

**A Two-Day International Conference  
(Hybrid Mode)**

**On  
Cultural Studies in Indian Socio-Literary Scenario  
by**

PG & Research Department of English  
V. O. Chidambaram College, Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, India

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## PREFACE

Welcome to the proceedings of the International Conference (Hybrid Mode) on *Cultural Studies in Indian Socio-Literary Scenario*, a landmark event that brought together scholars, researchers, and practitioners across the globe to explore the rich tapestry of cultural studies within the Indian context.

The conference served as a platform for interdisciplinary dialogue, addressing a broad spectrum of themes intersecting Indian socio-cultural and literary landscapes. Through rigorous academic discourse and insightful presentations, we aimed to deepen our understanding of the diverse cultural phenomena shaping contemporary Indian society.

The contributions compiled in these proceedings represent a confluence of innovative research and critical analysis. They encompass a range of topics, from traditional cultural practices to modern literary expressions and from historical perspectives to current socio-political issues. Each paper reflects the dynamic and evolving nature of cultural studies and its relevance in analysing the complexities of Indian identity and heritage.

We extend our gratitude to the keynote speakers, session chairs, and all contributors who have made this conference a success. Their dedication and scholarly rigor have enriched our discussions and broadened our perspectives.

We hope that these proceedings will serve as a valuable resource for further research and discussion, fostering continued exploration of the vibrant cultural and literary dimensions of Indian society.

Thank you for your engagement and support.  
Sincerely,

### **Organising Secretary:**

Dr. R. Ajith, Assistant Professor of English

### **Coordinators:**

Dr.R.Mercy Latha, Associate Professor of English

Dr.P.T.Selvi Kohila, Assistant Professor of English

Dr.Anita Albert, Assistant Professor of English

Mr.P.Maruthupandian, Assistant Professor of English

Dr.Manju Muraleedharan, Assistant Professor of English

**PG & Research Department of English**

**V. O. Chidambaram College,**

**Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu,India**

## **Principal's Message**

It gives me immense pleasure to convey that V. O. Chidambaram College has taken up the great challenge of organizing an “International Conference on Cultural Studies in Indian Socio-Literary Scenario”. I congratulate the faculty for their maiden attempt at holding the conference and I am happy with the revered publication of articles. ICCSIS-2024 will play a humble role in bringing together researchers, and young students in an informal environment to discuss the latest advances in various fields. Visit of various researchers under the roof of V. O. Chidambaram College is a matter to pride and immense pleasure to all of us. I hope that this volume which has been brought out by ICCSIS-2024 will be of great academic value for common scholars and readers. I convey my blessings and good wishes to all members of the ICCSIS-2024 family, for their dedicated involvement in this great event. Since its inception, V. O. Chidambaram College has been moving towards the heights of education and serving with quality education. I hope the management is blessed with such endeavours in the future too.

**-Dr. C. Veerabahu**  
Principal, V. O. Chidambaram College, Thoothukudi

## **Keynote Address**

**Dr. Ashok Chaudhary**

Vice-Chancellor

Bir Tikendrajith

University Manipur,

India

Respected Principal of this Institution, Learned Coordinators of this International Conference, esteemed professors from other universities and the native organisation, dear scholars and Students, Warm Greetings.

It is a great pleasure to address you today on the topic of cultural studies within the expansive and richly layered context of the Indian socio- cultural and literary landscape. As we delve into this subject, we are engaging with a field that is both deeply rooted in tradition and dynamically evolving in the face of modern challenges.

Cultural studies is an interdisciplinary field that examines how culture influences and is influenced by various social, political, and historical forces. It is concerned with the production and consumption of cultural artefacts, practices, and norms, and explores how these elements shape and reflect societal values and identities.

In India, cultural studies encompass a broad spectrum of issues, from the examination of historical legacies to the analysis of contemporary cultural practices. The field provides valuable insights into how cultural narratives are constructed and contested, and how they intersect with questions of power, identity, and representation.

India's socio-cultural landscape is defined by its historical depth and contemporary dynamism. Our cultural heritage, comprising diverse traditions, languages, and practices, forms a rich backdrop against which modern transformations unfold. The interplay between tradition and modernity is a central theme in Indian cultural studies, reflecting the ways in which historical legacies inform present-day experiences.

This dynamic interaction is evident in various domains, including literature, media, and public life. As India navigates the complexities of globalization, urbanization, and technological advancements, cultural practices are continuously evolving. Cultural studies provides a framework to understand these changes and their implications for society.

Literature plays a pivotal role in cultural studies by serving as both a reflection and a critique of society. Indian literature, in its myriad forms, captures the diverse voices and experiences of its people. From classical epics and regional narratives to contemporary works in multiple languages, literature offers insights into the socio-cultural fabric of the nation.

Through literature, we gain access to the concerns, aspirations, and conflicts that shape individual and collective identities. It also provides a platform for marginalized voices and alternative perspectives, challenging dominant narratives and fostering a more inclusive understanding of society.

In an increasingly interconnected world, cultural studies must address both global influences and local responses. The flow of cultural products, ideas, and practices across borders has created new opportunities for exchange and collaboration, as well as new forms of cultural hybridity and conflict. Understanding these interactions is crucial for appreciating the complexities of contemporary cultural dynamics.

At the same time, it is essential to recognize and value the unique cultural contexts and local practices that shape our experiences. By balancing global perspectives with local insights, cultural studies can contribute to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the world.

Looking ahead, cultural studies must continue to evolve in response to emerging trends and challenges. This involves embracing interdisciplinary approaches, incorporating diverse methodologies, and fostering dialogue across cultural and academic boundaries. By doing so, we can address pressing issues such as social justice, cultural preservation, and the impact of technological change.

Cultural studies offer a profound and expansive lens through which we can explore the complexities of the Indian socio-cultural and literary landscape. It challenges us to think critically about culture, to engage with diverse perspectives, and to contribute to a more inclusive and informed dialogue.

Hence, it is highly appreciable that the organisers have come with a topic that is profound in thought and provides a wider scope for authentic academic deliberations.

Congratulations to the Organisers!

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to the stimulating discussions and insights that will arise from our engagement with this vibrant field.

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**Exploring Cultural Significance : Unveiling Rich Layers of Tradition in  
Amish Tripathi's *Ram Scion of Ikshvaku***

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**Abstract:**

Amish Tripathi is one of the most prominent writers in the field of rewriting of mythology. Amish Tripathi weaves skillfully the cultural nuances and societal structures reflective of ancient India into his narrative in *Ram: Scion of Ikshvaku*. From the hierarchical dynamics within kingdoms to the philosophical debates about dharma and righteousness. The author showcases a masterful fusion of myth and culture, inviting readers to not only immerse themselves in a fantastical world but also contemplate timeless philosophical questions and engage with themes relevant to the contemporary society. This paper entitled Exploring Cultural Significance : **Unveiling Rich Layers of Tradition in Amish Tripathi's *Ram: Scion of Ikshvaku*** explores the most important aspects of culture in *Ram Scion of Ikshvaku* such as hierarchy and duty, rituals related to birth and death, social norms and gender roles, philosophical discourses of characters, the use of cultural and language references, and caste system and social strata prevalent in ancient Indian society. This article offers a glimpse of dynamics of relationships with the cultural context and reflects on the historical realities of the ancient era.

**Keywords:** Culture, historical realities, Tradition, social norms, caste system.

**Introduction:**

India has had a rich and glorious past. Ancient scriptures and other literary texts were heavily laden with myths. As a recent significant development the resurgence of new generation's interest mythology and folklore / folk literature. Many young writers have amassed tremendous popularity and success in the field. Amish Tripathi is one of the renowned names in rewriting of mythology. Indian Mythology is one of the richest elements of Indian Culture, which enriches further and makes it a unique one in the world. Through generations, different stories in Indian mythology have been passed from generation to generation either by word of mouth or through carefully stored scriptures. Myth is not a story told as history, but history told as story. It is actually a narrative of a real experience in the past. What is called as myth today is not an imaginary tale, but a real life experience of the primordial society. Indian literature is saturated with several types of mythological characters and their portrayal have also been of much relevance with the

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contemporary Indian Society.

The epic Ramayana has depicted Ram as God, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Many writers like Valmiki, Tulsi Das, Kambar have written Ramayana and have given due respect to Lord Ram. There is a difference in the early writings and the present writings, the early writings portrayed Ram as God, Sita as a submissive wife, Lakshman as a loyal brother, each attribute was designated to each character, but the present day writing differs totally from the early writings. The early writings portrayed the characters as incarnations but the modern rewritings present them as human beings who suffer like any other mortal man. *Ram: Scion of Ikshvaku* written by Amish Tripathi is the first sequel of Ram Chandra Series, a reimagining of the Indian epic Ramayana. The first sequel explores the life of Lord Ram, his struggles and his journey as a Prince. *Ram: Scion of Ikshvaku* is deeply rooted in Indian Culture and tradition. Tripathi draws the plot line based on Ramayana which is the foundational text in Hindu Mythology and a significant art of Indian Cultural Heritage. Tripathi reinterprets the timeless story of Ram weaving with contemporary themes and perspective and also skillfully blends mythology with fiction to create a narrative that resonates with readers familiar with Indian culture and tradition.

The main concepts dealt by Tripathi pertaining to Indian culture are Dharma, family values, respect for elders, social hierarchy and duties and spiritual values. As in Ramayana, in *Ram : Scion of Ikshvaku* Tripathi portrays Ram as a dutiful son and his adherence to Dharma as a prince and later as an exiled king. Family values are the most important aspect of Indian culture from time immemorial. Ram's love and respect for his parents, guru and his bond with his brothers and his devotion to his wife Sita exemplify traditional Indian family values. Respect for elders and the wisdom they impart is one of the aspects of Indian Culture. Characters like Dasaratha – Ram's father and Guru Vashishta, his teacher lay significant roles in shaping Ram's character and decisions. The novel also delves into spiritual concepts such as karma, devotion, and the pursuit of truth, characters embark on the spiritual journeys and face moral dilemmas that test their beliefs and values.

*Ram: Scion of Ikshvaku* intertwines these cultural concepts with a compelling narrative, offering readers insights into Indian Mythology and traditions. Culture is an intricate web of customs, beliefs, values, traditions and behaviours shared by a group of people. It encompasses everything from language and cuisine to social norms and art forms. Each culture is unique and constantly evolving, influenced by historical, geographical, economic, and social factors. Studying and understanding different cultures fosters empathy, appreciation, and respect for diversity. India's culture and tradition are rich and diverse, shaped by thousands of

years of history, various religious and philosophical movements, and interactions with different civilization. India's culture and tradition are rich, diverse, shaped by thousands of years of history, various religious and philosophical movements, and interactions with different civilizations. In the past, ancient Indian civilization gave birth to profound philosophical systems such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism which continue to influence Indian culture today. The country has a long tradition of art, architecture, literature, and music, with iconic monuments.

India's past includes a complex social structure with the caste system, which although officially abolished, still influences aspects of Indian society today. In the present day, Indian's culture is a vibrant mix of tradition and modernity. The first sequel *Ram: Scion of Ikshvaku* of Ram Chandra Series is presented from the perspective of Ram. Ram who is venerated as Lord Vishnu is portrayed as an outcast prince by Tripathi. It is believed by King Dasaratha and the people of Ayodha, that the inauspicious time of birth of Ram has led to the defeat of Sapt Sindhu. Hence, Ram is assaulted verbally by the people and stays away from his father King Dasaratha. His early childhood passes away with Guru Vashista learning philosophy, science, mathematics, ethics, warfare and the arts, so that he would return later as a man in charge of his destiny. Ram first learns that laws are the very foundation on which fulfilling life is built for a community. He learns it from the Chief Varun, Guru Vashista explains to Ram that, "The first time a child breaks a law in their society, however minor and inconsequential it may be, he's made to suffer, every child. Any recurrent breach of law results in further shaming. Just like you find it difficult to lie when it benefits someone because of what your mother suffered, Varun finds it impossible to do the same"(61-62). Guru Vashista differentiates to Ram between lies and not revealing the truth. As a guru he keeps them aware of the laws that prevail in the tribe and in the country.

When there was a conversation between Ram and Bharat regarding their father and law, Ram chides Bharat, and says that they have their duties towards their father, he also states that the Manu Smiriti, gives instructions about law and giving respect to a father, but Bharat is fed up with the laws whereas Ram insists that laws must be obeyed always. Both Ram and Bharat have conflicting views. According to Ram, 'Law' is for the betterment of the society and for Bharat freedom is very important. "I understand that this might not work under a few exceptional circumstances, said Ram, "But if the law is obeyed diligently, come what may, then over a period of time a better society has to emerge" (73).

Ram simplified and unified the law, he studied the *smiriti* and carefully selected laws that he felt were fair, coherent, simple and relevant to the times. He

was respectfully called as Ram, the law Giver. Ram also repeatedly demonstrated that the law applied equally to him, he was in no way an exception.

In an oft-quoted incident, Ram returned to the city after dusk, when the fort gates had been shut. The gatekeeper opened the gates for the prince. Ram upbraided him for breaking the law; the gates were not to be opened for anyone at night time. Ram slept outside the city walls that night and entered the city the next morning. The ordinary people of Ayodhya talked about it for months, though it was studiously ignored by the nobles. (117)

This is an example to show that the one who enforces the law should practice it, this is how Ram made the people abide by the law, strict adherence to law also hurt him a lot. Roshini the daughter of Mantara was compared to *Kanyakumari* for her noble service to the poor. Once when Roshini was late to enter into the gates of the city a few men violated and she lay beside the Sarayu river. The culprits were found and punishment was meted out to the culprits except Dhenuka, just because he was a minor. Ram himself was devastated that he could not punish Dhenuka, but the law could not be broken. The other brothers wanted to punish Dhenuka but Ram was very particular, “The law is clear: minor cannot be executed. Dhenuka is underage and, according to the law, will not be executed” (145). Bharat was angry, he was not worried about law but about justice. On the one hand Ram abided by the law and on the other he inflicted pain on himself as he could not do justice to his sister Roshini. This shows how he adhered to the law, Tripathi depicts another incident where he has to take part in the *Swayamvar*. Sita herself invites him to her garden and shows him the pinnacle and also asks him to practice with it, but Ram involuntarily stepped back. Ram denied, “It would be an honour to even touch the *Pinaka*, much less hold the bow that Lord Rudra himself graced with his touch. But I will only do so tomorrow. Not today” (252). Sita frowned and later understood Ram wanted to win her in the rightful way. And this impressed Sita. Ram is very particular about *Dharma*, he has heard from his mother what his father said during his coronation and he follows it always, “*Dharma* is above all, even the king, *Dharma* is above the Gods themselves” (130). Dashrath is flabbergasted when he hears his son repeat his words, a son who was all these years kept aloof as an outcast.

Once when Ram and Lakshman accompany Dashrath to a hunting expedition, Ram protects his father from a leopard and this changes the mentality of his father, who always considered him inauspicious. Ram had to wrestle with the leopard as the knife did not plunge into his heart, Lakshman rescued his brother from the leopard. Only at this moment his father feels for his behavior, he speaks to his son, “I blamed you for my defeat. My entire kingdom blamed and cursed you. You’ve

suffered all your life, and yet you never rebelled. I thought it was because you were weak. But weak people celebrate when twists of fate hurt their tormentors. And yet, you risked your life trying to protect me. Why? (128). Ram answered in one simple statement that it was his dharma, and nothing else other than that. Ram believed that his Karma may be the reason for his father's defeat in the hands of Raavan. "I don't understand how the universe keeps track of our karma across many births, Father. I know I could not have done anything in this birth to make you lose the battle. May be it was something to do with my previous birth?" (129). He accepts that Karma alone can be the reason. Dasarath understands from his answer that even when the whole universe tried to break him, he stood strong. This is the first time ever Dashrath understands the feelings of his sons and starts loving him. The love and the patience of Ram finally have retrieved his father's love for him.

Tripathi also relates the duties of the inmates in the Gurukul and their veneration to their Guru. It is the duty of the inmates to do the household chores in the Gurukul and then be seated for their morning prayers, "In keeping with tradition, they were reciting the Guru *Stotram*, the hymn in praise of the teacher, before the class commenced" (63). As the hymn ended, the students rose and ceremoniously touched the feet of their guru, Vashista. He gave them all the same blessing. "May my knowledge grow within you, and may you, one day, become my teacher" (63).

Ram the epitome of virtues is also known as 'ega pathini virathan' which means one wife one man – a syndrome exquisite, a character unique to Ram and almost the concept is noble in stature. Ram was a man who was against polygamy, his personal opinion was that a man should marry one woman and remain loyal to her for the rest of his life. He wanted to marry a woman who he can bow his head in admiration. The moment he saw Sita on the road enforcing law, he was awestruck and admired her skills. Ram was expressionless and he bowed his head when Sita crossed him. "Lakshman held his breath as his mouth fell open. He had never thought he'd see this day; after all, which woman would inspire the admiration of a man such as his brother? That love would slam into a heart that had only known obedience to, and strict control of mind? That a man whose mission was to raise every person's head with pride and purpose would find comfort in bowing to another? (233). Only after seeing Sita, Ram agrees to go for the *Swaymvar*.

Postcolonial cultures reliance on myth and local legend is an effort at decontamination, a process of freeing their cultures from colonialism pervasive influence. The return to roots is an attempt to gain a measure of self affirmation that is not tainted by colonialism. Amish Tripathi's writing has made a difference in the way people see the old age stories. Indian Mythology is so vast and there are so

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many stories to be told that one life time is not suffice.

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**Exploring Cultural Dynamics: A Study of Alka Joshi's *The Perfumist of Paris* in the Indian Socio-Literary Scenario**

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**Abstract:**

This paper endeavours to delve into the intricate interplay of culture, identity, and narrative in Alka Joshi's "The Perfumist of Paris" within the framework of the Indian socio-literary landscape. Against the backdrop of globalization and the ever-expanding reach of Indian diaspora literature, Joshi's work emerges as a compelling case study, offering insights into the complexities of cultural negotiation and the fluidity of identity. At the heart of Joshi's narrative lies the journey of Radha, a young Indian woman navigating the vibrant streets of Paris while grappling with the pull of her ancestral roots. By situating "The Perfumist of Paris" within the larger discourse of cultural studies, this paper seeks to unravel the layers of significance embedded within Joshi's storytelling. Through a meticulous examination of characters, settings, and narrative techniques, we aim to elucidate how Joshi's work serves as a mirror reflecting the multifaceted nature of contemporary Indian identity, both at home and abroad. Through this exploration, we aim to illuminate the intricate tapestry of cultural dynamics, inviting readers to contemplate the fluidity and resilience of cultural identities in an increasingly globalized world.

**Keywords:** cultural studies, Indian literature, diaspora, identity, cultural negotiation

**Introduction:**

In a world marked by globalization and the increasing movement of people across borders, the complexities of cultural negotiation and identity fluidity have become central themes in literature. Alka Joshi's *The Perfumist of Paris* (2023) offers a poignant exploration of these themes within the context of the Indian socio-literary landscape. As Indian diaspora literature continues to gain prominence, Joshi's work stands out as a compelling case study, inviting readers to contemplate the fluidity and resilience of cultural identities in an increasingly interconnected world. This paper seeks to unravel the narrative of *The Perfumist of Paris*, examining how Joshi's storytelling reflects the intricate tapestry of cultural dynamics, both within India and among its diaspora communities.

The study of cultural negotiation and identity fluidity has been a central focus within the field of cultural studies. Scholars such as Stuart Hall and Homi K. Bhabha have explored the concept of hybridity, highlighting the ways in which cultures interact and evolve through processes of exchange and adaptation. Within the realm of literature, Indian authors have been particularly adept at capturing the nuances of cultural identity, whether through narratives set in India or within diaspora communities around the world. Works by authors such as Salman Rushdie, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Arundhati Roy have garnered international acclaim for their exploration of the complexities of Indian identity in a global context.

This study employs a qualitative analysis of Alka Joshi's *The Perfumist of Paris*, focusing on character development, setting, and narrative techniques to uncover the novel's insights into cultural negotiation and identity fluidity. Drawing on close reading techniques, this study seeks to identify recurring themes and motifs within the text, examining how Joshi constructs the identities of her characters and the cultural landscapes they inhabit.

*The Perfumist of Paris* navigates the complexities of cultural negotiation and identity fluidity through its richly drawn characters and evocative settings. Protagonist Radha's journey from India to Paris serves as a metaphor for the diasporic experience, as she grapples with questions of belonging and identity in a foreign land. Through Radha's interactions with a diverse cast of characters, Joshi explores the ways in which cultural identities are shaped and reshaped through encounters with others. The novel's vivid descriptions of Parisian streets and fragrant markets provide a sensory backdrop for Radha's exploration of self and culture, underscoring the interconnectedness of place and identity.

The narrative of *The Perfumist of Paris* embarks readers on a multisensory expedition from the immaculate confines of a Parisian perfume laboratory to the vibrant markets of Agra in India. Building upon the storyline introduced in *The Henna Artist* (2021) and further developed in *The Secret Keeper of Jaipur* (2022), Joshi scrutinizes the evolution of her characters and delves into the ramifications of entrenched familial secrets on their lives, spanning several decades.

Radha Fontaine, previously introduced in *The Henna Artist*, recounts her upbringing shadowing her elder sister, Lakshmi, in Jaipur, where she honed her skills in henna application for Lakshmi's clientele and became entangled in a relationship with a wealthy yet careless suitor. In the current narrative, set in 1974 Paris, Radha has matured into a proficient perfumist, married with two daughters, Asha and Shanti. Despite her ardour for her profession, Radha faces discord with her French architect

husband, Pierre, whose traditional notions of gender roles clash with Radha's aspirations. Motivated to validate her professional capabilities, Radha embarks on a compelling assignment necessitating a return to India, enlisting Lakshmi's assistance in sourcing rare ingredients essential for her perfume concoction. The journey to Agra not only facilitates the procurement of crucial components but also fosters a reconnection between Radha and Lakshmi, enabling them to confront unresolved familial dilemmas and commence a journey towards reconciliation and personal growth. Radha in the beginning of the novel describes herself as a misfit in the House of Yves, "I'm a thirty-two-year-old Indian woman-not French-like all other employees of the company. Most have never been to India or expressed any desire to go. To them, I'm an anomaly, an oddity, and not necessarily a favourable one" (Joshi, 29).

Radha's narrative, though situated in an era almost five decades ago, resonates with contemporary themes of female empowerment and the pursuit of individual identity within familial confines. Her struggles against societal expectations, embodied by Pierre's and her mother-in-law Florence's conservative perspectives, underscore the timeless conflict between tradition and self-actualization. Nevertheless, a sequence of revelations alters Radha's perceptions, humanizing previously antagonistic characters and prompting a re-evaluation of societal norms.

Within her professional realm, Radha encounters feminist exemplars such as the master perfumer Delphine and the resilient courtesans of Agra, whose independence and resilience inspire Radha's pursuit of autonomy. For instance, when Radha encounters betrayal at her workspace she is consoled by Delphine, the Master Perfumer, "I've given my best, but I've been used. Delphine said I have to move past it. Lakshmi moved past her betrayals. So did Victorine. Isn't that the look she's giving us in Manet's painting? There will always be a Ferdie in our lives. We have to do our best despite them (Joshi, 148).

As Radha confronts adversities, including suspicions of sabotage in her perfume project, she grapples with the complexities of cultural assimilation and heritage preservation, particularly concerning her daughters' upbringing. When Radha's mother-in-law decides to help arrange a maid to look after her daughters, Radha lies to her. Radha is afraid of being completely cut off from her husband and daughters, "If I leave it to Florence, the nanny will be a French matron who will take ownership of my children and my household" (Joshi, 47).

Joshi's narrative brims with vivid sensory imagery, encapsulating the olfactory richness of Radha's perfume creations and the vibrant ambience of Indian

locales juxtaposed against the clinical backdrop of her Parisian laboratory. The intricacies of Radha's inner deliberations regarding the interplay of career, marriage, and motherhood add depth to the narrative, portraying her quest for fulfilment amidst competing obligations. It was the scents at her perfume laboratory in Paris that reminded Radha of her homeland. "Lavender made me think of the first time I saw Jiji in Jaipur; her hands were scented with the oil she used on the bodies of her ladies" (Joshi, 52).

Joshi's novel offers a nuanced portrayal of cultural negotiation and identity fluidity, inviting readers to consider the complexities of contemporary Indian identity in a globalised world. Joshi's use of narrative techniques such as flashbacks and multiple perspectives allows for a multifaceted exploration of her characters' experiences, highlighting the diverse ways in which individuals navigate questions of culture and belonging. By situating the novel within the larger discourse of Indian diaspora literature, this research underscores its significance as a reflection of the broader socio-cultural dynamics at play within Indian society and its global diaspora. It presents a sophisticated depiction of cultural negotiation and the fluidity of identity, prompting readers to contemplate the intricacies of modern Indian identity within an increasingly interconnected world. Joshi employs narrative strategies such as flashback sequences and the adoption of multiple perspectives to conduct a comprehensive exploration of her characters' journeys, thus showcasing the diverse approaches individuals take in grappling with issues of culture and belonging. Through contextualizing the novel within the framework of Indian diaspora literature, this study accentuates its importance as a mirror reflecting the broader socio-cultural landscape of Indian society and its diaspora on a global scale.

In conclusion, Alka Joshi's *The Perfumist of Paris* serves as a compelling exploration of cultural negotiation and identity fluidity within the Indian socio-literary landscape. Through its richly drawn characters and evocative settings, the novel invites readers to contemplate the complexities of contemporary Indian identity, both at home and abroad. By situating the novel within the larger discourse of cultural studies, this research sheds light on how literature can serve as a mirror reflecting the intricate tapestry of cultural dynamics in an increasingly globalized world. The novel offers a captivating investigation into the processes of cultural negotiation and the fluidity of identity within the Indian socio-literary milieu. Through its intricately depicted characters and vividly portrayed settings, the novel encourages readers to reflect upon the multifaceted nature of contemporary Indian identity, whether within its domestic confines or amidst international contexts. By contextualizing the novel within the broader realm of cultural studies, this study illuminates the capacity of literature to act as a reflective surface, capturing the

intricate interplay of cultural dynamics in an ever-expanding global landscape.

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**“I Can Love; Therefore, I Shall” – Shade of *Sringara Rasa* in the Character of Duryodhana**

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**Abstract:**

*Śṛṅgārah* or *Sringara* rasa is one of the nine rasas (flavours). In performance arts, the *sringara* rasa is often considered “the mother of all rasas”. It includes a variety of other emotions, such as the expression of physical closeness as well as envy, fear, anger, and compassion. Scholars have insisted that it is *Śṛṅgārah* rasa that balances the life of human beings. It acts as a yin-yang of emotions. Every piece of art and literature has displayed a myriad of emotions through its characters with a blend of several rasas to add more flavour to the work. Popular tales from the past, mythological stories, epics, poetry and philosophy have always catered to the audience’s emotional side, triggering empathy (called *Sahṛidaya* in Sanskrit). However, there is always one dominant rasa affixed to every character which has overshadowed other subtle rasas, adding a specific emotional adjective to the character. The *Mahabharata*, one of the epics of India, is a grandly written work of literature that portrays various characters. With variety comes flavourful depiction; thus, each character in the epic is layered with several rasas. This article attempts to study the shade of the *sringara rasa* in the character Duryodhana as projected by Anand Neelakantan in his novels *Ajaya: Roll of Dice* and *Ajaya: Rise of Kali*. The paper aims to bring the pleasant side of the famous dark-shaded antagonist, Duryodhana.

**Keywords:** Epic, Mahabharata, Duryodhana, Rasa, Myth

**Introduction:**

Indian Epics, “The Mahabharata” and “The Ramayana,” have always served as primary sources for teaching ethics, morals, and traditions and providing glimpses of Indian culture. The variety is shown in the characters and settings and in the characters' emotions. These emotions, called rasas, play a significant role in every work of literature. Based on this concept, most Western literary theories have taken root.

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One's objective should be to evoke rasas (emotions) in the mind of the reader through narration. Just as a singer sings sweetly to please the ears, the writer should try to please the mind. (Bharata Muni, *Natya Shastra*)

This quotation from the *Natya Shastra*, an ancient Indian text on performing arts, emphasizes the importance of rasas (emotions) in literature and the arts. In the exact way that a singer seeks to satisfy the ears with their song, it emphasises that the goal of narrative is to elicit particular feelings in the audience. This realisation confirms the long-held belief that emotions are crucial to drawing readers in and enhancing the impact of a piece of writing.

Every work of literature and art has used characters to convey a wide range of emotions, blending different rasas to give the piece greater depth and flavor. Stories from popular culture, myths, epics, poetry, and philosophy have always appealed to the emotions of the audience, eliciting empathy (called *Sahṛidaya* in Sanskrit). Every character does, however, have a dominating rasa that has eclipsed other subtle rasas and given them a distinct emotional descriptor. Scholars have insisted that it is *Śṛṅgārah* rasa that balances the life of human beings. It acts as a yin-yang of emotions. *Śṛṅgārah* or *Sringara* rasa is one of the nine rasas (flavours). In performance arts, the *sringara* rasa is often considered “the mother of all rasas”. It includes a variety of other emotions, such as the expression of physical closeness as well as envy, fear, anger, and compassion.

In Anand Neelakantan's *Ajaya: Roll of the Dice*, Suyodhana (the birth name of Duryodhana), symbolizes *Śṛṅgārah* rasa in a complex and multifaceted manner. Despite being portrayed traditionally as the antagonist, Neelakantan dives deep into the character, presenting him as more than just a monotonous villain. Neelakantan achieves this at instances where Suyodhana is seen with Subhadra. Neelakantan describes Suyodhana's feelings for Subhadra like this, “He only knew he was incredibly happy. He had never thought first love could be so sweet.” (*Ajaya* 170) He asks for her hand in marriage and believes Subhadra was one of the reasons for his raise in confidence level. The following lines from the text *Ajaya: Roll of the Dice* are coated with *Śṛṅgārah* rasa.

“For a moment, he wished the others would vanish and leave them alone to celebrate their love. ... He had a hundred things he wished to say to her but no words rose to his lips.” (193)

Suyodhana expresses *Śṛṅgārah* rasa whenever he is in the presence of Karna. His friendship and love for Karna proves unparalleled in several instances. His constant

support for Karna, despite societal standards and familial commitments, demonstrates the depth of his emotional connection and his willingness to make sacrifices for those he cares about.

Of all instances in the books *Ajaya: Roll of the Dice & Ajaya: Rise of Kali* by Anand Neelakantan, Suyodhana's interactions with his wife Bhanumathi are beautifully etched with *Śṛṅgārah* rasa. Suyodhana has a very protective and caring attitude towards Bhanumathi. He assures her comfort and safety while fulfilling his responsibilities as a husband and provider. This concern is visible in his behaviors, such as providing her with protection and tending to her needs. Despite his ambitious temperament and the hardships he endures, Suyodhana shows true regard and respect for Bhanumathi. He values her thoughts and considers her feelings, demonstrating a partnership founded on mutual understanding and respect. Bhanumathi provides emotional support for Suyodhana at difficult moments. Whether he is going through political instability or personal difficulties, she is there for him, bringing comfort and encouragement. Their friendship provides strength in the face of hardship. Suyodhana involves Bhanumathi in his drives and goals, considering her an equal partner in their journey. They share dreams of a prosperous kingdom and work together towards common goals, fostering a sense of unity and friendship. Suyodhana makes sacrifices and commitments for the sake of Bhanumathi and their relationship. Despite facing opposition and obstacles, he remains devoted to her, prioritizing their love above personal gain or societal expectations.

Overall, Suyodhana's love for Bhanumathi is characterized by care, respect, emotional support, shared dreams, and unwavering commitment. Their relationship serves as a poignant portrayal of love amidst the backdrop of power struggles and political conspiracy in the narrative.

In Anand Neelakantan's *Ajaya*, Suyodhana's portrayal embodies the essence of Sringara rasa, showcasing a rich tapestry of complex emotions, relationships, and aspirations. Through his interactions with Bhanumathi, his wife, and other characters, Suyodhana's expressions of love, desire, and longing surpass mere romantic conventions, probing into the depths of human complexity. His journey reflects the complex interaction between love and ambition, loyalty and sacrifice, offering readers a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted nature of Sringara rasa. In exploring Suyodhana's character, Neelakantan provides a compelling exploration of the universal themes of love, power, and the human condition.



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**Deconstructing Myth: A Study of Devadutt Pattanaik's *The Pregnant King***

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**Abstract:**

The paper analyzes how the author skilfully subverts the mythological narrative of normative sexuality by manipulating the story itself. The novel challenges the heterosexual normative sexuality and the binary of gender that are upheld in scriptures by retelling a few lesser-known stories from The Mahabharata. Pattanaik deftly incorporates mythology from popular culture into his narrative. He has muddled the distinction between man and woman throughout the entire story. The masculine and female forms are implied to be unfolding in the title. Yuvanashva, torn between being a mother and a father, sets out on a mission to heal his mind by studying numerous other figures who were able to embody both manhood and womanhood.

**Keywords:** gender fluidity, queerness, mythology

**Introduction:**

The four-thousand-year-old Vedas, Puranas, Tantras, and Bhakti literature are the foundation of India's literary heritage. Mythologies study how people's subjective realities are represented through rituals, symbols, and stories. Hindu mythology, considered to have a deeper, frequently symbolic significance and has been given diverse interpretations, plays a prominent part in Indian literature. How queerness is portrayed in Hindu mythology has taken on a special place in Indian literary works. In Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Tamil, there were more than fifty terms denoting non-heterosexual gender and sexualities in ancient India. According to some Sanskrit texts, this third sex or gender includes people who are conventionally called homosexuals, bisexuals, transgender people, and intersex people.

Indian physician Pattanaik is now a mythologist, author, and thinker who concentrates on myth, religion, and mythology in most of his writings. He is the first to identify, gather, and discuss queer concepts in Hindu mythology and metaphysics. In the universe, no sexual or gender expression is invalidated by societal rejection or acceptance. Everything is a manifestation of the divine in the Hindu worldview. A retelling of a few chosen scenes from The Mahabharata, Pattanaik's debut fiction

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novel *The Pregnant King* challenges heteronormative notions of gender and sexuality. It discusses living both inside and outside of oneself. He brings up significant issues regarding gender rhetoric, which assumes that everyone deserves equal treatment.

Only then will we be able to claim to be the most sentient species on Earth? One of the lesser-known sub-stories in *The Mahabharata* is the one that the wise Lomasha gives the exiled Pandavas. Yuvanashva, the Vallabhi prince at the story's center, unintentionally finds himself between mom and fatherhood. After revealing that the pregnancy was not an accident but rather the work of the spirits of two Brahmin boys whom the monarch had burned alive, Yuvanashva, a childless king, becomes pregnant.

The story of Yuvanashva, which tells of young Somvat who gives up his genitalia to marry his companion Sumedha, Shikhandi, a daughter brought to the world, skillfully weaves together several issues of gender distinction and the division of the sexes. The dawn deity Aruni, disguised as a woman, was compelled to accept the seed of Surya and Indra. Ila, a god during full moon days and a goddess during new moon nights, went through both parenthood and fatherhood; the bard claims that she was remembered for this" was restricted to the rituals of the temple" (Pattanaik 4), and Adi-natha, the teacher of teachers, was revered by some as an enchantress and by others as a hermit.

The primary plot of Yuvanashva's story is that he drinks an enchantment intended to impregnate his wife by mistake, leading to the conception of a kid. From this point on, his struggle and his frantic attempts to overcome his fractured gender and sexual identities begin. He conceives his second wife, Pulomi, who bears him a son named Jayanta after giving birth to his son, Mandhata. However, the king, who has always walked the Dharma's path, is now faced with a difficult choice. "He looked at Jayanta. He will call me 'father,' as he should. Then he looked at Mandhata. What should this one call me? Father or mother?" (238). The King considered the embodiment of manhood and the guardian of Dharma, longs until the day he dies to be addressed as "mother" by Mandhata only once. The story's irony persists until the book's conclusion. Yuvanashva asks, "What sounds sweeter, father or mother?" (239). He is lost between the obscure line that separates a 'man' from a 'woman' and a 'father' from a 'mother.' "I may look like a man, but I am not sure I am a man. . . I have created a life outside me as men do. But I have also created life inside me, as women do. What does that make me? Will a body such as mine fetter or free me?" (331-32)

As a result, society's expectation that the king plays a parental role and the

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maternal sentiments that have grown inside him destroy the king's personality. There has always been social organisation and regulation of desire. Only when one is required to follow the rules can one address their desires. He discovered he did not fit the gender-specific behavioural patterns and established, accepted, and anticipated norms. The classification of a man as a woman is neither changeable nor transferable in society.

In our society, heteronormativity is the norm that deems sexual desire acceptable. When Yuvanashva expresses his desire to be both, Simantini counters that this kind of gender role-switching is illegal. "To be a mother", she says, "you must be a woman. Are you saying you are a woman Arya? If you are a woman you have no right to sit on the throne." (258). Because he was fascinated with social conventions, Mandhata was sternly rejected by Yuvanashva and was never permitted to refer to him as "mother." The mother of Yuvanashva, Shilavati, is presented as a victim of societal norms. The Vallabhi Brahmin elders hesitate to acknowledge a woman as the head of state. Women are thrown out of power by rules that are imposed in the name of dharma. The hegemonic structures are merely reenacting preexisting meanings through these repetitive performances.

The idea of queerness centres on "mismatches between sex, gender, and desire," even though heterosexuality is the source and basis of societies' heteronormative stability (Jagose 3). It became a term of reference for marginalized sexualities that did not fit into the mainstream discourse on gender and sexuality, and it became a symbol of the fight against heterosexual culture. The scope of queer theory extends beyond sexualities and sexual rights. It also challenges long-standing structures of political, social, and economic power.

The central claim made by Butler in *Gender Trouble* is that the cultural construction of the coherence of the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality—the apparent naturalness of heterosexual desire in male bodies, for instance, and masculine masculinity—is achieved via the repeated performance of stylized acts across time. The appearance of an essential, ontological "core" gender is established by repeating these stylized bodily activities (Butler 140). Butler famously theorises gender, sex, and sexuality to be performative in this manner. Butler describes gender as an imitation that lacks an original and only manifests through repeated performance. Throughout the process, creativity only seems to surface due to repetition. The emphasis on repetition ultimately implies that there is no such thing as a fixed sexual or gender identity.

In the book's epilogue, Yuvanashva gives up the world and enters the

Vanaprastha Ashram after realising the pointlessness of his identity struggle. He renounces his regal title and becomes an ascetic by moving into the forest. Yuvanashva's search for comfort helps him relax after his wild trip. He becomes enlightened by the tales of Adi-natha, Bhangashvana, Krishna, Arjuna, and Shikhandi since he is liberated from the vicious power struggles between men and women. Among them is Shikhandi. Raised as a son who fathered a child with a borrowed penis, she is Drupada's daughter. Women's clothing and instructed the princess Uttara of the city controlled by King Virata in music, singing, and dance. The greatest archer in Arya-vrita finds living as a eunuch to be freeing.

As Judith Butler states in her seminal work *Gender Trouble*, binary gender categories could be deconstructed, opening up a wide range of potential gender "positions" by challenging gender norms and rejecting the traits that society assigns to a specific biological sex. Thus, the novel emphasises the plasticity of gender. Pattanaik creates a new story by constructing and manipulating fictitious characters and dissecting the original narrative. In this story, the marginalised voices and overlooked sexual identities of the Mahabharata are highlighted, and the myths about normalcy and truth are fiercely refuted.

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**Celebrations of Subjugated Knowledges through Oral traditions**

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**Abstract:**

Oral literature gave birth to written literature. However, Oral traditions and literature are gradually being removed from our lives. Oral traditions were written down to ensure their survival. However, in today's world, graphic stories are regarded as superior. Oral history is ignored because of its simplicity. Lack of access to oral traditions causes loss of language, modernization of the mind, and cultural genocide. This paper draws on a variety of sources, case studies, and perspectives to highlight previously overlooked stories and narratives. This paper focuses on respecting, preserving, and revitalising oral traditions. The goal of this article is to shed light on stories and narratives that have been underrepresented for far too long. The purpose of this research is to discover some of the key aspects of oral tradition.

**Keywords:** Oral traditions, Oral literature, Written literature, Storytelling, Knowledge

**Introduction:**

Oral traditions are the messages or practices passed on from one generation to another. According to Vansina, "Oral tradition is a veritable treasure trove for historians. It provides them with a nearly inexhaustible supply of raw materials, the product of centuries of human activity in virtually every aspect of life. It offers them the collective memories of societies, memories that have been continuously reshaped and refined over time, yet retain a remarkable degree of fidelity to the past." (Vansina, 1985)

As Niles defined "Oral literature, like written literature, is a form of artistic expression that reflects the creativity, imagination, and cultural values of a people. Passed down through generations via spoken word, oral literature encompasses a wide range of genres including myths, legends, folktales, epic poetry, chants, songs, and riddles." (Niles, 1999)

The origin of oral traditions dates back to the earliest human societies, where communication and knowledge transfer predominantly occurred through spoken word rather than written texts (Ong, 1982). Oral traditions encompass a wide range of cultural practices, including storytelling, folktales, myths, legends, rituals, songs, and chants, among others (Finnegan, 1970).

According to Lord, “these traditions served as essential means for preserving and transmitting cultural, historical, and societal knowledge from one generation to another” (Lord, 2000). Oral traditions have been integral to the cultural identities and social cohesion of communities worldwide, playing significant roles in shaping beliefs, values, norms, and collective memories (Goody, 1977). They have been utilized not only for entertainment but also for educational, religious, and political purposes, fostering a sense of shared heritage and belonging among individuals within a community (Havelock, 1963).

Written literature today dominates the subject of literature, and oral traditions are gradually disappearing from society. The purpose of writing down oral traditions was to save them for the next generation. However, written literature is disseminating the oral traditions.

Secondly, even though oral literature gave birth to written literature. In this digital era, written works are often associated with supremacy and authority. Rather oral traditions are seen as simple stories or myths passed across generations. In the field of academics and law, books are seen as the credible source. Whereas sources gathered from living beings who share their life experiences are completely regarded as false sources.

According to Slembrouk, “Colonial education systems often prioritized European languages and literacy, relegating indigenous oral traditions to inferior status. This perpetuated the perception that written European languages were superior forms of communication” (Slembrouk, 2002).

European languages underwent standardization and canonization processes, solidifying their status as prestigious written forms. This reinforced the idea of European superiority in language and culture (Bourdieu, 1991).

European languages became dominant in academic and intellectual spheres, influencing knowledge production and dissemination worldwide. This further entrenched the perception of European linguistic superiority (Mignolo, 2000). According to Ashcroft, “European colonial powers spread their languages through colonization, imposing them on indigenous populations. This process privileged European languages in written form, reinforcing their dominance over local oral languages” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2013).

A well-known Mesopotamian epic, “The Epic of Gilgamesh” was originally transmitted orally and later recorded in cuneiform script. Epics such as “The

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Odyssey," "The Ramayana," and "Mahabharat" are well-known tales that were handed down from our ancestors before being expanded into large epics.

Globally, we've advanced so far that we've switched from oral to digital storytelling.

We all have a mob mentality, in which we just follow what the bulk of others are doing without considering the consequences of our actions. We tend to focus on popular culture in terms of fashion, trends, ideas, and storylines, while ignoring folk culture.

In the process, we forget that we are the victims of European colonization. We are still adapting to Western influences. This demonstrates that our thoughts are still in the control of the West.

We used to live in a united family back then, when the older members would gather and tell the younger members stories. However, we now live in a technologically advanced society as members of a nuclear family, and we barely have time to spend a few moments with our loved ones. Certain households reportedly forbid speaking to others these days.

Further traditions are looked down by western culture and photos and videos are recorded over the actual presence of the people. People eventually become feeling isolated and alienated as a result, which ends their lives.

No matter how far we have come, human connections are essential to our survival. Living in harmony with other societies is fundamental to the human condition. Oral traditions also fall within this category. Even though technology is advancing daily, we must remember that oral traditions are the source of all literature. The wisdom passed down orally by our knowledgeable forefathers for the benefit of future generations is known as oral traditions. It is possible to acquire knowledge from anything and anywhere. As a result, we ought to embrace the knowledge that comes from oral traditions.

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***Rudali*: Struggle for Survival of Indian Subaltern Class Women by  
Mahasweta Devi**

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**Abstract:**

*Rudali*, by Mahasweta Devi, is a feminist work. *Rudali* presents a socially conscious image that emphasises the difficulties and empowerment of Dalit women. She portrayed the protagonist of her book "Sanichari" as a professional mourner. Being a Dalit woman, she became the embodiment of the pain experienced by the gendered subaltern. The novella concentrates on the customs, beliefs, and culture of the society to its socio-economic aspects. As a result, *Rudalis*, the subaltern women, establish their relevance in a repressive society and earn a living through professional crying. As the poor, low-caste subaltern woman Sanichari navigates the predatory world of landlords and moneylenders; she crosses political, religious, socio-economic, and traditional boundaries. *Rudali* explores the exploitation of tears by impoverished women, highlighting their fight for resistance against patriarchal norms and pursue their identities by selling their tears.

**Keywords:** Dalit, gendered subaltern, exploitation, resistance, patriarchal norms.

**Introduction:**

Mahasweta Devi, a notable female writer and activist of the 20th century, has written extensively about everyday issues, people's lifestyles, and customs and cultural practices. The paintings primarily address the subjection of men and women as the ongoing oppression and exploitation of the marginalized communities that exist in society. Mahasweta Devi's works can be examined within the framework of cultural and subaltern studies since they represent society in its cultural manifestations. According to the rules, every region, state, and group has unique cultural traditions. In her novella "*Rudali*," Mahasweta Devi addresses the major factor that cultural practices role in the subjugation and exploitation of marginalized groups, particularly women from ganju and dushads.

Mahasweta Devi's work reveals how social inequalities have affected the marginalized group in India." In the novella *Rudali*, Mahasweta Devi exposes the pitiful life of Sanichari, the main character, whose name was interpreted negatively

by the villagers. Rich individuals repay the oppressed for the same cultural practice. In certain regions of Rajasthan, wealthy individuals have a custom of hiring *Rudalis* to grieve in place of crying when a loved one passes away in their family. When an upper-caste male is dead, lower-caste women, known as *Rudalis*, are paid to perform as professional mourners. The word "rudaali" (*roo-dah-lee*) means "weeping woman" or "female weeper" in exact translation.

*Rudali*, a Bengali short story by Mahasweta Devi, was adapted into a Hindi drama by Usha Ganguly in 1992. The story explores the marginalized groups' experiences of exploitation, oppression, and survival tactics. The author critiques the extreme poverty of villagers, their exploitation, the influence of ritualized religion, the control of upper-caste Malik-Majans, and corruption within the privileged classes, emphasizing the importance of survival and the need for food. Mahasweta Devi's *Rudali* gives a realistic picture of the subaltern class women will inevitably confront against the misogyny and denigration of women that ninety-nine percent of male Chauvinists in our country commit. Sanichari takes on the responsibility of standing by her spouse through everything. She is morally and spiritually superior to than her spouse. She maintains the family unit while the males in her life shirk their duties.

In *Rudali*, a 'Dalit woman' from an Eastern Indian village experiences double oppression, marginalization, and hardship throughout her life. Sanichari is a victim of the paradox where women's are ill-treated like slaves yet revered as goddesses. Her life was a never-ending story of hardship, anguish, and struggle. She was impoverished her entire life: "By caste, Sanichari was a ganju. She shared the same extreme poverty as the other locals. She had to deal with the villagers' superstitions she has taken birth since she was thought to be unfortunate. Because Saturday was an inauspicious day of birth, she was cursed, manhooded, and destined to suffer; therefore, her name is Sanichari.

She has consistently been her husband's real, dependable, and honest companion. She had this idealized picture of an Indian woman who live her full day with her husband and kids. Despite her poverty, she remain satisfied and happy with her spouse and her married life. She was willing to give anything up to protect her family. Sanichari and her spouse were a good match and put in just as much effort, but in tandem, to provide for their house and means of subsistence. She left her six-year-old boy at home and went to work on Malik's estate, where she gathered cattle feed, cut wood, and collaborated with her husband during harvest season. The two of them built a cabin together on.

Like any other Indian lady, she too was highly sensitive person, but the unrelenting horrific circumstances of poverty, suffering, and exploitation at the hands of Malik Mahajan had completely hardened her heart. As she was constantly forced to make concessions due to her suffering and loneliness, she became a very realistic and resilient person. She didn't cry when her mother-in-law passed away since she didn't have time to grieve. Because of Malik Mahajan, her husband and his brother were incarcerated. Her mother-in-law cried out for food as she starved to death and suffered greatly. Sanichari had to make the appropriate preparations to carry out the funeral rituals before daylight amid the pouring rain at night, without any food and without the family's assistance.

In just three years, both the brother-in-law and his spouse passed away. Her spouse felt ill due to cholera after consuming the milk used to make Shiva idols at the Baisakhi fair in Tohri, further victimizing her for superstitions that were misinterpreted for religion. Before she could go back to the hamlet, the priest of the Shiva Temple in Tohri required that she make a ceremonial offering.

When she went back to her village, the Malik Mahajan priest chastised her once again for disrespecting and disobeying her local priest by going without his permission to carry out her husband's dying rites, even though his village was her home. For five years she need to spend working as a bond laborer in Ramavatar's fields after being driven into debt by him to make ends meet. She also never had time to weep for her spouse since she was so concerned about feeding her little child after paying for her husband's shradh.

She was unable to even imagine losing her child because of how much she loved and cherished him. She did her best to keep her son alive. After Budhua passed away, her daughter-in-law also departed, leaving a weeping boy on Sanichari's lap. Sanichari did not cry for her kid this time either. With Budhua's passing, she once again lost a kind, encouraging, and understanding friend. As best she could, she mentioned her grandson, Haroa. Haroa found a job for him with the new malik Mahajan, despite turning fourteen. The child worked hard at first, but he eventually became bored and lost interest in his job.

Sanichari then forewarned him, telling that she never allow him to go off the correct course. This demonstrated her jealousy and worry for her grandson. But in the end, he fled, leaving her by herself once more. She had a strong will and a strong sense of purpose. She refused to let it end there. After all her efforts she was unable to find him. She didn't weep. She remains strong and support herself.

After a long period of loneliness, Sanichari and her childhood friend Bikhni rediscovered and agreed to work together. Sanichari and Bikhni had an amazing connection. She was given companionship and shelter by Sanichari. They supported one another financially and emotionally. At every turn, Dulan helped Sanichari gain more self-confidence and taught her coping and adaptation skills. With Dulan's assistance and guidance, she was able to move from a state of helpless despair (mourning her fate), her deceased husband, and her deceased past to the realization that, in reality, she was not happy and angry too, and how unfair the situation was. He also gave her a survival strategy—a means of making the situation better—so that she moved forward.

He proposed that they take over *Rudalis's* business. She first was not ready to perform this work, but Dulan reassured her that no job is good or bad for one's stomach. For Sanichari, this was another survival issue. Thus, she consented to conduct this business. She mentally prepared herself and decided to do her duties to the best of her ability and resolve. It demonstrated that she was now a true professional. She wanted to live a luxury life where she can get rice, money in hand, good new clothes to wear.

As they developed into a successful professional partnership and managed their businesses well, Sanichari and Bikhni's reputation as *Rudalis* improved over time. However, she also had to deal with Bikhni's untimely death, which was another blow to her life. Once more, she lost a partner who was kind and sympathetic friend. But now Sanichari, become professional and more resilient and in control due to the numerous deaths, lies, and injustices. Sanichari had no desire to pass away in that manner. She's heartbroken, yet she refuses to cry.

And now she is considering extending her business and life. In exchange, she promised the village prostitutes to perform an extra service of weeping over the dead. These prostitutes had also been severely exploited and victimized by the community's higher-class residents. After considering Dulan's proposal to include the prostitutes in *Rudalis'* operations, she moved quickly to supervise the prostitutes because she believed that after being the suffer of these Malik Mahajan for so long, the prostitutes ought to exact revenge on them.

She promised to empower them in the same way that she was empowered. She also stood up bravely when she confronted her social superiors, deftly handling the issue to trap them in their hypocrisy since if they restricted her, they would have to face their greed. As we saw in the last moment when she came in to lament Malik

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Mahajan Gambhir Singh passed away with around 100 *Rudalis*, they were unable to do anything except watch helplessly as she wept away their chances of making a profit on the side. By using the circumstances to her advantage, Sanichari was able to trap the oppressors in their duplicity. She became the *RandiRudalis*' natural leader.

The system of exploitation of high-rich class is the noble reason of all her disasters, whether direct or indirect. Sanichari is a victim of the socio-religious, economic, cultural, and political power systems represented by Malik-Mahajan, the landowners, and the moneylenders. The entire narrative tells the story of Sanichari's journey from a helpless and weak lady to a strong, independent, cunning, and manipulative person who survives despite all difficulties. It tells the tale of a subaltern character's development who, after the narrative, triumphs. In another words, Sanichari's tale is about how her character changes over time and how she ultimately becomes more adept at surviving, adjusting to new circumstances, and taking advantage of the system.

As she encouraged the prostitutes to utilize it as a form of retaliation, Sanichari, who was acutely conscious of the ironic overtones of this commercialized, ritualized system of lamentation—highlighted its subversive potential. The *Rudali* rite had now been politicized. It served as more than simply a means of subsistence; it was also a tool of subaltern retaliation and empowerment. Sanichari was instrumental in this procedure. Additionally, we see Sanichari's persona gradually changing from that of a victim of an engaged professional woman. In the end, the writer showed the growth of Sanichari, a low-caste, impoverished woman who was, stated differently, more capable than previous because she was ready to adapt, survive, and exploit the system. *Rudali*'s female characters are life-affirming, despite facing dire circumstances. They strive to survive in class and gender oppression, demonstrating how they can weaken the exploitation system if given the chance. Their experiences have allowed them to cherish every moment, highlighting the prevalence of inequality and mistreatment of the underprivileged in historical or prehistoric times. Sanichari is now confident enough to enter the Tohri red-light district. She gives a call to everyone, including her daughter-in-law. Sanichari, who was silent, gains a voice. Marginality, subalternity, and dehumanization are prominent themes in her literature. She uses all of her abilities to link the margins to the mainstream.

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**Intersectionality and Social Justice in South Asian Feminist Literature:  
A Comparative Analysis of Fatima Bhutto's and Meena Kandasamy's  
Perspectives**

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**Abstract:**

This comparative analysis explores how Fatima Bhutto and Meena Kandasamy address intersectional issues in South Asian feminist literature, integrating discussions of gender, class, caste, religion, and ethnicity. By situating their narratives within broader social justice movements, the study elucidates how their works provide nuanced critiques of systemic oppressions and advocate for inclusive, equitable societies. Through diverse characters and perspectives, Fatima Bhutto and Meena Kandasamy contribute to ongoing dialogues on identity, power dynamics, and transformative activism in South Asia and beyond. By weaving together diverse narratives and perspectives, they contribute to conversations about equity, inclusion, and empowerment in South Asia. Through their literary endeavors, Bhutto and Kandasamy challenge dominant narratives, encourage reflection on privilege and power, and inspire readers to engage with issues of social justice, fostering dialogue and solidarity across diverse communities.

**Keywords:** Caste, Gender, Class, Religion, Ethnicity

**Introduction:**

Intersectionality and social justice are crucial concepts in contemporary feminist discourse that examine gender, race, class, and other intersecting identities. In South Asian feminist literature, the works of Fatima Bhutto and Meena Kandasamy are significant contributions to this discourse. This research article aims to explore the complexities of intersectionality within the framework of social justice in South Asian contexts by comparing their perspectives. By examining how these two authors articulate the interconnected experiences of marginalization and oppression in their literary works, this study aims to shed light on the nuances of feminist thought within



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the diverse cultural landscapes of South Asia.

Fatima Bhutto, a Pakistani writer, and Meena Kandasamy, an Indian poet and novelist, offer distinctive yet intersecting perspectives on feminism, social justice, and the complexities of identity within the South Asian context. Fatima Bhutto's narratives often address themes of power, politics, and patriarchy, while Meena Kandasamy's works delve into issues of caste, gender, and resistance. Through an exploration of their respective literary works, this research paper aims to uncover the commonalities and divergences in their approaches to intersectionality and social justice, providing insights into the multifaceted experiences of women in South Asia and how literature serves as a tool for challenging and transforming oppressive structures.

Fatima Bhutto is a renowned author known for her poignant narration and incisive social commentary. Her novels and essays explore themes such as power, politics, and patriarchy. Bhutto offers a multi-layered portrayal of Pakistani society in works like *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* and *The Runaways*. She explains how intersecting identities shape individuals' experiences and opportunities. Bhutto confronts issues like gender discrimination, socio-economic disparity, and political corruption through her characters. She sheds light on the various forms of oppression faced by women, minorities, and marginalized communities. *Songs of Blood and Sword* is a memoir that weaves personal experiences with the tumultuous political history of Pakistan. The novel primarily focuses on Bhutto's family legacy, and in this narrative, she shares her journey of navigating the intersections of gender and politics within her own family. Fatima Bhutto examines the legacies of power and privilege and how they affect women in patriarchal societies, particularly within political dynasties like the Bhuttos. Through her personal story, she sheds light on the challenges faced by women, highlighting how gender intersects with class, ethnicity, and political affiliation, shaping individuals' experiences of oppression and resistance.

In her novel *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon*, Fatima Bhutto focuses on the fictional town of Mir Ali situated in Pakistan's tribal region. It portrays the lives of ordinary people amidst the backdrop of political conflict and terrorism. She explores the intersecting impacts of war, religion, and societal norms on individuals from diverse backgrounds through the perspectives of various characters. The author challenges simplistic narratives of good versus evil by depicting the complexities of human experiences within contexts of violence and oppression. Fatima Bhutto's depiction of female characters in the novel emphasizes their agency and resilience in the face of systemic injustices, which offers a nuanced critique of gender roles and

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societal expectations. In the article “Critique of Cultural Hegemony in Bhutto’s *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon*” T. P. Lamichhane observes that, “Women are the underlying sentiment of the story; their extraordinary spirit and strength of heart and mind in a region where their voices are vetoed” (Lamichhane 277).

In *The Runaways*, Bhutto intricately weaves together the stories of three individuals from diverse backgrounds: Sunny, Anita, and Monty, whose lives intersect amidst the backdrop of terrorism, poverty, and religious extremism. Through their intertwined narratives, Bhutto exposes the harsh realities of life in contemporary Pakistan while celebrating the resilience and agency of her characters in the face of adversity. Fatima Bhutto uses the characters’ experiences to illustrate how their intersecting identities - gender, class, ethnicity, and religion - shape their perceptions of self and society. The struggles of Anita, Monty, and Sunny demonstrate how these factors influence their lives. The theme of social justice is central to the novel, as Bhutto addresses issues such as gender-based violence, class disparities, religious extremism, and the struggles of marginalized communities. She challenges readers to confront uncomfortable truths about privilege, power, and complicity. Bhutto also explores the role of activism and resistance in the pursuit of social justice, portraying moments of solidarity, resilience, and defiance. She emphasizes the importance of collective action in challenging systemic oppression and advocating for change. In the article “Exploring Identity Crisis in Fatima Bhutto’s *The Runaways*: A Psychosocial Perspective” Ghulam Haider Shaikh views that,

Fatima Bhutto’s *Runaways* is a true representation of this modern world which highlights the hypocritical systems of our societies. The author manifests that in the contemporary times of the world, people have been looking for resolving the issues of identity, place, existence, meaning of life and so on. When they cannot find it, they select the path which leads them towards unknown dark path and confused identities. (Shaikh 15)

Meena Kandasamy has a unique perspective on the discourse on intersectionality and social justice. She focuses on caste, gender, and resistance in Indian society. As a Dalit feminist, Kandasamy’s works foreground the experiences of marginalized communities, especially Dalit women, who endure intersecting forms of discrimination and violence. In her novel *When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife*, Meena Kandasamy offers a searing account of domestic abuse, patriarchy, and feminist resistance. The unnamed protagonist’s voice navigates the complexities of marital violence within the context of caste-based oppression and patriarchal norms. By intertwining personal narrative with socio-political analysis, she exposes the ways in which systems of power and privilege

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intersect to perpetuate violence against women, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds. Through her raw and unflinching portrayal of the protagonist's struggles, Meena Kandasamy invites readers to confront the harsh realities of gender-based violence and the urgent need for social change.

*The Gypsy Goddess* by Meena Kandasamy is a novel that delves into the complicated intersections of caste, class, ethnicity, and resistance among women from marginalized caste backgrounds in India. The novel highlights the different types of oppression faced by women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and sheds light on the exploitation of laborers and the economic disenfranchisement experienced by women. In addition to caste and class, the novel also explores the intersection of ethnicity and gender, particularly concerning indigenous communities that face discrimination and displacement due to land grabs and development projects. Through characters like Mari, Kandasamy emphasizes the intersectional nature of the oppression faced by tribal women. In the review "On reading and writing violence in Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You*" Proshant Chakraborty observes that, "The novel resonated so much because it tells a truth about the experience of millions of women across the world who face abuse and violence of all sorts, whose voices are battling the silence forced upon them" (Chakraborty 66).

Despite the various forms of oppression depicted in the book, it also showcases acts of resistance and solidarity among marginalized women, challenging the intersecting systems of power and striving for social justice. Meena Kandasamy's narrative style weaves together multiple perspectives and timelines, reflecting the multifaceted nature of intersectionality. *The Gypsy Goddess* serves as a poignant exploration of intersectionality and social justice in South Asian feminist literature, shining a light on the interconnected oppressions faced by marginalized women and the possibilities for resistance and solidarity. Nivetha in her article "Unveiling the Ecofeminist Discourse in Meena Kandasamy's *The Gypsy Goddess*" views that,

In Meena Kandasamy's novel *The Gypsy Goddess*, the themes of resistance and activism are woven throughout the narrative, portraying the characters' efforts to challenge oppressive systems and fight for justice. The novel showcases various forms of resistance and activism, highlighting the strength, resilience, and determination of individuals to create positive change in their lives and communities. (Nivetha 57)

The works of Fatima Bhutto and Meena Kandasamy make valuable contributions to the discourse on intersectionality and social justice in South Asian feminist literature. Both authors shed light on the interconnected nature of identity,

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power, and oppression through their respective narratives. They urge readers to confront the complexities of gender, class, caste, religion, and other intersecting factors. Fatima Bhutto's writings, as seen in *Songs of Blood and Sword*, *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon*, and *The Runaways*, provide a broader political and socio-economic context for understanding the struggles of marginalized communities in South Asia. Fatima Bhutto explores power dynamics, familial legacies, and political upheavals that highlight the intersections of privilege and oppression within the region.

Meena Kandasamy, on the other hand, offers a more personal perspective on intersectionality and social justice in works like *When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* and *The Gypsy Goddess*. Through her honest portrayals of caste-based discrimination, patriarchal violence, and resistance, Kandasamy underscores the lived experiences of individuals at the intersections of multiple identities. Fatima Bhutto focuses on geopolitical landscapes and historical contexts specific to Pakistan, while Meena Kandasamy on the social realities of contemporary India, both authors emphasize the importance of solidarity among marginalized communities. They advocate for collective resistance against systems of oppression.

In comparing their perspectives, it becomes evident that Bhutto and Kandasamy offer complementary insights into the complexities of intersectionality and social justice in South Asian feminist literature. Their works challenge dominant narratives, amplify marginalized voices, and inspire readers to critically engage with issues of power, privilege, and liberation. Ultimately, through their compelling narratives and thought-provoking analyses, Fatima Bhutto and Meena Kandasamy contribute to a richer and more inclusive understanding of feminism and social justice in the South Asian context.

Fatima Bhutto and Meena Kandasamy offer distinct yet complementary perspectives on intersectionality and social justice in South Asian feminist literature. Through their respective works, they illuminate the complex interplay of gender, class, caste, and other intersecting identities, while also advocating for transformative social change. This paper has compared and contrasted their narratives, themes, and characterizations to underscore the diverse ways in which Fatima Bhutto and Meena Kandasamy navigate issues of oppression and resistance within the cultural and socio-political landscapes of Pakistan and India. Through their powerful storytelling and thought-provoking insights, these authors inspire readers to critically engage with the complexities of intersectionality and to actively participate in the ongoing struggle for a more just and equitable society in South Asia and beyond.

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**Myths and man in the poem *The Raven* by Edgar Allan Poe**

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**Abstract:**

George Orwell posits that myths, once believed, tend to become true. Every human life follows a lifestyle intertwined with myths, which through constant thoughts and manifestations, can become reality. Hallucinations, imaginations, desires, and dreams often transform into myths, negatively impacting a person's psyche. Edgar Allan Poe illustrates this through his depiction of a deceased beloved, symbolized by a crow in his writing. For Poe, the crow represents his lost love, while others see it merely as a bird, demonstrating that disbelief can turn belief into myth.

**Keywords:** Thought, Myth, Mankind, Psyche, Reality.

**Introduction:**

A myth is a belief considered true by some despite lacking evidence. In Indian culture, for example, cutting nails on Tuesday is seen as bad luck, a belief not universally accepted. In Poe's "The Raven," the speaker perceives an invisible creature as his lost love Lenore, though others may see it as mere superstition. This poem blends unrealistic elements with reality, highlighting how deeply held beliefs can create myths.

Poe's "The Raven" explores how myths influence reality. The protagonist initially views the raven with fear, but as he converses with it, he comes to see it as a manifestation of Lenore. This mirrors Hindu mythology, where crows are seen as ancestors. Poe's portrayal shows how deeply myths can affect one's psyche and perception.

Myths significantly impact lives. Beliefs can shape societal judgments, with religious adherence often earning respect, while non-belief might invite disdain. As Masashi Kishimoto notes, knowledge and experience shape reality, which can become illusory. This concept is exemplified by the unwavering support for RCB in the IPL, despite years without a trophy, demonstrating the power of belief and hope, which can also be seen as myth.

Poe's lines, "Prophet! said I, thing of evil! —prophet still, if bird or devil!" reflect on belief in the unseen, much like Christian anticipation of Jesus' return or

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Muslim belief in Imam Mahdi's coming. Though these events haven't occurred, they are deeply held beliefs, illustrating how myths can persist and shape expectations of the future.

Negative perceptions, fueled by fear, can turn into myths. The word "Nevermore" in Poe's poem signifies both the end of pain and the end of life, impacting the narrator's psyche. While some dismiss these ideas as unreal, for the narrator, they are profoundly real. Concepts like black holes, the Bermuda Triangle, ghosts, and aliens are similarly divisive, believed by some and dismissed by others. The COVID-19 pandemic, while real, has also faced skepticism, showing how myths and reality intertwine and sometimes conflict.

In "The Raven," one's mentality, environment, upbringing, and experiences can shape myths or reality, with both being two sides of the same coin. Perspective dictates whether something is seen as myth or reality. Plato's assertion, "Those who tell the story rule the society," underscores the power of narrative in shaping belief. Ultimately, myths and realities are human constructs, blurring the lines between truth and illusion.

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**Validating Personal Perception: Romantic Film and Fantasy Dynamics**

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**Abstract:**

Romantic films in Indian cinema are considered to be an evergreen content. Romantic films have also been part of perpetuating popular culture among the society. *Premam* (2015), *Subramaniapuram* (2008), are few moves that have influenced the dress culture of the society for an example. Examples can be found for films that influence other aspects of a society's culture. Films are impactful, but what are the personal perceptions that romantic films create about love life of the society? How far does the viewers go to wooing their partners after watching a movie or do they fall short? The research article raises research questions about the creative impact of romantic films in the fantasies of its viewers.

**Keywords:** Subtext, Resonance, Film studies, Cultural Studies, Cultural Relevance, Romantic Films, Popular Culture.

**Introduction:**

Popular culture and romantic films have an inevitable role in the perception of fantasy and romance among Indians. The fashion, pick up lines used in the films, techniques to woo a partner are updated constantly in the perception of film watchers in India through Romantic films. It works in such a way that a film director uses his/her creativity to go a step forward in comparison to other directors before him and when audience see that on screen immediately try to replicate it in their life. (Rinke). The percentage of replication may not be high for other movies but the research article tries to find out how much impact non-sexual fantasies and romance expressed in movies have impacted the society. (Guertin)

The research article tries to find the impact of non-sexual romantic fantasies on a closed group of candidates. The scope of the research article is limited to this closed group yet further research may be carried out with more candidates. The closed group includes students of Loyola college, who belong to various streams of knowledge.

The advantage of the chosen group aids the data gathering from a group that actively participates in the popular culture of a society, since the age group of 19 to 24 is involved. However, the study can be expanded to reveal deeper implications.



The respondents were asked 15 questions through a questionnaire, distributed as a survey form. The responses aimed at finding if the responded has / had romantic fantasies influenced by the films they watch, whether the respondents went beyond the romantic fantasies portrayed in the films and whether the respondents creativity and personal experience played a part in having any specified romantic fantasy realized in their life.

**Limitation**

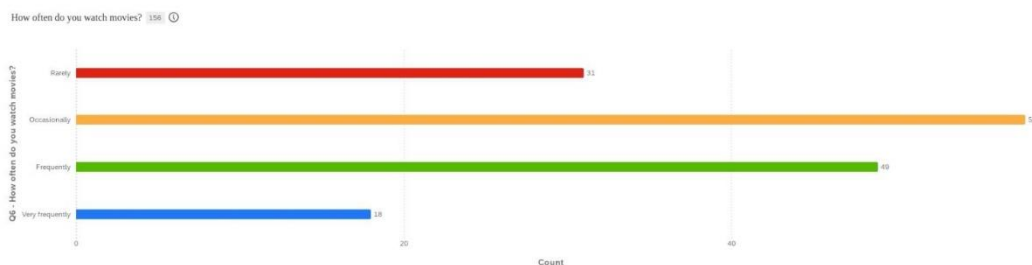
The survey was conducted by developing questions on the purview of the question raised by the research. It was distributed through social media and a total of 155 responses have been received. The survey was conducted using Qualtrics (Qualtrics) to obtain responses from a very closed group and within a shorter duration of 15 days.

**Methodology**

The receives responses were used to generate graphs and charts for diagrammatic representation. The data entered by the candidates have been put through response analysis and content analysis. The response analysis was made for survey questions that are close-ended questions. The content analysis was made for survey questions that are open-ended questions. The questionnaire had generated responses from candidates through 15 inputs to be made in the Qualtrics XM survey Form. The inputs include, age, gender, occupation, educational level, relationship status,

The age of the responders has been recorded between 19 and 67. However, the survey was conducted among a closed group, about 95% of the responders are within the age of 19 to 24. hence the analysis of the response would capture the

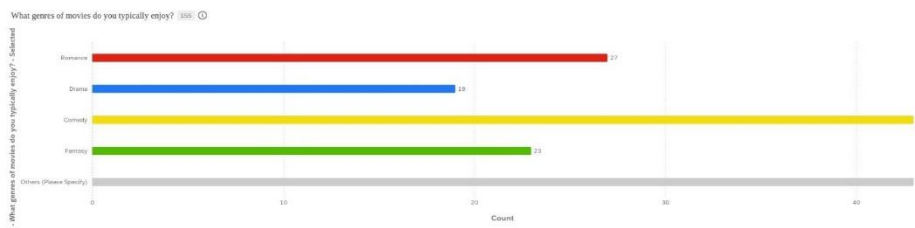
**Figure 1: Distribution of frequency in watching films**



perceptions of the age group belonging to 19 to 24. The responders within the age group predominantly belong to the ‘male’ gender rather than ‘female’ or other gender. About 80% of the responders were male and the rest were female also restricting the scope of the research article to place ideas only from the perception of male and female gender. The occupation of the responders were mostly recorded as ‘students’ yet other occupation include homemaker, prompt engineer, Assistant Professor, retired teachers, content creator, marketing strategist, Research scholars, language trainers, bankers, business analyst, and copywriter. The educational level of the responders range widely, including 12<sup>th</sup> standard, undergraduate, postgraduate, M.Phil, Doctorate, MBA and B.Ed. The response on ‘Relationship tatus’ broadly feel under three categories namely, ‘Single’, ‘Married’, and ‘Committed’

In *Fig 1* The responders were asked about how often they watch films to find out if the responders watch films, before finding out about their interest in romantic films. 20% of the responders ‘Rarely’ watch films. 37% of the responders ‘Occasionally’ watch films. 31% of the responders ‘Frequently’ watch films. And 12% of the responders ‘Very Frequently’ watch films.

**Figure 2: Distribution of ‘Genre preference’**

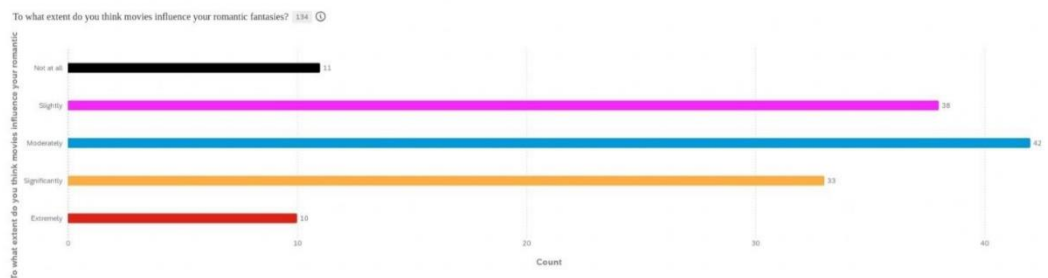


In *Fig 2* the responders were asked about the genre of film they prefer to watch. The options were limited to romance, drama, comedy, and fantasy to explore the genres watched by the responders and to anchor responses directed specifically towards the genres of ‘romance’ and ‘fantasy’. The survey question of genre preference, although it seems to be close-ended, was converted into open-ended question by accommodating another option of ‘Others’ where responders still have the freedom to choose other genres if they do not watch the genres that were anchored in the question. The combined percentage of responders who prefer ‘romance’ and ‘drama’ is 32%. However, 12% of responders have chosen ‘drama’ as the genre they prefer and few responders in the ‘open-ended’ question have responded that they



In *Fig 3* the data represents that the film *96* (2018) directed by C. Prem Kumar, *Sita Ramam* (2022) directed by Hanu Raghavapudi and *Alai Payuthey* (2000) directed by Mani Ratnam are the films that have been most commonly listed in the five text fields that were opened to the responders to type responses. These movies may be considered as classics among people who prefer romantic movies. Other films typed by the responders have been listed as *Table 1*.

**Figure 4: Distribution of influence on the perception created by romantic films on romantic fantasies**



In *Fig 4* the responders were asked the extent of influence that romantic films have on their romantic fantasies. Out of 134 respondents of the questions, only 8% have responded that they have not been influenced by the romantic fantasies. 28 % of the respondents have expressed that they have been ‘slightly’ influenced, 31 % of the respondents have expressed that they have been ‘moderately’ influenced, 25 % of the respondents have expressed that they have been ‘significantly’ influenced, 17 % of the respondents have expressed that they have been ‘extremely’ influenced by romantic films on their romantic fantasies.



**Figure 7: Distribution of responses about going beyond the romantic fantasies portrayed in the romantic films**



In *Fig 7* the respondents were asked if their fantasies went beyond the romantic fantasies portrayed in the films through the director and actors. 46 out of 129 respondents to the question opined that they have went beyond the romantic fantasies portrayed in the romantic films. 42 out of 129 respondents were ‘Not Sure’ and 40 Out of 129 respondents were clear that they have never gone beyond the romantic fantasies that were portrayed in the romantic films.

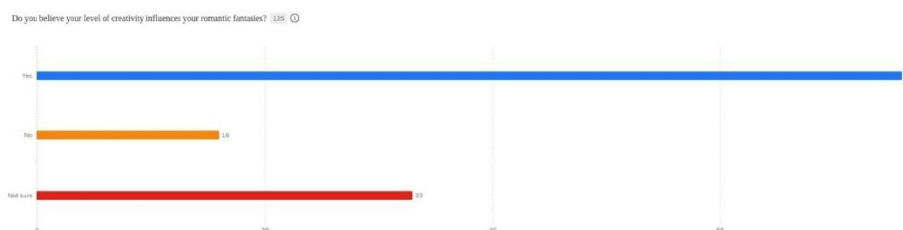
**Figure 8: Distribution on responses about specifics of fantasies that responders fantasise**



In *Fig 8* the respondents who responded ‘yes to the previous question were asked to elaborate on their fantasies by integrating ‘open’ and ‘close-ended’ questions. The respondents who have expressed ‘yes’ to going beyond the romantic fantasies portrayed in romantic films were asked to respond if their fantasies of going beyond involves ‘Greater emotional depth’ or ‘More elaborate scenarios’ or ‘Different cultural or societal context’. The respondents were also allowed to type in their responses if the three options did not cover their answer. 35% of the respondents responded that their fantasies go beyond in ways of expressing ‘greater emotional depth’ in their fantasies after being inspired by romantic films. 21% of the respondents responded that their fantasies go beyond in ways of expressing ‘more elaborate scenarios’ in their fantasies after being inspired by romantic films. 28% of

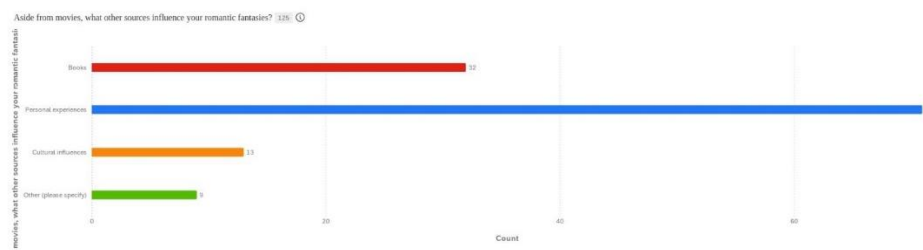
the respondents responded that their fantasies go beyond in ways of expressing ‘Different cultural and societal contexts’ in their fantasies after being inspired by romantic films. 16% of the respondents opted to use the ‘open-ended’ text field and typed their answers. Suh responses however did not express the significance of the research question or responded with a ‘No’ or an empty text field.

**Figure 9: Distribution on responses about creativity influencing fantasies**



In *Fig 9* the respondents were asked to introspect if creativity was a factor in influencing their fantasy they have about their romantic affairs. 76 out of 125 respondents were sure that their creativity was a factor influencing their romantic fantasies. 33 out of 125 respondents were not sure if their creativity was a factor and 16 out of 125 respondents expressed that their creativity do not influence their romantic fantasies.

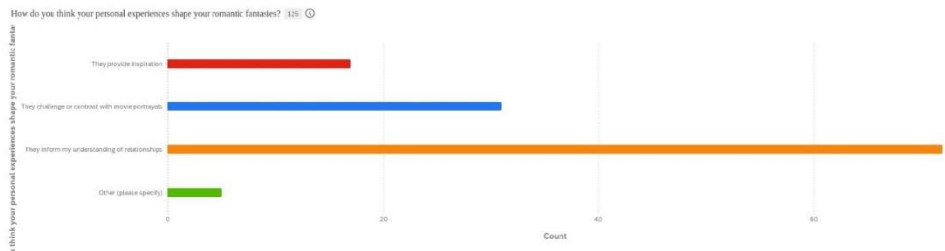
**Figure 10: Distribution on responses sources other than films influencing romantic fantasies**



In *Fig 10* the respondents were asked about their source for romantic fantasies. 26% of the respondents opined that it was books, 57% of the respondents opined that personal experiences were their source, 10% of the respondents opined that cultural influences were their source and 7% of the respondents opined that ‘other’ reasons were their source of romantic fantasies. The respondents who have

opted for ‘other’ as an answer, expressed that cultural influence like, Instagram influencers, reels and looking at couples around them expressing their affection.

Figure 11: Distribution on responses about personal experiences shaping romantic fantasies



In Fig 11 the respondents were asked if their personal experience shape their romantic fantasies. The respondents previously were asked if their creativity played a role in the fantasies. These two questions prove to be significant data in the research article. 17 out of 125 respondents opined that their personal experience provide inspiration to their romantic fantasies. 31 out of 125 respondents opined that their personal experience challenge or contrast with the films portrayal of romantic fantasies. 72 out of 125 respondents have expressed that their personal experience with romantic fantasies inform them of the understandings of relationships.

The data collected through fig 1 to fig 2 suggest that romantic and fantasy movies are not the most popular among the candidates who responded, fig 3 explores the contrary. The respondents were given five text fields to type their favourite non-sexually romantic movies. The data was highly reliant on the age group of the respondents which records 22 movies from the decade of 2000’s to 2010’s, 25 films from the decade of 2010’s to 2020’s and 7 films from 2020’s to 203’s decade. The films listed in these three decades appear repetitively among data entered. The list of the films that appear repetitively includes, *Sita Ramam* (2022), *96* (2018), *Vinnaithaandi Varuvaaya* (2010), *Premam* (2015), *A Walk to Remember* (2002) are examples from 25 films that represent a theme.

Nostalgia is perceived as a romantic fantasy by the group of respondents. The list of movies involves characters who have missed the opportunity of being with a person they love and take new people into their lives. But the nostalgia of the romantic experiences from the past is reminisced at a later time which becomes the subject of the 25 films opted by the respondents as their favorites. Even though the respondents preferred other genres over ‘romance’ and ‘fantasy’ , while listing their favourite



romantic movies, the respondents were not able to mask the impact romantic film have created in their perception. *Fig 4* exposes that 91% of the respondents believe that romantic fantasies in films impact their perception atleast 'slightly'.

*Fig 5* exposes that 81% of the respondents have fantasised themselves involving in scenarios depicted in the romantic films. If the data is corelated with *Fig 6*, the common romantic fantasies include, going to a movie, bike rides, walks on roads, conversations, holding hands or holding the person romantically, fantasy of actors as their partners, intimate moments, birthday celebrations / wishes / surprises, bus travel, the romantic fantasies about the nighttime, waterfalls, future partner etc. It can be verified through interpretation of the data that the respondents consider the aforementioned intimate moments as inspirations to implement in their romantic life or fantasise about such a moment in their life. The 25 favourite films listed including (A Walk to Remember), (96), (O Kadhal Kanmani), (Engaeyum Eppothum), (P.S. I Love You), (50 First Dates), are films that portray the intimate moments that are considered to be inspirational by the respondents.

*Fig 7* through *Fig 9* attempts to invoke responses from the candidates about their perception of their personal creativity or personal experiences in realising a romantic fantasy. The responses were divided as the responses were equally dived between 'yes', 'no' and 'not sure' to the question of whether the candidate went beyond a film-based inspiration on a romantic fantasy. Yet, more than 50% of the respondents were confident about their creativity. It means that the respondents who answered 'yes' to the question of 'being creative beyond movie scenarios', explore their romantic fantasies and they do not rely only on the scenarios portrayed in films. (Bellas) They have expressed that their creativity allows them to explore greater emotional depth, imagine more elaborate scenario and fantasise about different social, cultural scenarios.

*Fig 11* attempts to measure the level of impact personal experiences of the respondent have on their romantic fantasies. The data evidently exhibits that personal experience of the respondents provide inspiration, contradict or challenge the portrayals of romance in the films they watch and inform the respondent of the relationship they currently have or yet to have. Hence the impact of romantic fantasies portrayed in films are expressed by the closed group through nostalgia for the partner and other intimate moments.

In conclusion, the respondents answering to the survey questionnaire upon introspection, reveal that they possess a glorified form of fancy that is evoked out of the romantic films they watch. It is not under the purview of this research to anchor

the idea of these romantic fantasies as unwanted, yet romantic fantasies do not just spring out of films. They emanate from other sources as well including books, personal experiences, cultural influences like Instagram reels, Instagram influencers, songs and lyrics as well. The respondents, also did not exhibit harmful behaviour as being part of the romantic fantasy, like stalking. The responses have to be taken with a caution after considering the amount of time each respondent spends on a particular question while introspecting. Such data were overlooked in this research article.

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**An Ontological Overview on The Magic System and Everyday Distractions in Popular Culture**

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**Abstract:**

This research paper critiques and reimagines the ontological and epistemological foundations of our knowledge systems through the concept of 'Pop Untouched!' It examines how these systems are constructed and perceived, challenging conventional understandings through the lens of popular culture in the Indian context. The study explores the nature of reality, existence, ideology, perception of knowledge, and the construction of being within the framework of everyday distractions such as freeways, malls, television, advertising, marketing, and business. Emphasizing multiple forms of expression related to caste, class, gender, color, and race, the research addresses social issues specific to India and advocates for a critical understanding of our cultural identities amidst diverse ontological and epistemological frameworks.

**Keywords:** Ontology and Culture, Epistemology and Culture, Popular Culture and Social Issues, Everyday Distractions and The Magic System, Popular Culture and Mass Culture

**Introduction:**

This research paper delves into the captivating realm of “Pop Untouched!” - a concept that challenges and re-imagines the very foundations of our knowledge systems. It embarks on a critical exploration of the intricate relationship between ontology, epistemology, and the ever-evolving landscape of popular culture within the vibrant Indian context. The study explores the idea, “Who is Pop Untouched?” because it dares to imagine a space untouched by the pervasive influence of popular culture, a space where we can re-examine the fundamental principles that govern our existence. The research demonstrates how the magic system of everyday distractions work as an affective fallacy to persuade human consciousness; how virtual and social media perform its existence in our real world and create unreal reality with its material power. These are means of distancing, with binary opposition of inside and outside world that insulates the viewer. The paper re-thinks how the viewers or readers perceive things and conceive knowledge of understanding of our world. In

prolegomena of critical thinking, as humans, we are under anxiety to answer our ontology and epistemology of existence.

Both ontology and epistemology ask questions about knowledge and existence, questions framing of research objectives and exploring new knowledge about the universe. Prolegomena is philosophical in nature and drive us to think about our thinking. It poses question: “What is the authority for our thinking? How do we think? Why do we think what we think?” These kinds of questions are epistemological in nature. Epistemology is a philosophical term that asks the question, “How do we know what we know?” The paper argues that popular culture, with its ubiquitous presence in the form of freeways, malls, television, advertising, and marketing, functions as a magical system. This system casts a spell, shaping our beliefs about the nature of reality (ontology) and the ways we acquire knowledge (epistemology). We are invited to question the very essence of our being or our construction of our being: what it means to exist, what ideologies shape our sense of self, and how we construct meaning in the world. The research re-imagines this “made-up world,” by deconstructing the everyday distractions that popular culture weaves around us. The three steps that contributes to the formation of ideas and ideologies of culture:

**The Perception of Knowledge:** Our ways of knowing are not absolute. Popular culture bombards us with information, shaping our understanding of the world. The paper challenges us to critically examine these sources of knowledge, asking “Whose truths are we accepting?” and “How can we cultivate alternative ways of knowing?”

**The Construction of Being:** Popular culture constructs ideals of beauty, success, and happiness. We are invited to examine how these ideals influence our self-perception and our place in the world. The research encourages us to reclaim agency in defining our own existence, moving beyond the moulds cast by popular culture.

**The Positioning of Becoming:** Popular culture often presents a singular path to success and fulfilment. The paper argues for a more nuanced understanding of becoming. It encourages us to explore alternative paths and celebrate the diversity of human experiences.

The two concepts that deconstructs reality by unveiling the magical lens of cultural formation:

Enculturation is the culture learning process in which an individual comes to

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know about rules, values, and behavioural patterns of our own native culture. Enculturation is a deep-rooted process that binds together individuals. It is a learning and internalizing the culture's values, norms, and beliefs. Even as a culture undergoes changes, elements such as central convictions, values, perspectives, and young raising practices remain similar. In the realm of philosophy, two concepts stand at the very foundation of our understanding of reality: epistemology and ontology. While they may sound complex and abstract, delving into these two branches of philosophy can unlock profound insights into how we acquire knowledge and how we define the nature of existence itself.

Acculturation is the second culture learning process wherein an individual learns other's cultures and modifies the culture he/she practices. It refers to the socialization process by which people adopt values, customs, and attitudes of host culture. It is through which a person or group from one culture comes to adopt the practices and values of another culture. In this process, the newcomers assume the cultural attributes of the receiving country, including its language, cultural norms, behaviors, and values. In acculturation, there occurs a cultural exchange when people from different cultures come into sustained contact.

The only thing that aggressively affects the mass is: Cultism that affects the mass or people which is typically led by a charismatic and self-appointed leader, who controls others in the group. The leader supports and preaches a particular doctrine, belief system, or ideology; and members are committed to the belief system because of the persuasive skills of the leader. Cultism is happening in Indian politics even though it is unethical, unprofessional, illegal, and immoral.

With these terminologies, philosophies, and doctrines, the ontology of everyday distraction is discussed: Ontology deals with the concepts of nature of existence, nature of being, nature of becoming, and nature of reality. Ontology intermingles and co-exists imaginary and mundane, certainty and uncertainty, presence and absence. In nature of being concept, being is the material or immaterial existence of a thing. Anything exists is 'being' – being is a concept which encompasses subjective and objective features of reality and existence.

In Ontology of Everyday Distractions, Margaret Morse conveys that social media articulates particular modes of transportation and exchange in everyday life. It anchors 'personality in the machine' through the virtuality it conveys and thus creates a 'classic' space of discourse. As Raymond Williams comments the effects of cultural materialism in advertising, Morse connects virtuality and reality with human consciousness and minds. Through virtuality, human minds indulge in portals of

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imaginary world, with mystery beyond reality and mystery within reality. Virtuality is an everyday distraction for humans, and it constitutes to ‘de-realized mundaneness’ in life. This representation of semi-fiction effect is akin to ‘split belief-knowing’ which performs unreal, momentary, fantasy, imaginary world in human beings.

As Lacan’s ‘desire’ and ‘imaginary stage’ can be connected with everyday distractions because human minds are distracted and manipulated due to their inner desire and unconsciousness. Human minds can adapt with any world because they are creative with imagination, thoughts, desires, and they are adaptive with the ‘created artificial world.’ Like Stuart Sim’s chaos and complexity in human minds, they tend to get involved in the virtual unreality with different levels of attention, attractions, and distractions. The iconography of any media gives pleasure to human minds. In distraction, the state of mind ‘divides’ and ‘splits,’ and the mind forms a sequence of real or imaginary images as in unconsciousness or dreams. It gives dreamy effect which is called ‘the phantasmagoria of the interior’ which is a socio-cultural context of everyday life.

Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life* expresses interchangeability between signs and objects. Its articulation escapes literal reality to human consciousness, everyday practice for self-empowerment. It maps postmodernity in construction of virtuality, that resembles the concept of ‘de-realized space.’ De-realized Space means detached state of mind, but are self-aware with unreal altered state. The ‘de-realized non-space’ is called ‘mobile privatization,’ which is the pre-condition of ‘distraction.’ Distraction is related to expression of two planes of language represented simultaneously and alternately in narratives and in human nature. This kind of co-existence of presence and absence of mind is termed as ‘spacing out’ or ‘vegging out.’

Jean Baudrillard’s notion of simulation focuses on derealization. It has no referential anchorage point. It denotes insecurity in spatial existence. But, this co-existence of reality versus unreality, reality versus fantasy, reality versus imaginary, internal versus external gives and experience of ecstasy in communication. It represents the spatiality in postmodernity, association of interior and exterior worlds in humans, and creates a dubious vision of viewing space and time with Coleridge’s ‘willing suspension of disbelief.’

David Brodsky calls, ‘local and metropolitan’ orientations which is like the ‘edge of natural world’ that provides aesthetic and rhetoric. Malls are ‘psychologically separated’ from the rest of the world. It creates a paradoxical world of miniature. Kowinski says, malls are protected from exposure to natural and public

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world. It forms a 'retail drama world.' The mall represents Bakhtin's concept of carnivalesque ambience, which is artificially created in the minds of people because it erases the boundaries between self and other.

Walter Benjamin anticipates, everyday world has roots of non-space with mobile privatization which involves 'distancing,' with two parties the 'real and unreal world.' Real world which is natural world and Unreal world which is as secondary world. Urbanization is called the ideological effects of two entities with developed urban infrastructures. The concept of imaginary existence is related to cinematic illusion in human life which leads to 'the phantasmagoria of the interior.' The distinction between vision and experience are also with developing urbanization and suburbanization with physical and mental conditions.

Kimberly Stedman's examines and investigates an iconic text in a remote, unsteady, and shatterproof style, the book focuses on metacinematic texts' strategies for construction with user-friendly and professionally, including because 'Live-Action' workers.

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**“Tracing the Transformation of Kolam: Exploring Spatial Dynamics and Cultural Shifts in South India”**

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**Abstract:**

Kolam, defined as a design created by connecting lines and dots at the threshold of front doors, traditionally employs rice flour, synthetic Kolam Podi, and is adorned with Kaavi Podi. Originating in Tamil Nadu, Kolam has spread across South India, historically serving as more than mere decoration; it embodies cultural significance and ethical practice, feeding small creatures with its rice bits. However, contemporary urban settings have altered its practice and cultural role. This paper explores the current cultural position of Kolam through the lens of spatiality.

**Keywords:** Kolam, Culture, Spatiality, Urbanization, Identity

**Introduction:**

Culture is a multifaceted concept encompassing diverse aspects of life such as food, attire, rituals, arts, folklore, social norms, and communal identity (Causadias 2020). Kolam, a traditional Hindu practice, involves the artistic creation of symmetrical designs at household thresholds, shops, offices, and temples. Originally crafted with rice flour, modern adaptations have introduced various substitutes, marking a decline in traditional practices and cultural essence. Despite its cultural and historical roots traced back to Sangam literature and ancient cave paintings, Kolam faces challenges in contemporary urban environments (Ramachandran).

The significance of Kolam extends beyond mere ornamentation; it symbolizes community identity and cultural continuity among South Indian women, serving as a daily ritual and festive celebration (Jagadeesan 59-60). However, urbanization has reshaped spatial dynamics, diminishing the communal aspects and traditional practices associated with Kolam (Nagarajan).

Bakhtin's concept of Chronotope, combining time and space in literary analysis, offers a framework to understand Kolam as a narrative form in contemporary urban contexts (Bakhtin 86). Kolam, as a visual text, communicates emotions, occasions, and seasonal nuances, reflecting deeper cultural meanings and narratives within Tamil Nadu (Chacko).

Traditionally drawn twice daily, Kolam reflects auspicious timings in Hindu culture, linking temporal cycles with daily routines and seasonal festivities (Jagadeesan 60). Its spatial placement at thresholds blurs boundaries between private and public domains, historically serving as a communal activity fostering social bonds (Ascher 59).

However, urbanization has challenged these traditions, altering the frequency, size, and communal practices associated with Kolam. Contemporary adaptations like synthetic materials and reduced engagement reflect broader societal shifts and lifestyle changes in urban settings (Laine 5).

This paper examines how urbanization has transformed the practice and cultural significance of Kolam, altering its communal and ritualistic dimensions. While acknowledging contemporary adaptations, the study underscores the importance of spatial analysis in understanding cultural practices amidst urban transformations.

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**The Evolution of Narrative Voice: A Computational Analysis of AI-Generated Literature**

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**Abstract:**

The symbiotic relationship between artificial intelligence (AI) and literature has sparked unprecedented scholarly intrigue, prompting a profound exploration into the evolution of narrative voice. This study embarks on a pioneering journey through the annals of AI-generated literature, employing cutting-edge computational methodologies to dissect and elucidate the intricate nuances of narrative evolution. By scrutinizing a diverse corpus of AI-authored texts, this research endeavors to unravel the shifting contours of narrative voice, from the rudimentary imitations of human expression to the emergence of distinctly AI-driven linguistic styles. Through meticulous analysis and interpretation, this study not only sheds light on the transformative potential of AI in literary creation but also raises profound questions regarding authorship, creativity, and the very essence of narrative identity. In navigating the labyrinthine realms of AI-generated literature, this inquiry unveils a captivating tapestry of voices, resonating with both echoes of human influence and the burgeoning singularity of machine imagination.

**Keywords:** AI-generated literature, narrative voice, computational analysis, evolution, authorship, creativity

**Introduction:**

Artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionized various fields, and literature is no exception. In recent years, there has been a surge of interest in AI-generated literature, characterized by texts produced entirely or partially by machine learning algorithms. These algorithms analyze vast amounts of existing literature to generate new content, ranging from poetry and short stories to novels and screenplays. The emergence of AI-generated literature marks a significant shift in the landscape of storytelling, challenging traditional notions of authorship, creativity, and literary expression.

AI-generated literature encompasses a wide range of approaches and

methodologies, from algorithmically generated prose to collaborative storytelling platforms that integrate human input with machine-generated content. Examples of AI-generated literature include short stories, poems, novels, and even entire screenplays, created by algorithms such as GPT-3 (Generative Pre-Trained Transformer 3) and LSTM (Long Short-Term Memory) networks. These texts often exhibit a blend of human-like language and surreal or nonsensical elements, reflecting both the capabilities and limitations of current AI technology.

**Importance of Narrative Voice in Literature:**

Narrative voice is a fundamental aspect of literature, encompassing the style, tone, perspective, and linguistic features through which stories are told. It is the unique voice of the narrator or characters that shapes the reader's experience, imbuing the text with personality, emotion, and authenticity. The narrative voice determines the mood and atmosphere of the story, guiding readers through the narrative world and evoking emotional responses.

In literature, narrative voice serves multiple purposes, including character development, world-building, and thematic exploration. It allows authors to convey complex ideas, evoke empathy for characters, and create immersive reading experiences. Moreover, narrative voice plays a crucial role in establishing the author's identity and establishing a connection with the reader. Whether through first-person narration, third-person omniscient perspective, or experimental narrative techniques, the voice of the narrator or characters shapes the reader's understanding and interpretation of the text.

The intersection of AI-generated literature and narrative voice presents a compelling area of inquiry, ripe for exploration and analysis. This research paper seeks to investigate the evolution of narrative voice in AI-generated literature, employing computational analysis techniques to examine the stylistic, linguistic, and thematic elements of AI-generated texts. By tracing the development of narrative voice in AI-generated literature over time and across different AI models, this study aims to shed light on the transformative potential of AI in shaping the literary landscape.

Through a comparative analysis of AI-generated and human-authored literature, this research paper will explore the similarities and differences in narrative voice, examining how AI algorithms emulate or diverge from traditional narrative conventions. Additionally, this paper will consider the implications of AI-generated literature for storytelling, authorship, and reader engagement, addressing ethical concerns and proposing guidelines for the responsible creation and consumption of AI-generated content.

This research paper will contribute to our understanding of AI-generated

literature and its impact on narrative voice, offering insights into the evolving relationship between technology and storytelling. By elucidating the complexities of AI-generated narratives and their implications for the future of literature, this study aims to foster dialogue and exploration at the intersection of artificial intelligence and literary expression.

**Overview of Existing Research on AI-Generated Literature:**

In recent years, the burgeoning field of AI-generated literature has attracted significant attention from scholars, researchers, and practitioners across various disciplines. A plethora of studies have explored the capabilities, limitations, and implications of AI algorithms in generating literary content. These studies encompass a wide range of approaches, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks, shedding light on the evolving landscape of AI-generated literature and its impact on storytelling.

Researchers have investigated the creative potential of AI algorithms in generating diverse forms of literary texts, including poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. Studies have explored the stylistic features, thematic elements, and linguistic patterns of AI-generated texts, comparing them with human-authored literature and analyzing the extent to which AI algorithms can emulate or diverge from traditional narrative conventions. Additionally, researchers have examined the role of AI in collaborative storytelling platforms, where human users interact with intelligent algorithms to co-create narratives in real-time.

**Examination of Previous Studies on Narrative Voice in Literature:**

A significant body of research has focused on the concept of narrative voice in literature, exploring its role, significance, and manifestations across different genres, periods, and cultures. Scholars have examined various aspects of narrative voice, including point of view, perspective, linguistic style, and authorial presence, in both human-authored and AI-generated texts. Previous studies have analyzed the ways in which narrative voice shapes reader interpretation, influences character development, and contributes to the overall aesthetic and thematic impact of literary works.

Researchers have employed diverse methodologies to study narrative voice, ranging from close textual analysis to computational linguistics and natural language processing techniques. Studies have examined the use of narrative voice in different narrative modes, such as first-person narration, third-person omniscient perspective, and unreliable narration, highlighting its role in conveying subjectivity, bias, and narrative authority. Additionally, scholars have investigated the relationship between narrative voice and other literary elements, such as plot structure, character psychology, and thematic resonance, elucidating the interconnectedness of storytelling components.

**Identification of Gaps in the Literature and Rationale for the Current Study:**

Despite the wealth of research on AI-generated literature and narrative voice in literature, there remain significant gaps in our understanding of how AI algorithms shape narrative expression and voice. Existing studies often focus on either AI-generated literature or narrative voice in human-authored works, overlooking the intersection of these two areas. Furthermore, few studies have employed computational analysis techniques to investigate the evolution of narrative voice in AI-generated literature over time and across different AI models.

The current study seeks to address these gaps in the literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of narrative voice in AI-generated literature. By employing computational analysis methods to examine the stylistic, linguistic, and thematic elements of AI-generated texts, this study aims to elucidate the ways in which AI algorithms emulate, adapt, or diverge from traditional narrative conventions. Moreover, this study will contribute to our understanding of the transformative potential of AI in shaping the literary landscape, offering insights into the evolving relationship between technology and storytelling in the digital age.

The current study builds upon existing research on AI-generated literature and narrative voice in literature, filling a crucial gap in our understanding of how AI algorithms influence narrative expression and voice. By identifying key patterns, trends, and anomalies in AI-generated texts, this study will contribute to the ongoing dialogue and exploration at the intersection of artificial intelligence and literary expression.

**Explanation of Computational Analysis Methods Employed in the Study:**

In this research study, computational analysis methods are utilized to investigate the evolution of narrative voice in AI-generated literature. Computational analysis involves the application of algorithms and techniques from the field of natural language processing (NLP) to analyze textual data and extract meaningful insights. The primary goal of computational analysis in this study is to examine the stylistic, linguistic, and thematic elements of AI-generated texts, with a focus on narrative voice.

Various computational analysis methods are employed in the study, including:

**Text mining:** Text mining techniques are used to extract and analyze textual data from a corpus of AI-generated literature. This involves pre-processing the text to remove noise, tokenizing sentences and words, and identifying linguistic features such as vocabulary, syntax, and sentiment.

**Stylistic analysis:** Stylistic analysis techniques are employed to identify

stylistic elements in AI-generated texts, such as tone, diction, and narrative structure. This may involve analyzing word choice, sentence length, and rhetorical devices to discern patterns and trends in narrative voice.

**Machine learning algorithms:** Machine learning algorithms are utilized to train models that can classify and analyze narrative voice in AI-generated literature. Supervised learning techniques, such as classification and regression, may be employed to predict narrative attributes based on linguistic features extracted from the text.

**Computational linguistics:** Computational linguistics methods are applied to analyze the linguistic properties of AI-generated texts, including syntactic structure, semantic meaning, and discourse coherence. This may involve parsing sentences, identifying parts of speech, and analyzing syntactic dependencies to understand how narrative voice is constructed.

#### **Description of the Dataset Used for Analysis:**

The dataset used for analysis in this study consists of a diverse collection of AI-generated literature, spanning different genres, styles, and time periods. The dataset is curated from publicly available sources, including online repositories, literary competitions, and AI-generated content platforms. It encompasses a wide range of AI models and algorithms, such as GPT-3, LSTM networks, and recurrent neural networks (RNNs), to capture the diversity of AI-generated texts.

The dataset is pre-processed to ensure consistency and quality, including removing duplicates, standardizing formatting, and anonymizing sensitive information. Additionally, metadata such as publication date, authorship attribution (if available), and genre classification are collected to provide context for the analysis.

#### **Outline of the Steps Involved in Analyzing AI-Generated Literature for Narrative Voice Evolution:**

**Data collection:** The first step involves collecting a comprehensive dataset of AI-generated literature from various sources, including online repositories, literary competitions, and AI-generated content platforms.

**Pre-processing:** The dataset is pre-processed to clean and standardize the text, including removing noise, tokenizing sentences and words, and anonymizing sensitive information.

**Feature extraction:** Computational analysis techniques are employed to extract linguistic features from the text, including vocabulary, syntax, and sentiment. This may involve text mining, stylistic analysis, and computational linguistics methods.



**Machine learning modeling:** Machine learning algorithms are trained on the extracted features to build models that can classify and analyze narrative voice in AI-generated literature. Supervised learning techniques, such as classification and regression, may be employed to predict narrative attributes based on linguistic features.

**Evaluation and interpretation:** The trained models are evaluated on a separate validation dataset to assess their performance in predicting narrative voice attributes. The results are interpreted to identify patterns and trends in narrative voice evolution across different AI models and time periods.

**Analysis and discussion:** The findings of the computational analysis are analyzed and discussed in the context of existing literature on AI-generated literature and narrative voice. The implications of the findings for storytelling, authorship, and reader engagement are considered, and future research directions are proposed.

The computational analysis methods employed in this study offer a systematic and rigorous approach to investigating the evolution of narrative voice in AI-generated literature. By leveraging computational techniques and machine learning algorithms, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the transformative potential of AI in shaping the literary landscape.

### **Presentation of Findings Regarding the Evolution of Narrative Voice:**

The findings of this research study offer a comprehensive examination of the evolution of narrative voice in AI-generated literature, shedding light on how AI algorithms shape narrative expression and style over time. Through computational analysis techniques and machine learning algorithms, the study identifies key patterns, trends, and anomalies in AI-generated texts, providing valuable insights into the transformative potential of AI in storytelling.

The analysis reveals a dynamic evolution of narrative voice in AI-generated literature, characterized by shifts in linguistic style, narrative structure, and thematic focus. Over time, AI algorithms demonstrate an increasing ability to emulate and adapt traditional narrative conventions, resulting in texts that exhibit greater coherence, depth, and emotional resonance. Moreover, the study uncovers subtle variations in narrative voice across different AI models and time periods, highlighting the influence of algorithmic design, training data, and technological advancements on narrative expression.

### **Examination of Linguistic Patterns, Stylistic Features, and Thematic Elements:**

The research findings offer a detailed examination of linguistic patterns, stylistic features, and thematic elements in AI-generated literature, illuminating the ways in which narrative voice is constructed and conveyed through language.

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Computational analysis techniques reveal distinctive linguistic patterns, such as vocabulary usage, sentence structure, and rhetorical devices, that contribute to the overall stylistic and thematic coherence of AI-generated texts.

Furthermore, the study identifies recurring stylistic features and thematic elements across AI-generated narratives, including motifs, symbols, and narrative tropes. These stylistic and thematic elements serve as markers of narrative voice, shaping reader interpretation and engagement with the text. By analyzing linguistic patterns and stylistic features, the research offers insights into the creative capabilities of AI algorithms and their potential to produce diverse and compelling narrative voices.

#### **Comparison of AI-Generated Narratives Across Different Time Periods or AI Models:**

A key aspect of the research involves comparing AI-generated narratives across different time periods or AI models to discern patterns of narrative evolution and innovation. By examining AI-generated texts produced by different generations of AI models or trained on different datasets, the study elucidates how narrative voice evolves in response to changes in algorithmic design, training data, and technological advancements.

The comparative analysis reveals both continuity and divergence in narrative voice across different AI models and time periods. While certain stylistic and thematic elements may remain consistent, there are also notable variations and adaptations that reflect the evolving capabilities of AI algorithms. By comparing AI-generated narratives, the research provides a nuanced understanding of how narrative voice evolves over time and offers valuable insights into the creative potential of AI in storytelling.

Hence, the findings of this research study offer a compelling analysis of the evolution of narrative voice in AI-generated literature, providing valuable insights into the creative capabilities of AI algorithms and their impact on storytelling. By examining linguistic patterns, stylistic features, and thematic elements, and comparing AI-generated narratives across different time periods or AI models, the study contributes to our understanding of the transformative potential of AI in shaping the literary landscape.

#### **Comparative Analysis of Narrative Voice in AI-Generated and Human-Authored Works:**

This research endeavor delves into a comprehensive comparative analysis of narrative voice, contrasting AI-generated and human-authored works to discern the nuances and implications of narrative expression across these distinct modes of literary creation. The juxtaposition of AI-generated and human-authored texts offers a unique vantage point for understanding the evolution of narrative voice and the

impact of technological innovation on storytelling practices.

**Discussion of Similarities and Differences in Linguistic Style, Thematic Content, and Emotional Resonance:**

In the comparative analysis, striking similarities and differences emerge in the linguistic style, thematic content, and emotional resonance of AI-generated and human-authored works. While AI-generated texts may exhibit certain surface-level resemblances to human-authored literature, such as grammatical correctness and coherent narrative structure, they often lack the depth, complexity, and emotional nuance characteristic of human expression.

Linguistic style in AI-generated literature tends to be formulaic and predictable, reflecting the limitations of current AI algorithms in capturing the intricacies of human language. Thematic content may also appear derivative or disjointed, as AI algorithms rely on existing datasets and patterns to generate narrative material, often resulting in recycled or clichéd storytelling motifs.

In contrast, human-authored works showcase a rich tapestry of linguistic innovation, stylistic experimentation, and thematic exploration. Authors employ a diverse array of literary techniques, rhetorical devices, and narrative strategies to craft compelling stories that resonate with readers on an emotional and intellectual level. The depth of human emotion and insight infused into human-authored literature imbues it with a sense of authenticity and resonance that is often absent in AI-generated texts.

**Exploration of the Implications for Authorship, Creativity, and Reader Engagement:**

The comparative analysis of narrative voice in AI-generated and human-authored works raises profound questions about authorship, creativity, and reader engagement in the digital age. As AI technologies continue to advance, they offer unprecedented opportunities for creative expression and collaboration, blurring the boundaries between human and machine authorship.

However, the rise of AI-generated literature also poses challenges to traditional notions of authorship and creativity, as AI algorithms increasingly play a role in content generation and narrative creation. While AI-generated texts may offer novel insights and imaginative possibilities, they also raise concerns about authenticity, originality, and artistic integrity.

Furthermore, the comparative analysis highlights the crucial role of human interpretation and engagement in the reading experience. While AI-generated texts may possess technical proficiency and algorithmic sophistication, they often lack the emotional depth and narrative resonance that human-authored literature evokes.

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Ultimately, the enduring power of human creativity and imagination in crafting meaningful stories underscores the irreplaceable role of human authors in shaping the literary landscape.

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of narrative voice in AI-generated and human-authored works offers valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of storytelling in the digital age. By examining linguistic style, thematic content, and emotional resonance, and exploring the implications for authorship, creativity, and reader engagement, this research contributes to our understanding of the complex interplay between technology and literature.

#### **Ethical Concerns Related to AI-Generated Literature:**

The proliferation of AI-generated literature has prompted a critical examination of the ethical implications surrounding its creation, dissemination, and consumption. As AI technologies continue to advance, they raise a host of complex ethical concerns that warrant careful consideration and deliberation. This discussion aims to elucidate these ethical concerns and propose guidelines for the responsible creation and consumption of AI-generated content.

#### **Examination of Issues such as Algorithmic Bias, Intellectual Property Rights, and Cultural Appropriation:**

**Algorithmic Bias:** One of the foremost ethical concerns associated with AI-generated literature is the presence of algorithmic bias. AI algorithms are trained on vast datasets that may reflect and perpetuate societal biases, leading to biased outputs in AI-generated texts. This can manifest in various forms, including gender bias, racial bias, and ideological bias, which may distort the portrayal of characters, themes, and narratives in AI-generated literature.

**Intellectual Property Rights:** Another ethical issue pertains to intellectual property rights in AI-generated literature. Determining ownership and attribution in AI-generated texts poses unique challenges, as they are produced by algorithms rather than human authors. This raises questions about who holds the rights to AI-generated content and how creators should be compensated for their contributions. Additionally, the use of pre-existing texts and datasets in training AI models raises concerns about copyright infringement and plagiarism.

**Cultural Appropriation:** AI-generated literature may also raise concerns about cultural appropriation, particularly when algorithms generate content that draws upon cultural motifs, traditions, or narratives without proper attribution or understanding. This can perpetuate harmful stereotypes, misrepresentations, and cultural insensitivities, undermining the integrity and authenticity of cultural identities and narratives.

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## **Proposal of Ethical Guidelines for the Responsible Creation and Consumption of AI- Generated Content:**

In light of these ethical concerns, it is imperative to establish ethical guidelines for the responsible creation and consumption of AI-generated content. These guidelines should encompass the following principles:

**Transparency and Accountability:** Creators of AI-generated literature should be transparent about the methods, datasets, and algorithms used in the creation process. They should also take responsibility for the ethical implications of their work and be accountable for addressing any biases or inaccuracies that may arise.

**Fairness and Inclusivity:** Efforts should be made to mitigate algorithmic bias and ensure that AI-generated content reflects diverse perspectives, experiences, and voices. This may involve diversifying training datasets, incorporating ethical considerations into algorithm design, and soliciting feedback from marginalized communities.

**Respect for Intellectual Property Rights:** Clear guidelines should be established for determining ownership, attribution, and compensation in AI-generated literature. Creators should respect copyright laws and intellectual property rights, and mechanisms should be in place to safeguard against plagiarism and unauthorized use of copyrighted material.

**Cultural Sensitivity and Representation:** AI-generated content should be culturally sensitive and respectful of diverse cultural identities and narratives. Creators should exercise caution when generating content that draws upon cultural motifs, traditions, or narratives, ensuring that it is done in a manner that is accurate, respectful, and inclusive.

By adhering to these ethical guidelines, creators and consumers of AI-generated literature can promote responsible practices and mitigate the potential risks and harms associated with AI technology. By fostering transparency, fairness, and cultural sensitivity, we can harness the transformative potential of AI-generated content to enrich the literary landscape and promote ethical storytelling in the digital age.

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**Existential Angst and Cultural Constraints in Shyam Selvadurai's  
Novels**

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**Abstract:**

Existentialism emerged in the twentieth century as a vehement opposition to Hegel's essentialism. Søren Kierkegaard, often regarded as its father, critiqued Hegel's rational philosophy that reduced humanity to reason, asserting instead that reality is individual, particular, and subjective. Shyam Selvadurai, a postmodern diasporic writer, explores postmodern themes such as sexuality, gender, and identity in his works. His protagonists often grapple with existential angst and cultural crises during their adolescent years. This paper, titled "Existential Angst and Cultural Constraints in Shyam Selvadurai's Novels," examines the cultural limitations imposed on individuals and their resulting existential struggles.

**Keywords:** angst, cultural constraints, existentialism, sexuality, identity, queer

**Introduction:**

Human beings have grappled with existential angst throughout history. The existential philosophical movement addresses concrete human issues such as suffering and mortality. Its roots can be traced back to Pascal in the seventeenth century, gaining significant development through Søren Kierkegaard in the nineteenth century and further refinement by Friedrich Nietzsche. Twentieth-century philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, and Gabriel Marcel further expanded existentialist thought.

Existentialism thrived in the twentieth century by adamantly opposing Hegel's essentialism. Søren Kierkegaard, the progenitor of existentialism, challenged Hegel's rationalist philosophy that reduced humanity to mere reason. Central to Kierkegaard's philosophy is the assertion that reality is not universal but individual, specific, and subjective. His critique extended to institutionalized religion and rationalism, advocating for introspection and a detached understanding of reality.

All proponents of existential philosophy share the foundational premise that 'existence precedes essence.' German philosopher Karl Jaspers, following in the

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footsteps of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, emphasized individual freedom. In "Existentialism and Humanism," Jaspers posited, "Existentialism is grasping reality at its origin and understanding it through introspective thought" (4).

Jean-Paul Sartre, a prominent existentialist and atheist, reflected the despair of post-World War II Europe. His philosophy centers on asserting meaning and value in human existence. Sartre argued that existentialism places responsibility squarely on each individual; in choosing for oneself, one also chooses for all humanity. He wrote, "When we say that man chooses himself, we mean that each one of us chooses all mankind... In fashioning myself, I fashion man" (29).

Shyam Selvadurai, a postmodern diasporic writer, explores postmodern themes such as sexuality, gender, and identity in his works. The protagonists of Selvadurai's novels often experience existential angst and cultural crises during their formative adolescent years. Caught between their personal freedoms and societal expectations, these characters navigate ethnic conflicts and personal sexual identities. Robert defines existential angst as, "Existential angst arises not only from the human capacity to think, feel, and act in the world, but also from the fear of non-existence or death. It can be isolating and terrifying when one's very existence is questioned" (Web).

In Selvadurai's novels, protagonists like Arjie Chelvaratnam in "Funny Boy," Amrith De Alwis in "Swimming in the Monsoon Sea," and Shivan in "The Hungry Ghosts" confront existential angst. Arjie's early realization of being different, preferring imaginative play with girls over sports with boys, initiates his conflict with societal norms. When adults intervene, forcing him into conformist roles, Arjie experiences his first existential crisis. Amrith, orphaned and grappling with his queer identity, faces a hostile environment in Sri Lanka's heteronormative society. Shivan's journey, shaped by patriarchal and cultural pressures, intersects with his gay identity, challenging societal expectations.

The close-knit societal structures meant to nurture these protagonists often stifle their growth, introducing doubt, anxiety, and fear. Selvadurai's novels highlight the tension between personal authenticity and cultural conformity, offering poignant insights into the complexities of existentialism in diasporic contexts.

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**Tracing the Role of Autographs: A Cultural Exploration of Zadie Smith's *The Autograph Man***

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**Abstract:**

Zadie Smith, a contemporary British writer, explores the multicultural landscape of London in her novel *The Autograph Man*. Set in a diverse city teeming with immigrant communities, the novel introduces Alex-Li Tandem, an autograph collector obsessed with celebrities. Media and celebrities exert significant influence over people of all ages, including Alex, who fixates on Hollywood star Kitty Alexander's autograph. This paper examines Alex's pursuit of Kitty's autograph and its implications for cultural identity in the novel.

**Keywords:** Autograph, Celebrities, Obsession, Media, Identity

**Introduction:**

Zadie Smith, a British writer born in London, draws on her mixed heritage in her second novel, *The Autograph Man*, published in 2002. In this work, Smith depicts the fictional London suburb of Mountjoy as a multicultural hub where various businesses thrive. The autograph trade, historically linked to auction houses since the 19th century, not only fulfills collectors' obsessions but also promises fame and financial gain. Celebrities' autographs hold cultural currency, particularly in London's bustling business centers, drawing enthusiasts from around the globe.

Autograph collecting dates back to the 16th century, spanning figures from diverse fields like science, entertainment, and politics. Despite technological advancements, the allure of autographs persists as a testament to personal connections with admired figures.

In *The Autograph Man*, media plays a dual role of fascination and

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authenticity. Alex-Li Tandem, the novel's protagonist, inherits Jewish and Chinese heritage in multicultural London. From a young age, Alex's fascination with media shapes his identity, notably influenced by television and popular culture. His encounter with autograph collecting at a wrestling match introduces him to Joseph, a passionate collector. This encounter sparks Alex's lifelong obsession with autographs, culminating in his pursuit of Kitty Alexander's elusive signature.

Smith vividly portrays venues like the Royal Albert Hall, a cultural icon reflecting London's evolving landscape. Here, Alex's initiation into autograph collecting intersects with cultural heritage and personal passion, setting the stage for his later quests and revelations.

Joseph's influence on Alex is profound; through their friendship, Alex discovers the depth of passion and personal meaning inherent in autograph collecting. Despite societal pressures and familial expectations, Alex persists in his pursuit, culminating in a transformative encounter with Kitty Alexander herself.

Kitty's autograph becomes a symbol of Alex's journey, from youthful fascination to adult realization. His quest illuminates broader themes of identity, fame, and the media's role in shaping personal aspirations. Ultimately, *The Autograph Man* invites readers to consider the intersection of cultural obsession, personal identity, and the transformative power of celebrity in contemporary society.

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**Literary Movement for Social Change and Indian Dalit Women  
Identity in *Sivakami* and Bama's novels**

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**Abstract:**

The present study entitled “Literary movement for social change, Dalit women identity in the novels of *Sivakami* and Bama”, aims to explore the life of Dalits, who are residing in India and their social background. India is a country, included itself with multicultural religion, language and caste. By the impact of caste, the Indians are divided into two major categories upper and lower caste. Most of Dalits survived very hardly in India and they are in the lower caste category. The term ‘Dalit’ is symbolic of being victimized due to wide spread injustice in the Indian society. The issue of exploitation of Dalits at the hands of unjust society has gained a prominent platform in the field of literature and politics. There is an urgent need and the need of the hour is that the society understands the reason behind Dalit’s upsurge and act accordingly. In this background, Dalit Literature seems as a portrait of suppressed people. The dilemma of the marginalised women either does not find space or have negligible representation in the writings of men. Many Dalit writers started to write. *Sivakami* and Bama are among India's most prominent Women Dalit writers. Dalit Literature in India has contributed to give a face lift to the tarnished image of the Dalits in India. They have succeeded in their identity into a source of strength. They struggle to find a new harmony and collective identity for the oppressed, marginalized, dominated, discriminated, subordinated, subjugated and repressed society of womenfolk in India. The present study has a chance to overview the ideas of selected writers and their point of view on a group of suffered people over many decades and also provides solutions to live with equal rights.

**Keywords:** Literary Movement, Linguistic Directness, Plurality, Women Identity, Gender Discrimination, Dalit Resilience.

**Introduction:**

The present research paper is entitled ‘Literary movement for social change, women identity in the novels of Sivakami and Bama’. The novels selected for study are P. Sivakami’s *The Grip of Change* (1989) and *The Taming of Women* (2012) and Bama’s *Karukku* (1992), *Sangati: Events* (1994) and *Vanmam: Vendetta* (2002). The literature produced by the select writers portrays their first hand experiences of pain, trauma, oppression and marginalisation which bring out the anguish of their bleeding hearts to people. To know is the first step in visualising social change.

English Literature is not only the literature of England alone. It encompasses all literatures that are written in English language and with movements like Colonialism and Imperialism practiced, the number of literatures in English is vast and widely spread. From American Literature to African Narratives to Indian Writing in English to the Commonwealth Literature, the writings in English are vast and cover a wide range of subjects. Each individuals work represents a race and an age and exhibits not only the culture and the society, but also the different emotions and pains the characters go through or experience. English Literature encompasses within itself a number of literary genre and works of the great scholars and writers on a wide range of subjects. Among them the present study has chosen Dalit Literature for expose the social background of Dalits in India and Dalit woman writers Sivakami and Bama’s literary movement for social change.

The Dalit Literature is one of Indian English Literatures. It displayed mostly the subjugated people’s struggle and torments. Dalit Literatures include many writers from the background of Scheduled Caste and untouchable. Their works focused caste discrimination and upper class people’s adamant and Dalit’s inconvenient Indian Life. It finds out the solution to caste disparities and discriminations. The notable Dalit writers are B.R.Ambedkar, Sharankumar Limbale, Baburao Bagul, Baby Kamble, Urmila Pawar, Mulk Raj Anand, Meena Kandasamy, Imayam, Om Praksh Valmiki, Bama and Sivakami.

The present study has selected two Dalit woman writers Bama Faustina Susairaj and P. Sivakami for the research. Their writing revolves round the oppressive terms like untouchability, inequality, depression, discrimination, subjugation etc., which carry the ideas of degradation and humiliation. The Dalits are victims of social,religious, economic and cultural discrimination. Dalit woman in Indian appear to be metaphors for the doubly deprived. The up-surge of creativity by the Dalits in India is part of the quest of the doubly dispossessed for their identity and equality.

Palanimuthu Sivakami is one of Indian Dalit woman writers in India. Her

career started after completing her education and cleared the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) exam. Her participation started with the Dalit Land Rights Movement in Tamilnadu Government since 2003. Her bitter experiences and lowest treatment pushed her to relieve from service and told the media that bureaucracy has treated her with lowest level and untouchable. After twenty nine years of service, she gave voluntarily retirement service to her IAS service in 2008. She hoped that political rights make Dalits' life with honour and respectful in society. So she started hopefully a political party '*Samuga Samathuva Padai*' in 2009 for the development of Dalit. Her literary career started with the literary journal *Puthiya Kodangi* since 1995. She became the notable Indian Dalit feminist writer. Her effort reached Dalits and Backward Castes. Then she started writing many Dalit works. She won the President Award for her short film 'Oodaha' (Through).

Bama is one of prominent Indian Dalit woman writers and sister of Dalit writer Raj Gauthaman. She voluntarily became a school teacher and nun for provide education and service to suppressed people. She won the Crossword Award for translation twice (2001 and 2007) and the Iyal Award from the Tamil Literary Garden, Canada (2008). She is one of the Founder Deputies of the South Asian Diaspora Literature and Arts Archive. Her leading voice was identified after her first autobiographical novel *Karukku* in 1992. *Karukku* offers an influential critique on the way in which Dalits are cared for by the church. Bama lays bare a different face of caste discrimination within the Church. Priests and nuns are supposed to have set their lives aside to provide the weak and the poor. However, Bama;s practices tell a different story. Bama shows how the Church used Dalits "who are immersed in ignorance as their capital to set up big business which only profited their own castes" (80). In church, though the Dalits outnumbered the rest, it is the upper caste Christians who take pleasure in the benefits and comforts offered by the church. Even a priest or nun from the Dalit community is denounced and marginalized making them realizes that there is no place for them there.

The reviewed literature suggests that there are areas explored in the works of Sivakami and Bama. It has revealed a gap that Dalit works are analysed using various theories and generic study, it hasn't been analysed in women perspective. Taking this into consideration, the present study has chosen to do research on the literary movement on social change in the works of Sivakami and Bama. Most of the researcher provided major critical works done on the select novels. The present study exposes the reality and how it is differentiated from other's research works. The paper includes the aim and purpose of study, critical analysis of novels, and use of explicit language. To put it in a nutshell, in analysing Sivakami's and Bama's novels, the present thesis may do its bit for the very divine vision of social reform of Modern

India.

Sowjanya, Tamalapakula's research on 'Caste Violence in Dalit Women's Writing A Dalit Feminist Critique', discussed symbolic caste violence, everyday presence of caste and inferior social position given to Dalis in society. Caste discrimination and invisible caste prejudices create a constant violent situation for Dalits on their minds. The researcher had attempted to discuss symbolic caste violence is expressed through Dalit women's autobiographies.

Arulselesten Prema conducted a study on the topic 'From Limits to Liminal Spaces: A study of Select works of Sivakami and Imayam'. The study focused the equal rights in society and people should consider everyone by their efficiency and good attitudes, not based on colour, caste and religion. In this point of view, the research moved step by step discussed the poverty life of Dalits and their fearful life in front of upper class domination. The domination is not only followed in India, throughout the world a group of people desires to suppress others and they should act as their wishes. If Dalits continue their slavery life, the upper class people will satisfy. This attitude penetrated from one generation to other generation. So the dominant power and slavery life, both are continued till now. The study revealed the remedy to Dalits for get away from their slavery mind thought.

Kumari Parveen's study on the topic 'Distinctive Voices of Distress and Narratives of Suffering: A Study of Dalit Women's Writings'. Dalit women's life narratives have tremendous significance for the women of marginalised sections. The life narratives chosen for the study are Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke*, Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of my life: A Dalit Women's Memoirs*, Bama's *Karukku*, Virama's *Life of an untouchable*, Nalini Jameela's *The Autobiography of a sex worker*. This research is an endeavour to study the Dalit women writers' painful life memories and expressed realistically their own bitter experiences. This study focuses mainly on the oppression of Dalits, subjugation of Dalit women in patriarchal society and their realization through education. However, in some areas Dalits are treated in a better way, still they are not accepted wholly by society.

It exposes the Dalits' realistic life in current India and their struggled life. Dalits' prestigious life will bring out the changes in Dalits' civilization in all incidents and develop Dalits' education level and bring economical strength. The real Independence in India is every citizen should feel proud to be Indian and get freedom from the dominant power based on caste, religion and language.

To put it in a nutshell, in analyzing Sivakami's and Bama's novels, the present

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study argues that these authors focused the theme and characters portrayed as realistically lively. They presented major point of view is that social change; treat everyone as brotherhood and sisterhood. It is hoped that this literary research may do its bit for the very divine vision of social reform of Modern India and be deemed as a point of reference for further Dalit research in Sivakami and Bama's works.

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**“Intersecting Cultures: Tradition and Modernity in Preeti  
Shenoy’s  
“The Secret Wish list”**

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**Abstract:**

Preeti Shenoy is widely regarded as one of the most acclaimed and influential female authors in the field of Indian English literature. Her writings stand out for the realistic depiction of women's suppression in traditional Indian society. The protagonist in each of Preeti Shenoy's novel goes through a variety of trials, tribulations, frustrations, annoyances, suffering, and other emotional distress. The novel 'The Secret Wish list' explores the complex interplay between tradition and modernity depicted in the novel. It also examines how the characters of the novel negotiate cultural norms, familial obligations and individual freedoms, shedding light on the complexities of identity formation in a rapidly evolving Indian society. This study elucidates the ways in which Shenoy's work reflects broader cultural shifts and challenges prevalent stereotypes, offering refined insights into the cultural landscape of modern India.

**Keywords:** Tradition, Modernity, Cultural norms, Societal Expectations, Identity formation, Indian society.

**Introduction:**

The age that we live in is proudly considered as one of the progressive and glorious time by so many people. We feel pride in tagging our time as modern, advanced, developed and best that has ever been experienced. Today, the speakers, thinkers and philosophers talk about women empowerment, gender equality, progressive and independent women. Undoubtedly, growth and development in their lives can be seen, but there exists another side of coin as well. The age that we so fondly cherish is also, tinted with the dark and gloomy shades of women's conditions.

This literature review probes into the complicated weaving of themes such as individualism, emotional liberation, and liberal feminism as depicted in the works of Indian authors. The Indian authors have carved a place in illustrating

the multifaceted experiences of modern women, who navigate through societal norms and personal aspirations with unwavering determination. The characters often embark on journeys of self-discovery, challenging and renegotiating the roles assigned to them by a patriarchal society. This paper seeks to highlight the evolving nature of feminist thought in Indian literature and the role it plays in shaping the discourse around modern womanhood.

Preeti Shenoy is a bestselling Indian author known for her genuine storytelling and significant characters. With a skill of probing into human emotions, her novels often explore themes of love, relationships and self discovery. Her literary works explore the experiences of youthful women who frequently face social and family constraints. Her novels, such as *Life Is What You Make It* (2011), *The Secret Wish List* (2012), *Tea for Two and A Piece of Cake* (2012), *The One You Can Not Have*, (2013), *It Happens for a Reason* (2014) and *The Rule Breakers* (2018) have won the hearts of female readers all around with her skill in developing unique and captivating characters. She discusses women's personal identities and unique qualities.

The novel “*The Secret Wish List*”(2012), reveals emotional exploration of the delicate balance between tradition and modernity in contemporary Indian society. Through the experiences of its protagonist Diksha, Shenoy intricately weaves a narration that probes into the complexities of identity formation, societal expectations and the clash of cultural norms. As we pass through through the literary landscapes crafted by Shenoy, this review will offer insights into how her storytelling not only mirrors the struggles and triumphs of their characters but also reflects broader social transformation

This paper is about analyzing the conditions of women in 21st century. This novel is in simple narration; in spite of it, it is imbued with serious purposes. Various women’s issues, like search for identity and individuality, conventional and boring Indian marriages, an ideology of traditional and modern women, loveless married life, compromises done by women in several situations and solutions to fix their so called targets in life etc have been talked about in her novels. This study will help in coming out with what and how shall women put efforts to work out with the crisis of their lives so as to become more and more happy and successful in their lives.

Preeti Shenoy’s famous fourth novel “*The Secret Wish List*” (2012) pictures a young woman, who is bound by tradition and later cries out for her freedom. This predicament of a woman, living under social and familial

restrictions is highlighted here. Diksha, the main character, is an ordinary housewife who is content with her status as a housewife and has no complaints against anyone. Following its opening narratives, *The Secret Wish List* moves into the past in which Diksha is a young, beautiful and radiant teenager with dream filled ambition. She is positive, enthusiastic and passionate about her life. She is preoccupied with her studies, dreams and fun filled life along with her friends and has no slight idea of the brutal truths of life.

Her entire existence abruptly gets altered after an incident. Her attraction on Ankit, her brother's friend rephrased her life cycle fate. She tries to express her interest in him but she fails and holds all of her feelings inside. She used to open her heart to Vibha, her closest friend, about her emotions. Later on, Ankit too developed feelings for Diksha. Despite all the restrictions, they both maintained their meeting schedule though they knew that no one would approve of their relationship. But one day they are caught. After that, the family has brought Diksha under many limitations. The biggest limitation is that she is asked to stop her education. Despite being a bright and hardworking girl deserving of a bright future, social pressures forced her to give up on her education.

Preeti Shenoy has used the character of Diksha to depict the existence of a woman in a culture where men predominate. In a patriarchy, people believe that women cannot be trusted to make life choices; instead, men make these choices on their behalf. Diksha has also forced to marry at the age of nineteen. The marriage decision completely altered her outlook on life. Following her marriage with Sandeep, Diksha is carrying out all of her obligations as a committed and mundane wife. They have a son named Abhay. Sandeep and Diksha merely fulfill their marital responsibilities but there is no nuptial love or intimacy in their wedded life. Here Preeti Shenoy describes the monotonous lives that married women lead in Indian society. Their spouse and other family members have imposed numerous limits and constraints on them. Diksha describes her marriage as, "I know that there is only one word which sums up my marriage perfectly: Boring" (The SWL 21).

Diksha leads her life only to satisfy her parents, her husband and family and has nothing other than that. Here, this is not only the condition of Diksha but also the condition of many women in our society who face all the struggles silently. Everyone expects that a woman should be caring, loving and kind towards others but they fail to understand that woman too have hearts which longs for love, care and dream. At the same time, Shenoy depicts Vibha, Diksha's cousin as well as a friend as an independent, self-assured, brave and carefree lady, who embodies

the model present-day contemporary working woman. When Diksha meets Vibha, she realizes how boring her life is and controlled by male chauvinist treatise of Sandeep who didn't even give any consideration to Diksha's mental health and happiness. On the contrary, Diksha finds that Vibha was working and travelling to the locations she desired, having a contented, cheerful, and joyful existence. Diksha felt unhappy and dissatisfied with her existence and she had been living such a boring life for the last few years. Diksha's perspective on life gets changed because of Vibha and she began to moan, in a subservient voice. Vibha points out, "We all must live our lives; we should do what makes us happy. I kept pushing myself in my career, as I wanted to prove that I was as good as any man" (The SWL 74).

Upon learning of the death of Vibha's husband, Diksha begs Sandeep to allow her to travel to Hyderabad, so she can comfort Vibha at this difficult time. But he forbids her from going to see her friend. Here Shenoy expresses the powerlessness, fury, empathetic and aggravation of an Indian woman in traditional culture. Diksha is shocked to realize how inconsiderate her husband is. She says, "I feel angry. The person closest to me, someone who is almost like my sister, has lost her husband and he is more bothered about his presentation and about Abhay" (The SWL 65).

As a modern woman, she decides to succeed in all of her limitations and endeavours. Diksha overcomes numerous obstacles to meet Vibha. She maintained her determination and faith and she was now resolved to give her own life a new purpose. She made a move forward but maintained her ties to her base of principles. She now decides to fulfill her secret wishes because she realizes that apart from being a wife and mother, she is also a human being. She discovered herself. She has decided to voice out against the bad treatment given to her by her husband. Diksha left her miserable past behind and started a fresh new life. Diksha and Vibha are the characters who never give up but instead face life's challenges, Shenoy has been effective in capturing the shades of the contemporary woman of today's society through these characters.

The modern woman is represented by Shenoy as a brave and determined one who is prepared to take courageous steps to proclaim her self-reliance and fight for her freedom rather than as reliant, subservient, disappointed or traditional. Preeti Shenoy's depiction of today's woman in her novels is representative of the complexity of her present-day existence and the countless experiences she has to deal with in life. Shenoy has inspired women to reject the conventional image of women and stand up for their liberties via her artistic

endeavours; which made her a reform icon. Her fictional personas encompass a wide spectrum of contemporary female characters, each of whom encounters distinct obstacles in their everyday lives such as homemakers, single mothers and ambitious businesswomen.

At the heart of “The Secret Wish List” lies the tension between tradition and modernity a contradiction that shapes the lives of its characters Diksha and Vibha, the protagonist and her friend, find themselves torn between the values instilled by their traditional upbringing and the appeal of modern aspirations. Shenoy vividly captures this conflict through Diksha’s internal struggles and external encounters, painting a shaded portrait of a society in transition. In one moment from the novel, Diksha reflects on her upbringing, “I was brought up in a typical Indian household, where traditions were upheld with utmost reverence. But as I grew older, I found myself questioning the validity of these age-old customs in the face of modern ideals”. (The SWL 115)

This sentiment encapsulates the internal turmoil experienced by many Indian women wrestle with the clash of tradition and modernity in their lives. “The Secret Wish List” also delves into the rigid cultural norms and societal expectations that dictates the lives of its characters. From arranged marriages, Shenoy shines a light on the intricacies of Indian society and the pressures exerted on individuals to conform. Diksha’s journey of self discovery is hindered by the expectations placed upon her by her family and society at large. As she navigates the complexities of romantic relationships and career aspirations, Diksha wrestles with the fear of disappointing her loved ones and straying from the path laid out for her. Shenoy skillfully portrays the suffocating nature of societal expectations, illustrating the challenges faced by those who dare to disobey tradition.

This novel too has the theme of identity formation amidst a rapidly changing world. Diksha;s quest for self-realization mirrors the broader societal shift occurring in India, where individuals are increasingly questioning traditional roles and forging their own paths. Through Diksha’s interactions with various characters, including her supportive friend Vibha and unconventional mentor Mrs. Sinha, Shenoy highlights the importance of authenticity and self-expression in shaping one’s identity. As Diksha embraces her passions and ambitions, she embarks on a journey of empowerment and self-discovery challenging the constraints imposed by tradition and societal norms. In a moment of introspection, Diksha muses, “I realized that I was not just a product of my upbringing, but also a reflection of my own desires and aspirations. Tradition may have shaped me, but it did not define me”. (The SWL 35)

This quite encapsulates the central theme of identity formation and the struggle to reconcile tradition with personal autonomy. Further, Diksha's grandmother imparts a valuable lesson, stating, "Time may change, but the essence of our culture remains unchanged. It is up to us to adapt and evolve while staying true to our roots". (The SWL 55) This wisdom underscores the importance of honoring tradition while embracing the opportunities afforded by modernity.

At last, Diksha walked out of her marriage life to pursue her dreams. She then learned salsa and started her own dance studio. Her family accepted her decisions and choices in life. But, on the other side Diksha's friend Vibha repents for not having spent enough time with her family. So, she makes amendments and takes the situation under her control. Picturing this characters change Preeti Shenoy clearly states that a woman can build her life and go on, be it professionally or personally. In complete contrast to Diksha, Vibha longs to spend time with her family and hence she quits the job. She finds peace in doing mundane household chores. She starts to take care of her family and enjoys life. From this characters we can understand that woman has to know what her calling is and has to go in that direction making amendments in life. It is an another dimension of a new woman.

Preeti Shenoy's "The Secret Wish List" offers a compelling exploration of intersecting cultures, tradition and modernity in contemporary Indian society. In today's society, a new woman plays variety of significant roles from their birth to till the end of their life. The society expects a woman should be independent of thoughts, capable of making decisions, who is willingly able to lead others and above all who designs her life to the best. Through the lens of its characters, the novel delves into the complexities of identity formation, societal expectations and the clash of cultural norms. Shenoy's shaded storytelling and insightful commentary invite readers to reflect on their own experiences and perceptions of tradition and modernity in a rapidly changing world.

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**Anita Rau Badami's *Tell It to the Trees*: A Conglomerate of Antithetic Women**

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**Abstract:**

Women can best be narrated only by a woman. Anita Rau Badami is one such narrator whose works narrate the life of women at varied stages, put in different situations, and diverse cultures. The novels of Badami contain women characters belonging to different stages, starting from childhood to old age. Badami's fourth novel *Tell It to the Trees* is not an exception. It is the story of three generations of women rooted in India, who live together in a house located at the farthest and coldest part Merrit's Point in British Columbia. Woman by nature is multifaceted and an able administrator who is molded in a way to face, fight, and tackle situations. This paper focuses on three main characters Akka, Suman, and Anu to whom the situation in which they are placed is the same, but the way they handle it makes them different from one another. Earlier exposures, the culture, and the environment that surrounds a woman teach her innumerable lessons. Problems might be similar, but the ways in which women strive to find a solution differ from one to the other. The path that they choose is not the same, and the weapon they choose to fight back their problems, surprisingly varies. Each one is differently made and one is not identical with the other. It is culture and education that make the life of women unique and special.

**Keywords:** Culture – Antithetic – Women – Conflict

**Introduction:**

Women can best be narrated only by a woman. Though it had taken centuries for women to sprout out of their safely coated homes, we could now see them blossoming all around spreading their fragrant thoughts from every corner of the world. Anita Rau Badami is an Indo-Canadian writer, who had spent most of her youth travelling around various parts of India and later after her marriage had settled in Canada. The shift of the authors nativity could be traced in her works of fiction.

In Badami's debut novel *Tamarind Mem*, which she had written a few years

after moving to Canada, we could see the memories of India deep and fresh in her memory which had filled most of the pages. The book contains more of India and very less of Canada as the author herself would not have explored much of the newly settled place. In contrast, Badami's fourth novel *Tell It to the Trees* set in Merrit's point in British Columbia, pictures more of the Canadian landscape, climatic condition isolation and lot more and gives just a glimpse of India. So many years of the authors stay in Canada has made her understand the place and its impact in individuals in a distinct manner.

Having had the opportunity to travel to different places, even from her early childhood days Badami's exposure to lot many characters has helped her excel in her characterisation. Her novels have clusters of characters of which women always outnumber men. Holistic depiction of women in different stages as child, sister, mother, grandmother embellish her novels.

Woman by nature is multifaceted and an able administrator who is moulded in a way to face, fight and tackle situations. Earlier exposures, the culture and the environment that surround a woman teaches her various lessons. Problems might be similar, but the ways in which women strive to find a solution differ from one to the other. The path that they choose is not the same, and the weapon they choose to fight back their problems, surprisingly varies. Each one is differently made and one is not identical with the other. This makes the life of women unique and special.

In *Tell it to The Trees* Badami pictures the life of a few such paradoxical women who have migrated to Canada and presently live in the farthest place in Merrit's Point, with their own ideologies. The place is less populated and most part of the year the weather compels them to shut themselves up inside their secluded homes. It is the story of J.K. Dharma's family, narrated in parts that swing between the past and the present by Varsha, Suman, Anu and Hemant. The novel begins with the narration about a frozen body of a woman located near J.K. Dharma's House. Varsha, the thirteen year old daughter of Vikram begins to narrate the days she had been with her mother at the age of four. Helen, one of the rebellious character in the novel appears for a very short span of time through the memories of her daughter Varsha, but the impact of her deeds remain like a deadly shadow throughout the novel.

Harini @ Helen and Vikram had studied in the same college, fallen in love and then got married. But the two fail to compliment each other, the authoritative, autocratic dominance of Vikram irritates both Helen and her mother in law Akka. "You just live off me, You bitch." (26). In the absence of her husband, Helen begins



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to have secret roamings, to which even Akka does not object. Even as a four year old child, Varsha remembers the days when her mother “transforms herself from a Mom in to a Princes” (23). The more Vikram tries to cage Helen, she wishes to fly away beyond his hold.

He was like a wild-eyed and fanatical believer. It was his love for her that ate away at him, turned him in to a maniac. And the more he loved her, the more he wanted to hold on to her, the more she wanted to get away. And that made him screaming mad. It was terrifying. (TT27)

When verbatim turns in to physical harassment, Helen could no more tolerate and she decides to walk out. “It was your father’s temper that chased your poor mother away.” (12). Helen steps out of the house hoping to live an independent life, a life of her own choice.

Helen decides to walk out leaving her daughter behind with Vikram, but when Akka had faced a similar problem in her family long back, she had taken a different weapon. The clues thrown here and there help us to understand that Akka’s life with A.K. Dharma was not a happy one either. A.K. Dharma is also portrayed to be an autocrat when Akka comments on Varsha she says “Gene Problem, Like your father and his father, I am telling you, Varsha learn to control that temper. Don’t turn in to your Papa. Don’t turn bad like him.” (9).

Akka is an admirable woman, who voices out and stands up to the sufferings of women. Though it be her own son, when she feels that Vikram is wrong in his attitude towards his wife both Helen and Suman, it is Akka who points it out and tells him that he is wrong. She is a witness to all that happens inside the house. She neither finds fault with the roamings so Helen, nor does she want to restrict Helen. If ever, one day she decides to walk out, because Akka is definite that her son’s attitude towards his wife would one day chase her out. She never wished to be an obstacle in the path chosen by her daughters in law. She understands that no woman can live with a man of such attitude.

Many a times Akka offers to help Suman to get out of the place with a little money that she has. She could not withstand the pain she undergoes and says “ Go, leave today. Run, Run... Are you a sheep, are you a brainless ninny, what are you doing standing there like that?Go, I say go!” (49). Though Akka has grown very old and she knows that Varsha needs a mother, she is selfless and wants to retrieve Suman off her suffering. This could also be because of the guilt that it is her own son who seems to be ruthless. Akka does not remain a silent witness to all that Vikram does,

instead she keeps warning and registers her disapproval.” ... if he doesn't watch out, he'd lose another wife” (33). She also tries to some extent to heal the deep cut wounds caused by her son on Suman, Akka is on my stepmother's side. She can't bear to see her unhappy. I hear her telling Suman that she should leave. “Run girl run as far as you can”, she says. Once she offered Suman her gold necklace to go away... “I can't see her suffer, pear of my eye,” Akka said. (*TT* 35)

Being the daughter of a freedom fighter Akka has a revolutionary spirit within her. Though not very loud and openly rebellious, she silently but powerfully explodes. She could never tolerate violence though not explained in detail, we could understand that she herself had undergone the agony and pain of suppression in the past. She never feels sorry or sad when she refers to her dead husband J.K. Dharma. Akka should have faced similar suffering in the past. And your grandfather Mr. J.K. Dharma, small man with a high ego, froze in to a pillar of ice right outside our front door, when he was forty-seven years old. He forgot his keys, came home really late, really drunk one winter night couldn't wake me and turned in to an iced sculpture. He deserved what he got, the drunken lout. He brought me nothing but tears. (*TT* 10)

Akka gets rid of it in a different way, she opts tit for tat and chooses to take a well planned revenge. Even after so many years, she does not want to change her opinion about him. “He was a bastard... he had bad genes” (162).

Like an ant in the story narrated by Akka that gets in to the ears of an arrogant rogue of an elephant, who caused havoc in the jungle, made him mad and caused him to drop over the cliff and die, Akka got rid of her despised drunkard, bastard husband one snowy night. “He froze to death. Right outside our front door. And me fast asleep inside. Didn't hear the door bell, didn't hear him knocking away, him knocking, bang, bang, bang!” (168). She lets him freeze and turn in to a snowy statue. She finds pride in her act of taking revenge, a murder without evidence. This is Akka's way of handling and she puts a permanent end to all her worries.

Every individual is unique and differently made. They need not be identical in their deeds. Suman is different from Helen and Akka. She has been brought up from the southern parts of India, Chennai. The surrounding in which one grows up has a very significant role in influencing the personality. Suman has her own way of dealing with problems. She is very much, “aware of the man dominant society, where rules are framed by men as to how women should be” (*TT* 39). Though she is aware, she does not make any effort to change it or question it. Economical and social status of her father has control over the choice of life. The societal pressure that she is thirty, and yet to be married makes her feel of dependent and helpless, which in turn

makes her believe that she is a woman, a weaker one and so has to play a submissive role. Earlier she too had been a woman of dreams.

I too wished to be borne away by on horseback, in a train, or a plane, even in an ox- drawn cart if nothing else was available, by a man who would allow me to expand beyond my boundaries, beyond that stick-insect of an *I*, who would show me the world, who would love me into being more than what I was. (*TT* 43) But in a way to shatter her dreams, Vikram arrives at Chennai looking for a girl who would suit to be his second wife. He finds Suman, immediately marries her, she follows him to Merrit's Point and gets caged at the far most place 'the Jehannum', from where she could never dream of escape.

Now with a bitter hindsight, I believe that when he looked at me he saw a woman who could be moulded, who would not rise up and complain, who would be submissive to his needs and the needs of his household, who would not fight back, as Helen had done. (*TT* 73)

All her dreams all of a sudden disappear and she realizes very late that the little bit of *I* sticking to her had also totally vanished. She has brought up with a certain code of conduct, which stops her from fighting back or running away. I was part of the tight knit, contained universe, where everybody living within unwritten code of conduct the knowledge of which came to us with our mother's milk, was dinned in to our skull at every opportunity by our elders, inhaled from the virtuous dusty air we breathed. (*TT*44)

Suman accepts to play a submissive role . she never even tries to think of an alternative. She is treated as an insensitive object but she continues to do her household works without grudging, blaming or complaining. She is passively threatened and trained to become a typical domesticated woman, who is expected only to cook, clean and be a wife. She is both verbally and physically abused though she tries to please by doing all that is humanly possible, Papa began to find fault with everything she did and didn't do. He shouted at her, he called her a fool and he told her she can't wear anything other than saris. Akka said he is ridiculous forcing the poor woman to wear saris in winter. (*TT* 33)

Such complains are made only by other characters, Suman never complains. She lives a life of a slave who has no freedom of speech, freedom of choice or freedom of thought. Vikram believes that money would give women power to think independently, he never wishes his wife to act independently. Suman is deprived of money because Vikram feared that she too would set herself free. "The beetle was

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me, caught inside the house, inside the town, within the circling mountains. There is no escape for me from this place” (122). Though Akka promises to give her the money and gold she had, that alone wouldn’t help her, she needed the courage and the place was totally alien to her.

Vikram very cunningly executes all his plans and traps her. Suman is cornered from all directions, bullied and also kept busy throughout the day, so as to stop her from reflecting upon herself, which he feels would turn her against him. She is never given time or space to sit back and think over. Excessive domestic pressure and helplessness finally make her fit in to the mould of a submissive unquestioning wife that has been already designed by Vikram. Having no hope of escape, she begins to live her life, so as to suit the expectations of others. Even when Akka insists on her to escape, she does not think seriously about it. “This is my weakness, I know now. I am a follower of rules. I donot have the courage to break them” (TT 46).

Anu’s unexpected entry in to the life of Suman, gives her a ray of hope and she is made to rethink about walking out of that hellish place. Even then, Suman does not take the initiative to open up to Anu. She is trained to retain the family secrets and never to let them out. But Anu suspects something fishy in Dharma’s household. She senses some kind of indifference. She suspects and sniffs through the hidden secrets and begins to dig in to the issues of Dharma’s household. Unable to handle the questions asked by Anu, Suman reveals a lot about Vikram’s arrogance and about the domestic violence that pops-up frequently within the four concealed walls of their house.

Vikram is good at that sort of subtle humiliation. His violence is more harmful because nobody can see it ... his attacks they go deep in to the root of your being, kill your self-respect, your idea of who you are take away your sense of balance...” Vikram calls me a fool and I’ve become one. (TT 218-19)

Suman, who is continuously tormented and abused by Vickram, doesnt retaliate. Instead she passively accepts, as she is made to believe that walking out of marriage is,” ...I feared the shame of returning, of dishonouring my father if I left my marriage” (TT 89), this is a typical Indian thought, that stops Suman from even thinking of a solution.

Culture plays a prominent role in moulding the attitude of a man. Akka and Suman had spent the first half of their life, the life before marriage in India and had moved to Canada only after their marriage. It is to the culture of India that they had been more exposed to. Whereas Helen and Anu, though rooted in India, they are

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brought up in Western countries and grow up as Westerners. The attitude between these two, the ones brought up in India and the other brought up as Westerners varies vastly.

Akka and Suman are stuck too much to their families. Though they face innumerable sufferings, they do not walk out of the system called family. Whereas, for Helen and Anu, the priority varies. These two give more importance to the 'I' in them, than the family and that makes the difference. "Anu was a Westerner; she had grown up here, in this country, not India, even if her ancestors came from there" (TT 104).

Anu is a different make. She is economically independent, educated, and bold. When she faces similar problems in her marital life, being abused by her husband, without any second thought, she walks out of marriage. When she feels, she wants to do something different and interesting; she quits the job that had paid her a large sum of money. This independence in thought, action and decision making makes even Akka and Suman envious of Anu. Though Akka and Suman are educated, they are not given the freedom to make even minor decision in their lives. Suman remarks, "I envied the woman, her control over her life, her money, her future. It seemed she made the decisions; there was nobody she needed to consult. I must be everything she wasn't" (TT 99). Even Akka, who is very bold and has a different approach towards her life, admires Anu. "I should have been like You, freebird, comes and goes as she pleases, does what she wants, eh, Suman wouldn't you like Anu's life" (TT 161).

The women in the novel, Akka, Helen, Suman and Anu, all face domestic abuse. The problem is the same, suppression of women in the hands of dominant men. Each one is interestingly unique in the way they handle it. Helen, a Westerner, leaves her child Varsha with Vikram and she dares to walk out of the house, having an affair with another man. Even for Anu, break up in marriage does not matter much because she too is a Westerner, though ancestrally rooted in India. "I was married for a year and a half but am not any longer, he was a jerk, and if you asked him he'd tell you I was a bitch" (TT 104). Both Helen and Anu do not give much importance to the emotional bond named marriage, instead they are independent women, who give more importance to the 'I' in them. Anu goes a step further and chooses to be a writer of stories; she sets herself free even from her professional life.

In contrast, Akka and Suman, though they are both physically and psychologically harassed by their husbands, they do not dare to walk out. Instead, they try to hide the happenings in their family within the walls of their house. When,

Suman chooses silence to be her weapon, Akka, the daughter of an ex-serviceman, who marries a man of her own choice, handles the situation differently. She gives her husband a frozen death, “Frozen Solid, like a statue. God punished him for making my life a misery” (TT 167).

Thus, to conclude woman is neither submissive nor arrogant, each woman is unique, it is the home, the society and the culture that designs her and makes one different from the other.

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**Body as the Performative Site of Honour and Shame in Elif Shafak's Novel '*Honour*'**

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**Abstract:**

The increased number of honour killings and other honour-based violence (HBV) that occur in South Asian immigrant communities in the West, showcases the rigid claims of community on the bodies of women. The novel *Honour* written by Elif Shafak, a Turkish writer centred on the honour killing of a mother by her adolescent son in their migrant location, portrays that the lives of all the major characters are punctured with the nails of honour culture in one way or another. This paper analyses Shafak's novel to bring out how women's bodies work as the functional sites of honour, sacrifice and violence, whether inland or abroad. A woman's body, sexuality and fidelity not only define her identity but also make her a site where the males of the family and community prove themselves as honourable and virile by inducing punishment on those bodies. Shafak's novel is a representation of the real-life travails that women encounter in Immigrant locations

**Keywords:** Honour, Diaspora, Multiculturalism, Woman Body, Gender Performance

**Introduction:**

Communities presuppose certain norms, regulations and patterns of behaviour to be accepted as rightfully belonging to them. These patterns of behaviour are stereotypically attached as core to gender identity and asserted through socialization processes inherent in the social structure. The prescriptions and prohibitions are severe in traditional sort of communities and subversions are dealt with very violent methods of punishments ranging from disownment and ostracisation to murder. Even in modern times, people continue to be loyal to such traditional values and carry over their burdens of cultural proscriptions into multicultural, migrant locations too. The insistence on cultural value systems often becomes very difficult in multicultural scenarios, especially for a generation born and brought up in Western societies, very detached from the breeding grounds of their parents' cultural values. It is seen to lead to provocation and outbursts of violence against one's kith and kin.

The novel *Honour* written by Elif Shafak, the Turkish writer is set in Turkey

and London in the 1970s and contemporary times and explores the lives of three generations of a Kurdish family. The concept of honour which is central to Kurdish life defines their lives at home. Central to the novel is the honour killing of a mother by her adolescent son in their migrant location. The lives of all the major characters are punctured with the nails of honour culture in one way or another. This paper analyses Shafak's novel to bring out how women's bodies work as the functional sites of honour, sacrifice and violence, whether inland or abroad.

The narrative of the novel unfolds through accounts from multiple viewpoints, multiple narrators, several time frames, several cultures, different geographies and spanning several generations. Even though there are many narratives, the structural design of the novel is Esmā's retelling of her mother's story, there is a microcosm of migrant location in the novel. Apart from Pembe's family, the wide canvas sets a multiplicity of characters from around the globe; like Roxana, the Bulgarian bar dancer and lover of Adem who behaves as Russian, the Jamaican boss and friend of Pembe, and Elias, a man who has mixed ethnicities which makes him a supple character.

The lives of all the other characters are punctuated with the nails of honour culture in one way or another. In traditional Kurdish society, not giving birth to a boy child was highly stigmatized- where boys were a boon and girls were mere responsibilities. When Pembe's mother Naze gives birth to twin girls after having six girls already, she is desperate beyond measure. She even takes a vow to be silent as a response of defiance toward God who was not giving her a son. When the village elders visit her, they warn her about sacrilege in expecting God to reveal his ways to a woman like her: "Surely there was no woman among them" (*Honour* 6). Still, she named her twins strangely as Bexte and Bese meaning Destiny and Enough, just "like a petition to the skies" (8) and Berzo, her husband adds to their names Pembe and Jamila. Unlike her husband who wanted his girls to be educated, Naze had internalized the traditional beliefs that there is no need for education for girls and chastises them on how to perform as good girls:

"Modesty is a woman's only shield", she said. 'Bear this in mind: if you lose that, you will be worth no more than chipped kurus...women were made of the lightest cambric, Naze continued, whereas men were cut of thick, dark, fabric. That is how god has tailored the two: one superior to the other... What mattered was that the colour black didn't show stains, unlike the colour white which revealed even the tiniest speck of dirt...Honour was more than a word. It was also a name. You could call your child 'Honour' as long as it was a boy...Women did not have honour. Instead, they had shame' (*Honour* 15-16).



Even when her husband was educated and progressive, Naze believed that giving birth to a boy was her sole aim and she blindly believed that her next child would be a boy. But it was a complicated delivery and when the midwife tried to save Naze at the cost of the baby, an infuriated Naze, screamed like a mad woman- to cut her belly open and take the son out. The baby was a girl and both of them could not survive. Naze is an embodiment of the female self who immolated herself in the name of the concept of a perfect woman as the reproductive engine who gives birth to boys which belief was prevalent among many cultures.

Only male bodies were considered valuable. The female body was valuable only as an object to be looked at, taken care of, owned, possessed and if disloyal-destroyed/battered. Her body was a space to be controlled. When Naze's eldest daughter Hediya fell in love with a man and eloped, and returned home after some days as the man's family did not give consent to their marriage, Berzo shouted at her: "If I had a son, I'd ask him to kill you and clean our family's good name. And your brother would go to the gaol because of you. I am glad I do not have a son" (*Honour* 266). Hediya was served a rope in a cauldron and she hanged herself.

Pembe's twin sister Jamila could not marry, because, she was kidnapped by her elder sister's family- when there ensued a fight between them. Even though they returned her she was to be checked by a midwife to confirm whether her hymen was intact. When she could find no hymen in her, she explained that some girls are born like that. When Adem who loved her, got to know about her past, he wanted her to confess that she was a virgin. But she confronted him with the question of whether he couldn't love her if she was not a virgin. The distressed Adem was caught in an indecision wondering whether he would be able to live on with her, dubious about her virginity and how his brother and relatives would accommodate his having "a tainted wife- an exact replica of their mother?" (*Honour* 99). Adem's mother had eloped with another man, unable to suffer the regular beatings of her drunkard husband.

And Jamila, with a 'dubious record of honour', withdrew herself to live the rest of her life as a midwife in a lonely wilderness. When after many years she contemplates her life, she feels desolated and depressed about her inability to fulfill her femininity by giving birth to a child. "A dry womb is like a melon gone bad: fine on the outside, desiccated inside, and good for nothing, the peasants said about women like her". (*Honour* 34). Here, her body and sexuality are seen to define her identity. It downplays her capacity to live a life of fulfilment. The inability to prove her virginity which is a technical aspect of the body distorted her identity beyond the

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peripheries of its corporeality and the privation of childbirth dismantles her femininity.

The different performances of gender identity are always already available in a ritualized format in traditional societies, for individuals to epitomize. Men and women were expected to abide by the performance codes of masculinity and femininity. In a first-of-its-kind approach, it was Simone de Beauvoir, in her work *The Second Sex*, who put forward the conception of femininity as a social construction: “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society” (295). The 1970s and 1980s saw a proliferation of studies that asserted the social construction of gender. The body thus appeared as a category of consequential order. Following Simone de Beauvoir, Judith Butler proposed and familiarised the performative aspect of gender in academia. In her work, *The Gender Trouble*, she famously said: “In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed... There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results” (25). Theories on gender performance later lead to establishing the body as a very important factor of human experience and its narration.

Whether it be male, female or persons with other sexual orientations, individuals are by and large classified in societies, according to their loyalty to prescribed gender performances. Those who stray off the limits are always marked as the ‘other’. As we see later in the novel, when Jamila occupies the peripheries of a wilderness in a rough and lonely valley, she is respected as a midwife and healer woman for numerous illnesses. She always put on a shalwar under her attire, in the expectation that she may have even to jump up on a horse and travel with strangers. She becomes a necessity and approachable for common men and anti-socials alike. “She was the healer. The Virgin Midwife who spoke the language of birds, reptiles and insects. *A granddaughter of the Prophet Suleiman*... They respected, feared and despised her. As a result they left her alone. This woman who was no woman; a witch who paced the tightrope between two worlds” (*Honour* 172- 173). Thus she is looked upon by society as one who is outside the definitions of femininity and she is endowed with an agency that no other female is conferred. She had found herself in her domain, experimenting with newer remedies and herbs. “When Jamila was in the cellar, she stepped outside of her body, becoming a conduit for an arcane energy that coursed through the universe, healing, mending, multiplying. There she gave birth to her own womb and the womb expanded to cover the whole of the natural world around her... She lived outside the clock in a cycle of her own” (*Honour* 173). People made miraculous stories about her because mystification of reality is often a mode of negating and escaping that reality.

In one of her lectures, Elif Shafak repeated the traditional wisdom of Kurd origin, “If you would like to wipe off something in your life, acne, a scar or a human soul, all you need to do is to encircle it with thick walls. It would dry inside” (Qtd. in Gurbuz,1). The novel brings to the foreground the social and cultural circles which encircle persons like Jamila and anchor her to the shattered hut set in a rugged valley in the Kurdish mountains. The isolation and deep loneliness that Jamila and through her the readers too brood over enunciates the alienating power of the social norms and taboos. It dislocated Jamila’s life just because Jamila’s body failed to prove her innocence from being the violated body. As the one who had eluded and crossed society’s formulations and definitions of a ‘normal female’ or being, which society does not encourage conventionally, she is ‘othered’ as a discrete phenomenon. Here one has to be reminded of how intelligent women who discovered their wisdom and walked away from their own society’s concepts of ‘normalcy’ were othered, labelled and haunted as witches in many cultures in the earlier generations.

In *Honour*, the novel, even after Pembe and Adam moved to London and settled with their two sons and a daughter, they sustained their traditional beliefs and gendered concept of honour. Like in most traditional societies, a Kurd man’s honour was dependent upon his valour, status and virility, whereas a woman’s honour was all about her body and its performance in terms of subservience to the male dictums and its chastity. Man always defined his honour also as precariously dependent upon the conduct and control of the women of his family and by extension, his community. The masculinity of a male was thus intricately woven into the chastity and moral conduct of the females under his roof.

Iskender, Pembe’s son had a relationship with Katie Evans, an English girl, and she got pregnant by him. Later, Adam, their father left them and started to live with a Mexican bar dancer named Roxana. Adem’s migrant identity had transformed him from a man who lost Jamila on the question of virginity to a womanizer who fell seriously in love with a bar dancer East and West. ‘He was also a shameful man who abandoned his family for a dancer.’ (Shafak, 144). But the men’s breach of honour codes does not upset the balance in the family. Pembe gave Iskander all the freedom as a boy while insisting her daughter remain within her limits as a girl of Turkish-Kurdish origins. Pembe herself copied her traditional value system into her London life. But when Pembe hesitantly started to see another man called Elias, their whole life changed. Elias had helped her many times and gave her company when her husband left her. Adem’s brother and a religious man called Orator chastised Iskander about the need to control his mother, An impulsive Iskander whom Pembe had brought up as her Sultan, stalked her to find out about her illicit affair and later

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stabbed his mother with a knife, just to frighten her, but killed her instead. (But it was not his mother, but her identical twin, Jamila who had come on a visit to London who got killed). Pembe did not reveal herself, and as a self-imposed punishment withdrew into the remote rugged village alone like Jamila. She lived and died there alone as the midwife- Jamila.

Foucault's theorizations about the spectacle of punishment and the creation of docile of the body as a historically and culturally specific entity totally 'imprinted' by history are relevant in any discussion on patriarchy. Historically, patriarchy defined the modes of conducting bodies, whether male or female. Norms of masculinity and femininity were formulated in a way that one feeds the other, making them mutually exclusive. If the arguments of one are deconstructed, the total formulations about the latter also get crumbled down. So the surveillance naturally followed these formulations. Thus compulsive performativity of femininity becomes the norm.

Naze is just a representative of generations of women who internalized this body politics and mediated it to the next generations, adding more and more ferocity to their internalization and submissiveness to such 'historical imprints' over time. When chastised by her mother, the girl Pembe flips a coin and thinks that there are only two sides, "Win or lose. Dignity or disgrace, and little consolation for those who got the wrong one (*Honour* 16). One is calibrated with the other. There is no choice for in betweenness and both are trapped inside the system, one consuming the other.

If honour is celebrated as a communal and social value, the trauma that follows each honour killing is a severely individual phenomenon. Iskander who was brought up as the apple of Pembe's eyes was persuaded by his uncle Tariq, who was not a religious man even though he believed in the nobility of honour. He pushes Iskander into the bloody deed saying, "The rich could afford to lose and regain their reputation...The less means a man had, the higher was the worth of his honour...A man who had been cheated of the honour that was his due was a dead man...In your own corner and surrounded by disgrace, you would dry up like a desiccated fruit" (*Honour* 153- 154) Like many honour killers, Iskander, by murdering his mother loses his life altogether.

Ayse Onal, in her work titled *Honour Killing: Stories of Men Who Killed*, which is based on interviews with the Turkish honour -killers in jail, draws the rotten life they have, their trauma in memory of the murdered and their drive to end their own life. Murat, a young man from Urfa who murdered his mother on account of her affair with another man, revealed his pathetic condition to her: " We are murderers

with our bodies, but victims with our souls...it is crime that punishes our souls” (50). He was goaded to do the vile act, out of the shaming words of his relatives and friends and when his marriage proposal was rejected. Just like in Iskander’s case, after the murder everyone despised him and he feels, “you too die with the person you kill” (*Onal* 72). He tried much to end his own life by engaging in boxing with his fellow prisoner, while all the time humiliated by the White prison officer. And to Onal’s query about why didn’t his religious mind stop him from the regretted deed, he answers that “for someone who is oppressed, public censure carries more weight than religious commandments...the main reason was to make the people who knew this secret hold their tongues., to shut their mouths. I did it so they would say, “Even after so many years the man went ahead and killed his own mother he cleansed his honour”.....but the most likely place for me in the next life is hell” (73-74). The fear of being talked about and gossiping is the most common reason for many like Murat, Adem, Tariq, Iskander etc. “Words, like wandering tribes were of no fixed address. They travelled far and wide, scattering over the earth” (*Honour* 88). Though the scare about being talked about is the same, gossip too, seems to be gendered in the light of the fact that throughout different cultures, gossip about females travels farther and wider than those about males.

The mixing up of ethnicities in a multicultural location abounds in freedom of different sorts. Yet, the women folk who try new expressions of their identity face with gendered mode of violence, in a perfect replica of the ethnic power politics back home. The cultural baggage has been carried over all the places; to London from rural south-east of Turkey and Istanbul. Unlike the arguments of continuous change in diasporic identities as explained by critics like Stuart Hall and the possibilities of the hybridity of identities (Homi K Bhabha), and the possibility of third spaces that spatial changes offer, the ethnic identity often remains intact for women posited as embodied-sacrificial animals. The fear of acculturation and assimilation into the host culture takes its toll on women’s lives. Pourgharib B, Kiani S, and Ziadbakhsh S analysed Shafak's *Honour* to see how Bhabha’s concepts of hybridity and unhomeliness work in a migrant location and find that, diasporic characters feel unhomeily and struggle to fill gaps and redefine their identities struggling with the new socio-cultural cultural structures. Their attempts to counter stereotypes are seen to result in “feelings of isolation, nostalgia, insecurity, split self, and a sense of being out of place”(49). Even though the identity of the characters begins to acquire new dimensions, confronted with newer challenges and tug between traditional and modern values, they recoil and hurt themselves, getting further alienated from their family and community.

Even in a multicultural hybrid space, honour crimes are being interpreted as

cultural/ethnic practices that have to do with the domestic sphere, and are so unapproachable to the public and legal orders. In the novel also, the males who breached 'honour' live on, but the women who did not perform adequately are punished either by themselves or by the guards of honour. Sacrifices are signals for those who break the unwritten laws of honour culture. The spectacles of punishment assert in the community, the discourse of power over the woman and her body, "a policy of coercion that acts upon the body" (to use Foucauldian terms) and effectively warns all the others who do not conform. The increased number of honour killings and other honour-based violence (HBV) that occur in South Asian immigrant communities in the West, is proof of the rigid claims of community on the bodies of women. Elif Shafak's novel is a representation of the real-life travails that women encounter in Immigrant locations.

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**Detour through Desi Nonsense: Exploring the Fascinating Strand of  
Nonsense Literature within Indian Popular Culture**

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**Abstract:**

Indian Nonsense, the desi version of Nonsense Literature, happens to be one of the most unexplored and uncelebrated popular-cum-comic genres, no matter how diverse and prolific the literary output appears to be. A genre that artistically invokes the playful spirit of *Mela* (Festival) and *Tamasha* (Humour), Indian nonsense quintessentially draws upon cultural references, myths and folklore, weaving them into weird yet delightful versions of absurdity and humour. Initiating research in the field would indubitably unfurl a fascinating field in Indian Culture and Cultural Studies. Commemorating the greatest makers of the genre, ranging from Tagore, this proposed detour attempts a deeper appreciation of the cultural nuances, comic subtlety, and creative ingenuity that stages another interesting dimension of Indian art. Indian strand of nonsense drives in the fact that amidst the clutter and chaos of everyday life, there can always be room for laughter, whimsy, and a healthy dose of nonsense.

**Keywords:** Indian Nonsense, *Mela*, *Tamasha*, Indian Popular Culture, Cultural Studies

**Introduction:**

Somewhere at a fantastic point between common sense and No-sense lies the art of Nonsense. Nonsense contains within itself the impression of an absolute lack of sense placed side by side with sulking meanings and beyond absolute cognizance and interpretative reproduction. The genre has turned out to be the act or protest of 'writing back' against the totalizing and logocentric narratives that proudly profess the finality of what is written and, at times, said, too. The 'single text-single meaning' days are long gone, and the theoretical hype is so overwhelming that the restoration seems nearly improbable. The craving of every second reader is to emerge with a new reading of the text, and reading between the lines is also the default mode.

Interpretations go wild, which is the characteristic feature of Nonsense texts according to Jean Jacques Lecercle, the French exponent of the genre. He encodes

an altogether new hermeneutic foundation for Nonsense, stating, “Nonsense is the reflective image of our practice of interpretation, as philosophers or literary critics- it is interpretation gone wild” (3). Nonsense quintessentially dismisses interpretations even if some readings of it do make perfect sense. Though the talks on its scope of making sense seem deleterious to Nonsense, this truly helps the genre feel the literary fraternity with other genres, which it is deprived of, presumably because of the label itself, ‘Nonsense’.

Tom Swifty boldly proclaimed Nonsense as the fourth dimension of literature in the prolegomenon to his *Course in Nonsense*. Swifty, one of the few contemporary theoreticians to focus exclusively on Nonsense, brings a level of refinement and brevity to the discourse, as seen in his statement, “Much Nonsense rather looks like philosophy at play, probing the limits of logic and language” (5). Swifty's insights are a valuable starting point for the contemporary discourse on Nonsense, offering much to ponder, discuss, agree or disagree with, and thereby giving birth to new perspectives. In this light, Nonsense can be seen as a revolutionary quest to push the boundaries of language and comprehension.

Literary Nonsense resembles an oxymoron or reminds one of the celebrated Johnsonian comment on the characteristic trait of a metaphysical conceit, i.e. “...The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together” (17). ‘Literature’, when conjoined with the prefix ‘nonsense’, appears to shatter the very essence of literariness, which revolves around the meaning/s generated and the emotional effect enkindled. Nonsense literature deliberately endeavours to mean nothing, and, to achieve this, unwaveringly subverts all the prevalent norms of language and meaning-making. In simple terms, the genre has nonsense as both the medium and the effect....

Defining the word ‘nonsense’ is a facile task, and lexical definitions are galore. For instance, Dr Johnson, in his illustrious *Dictionary of the English Language* (1785), defines ‘nonsense’ as “unmeaning or ungrammatical language” which is luxuriantly replete with “trifles; things of no importance” (200). Suppose one explores the Johnsonian Age in its entirety. In that case, it can be observed without the need for ‘further’ confirmation that the uttering or writing of nonsense, or even a deviant idiosyncrasy, was fraught with the danger of being declared mad. The poet-painter William Blake came to be called ‘Mad Blake’ on similar grounds. No different is the case even within the present scenario. However, defining Nonsense as a genre demands more of a creative mental make-up from the part of the doer. Literary nonsense is too volatile and slippery to be contained within a single, compact definition.



Within his preface to the anthology of Indian Nonsense titled *The Tenth Rasa: An Anthology of Indian Nonsense*, Michael Heyman, the prolific Nonsense critic, refers to the genre as “an artistic expression of play” (Heyman xx). Play, whatever the kind, is indubitably joyous, an activity that exudes fun, energy, and entertainment and, in effect, breeds variety in the fabric of culture. Indian culture, in particular, proudly features and cherishes the sparkling strand of *tamasha*, regardless of the regional/linguistic differences. At the fundamental level, play washes the mind clean of the stress and worries at least so long as the duration of the sport. The most important aspect that relieves tension in the minds during the playful moments is winning or losing, which is just part of the game or playing carried out for its own sake, just for some minutes of pure and maximum fun. Nonetheless, Heyman hesitates to explore the huge currency the term ‘play’ received in postmodern philosophical discourses’ hotspots.

The dominant spirit that breathes life into Nonsense is the spirit of play, which becomes the very quintessence of the genre. Just like a child plays with his toys (that may even include the objects within the grown-up world) in all his/her innocence, nonsense engages in lively play with all the aspects of sense and sense-making. Predictably enough, this play shatters and shreds all the existing conventions of writing, the generation of meaning and emotions via the medium of language. However, this subversion is made not out of spite or the philosophy of the existential school that dots on the disasters erupting from the single view that lie is meaningless. Strikingly enough, the dominating spirit of Nonsense is that of sporty playfulness that seeks many a chance to laugh and make others laugh by deriving strange combinations out of the available material.

Also, Heyman’s editorial preface to *This Book Makes No Sense* draws parallels between the art of reading and comprehending Nonsense and the sport of juggling. This deceptively simple but ingenious analogy proves to be extremely evocative that the editorial becomes more concrete and compact, with less scope for doubts. ...juggling is *juggling* because the juggler keeps all the balls in the air, going around and around. If she catches one ball and holds it too long, all the other balls fall, and sometimes, for just an instant between catching and throwing, all the balls are in the air and her hands are empty. (5)

Every attempt at comprehending or making sense of Nonsense is like juggling meanings. A typical literary work of Nonsense is marked by its curious knack for containing either the excess of meanings or the absolute lack of it. Nonsense cannot possibly be the absence of sense, for no word can save itself from the fundamental characteristic of meaning/referring to something. Rather, the attempt is to create a pleasurable puzzlement within the readers by displaying an array of

suggested meanings, among which it is almost impossible to focus on a specific one. The writer uses the clever medium of nonsense to tease the reader, who proposes to make something out of the piece that s/he is in the process of reading. The words perpetually create a façade of meaning, but the reader finds no sense in the end.

Indian Nonsense, the desi version of Nonsense Literature, happens to be one of the most unexplored and uncelebrated popular-cum-comic genres, no matter how diverse and prolific the literary output appears to be. A genre that artistically invokes the playful spirit of *Mela* (Festival) and *Tamasha* (Humour), Indian nonsense quintessentially draws upon cultural references, myths and folklore, weaving them into weird yet delightful versions of absurdity and humour. Initiating research in the field would indubitably unfurl a fascinating field in Indian Culture and Cultural Studies. Quite very interestingly, the Indian strand of nonsense is driven by the fact that amidst the clutter and chaos of everyday life, there can always be room for laughter, whimsy, and a healthy dose of nonsense.

Rabindranath Tagore, the revered patriarch of Indian art and literature, spearheads the literal burst of Indian Nonsense. Tagore's identity as a Nonsense writer is not as popular as his artistic versatility. So is the vast output of Nonsense literature in India. Tagore experimented with Nonsense only towards the final phase of his eventful life. This hints at the bright aspect that Tagore embraced Nonsense with his ripened faculties, but there was not much time left for him to delve deeply into the delectable depths of Nonsense literature and theory. *Khapchhada*, the prized anthology of Nonsense penned by Tagore and the equally sweeping foreword, becomes the very foundation of the genre.

Unfortunately, until the first volume of Mohit K. Ray's *Studies on Rabindranath Tagore* was published in 2004, the global audience never came to know of Tagore's 'Nonsensical' venture. Thus, invariably, *Khapchhada* remains the single mortal cell in Tagore, an author about whom, every other aspect is immortal. The issue of the downright omission of *Khapchhada* from discourses on the Tagorian oeuvre, if taken seriously, would lead to the unfurling of a treasure house indeed, which would put in limelight many talents like Sukumar Ray, Sumanyu Satpathy, Mangesh Padgavkar, Sampurna Chattarji, Dr. K.Ayyappa Panicker, Kunjuni Master, M.D. Muthukumaraswamy and S. Ramakrishnan, to name a few. However, it is quite shocking that, until now, *Khapchhada* does not possess a full-length translation except as fragments within Heyman's *Tenth Rasa*, which is also now a century after the poet.

The essay "The Nonsense Poetry of Tagore" by Subir Dhar within Ray's

*Studies* provides occasional fragments from *Khapchhada*, especially that of its prefatory chapters in verse, composed to be a smorgasbord of philosophical and mythological references. Tagore daringly employs a rather profane image to place Nonsense on a pseudo-mythological frame that, in effect, appeals to the keen reader who recognizes and loves a typical Indian setting. Within a particular stanza, Tagore fancies Nonsense to be emerging from the fourth head of Brahma, the Lord of Creation. Dhar observes:

Tagore indicates that not only is the frenzied mad incoherence of Nonsense related to divine inspiration or prophecy, it is also allied to philosophy (the first face of Brahma), Morality or Religion (the second face) and normal, meaningful or “sensical” poetry (the third face). And finally...that Sense and Nonsense are tied in a bond of indissoluble binarity. (104)

Tagore enumerates the attributes of Nonsense as rant and garrulity, infantility, irrationality, madness, hilarity, transcursive behaviour, possession and inspiration, energy, and imagination. The list is quite precise and clear, and it is the most systematic one of its kind. At this point, Dhar adds the Bakhtinian notion of the anarchic spirit of carnival laughter, too and melds it with the Indian counterparts, *mela* and *tamasha* (106). The carnival scene is boisterous, flamboyant and even anarchic to the extent that laughter and merriment come at the expense of the restraining bodies. But this is not through poking fun at them. On the other hand, by deriving the strangest combinations out of them, a mode of comic distortion that subverts the routine. Dhar adds, “This is precisely what Tagore does in his play-acted role as a magician as he brings together with the sound of his drum and his incantations, a flock of children from near and far, and a crowd of objects different, various and diverse” (106).

The Tagorian Nonsense poem given below has been written originally in Bengali and is part of the *Khapchhada* collection:

The old woman’s grandma-in-law’s  
Five sisters live in a Brick-a-Brac,  
Their saris hang upon the stove,  
Their pots upon the clothes rack. [(1-4) *Tenth Rasa* 37]

Indian Nonsense, as the potential delegate and mouthpiece of the regional versions, their way to fame is hopelessly mazy. Any search for the roots, growth and branches of Nonsense is overwhelmed by the gargantuan figures of Lear and Carroll and no matter how perseverant the researcher is, the quest roams and ends within the borders of Great Britain. Thus, Indian Nonsense is revealed to be a twice-marginalized entity. This worse condition is akin to the crestfallen state of coloured

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women who go through double pangs of oppression meted out to them because of their colour and gender. Quite similarly, regional varieties of nonsense are also twice discriminated against, primarily because the art form is called ‘Nonsense’ and because they do not belong to the West.

The Indian English Nonsense and Nonsense, composed in the various vernacular languages, make up a stupendous collection that could amply provide for volumes of anthologies. It would be surprising for many to know that even Tagore, the revered doyen of Indian art, started practising Nonsense in the ripe and autumn years of his life. He even brought out an anthology *Khapchhada (Queer Folks)*, that had emerged as an antithesis to the Tagorian canon in its entirety. Like the true story of the genre, the Nonsense phase within Tagore’s literary life is also dumped to anonymity.

The study on the prospects of Nonsense, which, if carried out, would bring benefits on a global scale. The relieving and rejuvenating power of humour are true beyond contention, and Nonsense, with the ultimate and harmless version of it, may be of help to be a potential stress-buster. The working of nonsense on the human psyche, it is to be presumed, would be of tremendous positive impact. The plain enough reason is the very policy of the genre itself, that is, it never laughs at or ridicules; rather, the platform is one of celebration of disorder and indecorum which it creates, with nontoxic playfulness and laughter comes only as an enlivening background score. No one is hurt by Nonsense, and the reading experience would wash the mind clean of negative emotions, at least for a while.

The repertoire of Nonsense appears peculiar, with many an interesting and hitherto unexplored spark for future research: i) the need to bring the national and regional varieties of Nonsense to the literary forefront, ii) aesthetic and critical exposure due to Indian Nonsense iii) Retrieve from anonymity, the identity of Rabindranath Tagore as a Nonsense writer and critic iv) the psychological impact of Nonsense and the prospects on the proposed Nonsense therapy. The postmodern politics that reveals itself to be much conspicuous within the schemata of Nonsense ordains the genre with an ineffaceable anti-authoritarian appeal. For the very same reason, no other genre could claim so organic a relation to the theoretical school. Thus, the juncture appears propitious that the postmodern deliberation to effect an absolute revision of the existing power structures (irrespective of the field) in order to make the marginalized get into their deserved space so that their voices, too, become audible.

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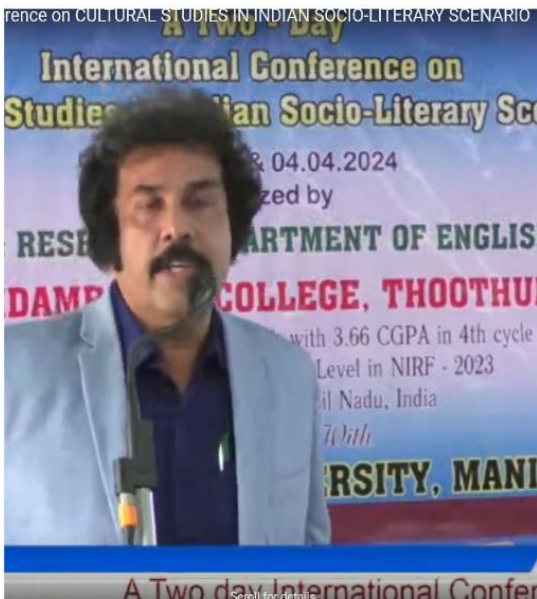
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**भारतीय सामाजिक-साहित्यिक परिदृश्य (हाइब्रिड मोड) में सांस्कृतिक अध्ययन पर दो दिवसीय अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सम्मेलन का आयोजन किया गया.**

भारतीय सामाजिक-साहित्यिक परिदृश्य (हाइब्रिड मोड) में सांस्कृतिक अध्ययन पर दो दिवसीय अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सम्मेलन का आयोजन 3 और 4 अप्रैल को बीकानेर विश्वविद्यालय में आयोजित किया गया। सम्मेलन का उद्देश्य भारतीय समाज और साहित्य के विकास को समर्थन देना और अंतर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर सांस्कृतिक अध्ययन को बढ़ावा देना है।



सम्मेलन में भारत के 15 राज्यों और 11 देशों के 411 प्रतिभागियों ने भाग लिया। सम्मेलन में साहित्यिक, सांस्कृतिक और सामाजिक विषयों पर 220 से अधिक प्रस्तुतियाँ प्रस्तुत की गईं और विचार-विमर्श का आयोजन किया गया।



**தூத்துக்குடி வஉசி., கல்லூரியில் கலாசார ஆய்வுகள் மாநாடு**

**தூத்துக்குடி.ஏப்.7-**  
தூத்துக்குடி வஉசி கல்லூரியில் இந்திய சமூகஇலக்கிய சூழ்நிலையில் கலாசார ஆய்வுகள் என்ற தலைப்பில் இரண்டு நாள் சர்வதேச மாநாடு நடந்தது. கல்லூரியில் ஆங்கிலத்திற்கு, மணிப்பூர் பிஜிஆர் திகேந்திரஜித் பல்கலைக்கழகத்துடன் இணைந்து நடத்திய இந்த மாநாட்டை உத்தரகாண்ட் மாநில உயர் கல்வி அமைச்சர் தன் சிங் ராவத் துவக்கி வைத்தார். மாநாட்டுக்கு கல்லூரி முதல்வர் வீரபாகு தலைமை வகித்தார். மணிப்பூர் பிஜிஆர் திகேந்திரஜித் பல்கலைக்கழக துணை வேந்தர் அசோக் செளத்ரி. 20 ஹார்வர்ட் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின்



தூத்துக்குடி வஉசி., கல்லூரியில் சமூக இலக்கிய சூழ்நிலையில் கலாசார ஆய்வுகள் என்ற தலைப்பில் சர்வதேச மாநாடு நடந்தது.

அசோசியேட் புரோகிராமம் பயிற்றுவிப்பாளரும், அமெரிக்காவின் தெற்கு இல்லினாய்ஸ் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் கல்விப் பள்ளியின் தலைமைப்பயிற்றுவிப்பாளருமான பிரான்சு கெனயூட்சன், நவீன கலாச்சாரத்தில் ஏழு இன் படையெடுப்பு குறித்து பேசினார்.

ஜார்க்கண்ட் மத்திய பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் நாட்டுப்புறவியல் உதவிப் பேராசிரியர் ராமகிருஷ்ணன், கேரள மத்தியப் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் மொழியியல் இணைப் பேராசிரியர் ஸ்ரீகுமார், ஸ்ரீநாராயண குருதிறந்த நிலைப்பல்கலைக்கழக மொழிப்பள்ளியின் தலை

வர் வின்சென்ட் பி நெட்டோ, திருநெல்வேலி மனோன்மனியம் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் ஆங்கிலத் துறைத்தலைவர் பிரபாகர் ஆகியோர் பேசினர். இந்த மாநாட்டில் இந்தியாவின் 18 மாநிலங்கள் மற்றும் 11 நாடுகளில் இருந்து 411 பங்கேற்பாளர்கள் கலந்து கொண்டனர். மெய்நிகர் மற்றும் இயற்பியல் தளங்களில் 220 ஆவணங்கள் வழங்கப்பட்டன. பேராசிரியர்கள் அஜித் அமைப்புச் செயலாளராகவும், மெர்சி லதா, கோகிலா, அனிதா ஆல்பர்ட், மருதுபாண்டியன் மற்றும் மஞ்சு முரளிதரன் ஆகியோர் மாநாட்டின் ஒருங்கிணைப்பாளர்களாகவும் பணியாற்றினர்.



Conference on cultural studies  
A two-day conference on "Cultural studies in Indian socio-literary scenarios" was organized by the PG and Research Department of English, V.O. Chidambaram College, Theerthkudi, in collaboration with BIR Tikendrajit University, Manipur, on April 3 and 4. Chan Singh Rawat, Higher Education Minister of Uttarakhand, inaugurated the conference. In his address, Ashok Choudhary, Vice-Chancellor of BIR Tikendrajit University, Manipur, stressed the coexistence of culture, K. Ilrasi Kuzhen of Southern Illinois University spoke on 'Invasions of AI in the modern culture'. M. Rameshkumar of Central University of Kerala, Vincent B. Netto of Sree Narayana Guru Open University, Kollam, and S. Prabhakar of Maronmaniam Sundaranar University spoke. R. Ajith of V.O.C college coordinated the conference.