bridge the gap between the past and the present. To resist assimilation to the host country, the migrants attempt to revive and recreate their religious, cultural and linguistic practices.

This paper draws from the theories of Stuart Hall, Avtar Brah and Paolo Boccagni and attempts to reestablish a sense of home and grounding for the Indian diaspora in the host country. *The Immigrant* revolves around the immigrant experiences from the perspective of a woman Nina who shifts to the environs of Canada following her courtship with Ananda, a dentist in Halifax. Ananda gets assimilated to the Canadian culture thanks to his endurance whilst Nina is alienated and torn between the two different cultures. Memories provide sustenance to Nina in the new atmosphere. Owing to her attachment to the homeland, Nina reintegrates her Indian cultural traditions in the Canadian setting. She asserts her belongingness, recreates a sense of home in the foreign soil and reconstructs her Indian cultural identity.

Keywords: Manju Kapur, *The Immigrant*, Diaspora, alienation, nostalgia, memories, home, reconnections, identity

Diaspora has been historically associated with the dispersal and collective exile of the Jews. Robin Cohen labels these refugee groups as victim diaspora. This is followed by the imperial diaspora when the British and the French colonial powers were in pursuit of their colonial empires. During the colonial era, one can trace the labour diaspora when the Indentured Indians crossed the borders of the Indian Ocean in search of economic opportunities. This is categorized as the *Kala Pani* crossings. Chinese, Japanese and Italians were also part of the labour diaspora or proletarian diaspora. Trade diaspora refers to the displacement of Indians, Chinese, Japanese and Lebanese for trade and business endeavours. Cohen contends that though these migrant groups belong to different diasporas, they exhibit a collective memory of their homeland and a sense of loss and exile in the host country. Rajesh Rai and Peter Reeves state:

A diaspora exists precisely because it remembers the ‘homeland’. Without this memory..., these migrants and settlers would be simply people in a new setting, into which they merge, bringing little or nothing to the new ‘home’, accepting in various ways and forms the mores and attitudes that already exist in their new country and society ... The people of the diaspora, however, do not merely settle in new countries: they recreate in their socio-economic, political and cultural institutions a version of ... that homeland that they remember. (2006, p.18)

Increasingly, during the last three decades of the twentieth century, there has been a steady flow of highly skilled and professional migrants to the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. They constitute the Non-Resident Indians. These NRIs changed the nature of the diaspora and brought high levels of skill and entrepreneurial flair to their new hostlands.

While migrating to different destinations, the South Asians have carried with them the social, religious and cultural practices of the homeland (Rai, Reeves 2009: p.3).

Theories of Diaspora, Cultural Identity and Homing

To begin with, I propose to examine the theories of diaspora, cultural identity and Homing. I will draw in particular from the theoretical writings of Stuart Hall, Avtar Brah and Paolo Boccagni.

Cultural identity refers to the sense of belonging to a particular group based on various cultural categories including nationality, ethnicity, race, gender and religion. Cultural identity is established through a process of sharing and understanding traditions, language, class, norms and customs. In *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, Stuart Hall, a sociologist and cultural theorist, defines cultural identity “in terms of a shared culture [...] that people with a common history and ancestry share. [...], our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as ‘one people’ [...] with stable, unchanging, and continuous frames of reference and meaning” (p.223). The forced dispersion, the traumatic experiences, the memory of the motherland, the lack of integration into the new cultural space, the quest for return and the connection with the homeland are the key elements of diaspora. Torn between displacement and relocation, there is a paramount need for the diaspora to reconstruct diasporic identity.

Stuart Hall argues that cultural identity is a matter of “becoming as well as being” (p. 225). Hall examines two ways of reflecting about cultural identity. In Hall’s first approach, identity is seen as fixed or stable. He posits that cultural identity reflects common historical experiences and shared cultural codes that reinforce a sense of unity. He interprets cultural identity as a unifying element that holds a certain group of people together. In his second approach, he describes cultural identity as a process that evolves constantly. Stuart Hall emphasizes that diasporic identities are those “which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference” (p. 235). Cultural identity is constructed through a constant transformation that is not fixed but its past experiences are deeply rooted. He declares that cultural identity is a continuous process of “becoming” as well as “being”.

While reflecting on diaspora and cultural identity, we understand that there are two key concepts that are pertinent: home and belonging. Home is the place where one feels comfortable and safe.

In *Home and away: Narratives of migration and estrangement*, Sara Ahmed offers a definition of home: “home can mean where one usually lives, or it can mean where one’s family lives, or it can mean one’s native country” (p. 338). In *Migration and Home*, Mastoureh Fathi Caitríona and Ní Laoire state that homeland is associated with a range of (mostly) positive feelings and experiences of belonging, such as security, familiarity, control, comfort, family and caring relationships, intimacy, grounding in place, and hope (p.3).

Traditionally, home has been defined as the place where our ancestors lived, the place of our origin and home is treated as a fixed place. Amid alienation, isolation and marginalization, migrants see their homeland as an idyllic place of desire where they long to return. The homeland is an imaginary land for successive generations. To them, the hostland is home because they have been born and raised there and have successfully accepted the new culture. The idea of the homeland is created and established through religious and cultural practices.

In *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, Avtar Brah, a sociologist, delves into *Homing desire*, a desire to feel at home and reinvent home. She affirms: “Where is home? On the one hand, Home is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense, it is a place of no return even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of ‘origin’. On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of locality” (p.188). Avtar Brah affirms that home is not a fixed place and is constantly being created in a different setting. She suggests that although home is associated with the traumas of dislocation, it is also a space of new hope and new beginnings.

Paolo Boccagni, a sociologist reflects on the aspects of *Homing* and argues:

Homing [...] is a range of spatialized social practices through which migrants— as exemplary of people who went through extended detachment from their earlier homes— try to reproduce, reconstruct, and possibly build meaningful home-like settings, feelings and relationships. (p.26)

He proposes that home resides in the constant attempt to make or construct home. As a continuous process, home is reconstructed through memories of the past, practices of the

present and hopes for the future. The migrants' sense of home, which manifests itself in mixed emotions of loss and alienation, is redefined by the reconstruction of cultural identity. They recreate a sense of home and cultural identity through the language, culture, religion and values of the homeland. Homing is a constant process of establishing and renewing feelings of belonging. There is a transition from fixed home to the recreation of home.

Mastoureh Fathi Cairtriona and Ní Laoire note that in counterpoint to traditional conceptions of the homeland as a fixed and bounded place that one leaves or stays in, current argument emphasizes the fluid and dynamic nature of home. Home is understood through a range of concepts such as homing desire, homing and home-making, designating home as a process encapsulating the practices, performances, desires and acts through which home is lived, felt and done (p.4).

Discussion

Manju Kapur's heroine Nina is elegant, educated and financially independent. Nina's status as a single woman often evokes a sense of lack in her. She has been conditioned to believe that marriage accords a social status to women. Thanks to her mother's prayers, Nina receives a marriage proposal from an Indian family whose son has settled in Canada. Ananda is a charming and enviable dentist in Halifax with whom Nina ties the knot in a pompous wedding celebration. Ananda is forced to leave for Canada alone within a few days while Nina awaits her visa. After several months, Nina leaves for Halifax. She arrives at Heathrow for transit with her hair dishevelled and limbs cramped. With mounting excitement and fear, she greets the river Thames with a song. Nina is enchanted and seduced by the dazzling lights of the airport. Amid the English passengers, Nina stands out with an Indian attire. She is a Punjabi and carries a salwar kameez and gold hoop earrings. Her clothing is a marker that she is an immigrant.

Nina begins to experience discomfort, anxiety and uncertainty while absorbing the scenario around her. Though everything appears interesting to her in the new environment, she is perturbed and bewildered with what appears to be the first phase of a culture shock. Manju Kapur explains Nina's state of mind: "For the first time in her life Nina felt out of place. Wrong clothes, shoes, handbag. Maybe in their eyes she was like the woman sweeping" (p.104). Overcoming her fear and agony of travelling to a foreign land, she boards the flight to Toronto.

With escalating anxiety and nausea, Nina lands in the host country and goes through immigration. She is perplexed when the other passengers gaze at her bridal bangles and she

covers them with a shawl. When Nina reaches the counter, the immigration official checks her passport and demands to see her husband. Nina responds nervously that she has married a Canadian citizen who was in Halifax. She is ushered into a small room where an official bombards her with questions about her education, her qualifications and her proof of marriage. The official examines the photographs, the wedding invitation and the marriage certificate. Nina is belittled, humiliated and harassed by the White woman. Though filled with rage and apprehensions of being deported, Nina responds politely to the condemnation. Nina expresses furiously: “This woman is looking for a reason to get rid of me. I am the wrong colour. I come from the wrong place. See me in this airport, of all the passengers the only one not allowed to sail through immigration, made to feel like an illegal alien. See, see, see” (p. 107). Nina asserts that she has become a victim of racial prejudice. She is discriminated and antagonized on the basis of her race and ethnicity. Vijay Agnew’s statement holds true in this context:

Indian women, like other racialized women, experience racism when white Canadians encounter their ‘difference’ from the norm, whether it is skin colour, different clothing, or an inability to speak English. Every day racism ‘expresses itself in glances, gestures, forms of speech, and physical movements. (p.29)

Later, Nina is permitted to leave and she walks down the corridor. She feels embarrassed that her dignity has been at stake in the new country. Forgetting the injustices and her displeasure, she enters into a restaurant and relaxes sipping a tea and a bread roll. She boards the next plane ruminating over her immigrant status in Canada.

Nina alights the plane and awaits her luggage in front of the carousel. She covers her golden bangles with a shawl and holds the luggage cart. Ananda waits for her impatiently worried about her experiences at the immigration office and the customs’ office. When Ananda greets her, Nina records her tribulations to Ananda and argues: “They wouldn’t treat a European or American like that [...] They did it because we are third people” (p.109). Nina feels devalued, stigmatized and excluded on the basis of racial dominance. Nina reaches home and examines the tiny apartment. She rolls the curtains and admires the morning scapes with splendour. She unpacks all her Indian stuffs on the bed. She strokes the intricately woven saris and gazes at the richness of the Indian fabric. After relishing the pizza with pepperoni, anchovies, olives, green peppers and onions, Nina snuggles into bed and sleeps like a child.

After a tiring journey, Nina wakes up from her slumber and prefers to have a good meal. She opens the fridge and stares at the milk, eggs, bread, butter and the pink meat slices. She fancied some Indian food but gets delighted with some grape juice. Nina becomes nostalgic of the Indian restaurants at the Ambassador Hotel and at Dasaprakash where she had enjoyed scrumptious Indian delicacies. She manages to have a sandwich with peanut butter for lunch and cereals for dinner. Nina is a typical vegetarian who abstained from meat, fish or eggs. She broods over the recipes that her mother has written for her, the special pickle that she has prepared for her so lovingly. Distance from one's motherland generates a sense of loss. Amidst this diasporic life which has been intimidated, memories of her home give Nina some comfort and consolation. Memories enable her to escape and sail into an idealized past. Rather than a shift from one dwelling to another, it involves a major transition and estrangement from home. Agnew affirms: "Memories are the glue that holds the past and present together. They give shape and texture to women's subjectivity, to identities that are fragmented by immigration, displacement, and diasporic living" (p.19). The memories ignite their emotions of home as a haven filled with love, comfort, longing and desire. The excitement of beginning a new life in a new environment alleviates the pain of leaving behind her home and homeland.

Late in the evening, Ananda plans to run the errands to purchase some Indian stuffs for Nina. She wears an embroidered salwar kameez and carries a pashmina shawl. To Ananda's astonishment, Nina has fetched only saris and salwars from India. Her Indian attire represents her home and her cultural identity. Brah states: "For some, such as the South Asian groups [...], cultural identification with the Asian subcontinent might be by far the most important element" (p.189). There exists a very strong nexus between migration and home. Home establishes a sense of belonging and a haven of desire. Neena is delected after cooking rice, dal and raita while Ananda makes a grilled fish for himself. When Ananda is invited for dinner by his friends, Nina is gorgeous in her patola sari. She is greeted with warmth and food is served. While the others enjoy braised turkey, Nina adheres to the vegetarian food of rolls, salad, potatoes and beans. She informs the gathering that she is a vegetarian. This is a reflection of the food culture in Hinduism. Food culture is a marker of caste, class, family, kinship and Indian ethnicity. Nina strictly abides by her Indian culinary orthodoxy. Home is associated with a sense of belonging and connection and this is established through the food culture. Habitually, Nina mashed her rice with dal and mango pickle and scooped yoghurt from a carton. Paolo

Boccagni's postulation is pertinent in this reading: "The separation from what used to be home is paralleled by systematic attempts to establish new home arrangements, or to recover meaningful dimensions of the past ones" (p.18).

Nina maintains her traditional dress, spends the whole day wandering in the streets, running errands, reading novels, and eating to her heart's delight. Little by little, Nina begins to feel boredom and isolation. Nina feels homesick and pathetically forlorn and writes to her mother and her friend. Nina feels the loss of her home and her alienation, isolation and marginalization in the new country. She has never been lonely in her home in India. The presence of her mother, the vendors, the gardener, the maid, the landlady, the college, the students, the faculty have all been woven into her day and life. Nina attempts to idealize her home through her memories of her home. Cultural differences make Nina feel alienated and heighten her feelings of desolation, nostalgia, and create a longing for home. Ananda dials two international calls to facilitate Nina speak to her mother. Her mother's voice, clear and loud carries her to Jangpura, Nina's hometown that she longs for and cherishes.

Nina bolsters her morale from the objects and memories of her home in her present diasporic life. As Brah states that "home is also the lived experience of locality" (p.188), Nina has to establish a sense of home in Halifax. Nina also expresses that it was quintessential to adapt to the habits of the west. One fine evening, Ananda and Nina plan to dine at the Indian restaurants in the locale. Ananda says: "From there, we can go to the Taj Mahal on Spring Garden Road. An Indian couple runs it and they serve pretty decent food" (p.137). The restaurant Taj Mahal and Indian food resonate in Nina's ears and she is captivated by the sumptuous Indian food. Rai and Reeves' affirmation is pertinent in this context. They state:

Wherever South Asians have migrated, moreover, they have carried with them the social, religious and cultural practice of the 'homeland'. These may be manifest in the private domains of households or, when there exists a sufficiently large number of South Asians, be represented in more public spaces. It is not surprising, therefore, that South Asian religious and cultural institutions, restaurants, movies, music and fashion shops are a common sight all over the world. In many cosmopolitan cities, entire neighbourhoods have been transformed into 'Little Indias' where one can easily purchase South Asian produce and enter into a recognisable 'Indian' locale. (2009, p.4)

Nina enters into the restaurant and scrutinizes a miniature Taj Mahal that glowed in red lights. The walls were decorated with saris and photographs of the exotic Indian places. The air was filled with the aroma and flavours of Indian cuisine. The savour of the spices – turmeric, cumin, coriander, red chillies, roasted onions and garlic, tomatoes that has travelled from India to Canada buttressed her emotions. She stares at the menu decorated with freizes from Mughal architecture and orders chicken do piyaza, palak paneer, dal raita and naan. Movindri Reddy states that “Throughout the diaspora, food maintains some continuities with the regional cuisine of India [...] It emphasizes the connectedness to India but also recognizes their presence in a place outside India. (pp.154 -155). She enjoys the gourmet meal and also feels the touch of home when she is offered the saunf and mishri (rock sugar) with the bill.

To resist assimilation into the host country, Nina attempts to revive and recreate her linguistic, religious, cultural and social practices of her home. Paolo Boccagni’s argument holds true: “It (home) refers to a set of social practices, values and symbols that [...] can be transferred and reproduced into different settings over time” (p. 5). On another occasion, she gets prepared for a party, a barbecue that Ananda’s best friend was hosting. Though she prefers to wear her extraordinary sari, she puts the brocade away and prefers an elegant silk salwar with gold jewellery and bindi. As Agnew states: “these women ought to retain their traditional dress as a symbol of their cultural identity” (p. 24). As a woman who has been accustomed to traditional dress and vegetarian food, Nina finds it difficult to adapt to the Western world. Though she feels that western clothing can ease her transition and integration, she resists. Nina was quite comfortable with her Indian clothing in summer, yet the harsh winter made her skin dry, flaky and cracked. She ponders that she has to assimilate to the Canadian lifestyle and clothing. She experiments with a jean, coat, tops, shawls and boots and buys them. She visits the library and wanders through the public gardens in her western outfit. Agnew’s statement holds true in this context. He affirms that “perhaps their lack of confidence and insecurity in their new environment makes them content with the small adjustments in their dress that they must make” (p. 24). Code’s observation is very true. He declares:

Women have had to negotiate the precarious balance between the tenacious forces of integration and the desire to maintain a sense of their cultural identity as a strategy of self-preservation in their country of adoption. (p.396)

In consonance with Nina's new western look, Ananda pleads Nina to call him Andy. Nina disapproves the idea of western name in her home. She confesses that it would "carry alienation into the bedroom" (p.153). Ananda is a Hindu name that originates from Sanskrit. Hinduism inspires pride in Nina that asserts her cultural identity. As Bhikhu Parekh et al state that "religion and language are the most tangible markers of cultural identity" (p. 29).

One morning, as Nina twiddles the radio knob, she hears voices in Hindi and her hands tremble. The commentator reports the Kumbh Mela, held in Allahabad every twelve years. It was an extremely auspicious event for the devout Hindus. Thousands of Indians march to the holy Ganges to immerse themselves in the river chanting Vedic hymns, blowing the conch shells and beating the drums. She recollects her visit to the Kumh Mela, the splashing in the freezing water with her parents and sister and the joyful train ride back home. Nina has a feeling of pensive melancholy as she can no longer speak her mother tongue in Canada. Agnew states: "The immigrants' loss of home is aggravated by the loss of a mother tongue that produces a psychological scarring" (p.112).

As Nina is busy shopping with Sue, she comes across a fair abuzz of spectators and becomes gloomy and depressed. The scenario reminds her of the Diwali fair in her hometown with rides on elephants, bangle sellers, paper lanterns, firecrackers, earthen diyas and delicious food. Nina is soaked in nostalgic feelings. The droppings of the horses remind her of the cow dung patties that were dried in the sun in her hometown. Agnew reiterates: "The past is always with us, and it defines our present; it resonates in our voices, hovers over our silences, and explains how we came to be ourselves and to inhabit what we call our homes" (p. 3).

Nina ruminates on her immigrant status and interrogates her identity. Despite her status of 'other', she sets her foot to explore her life in Canada with hope and determination. Nina enrolls in the Department of Library Science in Dalhousie University and also joins as a part-time librarian to make her own money. Nina has crossed the frontiers into a different culture that can intimidate, yet she gets prepared to explore the unknown and develop her intellect with a determination to shape herself. Though her path can be arduous, the quest for a new journey can transform and shape her identity. Nina is deeply rooted in the past, yet she acknowledges the transformation in her which can shape her identity anew. Brah points out that "diasporas are also potentially the sites of hope and new beginnings" (p.190).

Every evening, Ananda prepares some dal and rice and vegetables for Nina while frying onions and tomatoes and meat with butter, cumin and coriander for himself. Though Ananda was an Indian, he has lost the Indian flavours owing to his acculturation to the Canadian lifestyle. Nina cultivates in Ananda the habit of blending and fusing spices of Indian cuisine. As Paolo Boccagni affirms: “International migration is tantamount to an extended detachment from what used to be home. [...] Migrants’ everyday life, therefore is a privileged terrain to make sense of home *by default*. It brings to the fore a range of emotions, practices and living arrangements that mirror the need to recreate home anew” (p. 2), Nina recreates a sense of home through the Indian cuisine that transports her to her homeland. She gets reconnected to her homeland through the recreation of a sense of home and consequently her cultural identity is affirmed.

Anada loves braising a trout with lemon and parsley sauce. Nina has always been true to her upbringing as a traditional Hindu devout and strictly adhered to being a vegetarian in the Canadian land. When she finds the sauce bubbling with trout, she likes it and attempts to taste the fish. She chews the bit reluctantly wondering that she was getting integrated to the new culture while breaking the traditions that have been withheld by her family. The following day, she tastes chicken and likes it. When Ananda relishes the spareribs of beef, Nina is dumbfounded. She reminisces how her mother had worshipped cows. In Indian culture, cows are venerated as goddesses. These memories forbid Nina from consuming beef which emphasize the culture of her roots. As Rai and Reeves affirm: “Nonetheless, sustaining some sense of ‘Indian-ness’ (or ‘South Asian-ness’) – remains a prime concern” (2009, p.89). Following Boccagni’s theory, Homing is established through a constant process of renewing feelings of belonging to her homeland.

Though Nina tries to carve a niche for her in the Canadian University, she is desperately nostalgic and longs to visit her idyllic place of desire. She yearns to visit her dear mother and confesses to Ananda that her heart was almost breaking. She says: “I wish we lived in India [...] Please, can’t we go to India” (pp. 278-279). Ananda plans her trip to India. While travelling, she is elated and her heart throbs that the flight would get her closer to her mom and sister. She also plans to take her mother to the hill station for a holiday. She intends to provide all the comfort to her mother during the trip to India and longed to express the accumulated

emotions. Nina's mom and her sister embrace her while choking with happiness and greet her with tears. She unpacks the chocolates and cheese and other stuffs that she has brought from Halifax and lies on the lap of her mother. She shares her experiences in Canada to her mother while mashing the delicious, melting lauki kofta into the fragrant basmati rice with cold dahi. She wonders that has been the greatest bliss in her life. After a week, she takes some respite in the hills of Mussoorie with her mother. Nina is glad that her mother looked healthier in the arms of the serene nature. She also visits Miranda House where she has been a professor, her friends and faculty. She musters her strength to depart her hometown after her mother's maternal gaze shatters her.

Back in Canada, isolation and nostalgia surround her. Yet, she pursues her studies and finds solace in her job. She is devastated and becomes doleful when she discovers that Ananda has been exploring White bodies during her trip to India. She decides to quit her the institution of marriage and goes in search of her dream. As Agnew states "immigrants are successful in realizing their dream of a better standard of living" (p. 20), the mishaps strike a chord in Nina's life and she becomes decisive of carving a path for herself. With outstanding academic records, she is called for an interview by the University of New Brunswick. Manju Kapur ends with this note: "When you are reinventing yourself, anywhere could be home" (p.330). This highlights the theory that identity is not fixed and Nina is constantly in the process of becoming and reinventing herself. The concept of home is neither fixed but constantly being created. Nina is in the search of a new home.

Conclusion

The identities of migrants are fragmented by dislocation and diasporic living. The memories are the bridging gaps between the past and the present and give shape to women's subjectivity. The memories reverberate in their souls and keep them connected to their homeland. Homing is a constant process of establishing and renewing feelings of belonging to the homeland through memories of the past. The migrants persist in sharing their language, culinary traditions and other cultural practices of their homeland. They continue to travel in pursuit of their quest with innumerable risks in the new environment yet they are determined to tread the path that constantly shapes their identity anew. Though they are intimately attached to their homeland, they reinvent themselves and are constantly in the process of

becoming. They reestablish a sense of home through their cultural practices and values that can be transferred and reproduced in a different setting.

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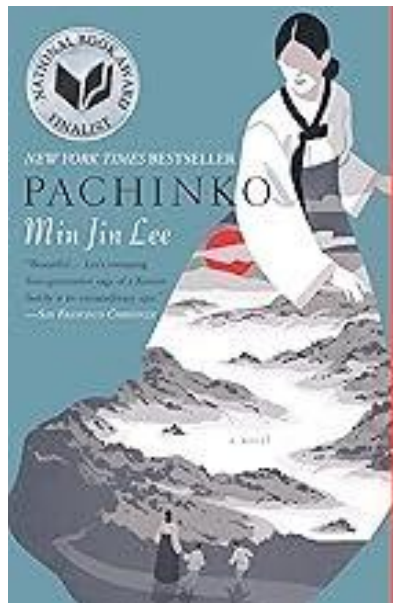
Understanding and Questioning History from the Perspective of Community Narratives and Gynocentric Narrations in Selected East Asian Texts

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Abstract

Being neighbouring nations and also because of the colonial influence of Japan over Korea, there are a lot of cross-cultural elements and influence present in the culture of both nations. When looking at the colonial history of Korea, one cannot ignore the tremendous influence placed by Japan over Korea. Korea was taken over by Japan in the year 1910, after

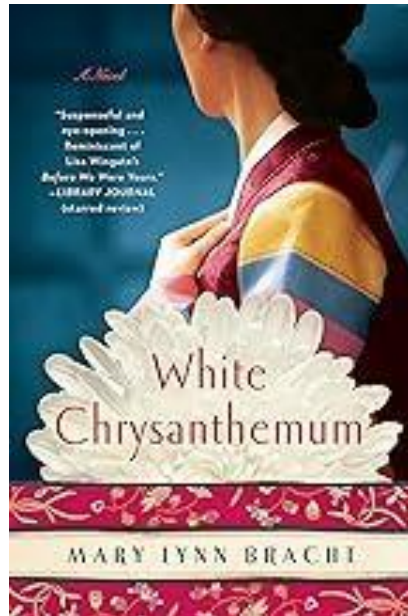
which the people living in both Japan and Korea became the imperial subjects answerable to the Emperor of Japan. The paper discusses three main novels, namely *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee, *White Chrysanthemum* by Mary Lynn Bracht and *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden. Placed in the period of World War II era and showcasing the Japanese rule over Korea, the novels present the wartime as well as post wartime conditions of the two countries.

Keywords: Community Narratives, Gynocentric Narrations, femimemory, *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee, *White Chrysanthemum* by Mary Lynn Bracht, *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden, wartime as well as post wartime conditions, South Korea, Japan,

Introduction

This paper explores the impact of community narratives and gynocentric narrations from the point of femimemory in relation to the literature written in the twentieth century with a special focus on Korea. The world has evolved and changed over the years, but man's need to control and conquer has not ended, but rather the techniques have become innovative. In today's world the concept of colonialism and its cruel aftereffects are a matter of the past, something to be forgotten. But the true reality is that it continues to exert power and influence over the former colonies in different forms unknown to the people. The colonial masters still continue to exert a subtle and dangerous power over the former colonial subjects, which is extended and driven by the various strategies they exercise.

South Korea and Japan are one of the most culturally and economically rich nations in today's world. Belonging to the Eastern part of the Asian continent, the two nations have a long standing history, a good geographical location and a very culturally rich society. Being neighbouring nations and also because of the colonial influence of Japan over Korea, there are a lot of cross-cultural elements and influence present in the culture of both nations. When looking at the colonial history of Korea, one cannot ignore the tremendous influence placed by Japan over Korea. Korea was taken over by Japan in the year 1910, after which the people living in both Japan and Korea became the imperial subjects answerable to the Emperor of Japan. The paper discusses three main novels, namely *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee, *White Chrysanthemum* by Mary Lynn Bracht and *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden. Placed in the period of World War II era and showcasing the Japanese rule over Korea, the novels present the wartime as well as post wartime conditions of the two countries.

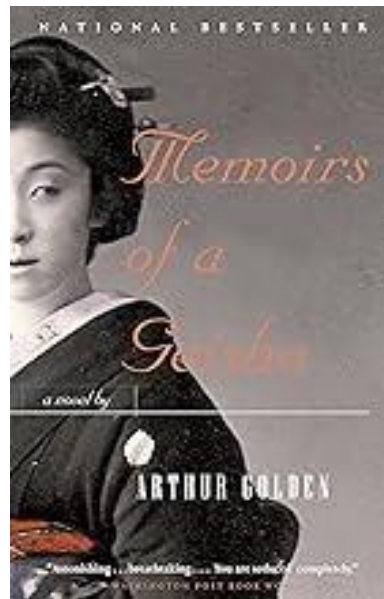


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Two out of three selected novels are based on outsider perspectives because they do not deal directly with the personal experiences of the author or the narrator, whereas the third one deals with an insider perspective. This paper makes use of two major frameworks: one is how the three novels become examples of community fiction and the second one explains how gynocentric narrations become counter-narratives. Exploring and analysing the texts from these two perspectives, the paper however also deals with the impact of colonialism on community life and the issue of central narratives that ignores the perspectives of the “other”. The selected communities for the frame of reference include: geishas, hanyeos and zainichi Koreans.

Introducing the issue of Zainichi Korean life in Japan as the central issue, Min Jin Lee presents *Pachinko* that traces the life of a family through five generations. The novel presents the life of the family in Korea and later on explains the situation of the family in Japan. The characters become the windows to the realities of war, Japanese rule, and many other issues that the Koreans faced under the Japanese rule, with Yeongdo as the main centre first and then it shifts to Osaka when Sunja moves with her husband. From then on the story shifts between Sunja and her sons, portraying through them the realities of the Zainichi life and the challenges of being a Korean in the Japanese society. *White Chrysanthemum* by Mary Lynn Bracht on the other hand depicts Jeju through the two central characters Hana and Emi, bringing to life the realities of war and post-war scenario of Korea. With the characters coming from the hanyeo community, the novel also depicts the impact of community life on the two central characters and how it takes precedence in their life, moving forward. It discusses important issues like Japanese rule, comfort women, Jeju massacre, the Korean War and many more. Intricately capturing the nuances of the Geisha lifestyle presented through Sayuri’s narrative, *Memoirs of a Geisha* is a coming of age story combined with the

realities of war. Sayuri's narrative brings in a lived in narration of the Geisha world with all its trappings and adornings, but also shows that Geisha lifestyle is not always a bed of roses.



Courtesy: www.amazon.com

The term, Community Fiction was coined by Jeetumoni Basumatary (2019), in correlation to Sandra Zagerell's *Narratives of Community* (1988), which dealt with texts that concentrated on community life specifically. Included in community fiction were the integral aspects and factors that formed the identity as well as the performativity of the community. The angle of community fiction explored in the paper provides a better understanding of the community as well as traced the changes that it goes through over the years. The genre of community fiction presents an outlook of the whole community life with all its aspects and grandeur, through the narration of the daily activities of the community. Based on the characteristics laid down by Sandra Zagerell (1988), the paper tries to analyse if the selected works fall under the particular genre or not.

The next theoretical framework questions the production of formal narratives and omissions in cultural memory, in the context of gynocentric narrations used in the selected texts. Evaluating the texts in relation with gynocentric narrations, the texts provide an extensive overview of the silenced past of the different women from the selected communities. The novels provide testimonies of the trauma, pain and violence that these women have experienced due to various circumstances during the war. Through fictionalised narrative of the true incidents, the authors pay homage as well as try to rewrite or fill the gaps in history, which was otherwise left out.

Combining the insider and outsider perspectives, the authors provide persuasive stories about the realities of war. Gynocentric narration also brings to life the alternative versions of the same story presented from the perspective of women. The two outsider

perspectives of the zainichi community and the hanyeo community are written by ethnic Koreans from the information they gathered through various interviews, discussions and many more. However, the insider perspective given by Arthur Golden is a direct translation of the interview from a former Geisha which is presented by the author in his work. The limitation of the paper is that the outsider perspectives are presented by diasporic Korean writers who do not have the personal lived in experiences of the communities they discussed. Moreover, Golden's novel has received criticism for improper depiction and inappropriate adaptation of the real story.

Community Fiction and Community Life in Transition

Knowledge, traditions, beliefs and customs form an integral part of any community, unifying its members under a common roof. These characteristics make them a concrete group whose members preserve it for generations to come, later on becoming the foundations for a strong community. Unified by the common background of Japanese Colonialism, the selected works weave a tale of collective suffering, traumas, and loss. The communities that are brought to focus in the selected novels are the Geishas, Hanyeos and the Zainichi Koreans. Categorising them as artistic, professional and ethnic communities, the paper presents three different narrations and perspectives of life under Japanese imperialism and projects the influence of it on the communities. The community life that is affected by the war goes through a lot of changes before it finally settles into a new normal.

Discussed here are three communities that are deeply entrenched with the cultures and countries that they are a part of. Hanyeos belong to a collective that primarily focuses on diving and it goes on to become their primary source of income. Harvesting abalones, crabs, sea urchins, seaweed, shellfish, octopuses and many more that live among the rocks of the sea beds, the hanyeos survived. Predominantly belonging to the Islands of Jeju in South Korea, it is a professional community which was recently attributed with the title of being an intangible cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO. The tradition of being a hanyeo is passed down from generation to generation, which includes learning diving work, a deep knowledge of the seas, deep diving skills, instincts and intuition, preservation of the ecology and many more that accompanies the work.

The community is largely women centric which is governed, protected and consisted by women. From earlier times, the diving work done by the hanyeos have been passed on from mothers to their daughters across Jeju and it is a matter of pride for the women when their daughters join them into the sea. They take pride in the work, independence and freedom that accompanies being a hanyeo. Over the years, the hanyeos from Jeju have witnessed the change of rulers and trepidations of war, which was followed by massacres and mass violence against their people. *White Chrysanthemum* by Mary Lynn Bracht pays homage to the turbulent history of Jeju and the violences wrecked on the land and its people with the change in the political environment of their country. By discussing the gruesome history, Bracht tries to bring the attention of the readers to a history which is hitherto unheard

of or not known to many. She deals in detail, the issues of comfort women, Japanese rule, the Korean War and many more in her novel.

The second community to be discussed is the Geisha community, which is based in the Gion district of Kyoto in the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden. Kyoto is specifically known for being the geisha district which is filled with geishas, teahouses, Okiyas, and many more; hence attributed as the artistic district. Geishas are artists who are well versed in hosting customers and know a wide range of skills to entertain their guests. It is again a very ancient community which is famous for their skills, knowledge and practices that has been preserved for a very long time. The Geisha community is female centric and known for their status in society as entertainers and hosts. Kyoto being the cultural capital of Japan has a wide variety of arts and artists, among which the geishas have a significant role to play as they are acclaimed for their role as the symbol of Japanese culture and heritage.

Geishas belong to the artistic and professional community who are bound by the rules and regulations of their organisation. Being one of the important symbols of Japanese culture, geishas are sought out by people in society for entertainment as well as hosting purposes. As trained experts in singing, dancing, instrument playing and tea ceremonies, they are well sought after, hence keeping the traditions alive to this day. In reality they are master entertainers, who become the life and soul of every function, but something to be remembered is that it is an acquired position from years of training. But Geishas should never be confused with courtesans or prostitutes because they hold a very revered position in the Japanese society which is way above them.

Traditionally, the predecessors of the Geishas can be traced back to the Haein period in Japan called Shirabyoshi (Gallagher 2003, p.99). During the Haein period, women actively participated in the matters of the court, they were also well known for their knowledge and beauty, and as a result many nobles desired them (Downer 2002, p. 37). In many cases, daughters of the Geishas follow the path of their mothers as they are well versed with the prerequisites, expectations and practice that the profession demands. Being a professional geisha takes a lot of patience, practice and persistence because the training itself is very demanding. From shamisen training, tea ceremonies, singing and dancing to performing Kabuki plays, geishas are expected to be experts in arts. The significance of their position in Japanese society is irreplaceable and in today's world it has gone on to become one of the major factors for the popularity of Kyoto as well as other Geisha districts.

The third community is the Zainichi Korean community, who are a minority community that has settled down in Japan. The community consists of Koreans from different parts of Korea who immigrated to Japan during the Japanese rule looking for better opportunities. The minority community then settled down here even after the wars either because they had nowhere else to go, had no money to travel back or because of the worse situations back home. The community consists of the migrants from Korea and their

descendants who have settled down in Japan. Many returned after Japanese troops withdrew from Korea but the condition back home prompted them to come back.

The Zainichi Korean women were one of the most marginalised communities in Japan because as a group without much agency and power, they fell among the lowest in the ladder of hegemony. Newlywed and shipped off with strangers as husbands, the girls had no idea of what awaited them. The Japanese were a very dominant group that believed in the glory of their civilization and wanted to promote it throughout the neighbouring countries. In their eyes, the Koreans were an inferior race without much potential for greatness or governance. So during the Japanese rule in Korea, it became a colony of Japan after its annexation and hence became Japanese nationals as well as the Emperor's children. But after the Japanese retreated from Korea, the Koreans living in Japan became resident foreigners living in Japan because of the signing of the San Francisco Treaty of 1952 (Lie, 2008). They became outsiders without citizenship in the country that they settled in.

The Zainichi Koreans lived in hostile and pitiable conditions in Japan without the ability to change their conditions. It is only in 1965, when the diplomatic relations were established between South Korea and Japan, that the Koreans who opted for South Korean nationality through the Mindan organisation received permanent residence in Japan and those who were on the Chongryun side remained stateless as they supported North Korea. Later on, in 1982 all Koreans gained permanent residence in Japan (xviii).

Reflecting on the experiences of expatriate life from the personal experiences of the Zainichi Koreans, Min Jin Lee writes the novel *Pachinko* with the Ikaino ward in Osaka as the background. Ikaino ward was famously known as the ghetto where the Koreans lived in segregation from the Japanese mainstream society. With Sunja and her family at the center, Min Jin Lee weaves a tale of persistence and fortitude of a family to strive in a world that tries to suppress them.

The genre of community fiction entered the field of academia relatively late, even though its traces could be found in history. Unlike the other genres, Sandra Zagerell (1988) states that the community narratives don't have linear developments but rather it sticks to a specific geographical phase and is rooted in process. "They tend to be episodic, built primarily around the continuous small-scale negotiations and daily procedures through which communities sustain themselves. In keeping with the predominant focus on the collective life of the community, characterization typically exemplifies modes of interdependence among community members" (Zagerell, 1988, p. 503).

They acquaint the readers with the culture, local life, food habits, practices and many more which are an integral part of any specific community. Sandra Zagerell, calls it narrative of community and states that, works under this category "portray the minute and quite ordinary processes through which the community maintains itself as an entity"(499). As per Zagerell (1988), she presents works set before the pre-industrial era to confront the capitalist

society of the twentieth century. Echoing through her words are the reflections of diverse changes that the community life goes through because of the introduction of Industrialization and a gradual transition into a capitalist society.

The impact of Japanese colonization and the resulting changes of the rule on its colonies are unmistakably presented by Arthur Golden, Mary Lynn Bracht and Min Jin Lee in their respective novels. With Sunja, Chiyo, Hana and Emi as the central characters, the authors present the community life and its gradual transition from the past into the modern world after World War II in a smooth manner. For Sunja, her life being uprooted and placed from her homeland to a foreign country is in itself a big change. Through her eyes, the readers are presented with the past, present and future of the Zainichi community living in Japan before and after the war. From complete outcasts to tolerated members, the readers get to see how the Japanese society changes to accommodate this minority into their world, but it is not a life without struggles.

The Baek family house is the place of action for *Pachinko* and Isak bringing Sunja to Osaka puts things into motion for the story. Isak's life as a pastor and Yoseb's life as a factory worker leads them to meet people from different backgrounds presenting a community that is in strong need of hope, acceptance and salvation. Unable to survive the living conditions, facing segregation from the Japanese and suppressing the growth of the Koreans, the Japanese exercised firm control over the community. The changes in Zainichi life of Sunja structures around Koh Hansu, Garo, Korean organisations and Pachinko, hence they are the turning points of her life. Looking at the life of other Koreans around her, the majority of them resorted to peddling, brewing illegal alcohol, working in factories, selling metal scraps or opening yakiniku restaurants in order to support their families.

To survive in a capitalist society like Japan which is hell-bent on never letting the Koreans succeed, Koh Hanasu gets a cheat code which he tries to present to his only son with Sunja which ends in failure. But Garo's technique is much more effective because it helps Mozasu for the long run and makes him a better man. Sunja's two sons present two ideologies existing within the Zainichi Koreans, first is to mimic the Japanese and try to become like them, which Noa embraces resulting in his doom. The second is to accept the Korean identity, make peace with it and patiently work through the available options which Mozasu adopts, making him successful in life. Presenting the two binaries, Jin Lee presents two facets of a changing community and choices which Sunja could never have.

From Mozasu's perspective, "Most Koreans in Japan had at least three names. Mozasu went by Mozasu Boku, the Japanization of Moses Baek, and rarely used his Japanese surname, Bando, the tsume listed on his school documents and residency papers. With a first name from a Western religion, an obvious Korean surname, and his ghetto address, everyone knew what he was there was no point in denying it" (Lee, p. 269), whereas Noa thinks, "All my life, I have had Japanese telling me that my blood is Korean- that Koreans are angry, violent, cunning and deceitful criminals. All my life, I had to endure this. I tried to be as

honest and humble as Baek Isak was; I never raised my voice. But this blood, my blood is Korean, and now I learn that my blood is yakuza blood. I can never change this, no matter what I do.” (345)

When it reaches the next generation, Solomon has even better options because of Mozasu’s success. Solomon is able to get a good education with excellent opportunities opening up to him because of his qualifications which are a result of Mozasu’s hardwork. Along with it, the gradual change in the Japanese society is also visible when they start accepting the Koreans bit by bit. Without the work done by Garo, Mozasu and Sunja, Solomon could never have achieved the heights he aspired to. But a complete liberation and acceptance is still a taboo in Japanese society because from the instances of Noa and Solomon’s downfall from grace, it is clear that even though colonialism ended long back the neoliberal forces would never allow the postcolonial subjects to succeed.

Hanyeos from Jeju portray a community that has always existed separate from the mainland unaware of the changes happening around them. Being a self-sufficient and independent community, the hanyeos have always taken pride in their diving work and the freedom it presented them with. *White Chrysanthemum* presents a hanyeo community living under Japanese colonialism and which is well accommodated with the demands of the rule. Away from the mainland, Jeju enjoys many of its privileges but tragedy starts hitting them when the Japanese start laying down huge taxes, inflation on necessities and took up control of the economy. After that, misfortune started rolling down like waves on the hanyeos as one after the other their men were called off for war, the girls from the villages started disappearing and violence was perpetuated on the public.

A community which prided in their freedom was rowed down with the loss of its family members. Even when rule changed hands from the Japanese to the Americans and from the Americans to the Koreans themselves, violence and oppression continued. The community still persisted with the support from the members of the collective combined with their fierce survival instincts. They continued doing diving work, providing for the family and taking care of their members. Through Hana and Emi, Bracht depicts the two of the worst calamities that the hanyeo community faced: one was losing a daughter to forced prostitution and the other was mass massacres that wrecked Jeju during the Korean War. Hana’s life is steered away from a normal hanyeo life when she is captured by Captain Morimoto and Emi is forced to marry Hyunmo in order to survive. Forcefully separated and pressured into submission Hana as well as Emi have no choice but to go forward on the roads chosen for them.

Hana’s introduction into a new community where violence, rape, abuse and torture is a daily routine doesn’t bend her will. The memories of her former community grant her a strength that helps her escape her captors and find light at the end of a dark tunnel. Even though the community of the comfort women accept her, Hana never learns to be a part of it and rejects it, which is clear when she runs away from the brothel without thinking twice

about her sisters. This is so because Hana only considers her hanyeo sisterhood as her own, because even though she is concerned for the other girls in the brothel, she still leaves. Her thoughts before she leaves confirms it when she says, "It is too late. She cannot stay, not even to spare her sleeping friends. She rises to her feet and hurries to the door. She lets out a shaky breath as she tries the metal doorknob" (Bracht, p.151).

Emi is never separated from her sisterhood but the ravages suffered by Jeju had also affected her and her community of hanyeos, leaving them scarred for life. With both her parents killed by her own countrymen when Emi was young and helpless, the only way she could live on was by suppressing her memories and remaining silent. But Emi is unable to comprehend the things happening around her as her father and villagers get killed, her village gets destroyed and she is forcefully married to Hyunmo at the local police station. It is clear only when Hyunmo says, "Like many of them, I had to leave my home in the North and flee south of the line before the communists murdered me like they did my family. They took everything from me. From all of us. So we are marrying you to regain what we lost, but more importantly, to keep the communists out of the South, we must breed them out. It's for your own good . . . and the good of Korea" (112).

Compared to the hanyeos, the Geishas are a community that is predominantly focused on art. Being an essential part of Japanese society, Geishas enjoy a certain privilege and reputation in the society as cultural markers. *Memoirs of a Geisha* presents the before and afterlife of World War II as presented through the eyes of Sayuri who is a well-known Geisha from Gion. Tracing from the point where Sayuri is nine years old and sold to the Okiya by Mr Tanaka, the story moves from the time of Mameha and Hatsumomo as established geishas, to the time of Sayuri and Pumpkin as the most sought after Geishas of their time, who are their respective apprentices. When the story moves from Mameha's time to Sayuri's success, it simultaneously reflects on the war and the changing community.

As a community that survives on art, sponsors and audiences, the Geisha community suffered severely during the war. This is clear when even Sayuri who is one of the most successful Geishas of her time had to select a danna who would help her Okiya survive during the war. For this purpose, the Mother selects a General who is in charge of rations for the military under Mameha's suggestion. Sayuri's success on the other hand also leads to the downfall of Hatsumomo and Pumpkin, as she gets adopted as the daughter of the Okiya. The competition and challenges of the profession are hard on the less fortunate ones as they have no choice but to adhere to the complexities that come along with choosing the profession.

The Geisha community is a community that survives with the efforts of all the members that constitute in upholding it, but the irony is that its downfall also rests on the same. Being on wrong terms with them means a black mark on the Geisha's career as these stakeholders can end it easily. The community is supported by artisans, teahouse owners, makeup artists, instructors, wealthy businessmen and many more. After the ravages of war, the Geisha culture that was resuscitated was never the same because many of the Geishas had

left the profession, alongside that many Okiyas and teahouses were also shut down. The makeup artists, instructors and many others had to change professions in order to survive in a post war society where their demand was less.

Looking at the three novels, the paper presents how the selected communities are not presented as rigid but fluid and in transition. Taking into account the socio-political and economic factors that accompany wars the communities are affected severely to the point of extinction in certain cases. Evidently, the communities that emerge after the transitions do not remain the same because of the violent, abusive and oppressive environment it was met with. Some communities were affected harder whereas some others were not, but the compatriots of transition are the turning points in the story who either contribute positively or negatively to the character developments. The communities that emerged from the ashes of the old were more lenient, sporadic and weak.

Today the number of members of the communities are dwindling or dying down without any memory of the old ways. Among the Zainichi Koreans only a very few remember how to read or write in Korean because they have been incorporated into the Japanese society as a result of which they have forgotten their identity. Another factor is that the existing members are second, third or generations after those, who have no connections with their homeland and are the naturalized citizens of Japan. The Geisha and Hanyeo community is a community that has very few members left because not many are coming forward to keep it alive. The problems that hanyeos face are with regards to dwindling members, polluted sea waters, organisms facing extinction, and risks of deep diving without proper equipment. Even the Geisha culture well known for its aesthetics and artistry is dying down because of dwindling numbers. Despite the fact that the rules and regulations have become flexible the numbers of girls who join have lessened.

The three novels with a connection to a specific point in history converge together as symbols of community life and act as an acknowledgement of the horrors of war. Experiencing the past from the perspective of the characters, the reader gets to experience the war and its repercussions faced by the community. The novels by the selected authors are a result of the number of interviews, research and exploration they did which perform the role of acting as a witness to the terrors of Japanese Imperialism.

Gynocentric Narration as Counter Narratives

Taking into consideration the official perspectives of war, in most cases the formal accounts fail to include the gynocentric perspectives of war. Even though war affects the community as a whole, the formal narratives are predominantly silent about the sufferings of women; they are either neglected or overlooked. This is the case in majority of the communities around the world, where the voices of the women have less significance and autonomy. Throughout the ages, the representation of women in literature and arts were quite different than that of men, which is clear when Nina Auerbach says, “As a recurrent literary

image, a community of women is a rebuke to the conventional ideal of a solitary woman living for and through men, attaining citizenship in the community of adulthood through masculine approval alone. The communities of women which have haunted our literary imagination from the beginning are emblems of female self-sufficiency which create their own corporate reality, evoking both wishes and fears” (Auerbach 1978, p.5). As a result, the feminine communities examined here present the realities and trajectories that the imposition of Japanese Imperialism inflicted on its colonial subjects.

There are an enormous amount of works written on women whose identities get narrowed down to someone’s wife, daughter, sister and mother, but what must not be forgotten is that the identity of a woman is not just restricted to that. Auerbach reflects that, “The unformulated miracle of the community of women is its ability to create itself” (11). The formulated communities may be formed based on certain codes, which “can range from dogma to a flexible, private and often semi-conscious set of beliefs” (8-9) which are not always rigid. Because the community itself was private, informal, flexible and mercurial, nobody took it seriously but the irony is that, the fact that made it an ignominy became its privilege as well as pride.

The communities of women discussed in the paper are fractions in society belonging to South Korea and Japan, who are representations of the glorious and turbulent history filled with blood. The community experiences act as testimony to the ground realities of Wartime crimes and the post-war realities of the trauma suffered by them. The tirade of calamities that followed one after the other, because of the actions of people in power, wrecked the two nations beyond recognition. The authors discuss some of the important incidents in the current history through the vital protagonists and provide testimonial accounts of the true incidents, giving tangible evidence to the experiences.

The stories of women told or written by women present a very different reality that is different from the formal narrative because, the former provides a more intimate understanding and evokes empathy. The fictionalised account of the incidents aim to “fight against phallocentrism that construed them as inferior” (Stanley 2022, p.136) and bring to the surface the suppressed voices of the marginalized. Remembering history from the perspective of women through their recollections of the incidents from the past is termed as ‘femimemory’ by Maureen Stanley. According to her, “femimemory, the gynocentric recovery of memory, consists of the following elements: the acknowledgment that heteronormative patriarchy shapes historiography in the masculine resulting in the inferiorization or omission of the female sex; the moral imperative to recover and vindicate the role of women in history or the past; the empathetic identification with women’s experiences and traumas; and the commitment to a more just world through the transmission of women’s stories” (136).

By retelling the stories from the perspective of women, the writers are trying to provide agency and legitimacy to incidents that occurred. Here the fictionalised version of the

stories presents female communities that support, care and become the strength of each other. The novels demonstrate the forced silences of the women especially within communities with regard to the wartime crimes. “Gynocentric works of memory shed light on the gendered omissions within cultural memory” (137). What is to be noted in common for all the three selected works is that Arthur Golden, Mary Lynn Bracht and Min Jin Lee have written their works after collecting information from the testimonial accounts of survivors and members from the communities. Stanley feels that, “Femimemory counteracts the hypermasculinized authoritarian regime. It is the antithesis of phallo-fascist mandated assimilatory forgetting. Femimemory actively and intentionally foils the legacy of misogynistic omissions or revisionist constructs. Femimemorial cultural production remedies both intentional and unintentional complicity in silence” (137).

When the question of the regime comes up it is not just the Japanese, but the leaders from North Korea and South Korea also come into the picture because the crimes continued even during the post-war era. By collecting the female testimonies, the authors create fictionalised versions of the events thus storing the memory of the female trauma into the cultural memory. The accounts given by the survivors become the backstories for the novels on the basis of which the community narratives are structured being the voices of the unheard.

The Zainichi Korean community residing in Japan is one of the most marginalized communities residing in Japan who have been facing discrimination and segregation from the Japanese society for their Korean identity. Sufferings of Sunja and other women like her point to a reality that is not well heard of. Unlike the well-known stories of European colonialism, the consequences of Japanese colonialism are not talked about quite often. Like the neighbouring countries, the undivided Korea belonging to that period went through harsh changes with the invasion of the Japanese troops.

Living in a patriarchal society Sunja, Kyunghee, Hana, Emi and Sayuri become central and important characters in the novels only when men notice them. It is as if their lives have no significance until and unless a man notices them or appreciates them. Even though the communities of the Hanyeo, Geishas and the Zainichi Korean women are self-sufficient, it is only the presence of the males among them that gives them prominence or visibility. Without the men that surround them or help in upholding the communities, the feminine communities would perish. Koh Hansu is the first person to ever properly notice and give attention to Sunja; who later goes on to become her first love. He doesn't reject her when he knows she is pregnant, but Sunja decides not to lead a life as a mistress and help comes again when Baek Isak agrees to take responsibility by marrying her, thus saving her from shame.

In a world where women were suppressed, forced or coerced into sexual slavery, Sunja lives a protected life because of the influence of Koh Hansu, who constantly guides her through difficult situations but at the same time lets her maintain autonomy over her life.

Under the guise of factory jobs, labour recruitment and forced migration, many women were taken away for sexual labour in enemy camps, against which Hansu gives prior warnings to Sunja. Unlike Kyunhee (Isak's sister-in-law), Sunja has always known work and the difficulties of managing a house working with her mother. So, when the time comes she isn't ashamed to go out, find work or find the means to help her family survive. In a cut-throat world, Sunja realises that if she needs to take care of her sons she cannot sit idle but find any means necessary to make money. Being an illiterate, she faces a lot of difficulties, but her street smartness helps her adapt quickly. Sunja's life is a representation of the life of a woman in Korean society and the Zainichi life in Japan. Being a girl she was never sent to school and always helped her mother maintain the Inn doing all the housework. Even though she had to work hard, Sunja had everything and her mother made sure of that. But in Osaka, she leads a different life which is filled with poverty, discrimination and exploitation which is a part and parcel of the Zainichi life. Min Jin Lee paints Ikaino in the following way,

“Ikaino was a misbegotten village of sorts, comprised of mismatched, shabby houses. The shacks were uniform in their poorly built manner and flimsy materials. Here and there, a stoop had been washed or a pair of windows polished, but the majority of the facades were in disrepair. Matted newspapers and tar paper covered the windows from inside, and wooden shims were used to seal up the cracks. The metal used on the roof was often rusted through. The houses appeared to have been put up by the residents themselves using cheap or found materials—not much sturdier than huts or tents. Smoke vented from makeshift steel chimneys. It was warm for a spring evening; children, half-dressed in rags, played tag, ignoring the drunken man asleep in the alley. A small boy defecated by a stoop not far from Yoseb's house” (Lee, p.111).

When the men leave for work, it is the women who have the responsibility of maintaining the house and taking care of the family. In Ikaino, many of the Koreans lived together with pigs in their houses, did jobs in factories, sold metal scraps, brewed illegal alcohol or did some other work. Since the Koreans had no chance to be successful following the proper route of education or by getting good jobs, they had to resort to illegal means in order to survive. Lee explains the same here,

“Mozasu knew he was becoming one of the bad Koreans. Police officers often arrested Koreans for stealing or home brewing. Every week, someone on his street got in trouble with the police. Noa would say that because some Koreans broke the law, everyone got blamed. On every block in Ikaino, there was a man who beat his wife, and there were girls who worked in bars who were said to take money for favors” (269).

Because the majority of them couldn't stand the bullying, discrimination and hatred they experienced in schools as well as work places, many quit. Because the living conditions were bad, the pay was less, and they even had to face discrimination as well as oppression from the Japanese, the Koreans suffered. In many cases, the men resorted to violence and abused the women in the family, unable to withstand the pressure of living in Japanese

society. Some men were hauled off to jails, ran off or kept other women, completely ignoring their families. Therefore, the burden of the family usually fell on the women.

Sunja's growth also depicts the different periods of Japanese colonialism and the changes happening in Zainichi life in Japan. It starts from the period of Japanese colonialism and moves to the post war reality of Zainichi life. The life of her sons and grandson is a depiction of the changing laws as well as the existent condition of the Zainichis in Japan. From being immigrants, their life moved from resident foreigners to temporary citizens and from there to permanent citizens in 1982. Thus far they had to live in the country unsure of their identity or position, even though some of them were born in Japan.

Sunja's protected life in Ikaino is toppled when her husband Isak is taken away by the police. From then on Sunja's life becomes a struggle for survival like many others. Koh Hansu's continued presence in her life saves her and her family, but that is not the case for many other women living in Ikaino. Sunja's story is the story of many others like her who struggle to live in a society that rejects them. Being a widow within a few years of marriage, she has no choice but to rely on the men surrounding her because she is illiterate and the society is patriarchal. Unable to help her sons, Sunja has no alternatives left but to take the help of Koh Hansu and Garo, which later on leads her sons into two different paths in life.

The life of the women in this community is stacked with pain, suffering and turmoil. Being a woman in Korean society means the majority of the girls are uneducated, so when they go to Japan and are left to fend for themselves as well as their family, they are left utterly powerless. Women are privy to the intimate details of the family, hence they are aware of the grievances of their children and husband, but left powerless to help them. Unable to provide the children with proper education and incapable of protecting them from the injustices of living in Japan, the women have seen many of their family members perish. Racism is apparent when the Koreans are mocked for their food habits, clothing, language, living conditions and many others. The Japanese were very monoethnic (Lie 2008, p.2), never giving other communities any opportunity, space or acceptance, but completely rejected or ignored them.

The ground reality of the effects of Japanese colonialism in Korea is more discernible in the background of Jeju, which is aptly portrayed by Mary Lynn Bracht. Occurrences in Jeju are just a miniature effect of what actually happened all over Korea. Korea was in distress because, "The villagers were tired of the heavy taxes, the forced donations to the war effort, and the taking of men to fight on the front lines and children to work in factories in Japan"(Bracht, p.6). The country portrayed in the story is an undivided Korea and the protagonists have no idea of a Korea before war, since they were born after its annexation. Hana and Emi are representatives of the hanyeo community that specialises in diving work. Even though many religions like Shamanism and its practices were banned by the Japanese, the hanyeos continued them in secret. The introduction of the Japanese language, naming

system, cultural practices, religion and many others was an act of suppression of the Korean identity which was followed stringently by them.

Reading from the experiences of the Hanyeos, it is clear that the community has seen things getting worse one after the other. Unable to question the discrimination and afraid of incurring harm on their family, many remained quiet. Sunja's father, Hoonie, learning from his parents, never got distracted with the politics of his country because he had to take care of his family. Same way, Hana's father is incapable of resisting when his brother is called in to enlist in the army because he knows that his family will face the wrath, especially his daughters. It was a time when the hanyeos were coming to know of the girls disappearing from their villages who were taken away to different places for servicing the soldiers in army camps. The community known for their freedom and independence cowered down in order to protect their daughters and family members. Hana remembers her uncle when she is being taken away, she thinks "Four years ago, her uncle was sent to fight the Chinese in the Japanese emperor's name. He was instructed to report to this police station. Few Koreans held official positions, and if they did, they were sympathizers, loyalists to the Japanese government, traitors to their own countrymen. They made her uncle enlist and fight for a country he despised" (24).

Incidents of rape, disappearance and violence against women had increased as a result of which the families kept their girls closer. Sunja and Hana are victims of wartime cruelties against women, but the difference is that Sunja was saved by the timely intervention of Hansu, whereas Hana went on to become a comfort woman. The latter was captured by Captain Morimoto when she was trying to save her little sister Emi. In the truck that Hana is forced into, she finds many girls and women who were captured like her from all over Jeju. Next when she is taken away into a different route in a ferry and moved into trains to Manchuria, she finds many girls who were captured and 'broken into' like her; when some survived the ordeal, some others did not, like Sangsoo. All the corpses of the dead girls were buried together under an unmarked grave and their family would never know what happened to them. Even in the post-war world the atrocities continued. If earlier it was just the Japanese, in the post-war period it was the Americans and the Russians.

The majority of the girls who were taken away did not return, but even if they did the nation looked at them with shame and revulsion for having survived the ordeal. The comfort women who returned were shunned and segregated from mainstream society, hence they had to live in isolation. The Japanese never acknowledged the wartime crimes it committed on the Korean citizens, especially with regard to the issue of the 'comfort women'. It was through Kim Hak-Sun that the world first came to know about the experiences of the comfort woman and from then on the others came up. Korea was constantly facing calamities one after the other with a change in power, changes of administration and between that the country was getting rebuilt from its ashes. But, "the defeated were prohibited from acknowledging the persecution and reprisals, the cleansing and cruelty that the victors—with impunity—waged

upon them” (Stanley 2022, p.139). Whether it is the Japanese, Americans or the Russians, they all focused on looting and making changes for their own advantage.

The Japanese citizens themselves were victims of the ravages of war and the cruelties of their own countrymen. However, they were also victims of the perceptions and discriminations imposed on them by the west. *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden received widespread criticism as it provided a tainted portrayal of the flower and willow world and its narrator, Mineko Iwasaki. Anne Allison argued that, “Golden’s portrayal of a geisha world is totally different from the one she gave him. In his hands, it is more tawdry and smutty than cultured and refined; the book is a “potboiler” where geisha appear as prostitutes – more fantasy of Western men than an accurate representation of Japanese Geisha” (Allison, 2002, p.389-391). For Iwasaki, the betrayal came in the form of inappropriate portrayal of her life, the tarnished reputation of the Geisha culture and the discussion of intimate details that were discussed, which compromised her position in society. As a result, Mineko Iwasaki released her own version of the memoir titled, *Geisha, A Life in the US* or *Geisha of Gion* in the UK. Being the main source for Golden’s novel, Iwasaki was already established, so when she published her own memoir written from her own perspective, it generated a stir among the audience. Iwasaki writing her own memoir was an act of ‘writing back’ and creating a narrative that was not according to the perceptions or ‘gaze’ of the West.

Mineko Iwasaki takes matters into her own hands when she is presenting her memoir from her own perspective. By publishing her own memoir, Iwasaki refutes the claims made by Golden and at the same time questions his narrative. Geishas represent the culture and heritage of Japan; hence it has a longstanding reputation in Japanese society as well as in the West for the “Japaneseness” (p.15) it represents. After the publication of *Memoirs of a Geisha*, as well as during the nineteenth century, the perception of the term ‘Geisha’ changed from paragon of arts to an object of beauty and sex, in the Western minds. The movies and novels started endorsing this symbol to a great extent instead of being perceptive of what the term ‘Geisha’ represented. Iwasaki’s novel questions and negates the perception of the Western world by rewriting her story. By using the same tools of language and discourse used by the Western world, she presents her life and ethnography of Japan in its truest form. For her, the act of writing back to the centre is her way of claiming back her identity and also protecting the culture or world she belongs to. When Golden presents the book, he is restricted by the limits and ability to represent the Japanese society as it is, because he is an outsider observing the Japanese culture, hence his representation also gets influenced by the culture from which he belongs to. But in Iwasaki’s case she is an insider and hence she becomes a ‘cultural native’ (p.16) questioning the perceptions of the west and at the same time correcting it, in order to provide the proper narrative.

The three works discussed in the paper provide a concrete analogy of how they represent a counter perspective and how the centre always turns its back on the stories of women. These texts are the indications of how the ignored narratives of women provide more

information about the ground reality. Rather than seeing women as reserved to the private quarters, the angle the novels presented of women were as the victims of war and the witnesses of the wartime cruelties. When the majority of the men perished during war or were at the war front, it's the women at home who saw what their community and country went through. Looking through the perspective of Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffins's words, the authors of the three selected texts are abrogating and appropriating the language of the colonisers in order to convey the stories. They appropriate the language, reject the Western ideals and question the narratives of the colonisers, but at the same time colour it their own. By creating and propagating the narrative of the 'Other', the stories are transmitted worldwide and by using the language of the coloniser, makes it a site of resistance. Through this, the silenced voices get a chance to validate their experiences within their community and the outsiders become spectators for the performance of reconstruction of the authentic experiences.

Conclusion

The significance of historical memory showcased here in the paper is very clear, when looked through the perspective of community fiction and gynocentric narratives. These perspectives try to bring out the collective memory of the community that is stored deep inside their cultural memory. By analysing the selected texts, it is clear that the testimonials dig deep into the memory of the community and its victims in order to provide justice for them. The different voices from the selected texts pays homage to the collective sufferings of the community members, this is so because in their fight for survival the victims chose to remain silent or their voices were silenced by the people in power. So through the fictionalised accounts of the incidents the communities find voice, which is also an act of regaining their agency as well as establishing their selfhood.

As a community narrative, the texts become records of the collective community experiences, thereby giving legitimacy to the same. The experiences mentioned by the authors in the texts were based on the direct experiences accumulated by them through interviews with the victims. Majority of the writing incorporated into it, the activities of daily life of the community including its practices, chores, lifestyle and customs through which they nurtured the sense of communityhood in the readers. These experiences became an example of the collective memory of the community based on which the texts were structured. Therefore, the authors reconstruct it in their works and making it a written record, though fictionalised. Reading through the community narratives, the readers get to live through the experiences of the community as a whole through the characters. The geishas, hanyeos and Zainichi Koreans come out of the pages and become real people who narrate their life stories to the readers directly. By evoking sympathy in the readers, the authors help in acknowledging the past and providing a platform for change.

Similarly, by using the idea of femimemory and gynocentric narration the authors present the problem of gender binary that exists in society irrespective of the people in power.

Being the head of the family, Yoseb doesn't want Kyunghee or Sunja to work because he believes it's the man's job and considers them foolish. But Hansu on the other hand respects Sunja by giving her autonomy over her own life. The authors also present the gender disparity and sexualisation that the women experienced in the Korean and Japanese society of those times, which was deeply embedded in their minds. Through femimemory, the novels try to reclaim the lost glory of the community and the gendered omissions of memory by making their voices heard for generations to come. By questioning the official accounts, the gynocentric narratives allude to how the narratives are all masculine, which promptly ignores or omits the feminine versions. In the face of oblivion, retelling the tales from femimemory is an act of resistance and an attempt at creating a just world.

In the face of the calamities that the people went through, the firm source of support and comfort came from interdependency among the communities. So community life is an integral part of an individual's life because of the support and fortitude that they gather from the members during calamities in their lives is undeniable. For the Zainichi Korean communities in Japan, it is the organisations formed by their own community members like Mindan and Chongryun organisations that were finally able to make their situations better. The organisations provided its community members with facilities like schools, banks, working places, and many other facilities which were finally able to save the community members from its downfall. Similarly, the hanyeo collective is not just a professional group, but a sisterhood which is a very close knit community. When together they share their sorrows, happiness, and even help each other out when they have problems. It is a sisterhood that exists far beyond the depths of the sea and the members are more close with each other than with their family members. It is a bond that blooms from keeping an eye out for each other under the sea and a mutual trust that is gathered by working together under dangerous situations. In the same way, geishas also have a similar bond with the Okiya members even though they are not actually related by blood. Once a member of the Okiya, the children are considered a part of the family. It is again a sisterhood where all the women work together for the prosperity and improvement of the Okiya as well as its members. They protect, pamper, love, cherish and support each other in such a manner, that the Okiya gradually becomes their own home.

Even though each community has its own limitations and problems, nobody can better understand each other than its members. Beyond the hurdles of class, race, and income these communities are successful in protecting, preserving and taking care of the needs of its members. The gynocentric narrations presented in the texts also honour the communal values and cultural ethics of the different communities presented in the selected texts. Discussion on community narratives, gynocentric narration and femimemory opens up important avenues for further research within the paper. The perspectives and junctures it opens provides scope for more research based on community, counter narratives and history.

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On the Function of Verbal Reduplication in Nigerian Pidgin

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Abstract

Reduplication is the repetition of a word in whole or part in speech and it is a prominent feature in Nigerian Pidgin (NP), spoken as a lingua franca in the different regions of Nigeria. The present paper examines this feature of reduplication in Nigerian Pidgin verbs with the aim of revealing the different functions or roles that the phenomenon plays in the language. The data for the study were collected from different parts of Nigeria, especially Sapele and Warri areas in the Southern region of the country. These formed a part of a corpus of primary data collected for the study of sentence modes in the language but were later observed to manifest reduplicative forms. The verbs with reduplicative forms were organized according to the different functions that they are observed to play in the language and later reviewed in different interview sessions with speakers of the language in view of verification before observations were made. The findings of the study revealed that reduplication of Nigerian Pidgin verbs perform two main functions, including emphasizing actions as well as marking iterative properties of the verbs that are repeated. The paper concludes that reduplication of verbs in Nigerian Pidgin is important in expressing the adjectival aspects of the action expressed by the verb.

Keywords: Nigerian Pidgin (PN), morphology, verb, reduplication.

1. Introduction

This paper examines the function of reduplication in Nigerian Pidgin (henceforth, NP). It seeks to show that when a verb is reduplicated in NP, it may be used to indicate that a given

action takes place repeatedly, i.e. more than once, in addition to existing notions in which reduplication in NP is thought to mark emphasis. This work is motivated by the need to clearly demonstrate this iterative and emphatic function of reduplication in the language.

Reduplication is a word formation process in which a word or a part (usually a segment or syllable) of it is repeated, with or without any modification (Spencer, 1991; Mensah, 2011; Holm, 2000; Li & Rawski, 2024). Ofulue (2015) is, however, of the opinion that reduplication in NP can also be a simple case of repetition of an existing word, provided that it gives rise to an extension in its original meaning. It is notable, however, that reduplication in languages may affect a part or the whole of a word, thus languages manifests both partial and full reduplication which Mustafa (2022) referred to as morphological doubling. In NP, full reduplication is very productive while partial reduplication is hardly observed.

This paper is organized as follows; this section provides an introduction to the thoughts in the paper, section 2 is an overview of the concept of NP, while the methodology employed in the paper is discussed in section 3. In section 4, the observed functions of reduplication in NP are examined with appropriate illustrations, and the concluding remarks are contained in section 5.

2. Nigerian Pidgin (NP)

NP is the pidgin that is spoken all over Nigerian. A pidgin is a hybrid language that is developed for ease of communication in a language contact situation. It is, therefore, also called a contact, trade, makeshift, marginal or an auxiliary language (Reineke, 1964; Todd, 1974; Elugbe & Omamor, 1991; and Faraclas, 1996). In a simplified form, Ugot and Ogundipe (2011: 227) define it as “a communication system that develops among people who do not share a common language”. The development of a pidgin involves, at least, two languages: “a superstrate language and a substrate language. The superstrate is usually the language of power while the substrates are usually the local languages” (Ifechelobi & Ifechelobi, 2015: 208).

NP is a lingua franca in Nigeria. The language is spoken all over the country. Its speakers cut across ethnic, social, religious and regional classes (Omamor, 1982; Gani-Ikhillama, 1990; Faraclas, 1996; Ugot & Ogundipe, 2011; Oreoluwa, 2016). Many studies in NP (e.g. Agheyisi, 1971; Elugbe & Omamor, 1991; Ihemere, 2006; Mensah, 2011; Ifechelobi & Ifechelobi, 2015; and Ofulue, 2015; Ajaps, 2024) suggest that English is the superstrate language in NP that

provides the bulk of the lexical resources, while the various indigenous languages in the country are substrates, providing the structural, segmental and supra-segmental phonological features. The language also employs several tonal and intonational patterns in distinguishing sentence modes (Ugot & Ogundipe, 2011; Evbuomwan, 2018). Although NP is predominantly spoken, widespread, and thought to be the best choice as a national language for Nigeria (Faraclas, 1996, 2021; Omozuwa, 2003; Eze, 2023; Yakpo, 2024; Lin, Scholman, Saeed & Demberg 2024), it has not gotten the desired attention from language policy makers, making the general attitude towards it to remain negative.

3. Methodology

The data that were analyzed in the study include NP verbs that were observed to contain reduplicated forms. The first set of the data were extracted from free-flowing conversations that were recorded in Edo, Sapele and Warri areas of Nigeria for an earlier study that sought to investigate the different pitch patterns that are employed in distinguishing sentence modes in NP. In that process, certain reduplicated forms were observed to indicate repeated actions. Subsequently, more interviews were conducted in the selected areas to verify the extracted data. In these interviews, NP speakers were engaged in storytelling, family interactions and other free-flowing discourses that facilitate the ordinary use of the language. The speeches were recorded by means of a digital voice recorder. The recordings were re-played with the aim of extracting the reduplicated words and sentences in which they occur, for analysis. The analysis of data was carried out by means of careful observation of the words and the uses to which they are put in sentences.

4. The Role of Reduplication in NP

The present work observes that the process of reduplication in NP is motivated by the need to satisfy two similar, but different, purposes. This section demonstrates that reduplication perform two functions in NP – emphasis and iterative functions. However, this section will begin by giving an overview of some existing assumptions on the role of reduplication in the language.

4.1 Previous Assumptions

There has been a number of divergent views on the role of reduplication in NP. Although there are many existing works on NP, this review will focus on those that have made definitive statements on the implications of reduplication in the language.

Faraclas (1996) can be described as a comprehensive work on NP grammar. The work examined several aspects of the language, including reduplication. On his consideration of NP reduplication, Faraclas (1996:158) argued that “reduplication is used with frequentative, durative, iterative and habitual meaning”. In his example,

1. Im go tek tu oklòk-tu oklòk de baf
3sg -R take-V two o'clock-R -C bathe
'(S)he will bath at two o'clock every day'

The assumption, here, is that tu, oklòk ‘two o'clock’ is repeated to express the iterative nature or frequency of the bath. It is notable, however, that a repetition such as tu oklòk should not be considered as an example of reduplication as these are two different concepts that play different semantic roles in the NP, as this paper will demonstrate later.

In Mensah (2011), reduplication is argued to be an important device in the formation of nouns, adverbs and adjectives. Here, “the reduplicative process may signal increase in size and intensity” (p. 220) as in the following examples.

- 2a) small small ‘gently’
- b) weluwelu ‘very well’
- c) magomago ‘deceitful’
- d) jagajaga ‘confusable’
- e) chacha ‘gambling’

(Mensah, 2011:219)

Although NP words such as smòl 'small' and wèl 'well' may be reduplicated as smòlsmòl and wèlwèl, respectively, for emphatic reasons, the present study observes that there are no such words as *mago, *jaga and *cha in NP from which the reduplicated forms in 2c –e can be said to have been formed. In reduplication, the base form from which the reduplicate is formed is usually an existing word in the language.

In Ugot & Ogundipe (2011), the process of reduplication is examined as an aspect of NP morphology. The paper sought to show how reduplication is employed in enriching the vocabulary of NP and reports that the following can be derived in the process.

3. Adjectives
 - a) lukluk 'a stare' (from luk 'look')
 - b) pispis 'a bed wetter' (from pis 'to urinate')
4. Emphasis marker
 - a) welwel 'very well' (from wel 'well')
 - b) skataskata 'very scattered' (from skata 'scatter')
5. Adverb
 - a) nyafunyafu 'plenty'
 - b) kiakia 'quickly'
6. Onomatopoeic expressions
 - a) gbangbam 'heavy sound'
 - b) piompiom 'whistle'

The study also observed that only fully reduplicated forms are attested in the language.

Osisanwo (2012) examined the morphology of NP and identified the following as examples of reduplicated forms.

7.	word	meaning	word class
a)	wel-wel	very well	adverb
b)	atoll-atoll	not at all	adverb
c)	kpata-kpata	totally	adverb
d)	kai-kai	quickly	adverb
e)	fek-fek	fake	adverb
f)	ple-ple	easily	adverb

(Osisanwo, 2012:48)

In his consideration, Osisanwo (2012) opines that the function of reduplication in NP "tends towards emphasis" (p.48).

Ofulue (2015) focused on vocabulary expansion process in NP, towards the standardization of the language. In this, she considered reduplication to be one of the processes

for vocabulary expansion in NL (i.e. Naija Language, a name with which she referred to NP). Ofulue (2015) opined that "reduplication is a morphological process common in the contact ecology of NL: it is a very productive process in NL" (p.48). Using examples such as:

- 8a) waka 'walk'
 b) wakawaka 'roam about'

She argued that reduplication in NP "is for the purpose of creating new words" (p.48).

4.2 Emphasis Motivated Reduplication

The study observes that one of the functions of reduplication in NP is to emphasize the intensity or severity of an action. This function of reduplication in the language is widely documented in the literature and is thought to be the only function that the process plays in the language by many linguists. The following demonstrate that an action is emphasized when the term that refers to it is reduplicated.

- 9a) sɔfa 'suffer' → sɔfasɔfa 'excessive suffering'
 b) Aɛ sɔfa → Aɛ sɔfasɔfa
 I suffer I suffer-R
 'I suffered' 'I suffered excessively'
- 10a) diɛ 'cost' → diɛdiɛ 'very cost'
 b) Di fud diɛ → Di fud diɛdiɛ
 the food cost the food cost-R
 'The food is costly' 'The food is very costly'
- 11a) shaɛ 'shy' → shaɛshaɛ 'very shy'
 b) Shi de shaɛ → Shi de shaɛshaɛ
 she asp shy she asp shy-R
 'She is shy' 'She is very shy'
- 12a) sɔfri 'softly' → sɔfrisɔfri 'carefully'
 b) sɔfri kari am → kari am sɔfrisɔfri
 softly carry it carry it softly
 'Carry it softly' 'Carry it carefully'
- 13a) fɔlo 'follow' → fɔlofɔlo 'a cling'

- b) fọlo mi go → yu bi fọlofọlo
follow me go you be follow-R
'Accompany me' 'You are a cling'
- 14a) laẹ 'to lie' → laẹlaẹ 'excessive lying'
- b) Na laẹ → Na laẹlaẹ
it-be lie it-be lie-R
'It is a lie' 'It is an excessive lie'

The reduplicated forms in 9 - 14 above, therefore, restate the actions expressed in the items, emphasizing the degree to which an action is performed. In 9a, *sofasofa* 'excessive suffering' is an emphasized form of the verb *sofa* 'suffer'. The verb *diẹ* 'cost' in 10b is reduplicated as *diẹdiẹ* 'very cost(ly)', indicating emphasis on the extent to which the food is costly. Reduplication is also observed to function in this light in 11 – 14 where *shae*, *sofri*, *fọlo*, and *laẹ* are reduplicated as *shaeshae*, *sofrisofri*, *fọlofọlo*, and *laẹlaẹ*, respectively.

4.3 Iteration Motivated Reduplication

In addition to the above in which reduplication is shown to perform emphatic function, the present study observes also that reduplication in NP performs an additional function: it expresses the fact that the action of a verb so reduplicated is iterative. Consider the following examples.

- 15a) tọk 'talk' → tọkutọku 'always talking/talkative'
- b) Yu de tọk → Yu de tọkutọku
you asp talk you asp talk-R
'You are speaking' 'You are always talking'
- 16a) họri 'hurry' → họrihọri 'always in a hurry'
- b) Aẹ no fit họri → No de họrihọri
I NOT can hurry NOT asp hurry-R
'can not hurry' 'Stop acting in hurry'
- 17a) ple 'play' → pleple 'always playing/playful'
- b) Yu tu ple → Yu tu pleple
you too play you too play-R

- 'You played too much' 'You always play too much'
- 18a) luk 'look' → lukuluku 'always looking/a stare'
 b) Dẹm de luk → Dẹm de lukuluku
 them asp look them asp look-R
 'They are looking' 'They are always looking'
- 19a) bẹn 'bend' → bẹnibẹni 'having several bends/crooked'
 b) Im bẹn → Im bẹnibẹni
 It bend it bend-R
 'It is bent' 'It be crooked'
- 20a) shọp 'eat' → shọpushọpu 'always eating/glutton'
 b) Aẹ de shọp → Yu sabi shọpushọpu
 I asp eat You can eat-R
 'I am eating' 'You eat a lot'
- 21a) sik 'sick' → sikisiki 'always sick/sickler'
 b) Jọẹ sik bifo → I no laẹk sikisiki
 Joy sick before I NOT like sick-R
 'Joy was sick' 'I do not like a sickler'
- 22a) waka 'walk' → wakawaka 'always walking/walkabout'
 b) Waka kọm → Wakawaka no gud
 walk come walk-R NOT good
 'Come forward' 'It is not good to be a walkabout'
- 23a) travo 'travel' → travotravo 'always travelling (about)'
 b) Aẹ travo → Aẹ bi travotravo
 I travel I be travel-R
 'I travelled' 'I am always travelling'
- 24a) bẹg 'beg' → bẹgibẹgi 'always begging'
 b) Bẹg am → Kọl dat bẹgibẹgi kọm
 beg him/her call that beg-R come
 'Apologize' 'Call that begger'
- 25a) lọv 'love' → lọvilọvi 'always loving/lover'

- b) Aẹ lọv yu → Dẹm bi lọvilọvi
 I love you Them be love-R
 'I love you' 'They are lovers'

A careful observation of the examples above show that the reduplicated forms imply that the actions are not performed in a single instance. The actions are performed severally, i.e. iteratively. This suggests that several similar actions are embedded in each of the examples in 15 – 25. It is worthy of note that appropriate vowels are added to the base forms in some of the verbs above, before they are reduplicated. The vowel /i/ is added to each verb presented in example 19b, 21b, 24b, and 25b, /u/ is added to each verb presented in 15b, 18b, and 20b, while such additions are not observed in 16, 17, 22, and 23. The respective vowel is added to the end of the root before the entire word form is reduplicated, accounting for the corresponding occurrence of the observed affix at word final positions in each of the final realizations. This study observes that the introduction of appropriate vowel is motivated by the need to avoid the occurrence of any closed syllable in the forms and in the realized reduplicates.

5. Conclusion

The study has shown that reduplication is an important aspect of the lexical formation resources of NP. The paper has examined the reduplication of NP verbs and the implication of the lexical process on the meaning of the utterances in which the verb is repeated. The paper demonstrated the functions of reduplication in NP verbs and through these functions, it is able to show how reduplication enhances the expressive potentials of the speakers of the language in meeting their communicative needs.

This present study represents an insight into the roles played by reduplication in NP and a call on linguists to examine the phenomenon in other languages in Nigeria. This is so, given that the different morphological phenomena in NP are usually drawn from one or more of the indigenous languages spoken in the country, from which NP draws its lexical and post lexical resources.

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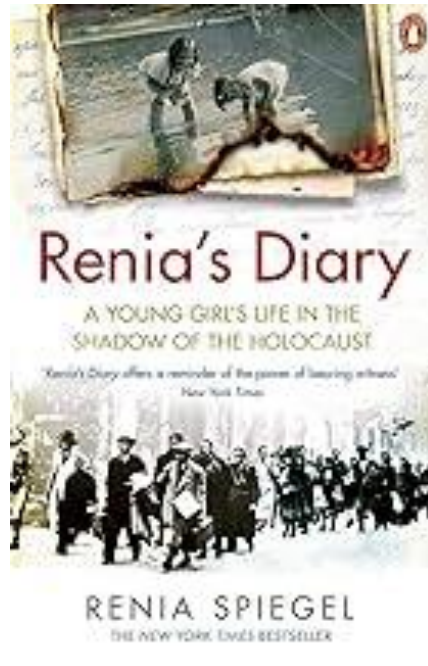
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Deciphering the Suffering of Women in *Renia's Diary*

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Courtesy: www.amazon.com

Abstract

The experience of Holocaust was a prolonged experience of trauma for the victims, which created a routine of terror, fear, and disintegration in them. These have been recorded in their autobiographies or biographies in detail. Such life writings are subjective accounts of incidents or events from a perspective different from that of mere historical documentation of an event. *Renia's Diary* is a journal written by a teen victim of the events as they had been happening during the time of war, which contains the journaling of her life before the atrocities started and then also during the suffering and her attempted escape. As Amos Goldberg points out, the purpose of children's diaries has less to do with documentation and more to do with the internal and emotional dialogue. This paper attempts to interpret the diary to analyse the suffering of women.

Keywords: *Renia's Diary*, Holocaust, Life Narratives, Diaries.

Introduction

Diaries and memoirs provide direct insight into the horrors of the Holocaust through first person narrative, Writing about their experience not only provides a subjective account of the events but also gives space to voice out emotions. As Leena Kurvet-Käosaar points out what Gilmore says about

Autobiographical representations of trauma make an invaluable contribution to the study of literature and culture. They offer indispensable eyewitness accounts of large-scale and everyday violence and, through their elaboration of specific scenes of terror and trauma, provide an anti-dote to universalizing narratives about evil, suffering and history. (305)

Everyone suffered the same event, but it was experienced differently by different individuals, this experience differing from gender to gender as well. Samuel Totten reiterates a similar idea in his introduction to *Plight and Fate of Women During and Following Genocide* when he writes:

The plight and fate of female victims during the course of genocide is both similar to and, in some respects, radically and profoundly different from their male counterparts. During the course of genocide, female victims, like males, suffer demonization, ostracism, discrimination, and the deprivation of their basic human rights. Likewise, they are often rounded up, deported, and killed. But, unlike most men, they have also been subjected to rape, gang rape, and mass rape. (1)

Women had to go through atrocities that were different from what men had experienced and the vulnerability of being a woman during a conflict added to their sufferings. Similarly, in his article, *Memory and the Holocaust: processing the past through a gendered lens*, Mushaben, while referring to Ofer and Weitzman, writes:

Female scholars provide concrete evidence that ‘although men and women were equally targeted for death, their paths – especially in the early years of the war – were paved with different regulations, work requirements, opportunities and constraints’. Under traditional family structures, men enjoyed more contacts with ‘the outside world’, and thus seemed better assimilated. Women, however, were more attuned to local culture; girls unable to attend Torah schools learned to speak fluent Polish and German, appeared more ‘secular’, and developed a facility for networking, contributing to their later survival. Men suffered

from lost 'identities', given this form of role reversal, while women were affected more negatively by the loss of sociability. (17)

The study highlights the importance of women's voices and experiences in historical memory. Eglitis mentions how "the conscious inclusion of women's experiences in Holocaust history was fostered by efforts that took root in the 1980s" (524). Other elaborate works by J Ringelheim (1985), ER Baer, M Goldenberg (2003), J Ringelheim, D Ofer, LJ Weitzman (1998) Z Waxman (2017), M Goldenberg, A Shapiro (2013) and many others have focused on the experiences and perceptions of women during the Holocaust and have also helped establish and distinguish the suffering of men from that of women.

There have been studies that have focused on the experiences of women, this paper however attempts to decipher the sufferings of women as seen through the lens of a child that knows and understands little of the background to the war. "Holocaust narratives by and about children are characterized by their narrator's innocence and inability to understand. In this way, child's-eye-view texts are not unusual but exemplary representations of the event (Sue Vice 164)."

Young women and girls took different roles in the ghettos as the circumstances around them changed, they had to often become the providers for families and had to take over roles which were not present before the war started like assuming leadership in some communities and such other roles that have been discussed by Dalia Ofer in a chapter titled *Gender: Writing Women, Writing the Holocaust (2011)*. In the same discussion she also highlights how the narratives of women paid attention to details and were expressed with emotions, and self-awareness. Not only are the interpretations of young adults and children often less differentiated than that of an adult, but also are the interpretations of young women more coloured owing to a more traditional and restrictive upbringing (Bitunjac and Markowska-Manista 65). Moreover, the understanding and experiences of young women were often different from that of older women.

Reading perspectives of young women provides one with a nuanced picture of the society subtly highlighting the experiences and differences of young women from that of the adults.

"The viewpoint of the child shifts the whole discourse since children possess sensibilities that are often lost in adults... Therefore, war narratives as related by children or from their perspective gain a much significant potency." (Hevesiova 91)

Moreover, Sue Vice (2) has argued that "children's accounts of the Holocaust are worthy of attention as a matter of perspective." She also argues that "Representing a child's voice means that his or her own language would have to be present in a text. On the other hand, representing a

child's viewpoint usually means that an adult narrator describes how events seemed to his or her younger self.” (Vice 11) The point of narration makes a difference to a child narrating his or her experience is different from the adult talking about the role of the child to narrate his or her experience.

Renia Spiegel

For Renia Spiegel her *Diary* was her friend and confidante with whom she shared her everyday worries and joys. She started writing her diary on January 31, 1939, when Poland was under Soviet rule. Through her diary we see how antisemitism spread slowly in Poland and how Jews had been affected by the slow but steady change amidst the war. Renia’s diary entries however seem to focus on the futile heartbreaks in friendships and relationships compared to what was happening in Poland at that time. It seems like she was focusing not on the war *per se* and it seemed not very important. Her diary provides an emotional insight through which she was able to cope when the times were tough. It is a suffering which was more psychological which Renia’s seemed to be avoiding talking directly about.

In his study analysing stroke patients’ suffering through diaries, A. Alaszewski maintains that:

“An alternative approach, and one which directly addresses the experience of suffering, is to treat texts such as diaries as a representation, albeit a potentially distorted representation, of personal experience and through systematic analysis seek to develop an understanding or theory about suffering. This alternative approach involves using the material recorded in the diary as the record of some aspect of social reality that is external to the text they are analysing and the text describes and can be used to build up a picture of this external reality whatever aspect the scientist is interested in events, actions, perceptions and emotions,” (44)

In the same manner the paper has used an alternative approach to interpret the suffering of women in Renia’s *Diary*. Here the social reality transcends to the reality of Holocaust that existed outside the inner turmoil. The reality was that she was facing the suffering of a young girl while the events were unfolding. As the diary spans a few years, it shows a series of different events and is not just focused on the sufferings alone but of her life in the ghetto. The prices of goods also rising which added to the sufferings.

Now people seem to be only interested in material things. Which is not surprising at all, since a goose costs 100 złoty, and used to cost 4 złoty; a liter of milk costs 3.50 złoty, and used to cost 15 groszy; a pair of shoes— 300 złoty, and it used to be 12 złoty.... I have decided to have a photo taken, as there isn’t much one can do with money anyway. You

peep out into the street and all you see is lines, lines everywhere, people waiting in lines to buy bread, butter, sugar, eggs, thread, shoes—everything. And if you think that after five hours of waiting you might get anything else on top of bread, you are very, so very wrong. And if you, by any chance, would like to buy two loaves of bread, better be careful, you profiteer. (January 26, 1940)

Women were the ones who were left behind to take care of the families. The rising prices added onto the troubles of these women who were trying to manage the household when the husbands were not around. Even though Renia does not mention this in her diary it was evident that women were taking care of the families. Moreover, things of necessity were being taken away from them or simply being restricted. “This life is terrible. We’re yellow, pale, from this cellar life—from the lack of water, comfortable beds and sleep” (September 18, 1939) She writes on December 28, 1941, “Yesterday coats, furs, collars, oversleeves, hats, boots were being taken away on the street. And now there’s a new regulation that under pain of death it is forbidden to have even a scrap of fur at home.” In the notes Renia’s sister mentions how the men and women were being stripped off their fur on the streets and women were at times asked to remove shoes and had to walk home in their stockings, adding to their humiliation.

Renia’s reality is distorted, she is only able to comprehend what is going around by not focusing on it. As Goldberg notes, “the narrator’s emotional detachment from the event, even when describing a personal experience, is one of the clinical manifestations of trauma” (166). It can be observed that Renia focuses more on what is happening in her mind rather than what is happening outside, which can be interpreted as a clinical manifestation of trauma.

Renia’s dissociation from reality is made clearer through the notes provided by Ariana, her sister. She provides notes on what was happening and how the events unfolded; she gives a clearer picture of the ghetto situation or the general situation in Przemysl. Her notes provide a contrasting reality to what was happening outside Renia’s mind. Despite the dissociation we can argue that there is fear and anxiety evident in her writing. We cannot deny that Renia was not dissociating her thoughts while the horrors were unfolding. By not focusing on the war too much, she is still able to relay a lot of horrors that they had to go through; by talking about her friends and family she highlights their sufferings as women, their fears and hardships.

In her diary entry on April 24, 1940 she writes “I have so many jumbled thoughts in my head, so many. I should perhaps start with the fact that terrible things have been happening. There were unexpected nighttime raids that lasted three day” and in the same diary she has an entry “ About this Holender boy I have mentioned: I fell in love, I chased him like a madwoman,” This instance highlights how her mind was slowly dissociating from the harsh

reality in order to cope with it. It also shows, as Dumitru Tucan points out, the “dissimulation and repression of painful thoughts and memories as she lived and wrote in horrific times” (1067).

Moreover, we observe a kind of persistent trauma that Renia undergoes through the years that she writes in the diary. There was a constant fear of bombing and of war which occupied the minds of the people. Goldberg talks about “persistent trauma which was a prolonged experience for the victims of the Holocaust, where “a kind of routine and its violent unraveling are constantly intertwined” that “creates a routine of terror, fear, and disintegration” (39). Her diary reflects the constant anxiety and threat to life. In the years that she writes her diary, there are multiple instances where she mentions the fear of bombing, the gas attacks, searches, killing, and mass murders. She notes:

“The city is surrounded. Food is in short supply.... This life is terrible. We’re yellow, pale, from this cellar life—from the lack of water, comfortable beds and sleep.” (September 18, 1939)

“War again, war between Russia and Germany. The Germans were here, then they retreated. Horrible days in the basement. The city has been evacuated.” (June 26, 1941)

“Why do we live in fear of searches and arrests? Why can’t we go for a walk, because “children” throw stones? And why, why, why?” (August 16, 1941)

These are just examples of a few entries where she expressed her worries related to what was happening. It can be argued that most of her entries do not evidently show a gendered perspective of the trauma or the sufferings. She expresses her perspectives and her own understanding of events happening around her, which might not be consciously gendered.

When she writes about mothers clinging to their children, the pain and separation felt by other women echoes. Her voice could anticipate the suffering that women in general suffer. “I’ve realized that mother and child are the closest beings after all. I understand that I am to Mom what my child would be to me“(January 1, 1942)

They also suffered from a loss of identity, “I want to speak with you as a free person still. Today I’m like everyone else ... Tomorrow, along with other Jews, I’ll have to start wearing a white armband.” (July 1, 1941)

She mentions “sexual murders” only once in her diary, but this might have been a constant threat and fear among the women and they had to be conscious of and careful about it. They had to work “Today I had work (physical, of course), one gets bread for it, I also got potatoes, that is I have had a victory in the field of provisioning” (July 6, 1941). They also had

to acquire a work pass in order to avoid deportation, which is seen in her later entries. The constant worry of being deported, sent to a ghetto occupied the minds of these girls and was a common cause of anxiety in everyone.

The innocence and maturity in her voice narrates the story of her life that she saw and lived, striving through the harsh realities and coping through life and growing up. At a vulnerable stage of her life she was living through the complexities of war and the impending war and losing her life for not being able to escape. The story of Renia however doesn't end with her death, her story is carried forward by her boyfriend Zygmunt and sister Ariana who could escape and live a life despite the grief and sorrow.

Conclusion

The instances that we find in Renia's Diary barely touch upon the sufferings of women during the Holocaust.

The diary was written in a span of around three to four years, her entries seem to be avoiding topics. She might have dissociated from what was happening outside by avoiding them when writing her diary, which acted as her sole escape. Her dissociation might be an effect of prolonged trauma and uncertainty that she was in. Moreover, the sudden shifts of emotions are very evident in her diary where she constantly moves from one topic to the next. Due to the fragmentation of her narration and constant avoidance and dissociation it becomes difficult to analyse the overwhelming suffering and pain. Moreover, *Renia's Diary* is marked with a sense of dissociation where Renia is constantly running away from reality and focusing on relationships, love, friendship. This constant dissociation is not only a part of innocence but also an aspect of trauma where the mind is trying to escape. However, despite the fragmentation of narration and the dissociation, *Renia's Diary* forms an important part of the study of the Holocaust in Poland and we can still find instances of women suffering. The menial tasks and roles that were suddenly assigned to us and the loss of dignity and identity also contributed the suffering of women. The displacement and distance from family and loved ones seemed to be one of the most important aspects of suffering in women as represented in this diary. Even Renia discussed her suffering in the context of being separated and distanced from her parents and loved ones during the atrocity.

The child's voice is very evident in *Renia's Diary* that focuses on discussing the inner turmoil that is more important to the child than the events that might have a historical unfolding. The paper tried to explore the sufferings of women from a child's perspective, where the perspective is often scaffolded by happenings that do not burden the author. The diary also highlights the unrepresentability of real time horrors.

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Challenges of Teaching English Communication Skills in NIT Srinagar

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Abstract

English Communication skills are indispensable for the engineering students; not just academically but also for their future careers. English communication skills course forms an important component of various engineering colleges, including National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar. NIT Srinagar is a public technical institute in Kashmir, and is one among the fully funded institutes of the Central Government. The English Communication Skills paper is part of the syllabus in the B.Tech program under the title ‘Basic English and Communication Skills’ in the first semester and ‘Advanced English Communication Skills & Organizational Behavior’ in the second semester. Both of these are compulsory papers in the first two semesters of the following streams: Electrical Engineering, Electronics and Communication, Computer Science, Information Technology, Civil, Mechanical and Metallurgy & Material Science, and comprise of three credits each. The syllabus in the said college has been framed with specific aims and objectives. Apart from methods and teaching aids, the motivation and curiosity of the learners play a major role in the teaching learning process. In addition to lack of motivation among students, the teachers face many difficulties including the syllabus, educational and lingual background of the learners, medium of instruction at school level, among others. Amongst all this the teachers also need to continuously improve their English communicative skills. Given this backdrop, the present paper aims to study the challenges faced by teachers in NIT Srinagar.

Keywords: English Communication Skills, Engineering College, Syllabus, Challenges, Teachers, NIT Srinagar.

1. Introduction

English language has become a major medium for communication across borders globally; a deficiency in this area may result in barriers for an individuals' personal and professional development. To overcome this deficiency and to keep a check on the English language skills of an individual, time to time evaluation is required. It is concerned with assessing things like effectiveness of the teaching strategies, methods and techniques, etc. and is of paramount importance in improving the effectiveness and quality of any program. In the teaching learning situation, evaluation is a concept that deals not only with the classroom examination system but also with the syllabus, teaching methodology and difficulties faced in the teaching learning process. Prakasam.V. (2011) explains the problems of learning English in India: "In India it is not the language of our being or identity. It has come to be the language of doing, language of academics and the language of recognition. It is learnt, not really 'acquired' from 'the days of being in the womb'. English is heard everyday all around us, but English does not help us 'socialize' or 'mature' within our 'experience'. It helps us 'grow' outside our 'inner circle'. In spite of all our efforts, we cannot really get many 'coordinate bilinguals' with our academic or professional exposure to English. The point of reference will always be a native variety of English. That's why I call English National Foreign Language".

2. Importance of English for Engineering Students

English is the most widely spoken language in the world, and it serves as a common language for international communication. The importance of the English language for engineers cannot be overstated. Engineers often work on global projects, collaborate with colleagues from different countries, and communicate with clients and stakeholders worldwide. Proficiency in English language enables engineers to effectively convey their ideas, understand requirements, and collaborate with diverse teams.

Engineering involves extensive technical documentation, including reports, research papers, manuals, and specifications. English is the dominant language for publishing technical literature and research and as such engineers need to be proficient in English language to write

and understand technical documents, ensuring effective knowledge transfer and dissemination of engineering advancements. Proficiency in English helps engineers to access a vast pool of knowledge, stay updated with the latest advancements, and leverage existing research and best practices to enhance their work. English proficiency is essential for engineers seeking career growth and professional development.

Engineers who can effectively present their work, participate in discussions, and network with professionals from around the world have a competitive advantage in their field. Engineering projects often involve multidisciplinary teams comprising professionals from different backgrounds and cultures.

English serves as a common language for effective collaboration, ensuring that engineers can communicate their ideas, understand others' perspectives, and work together towards project success. While the importance of English for engineers is undeniable, it is essential to acknowledge that language proficiency alone does not guarantee engineering competence. Engineers also need a strong foundation in technical knowledge, problem-solving skills, and practical experience to excel in their field.

3. Technical English in NIT Srinagar

3.1 Course Description

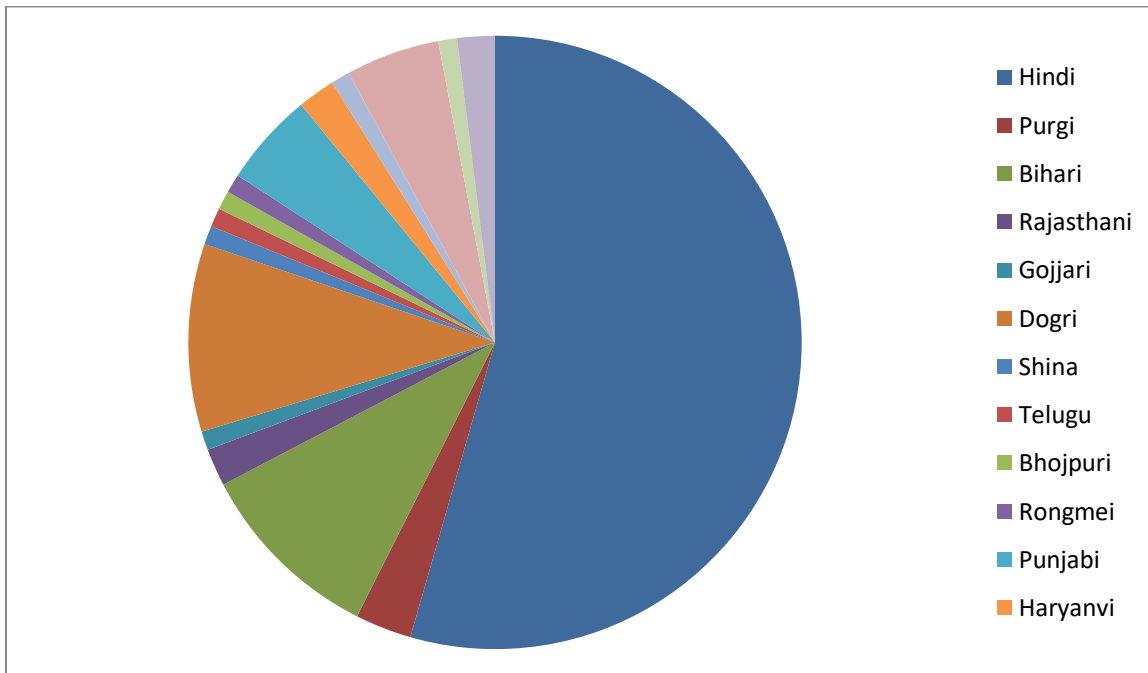
The English Communication Skills course is designed to develop basic reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills of the students. It is organized in a manner that the reading, vocabulary, grammar, and writing exercises are interconnected, contextual as well as non-contextual. It helps them to learn effective reading techniques enabling them to identify main ideas and to glean details from a text. The course facilitates an understanding of word structure and thereby enrichment in vocabulary. It also assists the students to acquire knowledge on formal writing skills. The presentation skills taught through the course intends to enhance the expressive skills of the students such that they are able to express their feelings, thoughts, and expressions effectively to the listeners.

3.2 Course Objectives

The English Communication Skills course in NIT Srinagar aims to help the students do the following:

1. Learn the techniques of effective reading and good comprehension.
2. Develop an understanding of word structure and word formation.
3. Enrich their vocabulary by learning antonyms, synonyms and the meaning and applications of words pertaining to various parts of speech.
4. Use grammatical elements such as articles, prepositions, tenses, modifiers and noun-pronoun and subject-verb agreement correctly.
5. Learn the structure and style of sentences and paragraphs.
6. Study the nature and style of formal letters.
7. Learn the nature and style of formal writing.
8. Focus on the sound system in English and learn correct pronunciation.
9. Focus and learn stress, rhythm, and intonation in English.
10. Develop their presentation skills.

4. Languages Spoken in NIT Srinagar



Students at NIT Srinagar represent a diverse multilingual background. As shown in the figure above, the majority of students in the sample have Hindi as their mother tongue. However, the linguistic diversity extends to other languages such as Gojjary, Kashmiri, Purgi, Dogri, Shina, Bihari, Telugu, Bhojpuri, Rongmei, Punjabi, Haryanvi, Kannada, Bengali, Rajasthani, and Marathi. This rich linguistic variety highlights the challenges and opportunities for fostering effective communication skills in such a multicultural academic setting

5. Methodology

To explore the challenges of English language teaching at NIT Srinagar, interviews, interactions, and observations were conducted with 150 students and 4 teachers. During these sessions, participants shared their experiences, thoughts, and feelings about English language education in the college. The interviews included open-ended questions on topics such as teaching methods, materials, activities, assessment patterns, teacher qualifications, and the language used as the medium of instruction. Both students and teachers were involved in this study to gain insight into the difficulties they face in English language classes

6. Challenges faced in teaching English Communication Skills

The challenges faced by teachers in teaching English communication skills to students in engineering colleges often stem from a combination of institutional, student-related, and pedagogical issues. Some of the key challenges are mentioned below:

i. Lack of Motivation: Teachers face a difficult task when the students are not wholly motivated to learn. Engineering students often prioritize technical skills over writing and communication skills perceiving it as less relevant to their future careers. They resist practicing and developing the language skills, as they do not see immediate relevance or value in them. They prepare for exams only for passing the semester and getting the certificates; as a result, they don't learn anything. This lack of motivation makes it challenging for teachers to engage students and encourage active participation in English classes. Teachers face difficulties in convincing students of the importance of these skills and motivating them to improve. According to Sharma. R. "English language teaching in India, you will agree with me,

has suffered a lot so much that our students who pass intermediate or degree examinations with English either as a compulsory or as an elective subject can neither speak nor write correct English, may be because the emphasis in our schools and colleges has always been on the conceptual content and the stylistic content has been neglected so far”.

ii. Insufficient Time and Curriculum Constraints: Engineering curricula are typically packed with technical subjects, leaving limited time for English language instruction and same is the case with NIT Srinagar. In NIT Srinagar, English Communicative skills are taught in the first two semesters when the students are getting settled with the new course and mainly focus on their main subjects. For the rest of the six semesters, this subject is not taught at all. So, it can be concluded that teachers are given very less time to teach English communicative skills and that is where the needs of the students are not fulfilled, and the engineers lack the required proficiency in English language. Teachers struggle to cover all the necessary language skills and competencies within the limited time, making it difficult to provide comprehensive language training

iii. Varying English Proficiency Levels: NIT Srinagar is a central government institution and therefore has students from diverse linguistic backgrounds, resulting in a wide range of English proficiency levels within a single classroom. Some students may have a lower level of English proficiency, making it challenging for them to understand and communicate in English effectively. This hinders their ability to comprehend technical concepts and participate in class discussions making it difficult for the teacher. Teachers have to cater to the needs of both advanced and struggling learners, which is challenging when designing lesson plans and delivering instructions.

iv. Medium of Instruction: The English language classroom in NIT Srinagar offers heterogeneous background which includes English medium students and non-English medium students. Teachers face lot of difficulties to cater to the needs of any one particular section of their class. Focusing on one group of students disturbs the other group. The students with non-

English background may have a limited vocabulary in English, which makes it difficult for them to understand engineering concepts and express themselves accurately causing teachers to spend extra time building their vocabulary and providing explanations of technical terms. Therefore, the teachers at NIT Srinagar face great difficulties in managing both the groups keeping in consideration the time constraint.

v. Fear of Making Mistakes: Many students were exposed only to their mother tongues in their schools. They did not get adequate opportunities either to listen or speak in English. They listened to English only in the English class. Other subjects were taught in their regional languages as the medium of instruction. Because of the social and economic backgrounds, they did not get enough exposure to English. Such students experience anxiety or fear of embarrassment when speaking in English, which in turn poses a challenge to the teachers. These students struggle with English grammar and sentence structure, leading to errors in their writing and speaking, giving the teachers a hard time.

Teachers need to go beyond the syllabus within the limited class hours to focus on grammar instructions and provide ample practice opportunities to help students improve their language skills simultaneously. Teachers also need to equip themselves to meet the demands of students who studied through the regional language medium in higher secondary schools.

vi. Class Roll: The class sizes in NIT Srinagar are significantly large, making active student participation in classwork nearly impossible. The student-to-teacher ratio is disproportionate, with around 90 to 100 students in the communication skills class. This overcrowding makes it challenging for teachers to create a conducive teaching-learning environment. Consequently, providing individual attention to students, which is crucial during activities, becomes unfeasible.

vii. Limited Exposure to English: Many engineering students may have limited exposure to English outside of the classroom, especially if they come from non-English speaking backgrounds. This lack of exposure can hinder their language acquisition and make it

challenging for teachers to create an immersive English learning environment.

viii. Assessment and Evaluation: Assessing and evaluating English language proficiency in an engineering context is very challenging. Traditional assessment methods may not effectively capture the specific language skills required for engineering communication. Teachers need to develop innovative assessment strategies that align with the unique needs of engineering students.

ix. Cultural Differences: NIT Srinagar admits students from multilingual and multi-cultural backgrounds. Students from different cultural backgrounds have different cultural norms and communication styles, which can affect their language learning experience. Teachers have to be aware of these differences and adapt their teaching methods to accommodate diverse cultural perspectives. Some students lack confidence and have a fear of speaking. Students who are not confident in their English-speaking abilities may be hesitant to participate in class discussions or ask questions. Teachers need to create a supportive and non-judgmental environment that encourages students to speak up and practice their English skills.

7. Recommendations

To address these difficulties, teachers at NIT Srinagar must implement strategies such as providing extra language support, offering individualized feedback, incorporating language activities into technical subjects, and creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Students who did not have English as the medium of instruction may have had limited exposure to the language outside of the classroom. Teachers must encourage students to engage with English through reading books, watching movies, listening to podcasts, and participating in language exchange programs.

The college authorities may also conduct diagnostic tests at the beginning of the course in order to scrutinize the learners according to their proficiency levels. Teaching English to engineering students who are already overloaded with technical coursework can be challenging, teachers need to find ways to integrate language instruction into the engineering curriculum and make efficient use of limited class time.

Students may have varying learning styles, abilities, and motivations, teachers need to employ differentiated instruction strategies to cater to the diverse needs of the students and provide additional support to those who require it.

Additional resources such as tutorials or workshops for students who need extra help must be provided, while challenging advanced learners with more complex tasks. Teachers need to employ various strategies such as incorporating real-world engineering examples into language instruction, integrating technical writing and communication tasks into engineering projects, providing individualized support for students with different proficiency levels, and creating a supportive and interactive classroom environment.

Collaboration with engineering faculty and industry professionals can also help bridge the gap between technical and language instruction. Teachers should also emphasize the importance of English language skills for engineering careers and future professional success. Showcase success stories of engineers who have excelled in their field due to strong English communication skills.

By implementing these strategies, teachers can create a supportive and engaging learning environment that helps engineering students develop their English language skills while recognizing the relevance of these skills in their future careers.

8. Conclusion:

Teaching English Communication Skills at NIT Srinagar poses challenges due to various factors. Some of these challenges include limited time available for English instruction within the engineering curriculum, lack of motivation among students who may prioritize technical subjects, the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the students, limited exposure to language, the fear of making mistakes among students, and the influence of previous language instruction received at school. These factors can make it challenging for English teachers to effectively engage students and facilitate language learning in this specific context resulting in the poor communication skills of the engineers.

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Deconstructing the Deconstruction of Science in *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*

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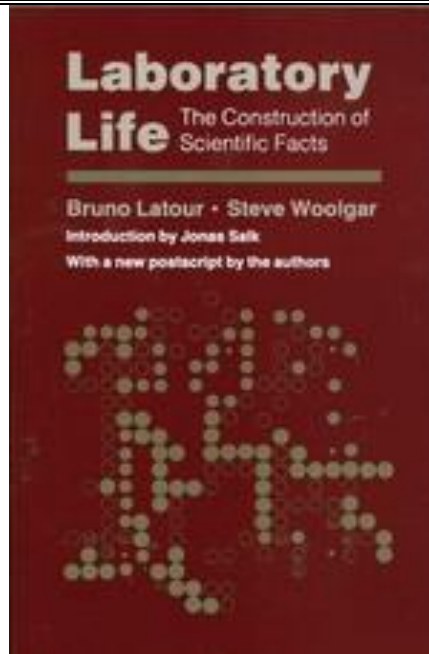
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Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts

Courtesy: www.amazon.com

The book *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* (first published in 1979) as the title suggests is an effort to prove that the **content** of Science is also socially constructed. It can be seen as an addition to the postmodern ‘generalized skepticism with regard to scientific truth’ (Norris 457). The book deconstructs the idea that Scientists are talking about a ‘truth’ out there and that scientific truths are also a result of negotiations among scientists. I am trying in this paper to show the ‘aporias’, ‘slips’, ‘contradictions’, etc. in this book. I am just trying to show the inconsistencies in this book. I am trying to show how the book is

confusing in its methods and how it often uses the very scientific ‘methods’ and vocabulary that suits a ‘scientific’ investigation while trying to prove that ‘science’ is just another narrative.

The idea that science enjoys a special status with regard to ‘truth’ out there has been questioned repeatedly. As Newton says, antagonism to science springs not just from people of ‘spiritual beliefs’, but also from the ‘practitioners of the more recent and less developed social scientists’, who argue that the results of science have nothing to do with ‘Nature and the external world under investigation but are simply narratives, like myths and fairy tales, or the outcome of social agreements’ (2-3). There have been many responses from scientists and philosophers of science to this relativist and constructivist ideas of science (see Newton, Chalmers, Gribbins). I would not be looking at all these debates between the ‘constructivist’ and ‘realist’ approaches to science in this short paper, but only at the inconsistencies in one book, which in fact claims that even the content of science is not about reality. I think it is important that when we speak repeatedly of either the need for ‘scientific temper’ or the need to escape from the ‘hegemony’ of the science to seriously understand these debates about science, though this particular book was published long ago.

Let us begin with a brief introduction to the book in question. The book is based on the field research carried out by Latour for twenty-one months between October 1975 and August 1977 in the Roger Guillemin’s scientific laboratory at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, San Diego, California. The researcher closely observed the processes at the laboratory and the interactions between the scientists, collected a lot of data and then analyzed it. The results came out in the form of the book written in collaboration with Steve Woolgar. The book as the authors accept adds to the strong program of sociology as envisioned by Bloor (Latour Bruno 107).

It is interesting to look at the introduction (skeptical) to the book written by Jonas Salk, the founder of the Salk Institute. As a virologist, Salk was instrumental in discovering the vaccine for polio, and naturally he would have ‘vested’ interests in not accepting the theory that instruments (that is the scientific instruments or as Latour calls them ‘inscription devices’) construct phenomena (Latour 64). Salk accepts the need for such an observational study of the scientists. As far as this book is concerned, Salk’s introduction is at the margins of the text and

text itself as Latour says in his postscript to second edition “.... [has] a life of its own. It is the reader who writes the text” (273). He is saying this not about a literary text, but about his own text that tries to **prove** that science is a social construct. Salk would not have meant for the views in his introduction to have a life of their own, and anyhow as Latour says it is old fashioned to look at the ‘intention’ of the author (273). Saying that this present work is different from other works on scientists, Salk says that the present work is an anthropological probe in to study of scientific culture. He calls the researcher ‘an inside outside observer’. Let us quote some of his words- ‘He has tried to observe scientists with the same cold and unblinking ways with which cells, or hormones, or chemical reactions are studied in this book the authors demonstrate what they call the social construction of science... I realized how a “scientific” study of science could be when viewed by an outsider who felt impelled to imitate the scientific approach he observed ... [the book] reminds of many scientific endeavors in which nothing stands in the way of an impartial inquiry...this kind of objective observation of an outsider...” (12-14). It is clear that Salk is looking at this work as an effort to ‘prove’ a reality that is ‘out there’ just as scientists try to prove something. This points to the problem that anyone who says that ‘all truths are relative’ has to address- what about his/her own statement? This is analogous as Newton observes to the Cretan shouting ‘All Cretans are liars’ (37). While arguing that scientific truths are social constructs, the authors of *Laboratory Life* often describe their own work in scientific language, as I will show later.

But first let me summarize the main arguments of the book. The authors think of themselves as anthropologists visiting a ‘tribe’. They are not visiting any ‘exotic tribe’ (17) but are visiting the ‘tribe’ of scientists. This is a kind of unusual anthropologist because here he is visiting someone not ‘below’ him in civilization as most western anthropologists do. Anthropologist studying a so-called primitive culture will have tools of study that his ‘subjects’ do not have, though his knowledge of the culture that he observes may be limited. Even then, as Newton says, “Few anthropologists would enter an alien milieu without any prior knowledge of that culture” (35). Latour and Woolgar however think of it as an advantage that they have no idea of the activities of the ‘tribe’ that they are studying. The analogy of the anthropologist and the tribe of scientists looks only superficially convincing. Latour and Woolgar certainly are not such outsiders to the scientific tribe as an anthropologist studying an ‘exotic’ culture.

But the analogy is consistently used throughout the book. They refer to their research as ‘the anthropology of science’ (27). Saying that they take the apparent superiority of scientists as insignificant, they add “This is similar to an anthropologist’s refusal to bow before the knowledge of a primitive sorcerer” (29). It seems here that they do accept that the anthropologist is above the ‘sorcerer’ and it is implied that the knowledge of the sorcerer is not something that needs to be bowed to. And do anthropologists really take the apparent superiority of the tribes they study as insignificant? They keep on extending the analogy when they say “Whereas other tribes believe in gods or complicated mythologies, the members of this tribe insist that their activity is in no way to be associated with beliefs, a culture or a mythology” (70). The questions that rise to mind when we read this are whether explanations of natural phenomena based on belief in god or mythology are the same as the explanations of the natural phenomena by scientists and whether the ‘strong program of sociology’ for the tribals like Latour and Woolgar is similar to the god or mythology of the ‘primitive’ tribes.

They take this analogy literally and say things like “The general mythology provides them with the tenet that the brain controls the endocrine system, and they share this with a large cultural group of neuroendocrinologists” (55). In other words, that the brain controls the endocrine system is not a matter of the reality of the physical world but only a matter of the mythology and scientists are only working within this mythology rather than with ‘facts’ about brain and cells. A further implication is that the claims of science about such things are on a par with any claims about the natural world made on the basis of ‘mythologies’. (Of course, Latour and Woolgar will say that they are using the word mythology in the sense in which, say, Barthes used the term, but as I have shown in the citations from their texts above, they have not used the word mythology in such sense.)

As the scope of this paper prevents me from discussing all the arguments in this book, let me now look at one important argument that they make about instruments and facts. They say, “the spectrum produced by a nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectrometer ... would not exist but for the spectrometer. It is not simply that phenomena depend on certain material instrumentation; rather, the phenomena are thoroughly constituted by the material setting of the laboratory. The artificial reality, which participants describe in terms of an objective entity, has in fact been constructed by the use of inscription devices” (64). They are mainly talking

about in this book about neuroendocrinology; for the sake of simplification, I would provide an analogy. This is akin to saying that the planets of Jupiter are constructed by the telescope. In fact, there have been debates about trusting the ‘sophisticated’ instruments that scientists use. The argument is if you can see something only through a particular instrument, how you can think of this as a result of discovering of a fact ‘that is out there’ and not as a contribution of the instrument. The simple answer would be that Galileo would have shown how his telescope is trustworthy by first focussing it on a distant fort and asking people to check the dependence of the telescope and then asked them to trust the existence of the planets of Jupiter. I am simplifying the argument, but for a more nuanced discussion of the role of instruments and how instruments are used in science, see Chalmers 179-196.

The interesting thing about this book, however, is that the authors do use the terms that fit comfortably with ‘scientific methodology’ and often try to show how they are ‘objective’. They say they are ‘monitoring’ scientific activity in the lab (27). Look at some of these quotes from the book “the term anthropology is intended to denote the preliminary presentation of accumulated **empirical** (emphasis added) material” (28) and “it is necessary to show through **empirical** (emphasis added) investigation how such craft practices are organised into a systematic and tidied research report” (29). They also say “This, after all, is one of the basic principles of scientific enquiry. No matter how confused or absurd the circumstances and activities of his tribe might appear, the ideal observer retains his faith that some kind of a systematic, ordered account is attainable” (43). If science does have a belief, it is precisely that there are laws that govern seemingly random events. Does this mean that Latour and Woolgar are themselves following ‘scientific method’?

Throughout the book we see an effort to demonstrate the objectivity of the writers. The writing style tries to erase all ‘social factors’ that may have lead the authors to talk about the social construction of scientific truth. Often, they use statistics, tables and percentages to make a point (for example, 56 and 62). Which mythology depends on such strategies of persuasion? Certainly not the mythologies of ‘primitive tribes’.

They do accept that “Obviously, our own account cannot escape the conditions of its own construction” (252). They add, “In a fundamental sense, our own account is no more than fiction. But this does not make it inferior to the activity of laboratory members: they too were busy constructing accounts to be launched in the agonistic field and loaded with various sources of credibility in such a way that once convinced, others would incorporate them as givens, or

as matters of fact, in their own construction of reality” (257). This says that their account is also fiction, but their account is that science is fiction. It is quite mental gymnastics to reconcile the two parts of the above sentence.

Thus, Latour and Woolgar have tried to show the constructed nature of scientific facts. This they say is a constructivist position. It is entirely understandable that there are many ‘constructs’ in society and there is a need to reveal the constructedness of, for example, gender. It is also true that we do need to reflect upon the role of science in society and question the privilege it enjoys, if it really does. But to say that scientific ‘facts’ are on the same level as mythological facts cannot be proved. Though this book and the debates about it are old, I feel that there is always a need to revisit such debates to seriously engage with questions connected science. If we do not, we may as well go to a sorcerer of ‘primitive’ tribe to find solutions to our problems.

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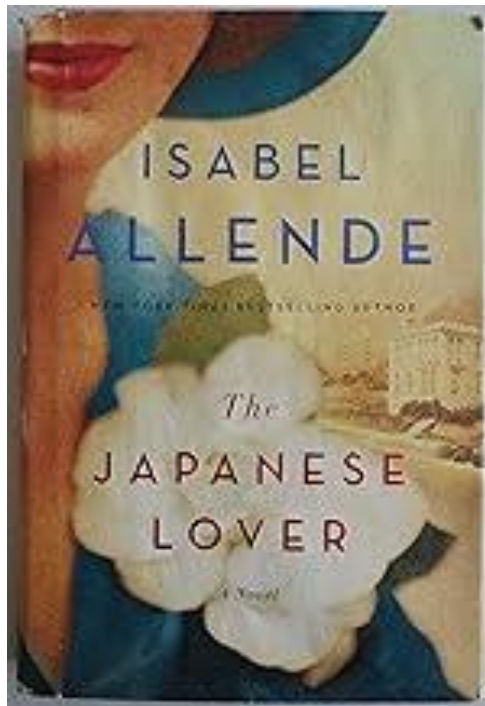
B.V. Ramaprasad, Ph.D.

Deconstructing the Deconstruction of Science in *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*

Hybridity in Isabel Allende's *The Japanese Lover*: Bhabhaian Approach and Cultural Expressions

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Courtesy: www.amazon.com

Identity has been deemed as a crucial concern for people whose living situation is either deliberately or involuntarily altered. Individuals are compelled to adapt to a foreign or new space in which they do not belong and must construct subjectivity. Due to the cultural intersectionality, the immigrants are neither considered as native members of the host culture nor able to claim to

be part of their own. The lack of control and dependency are not under the control of either the coloniser or the colonised. But there is a conscious resistance on the part of the colonised.

Bhabha demonstrates how the histories and cultures of colonialism continuously encroach on the present, forcing us to rethink how we see cross-cultural interactions rather than viewing them as something that is confined to the past. Bhabha views culture is not an unchangeable essence, however, characterized by flux, transformation and most importantly by mixed-ness or interconnectedness, which Bhabha terms as hybridity.

Through this lens, the present research paper makes an attempt to study the causes of hybridity, homelessness and ambivalence in Isabel Allende's *The Japanese Lover* to analyse an unusual blend of simultaneous emotions of repulsion and attraction that exist between the colonizer and the colonized due to liminal status.

Keywords: Isabel Allende, *The Japanese Lover*, Identity, cultural, intersectionality, hybridity, homelessness, ambivalence

Introduction

In the present context of social, economic, and cultural globalization, the term Hybridity is loaded in social and cultural theory. Following the colonial encounter, hybridity highlights the difficulties of returning to any sense of intrinsic national or cultural identity. The process of hybridization is never an even exchange and is always inevitably a lived, power-laden activity, even though the term is frequently employed without question to refer to a balanced and harmless blending of cultures. The porous boundaries, psychological barriers, socially constructed racial superiority, political hegemony, economic domination, or military power to the detriment of others was further eroded by the process of globalization. Any migration is a result of a persistent global crisis or of social, economic, or political injustice on a worldwide scale. Migration alters how people think about identity and cultural understanding in addition to how they see physical location. Divergent opinions on hybridity have been expressed by

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academics. Hutnyk (2005) asserts “Hybridity has come to mean all sorts of things to do with mixing and combination in the moment of cultural exchange”.

The term ‘hybridity’ traditionally carried the connotation of being ‘impure’, ‘racially contaminated’, and genetically ‘deviant’, in social evolution theory,” says Hoon (2006). People travel not just physically but also with all of their social, emotional, and cultural quirks, which makes it impossible for them to be mechanically assimilated into the new environment. Their psychology and personality were impacted by the unintentional internalization of other people’s cultural qualities through adaptation and adoption. This gap widened with each generation that followed, diminishing the longing to return to the country. Every community in the world is going through the process of hybridity. In situations where conflicted identity is reflected, hybridity becomes obvious.

The terms “hybrid” and “hybridity” however, have been adopted to denote cultural synthesis in the latter half of the 20th century. The notion of hybridity is referred to as the “new consensual culture of fusion and synthesis” says Lo (2000). Camilleri, F., & Kapsali, M. (2020) says Hybridity refers to mixture and fusion, of species, races, plants or cultures. It is the combination of cultural components from various sources. It creates a fresh, varied and frequently intricated form of cultural expression. Marwan M. Kraidy explains “hybridity involves the fusion of two hitherto relatively distinct forms, styles or identities, cross-cultural contact which often occurs across national borders as well as across cultural boundaries” (*Cultural Hybridity and Communication* 5).

The term hybridity in cultural studies describes the combining and blending of cultural components from various sources to create a fresh, varied and frequently intricate form of cultural expression. When individuals from various backgrounds come together, customs, languages, beliefs and practices blend to form hybrid cultures. It recognizes that cultures are dynamic, ever-evolving products of interactions and exchanges. In biology, the term hybridity refers to the progeny of two plants or animals of different species or varieties. The idea was modified for use in cultural studies to refer to the blending of various cultural components. In

large part of the contributions of postcolonial theorists Homi K. Bhabha, is a well-known theorist in the latter half of the twentieth century who examined the concept of hybridity within the framework of colonialism. Bhabha highlighted the intricate interplay and blend that arise from the collision of diverse cultural traditions. He argues that colonial encounters are marked by power imbalances, where the colonizer seeks to impose their cultural norms and values on the colonized. Hybridity, as conceptualized by Bhabha, involves a complex interplay of different cultural traditions. It is not a simple blending or assimilation but a process of constant interaction and adaptation. He also emphasises the disruptive nature of hybridity, which challenges binary oppositions and fixed identities. This disruption occurs because hybridity exists in the liminal spaces between established categories which introduces ambiguity and complexity, making it difficult to adhere strictly to colonial distinctions between the self and the other. Individuals and communities navigating hybrid spaces may experience a sense of cultural fluidity and multiple affiliations, resisting the imposition of a singular, fixed identity which he brings under cultural ambivalence.

Bhabha is one of the remarkable critics who concentrated on hybridity and addressed the question of identity in a hybridised space. In his collection of articles, *The Location of Culture (TLC)* develops a set of challenging concepts through which he illuminates how both the oppressed and the oppressor's identities are interwoven. It is neither examined nor explored the oppressed individually, however dependent on each other. The condition of migrants stated by Bhabha under his theory of hybridity is "new, neither the one nor the other" (*The Location of Culture* 25). Hybridity became more broadly associated with questions of 'subjectivity' and 'identity', eventually leading to notions of cultural hybridity (Kraidy, 2005)

All of these definitions have one thing in common: hybridity refers to the blending or blending of cultures, or, more generally, the 'creolization' of civilizations. Without much debate, hybridity can all be viewed as expected results at this stage of cultural contact. Ang's pragmatic definition of hybrid her own identity as "suspended in-between: neither truly Western nor authentically Asian; embedded in the West, yet always partially disengaged from it; disembedded from Asia yet, somehow, enduringly attached to it emotionally". She asserts that all

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migrants have both positive and negative reflections when they are going through an identity crisis that is “hybrid implies unsettling of identities” (2003). In contrast to Hutnyk, Hoon, and Lo, who see hybridity as a process of cultural blending that creates a unique altered identity, Ang views identity as an entity and interprets hybridity through the changing frames of identity. Hall (1994) says “Not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity, which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity,” is how diaspora experience is described in the literary texts.

This research paper intends to study the invisible facets of hybridity, unhomeliness and ambivalence in Isabel Allende’s *The Japanese Lover (TJL)* through the lens of Bhabhaian concepts. When individuals from various backgrounds come together, customs, languages, beliefs and practices blend to form a hybrid culture. Hybridity acknowledges the dynamic, ever-evolving nature of cultural connections and exchanges. Allende presents her characters as migrated from their nation to the USA to survive. Her characters departure from their native land and experience a liminal space in which they find themselves excluded from two cultures. Migration is a common ground in Allende’s novel that connects with Bhabha’s theory on hybridity.

The term **hybridity** is the combination of cultural components from various sources. It creates a fresh, varied and frequently intricated form of cultural expression. Marwan M. Kraidy explains “hybridity involves the fusion of two hitherto relatively distinct forms, styles or identities, cross-cultural contact which often occurs across national borders as well as across cultural boundaries” (*Cultural Hybridity and Communication* 5). M. A. Rafey Habib, an academic humanities scholar, in *A History of Literary Criticism and Theory: From Plato to the Present*, highlights “Hybridity expresses a state of ‘in betweenness,’ as in a person who stands between two cultures” (750). Bhabha is one of the remarkable critics who concentrated on hybridity and addressed the question of identity in a hybridised space. In his collection of articles, *The Location of Culture (TLC)* develops a set of challenging concepts through which he illuminates how both the oppressed and the oppressor’s identities are interwoven. It is neither examined nor explored the oppressed individually, however dependent upon each other. The

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same is located in Isabel Allende's *The Japanese Lover (TJL)*. The condition of migrants stated by Bhabha under his theory of hybridity is "new, neither the one nor the other" (*The Location of Culture* 25).

Bhabha questions the purity of culture and nationhood, he believes the colonized and colonizer's gathering creates an element of "negotiation" (*TLC* 23) which is a firm ground for how their interaction leads to structuring identities. Huddart denotes that Bhabha's insistence on hybridity's ongoing process sheds light on the fact that how "cultures are the consequence of attempts to still the flux of cultural hybridities" (*Homi K. Bhabha* 4). Thus, Bhabha views culture as not in its unchangeable essence, but characterized by change, flux, transformation and most importantly by mixed-ness or interconnectedness which Bhabha terms as hybridity.

Bhabha in his *The Location of Culture* explains "being in the 'beyond', then, is to inhabit an intervening space" (7) in which the term beyond elucidates border as a controversial position in which some are gathered. The paradoxical nature of the border is in a way that both separates and joins different places. Bhabha then stresses cultural and social differences that enable one to go beyond the fixed groups and bring about fluidity and continuity in the process of cultural formation. It owes to the ambivalent nature of the border that the colonized to establish identity, on the other hand the colonizer's identity is threatened. Under the topic "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences" in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, Bhabha advocates "an international culture, based not on the exoticism or multiculturalism of the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (209). In the same work, Bhabha denotes the idea of Frantz Fanon "the liberatory 'people' who initiate the productive instability of revolutionary cultural change are themselves the bearers of a hybrid identity" (208).

Fluidity of Identity

The conception of hybridity emphasises cross-cultural contact which frequently exceeds the cultural boundaries and national borders. The notion signifies the dynamic nature of cultural exchange and blending of diverse influences. The opening part of *The Japanese Lover* is named as "Lark House" (*TJL* 1). Allende introduces the Lark House as a cultural identity bearer which remarks hybridity with the insights of fluidity. Allende delineates that "Lark House had

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undergone many changes over the years but still charged fees in line with each resident's income, the idea being to create a certain economic and racial diversity" (1). This is a mansion in which there are main blocks of houses, offices, library, dining hall, workshops and communal areas are fit within ten acres of land. There live white and black old people, most of them are middle-class. The migrants over there are free thinkers, social, ecological activists and spiritual teachers. The aim of the Lark house is to look after two hundred and fifty elderly ones with an average age of eighty-five years who need somebody's help to take care of themselves. Also, it is to bring economic and racial diversity to the house. Irina Bazili, the caretaker of the protagonist Alma and other elders in the house organises a ceremony to celebrate and exchange their cultural and religious festivities with each other. Allende remarks "no one could possibly feel excluded" (66). This house truly means to restore the lives of older people. And also to bring out the blend of different cultures, identities and the reflection of the multiculturalism that exist during the war.

The "The Fukuda Family" (75) depicts the cultural differences of two families that belong to Japan and America. The head of the Fukuda family is Takao Fukuda. He is the father of Alma's beloved Ichimei. In 1912, Takao Fukuda migrated from Japan to San Francisco because of the invasions. Allende calls them as "issei" (75) ("issei" are the first-generation Japanese immigrants who left Japan after 1907 to North America and entered the United States or Canada) these migrants are not granted citizenship until 1952. The Fukuda family came from a military background and had been loyal soldiers for the emperor of the country for centuries. Takao has been the gardener of the Belasco family for a long period at Sea Cliff. Later he collaborated with Alma's uncle Isaac Belasco to begin gardening. He easily gets fluxed with the entirely different culture and atmosphere of America, but he has not forsaken his cultural practice. Even though he felt bad to see his children adapt to the individualistic values and impudent behaviour of the natives, he strongly followed, practiced and protected his culture to where he got migrated. He always feels "proud of his culture and his language" (75). In the meantime, the family rituals and practices of the Fakuda family have brought impressions on Alma who was ejected from Poland and compelled to live with her uncle, Belasco family. Alma noticed a gesture of greeting from Ichimei Fukuda which is unfamiliar to Western society. When Alma and Ichimei do gardening, Ichimei hears his father approaching him, "he dropped his pair of pruning shears and stood stiffly to attention" (47). In this context, Bhabha's concept of

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hybridity acknowledges the agency of the colonized in shaping their cultural narratives. It is not a passive acceptance of colonial influence but an active process of appropriation, reinterpretation and rearticulation of cultural elements. Thus, the culture and lifestyle of the Fukuda family differentiated from the Belasco family is well pertained to Bhabha's concept of hybridity.

In the chapter "Alma, Nathaniel, and Ichimei" (50), Takao Fukuda teaches martial arts to Isaac Belasco's son Nathaniel Belasco, where Fukuda works as a gardener. Allende narrates "Takao Fukuda taught a combination of judo and karate to his children as well as other youngsters from the Japanese community, in a rented garage on Pine Street" (53). Takao helps Nathaniel to learn martial arts to defend himself from his classmates who beat him at school. Similarly, the eighth chapter titled "Seth Belasco" (68) tells the history of the Belasco family and the protagonist, Alma Mendel. The Belascos have become the only family that survived from the grand family of Mendels in Poland which was later swept away. Isaac Belasco follows the hospitality and runs the art of stage dramas and theatre dramas that was started by the most famous ancestor David Belasco. David was "a theatrical director, producer and author of more a than hundred works" (71) in San Francisco. Isaac Belasco takes over the job that his forefather left and all the members of the Belasco family take part in performing dramas which later Alma and Fukuda children combine to stage performances. The theatre culture is not known to the Fukuda family still Takao has been encouraging his children to join the Belascos. It clearly expresses the cultural exchange between two different cultural families. Therefore, Allende's characters are initially entangled in liminal space; they find themselves on the order of two cultures between the culture of their homeland and the culture of the host land. Each character in the novel has undergone the impact of cultural hybridity which has affected their lives in the later part with good and unpleasant outcomes.

Unhomeliness

A further key concept in Bhabhaian theory is unhomeliness. Living in a hybridised space and being confronted with the dominant identity and distant from the native territories, the colonized find it hard to get a fixed identity, because neither they belong to their own culture nor the colonizer. It seems as though they are deserted by both cultures. Therefore, adapting and

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adopting a stable subjectivity is challenging on account of living in a hybrid space and being exposed to a superior culture. Needless to say, unhomeliness is a feeling of unhomed within oneself apart from the physical aspect. Lois M. Tyson, a professor of English at Grand Valley State University says, “to be unhomed is to feel not at home even in your own home because you are not at home in yourself: your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refugee” (*Critical Theory Today* 421). As a consequence, unhomeliness makes psychological refugees mix their two cultures.

In Bhabha’s words, “to be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the ‘unhomely’ be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres” (*The Location of Culture* 9). It can be said that Bhabha sees unhomeliness as the point from where one might go beyond the binary opposition of homeness and homelessness. It is observed with the characters like Alma, Irina, Ichimei and his family in *TJL*. These characters get stuck between homeness and homelessness. They regard their life as one moving on the threshold of being and non-being. Here, unhomeliness does not signify homelessness; however, it is an uncanny feel disturbing between self and other.

The “The Polish Girl” (36) tells the first sign of unhomeliness felt by Alma, the protagonist of the story, due to continuous attacks during the Second World War, Alma was forcefully migrated to America in 1939 at her eight years by her parents to stay with her uncle and aunt Isaac and Lillian Belasco in their opulent Sea Cliff mansion at San Francisco. The migration causes Alma an unhomed feeling and alienation in the new home. Her real name Alma Mendel has changed to Alma Belasco. Allende narrates the pain and suffering of Alma as:

... they were forced apart. When she [Alma] learned that Samuel [Alma’s brother] was leaving, Alma had her first ever tantrum. It began with crying and screaming, followed by her writhing in agony on the floor, and only ended when her mother and governess plunged her ruthlessly into a tub of icy water. Samuel’s departure left her both sad and on edge, as she suspected it was the prologue to ever more drastic changes. (38)

Thus, unhomeliness evokes pain, agony, discomfort and unease with the people around and caused alienation. It creates a sense of not belonging and being disconnected from one's surroundings or even oneself as Alma feels in the new and crucial phase of life after the departure from her family and native land.

At the outset, Alma notices the differences between herself and her cousin Martha and Sarah, who according to her, "lived in different world" (45) because they always preoccupy with the culture of involving themselves with fashion, parties and potential boyfriends. Martha and Sara never befriend Alma and so she felt alienated. Within the family Alma whimpered and isolated herself inside the wardrobe at night. Later, her cousin, Nathaniel gives refuge and she has a friendly relationship which later becomes a marital relationship. Even after living with Belascos, Alma depends on him. After long displacement Alma finds Nathaniel's friendship as a solace to her pain.

The "The Fukuda Family" (75) explains unhomeliness which is majorly seen in the Japanese family identity. While Isaac Belasco and Takao Fukuda join to improvise their partnership in gardening, they plan to set up a nursery. Their first step to buy land in Isaac's name but not registering with the Japanese identity of Fukuda because "around the 1913 law that prohibited *issie* from becoming American citizens, owning land, or buying property" (82) because "*issei*" are the first-generation Japanese immigrants to North America were. Initially, the *issie* were used to be like immigrants from other nations but due to the consequences succeeding the Japanese assault, they are segregated from other nations and treated cruelly in the course of time because of the "Imperial Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941" (83).

In fact, all Japanese are suspected of spying or collaborating with the enemy country the Japan, an order was issued and forcefully insisted to "be interned in ten concentration camps in isolated areas" (83). The people of Japan are named as "yellow" (83). All the youngsters are separated and forced to work in the military camp. In the meantime, the Japanese' "ancestral

traditions began to disappear . . .” (95) simply led to the loss of the cultural identity of Japanese migrants.

In the “The Yellow Peril” (88), there were “eight thousand evacuees had to live in little more than seven thousand square feet” (94) at Topaz. It reads that the Japanese never took the time to build up a lasting identity; in reality, their identities are always switching from homeliness to unhomeliness. Their inability to find a home for themselves is the reason they start adopting the ways of the colonizer. Allende elucidates that under the surveillance of the American military, the Japanese reform new:

schools, nurseries, sports areas, and a newspaper. They created art from bits of wood, stones, and other material left over from the construction of the camp. They made jewelry from fossilized shells and peach stones, stuffed dolls with rags, and toys with sticks. They started a library with donated books, as well as theater companies and music groups. (94)

Instead of rioting against the military of America to demand their homes or lands and cultures, Japanese simply built up a region for their fundamental facilities for survival and education to fetch knowledge for children and entertainment. In 1945, the concentration camps began to close and the evacuees are not permitted to return to San Francisco. Then, again the Fukuda family remains homeless. Allende narrates “where they had nothing to go back to anyway. Takao had lost the right to send the plots he used to cultivate, as well as his house; there was nothing left of his savings or of the money Isaac Belasco had given him when they were evacuated” (125).

Another major character suffer from the feel of unhomeliness is Irina Bazili, a young Romanian girl of eleven years raised by her grandparents Costea and Petruta. Irina was forcefully sent from her homeland a Moldovan village. Her grandparents sent her alone in the train to reunite with her mother living at Texas. Irina’s mother Radmila and her husband, Jim Robyns receive her and to take care of her. But in the new home Jim Robyns closed her inside a room where no one could enter and see her. But he took photos and videos of Irina without her

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knowledge. Later, Robyns shared her photos and videos on porn channels. Because of this, Irina's face was flashed to the world. When it came to be found by the agent of Wilkins, he rescued Irina and kept his eye over her right after she moved to San Francisco. Later, she started working at Lark House from 2010. In the case of Irina, she kept moving from place to place and remained homeless. Though she got good companions like Alma, Cathy and Seth, Irina feels unhomey. She was alleviated from her sufferings and trauma at Lark house with elder people. Thus, Allende's novel depicts dislocation and unhomed feelings. All her characters have manifested the process of self-realization in hybridity by settling the struggle of identity.

Ambivalence

Another Bhabhaian concept taken for discussion in *The Japanese Lover* is ambivalence. The idea of ambivalence looks culture as consisting of opposing perceptions and dimensions. It is a symbol of authority of colonial power that Bhabha signifies "after the traumatic scenario of colonial difference, cultural or racial, returns the eye of power to some prior, archaic image or identity. Paradoxically, however, such an image can neither be 'original' - by virtue of the act of repetition that constructs it - nor 'identical' - by virtue of the difference that defines it" (TLC 107).

Further, Bhabha argues that "the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference" (107). The colonial presence is complex, embodying two dimensions of discourse. On one side, it presents itself as original and powerful, asserting mastery over the colonized. This dimension is marked by invention and control. On the other side, it involves displacement where colonial powers impose their ideas and systems on others, often resulting in a distorted perception of reality. Both dimensions contribute to the ambivalence of colonialism.

The relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed becomes essentially unstable and ambiguous due to ambivalence. In the words of Bill Ashcroft et al. (2007) in *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, ambivalence is seen as the "unwelcome aspect of colonial discourse"

(10). Therefore, colonial discourse is ambivalent by nature and it contribute to its extinction. Likely, the characters in *The Japanese Lover* have a striking combination of simultaneous sensations of repulsion and attraction of the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized due to bordering status.

The protagonist Alma is also Alma's having an oscillating and ambivalent identity; in fact, ambivalence is one of the Alma's peculiarities. Alma neither be assigned a certain location, nor her identity and way of life be defined and stable. She was brought to the USA at her eight years from Poland where she was born. Her memories of her native home follow her everywhere. This polarization persisted throughout her entire life. Ambivalence is not limited to her social life as an immigrant; it also plays a role in her subjectivity. Initially, she was attached to Nathaniel later gradually fell in love with Ichimei Fukuda. They are pulled apart by the interment period in the meantime. The fourteenth chapter "Boston" (130) describes that she has suffered from the indefinite absence of her ardent lover Ichimei. Allende says "had abandoned her: first her brother and her parents, then Ichimei . . . it was her destiny to lose everyone she loved most" (132). When Alma stayed in Boston for her education, Nathaniel cared her and this made Alma to love him. Allende says, "she loved him devotedly" (133). However, Alma builds a life for herself and spent her remaining days in America. In addition to the variations in her nationality, there are disparities in her personal life as well.

Alma Mendel and Nathaniel Belasco got married. Alma was bearing the child of Ichimei which was miscarried. She never forgets Ichimei's love. However, she loves both equally like an immigrant who remains faithful to his native and the host. In her old age, Alma moves to Lark House despite possessing the estate, is another example of her ambivalence. The reason behind the shift to Lark House is the death of her lover Ichimei. Allende remarks the state of Alma's ambivalence as "she moved to Lark House, she began sending the letters to herself . . . She received and read them, treasuring them as if they were new" (319).

Megumi, a daughter of Takao Fukuda, is the one who is primarily responsible for the dual emotions of attraction and repulsion that is called ambivalence. She and her family were

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imprisoned in Topaz Camp alongside other Japanese nationals, and just because of their nationality “they saw as the inhumane treatment meted out to the Japanese – Americans” (115). Meanwhile one of the American soldiers named Boyd Anderson had suddenly fallen in love with Megumi Fukuda while working as a volunteer in the internment camp. Initially, she hesitated to get attracted to Boyd because of the unfair treatment by the Americans, she detested the United States on the one hand, but eventually she also falls in love with one of them and found comfort in his company on the other. Megumi too liked Boyd after having many ambiguities regarding her cultural norms and family situations. Megumi could enroll in “two things in life: to become a doctor and to marry Boyd” (119). She also succeeded in finding her true love with that American soldier after the internment camp was over. Thus, ambivalence is demonstrated through love and feeling which are often conflicted due to unstable emotions, cultural indifferences and societal expectations. All these reasons lead to a sense of uncertainty and indecision in the complex relationship of Alma, Ichimei, Nathaniel and Megumi.

Thus, the characters and events of *The Japanese Lover* go hand by hand through the lens of Bhabhaian concepts hybridity, unhomeliness and ambivalence. This is not an everlasting condition for the characters, and they are inevitably led to a hybrid state. In a research paper titled “Post-Colonial Reading of Isabel Allende’s *The Japanese Lover*”, the authors say, “Hybridity is indeed the product of cultural exchange through which the characters render mixed identities” (Shabrang and Karimi 85). Therefore, Allende’s characters are initially entangled in liminal space; they find themselves in the order of two cultures between the culture of their homeland and the culture of the host land.

To conclude, the novel *The Japanese Lover* illustrated the character’s sense of displacement and lack of belonging, leading to their journey of self-discovery within the context of hybridity and the resolution of identity conflicts. Both concepts are applied in the lives of Alma, Ichimei’s family and Irina who were all dislocated from their homeland and lost their culture due to the war. Though society had pressured the Fukuda family during the internment period, the family tried hard to keep their culture alive in the host land. The Fukuda family was the one who was deeply affected by unhomeliness for years, lost their family members during the

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period of battle and when they were freed, they found they had nowhere to live. After being homeless, Alma and Irina found refuge with Nathaniel and Seth subsequently. Ambivalence is demonstrated through the love and feelings which are often conflicted due to the unstable emotions, cultural indifferences and societal expectations leading to a sense of uncertainty and indecision in the complex relationship of Alma and Ichimei. Because of her multiple ambiguities, Alma ruined her relationship with Ichimei by feeling uneasy about carrying his baby and consequently getting married to her cousin Nathaniel. Irina was drowned in ambivalence with her past events like Alma and kept on rejecting the awaiting better life with Seth. All the characters and occurrences in the novel were well endured the concepts of Bhabha.

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**An Analysis of the Marathi Drama ‘na:tigo:ti’ Written by
‘Jaychand Dalavi’
(The Story of a Mentally Retarded Boy)**

Dr. M. Mohanalakshmi

Abstract

‘na:tigo:ti’, ‘relationship’ is a drama written by ‘Jaychand Dalavi’ in Marathi language. It was published in the year 1991. The entire play is about the intricacies of the relationship all the main characters have with Bachchu, the mentally retarded boy. Each one of them chows hope on the curing of the illness.

The story and conversations are so fantastically written that the readers will understand and feel for the characters. Each one cares for each other and take into consideration their partners’ feelings and thoughts and opinions, etc. These decide what kind of relationship and sympathy they had, which are well established in the drama.

The drama is well-scripted and the dialogues expressed and executed so nicely that it truly engages the readers very much. This is what sets apart this drama and the writer. Also a sensitive subject as this is handled so perfectly that the whole drama feels so balanced. The readers also travel with the story and characters till the end. This is the success of the writer. The story is well woven like a beautiful and attractive carpet.

Keywords: Jaychand Dalavi, na:tigo:ti, Tragic drama, characters, mentally retarded, innocence and punishment, saving a soul, theme, symbols

1. Introduction

Drama may be defined as a captivating literary genre that is brought to life through performance. Though, normally, the parts of a dramatic structure are the prologue, acts, scenes, and the epilogue, this drama has only two acts and are sub-divided into scenes. Drama is the expression and exploration of personal, cultural and social worlds through role and situation that engages, entertains and challenges.

This analysis is on the drama named 'na:tigo:ti', 'relationship' written by 'Jaychand Dalavi' in Marathi language. It is a two act play, published in the year 1991.

This drama revolves around mentally retarded children and the burden because of them to the parents. There are a large number of studies on mentally retarded children in the general population. However, since the focus of this drama and the analysis is on the problem of the mentally regarded boy, this will not be reviewed in detail about these children but will only be referred to as a problem and the story spanned around the boy.

The objective of this analysis is to analyse the story, characters (Gupta, 2009) and the information given to the readers about mentally retarded children and the way to handle them, etc., expressed through the characters of the drama.

2. The theme of the drama

A theme is a recurring idea that is present throughout the work (Merga Sisay, 2021). Themes may concentrate on social justice: addressing issues like inequality, discrimination, and the fight for human rights, etc.; redemption and forgiveness: exploring themes of guilt, punishment, and the possibility of finding grace, etc. ; love and loss: exploring the complexities of love, despair, etc., of human connection. However, the central theme of this drama focuses on family dynamics: examining the intricate relationships within families; it is on the hope of getting the mentally retarded son cured. Hence the incidences taken place around the son.

3. The roles

There are seven characters, namely, Bacchu, Shylaja, Kathdare. Venkatraman, Pandit, Gaytode and Baghmare. The character and the relationships are as follows:

1. Bachchu is the mentally retarded son
2. Kathdare is his father
3. Shylaja is his mother
4. Venkatraman is their family friend (a Tamil)
5. Pandit is the officer of Shylaja and a homeopathy doctor
6. Gaytonde is an officer in Pandit's office
7. Bhagmare is an office boy

4. Situation

Bachchu, the mentally retarded boy is at home because he does not understand anything, about himself or anything that happen around him. He listens to his mother. Father often gets angry, may be because of his inability to do anything fruitful for the boy and the

family as well or poverty. One Dr. Pandit gives medicine to him. The whole story revolves around the boy.

5. Language

It is written in Marathi. The author uses beautiful language. The dialogues are short and expressive. The mood and character of the roles are expressed well in the dialogues. The author beautifully writes different styles, words, sentences according to the characters he has built up.

For example, when Mr. Pandit talks, he uses more English words since he is working in an office. The situation demands that kind of language use. In telephonic conversations also he uses more English, which gives him a different status.

In the character of Mr. Venkatraman, since he is a non-Marathi person, the author uses English, Hindi, Marathi and sometimes little Tamil. The style and vocabulary suits the character very much.

The language and diction used by Mr. Kathdare and Mrs. Shylaja are different from others and nice to listen to.

The mocking tone and sentences used by Mr. Gaytonde also attracts the readers very much. The character is so established to bring in the relationship of Mr. Pandit and Mrs. Shylaja. In fact, the language and style used by the author is praiseworthy.

6. The Symbol

A symbol is something which stands for, or represents something else and does not convey the direct meaning (Mohan, 2006). Symbols are often used in a drama to deepen its meaning and remind the audience of the themes or issues it is discussing. Here the mentally retarded boy is one of the symbols of suffering of the middle class family. The rain on the night of Bachchu's birth symbolizes both a new beginning and a tragic end. The saree and the mutton curry given by the doctor, Mr. Venkatraman himself are the symbols in the drama. The story spins around these symbols.

7. Dramatic tension

The dramatic tension is created very well through the characters (Samanda Mudliyar, 2012). The Character Venkatraman, Pandit and Gaytonde the officer in Mr. Pandit's office are well expressed for the understanding of the story.

7. The variety of the Drama

There are two most recognized varieties of drama, namely, tragedy and comedy. Generally speaking, tragedies end in catastrophe, often the death or failure of the tragic character. Here, the drama is a tragedy. At the end of the story, the mentally retarded boy Bachchu dies and the members of the drama feel sorry for this tragic ending.

8. The story

Shylaja, Kathdare are a middle class family with a mentally retarded son named Bacchu. Mr. Kathdare works day and night for getting money to maintain the family. He used to say that he types about twenty to twenty five pages per night to get 4 rupees per page. He often complains about his body pain as a result of this hard work.

Mrs. Shylaja Kathdare, the mother of the boy, works in the office of Pandit as a stenographer. The father and mother feel that their son will be cured and their problem will be solved. The hope, which did not materialise ultimately, is described in the drama. She is a hard working lady and is always appreciated by her boss. The boss gives her homeopathic medicine for Bachchu. He always gives hope that the boy will be cured of his problem. It is the second hope expressed through the drama.

When she goes to the office, the father takes care of the son. Bachchu is innocent and blank- minded and hence creates little troubles always to the parents. The father tries to beat him with a stick, but the boy often holds it. Moved by this attitude, the father takes his waist belt and beats himself, while the son simply observes the action without any response. He punishes himself as though it was his mistake to have such a mentally retarded son.

Their family friend Mr. Venkat Raman, a Tamilian often comes to their house to spend some time. One day he asks his friend about the birth day of Bachchu. Mr. Kathdare replies it was August third midnight, on which day it rained heavily. The rain on the night of Bachchu's birth symbolizes both a new beginning and a tragic end. Shocked by the date, Mr. Venkat Raman says it was his son's death day. Hence Bacchu must be a reborn boy of his own son. Therefore, he takes care of him with affection. There is yet another twist in the incident. The ironic twist of fate, where Mr. Venkatraman's loss leads to a connection with Bachchu, adds depth to the story. Nevertheless, the recurring motif of death and rebirth foreshadows the tragic conclusion.

Mr. Pandit, the officer in charge of the company, is a friend cum superior, who always expresses well wishes for the curing of the boy. He gives homeopathic medicines for the boy, Bachchu. He has a soft corner for Mrs. Shylaja. He treats her, always as his friend and talks

accordingly. The closeness of these two is mistaken by the office and this is expressed through Mr. Gaytode. He says there are rumours about them in the air, to men the workers in the office. Mr. Pandit excuses her for coming late to the office also.

Mr. Pandit gives a promotion to Mrs. Shylaja with an increase of Rs. 300 in her salary, this was also criticised by the office staff. Mr. Gaytode tells that the whole office is talking about this, for which, Mr. Pandit replies that “are you talking to others or others are talking”, which interprets his character.

Mr. Venkatraman comes and encourages the boy often feeling that is his own son’s soul is on him.

One day, Mr. Pandit comes to their house and wishes on her birthday and presents cake and a saree to Mrs. Shylaja. The boy eats the cake when nobody was there. At the same time Mr. Kathdare, who also feels like eating the cake, takes a little left over of the cake. Mrs. Shylaja too wanted to taste the cake but when she comes out there was no cake. Both the husband and the wife express their eagerness to eat it since it was a rare occasion and a uncommon food item for them.

One day after Mr. Kathdare left for office, Mrs. Shylaja remembers the saree and wears it on her dress. Seeing this Bachchu gets wild and pulls the saree from his mother’s body and tries to attack her as if he had understood some wrong or erroneous relationship with each other. She was frightened by this action. Mr. Pandit gives a book for typing saying he would pay Rs. 5 per page. Mr. Kathdare feels happy and expresses his thankfulness.

Foreshadowing as a literary device is used to hint at future events in a story. It creates suspense and anticipation, preparing the reader for what is to come. This can be understood when the characters’ activities led the readers to a state of mind to imagine. In the drama, several instances of foreshadowing can be identified. Bachchu's frequent illnesses as a precursor and the parents' constant worry about his health foreshadow his eventual demise. The ominous night before Bachchu's death, when he unexpectedly prays, which he never does even on the request by mother, can be seen as a symbolic moment, hints at a significant change at the end.

Days go on, one day night the parents get Bachchu’s bed ready and make him sleep. After he slept they also went to bed. In the morning, when Mrs. Shylaja wakes Bachchu up, his body was chill. Crying profusely, she requests her husband to bring the doctor. But when he tries to move away she cried very loudly since the boy was dead.

The story ends there as a tragedy in their life.

The readers will also get the same feeling of losing Bachchu, the innocent boy.

9. The characters

9.1. Mrs. Shylaja

She is the main female character in the drama. She is the mother of the focusing main character Baccu, the mentally retarded boy. She works in an office as a stenographer. She works hard to get salary to be spent for the treatment of their son. She is well treated by the officer in charge of her office Mr. Pandit. He often helps her.

Once on her birth day, Mr. Pandit brings a gift for her. Her husband and the boy Bachchcu were there. Somehow, the mentally retarded boy Bachchcu did not like this gift. We also do not understand why he did not like the gift. There was no cue to understand his unhappiness. But he starts eating the cake, Shylaja and Katdare were not there. When Mr Katdare comes out and sees the boy eating, he runs up to him and started eating cake along with him, as if snatching from him. At this moment, Mrs Shylaja comes out with two candles and wanted to celebrate the day. But to her astonishment she saw both of them completed eating the cake. Both the husband and the wife never had a cake for quite a long time because of their poverty. To our heavy heart, she puts out the candles and helplessly looking at them. The scene was very touchy.

Mrs. Shylaja loves Bachchu very much. This may be seen in her actions whenever she meets him. Both of them, the husband and the wife work hard to take care of Bachchu. They have an aim to form a trust in the name of Bachchu for the benefit and treatment of children like him. Which they could not when he was alive.

She makes his bed and makes him sleep on his own bed. Before sleeping, she always requests him to pray to God. “Bapa moria’ as the only prayer she always asks him to do. But he tries but never did that. When her husband was one day about to beat him she stops him from doing so and cries for her husband’s inability to teach Bachchu.

When she saw her son’s hair has grown a lot, she asks Mr. Katdare to cut it and give him a good shave too. She always takes care of the boy. Her love is so pure that she holds his hands often and makes fun and merry making.

She loves her husband very much. When he was trying to beat himself with a belt for the mistake done by their son, she stops him from doing so and it is not good to beat oneself for the birth of their son as a mentally retarded. That was God’s creation, etc.

She has a soft corner in her mind for Mr. Pandit. This may be seen from her actions. When he brought her a saree, she did not wear it immediately. One day, when her husband has gone to the office, she wears that saree on her dress, with an affectionate mind thanking him for it. May be she had no such new saree worth Rs. 950 or she was in a mood of wearing it in memory of him. When her son seeing her in that saree pulls out it from her body and throws it. She feels for it and later complains to Mr. Pandit about his rough behaviour. Mr. Pandit, in turn, gives additional medicine for him and gives her hope of getting him cured as early as possible.

When one day, Mr. Pandit came to her house and while talking in the transistor suddenly a Hindi song, namely, “kabhi kabhi mere dil mem kayal aataa hai.....” comes, both of them in a meaningful laugh and enjoy the song. After some days, when they were talking in the office she reminds him of the same song. This indicates their affectionate relationship.

One day in the night, both Mrs.Shylaja and her husband make the boy to sleep. That particular day Bachchu prays when Mrs.Shylaja tells ‘bapa moria’ he also does it, without knowing that it would be his last prayer. In the morning she gets up first and wakes up Bachchu, but Bachchu never got up. She feels he is no more. In the morning of the day of her son’s death she cries so loudly. Her love and affection on her son were expressed neatly through this. Finally, she stands with her husband and affectionately holds his hand, which specifies their loneliness in life after their son’s death. All the other characters come and soothe them.

Her character was the central to the Drama, though Bachchu was the theme around whom the drama is knitted. Her conversation with all the characters are well written.

9.2. Mr. Katdare

One of the main and prime character in the drama is Mr.Katdare, the father of Bachchu and husband of Mrs. Shylaja. An extraordinarily built and outstanding character was Mr. Katdare. The poor middle class head of the family, works day and night to earn money. When he says that he types about forty to fifty pages throughout the nights for Rs.4 per page, we feel for him.

He and his wife had a dream aim to make a trust for the mentally retarded children, it was a sensational and social contribution for such children. As readers, we wish that they should make one at least at the end of the drama. Their wish was not fulfilled till the end. But still had the dream in their minds even after the drama ends.

This man with light and simple dresses, always attracts our minds. His very simple wishes to eat mutton and cake were not fulfilled. One day Mr. Pandit brings mutton curry and gives it to Mr. Katdare. He was telling nowadays mutton costs Rs 120 a kilogram, to say indirectly he had not eaten mutton for a long time.

As a simple man his talks were not appreciated by his wife but innocently talks and requests Mr. Pandit to eat tomato omelette. The dialogues were really significant and impressive.

With an intension to eat it, he was eagerly waiting. Unfortunately, Bachchu eats all and when Mr. Katdare comes out from the room, he had the empty vessel only. He licks what was left there. Seeing this Mrs. Shylaja feels very much for their poverty and her husband's wish to eat mutton. It may be a simple incident, but has a lot to say about the character of Mr. Katdare.

Another day when Mr. Pandit brings cake on her birthday. Both of them, the husband and wife, had different thoughts. But again Bachchu eats all the cake. Seeing this Mr. Katdare snatches the cake again in vain. He had very little cake to eat. But Mrs. Shylaja comes with two candles to celebrate her birth day. Unfortunately, his wishes were spoiled by the father and son duo. Mr. Katdare asks excuses and feels sorry for his action. Here, his role seems to add lots of effect to his character. The occasional arguments and misunderstandings between the parents, though minor, hint at the underlying stress and emotional turmoil they experience. These tensions can be seen as a foreshadowing of the impending tragedy. The well knitted events and the feelings expressed add a lot of dramatic interferences and effects on the readers.

With his friend Mr. Venkatraman, he shows his humour very much. When both of them converse, they use English, Hindi and Marathi with little Tamil also. He even criticizes Venkatraman while talking about Mathunga. He says it is an extension of South India and not part of Maharashtra, which is to some extent a fact.

When Mr. Venkatraman feels that his son's soul lives now in Bachchu, Mr. Katdare feels for his innocence and appreciates him for his love towards his dead son. When Mr. Venkatraman discloses that he was the reason for his son's death, Mr. Katdare with all his distrust, asks him whether he himself had killed him. Mr. Venkatraman cries for his mistake of keeping the sleeping tablet bottle open, which finally lead to his son's death. Saying these, he leaves the house. When Mr. Katdare discloses this to his wife when she comes back from office,

his and his wife's expressions were strange but a truth occupied both of them. The author has succeeded in bringing in expressions in the roles very effectively.

Mr. Katdare wanted to punish Bachchu for his mistakes, he could not beat him, he takes the belt and beats himself, may be that he feels for having this angry attitude or for having such a son. His dialogues were so effective which brings his character very much and shows the author's writing skills.

Finally, when Bachchu dies, Mr. Katdare cries inside a lot and feels that he has to establish the trust somehow with all his earned money. The unfulfilled dream of the parents' establishing a trust for mentally challenged children, while noble, is tragically cut short by Bachchu's death. This unfulfilled dream foreshadows the tragic turn of events. The social awareness is expressed here, though the author has killed the mentally retarded boy. He could have avoided this tragedy that is the expectation of the readers.

9.3. Bachchu

The mentally retarded boy has no dialogues to express his feelings or the feelings he had on other characters in the drama. But the expressions were indicated by the author in brackets. We feel really sorry for the boy. When he eats the mutton, the cake, the payasam and puri, etc., brought by Mr. Pandit and Mr. Venkatraman, indicating his eagerness to eat without caring for others are incidents to show the attitudes of such children. This is quite a natural one. But this action has disappointed both the father and the mother.

When he pulls out the saree of his mother which was gifted by Mr. Pandit, his mental attitude is expressed well, but we could not understand his mind in this arrogant action. Bachchu's innocence and unexpected actions make us laugh.

He is a just a playful boy always. Before he sleeps he hums himself what the mother does. The mother's request to pray 'bapa moriya', was never fulfilled except before his death day. That day he joins hands as if taking good bye from other. His death was miserable and makes the drama a tragic end.

9.4. Mr. Pandit

Mr. Pandit a fully affectionate gentle man was a man of action throughout the drama. His fondness, friendliness and care shown on the family of Mr. Katdare has no limits. His character was necessary to build the story. The conversation between him and Mrs. Shylaja in the office has lots of bearing for the development of the story. His role is very important to build up the main characters in the drama.

With Mr. Katdare, he had a soft corner. When understands that they are suffering a lot, he tries to help them by giving medicines for the boy, giving typing works for Mr. Katdare with additional Re. one per page, giving gifts to Mrs. Shylaja on her birth day, etc. These affectionate activities gave us some kind of suspensions about his intension. But towards the end of the drama, he proves himself worthy of praising.

His character gets more appreciations an approvals when one of the officers in his company seriously tells him the workers in the office talk about him and Mrs Shylaja, he immediately retarded a response telling “Is that they say or you say to them”, an understanding of human minds working wildly.

By this action he calms down the rumours that would have arisen out of the situation in which he and Mrs. Shylaja were closely conversing and laughing at times in the office.

This naturally depicts the real situation in any office, where a man and a woman talk little closer and it irritates the eyes of others, specially the rumour mongers. This is a place where the writer had succeeded in his expressions and words.

Mr.Pandit, on shylaja’s birthday presents cake and saree to her. As a common man, it irritates the mind of Mr.Katdare, since he was unable to present a saree worth Rs.950, which he would have not even imagined at any time of their married life. However, the boy could not tolerate this gift, reacts violently when His mother Shylaja wears it. When Mrs Shylaja reports him about this incident, he coolly accepts the fact and gives him medicine to calm his mind; such a kind hearted person he was.

When giving promotions to the officers, he gives Mrs .Shylaja an increase of Rs.300 and promotion, the people in the office perhaps got irritated. This was expressed by Mr. Gaytonde by using the word ‘premi’ and criticises Mr. Pandit indirectly. This was the character of Mr. Gaytonde.

Earlier one day, Mr. Pandit brings mutton curry or fry for them, the boy eats the entire serving. Mr.Katdare, out of eager to eat, snatches the empty box from Bachchu and tries to lick the remaining, the poor lady sees it and feels for it. This scene was an interesting one to show their poverty and eagerness to eat mutton.

When Mr. Pandit arranges for the family of Mr.Katdare to go and stay in Kandala for a few days as if for the second honey moon, Mrs Shylaja laughs and finally they could not make the trip.

Mr. Pandit was transferred to Nagpur with a promotion. When the boy Bachchu died towards the end of the drama, Mrs Shylaja asks about the transfer he says nothing and leaves the scene. Such a beautiful character was chiselled out by the author in the drama. It was simply unimaginable.

9.5. Mr. Venkatraman

He is an excellent character in the drama. He is depicted as a Tamilian, who is unable to talk in Marathi fluently. He uses English and uses Hindi also in his conversation. He is the family friend of Mr. Katdare's family. He has a major role to play in treating Bachchu as his son's rebirth. When Mr. Katdare tells him that on August third midnight, when it was raining heavily Bachchu was born, Mr. Venkatraman unreservedly says that is the time his son died. He feels that his son's soul has entered into Bachchu. Therefore, he tries to treat him as his own son. He talks to him and takes care of him well. This tragic parallel or the similarity between Bachchu's birth and Mr. Venkatraman's son's death creates a sense of foreboding. This connection foreshadows a potential loss or tragedy, which become true at the end of the drama.

Mr. Venkatraman suggests to admit Bachchu to a mental Institute and the conversation at that time was very interesting. He scolds Marathi people, in turn Mr. Katdare says you have no brain.

On the death day of his son, he brings 'payasam' and 'puri' for Bachchu, whose birth day was that. However, his affection towards his son's soul, that is, Bachchu, was immense. He always says Bachchu is his own son.

In the very first scene of his introduction he talks about Mathunga, a part of Mumbai. However, Mr. Katdare comments that Mathunga is no more a part of Maharashtra but an extension of South India. Mr. Venkatraman laughs at this serious joke and did not reply. This is simply an adjusting character he had.

When Mr. Venkatraman asks about Bachchu's studies, Mr. Katdare answers jokingly, the character and the authors changing mood makes the conversation interesting.

When he discloses that he was the reason for his son's death, Mr. Katdare was shocked and could not believe that. However, Mr Venkatraman said that he kept the sleeping tablet bottle open and his son consumed it and died. Whatever be the reason, Mr. Venkatraman feels he was the reason for the death. However, when Bachchu died, he says 'his son Krishnasamy is also dead.' His feeling of his son's soul in Bachchu has also left the world. His character was

an example for people who has affection to others children too. But when bachchu died he cries a lot and goes out of the house.

He has a comedy role in the drama. He uses mixed language. He uses English, Hindi and Marathi. This speciality is given to say that he is not a Marathi native speaker.

In the light of the analysis, we may discuss the setting as The unambiguous contrast between the characters' modest living conditions and their aspirations highlights the challenges they face. The urban setting provides a backdrop for the characters' struggles and their interactions with society.

When we revisit the themes the characters' unwavering hope for Bachchu's recovery is juxtaposed with the harsh reality of his condition, hence hope and despair are expressed. The next point of discussion is love and Compassion. The deep love between the parents and their son, as well as the kindness of Mr. Pandit and Mr. Venkatraman, underscores the power of human connection. However, at the end of the drama, the discussion on the human condition leads the play to explore universal themes of suffering, loss, and the resilience of the human spirit.

By utilizing these techniques, the playwright creates a sense of anticipation and suspense, drawing the reader deeper into the story and prepared them for the tragic conclusion.

10. Conclusion

My attitude and opinions towards the drama is the conclusion to this analysis. I had seriously gone through the drama 'na:tigo:ti' a well-written play as part of my course in Marathi, in Western Regional Language Centre (Pune) of Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysuru. The theme, the plot, the characters depicted, the conversations, the extra information given in brackets, the conversations which brought to me the character's actual sentiments and affection, etc., which have attracted my mind very much. As far as the expressions by the characters in the drama is concerned, they bring to the forefront the chemistry of all the characters. They have created quite an impact on me when I went through reading the drama, its content, focus on mental retardation, the sufferings thereafter for the family, the affection shown by all the characters to each one is really remarkable. It was the perfect way to spend reading a drama. In fact, I used to read dramas and see plays in Tamil, my mother tongue.

With my background in Tamil literature and my thesis for the Ph.D. degree, I had good times in reading this drama. Not only well written but the expressions necessary and the location, time and the action to be engaged are given in brackets. This technique, in effect, gives me and the readers an opportunity to emotionally see the drama playing in the intellectual screens running on the closed eyes of the readers and especially on my closed eyes. The dialogue and the instructions and information given in brackets take us exactly to a logical screening of the play one could imagine.

The couple, Mrs. Shylaja and Mr. Katdare have a mentally retarded son. Bachchu. In reality, the writer could have given more information regarding mental retardation. But it is also not expected of him because instead of a drama, he would have ended with a research book.

The sufferings the parents underwent is well exposed through their conversations. The father works throughout the night to get little more money to maintain the family. The mother, on the other hand, works in an office. Mrs. Shylaja's expressions during the dialogue delivery is praiseworthy. Her comic timing is impeccable and her ability to switch from the comedy aspect to the serious or sad is truly a mesmerising fact.

Finally, when the boy dies, the whole family and friends were stunned and they left the family. The tragic end has given me a mental agony. I could not digest the death. Every problem has a solution. The authors of creative literature, normally give solutions to the problems arising out of the story or they leave it to the readers to complete the story with their solutions or judgements. In the present drama, the author himself gives the solution to the problems of the family and the sufferings of the boy by his death.

I would have expected that the mental illness of the boy, if cured by the doctor by treating him and by affectionately handling him would have been the solution, which could have brought hope to the persons with such mentally retarded children. This ending might have a comedy end, but would not have received this much of empathy and responsiveness on the character by the readers. The tragic end has given a solution to end the drama, but I could not accept it as a compassionate and kind reader.

The drama 'natigoti' is an excellent combination of story, expressions, language and relationships. Though the end is a tragic one, it touches the reader's mind and instigate

everyone to take part in the eradication or treatment of this kind of mentally retardation problem among children. That is the success of the drama, especially the author.

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