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# International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL)

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*Editor in Chief*

Dr. Luisa Maria Arvide Cambra

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# Vol-4, Issue-1; January-February 2025 (10.22161/ijeel.4.1)

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## [“Verses For Black Mothers”: Hughes, McKay, Brooks, Cullen, Toomer, Senghor, Césaire, Naylor and Angelou](#)

Authors: Papa Amady Ndiaye

DOI: [10.22161/ijeel.4.1.1](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijeel.4.1.1)

Page No: 1-12

## [Black Lives Have Never Mattered!](#)

Authors: Papa Amady Ndiaye

DOI: [10.22161/ijeel.4.1.2](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijeel.4.1.2)

Page No: 13-18

## [Reclaiming Dignity: A Study on Transgender Experiences in Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story](#)

Authors: Anjana M S

DOI: [10.22161/ijeel.4.1.3](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijeel.4.1.3)

Page No: 19-24

## [Intertextuality and Dialogism in Narayan Surve’s Karl Marx: A Marxist Perspective](#)

Authors: Md Nasir Hossain

DOI: [10.22161/ijeel.4.1.4](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijeel.4.1.4)

Page No: 25-28

## [Revisiting the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale](#)

Authors: Adam Crosby

DOI: [10.22161/ijeel.4.1.5](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijeel.4.1.5)

Page No: 29-34

## [Striving in the Globalized World: A Study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s Americanah](#)

Authors: Nfon Rita Gola

DOI: [10.22161/ijeel.4.1.6](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijeel.4.1.6)

Page No: 35-44

## [Transformation of Vulgarisms into the Azerbaijani Language](#)

Authors: Hasanova Sevda Huseyn

DOI: [10.22161/ijeel.4.1.7](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijeel.4.1.7)

Page No: 45-49

## [Education Policies, Commissions, and Committees in Colonial and Postcolonial India: Their Role in Spread of Education in the Country](#)

Authors: Alauddin Ansari, Dr. Govindaiah Godavarthi

DOI: [10.22161/ijeel.4.1.8](https://doi.org/10.22161/ijeel.4.1.8)

Page No: 50-56

# “Verses For Black Mothers”: Hughes, McKay, Brooks, Cullen, Toomer, Senghor, Césaire, Naylor and Angelou

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Article Detail:	Abstract
<p>Received on: 01 Dec 2024</p> <p>Revised on: 02 Jan 2025</p> <p>Accepted on: 09 Jan 2025</p> <p>©2024 The Author(s). Published by International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/</a>).</p> <p><b>Keywords – African-American, Women, Poetry, Homage</b></p>	<p><i>Throughout African-American literature, the maternal figure has often held a central place. In many works written by African-Americans, the Negro woman, whether mother or grandmother, transcends her traditional biological role to embody survival, resistance and resilience. A central component of a community grappling with oppression and injustice, she is a source of love, strength and wisdom. A number of novels have succeeded brilliantly in highlighting these qualities and the primordial role of the Black woman, such as Sethe in Toni Morrison's <i>Beloved</i>, who pulls out all the stops to safeguard the memory of her past and her descendants, or Lena Younger (Mama) in Lorraine Hansberry's <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>, who reveals an unwavering love and determination to maintain dignity and family unity. The aim of our article “Verses For Black Mothers” is to show that the African-American woman, through her beauty, her resilience, her sacrifice and role as guardian of the collective memory of Blacks in America, takes also a pride of place in African-American poetry, and even beyond, with French-speaking poets of the Negritude movement in particular.</i></p>

## I. INTRODUCTION

In African-American books, the maternal figure plays a central role. In many works written by African-Americans, the Negro woman, whether mother or grandmother, surpasses her traditional role as a mother figure to embody the struggle for the future, coping with oppression and injustice, and serving as a source of energy, endurance and resilience. At the heart of a community struggling with oppression and injustice, she is a source of love, strength and wisdom. In the poetry of Langston Hughes and Claude McKay, two key figures of the Harlem Renaissance movement of the 1920s, the Black American woman, or “Negro

Mother”, is celebrated and exalted as never before. The African-American poet exalts this figure not only to pay her a well-deserved tribute for her unflinching courage and legendary tenacity, but also to highlight her social role in holding the Black community together in the face of a hostile, oppressive society. The mission of the Negro Mother has always been to foster the values of patience, perseverance and purpose in order to secure their rightful place in American society. This is what Anne-Marie Paquet demonstrates when she points out that “tributes to the African-American mother, “*The Black Mother*”, are

*flourishing. A new image was created: that of the catalyst who gives others the motivation to take action..<sup>1</sup>*

This article is structured around six sections. We will first demonstrate that an important aspect of Hughes and McKay's poetry is devoted to the rehabilitation of the Black humanity, destroyed by the ideologies of slavery and colonialism through the celebration of Black motherly figures. In the second part we shall highlight the enduring power of Black women in the Gloria Naylor's *Women of Brewster Place* even though it's not a collection of poetry but rather a work of fiction, and then we will make an analysis of the Langston Hughes' piece "Song For A Dark Girl" in an attempt to shed light on the impact of the racial violence targeting Black males, on African-American women. The fourth section of the article is celebration of the strength by which Black Women survived the wrongs against the African-American community in the poetry of Gwendolyn Brooks, Margaret Walker and Maya Angelou. In the final section, we deemed it interesting to revisit Jean Toomer's *Cane*, a groundbreaking masterpiece that addresses themes of racial identity, the legacy of slavery while putting a stress of his portrayal of two African-American female figures: Karintha and Fern whom the poet provides with sensual dimensions and mesmerizing effects on others.

## II. TRIBUTE TO BLACK FIGURES: A KEY ASPECT OF HUGHES AND MCKAY'S CULT OF BLACKNESS

This is precisely why, beyond skin color, a major aspect of Hughes and McKay's cult of Blackness remains the spirit of perseverance and the role of black mothers in the war against racial injustice. In this regard, Emanuel observes that: « *One of the most important character features implied by negritude [in Hughes] is endurance [of the Negro Mothers].* »<sup>2</sup> This is a topic on which the African-American poet puts a great deal of emphasis, giving voice to black women whose strong personalities and willingness to infuse these racial values are highlighted. In the poems 'Mother to

Son' and 'The Negro Mother', the voices of black mothers are particularly amplified. In the first monologue, Hughes gives voice to a black mother who is not spared the effects of racial oppression, and who seeks to transmit to her son her own determination to survive in spite of the fact that the path is scattered with rocks and pitfalls. The poem reads:

*Well, son, I'll tell you:*

*Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.*

*It's had tacks in it*

*And splinters*

*And boards torn up,*

*And places with no carpet on the floor-*

*Bare*

*But all the time*

*I've been a-climbin' on,*

*And reachin' landin's*

*And turnin' corners*

*And sometimes goin' in the dark*

*Where there ain't been no light*

*So boy, don't you turn back.*

*Don't you set down on the steps*

*Cause you find it's kinder hard*

*Don't you fall now-*

*For I've still going, honey*

*I've still climbin*

*And life for me ain't been no crystal stairs (30)<sup>3</sup>*

For the Black mother, no matter how daunting these adversities may seem, they should not hold back the social ascent and racial integration of the new, emerging black generation. To give in and surrender would, for the Black Mother, is tantamount to defeat in the racial struggle. Hughes' predecessor and a leading figure in Black nationalism, James Weldon Johnson, warned "*Young man-Young man- / Smooth and easy is the road / That leads to hell and destruction*"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Anne-Marie Paquet, *Toni Morrison : Figures de Femmes*, Presses de l'université de Paris-Sorbonne (1996) p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> James A. Emanuel. *Langston Hughes. (Translated from American by Jacque Eymesse) Paris: Les Editions Internationales, 1970.* p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> Langston Hughes, *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, ed. Arnold Rampersad, Associate ed. David Roessel, New York, Vintage Books, 1994 (References to Hughes' poems are to this edition and are indicated in brackets throughout the text.)

<sup>4</sup> James Weldon Johnson, *Complete Poems. London: Pinguin Classics, 2000* p. 19.

Addressing her son, the "Black Mother" utilizes powerful imagery, that of a difficult staircase to climb that isn't made of crystal, with plenty of "tacks and breaks" on it. It is to such a staircase that the African-American lady compares the road she had to travel, to get to where she is today. Despite the hardships she's endured, she hasn't thought for a moment of letting herself beaten down by the hardships and "banana peels" placed by mainstream society to halt her progress.

By deciding to share her ordeal with her son, who is obviously in the grip of the injustice of white society, the African-American mother figure seeks to comfort her son, inviting him to draw inspiration from her story. The poem's repetition of the line "I've been climbin'on" is no accident. In so doing, Hughes urges his race brothers to repeat their efforts to achieve socio-economic integration. The term "honey" used by the Black Mother in the 18th line of "Mother to Son" reflects the love that mother figures have for their black offspring, whom they have often been the only ones to raise, their fathers in many cases being emasculated and unable to provide for their families' basic needs due to oppression and unemployment.

This relentless drive to survive characterizes the other black mother depicted in 'The Negro Mother'. It's a lyrical poem written as a narrative in which the 'Black Mother' conveys to her children the uphill battles she has had to fight in order to endure and thrive. From the very first lines of the poem, the "Black Mother" reminds her offspring of the mistreatment she faced in and how, against all odds, she stood her ground to survive. It's worth noting that the Black Mother's ordeal reflects the collective oppressive experience of the entire Black American community since their arrival in the Americas:

*Children, I come back today*

*To tell you a story of the long dark way*

*That I had to climb, that I had to know*

*In order that the race might live and grow (155)*

The poem unfolds with the words "Children, I come back today", as if to point out that the Black Mother is nonetheless aware of her mission to shape future generations. The verb "come back" suggests that she is accustomed to addressing her children repeatedly, so that they never lose sight of her past struggles for the survival and well-being of the African-Americans:

*Look at my face -- dark as the night --*

*Yet shining like the sun with love's true light.*

*I am the dark girl who crossed the red sea*

*Carrying in my body the seed of the free.*

*I am the woman who worked in the field*

*Bringing the cotton and the corn to yield.*

*I am the one who labored as a slave,*

*Beaten and mistreated for the work that I gave --*

*Children sold away from me, I'm husband sold, too.*

*No safety, no love, no respect was I due. (155)*

In the line "look at my face -dark as the night", a recurrent notion in Hughes' work, namely self-assertion, i.e. racial pride, comes to the fore.

Later in her recital, the Black Mother touches on a grim episode in the history of African-Americans, the slave trade, which, despite its brutality, never succeeded in taking away the inborn resolve and innermost hope of the Black slaves to someday attain freedom. "[I] carried in my body the seed of the free", which reflects an unshakeable stoicism on her part.

One of the most harrowing aspects of the Black slave's situation in America is also recalled by the Black Mother. That is, the transplantation of slaves, involving the forced splitting up of members of the same family. However inhumane this experience may be, it did not cause the brave Black mother to crumble or surrender. She is convinced that by holding firm she would, through her resolve, be able to pave the way for the survival of subsequent generations:

*Three hundred years in the deepest South:*

*But God put a song and a prayer in my mouth.*

*God put a dream like steel in my soul.*

*Now, through my children, I'm reaching the goal. (155)*

According to Jemie "At a time and place where black life is held cheap and the days of black men appear to be numbered, the poem [The Negro Mother] is a majestic reminder of the strength and fullness of history, of the

*source of that life which transcends even ceaseless labor and burning crosses.”<sup>5</sup>*

The powerful presence of the Black Mother occupies a pivotal role in McKay's poetic work. For him, this figure is embodied by his own mother, Hannah Ann Elizabeth McKay, a woman of strong character and a kind of moral motherly figure within the Black peasant community of Sunny Ville. More than the father of the McKay family, "Mama Anna" played a significant role in shaping Claude's character and personality. She never missed an opportunity to instill in her children a deep sense of racial and ancestral pride. Concerned with raising her children to be proud individuals "in no way inclined to apologize for the color of their skin," as Wagner puts it, Anna wouldn't miss any opportunity to tell young Claude and his siblings about the heroic deeds of their ancestors while they were under the yoke of slavery.

Besides, the Jamaican poet's mother had an unusual kindness and an extraordinary attentiveness towards the predominantly black members of her community. She would gladly open her door to the wife beaten up by her husband, lend her shoulder for the teenager abused by her boyfriend to cry on, mediate between iron out the differences between family members in conflict and willingly share her food with needy neighbors. Speaking of his mother, McKay recalls that his mother cared little for people's moral character. What mattered to her was helping people out of the goodness of her heart. In the opinion of the poet, it's clear that he's none in the community could hold a candle to Hannah Elizabeth who devoted her entire life and energy to preventing the implosion of Sunny Ville's black community. For McKay, there are no words powerful enough to describe her mother's loyal attitude to the oppressed race to which she belongs. "Ribber Come Do'n" is a dialect poem that appeared in one of McKay's first collections. It's a heartfelt tribute of her brave mother who wouldn't hesitate for a second to deprive herself and her own children of food to appease the hunger of a neighbor's children. McKay proudly recounts an episode when "Mother Mac" had to offer some of her food supplies to Milly, a fourteen-year-old whose little sisters and brothers

were starving as their parents were held up at their workplaces by a river flood:

*I know the magic word, the graceful thought,  
The song that fills me in my lucid hours,  
The spirit's wine that thrills my body through,  
And makes me music-drunk, are yours, all yours.  
I cannot praise for you have passed from praise,  
I have no tinted thoughts to paint you true;  
But I can feel and I can write the word;  
The best of me is but the least of you. <sup>6</sup>*

Later on, Léopold Sédar Senghor's poem "Femme Noire" is one of his best-known and most acclaimed pieces echoes both McKay and Hughes in its attempt to pay a powerful tribute to the dignity, beauty and vitality of the African woman.

Published in 1945 and included in the collection *Chants d'Ombre Femme Noire* is part of the Négritude movement, which Senghor co-founded with Aimé Césaire and Léon Gontran Damas. *Négritude* or Blackness seeks to restore and celebrate the identity, culture and dignity of the African people against colonization. In this poem, the figure of the African woman is not only a symbol of beauty, strength and motherliness, but also represents Africa itself. To Senghor Africa represents both his homeland and the land that nurtures and protects him.

Composed in free verse, the piece features no regular rhyme scheme or fixed structure. The idea behind this is to let Senghor's poetry flow naturally, like a song in praise of the black woman. The poem unfolds through a series of metaphors and images that extol this feminine figure.

In the opening lines of "Femme Noire", Senghor lauds the beauty of the black woman. He describes her in exalted terms, using sensual, natural metaphors, such as "black skin" and "the color of oil". This skin color is magnificently ennobled as a symbol of purity and grace. The image of the woman is often associated with nature: her beauty is that of the African earth itself. The black continent's earth is reputed to abound with richness and fertility.

<sup>5</sup> Jemie, Onwuchekwa. Langston Hughes; An Introduction to the Poetry. New York: Columbia University Press, 1976,

<sup>6</sup> Claude McKay, Complete Poems ed, William J. Maxwell, Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 2004, (References to McKay's poems

are to this edition and are indicated in brackets throughout the text.)

Through the verse “*I discover you, Promised Land, from the top of a burnt-out pass*”, Senghor compares the African woman to nature. She is at once the African earth and the nurturing mother. Her curves are compared to hills, her skin to ebony, reinforcing the idea that black women and Africa are inextricably linked. The use of natural elements (oil, ebony, tam-tam) further underscores this idea of connectedness between woman and earth.

The Black women are also acclaimed as mothers. “*Naked woman, Black woman, dressed in your color which is life, in your form which is beauty!*” highlights the idea that woman, in her simplicity and essential nature, is a life-giving source. Here, the African woman epitomizes peaceful strength. She is all the more capable of transmitting life and protecting those that are dear to her.

The black woman embodies Africa itself. Using sensual, visual descriptions, Senghor celebrates not only natural grace, but also the depth of African history and civilization.

According to the poet, every woman is a metaphor for the greatness of Africa, a continent that, despite being shattered by the effects of colonialism, continues to hold on to its intrinsic dignity and attractiveness.

Although the tone of the piece reflects an eminently sensual nature, the poet retains himself from the point of view of vulgarity. The eroticism is sublimated by the spiritual and sacred.

In his endeavor to bring together the body and soul at last, Senghor successfully manages to unite the physical and the spiritual. For him, what is a woman's outward beauty is but the mirror image of her inner beauty, her soul. He exalts both her body and her spirit, as in this phrase: “*Naked woman, black woman, I sing of your passing beauty, a form I gaze upon in the Eternal.*” Here, he shows that the beauty of the black woman transcends time and endures forever.

Langston Hughes uses his legendary simplicity as he marvels at the beauty of her Black lover. He confesses in “*Fascination*” “*Her teeth are as white as meat of an apple/Her lips are like dark ripe plums/I love her/And because her skin is the brown of an oak leaf in autumn.../I want to kiss her* (39). He eloquently portrays the black

woman whose face and skin are so attractive and fascinating at the same time.

One passage *Notebook of a Return To The Native Land* by Césaire, chants African elegance and beauty when he writes: “*The woman standing alone/and standing up my dead who have me by the throat with hands so beautiful/and I'm standing up, standing up, and free...>*”<sup>7</sup>

Clearly, this passage shows how Césaire sees beauty not only in the body, but also in the resistance and heritage of African ancestors. The standing woman here is a representation of collective strength and dignity. He links this beauty to the struggle for freedom, rooted in a culture that continues to resist and exist, despite attempts by colonialism to destroy it. Césaire one's asserted at the French parliament that for him to get a good education, his grandmother, the brave Black woman who raised him, had to bleed herself dry and sacrifice everything.

While the poem does not devote a passage directly to African physical beauty like his contemporary Leopold Senghor, it does extol it by highlighting the resilience, identity and pride of the black people, which he associates with an inner, cultural aspect of beauty.

One key aspect of the cult of *Blackness* for Langston Hughes and Claude McKay involves the celebration of the physical appearance of the black woman. In their works, both poets are quick to emphasize the sensual beauty of the black woman. For the African-American poet and the Jamaican poet, it's an attempt to question, even reject, the “Caucasian” aesthetic ideal as a standard of beauty, with a view to reasserting Negro values and identity in the Americas.

By championing the beauty of the Black woman, the African-American poet goes so far as to “sing the beauty of a black woman who is not beautiful, and praise her purity when she is not virtuous”, in the words of Jean Wagner. In the first two stanzas of 'Poem [4]: To The Black Beloved', he claims:

*My black one,  
Thou art not beautiful  
Yet thou hast  
A loveliness*

---

<sup>7</sup> Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, présence africaine, 1947

*Surpassing beauty.*

*My black one,*

*Thou art not good*

*Yet thou hast*

*A purity*

*Surpassing goodness.*

Further on, Hughes, extolling the sensual beauty of black women, speaks in the same vein, dazzled by the authentic beauty of a young black girl forced by extreme poverty to descend on the sidewalks of Harlem to whore out her favors. In contemplating the beauty of this harlot, the African-American poet highlights the beauty and authenticity of her black skin. Needless to say, from the point of view of the black poet, it is precisely the color of her skin that makes the young Harlem prostitute so gorgeous:

*Her dark brown face*

*Is like a withered flower*

*On a broken stem.*

*Those kind come cheap in Harlem*

*So they say. (33)*

McKay has a similar point in his "Harlem Shadows" sonnet.

With a view to restoring the physical beauty of women of his race denied it by mainstream society, the Jamaican poet, while exposing the white oppression that forces his racial sisters to become whores as the only way out their precarious existence, can't help but chants the exquisite beauty that nature has bestowed on black-skinned women.

The opening stanzas of this sonnet, which is both an expression of McKay's racial activism and racial apology, read as follows:

*I hear the halting footsteps of a lass*

*In Negro Harlem when the night lets fall*

*Its veil. I see the shapes of girls who pass*

*To bend and barter at desire's call.*

*Ah, little dark girls who in slipped feet*

*Go prowling through the night from street to street!*

...

*Ah, stern harsh world, that in the wretched way*

*Of poverty, dishonor and disgrace,*

*Has pushed the timid little feet of clay,*

*The sacred brown feet of my fallen race! (161-62)*

"Verses for Black Mothers" also, is a powerful tribute to the ability, wisdom and enduring legacy of black mothers. Written by Evans G. Valens, it pays tribute to their role as vectors of history, purveyors of unwavering love and resilience in the face of adversity. The poem highlights the deep, centuries-old bond between black mothers and their ancestors and offspring. It shows how they go on nurturing and safeguarding their families despite the difficulties they face in a racist society. In their desire to see a black elite emerge, the Afro-American mother mothers not only her own children, but also the young members of the entire black community.

From the very first lines, "*Heritage strong, hands warm and wise*", it is suggested that black mothers are not only the physical custodians of their families, but also the guardians of a powerful cultural and historical heritage. They are the repositories of an entire community's consciousness. Their wisdom, handed down from generation to generation, is intimately linked to the legacy of their predecessors.

The line "*Legacy thrives where love never dies*" conveys the concept that the love of Black mothers is eternal, ensuring the continuity of their cultural and personal heritage.

Through the expressions "*Gentle lessons, softly taught*", the poet emphasizes the nurturing and educational nature of Black mothers' mission. Their lessons, though sometimes subtle, are transformative and shape the future of their children and their communities.

"*History woven, battles fought*", it suggests that Black mothers are bearers of the history of the struggle. The fearless and resilient mothers waged their struggles through their own personal experiences and through the collective experiences of their ancestors, especially the slaves. According to Jean Wagner "*If the Black man has been able to resist triumphantly for more than three centuries in a hostile environment, it is because he has had*

*the strength to start again and again, even when everything seemed lost.*"<sup>8</sup>

They also instill the values of resilience and perseverance in the face of oppression and injustice.

The phrase "*of courage crafted in molds of old*" refers to the strength that transcends time and space of black mothers, which has been shaped by generations who fought uphill battle in order to endure and survive in hostile environment.

"*The strength that lies in love and not in pride*" highlights a far-reaching form of power rooted in love rather than arrogance, implying that the strength of Black mothers is selfless and dedicated to the well-being of others.

"*Through hardship they rise, not fall*" is a powerful affirmation of resilience. Black mothers have weathered many hardships, but they continue to rise, remain strong despite the circumstances, and provide support to those around them.

The phrase "*Their embrace a fortress wall*" depicts the love and protection of black mothers as a fortress against the harshness of the world, offering comfort and security to their families.

The tone of the poem culminates in a recognition of the eternal love of Black mothers: "*Mothers, daughters, clear lineage, the love of black mothers, forever dear*". This last line links past, present and future, showing the unbroken line of strength and affection that runs through black families.

According to the poet Jemie "*Their [The Black Mothers'] reward is in their vision of the possibility of freedom for their children. For, they're conservers and transmitters of the national soul, an example of love, wisdom, perseverance and triumph for the younger generations to emulate*"<sup>9</sup>

Countee Cullen, one of the most influential poets of the Harlem Renaissance, has often touched on topics related to the African-American experience and racial stress. Although he didn't explicitly write a specific poem that directly celebrates the Black woman as boldly as his contemporary Hughes or the Senegalese poet Leopold Sedar Senghor, Cullen nonetheless underscores themes of African identity, beauty and black culture. He expresses his pride in his African

heritage despite the distance that separate him from the land of his forefathers.

It's a rarity in Cullen's poetry to come across an explicit celebration the grace of black women. Yet in his famous poem "Heritage" (1925), written at the height of the Harlem Renaissance, there is a passage that can be interpreted as a celebration of African heritage as a whole, in which black women play an essential part in maintaining culture and tradition.

*What is Africa to me:  
Copper sun or scarlet sea,  
Jungle star or jungle track,  
Strong bronzed men, or regal black  
Women from whose loins I sprang  
When the birds of Eden sang?  
One three centuries removed  
From the scenes his fathers loved,  
Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,  
What is Africa to me?*<sup>10</sup>

In this excerpt, Cullen speaks of Africa as a land both mythical and remote, extolling the awesome beauty and dignity of Black men and women. The expression "regal black women" can be understood and interpreted as a nod to these female figures. For Cullen these brave women better incarnate the African heritage and pride.

The poem not being exclusively dedicated to Black women, doesn't mean that it doesn't give a place of pride on aspects of black identity and culture, including the celebration of African women because of their majesty and dignity.

### III. RESILIENCE AND HOPE AMIDST ADVERSITY IN NAYLOR'S THE WOMEN OF BREWSTER PLACE

In her novel *The Women of Brewster Place*, Gloria Naylor pays resounding tribute to the strength, resilience and solidarity of black women against the backdrop of social exclusion within their own homeland. She resorts to their personal experiences of oppression only to underscore the fact that these women stand as bedrocks in their communities.

<sup>8</sup> Jean Wagner, *Les Poètes Noirs des Etats-Unis*. Paris : Librairie Istra, 1962 p. 203

<sup>9</sup> Jemie Onwuchekwa, op. cit. p.101

<sup>10</sup> Countee Cullen, *Heritage* in All Poetry website, <https://allpoetry.com/poem/8497383-Heritage-by-Countee-Cullen>

The story takes place in a poor, secluded and marginalized neighborhood called Brewster Place, where the lives of seven African-American women are closely interwoven. Brewster Place serves as both a setting and a metaphor for the challenges the women must confront for their survival, but also for their resilience.

It's worth noting that although the book is not a poem, it is full of poetic flourishes that glorify the strength of black women. With each character, Naylor highlights various aspects of these women's lives - their pain, their hope, their struggle against neediness, racism and sexism. Despite these hardships, they show outstanding strength and resilience. While some of them indulge in back-breaking chores, others have worked their fingers to the bones without being able to make ends meet. They can't glimpse at any possibility of social ascension.

The resilience and stoicism they show in the face of adversity is quite praiseworthy as the brave Women of Brewster Place must struggle from dusk to dawn against social and economic hurdles. Yet they always manage to find a way out, through solidarity and mutual support. They shall press ahead against all odds. Their ability to endure hardship and find the strength to move on is a form of powerful endurance that Naylor praises.

Female solidarity is one of the focal themes of the novel. The sisterhood and solidarity that exist between these women is unusual. Regardless of their dissimilarity, they join forces in their uphill struggle to survive and protect each other. In so doing, they epitomize the collective strength of black women in their community.

In furtherance, the novel writer pays a tribute to their full humanity and their vulnerability here cannot be not interpreted as weakness.

Despite the harsh, oppressive environment of Brewster Place, some women continue to keep a stiff upper lip and find a way to overcome their situation. This, for Naylor is a symbol of their inner power to transform. The wall that encloses Brewster Place is a metaphor of both a barrier and a space that these women seek to surpass.

#### IV. RACIAL VIOLENCE AND ITS IMPACT ON BLACK WOMEN IN HUGHES' "SONG FOR A DARK GIRL"

The poem that, in our opinion, most eloquently captures racial violence and its effects on Black women remains Langston Hughes' "Song for a Dark Girl". This is a composition in three stanzas written as early as 1927. This shows the poet's early awareness of the plight of his race in the US society. It is as poignant as it is tragic.

Hughes reflects the pain of African-Americans in the face of racial violence, particularly the lynching spree, a practice that was commonplace in the United States in the early 20th century. Hughes, uses simple but powerful language to illustrate this tragedy and express his outcry.

"Song for a Dark Girl", is the inner-thoughts of a young Black woman overwhelmed by an unspeakable pain after the burning, mutilation and hanging of her lover, an act of racial violence that was widespread in the southern States and which targeted exclusively Black men. Hughes chooses to use a simple structure, almost like a folk song, but it is precisely this simplicity that we see in many of the African-American poet's work that makes the reality he describes all the harsher.

Early in the piece, he hints at a specific place, the South, where acts of brutality were tragically rife:

*Way Down South in Dixie (Break the heart of me) (104)*

Dixie is another name for the Southern States, a region marked by a history of slavery, segregation, White supremacy and racial violence against the Black population. In just a few words, Hughes captures both the location and the emotional repercussion "*the heartbreak of the young woman.*" Here the poet's intent is to highlight the devastating impact of the summary execution of the young black male on their helpless lovers, sisters and mothers.

The systemic racism in the South has taken a particular toll on the young Black girl. The young girl's lover has been hung from a tree. Shocking as it is, this image was not a rarity in the Dixie. The lover's death is not natural, nor is it justified; it is nothing less than the outcome of violent racism on Black men. The loss of a loved one symbolizes the destruction of love itself as well as the beheading of the Black family to racial hatred.

In reiterating the image of the South and the lynching spree, Hughes lays emphasis on the contrast between the romantic idea of love and the harshness of racial violence.

In the face of the atrocity, the loss of faith of the Black women, whose religiosity has been celebrated in countless the Afro-American works, is introduced by Hughes when he writes:

*I asked the white Lord Jesus*

*What was the use of prayer. (104)*

The bereaved lover questions of the relevance of prayer and religion, Christianity in this case in a world where innocent persons are killed and hung to a tree by a crossroad just because of the color of their skins.

The young woman who needs answers, turns to Jesus, but she comes to the conclusion that prayers are pointless, should such evils continue to prevail. The expression of "white Lord Jesus" suggests a sense of alienation from a prophetic figure who, historically, has often been portrayed as white. She is definitely in conflict with the Christian religion whose prophet seems heedless to the suffering of the Black community.

The poem can be read as a heartfelt tribute to black women who despite the senseless of the atrocity against their sons, brothers and lovers, have remained dignified and enduring.

## V. THE RESILIENCE AND ENDURING POWER OF BLACK WOMEN IN ANGELOU, WALKER AND BROOKS

Maya Angelou was at the forefront of in the efforts of Black authors of her time, to celebrate the identity of Black women, particularly their selflessness, courage, and resilience in a context of racial oppression. She has always strived to help Black women get rid of false stereotypes and inferiority complexes. Angelou rather encourage her sisters to take pride their identity and accept and celebrate themselves like Walt Whitman has done his famous poem "Song Of Myself". "*I sing myself, I celebrate myself, and what I assume, you shall assume for every atom belonging to, belongs to you as well*" Whitman proudly asserts.

This is the true meaning behind her highly acclaimed poem "Phenomenal Woman" in which she questions and challenges the conception of feminine beauty. Angelou is up in arms against the narrow societal beauty standards. She rather makes clear that true beauty can only come from self-confidence and self-acceptance. The poet opens the piece by referring to the "secret" of her allure. "*I'm not cute, and I'm not a fashion model's height. / But when I start telling them, / they think I'm telling lies*"<sup>11</sup> she writes.

At the outset of the poem, which is about self-assurance and strong personal presence. the author confesses that she may not fit the conventional image of attractiveness: she doesn't have a model's body. Still, she is quite eye-catching. When approached about her appeal, she reveals that it's not a matter of superficial appearance, but of inner confidence and self-assurance. That's what draws people to her just like Toomer's figures Fern and Karantha.

*Men themselves have wondered  
What they see in me.  
They try so much  
But they can't touch  
My inner mystery.<sup>12</sup>*

The phrase "*inner mystery*" alludes to her self-love and appreciation of her own worth, something that those around her can feel but can hardly grasp.

Indeed, the Phenomenal Woman's impact on others is truly powerful. The author highlights people's reactions to her as both men and women are mesmerized when she walks in. They're all the more so captivated since they are unable to put their finger on exactly what it is that makes her so special. Her allure is intangible, and goes beyond her appearance.

Margaret Walker for her part, was quite sensitive to the plight of his Black people that have suffered for centuries, from the time they set foot on the American soil to the present time as well. Her poem "For My People" is a tribute to their resilience and enduring power over the years despite all the suffering inflicted upon them. The second stanza of the poem reads as follows:

*For my people lending their strength to the years, to the  
gone years and the now years and the maybe years,*

<sup>11</sup> Maya Angelou, Phenomenal Woman Random House; 1st edition (January 17, 1995)

<sup>12</sup> Jean Toomer, Cane: A Norton Critical Edition (Norton Critical Editions)

*washing ironing cooking scrubbing sewing mending  
hoeing plowing digging planting pruning patching  
dragging along never gaining never reaping never  
knowing and never understanding;*<sup>13</sup>

In these lines Walker comes back on the exploitation of African Americans, particularly those in the working class, who have over the years worked their back off relentlessly without ever being able to break the cycle of poverty. Hard as they may work, they struggle to make ends meet.

In the phrase "*Lending their strength*», the poet underlines the enduring struggle of African Americans across time with no due reward. Her brave People's plight is somewhat reminiscent of *Sisyphus myth* and his endless vain efforts. Blacks have selflessly contributed to the erection of the prosperous society without seeing the fruits of their labor.

The catalogue of the chores African-Americans fulfill, is an allusion to Black women's manual and hard chores over the centuries which is one of the central themes reflected in most tributes them. The Black women, during slavery times, have often been used by their White masters as pack animals, toiling from dawn to dusk. No only they do they "wash, iron, cook," clean, serve food, they would also attend to the needs of the White babies.

"Negro" by Hughes echoes Walker's piece as it also lists the many injustices Blacks have suffered over the centuries:

*I am a Negro:*

*Black as the night is black,*

*Black like the depths of my Africa.*

*I've been a slave:*

*Caesar told me to keep his door-steps clean.*

*I brushed the boots of Washington.*

*I've been a worker:*

*Under my hand the pyramids arose.*

*I made mortar for the Woolworth Building.*

"Negro" is a concise but powerful work that intends to capture Black experience, identity and the quest to belong.

In an America where racial shame and pessimism prevailed among the majority of Blacks, the Black poet proclaims loud and clear "*I am a Negro*". However, beyond the poem's apology for Black skin, Hughes exalts black people's strength of character through their determination to overcome the prejudices they have suffered throughout history. In Jemie's opinion, "*Negro*' is both a catalog of wrongs against the black man over the centuries and the celebration of the strength by which he has survived those wrongs."<sup>14</sup>

While Hughes' work frequently deals with social justice issues, and while "Negro" may sound more soul-searching, it successfully manages to address in a somewhat subtle fashion the societal context that shapes Blacks' experiences as an oppressed people. Most of its lines can thus be read as a call for social change and the recognition of marginalized identities.

The chores Walkers describes are mostly background activities that reflect the extent to which African-Americans, particularly in the service sector, have been cast to the margins of society. The list of verbs is a reflection of the crushing, endless nature of their tasks. It's both a literal and symbolic representation of the hard work the African-Americans had to endure to keep body and soul together for themselves and their offspring. Unfortunately, this sacrifice done mostly by the women, is poorly rewarded, often goes unnoticed and underappreciated.

"*Dragging along*" connotes the exhaustion and weariness stemming from years of strenuous work. By using "*never*" repeatedly, the poet lays emphasis on the lack of rewards, be they material wealth ("*never to win*"), spiritual fulfillment or insight into the reasons for their suffering without ever being able to climb the social ladder in America.

Walker's piece can be interpreted to large extent as an homage to the resilience and bravery of the African-Americans in general but as praise to the Black women who despite the hardships, oppression and exploitation press ahead in order to survive.

As far as she is concerned, Gwendolyn Brooks, one the female figures of the Renaissance Harlem, thinks that the Black women are so resilient and enduring and have made so many sacrifices for the survival of their

<sup>13</sup> Margaret Walker, For My People (Yale Series of Younger Poets) October 2019

<sup>14</sup> Jemie, op.cit

communities that they deserve recognition from the rest of world.

In Brooks' poems, the stress is put in the enormous sacrifices for the survival and upliftment of their communities by Black people. Through their relentless work, selfless unwavering love, and perseverance, they have managed to keep families and entire communities in cohesion, all of which being necessary to face up with systemic oppression and racism.

"To Black Women" is the poem by Brooks that better illustrates the unique resilient strength and dignity of Black women as they try to come to terms with historical and social adversity. The committed poet that she is, hails not only her sisters' physical appearance, but above all their character and their quest for dignity and recognition.

She asserts Black Woman's gracious beauty and dignity in the following terms:

*It has been a  
hard trudge, with fainting, bandaging and death.  
There have been startling confrontations.  
There have been tramlings. Tramlings  
of monarchs and of other men.  
But there remain large countries in your eyes.  
Shrewd sun.  
The civil balance.  
The listening secrets.  
And you create and train your flowers still.*<sup>15</sup>

The piece as a whole is written as a reaction to the centuries-old denial of Black beauty in societies dictated by Eurocentric norms. The African-American poet is drawing attention to the beauty of her sisters. To her the Black women's beauty is both sensual and in terms of characters thanks to their resilience and humanity.

In her portrayal, Brooks does not dwell much on their victimization throughout history, she rather insists on their capacity pick themselves up after every trial and tribulation. They always find within their inmost selves the strength to rise again, even after being brought low by injustice. This is a central motif of the poem.

In her tribute, Brooks gives over the floor to the everyday African-Americans women who cannot merely be seen to be resilient in the face of oppression, but also to be resilient in the face of violence. As we've seen it, in Naylor's *Women in Brewster Place*, there is among them a sense of community and mutual understanding, and a sense of belonging on which they need to build to overcome the pressure exerted on them by a predominantly White and racist society.

## VI. CANE AS A CELEBRATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN IDENTITY THROUGH BLACK FEMALE CHARACTERS

In 1923, a ground-breaking literary work entitled *Cane* which the Black sociologist Charles S. Johnson labelled as "the most astonishingly brilliant beginning of any Negro writer of his generation" was published by Jean Toomer. He is deemed to be an important figure of the Harlem Renaissance despite his attempts to dissociate himself from the movement calling himself rather an American writer. *Cane*, a hybrid work of poetry, prose and drama, in many ways, celebrates Black women in its exploration of the lives of African Americans in both rural and urban settings. Toomer has an original technique in this work in portraying Black women in a complex and multi-faceted way, showing their strength, beauty, and resilience, as well as the challenges they are grappling with due to race, gender, and societal expectations.

Toomer gives Black women a full panoply of human emotions, longings and authentic experiences. In that he is on the same wavelength with Hughes in his attempt not to merely represent them as stereotypes or simplistic portrayals, but to give them the full range of human feelings and yearnings. Characters like Karintha and Fern in *Cane* are a case in point as they are depicted with layers of complexity, showing their sensuality. Black women's grace and sensuality was one of Langston Hughes' favorite topics. Toomer sings in an epic manner the inner conflicts and emotional burdens they shoulder with pride and dignity. This complexity reflects Toomer's appreciation of their individuality and inner life.

Black women depicted in Toomer's masterpiece often typify the American South, Black ancestry and a deep

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<sup>15</sup> Gwendolyn Brooks, *Selected Poems*, Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2006

connection to the land. For Toomer, they are central to the cultural and spiritual life of the African-American world. Black women represent fecundity as well as creativity and the poet's lyrical depictions of their grace and beauty is quite outstanding.

Women in Toomer's work are often struggling harsh realities, whether it's the burden of racial discrimination, gender oppression, or economic hardship. Yet, despite these challenges, Toomer celebrates their perseverance, wisdom, and positive influence on the community.

Toomer in many instances, associates Black women with mystical and spiritual qualities. He creates some sort of connection between them and the earth and to a greater sense of belonging. By way of illustration, the character of Fern, is depicted as having a mysterious, almost hypnotic presence that has a deep impact on the men she meets. This suggests a form of inner power and allure that goes beyond physical beauty. Here the beauty ceases to be physical in order to become spiritual.

Whereas Fern who is solitary figure, epitomizes both the mystique and complexity of Black womanhood according to Jean Toomer, Karintha is described as being full of grace and attractive to men from a young age. Yet, her life is a succession of pain and hardship. Toomer reflects on how societal pressures and expectations affect her, but her beauty and allure remain powerful.

If Jean Toomer's name and *Cane*, a stroke of genius from its author, cannot be dissociated from the Harlem literary movement, it's especially because the author provides a nuanced and delightful portrayal of Black women, celebrating their grace, inmost resilience, and complexity, while also recognizing the societal challenges they are grappling with.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The resilience, strength and beauty of the African-American woman is a central theme of American literature, particularly in the writings of African-American authors. If the poets of the Harlem Renaissance, like Hughes, McKay and Toomer, depicted strong-willed women who had always shown an unshakeable drive to survive and advance in a hostile environment, authors like Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, and poets like Gwendolyn Brooks

succeeded brilliantly in extolling their stories, portraying them as symbols of struggle, hope and humanity. Their grace and poise have not been outdone either in Angelou's poetry and that of the Negritude poets such as Senghor and Césaire.

The relevance of the highlighting the centrality of Black women's in African-American literature is of paramount importance as it rehabilitates them by addressing historical silences, celebrating the gracious beauty by challenging stereotypes. It is also paramount to showcase their contribution in the long march of the Black community towards freedom and equality by laying emphasis on their unflinching resilience and resistance in hostile environment, which Hughes captures so well in an epic poem he entitled "The Negro Mother" and which could be a subject of an article itself.

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# Black Lives Have Never Mattered!

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Article Detail:	Abstract
<p>Received on: 03 Dec 2024</p> <p>Revised on: 08 Jan 2025</p> <p>Accepted on: 12 Jan 2025</p> <p>©2024 The Author(s). Published by International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/</a>).</p> <p><b>Keywords – African-Americans, Police, Violence, Hughes, McKay, Black Lives Matter</b></p>	<p><i>In the year 2023, a number of Blacks in the United States died at the hands of the police who resorted to heavy-hand arrests. This sparked a movement of protest called “Black Lives Matter”, which has been decrying this form of violence against African-Americans. Since the death of George Floyd in 2020, it has been one of the most powerful movements for the defense of Black rights. It all came to a climax on May 25, the day one which, during his arrest, George Floyd, an African-American, died of suffocation. Yet if we revisit the American history, we shall easily observe that the law enforcement agents were often used to exert violence and abuses against the Blacks, the aim being to torpedo their efforts to integrate into the mainstream society and thrive economically. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate the police or State-sponsored brutality have existed since the abolition of the slavery in the US. The denunciation of such violence is one of the main themes of the poetry of Hughes and McKay to a lesser extent.</i></p>

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the 1950s and 1960s, police violence in the USA was a serious concern, particularly in connection with the struggle for civil rights. In order to thwart the socio-economic integration efforts of African-Americans, police forces were often called in to enforce segregationist laws and, if necessary, to crush demonstrators for equal rights with bloodshed.

On March 7, 1965, police, state troopers, and a citizen “posse” violently attacked civil rights marchers as they were attempting to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, United States. More than a dozens of marchers were hospitalized for injuries sustained on that day, later referred to as “Bloody Sunday” due to cruelty with which the pacific African-American activists were dealt with by those who are supposed to protect them.

Police misconduct during this period extended beyond protests. In many African-American communities, the use of the police as an oppressive

force tasked with perpetuating institutional racism was widespread.

In cities such as Birmingham and Selma in Alabama, or Jackson in Mississippi, as well in the industrial North city centers, where iconic racial leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr, Rosa Parks and other civil rights activists staged peaceful walks, sit-ins and boycotts to confront racial segregation, employment discrimination, voting rights and other forms of injustice, police resorted frequently to dogs, fire hoses and truncheons to disperse crowds and bully demonstrators.

Black Lives Matter (BLM) is an overnight movement that was pioneered in 2013 by three African-American activists, including Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza and Opal Tometi, in the wake of the not-guilty verdict pronounced in the case of George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watchman, who had shot and killed Trayvon Martin, an unarmed Black teenager. The events took place in Florida in 2012 with the vigilante's

acquittal sparking a wave of indignation in the United States and exposing the breadth and depth of racial tensions, inequalities and systematic injustices suffered by African-Americans in the country.

The purpose of this article is show that police excessive of use of violence against Black people is not something new in the United States and the hidden objective behind that violence is to slow the latter social ascension and economic progress.

We will first expose the case of Georges Floyd's assassination by the police in Minneapolis in 2020 and how it represented a turning point in the Black Lives Matter movement, giving it new impetus as it eventuality resonated across the globe. And then, we shall revisit part of the American history in an attempt to show cases of violence by police targeting African-Americans and we will finally highlight some of the poems by Hughes and McKay written in denunciation of the excessive and abusive use of violence their racial brethren both in the US and in Jamaica.

## II. GEORGES FLOYD'S DEATH: THE FINAL DROP

It was in the context of the passing of Georges Floyd, that three brave ladies created the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, which was taken up on social networks as a way of denouncing police brutality and racial discrimination against Black persons in the States. In just a few months, this movement has become a global symbol of the fight against racism and violence against people of color, particularly African-Americans. Seven years later, the movement for racial justice gained a fresh momentum in 2020 with large-scale protests staged across the country, this time in reaction to the death of George Floyd, a black man killed by a police officer in Minneapolis. The killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, was a turning point in the fight to do away with police violence and systemic racism among Black persons in the USA. Floyd, a 46-year-old African-American, succumbed to death at the hands of White police officers during a forceful arrest in which one of the officers, Derek Chauvin, knelt on his neck for ten minutes. This cruel

maneuver, videotaped by passers-by, showed the Black man in state of agony, pleading with the officers "I can't breathe", aroused an outcry not only in the United States, but around the world. This was followed by worldwide protests that reinvigorated the Black Lives Matter movement. Millions of people took to the streets to voice their outrage at racism and police violence against people of color.

The fate of African-Americans who fell under the bullets of White police officers did not leave Black writers and leaders unaffected.

"The Hill We Climb" by Amanda Gorman which highlights the need for resilience and unity in the face of injustice, incarnates to a large extent, the spirit of the Black Lives Matter movement and other struggles for equality and justice. It partly reads:

*We will not march back to what was but move to what shall be, a country that is bruised but whole, benevolent but bold, fierce and free, we will not be turned around or interrupted by intimidation because we know our inaction and inertia will be the inheritance of the next generation, our blunders become their burden. But one thing is certain: if we merge mercy with might and might with right, then love becomes our legacy and change our children's birthright<sup>1</sup>*

Here we've seen a call for action from Gorman. According to the poet, in spite of the unspeakable violence and brutality against African-Americans, Blacks, Whites, Yellows all alike, must join forces in order to help usher in a new era of justice and freedom. In her opinion, the US must be greater than what is depicted on TV every time a young Black man dies to police excessive use of violence.

## III. LONG HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

However, should we delve into the recent history of the United States, we would easily see that's the same old story, that the days of African-Americans have always been held cheap and numbered. In an article entitled "Black Lives Don't Matter" Joao Vargas indicates "*Evidence of poverty, unemployment, persistent residential segregation, exposure to environmental toxins, substandard schooling, disproportionate presence of children in the foster care system, police harassment, and imprisonment: these intersecting dynamics, while also*

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<sup>1</sup> Amanda Gorman, The Hill We Climb, Viking Books for Young Readers; 1st edition (30 March 2021)

*impacting vulnerable whites and non-Blacks, uniquely define the transgenerational social and physical death experience of Blacks. Police brutality is just one aspect of a constellation unendingly generating anti-Black forces”.*<sup>2</sup>

These decade-long police beatings and repression of equal rights organizations had a profound impact on American society, and are often seen as a starting point for ongoing efforts to root out systemic racism in policing.

In his capacity as a spokesperson of the Nation of Islam, and then as an independent activist, Malcolm X exposed the reality of police violence. Unlike leaders since as Martin Luther King Jr who rejected the tit-for-tat approach as a way to confront police violence, Malcolm X asserted that African-Americans had the right and duty, to fend off unjustified attacks, including from the police. One of his most famous slogans, “By any means necessary”, was a statement of his commitment to equality, even if it entailed meeting violence with violence to protect one's own self and others. In Malcolm X's view, non-violence in the face of this illegal crackdown was nothing short than a weakness, and he encouraged therefore a more aggressive stance. He outspokenly labelled the police as an instrument of White oppression, and harshly criticizes the justice system which he deemed overtly biased against Blacks.

Langston Hughes the African-American poet whose long writing career expanded from the 1920s to the late 1960s, was particularly preoccupied with the police violence exerted at his fellow Black brothers in northern urban centers. A great deal of his poems is an overt denunciation of the law enforcement agents' brutality on his racial brothers. The oppression of the police of the Blacks in Jamaica, was also a source of concern for the Harlem Renaissance poet Claude McKay.

#### IV. HUGHES AND MCKAY UP IN ARMS AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Black masses, who couldn't take it anymore, in the context

of the cruelty of lynching spree, the unfair sharecropping system, the senseless *Jim Crow* laws and all kinds of abuse of colored girls in the American South, decided to leave the South, thinking that they could only find respite in the North, where they hoped to secure a more humane and dignified existence.

Thus, many African-Americans turned their back to their meagre possessions, packed their bags and bought themselves a one-way ticket to the cities of the North or East, provided they could get away from the South, which had been inhumanly hostile to them. This is the phenomenon known as the *Great Migration*. The poem 'One-Way Ticket' by Hughes captures this reality most eloquently:

*I pick up my life  
And take it with me  
And put it down in  
Chicago, Detroit,  
Buffalo, Scranton,  
Any place that is  
North and East –  
And not Dixie  
...  
I am fed up  
With Jim Crow laws  
People who are cruel  
And afraid,  
Who lynch and run, (201)<sup>3</sup>*

This mass exodus brought millions of African-Americans from racist southern states to cities in the North and East, such as New York, Harlem, Chicago, Detroit, and elsewhere, in the hope of a more humane existence. Fleeing Dixie for these Black masses meant, in their minds, fleeing the racial injustice of which they were the victims. But once in the cities of the North and East, they were to experience disenchantment. Their dream of a decent life soon turned into a nightmare. Not only they had no prospects of decent employment, but they also

<sup>2</sup> Joao Vargas, “Black Lives Don’t Matter”, published in the website of Society For Cultural Anthropology <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/black-lives-dont-matter>

<sup>3</sup> Langston Hughes, *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, ed. Arnold Rampersad, Associate ed. David

Roessel, New York, Vintage Books, 1994 (References to Hughes' poems are to this edition and are indicated in brackets throughout the text.)

encountered exploitation and economic discrimination in these urban centers. What's more, they were prime targets for police violence and the psychological oppression of White mainstream society. The disillusionment of Black migrants from the South to the cities of the East and North finds one of its most eloquent expressions in Hughes' "Evenin' Air Blues", a poem in which a Dixie-born Black who had dreamed of a more humane life in the North, voices his disappointment at the cruelty of life awaiting Blacks in this part of the country. He is on the verge of losing his sanity because of the racial oppression he believed was behind him:

*Folks, I come up North  
Cause they told me de North was fine.  
I come up North  
Cause they told me de North was fine  
Been up here six months-  
I'm about to lose my mind. (225)*

Indeed, the cities in the North and East are not eager to accommodate Blacks, whom they consider inferior. The issue of "white racial superiority" resurfaced in this part of the country. It's no longer lynching and *Jim Crow* regulations that are used to enforce this alleged White superiority. It's rather the police who are called in to brutalize the Black masses into conceding their inferiority. The police, who are there to protect all American citizens, turn out to be a tool of Black oppression. In Hughes' view, there can be no doubt that the police in the North and East are the direct equivalent of the Ku Klux Klan in the South:

*They took me out  
To some lonesome place  
They said: "Do you believe  
In the great white race?"  
They hit me in the head  
And knocked me down.  
And then they kicked me  
On the ground. (252-253)*

Hughes' poignant tone has a certain universal dimension in that it also supports the thesis that imperialist powers have often used physical brutality to impose their false racial superiority, as Jemie points out: "The poem holds five hundred years of history in

*capsule, spotlighting the physical violence by which the West established and enforced the myth of its superiority over the rest of world". Thus, in the eyes of the African-American poet, the police appear as the embodiment, in urban centers, of the oppression of the Black community, of which he is the uncompromising defender. This is further evidenced by his piece "Third Degree", in which Hughes castigates the beating of an African-American man solely because of the color of his skin: "Hit me! Jab me!/Make me say I did it./Blood on my sport shirt/And my tan suede shoes (370)"*

In the process of beating the innocent victim into confessing to a crime he, undoubtedly didn't commit, the "law enforcers" are quick to kick him in his privates. This gesture is highly deliberate and noteworthy, as the White policemen seek to leave the black man impotent and unproductive. These blows, purposely aimed at the unfortunate black man's genitals, are intended to "nip in the bud" his potential offspring. According to Hughes, this is a cowardly and hypocritical attempt to exterminate the Black race from American soil. The poor victim is not unaware of this genocide:

*Three kicks between the legs  
That kill the kids  
I'd make tomorrow (371)*

In a further poem entitled 'Who But The Lord', Hughes again is up in arms against the police brutality of which his racial brothers are the victims. This time, in an effort to denounce these racist excesses, the poet highlights the helplessness of black folks in the face of White policemen. The poor black man, with no weapon to defend himself and no one to turn to for help, comes to the conclusion that only Providence can save him from the police:

*I looked and I saw  
That man they call the Law,  
He was coming  
Down the street at me!  
I had vision in my head  
Of being laid out cold and dead  
Or else murdered  
By the third degree.  
I said, O, Lord, if you can,  
Save me from that man!*

*Don't let him make a pulp out of me! (322)*

Unfortunately, the God to whom the poor victim pleads, is not forthcoming. Indeed, the poem suggests that He is totally insensitive to the plight of Blacks:

*But the Lord he was not quick.*

*The Law raised the living hell*

*Out of me! (322)*

As in Hughes' poems referred to above, McKay's work frequently castigates the police brutality of which Blacks, particularly those living in large urban centers, are the intended targets. In "The Apple-Woman's Complaint", the Jamaican poet rants against the use of the police to perpetuate the oppression of Blacks. This, too, is the complaint of the apple seller to whom McKay gives voice:

*Black nigger wukin' laka cow*

*An' wipin' sweat-drops from him brow,*

*Dough him is dyin' sake o' need,*

*P'lice an' dem headman boun' fe feed.*

...

*De headman fe de town police*

*Mind neber know a little peace,*

*'Cep' when him an' him heartless ban'*

*Had sufferin' nigger in dem han'*

...

*We hab fe barter-out we soul*

*To lib t'rough dis ungodly wul';-*

*O massa Jesus! don't you see*

*How police is oppressin' we?<sup>4</sup>*

The Jamaican apple-seller's attitude to police oppression is not altogether distinct from that of her racial brother in the United States of America, since they both call on Lord Providence for protection from the men who are supposed to keep everyone safe. McKay has hard time accepting the excessive and unjust use made by the all-White police of the power in their hands. He expresses this point of view elsewhere in the following terms:

*God gave you the power to build and help and lift;*

*But you proved prone to persecute and slay*

*He gave you law and order, strength of will*

*The lesser peoples of the world to lead;*

*You chose to break and crush them through life's mill  
(134-135)*

The problem of violence against Blacks has deep historical roots, and is closely a result of systemic racism and the social, economic and political exclusion of African-American communities.

As far back as the 18th and 19th centuries, "slave patrols" were organized groups recruited by slave owners to maintain order and subjugation of enslaved Blacks in the United States, through the enforcement of enslavement control laws.

While enslaved Blacks were relatively spared a certain type of violence because they benefited to some extent from the protection of their masters, who were careful to safeguard their physical integrity in order for them to be more productive, their situation was quite different in the wake of the abolition of slavery in 1865. Indeed, for the first time on American soil, newly freed Blacks were confronted with widespread violence during the Reconstruction period (1865-1877) and beyond, including lynching sprees and racially-motivated assaults, often with the connivance or disregard of the law enforcement agents.

The Black Codes (1877-1960) further institutionalized and "legitimized" segregation and inequality, and the police often played an active role in enforcing these racist systems.

## V. CONCLUSION

As we pointed out earlier in years of the Civil Rights Movements, law enforcement officers have often resorted to violence and brutality against peaceful activists. Scenes of police violence, such as the brutal beating of protesters in Selma, Alabama, were emblematic of State-sanctioned oppression.

Racial profiling, stop-and-frisk and other unjustified practices disproportionately target black Americans, resulting in abuse that ends in tragedy. Cases of police killings, such as Rodney King (1991), Michael Brown (2014), George Floyd (2020), Breonna Taylor (2020) and many others, have highlighted the excessive use

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<sup>4</sup> Claude McKay, Complete Poems ed, William J. Maxwell, Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 2004, (References to

McKay's poems are to this edition and are indicated in brackets throughout the text.)

of violence towards Black persons under the pretext of policing.

Studies consistently show that African-Americans are more likely than Whites to die to police violence even when they have no weapons or resistance.

While it's undeniable that advances have been seen in some areas, due in part to efforts and initiatives such as Black Lives Matter that have emerged in response to this violence by calling for accountability of perpetrators, genuine political reform and systemic change, police violence remains a burning issue and continues to be at the heart of activism, political debate and academic research.

The paper has examined police violence against African-Americans in the United States, tracing its historical roots to systemic racism and the post-slavery era while highlighting significant events, including the Civil Rights Movement and the emergence of the BLM movement, which denounces police brutality and systemic inequality.

However, it has a limitation, namely its inability provide a deeper analysis of the specific achievements and challenges of the Black Lives Matter movement due to a lack of resources and in-depth studies published on the matter.

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# Reclaiming Dignity: A Study on Transgender Experiences in *Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*

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Article Detail:	Abstract
<p>Received on: 21 Dec 2024</p> <p>Revised on: 18 Jan 2025</p> <p>Accepted on: 23 Jan 2025</p> <p>©2024 The Author(s). Published by International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/</a>).</p> <p><b>Keywords – Transgender, intersectionality, education, discrimination, struggles</b></p>	<p>Transgender people in India, often referred to as hijras, aravanis, or kothis, have a rich cultural history but face significant challenges in contemporary society. Despite their recognized presence in Indian culture and religion for centuries, they encounter widespread discrimination, marginalization, and violence. Most of the violences and prejudices transgender individuals are facing due to their gender identity and expression. These violations are compounded when intersecting with other social categories such as caste, class, ethnicity, and disability. They face substantial barriers in accessing education and employment. When it comes to educational settings, they experience bullying, harassment, and exclusion, leading to high dropout rates. The influences of these intersectional factors are evident in A. Revathi's <i>Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story</i>. Her autobiography depicts the life and struggles of the 'Third Sex' in Indian society. Revathi is an Indian transgender activist and a writer. She writes about the unspoken tales of the transgender lives and how they are socially stigmatized under the mainstream point of view. <i>Truth About Me</i> is one of the seminal works in literature which explores the complexities faced by transgender individuals in India. It discusses how the mainstream society mistreats and subjugates the transgender community within the constitution and law where all have the equal right to live regardless to sex, caste, gender, etc.</p>

## INTRODUCTION

Social stigmatization refers to the negative attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes that society holds against people based on their sexual behaviours, gender identity, or gender expression. Transgender people often face physical and sexual violence due to their gender identity and expression. This violence can come from family members, community members, or strangers. Many transgender individuals, particularly those who are visibly gender nonconforming are targets of hate crimes and physical assaults. Sexual

violence is prevalent with many transgender individuals experiencing sexual harassment and assault, often as a means of 'corrective' behaviour by those who wish to enforce traditional gender norms. A. Revathi had faced violence from her family members as well as from the government authorities. She

recalls,

...My middle brother was at home though. As soon as I stepped in, he shut the door, grabbed a cricket bat, and began hitting me, all the

while screaming, 'That'll teach you to go with those Number 9s. Let's see you wear a sari again, or dance, you motherfucking pottai!' He beat me hard mindlessly, yelling that he wanted to kill me, I who had dared to run away... (55)

This lines vividly illustrates the severe physical and emotional violence face by transgender people within their own families upon revealing their true gender identity. When Revathi returns home, her middle brother's response is not one of the understanding or acceptance but rather of hostility and aggression. The act of grabbing a cricket bat and physically assaulting her underscores the fear, anger, and confusion that family members might experience when confronted with a transgender identity, which they may perceive as a deviation from societal norms. Revathi's existence is cursed by her upbringing in her household, driving her to leave home in pursuit of like-minded individuals. Her primary source of sad reality was her own home, which turned out to be fatal rather than the society around her. For a *hijra*, who are frequently mistreated due to their sexual orientation, family acceptance is crucial, since it appears to be the sole source of genuine support in their lives (Kumar, et al 2022). A similar encounter can be seen in Living Smile Vidya, Laxmi Narayan Tripathi and other well-known transgender right activists' narratives.

### 1.1 Revathi's Life: An Intersectional Perspective

A. Revathi provides a comparable narrative of the gender-based abuse and persecution experienced by the community in her autobiography, *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*.

"But boys at school, as well as men and women who saw me outside the house, would call out 'Hey, Number 9!', 'female thing', and 'female boy'. Some even teased me, saying, 'Aren't you a boy? Why do you walk like a girl? Why do you wear girl's clothes?' I understood that I was indeed like that. In fact, I wanted to be so" (Revathi 4). In Revathi's life, intersectionality helps to explore how her experiences are shaped by the overlapping and interdependent systems of oppression and discrimination she faces as a transgender individual. Revathi's experiences with discrimination and self-acceptance are fundamentally shaped by her gender identity and expression. Because she dresses and walks in ways that frequently

coincide with girls, she gets teased and harassed, which serves as a reminder of the rigid gender binary and societal standards that penalize nonconformity. Her acceptance of who she really is in spite of social pressure highlights the individual battle for acceptance and recognition of one's gender identity. The demeaning terms and mockery, such as "Number 9," "female thing," and "female boy," highlight Revathi's experience with transphobia and social stigma. By dehumanizing and marginalizing her, these labels highlight how cultural beliefs support prejudice against transgender people. Understanding how these societal attitudes interact with other aspects of identity to heighten the prejudice she experiences is made easier with the aid of intersectionality. Being a young person at school, Revathi faces age-specific bullying and discrimination. The mockery from boys at school points to how children and adolescents can be particularly harsh in enforcing gender norms.

"I wondered why God had chosen to inflict this peculiar torture on me, and why He could not have created me wholly male or wholly female. Why am I a flawed being, I wondered often" (Revathi 15). These lines poignantly capture A. Revathi's profound uncertainty about her gender identity and reflect the intersectional realities of her experience. Revathi's question regarding why God subjected her to this "peculiar torture" exposes her intense internal turmoil and self-doubt about her gender identity. This shows how difficult it is for her to balance her sense of self with gender standards and expectations from society. The feeling of being a "flawed being" indicates internalized transphobia, where societal prejudices and negative attitudes towards transgender individuals are absorbed and directed inward. This internalization is a direct result of intersecting forms of oppression and discrimination. The reference to being "wholly male or wholly female" underscores the rigid binary gender norms that dominate society. Revathi's experience highlights the difficulty of living in a world that largely recognizes only two genders, leading her to question her own legitimacy and worth as a person who does not fit neatly into these categories. The problem faced by transgender people who are stigmatized as abnormal and outcasted from mainstream is depicted in the narrative. As a trans woman and a member of the hijra community, Revathi has experienced trauma and exploitation. Through her

narrative, she hopes to change perceptions of her community and draw attention to the importance of transgender rights. Her questioning of why God made her this way reveals the intersection between her personal beliefs and her gender identity. This intersection complicates her experience, as it involves reconciling deeply held beliefs with her lived reality. Her experience illustrates the challenge of navigating multiple identities including gender, cultural, and religious ones, which can overlap and make one feel insecure and selfconscious.

“Girls of my age, in flowing silk skirts and half-saris, their oiled hair braided elegantly and adorned with flowers, carried these rice-flour lamps. I was envious and wished that I too could somehow be part of that procession” (Revathi 11). In this line, we can analyse the gender norms that dictate specific roles, behaviours, and appearances for boys and girls. Her desire to be part of the procession reflects her internal identification with these feminine norms and her struggle against the expectations imposed on her as a boy. Revathi shows how deeply ingrained these gender standards by expressing her enthusiasm for the girls’ looks and her desire to participate in the procession. She judges her identity and worth against conventional norms of femininity even if she is aware of who she really is; this is an internalized effect of society gender expectations. The traditional attire and roles described in the passage have cultural significance, reinforcing the importance of gender roles within the community. Revathi’s exclusion from these roles illustrates how cultural practices can perpetuate gender binaries and marginalize those who do not conform. Intersectionality allows for a deeper understanding of how cultural and gender identities intersect and affect individual experiences. By analysing this through the lens of intersectionality, we can see how cultural, social, and psychological factors combine to the need for broader acceptance and inclusion of diverse gender identities in cultural and social practices.

### 1.2 Education as Liberation: The Role of Learning in A. Revathi’s Life

Revathi dropped school in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, because she was fed up being teased and not doing well in English subject. Revathi’s wish to become a woman was realized when she had the operation, but she continued to be open to society taking advantage of

the hijra community. Due to her lack of education, economic independence, and support from her family, Revathi was forced to turn to sex work and beg in order to survive, which left her open to verbal, physical, and sexual assault. “Sometimes, I wondered if I should continue to do sex work at all. But what else was I to do? I had no choice but to suffer it. I had to get used to living thus, not knowing what the day bring or what the morrow held for me” (Revathi 210). This line reflects the intersection of socio-economic constraints, lack of educational opportunities, and systemic marginalization. Analysing this through the lens of critical pedagogy reveals the broader societal forces that shape Revathi’s life choices and the limitations imposed on her. Systemic obstacles that restrict Revathi’s options are reflected in her withdrawal from sex trade. Investigating the obstacles that keep underrepresented people from obtaining good education and career possibilities, such as discrimination, a lack of supportive policies, and social stigma. Revathi’s narrative can be seen as a form of consciousness-raising, bringing attention to the harsh realities faced by transgender individuals. This awareness is the first step towards advocating for social change and inclusive policies.

My father did not know that I did sex work to earn the money that I sent him. I would tell my parents that I danced, that I did small comedy roles in films, that I posed for advertisements, as if I was asking for ice-cream... In the end, I never had much money. (Revathi 213-214)

It is analysed that Revathi’s lack of access to quality education underscores the barriers that marginalized individuals face. Education is often inaccessible or inadequate for transgender people, preventing from acquiring the skills and qualifications needed for more stable and respected employment. The necessity to engage in sex work to support her day-today life indicates severe socio-economic constraints. Proper education often provides a pathway to better job opportunities and financial stability, which was not available to Revathi. Despite her efforts, Revathi ends up with little money, highlighting the economic exploitation inherent in sex work. Her lack of education and career options puts her in a vulnerable and exploitative position where the risks and labour involved outweigh the potential

financial rewards. The need to lie to her parents and the constant financial struggle take a psychological and emotional toll on Revathi. Critical pedagogy emphasizes the importance of addressing the holistic needs of individuals, including their emotional well-being, which is often compromised by such precarious occupations. Revathi chose to relocate to Bengaluru in pursuit of employment, where she connected with the non-governmental organization Sangama, which promoted the rights of sexual minorities. She attended the NGO-organized activist meetings, where she learned about the significance of transgender rights and how they are necessary for the advancement of their social standing.

... I learnt a lot from the seniors in Sangama about sexual minorities, and about the minorities in general; about violations against Dalits and Adivasis; Hindu-Muslim differences and conflicts; the effects of wars waged by the large nations...I learnt of these matters in workshops, where they taught us in a manner that helped us understand, I was beginning to understand. I was beginning to understand what works was all about. (Revathi 242)

Through her story, Revathi shows how Sangama's educational initiatives assisted her in understanding the intricacies of societal injustices and the connections between different types of oppression. Revathi developed a comprehensive grasp of intersectionality through studying about sexual minorities, caste-based prejudice against Dalits and Adivasis, religious disputes, and the effects of war on a global scale. Understanding how various facets of identity and social positioning interact to produce distinct experiences of privilege and discrimination requires this insight. This educational approach aligns with the principles of critical pedagogy, which emphasizes active learning and critical engagement with social issues. The manner in which these workshops were conducted encouraging comprehension and reflection allowed Revathi to internalize the lessons and apply them to her own life and activism. Understanding the broader social and political contexts of marginalization helped her articulate her experiences and fight for her rights more effectively. This empowerment is a crucial aspect of educational pathways for marginalized individuals,

enabling them to challenge oppressive structures and seek social justice.

...I felt that it was wrong to be a hijra, and to do sex work. However, working in Sangama I was beginning to realize that none of it was my fault- the way the world perceived me and refused to accept me, ...The realization increased my desire to work for the rights of those in my community who had faced as much or more violence and difficulties than me. (Revathi 244)

Revathi recounts a pivotal moment in her life when she started to see herself and her place in society differently. Revathi's personal and activist path was greatly impacted by her realization of the larger disparities in society and rights of hijras, which she began to grasp through her activist journey with the NGO Sangama. By analysing these lines, there get an understanding that Revathi first battled internalized stigma related to being a hijra and doing sex work. She came to feel that her identity and work were intrinsically flawed as a result of society's unfavourable opinion and rejection. But her relationship with Sangama enabled her to confront and disprove these ingrained notions. As Revathi gained knowledge about the social constructions surrounding gender and sexuality and the systemic nature of discrimination, she started to realize that prejudices in society were to blame rather than her own shortcomings. Through Sangama, Revathi connected with others who shared similar experiences of violence, discrimination, and marginalization. This sense of solidarity was instrumental in her realization. Understanding that she was not alone, and that many others faced even greater challenges, galvanized her desire to work for the rights of her community. It shifted her perspective from one of individual struggle to collective advocacy. The support and education provided by Sangama exemplify how community-based organizations can play a crucial role in empowering individuals and fostering broader social change.

Sometimes I felt a glow of pride. I had wanted to study, get a degree and go to work, like other people. Of course, none of that happened.... There were so many things that I could be proud of, but I felt that this was about more than an individual hijra's success

it was a matter of pride for all hijras. (Revathi 246)

Sangama played a crucial role in Revathi's educational empowerment. Sangama is essential to her success in her schooling. The organization offered a forum for learning about the problems and rights of other oppressed groups, including hijras. This education was firmly grounded on activism and real-world experiences rather than purely academic. Through seminars, conversations, and encounters with other community members and activists, Revathi was able to develop a sophisticated grasp of human rights and social justice. It is analysed that, Revathi's narrative reflects on her non-traditional educational journey and the significant role that Sangama, played in her personal and professional development. Unlike the conventional academic route, she once aspired to, her education came from real-world experiences, activism, and community engagement. This analysis explores how her educational pathway through Sangama differs from traditional academic education and highlights its profound impact on her life. This pathway allowed her to gain practical knowledge and skills that were directly relevant to her work and personal growth. This exceptional educational opportunity underlines the value of community-based learning and the transformational power of education in empowering marginalized people and promoting social change. Revathi's narrative proves how education may influence individuals' lives and advance larger societal movements.

## CONCLUSION

Through her autobiography, A. Revathi challenges the binary classification of sex, gender, and sexuality in contemporary society. The narrative sheds light on the difficulties faced by the hijra group. The author condemns the approaches used by the school, and family, among other societal institutions, to uphold the status order. Transgender people are pushed to the periphery of society because they defy the dominant norms of heterosexuality, femininity, and masculinity. The hijra community faces violence, humiliation, and discrimination in their daily lives as a result of their marginalized status. Through their involvement with organizations like Sangama and other NGOs, Revathi was exposed to a different kind

of education that empowered them to challenge societal norms and advocate for their rights. Revathi's realization that her identity as a hijra was not at fault, but rather the world's perception of her, was a transformative moment facilitated by the critical pedagogy practiced at Sangama. These educational pathways were crucial in their personal development and activism. They allowed Revathi to move from positions of marginalization to becoming vocal advocates for transgender rights. Her work in conducting workshops, engaging with educational institutions, and challenging systemic injustices exemplifies the impact of critical pedagogy. It highlights how education can be a tool for empowerment and social change, particularly for marginalized communities. A. Revathi's autobiography offers insightful perspectives on the complex dynamics of discrimination and the role of education plays in promoting social justice and empowerment. Through embracing critical pedagogy and navigating their intersecting identities, Revathi not only changed her personal life but also made a major contribution to the larger Indian transgender rights movement. Her story serves as a testament to the transformative potential of education rooted in critical awareness and social justice. In April 15, 2014, the Supreme Court of India granted official recognition to hijras as "third gender", to be situated under the OBC category of reservations in educational institutions and workplaces. At one level, this verdict was lauded for its progressive approach to gender identity. The judgement by providing reservation to *hijras* under the OBC category would improve employment opportunities for their community, if it is rightfully exercised by the potential workplaces. However, objections against the court judgement were raised by the members of the larger transgender community that includes trans men and trans women who do not identify as hijra, as they feared being clubbed under the umbrella of "third gender". Moreover, the court did not specify on what basis, the government shall identify hijras, making the process liable to misuse. Further, the Supreme Court judgement erased the caste privileges of *savarna* (upper caste) hijras which was objected by the Dalit (lower caste) hijras (Bose 132133). Thus, attitudes regarding the *Hijra* population have gradually changed in India in the modern day. The

autobiography of A. Revathi provides a rich foundation for further research in several key areas. These areas can offer deeper insights into the complex interplay of gender, caste, education, and activism in shaping the lives of transgender communities in India. Some avenues for further study are; Further research could explore the subtle experiences of transgender individuals across different caste backgrounds. A comparative analysis of the intersectional realities faced by transgender individuals in various regions and communities of India would shed light on how caste and gender intersect to create unique challenges and opportunities. While Revathi's experiences focused on the transformative potential of education, more detailed studies could examine the specific educational policies and practices that facilitate or hinder the empowerment of transgender communities. The studies of transgender experiences in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Nepal could offer a deeper understanding of the regional dynamics of gender identity and expression given the cultural and historical commonalities in South Asia. Additionally, this could draw attention to international best practices and inclusion and advocacy strategies. An in-depth examination of the economic opportunities available to transgender individuals could identify obstacles and facilitators to their financial independence. Analyses of employment laws, programs for vocational training, and business ventures that assist transgender people in sustaining their livelihoods could include. Even though there are more transgender autobiographies, they are written in their regional language. I aim to explore the translated version of this autobiography as my core subject is English.

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# Intertextuality and Dialogism in Narayan Surve's *Karl Marx*: A Marxist Perspective

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<p>Received on: 18 Jan 2025 Revised on: 15 Feb 2025 Accepted on: 19 Feb 2025</p> <p>©2025 The Author(s). Published by International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/</a>).</p> <p><b>Keywords – Intertextuality, Marxism, Localisation, Dialogism &amp; Voice of Protest.</b></p>	<p><i>Julia Kristeva's concept of Intertextuality signifies the relations of texts through their references of ideas, wording and ideological resonances. This paper investigates the intertextual dimensions of Narayan Surve's poem Karl Marx, presenting how it integrates ideological, historical, cultural, and literary elements within the idea of class struggle. Through Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism theory and Marxist literary criticism, the study highlights how the poet Surve builds dialogue between past and present, representing the Marxist ideas in contemporary labour movements. The localisation of Karl Marx through oral traditions and cultural references shows how intertextuality functions as a vehicle for ideological and political solidarity. The poet Narayan Surve's depiction of Marx as an active presence breaks the linearity of historical texts, representing class consciousness through poetic expression. Additionally, the poem's reference to Goethe further embroils the relationship between art and revolution, signifying the role of literature in designing proletarian agency. By analysing these intertextual strategies, this paper argues that the poem Karl Marx exemplifies how poetry can be a medium for ideological resistance, linking historical materialism with lived experience.</i></p>

## I. INTRODUCTION

Intertextuality is a concept familiarised by Julia Kristeva in the late 1960s in her book *Word, Dialogue and Novel*. Intertextuality signifies a text's connection to another, shaping the meaning through their relations, as Alfaro (1996) rightly pointed with the tune of Kristeva that "the text as a dynamic site in which relational process and practices are the focus of analysis instead of static structure and products" (268). In addition to Bakhtin's dialogism concept, Kristeva (1980) argued that all texts breathe within a network of connection or relations, influenced by

previous texts and contributing to the making of future texts. This idea or perspective challenges the notion of a text as a self-centred entity, instead accentuating its position within a broader cultural, ideological and literary framework. Roland Barthes (1977) further extended this idea, adding that "the text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (p. 146). This interpretation transforms the author's intention to the reader's interpretation and creative level, in which meaning is created through the intertextual connection. As a result, reading becomes an act of

refiguring and rewriting the relation of texts to others.

Intertextuality is exhibited at various levels, from explicit citations, alliteration, simile, metaphor, and allusions to more subtle references through cultural, political, and ideological connections. For instance, James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) reinterprets Homer's *Odyssey*, creating new meanings through modernist presentations (Eagleton, 1996). Similarly, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) demonstrates a collage of intertextual fragments through classical, religious, and literary sources to present the flavour of modernity (Culler, 2001). Postmodern theorist Linda Hutcheon (1988) presents intertextuality's role in parody and pastiche, where texts are associated with previous texts through irony and critique. This is evident in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), which relooks Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) from a postcolonial point of view, stimulating its Eurocentric and patriarchal dominance (Spivak, 1985). Similarly, Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad* (2005) contextualise *The Odyssey* by centring Penelope and the twelve maids, re-looking the male-centric portrayal. Despite its critical importance, some researchers argue that intertextuality can remove the originality of the text and just present it as a mere recombination of preexisting essence (Genette, 1997). However, this idea overlooks the creative and authentic transformation embedded in intertextual practices. As Harold Bloom (1973) posits in *The Anxiety of Influence*, original writers engage in a dialectical struggle with their literary predecessors, reconsidering influences to assert their authenticity and originality in the text.

An excellent example of intertextuality within Indian literature is Narayan Surve's *Karl Marx*, translated by Mustansir Dalvi, which merges historical, cultural, ideological, and literary elements into a prominent experience of class struggle. The poem presents Marx not as a distant theorist or a writer but as an active presence in workers' movements, strengthening the continued relevance of his idea of class. Through the character of Janakiakka, Marx's legacy is introduced in colloquial terms, localising his influence. The poem humorously depicts Marx's flawless discussions, reinforcing his role and involvement in shaping revolutionary thought. The climactic declaration- "Now, we are the protagonists of history",-echoes

Marxist ideology, affirming the position of the working class. The closing allusion to Goethe demonstrates the intersection of poetry and political thought, signifying the poet's role in accentuating the revolutionary spirit. Surve bridges the gap between past and present, theory and action through these intertextual elements, rendering Marx a comrade in struggles rather than just a distant historical theorist.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research paper employs a Marxist literary theory, incorporating intertextuality and Bakhtinian dialogism to interpret Surve's poem. Bakhtin's concept of dialogism discloses that texts connect in constant conversation with other texts, designing and shaping their meanings through intertextual relations. Kristeva's theory of intertextuality further supports this opinion, putting forward that meaning is created through the interaction of texts by the reader rather than authorial intention. Additionally, Marxist literary criticism, particularly Althusser's ideology concept and Gramsci's theory of organic intellectuals, analyse how *Karl Marx* integrates revolutionary thought within a poetic structure. By examining how Surve recontextualises Marxist ideas within an Indian labour movement, the paper presents the ideological function of intertextuality in literary discourse.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative textual analysis approach to analyse Surve's *Karl Marx* through a Marxist and intertextual lens. Primary textual analysis examines how the poem references cultural, ideological, historical, and literary sources, identifying intertextual strategies reinforcing class struggle. Secondary sources, like Kristeva's intertextuality and Bakhtinian dialogism, provide a critical framework to understand the poem's ideological function. This methodological approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of intertextuality as a tool for ideological critique in literature.

## IV. ANALYSIS

Intertextuality signifies how texts exist in a network of references, reshaping and redesigning meaning

through interactions with past narratives. Within a Marxist theory, intertextuality is a tool to disclose ideological structures and reveal the continuity of class struggle (Eagleton, 1996). Surve's *Karl Marx* demonstrates this phenomenon by adding Marx's legacy to the contemporary labour protest, presenting the persistence of class conflict as outlined in *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx & Engels, 1848). Thus, the poem highlights personal experience with history, blending reality and ideology through intertextual references to Karl Marx and his philosophy.

Surve's poem does not only present Karl Marx as a mere theorist but as embodied in labour workers' struggles. The opening lines- "*Here is how I met Marx / during my very first strike*", signify the immediate collapse of temporal distance, making Marx an active participant in the movement rather than a historical figure and theorist. This shows the Marxist concept of historical materialism, where economic situations determine social structures (Marx, 1867). The speaker's phrase "first strike" awakens class consciousness, a crucial step in Marxist revolutionary praxis (Lukács, 1923).

The poem incorporates an oral storytelling tradition through the character of Janakiakka (a working-class woman), who introduces Marx in a manner that blends historical fact with the local idiom: "*D'you know him? / This here, is our own Markusbaba / born in Germany, / wrote sacksful of books / then met his end in England.*" By referring to Marx as *Markusbaba* (a term of reverence in Indian culture), the poet Surve indigenes his ideas, presenting how Marxist thought crosses geographical and cultural barriers. This localisation of Marx resembles Gramsci's (1971) theory of organic intellectuals-working-class thinkers who reinterpret revolutionary theory within their socio-political context. Blending historical reality (Marx's life and death) with familiar, colloquial storytelling reflects how ideas surpass time and place.

Throughout the poem, Surve highlights Marx as a dynamic figure and active participant in the contemporary struggle movement, strengthening intertextuality through conversations and engaging in dialogue. During a workers' protest, the poet describes Marx as interrupting his speech, which is evident in the lines: "*Marx pushed his way forward / and*

*said: I'll tell you / then shot his mouth off, going on and on.*" These lines employ humour to present Marx as an assertive and ever-relevant thinker. The interference shows the inescapable presence of class struggle, echoing Althusser's (1971) notion of ideology as an omnipresent force shaping consciousness. Further, the phrase "*shot his mouth off*" humorously humanises Marx, suggesting that his ideas remain forceful, urgent, relevant and directly applicable to contemporary issues.

In another instance, Marx reappears at a picket line, where the poet Surve declares: "*Now, we are the protagonists of history / and the subject of all accounts that will be written.*" By approving this statement, Marx affirms the poet's role in moulding history. This directly engages with Marx's assertion in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *Das Kapital* (1867), accentuating the proletariat as a driving force. By placing the proletariat workers at the centre of history, Surve reaffirms the agency of the proletariat, confronting the bourgeois historiography that traditionally marginalises labour movements (Thompson, 1963). Surve thus reinforces Marxist thought by presenting it as an ongoing, lived struggle rather than just a theory.

The poem concludes with an unexpected literary reference: "*Man, you do write poetry, d'you not? / Good, Good! / Y'know, I used to like Goethe. / Once.*" This intertextual reference to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, a literary personality of German Romanticism. Marx's reference to Goethe invokes the intersection of art and revolution. Goethe, often associated with Romanticism, contrasts with Marx's materialist philosophy, yet his works critique feudal structures, showing early revolutionary sentiments. This moment signals the importance of cultural production in class struggle, aligning with Marxist aesthetics as discussed by Benjamin (1936), who argued that art should serve political consciousness. Marx's admiration for Goethe shows that revolutionary thought and poetic sensibility coexist, repositioning that ideological struggles are not devoid of artistic expression. Surve, a poet himself, aligns with this idea and reinforces that poetry and activism can intersect.

## V. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings reveal that intertextuality in the poem operates through multiple dimensions. The poet Surve presents Marx as a living presence, actively engaging with workers' protest. The speaker's reference to meeting Marx during his "first strike" collapses temporal distance, aligning with Marx's theory that economic structures mould class consciousness. Through the figure of Janakiakka, Marx is introduced in a colloquial and culturally embedded manner. The term "Markusbaba" indigenises Marxist thought, making it accessible to the Indian working class. This aligns with Gramsci's notion of organic intellectuals, who adapt revolutionary theories to their socio-political contexts.

Further, Surve's poetic dialogue with Marxist philosophy demonstrates intertextuality's role in representing revolutionary discourse. The poem's declaration-"Now, we are the protagonists of history", accentuates the working class's role in moulding historical narratives. This assertion echoes *The Communist Manifesto*, where Marx and Engels position the proletariat people as the driving force of historical transformation. Additionally, the reference to Goethe integrates literary tradition with revolutionary ideas and thoughts. Marx's engagement with Goethe shows that art and ideology are intertwined, refiguring Benjamin's argument that cultural production should serve political consciousness in society. These findings show how Surve's *Karl Marx* employs the technique of intertextuality not merely as a literary device but as a means of ideological intervention, transforming historical figures into active participants in contemporary protest movements.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Surve's *Karl Marx* is a deeply intertextual poem that weaves historical, ideological, and literary elements into a personal narrative. By localising Marx through oral tradition, depicting him as an ever-present figure, and engaging with historical materialism, the poet Surve creates a literary dialogue that bridges the gap between the past and present. The reference to Goethe further strengthens the poem's intertextual framework, which bridges history, labour

movements, and poetry. Through this technique, Surve transforms Marx from a distant theorist into a comrade in the fight for justice, making his ideas accessible to the proletariat class. Therefore, the poem exemplifies how Marxist intertextuality is a tool for ideological critique and proletarian solidarity.

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# Revisiting the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

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Article Detail:	Abstract
<p>Received on: 18 Dec 2024</p> <p>Revised on: 25 Jan 2025</p> <p>Accepted on: 30 Jan 2025</p> <p>©2025 The Author(s). Published by International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL). This is an open access article under the <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">CC BY license</a> (<a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/</a>).</p> <p><b>Keywords – EFL anxiety, silence, motivation.</b></p>	<p><i>This paper critically examines the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), a widely used tool for assessing foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA). Despite its significance in understanding the emotional challenges of language learners, the FLCAS has several limitations. These include unclear definitions of its core constructs, reliance on self-reported data, and a lack of focus on positive emotions. Additionally, the scale's cultural biases and inability to capture the dynamic nature of anxiety over time undermine its applicability in diverse educational settings. The paper argues for improvements in the FLCAS, such as incorporating behavioral observations, physiological measures, and positive emotional states like motivation. It also calls for longitudinal studies to better capture how anxiety fluctuates throughout the language-learning process. By addressing these shortcomings, future research can enhance the effectiveness of FLCA assessments, ultimately supporting more effective language acquisition strategies.</i></p>

## I. INTRODUCTION

Anxiety within the context of foreign learning (L2) has been a significant area of focus in research, with much focus on its negative impact on the learning process. Anxiety has been considered a crucial factor influencing L2 acquisition and has been extensively examined in the literature (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015; Horwitz, 1990; MacIntyre, 1999). In particular, foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) has attracted considerable attention (Horwitz, 2010). Foreign language anxiety is a unique blend of emotional responses and behavioral reactions that arise within the specific context of language learning in the classroom (Horwitz et al., 1986).

For the assessment of FLCA, Horwitz et al. (1986) developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to evaluate three types of anxiety related to language learning: 1) communication apprehension, 2) test anxiety, and 3) a fear of negative evaluation. The FLCAS consists of a 33-item questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale (see Appendix 1), and since its introduction in 1986, it has become a widely used instrument in research. It has been adapted in various ways and translated into multiple languages, including Japanese (Yashima et al., 2009) and Thai (Tanielian, 2014). The FLCAS has facilitated in the comparison of studies that focus on FLCA (MacIntyre, 2017).

While the FLCAS has been widely used to explore FLCA, it is not without its criticisms. Issues such as

the unclear definition of the scale's core constructs, flaws in factor analysis, cultural biases, and a lack of focus on positive emotions limit its ability to fully capture the complexity of FLCA. Additionally, the scale's reliance on participant-reported data and its limited temporal scope fails to provide a comprehensive understanding of how anxiety fluctuates and affects learners over time. This paper aims to 1) critically evaluate the FLCAS and 2) offer ways to improve its applicability and accuracy in measuring FLCA across educational contexts.

## II. FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY

Communication apprehension, test anxiety, and a fear of receiving negative evaluations are the main forms of anxiety that language learners encounter in the classroom (Horwitz et al., 1986). Communication apprehension is the uneasiness when speaking with others. Being shy and a dread of talking to people in a foreign language are frequently associated with this anxiety. This kind of anxiety includes both the oral and aural components of language learning and is particularly relevant during discourse (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Test anxiety is the fear of failing language tests. Students who suffer from test anxiety may experience a great deal of stress and anxiety in foreign language programs because of tests and assessments. Their anxiety is exacerbated by their dread of performing poorly. Test anxiety can prevent pupils from demonstrating their genuine language skills (Horwitz et al., 1986).

The fear of negative evaluation stems from concerns about being criticized or judged negatively (Horwitz et al., 1986). This anxiety relates to how learners perceive others' judgments, both in formal assessments and informal interactions. It is prominent in verbal situations where the worry about receiving criticism or negative judgment may be prominent.

## III. METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS

Although the FLCAS has been widely used in various contexts (see Aida 1994; Arnaiz and Guillen 2012; Dewaele 2013; Kitano 2001; Liu and Jackson

2008; Park and French 2013), it has faced criticism. A key issue is the lack of clarity in how the scale's core constructs are defined. According to Park (2014), the FLCAS did not clearly indicate which of the 33 items were associated with communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. This has led to difficulties in analyzing the data and has resulted in the incorrect application of its findings (Park, 2014). According to Park (2014), the use of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to validate the data is another concern. EFA is commonly used to identify anxiety factors, but this technique may be subjective. Park (2014) recommends using other methods, such as oblique rotation to understand the reasons behind FLCA.

## IV. CULTURAL BIAS

Cultural and contextual biases may limit the FLCAS's applicability. Originally developed for American students (Horwitz, 2016), the scale may not fully account for the varied anxiety experiences of learners from different cultural or educational backgrounds. Language learning anxiety is influenced by cultural factors (Mendoza and Thian, 2023), such as educational practices and societal attitudes toward foreign languages (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991). Therefore, the FLCAS may struggle to capture the emotional experiences of learners in different contexts.

## V. LACK OF FOCUS ON POSITIVE EMOTIONS

The FLCAS has been subject to critique for its exclusive lack of focus on positive emotions. This singular focus on adverse emotions neglects the positive emotional dimensions that can substantially impact language acquisition. Positive emotions like excitement are integral to the language learning process and should be incorporated into any thorough evaluation of FLCA (Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014; Dörnyei, 2005). By ignoring positive emotions and feelings, the FLCAS may present an inaccurate representation of the emotional experiences of learners.

## VI. LACK OF SPECIFICITY

The FLCAS's lack of specificity stems from the fact that it measures anxiety using general constructs. The three factors— communication apprehension, test anxiety, and a fear of negative evaluation—are useful, but they are still not entirely clear and do not take into consideration more context-specific forms of anxiety that students may encounter in the classroom. For instance, the FLCAS does not take into consideration anxiety resulting from certain classroom variables or anxiety associated with particular language skills. Its applicability is further limited by the fact that elements such as personality or learning preferences may influence FLCA (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991).

## VII. RELIANT ON PARTICIPANT-REPORTED DATA

The FLCAS's dependence on participant-reported data is another drawback. The FLCAS relies on respondents' capacity for self-assessment, a procedure that is susceptible to biases or inaccurate self-perception. As is typical in Asian nations, learners may either exaggerate their concern to garner sympathy or minimize it to seem more assured (Aida, 1994; Hammond, 2007). Complementary techniques like in-class observations might provide a better depiction of FLCA.

## VIII. TEMPORAL SCOPE

The FLCAS also has a limited temporal scope. It is a scale that measures learners' anxiety during the data collection process. However, language learning, including anxiety, is a dynamic and fluctuating process that can change as learners advance in their language learning (Norton & Toohey, 2011). The FLCAS does not take into consideration other numerous variables present in the classroom that can cause anxiety levels to shift during the learning process.

## IX. SUGGESTIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the comprehensive review of the FLCAS, this paper offers several suggestions for future research that could address existing gaps and

improve the measurement of FLCA. Future research could focus on developing a more comprehensive instrument that captures a wider range of anxiety-related experiences, including more context-specific forms of anxiety. This could involve incorporating items that account for language skills, such as speaking anxiety versus writing anxiety, or classroom variables such as classroom size and teaching methods, which may influence learners' anxiety levels. Additionally, future research should explore how positive emotions, such as excitement contribute to the language learning process since the current FLCAS primarily focuses on negative emotions. Developing a more balanced tool that evaluates both negative and positive emotions could provide a more accurate and holistic view of learners' emotional experiences in the classroom. Longitudinal studies may also reveal new insights into how FLCA evolves over time as learners progress in their language acquisition, allowing researchers to capture fluctuations in anxiety levels and identify factors that contribute to changes in anxiety throughout the language learning journey, thus offering a more dynamic understanding of FLCA.

Since the FLCAS was originally developed in the context of American education, it may not fully apply to learners from different cultural or educational backgrounds. Future research could explore how FLCA manifests in diverse cultural settings, examining whether cultural factors such as societal attitudes toward foreign languages, educational practices, and the social environment influence anxiety levels differently across cultures. Comparative studies between cultures could reveal new dimensions of FLCA, while research focused on validating and adapting the FLCAS in non-Western contexts, particularly in countries with different social, pedagogical, and cultural practices toward language learning, could expand its applicability. Additionally, given the limitations of participant-reported data, future studies should consider using mixed-methods approaches, combining quantitative scales like the FLCAS with qualitative methods such as interviews and classroom observations. This approach would provide a richer, more nuanced understanding of the complexities of FLCA and allow researchers to triangulate findings, reducing

bias from social desirability or inaccuracies in participant self-reporting.

## X. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the FLCAS has made significant contributions to the study of FLCA by providing a standardized instrument for measuring anxiety in foreign language classrooms. Its focus on communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation has helped to identify the emotional challenges faced by learners in the language learning process. However, the scale's lack of clarity in defining its core constructs, overuse of participant-reported data, and its limitation in analyzing anxiety over time undermine its effectiveness in offering a comprehensive understanding of FLCA. Furthermore, cultural biases, its lack of focus on positive emotions, and the broad nature of its anxiety constructs may limit its applicability across diverse educational contexts.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

(Horwitz et al., 1986)

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.  
*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.  
*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.  
*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.  
*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.  
*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*

6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.  
*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.  
*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*
8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.  
*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.  
*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.  
*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.  
*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*
12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.  
*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.  
*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*
14. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.  
*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.  
*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree*
16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

17. I often feel like not going to my language class.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

18. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

26. I feel more tense and nervous in language class than in my other classes.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared

in advance.

*Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree  
Disagree Strongly Disagree*

# Striving in the Globalized World: A Study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*

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Article Detail:	Abstract
<p>Received on: 25 Dec 2024 Revised on: 28 Jan 2025 Accepted on: 10 Feb 2025</p> <p>©2025 The Author(s). Published by International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/</a>).</p> <p><b>Keywords— migration space, globalization, intelligence, society</b></p>	<p><i>Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Americanah (2013) x-rays a complex world driven by advanced technology to the continuous undoing of borders and complexly, for the benefit and disadvantage of humanity. Low cost transportation and communication processes increasingly intensify migration processes from the global south into the global northern geographies of The United States of America (USA) and Britain. This paper respectively builds on these unrestricted movements, mainly on those from the 1990 Nigeria. The aim of this engagement is to underline the complicated facets of migrant centers. Relatively, the paper registers the underpinnings of otherness—a context from where it cries foul to the optimism tales surrounding globalization. Explicitly, it hints on the increased insecurity and challenges that migrants undergo in a bid to define selves and further stresses on how the degraded natural landscapes put the ecological systems of both migrant center and the entire planet at risk. Concurrently, it celebrates the beauty of immigration under the umbrellas of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. Analytically, it uses globalization theory, basically from the perspectives of Arjun Appadurai's Social Imaginary and Ulrich Beck's risk society. The paper is built on the rational that though globalization has led to the growth of urban cities, it has constrained the sustenance of individuals and the natural environment. The central argument of the article is wrapped around the thought that because the global society is a concoction of the upright, the depraved and the unpleasant, its citizens have to employ intelligence so as to live meaningfully.</i></p>

## INTRODUCTION

The exposition that for decades, some ten thousand (10.000) far off societies would be found living in some

two hundred (200) societies is a hint on increased international movements.( UNESCO 1995, 15) The World Bank holds that these movements are practically

unidirectional – with migrants living the the global south into the global north in search for opportunities. (*Migration and Remittances Facebook* 2011) These assessments showcase a variety of facts, top among being the precarious nature of movements, the overpopulated, multiracial and multicultural compositions of migrant centers and a compressed society. The world is thus becoming a global village; a consequence of modern technology in its ability to reduce both distance and time to the simultaneous happening of action and reaction. (McLuhan 1989) Implicit in the above stories is a world structure that is fostering global unity and solidarity; a world highlighting Kant's positioning of humans as world citizens with the right to settle anywhere. (Kant 1795) Contrarily this global society is instead institutionalizing difference. (Robertson 1992, 102) Robertson validates his point with the explanation that the earth is increasingly taking the form of a "community" characterized by "segments of humanity living close together" in disharmony. Deutsch underlines the challenge of this era as the difficulty to formulate a theory that can incorporate difference without completely integrating it. (Deutsch, (1957) The above claim is generated by Deutsch's conviction that people have to remain true to themselves. This is a twist of the globalization narrative; a conscientizing story to which migrants commonly fall prey, as migrant writers reveal. In the course of celebrating some ongoing global cultural changes, they reveal the misfortunes of a section of humanity in the degraded natural landscapes characteristic of the expansive but class-designed migrant spaces.

African writers capture the fragmentary and uncertain outcomes of global dynamics in the hazardous human conditions definitive of the Global North's migrants and migrant communities. As envisioned in Tayeb (1991), Darko (1995), Gurnah (2002), Adichie (2009), Nkengasong (2015) and Mbue (2016) to name these, African writers continuously hint on the uncertain outcome of migration. But coaxed by modern technology's communication and transportation push factors, Africans leave their seemingly hostile spaces for apparently accommodating distant ones. Life is meaningless until its owner decides to make it

meaningful, existentialist philosophers persistently educate mankind. Failure to make valuable decisions only pins your existence to absurdity and renders you guilty of being inefficient The misery surrounding existence in Africa and the fear of being termed ineffective evidently generates emigrations to the resulting migrant tales in African literary creations. But the writers' ideologies vastly build on Marx's migration theories—concepts that link migration to processes of violence. (Marx 1988)

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is among the twenty-first century writers in possession of instinctive insights of the displacement mania that is plaguing contemporary modern society. In *Americanah*, she x-rays students, workers and the unemployed fleeing the socio/economic and political unrest that had become definitive of the 1990s Nigeria into the Urban North, with the hope of prospering here. Ironically, they would meet places largely defined by absolutes in terms of culture and identity; ideological landscapes that render illusionary globalization's promise of socio-economic and political cohesion. Amazingly, her diehard migrant overcome the frictions by forging peaceful relations with host spaces and/or wavering their loyalty to both the host and original spaces, with the logic that these spaces crave for their behaviors. Within this frame, they become in Homi Bhabha's perception the only class of human beings not hooked by the restraints culture and geographical dictates. (*Location of Culture*, 4) The novelist however portrays the racist conscious migrant spaces with their discriminatory residential areas that settle newcomers at decayed physical spaces as limitations of their selves and potentials. This paper finds agency in the genuine mindsets with which Chimamanda's characters set sailed for migration, the hostile environments they eventually encountered and their attempts at making meaning out of the messes. Driven by the place entanglements in the text, the paper invites both Arjun Appadurai and Ulrich Beck's globalization tenets for analysis.

Appadurai theories both five types of globalization flows and five dimensions by which these flows daily take place across cultural and national borders.

(Appadurai 1996) The theorist positions the flows as 'ethno scapes', 'media scapes', 'techno scapes', 'finances cape' and 'ideascap' (18). Clarifying them, the 'ethno-scape' underlines the movements of individual cross physical borders; the 'mediascape' captures the images and narratives produced and disseminated virtually across the globe; the 'techno scape' envisions modern technology's global spread of information; the 'finances cape' represents global financial exchanges, and the 'ideascap' defines the global flow of ideas. Appadurai emphasizes on the fact that though the flows each appear as firmly constituted landscape, they are in a constant state of flux; a process through which they entwine with each other and consequently facilitate the globalization phenomenon. Appadurai's ideas visibly examine both the processes and mechanisms of social change, and the progression tenet inherent in the globalization idea. But Beck's (2005) concept of the 'risk society', instead underlines the negative consequence of the processes outlined by Appadurai to individuals and groups of people. The concept of risk society characterises the social economic and ecological risks inherent in modernity's fast growing places. Globalization here is a two faced coin; one working towards the socio-economic and political development of the globe and the other working rapidly and steadily towards the destruction of life on earth. This paper consequently intends to examine how these progressive and regressive tenets of globalization affect the physical and social environments of Adichie's multicultural/multiracial modern technology prone host spaces.

Multiculturalism and multiracialism have instead generated hostility to cultural difference; a condition blamed on the too much power that individual states still hold; a factor that functions against the realization of the global community entailed in globalization. (Linklater 1998) Adichie's *Americanah* captures this in the liminal spaces that the English and American urban spaces have become in spite of immigrations. She in line with Linklater blames it on two factors which are hostility to cultural difference and the cling to national identity.

### Adichie's Fixed Identity Dynamics

Mobility as earlier positioned is a social subject with great impacts on both place and identity. These are entities that constitute the politics of who one is; though one habitually downplays the significance of who one has to be to the suffering of both one's self and others. Leaning on authenticity for accuracy, the social mechanism for the negotiation of the migrant's identity echoes their real past in unison with their present. This retrospective introspective lean distances the migrants from the hosts' good books to the generation of diverse strands of identity crises. Authentic identification thus begins to capture changes with time and place; a complex scenario as strident identities become limiting in their manifestations of harshness and discord towards others. In their insistent natures, strident personalities cleave to their opinions, feelings and priorities to the stemming of disagreements; disharmonies that are detrimental to the liberal interconnectivity implied in globalization's open-minded strand. The great emigrations from Nigeria the novelist holds, emits diversity, conflicts and negotiations, and consequently highlights globalization's complex status—its repulsive fragments discussed in this section.

Adichie's text x-rays Britain and the United States of America as worlds which despite their multicultural and multiracial status still hold tight to past values and rigid boundaries. Within this atmosphere the migrant's dreams are dominated and almost pushed to the edge of destruction. Visas only function to their doors and not passports to operate freely. Their languages are declared unwanted and their accents considered derogatory. Their already acquired professional skills are termed unqualified and worth revising in qualification of western values. The Nigerian migrants' black color, above all, places them at the lowest rank of each country's race ladder. It is well noted that Adichie describes her migrant subjects as people "merely hungry for choice and certainty" (*Americanah*, 2). They are also a people "fleeing a type of poverty that crushed human souls" (*Americanah*, 276). It is therefore a pity that here in west America especially, where Obinze thought of as "my future" they are wallowing

in poverty, joblessness and above all undergoing the “oppressive lethargy of choicelessness” (*Americanah*, 277). The green card is the only authentic document by which the migrant can position himself/herself in the new space. Unfortunately for the new comers it takes lots of money and financial procedures to establish this official document. The British Prime Minister, Brunkett obliges migrants to speak only English all through the day and in America the migrant must speak English with a twist of the American to have a well-paying job. And without this language conformity the migrants encounter prejudice, lack of opportunities and at times take up roles that they did not preview. Adichie portrays a significant part of her migrant population living in the urban slums—places where they are exposed to varied risks. This unpleasant atmosphere exposes the alterity of migrants in the liminal spaces of Britain and America.

As highlighted above, migrants connote externalities. They constitute conflicts for and against totalitarian principles in host spaces. (Bhabha 1982, 3) Migrancy consequently entails conflicts with/within the self, with the migrant fighting and subduing the clashes and crisis inherent in the self and other. They become bearers of fragmented ideologies; a forum in which strict respect for either self or other is a farce but interestingly migrants still stick the idea of self-authenticity and consequently live in argument for consistency. But consistency denotes regularity and .calls for the steady respect of the past, that past which is now just a part of the migrant’s being. Conversely, migrants’ structures as blends of the past and present posit strands for ethical behaviors—altitudes which hold out the possibility of accepting and enduring all. (Derrida 1967, 23). They would have to undermine the negative forces that nurture conflicting spaces and instead cultivate unique behaviors suited to their current social contexts. (Zacares and Iborra 2015)

### **The Migrant’s Authentic Identity**

The term ‘migrant’ in dual functioning evokes the self from the perspective of the restrictions that characterize human relations in everyday life and as well underline urban centers where people are obliged to live in unison.. This is a complex atmosphere that

puts a check on migrants’ authentic selves. Authenticity as a term is so fluid and becomes so nuanced in meaning that it positively validates a cross section of behaviors.(Troper et al 2022). Its implication of being true to self begins to crave on individual and groups’ consciousness, interrogating the concept of self and its relationship with the external world. It is some sort of community authenticity – a holistic activity that builds on dynamic relationship between the new comer and its host space. Authentic migrant portfolios would thus rotate around accepting the changeability that comes with transnational mobility – a trans-border phenomenon that calls for inclusiveness. Distinct binaries have to interact and go beyond their individualities so as to produce a complex infusion that does not dissolve the various fissures, but introduces in them another dimension of complexity. (Derrida *ibid*) Conformity and connectivity are the guiding principles, complex phenomena that take the migrant out of his/her comfort zone of consistency. (Lehmann et al 2019) This scenario creates a sound atmosphere for advancement – that which often results from a congruous relationship between the individual and his/her immediate environment. Adichie’s *Americanah* x-ray this migrant oriented growth emanating from two forces, namely transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. Through the concepts of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism the section below examines the migrant’s identity in relation to two places, the one he left behind and the one he is presently developing.

### **Transnationalism**

Transnationalism examines the functioning of social relations under conditions of globalization. It embodies the trans-border activities of migrants and encompasses shared relations. Specifically, it rotates around trans-migrant – migrants who maintain ties with both host spaces and their countries of origin. The beauty in transmigration is projected in migrants’ acts that result in “counter narratives of the nation.” (Bhabha 1990, 300) Migrant authenticity consequently deletes the self-centered authenticities that generate friction in the third space. This behavior, for one, is echoed in transnationalism. As accentuated in this

article, transnationalism echoes the various ways African migrants in Britain and America sustain relations with their countries of origin. The novelist portrays them exhibiting strong connections with their home and host societies; an atmosphere in which they become partakers in the development of the continent and the renewal of the histories of binary opposites.

Dick, aunty Uju's son who was taken to America as a kid, demonstrates his love for kith and kin by visiting them in Nigeria, as a teenager. His cousin, Ifemelu, a returnee from America welcomes him at the airport in Nigeria. As the dual move out of the airport and through the streets for home, Dick marvels at the mass number of blacks on the way and burst out in excitement thus "O my God, Cos, I've never seen so many black people in my life" (*Americanah*, 320). This expresses accepting the other part of him joyfully. This international travel acts as breakthrough for Dick who knew things only from the realities of the American space – a racist society in which the majority whites loaded it over the minority black. Dick notes that the country was void of racism as no one called the other black. Though he enjoyed the company of his relations, he still returned to his mother, friends and education in America. He has known his past, a consciousness that will forever guide his visions of his present and obviously his future.

Adichie again reveals a transnational social networking with Obinze sending money to Ifemelu in America from Nigeria. In this counter-hegemonic behavior, Adichie mystifies the Eurocentric story which defines the west as the economic giant of the world. In another light, Obinze and Ifemelu come to experience psychological relieve from the trauma that emanated from their growing uncertain relation by exchanging emails. When Obinze emailed her details of his immigration to and stay in England, Ifemelu opened up on the conditions of her stay in America. Another period of quite once again prevailed between them due to the unhealthy entanglements they had each gotten themselves into. Because Ifemelu planned to return to Ngeria she again informed Obinze by email, this time in a lighter mood. The ease with which Ifemelu messaged him encouraged Obinze to open up to her on

some of his experiences during their separation.. These disclosed information, from both ends obviously prepared the cordial way in which they finally embraced each other in Nigeria.

Adichie even unveils the networking of modern communication as a great disseminator of information. Modern gadgets of communication, the telephone most importantly, instantly disseminate information worldwide. The internet even controls the way in which literature is built. Ifemelu's blog post, originally called "Raceteenth or Curious Observations by non-American Black on the subject of Blackness in America", (296) becomes her sure source of getting information on race and racism at the moment she really needs it. Racial bias brought to an end the beautiful relation between her and the influential white, handsome rich guy Curt. Provoking people to talk on race and then posting their ideas on blogs became her main source of material for blogs – an activity which x-rays a virtual cosmopolis that both represents and acts on literature as validated by the fact that the posts later formed a type of textuality for her work. Ifemelu couldn't when her first blog post "The Hot White EX" (296) captured nine readers just hours after being posted. She saw this as a move towards achieving her goal, that of educating the world on the reality of racial discrimination in America. She conscientised that the race feeling is bad and that only romantic love can erase this unjust feeling. Her effective communication spells out how the virtual community is becoming important as the physical one. Her success in informing the world through blogs buys Jean Baudrillard views that the ongoing historical moment is one in which "Life has become TV, and TV, life. TV watches us and we watch TV watching us," (*Postmodernism for Beginners*, 64). Correspondingly, everything is noe coded and reduced to cybernetics which functions in fascinating difference.

### **Cosmopolitanity**

Cosmopolitanity underlines the unusual medley of diverse populations coexisting and sharing. It harbors the aptitude of peaceful and harmonious living in the third space. It reverberates with theories of

globalization and waves towards determining and cultivating “political and ethical principles that are constant with a globalized world. (Gupta 2003, 48) Its working can be descended into six perspectives including its functionings as an emerging socio-political condition, a philosophy or world view, a political project for creating effective transnational institutions, a political project for enabling people to act upon their multiple subject positions and a competence to deal with others and the world. (Vertovec and Cohen 2002, 9-14) Remarkable, these are the angles from where some of Adichie’s migrant subjects relate with the world. Constructed on the bases of the postmodernist relative thinking, it negates cultural difference and correspondingly debunks notions of superiority and inferiority complexes as it reads in the opposite member of the pair the strength and weaknesses lacking in the other. The international relation theorist, Linklater celebrates cosmopolitanism from the guise of a global civilization which obliges mankind to adopt a new moral standing that will outweigh hostility and difference. The cosmopolitans’ behaviors are consequently shaped by shared vision and common principles- a way of life which from Adiche’s perspective is equally realized and maintained by means of modern communication. The cosmopolitan must adjust to various cultures; an adaptive process that many of Adichie’s characters get involved in for the sake of meaning making.

Adichie’s use of the Obama’ presidential victory seems to be for the projection that one can create good relations out of encounters if one is ethically sound and in control of their emotion. Obama sent in his candidature for the president of the white house despite racist atmosphere that defined America- at a moment when whites were asking themselves if there were ready for a black president. Ifemelu believed a black person could be and in one of her blog posts she brings out the qualities of such a one as –a black who is “eternally wise and kind ... never reacts under great suffering , never gets angry and is never threatening” (Americanah,321) could become the president of America. Living soundly in the metropolis as Adichie fashions out, entails accepting and tolerating difference.

The novelist equally x-rays how the tensions Ifemelu experienced in America become relaxed due her conjugal relationship with the rich white man, Curt. With Curt “she became in her mind a woman free of knots and cares.” (Americanah, 229). Thus with Curt, Ifemelu transcends racial borders and integrates into mainstream America. ‘I get to show you Paris.’(Americanah, 229).

In the host space the migrants go in for hyphenated identities like Nigerian-American, Kenyan-American and Ethiopian-American, thanks to their ethnic or national particularities. The hyphenated portrayals are contrary to the identities that denoted them back in the continent. They correspond with the complex being these Africans have become- fragmented people who, unfortunately, are undergoing lots of sufferings since the black race occupies the last rung in the American race ladder. This uncomfortable atmosphere the African embraces while out of the continent. (Beoku-Betts and Njambi 2005). Limiting this to the Nigerian experience in the west, the Nigerian feminist scholar, Leslie Ogunjide (2000) describes it as one of suffering. She says this out of her experience, like Ifemelu and Adichie herself, Ogunjide only became conscious of her blackness while out of the continent.

The African Students Association (ASA) in America mimics the global space of open doors, interconnectivity and opportunity – an immigrant space which facilitates and fosters broader and more creative interactions. The association safeguards its members’ interest and discusses the pressing issue about the African continent especially the diverse cultures and the problem plaguing their countries. They talk about the necessity of integrating themselves into the American society, but, without forgetting where they come from. They help each other get settled in America. It is thanks to Dorothy of Ugandan nationality that Ifemelu of Nigerian origin attends her first interview test in America. They talk each other into trusting not American but internationals on the basis of a people in crisis – that plight of American immigrants, an ugly situation which only the immigrants; a point relevant from the perspective of

the hospitable relationships characteristic of cosmopolitan.

Adichie projects the influx of migrants into northern hemisphere as a double faced coin. It is speeding up the economic and cultural development of the planet. Contrarily, it is rendering the world's population more urban to the disadvantage of the urban geographies. Increased human population often greatly impact land; a point empirically viable in the vast constructed houses and roads. These man-made structures cost the destruction of ecosystems— great determinants of the energy that supports life factor on earth. (Small 2004) Excessive land use echoes a danger to the earth as its impact on ecosystems equally negatively influences the climate. Increased destruction of the natural vegetation increases the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to the warming of climate. (Azar et al 1986) This seems to be one of Adichie's principal concerns in the text under study.

### **The Unhealthy Natural Landscapes of Modernity**

Though Adichie celebrates the integrated cultural and economic systems that evolve in and out of the global cities, she regrets that these two processes are steadily giving in to ecological globalization; a fact evident in the greenhouse gases reality of *Americanah*. The contact zones are human build-in areas constructed at the loss of ecological elements. In this post industrial revolution era, these cities function as industrial centers and serve as bets for the quest migrants from the under-privileged global south. With increased immigration the cities become more and more unnerve places for migrants whose second class ascribed status pushes them to the peripheries of the cities. The modernity has brought with it ecological degradation whose main consequence is increased stress on the entire environment. In line with this accession, Adichie begins *Americanah* by bringing American environmentalism in the forefront. In the process of exposure, she captures how physical boundaries are constructed in denoting the various groups that make up the city. Roberts et al (2009) explicates that the above structure of the city increasingly favors the wealthier citizens as it puts them beyond the environmental risks incurred by the others.

Adichie uses the functioning of the human nose to expose the obnoxious air quality definitive of migrants' lived- in environment. Atmospheric pollution is either the presence of man-induced or natural substances in the "ambient atmosphere" that have effects on or the environment. (Weber, 1982, 3) Adichie's migrants live in New Havens, a place that smells of "neglect"; they live in Baltimore, a place that smells "brine"; in Philadelphia, a place with the "musty scent of history" and in Brooklyn, a place that smells of "sun warmed garbage" (1). The qualities of air implied in each of the cities above are impure and impure is a threat to human existence. With the nose the main respiratory organ, it transports pictures of human domestic squalor defined in accumulated waste. The situation would be terrible if the waste constitutes garbage. The narrator laments on the more deplorable situation with Brooklyn's garbage being abandoned to the heat of the sun. This paints an unattractive landscape that might be offensive to the entire human system given that the garbage may have decayed— to the further anguish of the nose. Again Adichie's "brine" characteristics of the Baltimore space speaks of dangerous toxic pollutants, while Philadelphia's "musty scent of history" envisions a place void of vitality and essence. It is unimaginable how comers in their daily struggles to make ends meet survive un these polluted environments. Adichie makes clear the fact that, localized pollution has become ubiquitous in northern urban cities to the disadvantage of the living.

Adichie's migrant centers hold modified climate characteristics and the change is making life unbearable for the migrants. "The heat is really bad" says Mariana, the African hair braider in Trenton who cannot bear to work with the door half open despite the shabby state that characterized the outside saloon (*Americanah*, 13). Mariana's comment on increased heat waves Ifemelu memory lane, thirteen years back into the summer when she arrived America. She was putting on the thickest pullover she could in a Nigerian market because she drew from the traditional single story that the western hemisphere unlike the southern was very cold. Ironically, she unzips her sweater immediately she arrives as the American airport. Aunt Uju instantly solves her puzzle with the words that the

heat waves were currently becoming higher than in the past, a condition which can be understood the perspective of the high level of technological advancement and the increased and extended industrial cities that increasingly define the global north. The danger inherent in the warming climate can be understood from the consequences of increased atmospheric temperatures in Nigerian metropolis, Nsukka in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2003). Parents pour water on the floor for children to lie on (*Purple Hibiscus*, 262). Again due to the scorching heat, flies could not survive the ambient temperatures but instead lived with households "buzzing over food". Climate change thus, is changing the natural order of things and putting humanity into great risks.

The term "global north" captures the developed countries of the northern hemisphere that are characterized among many other things, by high levels of income and technological advancement. (Kowalski 2020, 1) Technological advancement as aforementioned, is associated with increased emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, an activity responsible for the constant and recurring changes that has become definitive of natural phenomena. Environmental and Earth scientists blame the current harsh climatic moment the destroyed ozone layer, a product of increased greenhouse gases, and the cause of increased heat waves on earth. As a social scientist, Adichie too uses the above angle of discourse in *Americanah* to localize climate change in a narrative of the mass immigration turn from the developing into the developed world.

The above man-induced environmental problems necessitates a move out of Adichie's written text into the palpable society where years back a respiratory track disease (covid19) diagnosed by medical scientists as the workings of advanced modern technology, wreaked havoc on human lives. Like the offensive smells in Adichie's *Americanah* that are sensitive to the nose, covid19 was known to be an airborne and respiratory track disease. Nishant (2021) advances the application of technology in certain fields of life as the cause of covid19. This does not go without saying that, covid19 has been generated by increased greenhouse

gases that are currently warming the air and causing climate change and rendering life on unbearable. Interesting to note, Keesara et al (2020, 3) holds that the pandemic has not only led governments, but has caused governments and individuals to back out of the host of universally established freedom to travel and the right to indulge in any transparent social activity of your choice. Paradoxically, covid19 has brought with it travel restrictions and increased use of technology. Nishant (2021, 5) clarifies that world governments priorities the use of technology over travels and social gatherings for the sake of securing human life. Increased use of digital technologies in the guise of securing humanity sounds like a fairy tale for increased application generates a chain of negative consequences ranging from increased atmospheric pollution, increased global warming, and decayed ecosystems and obviously of life on the planet.

Correspondently, humanity will continue to wallow in pain and suffer due to the overpopulated, degraded and warming landscapes of the urban north. The lack of pure air in urban areas constitutes a danger to animals and humans since this pure is a life sustaining element. This pure air or oxygen is said to be a produce of plants. If climate change, as holds includes global warming while its cause is anything that increase greenhouse emission, then humanity should begin to change its behavioral patterns of the sustainability of the planet. Depopulating the already overpopulated northern geographies can go a long way into limiting the growth of those cities in America. Adichie brings out this logic in the return home migration of some of her migrants. Ifemelu decides to return to Nigeria when she is already successful. Obinze on his part is forced back to Nigeria where ironically, he becomes successful. These two actions constitute a reduction of the northern hemisphere debunks of Eurocentric myth of the centrality of the northern hemisphere. Rebuilding the green too will help for Ifemelu says that earth's green "is gold" (*Americanah*, 144). Re-greening the earth will restore destroyed ecosystems for the rejuvenation of human and animal life. Plants will then generate oxygen in the process of photosynthesizing to produce carbon dioxide for them. This will go a long way to stabilize life on earth since Goviinji et al (1990)

x-rays that most of the oxygen (pure air) in the atmosphere is the result of many years of plants producing photosynthesis.

### CONCLUSION

The article articulated the increased immigrations from the 1990's Nigeria into the western places of Britain and Americas, mainly from the perspective of migrant experiences in the new spaces. It noted that the ethnically constructed host spaces constituted constraints to the new comer's original dreams. Migrants however fought the degrading theories of ethnic and regional authenticities and sustained new fragmented cultural mind frames that resulted into a subculture. This was a new authenticity; one that brought with it the beauty and harmony of the migrant society But the overpopulated urban spaces and the offensive by-products of modern technology constituted problems to the migrants. The extended and technologically controlled cities constitutive of the northern hemisphere poised for destroyed natural environments that housed offensive gases, to the suffering of the poor migrants.. The paper analyzed these environmental crises as the unintended outcomes of modernity. Air pollution was underlined as both a produce of modernity and as a direct driver of climate issues. The decayed physical environment was analysed as reason for the psychological and mental crises constitutive of migrant problems. The paper thus hinged on how globalization elements should slow down their processes for the realization of a sustainable global society.

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# Transformation of Vulgarisms into the Azerbaijani Language

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Article Detail:	Abstract
<p>Received on: 19 Jan 2025</p> <p>Revised on: 17 Feb 2025</p> <p>Accepted on: 22 Feb 2025</p> <p>©2025 The Author(s). Published by International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/</a>).</p> <p><b>Keywords – vulgarism, colloquial, lexicon, taboo words, vulgar lexicon</b></p>	<p><i>This study examined the translation of vulgarities from English into Azerbaijani. Language constantly evolves, reflecting societal changes and cultural interactions. One fascinating aspect of this evolution is the transformation and incorporation of vulgarisms – words or expressions considered coarse, offensive, or taboo – into a language. The cultural advancement of society as a whole, as well as the formation of diverse relationships between individuals, are significantly influenced by the translation of fiction. The study of vulgar language intersects with various areas of linguistics, such as sociolinguistics, semantics, and pragmatics. Jay (2000) argues that vulgarisms are not just offensive terms; they also serve expressive and cathartic purposes, frequently used to communicate intense emotions or societal attitudes. Research in sociolinguistics, including Labov's work (1972), demonstrates that the use of such language differs across social groups and contexts, revealing deeper power structures and cultural norms. For amusement or language learning purposes, people watch American films or read English-language literature. There are instances when we are unsure of the exact meaning of the words they are speaking at any given moment. It's common to come across crude language, prohibited words, and vulgarity at this time. The majority of the time, these words are utilized in Western films. Similar to this, some literary critics have used the word "vulgar" without knowing what it means. The word "vulgar" actually has multiple meanings. If we label a man vulgar, it's just an insult. Actually, what we're trying to say is that we don't like or approve of the man. When a guy acts in a way that is inappropriate for the society he belongs to, he may be said to as vulgar. They serve several functions and are essential to the vernacular English language. In the Azerbaijani context, vulgarisms have undergone significant transformation, influenced by various factors including globalization, media, contemporary influences, and historical language contact. The linguistic landscape has been influenced by interactions with Russian, Turkish, and Persian, each contributing distinct colloquialisms and vulgar expressions. This contact has resulted in</i></p>

*the borrowing and integration of these terms into everyday Azerbaijani language (Khalilov, 2015). This paper explores how these vulgarisms are adapted and integrated into Azerbaijani, examining their origins, transformations, and the social dynamics surrounding their use.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The evolution and adaptation of language are essential components of linguistic development. In recent years, the Azerbaijani language has undergone significant changes, particularly in incorporating and adapting vulgarisms. These informal and often taboo expressions have become prominent in everyday speech. This thesis examines the processes and consequences of integrating vulgarisms into the Azerbaijani language, emphasizing their origins, transformations, and societal attitudes.

Vulgarisms are lexical units with poor stylistic shades never used in cultured speech or polite society. They also violate the rules of literary language. They refer to those who use such language as "illiterate persons" (Merriam-Webster dictionary) and describe speaking behavior as "rude, unpleasant, and offensive" (Macmillan dictionary). Varying degrees of vulgarity are possible: while obscene or taboo phrases are the most offensive, expletives and swear words (damn, bloody) convey strong feelings and are less harsh.

Body parts, sex actions, bodily functions, and products, racist slurs, verbal vulgarities or insults directed at individuals and their families, family religion, death, and unfortunate circumstances are all mentioned in English and expressions.

Examples of **vulgar words** concerning **body parts** are *cock, cunt, dick, prick, and balls*.

Various examples of **vulgarity words** in **sex acts** are: *fuck, suck, blow job, bugger and screw*.

**Vulgarity on bodily function and products** are *shit, piss, crap, and fart*.

Examples of vulgar language on **racist terms** are *frog, nigger, wop, and dago*. Examples of **vulgar words** directed **at people** are *bitch, bastard, cock sucker, mother fucker, and whore*.

And the examples of **vulgarity words** to do with **death, religion, and unlucky matters** are *Jesus, goddamn, and God*. [6. 124-131]

There are two categories of vulgar words: *stylistic vulgarisms* and *lexical vulgarisms*. The first type primarily consists of aggressive swear words and expletives that are not appropriate in the context of the culture, such as swear words like "**damn**- nadürüst", "**Gosh darn it (God damn it)**- Allah lənət eləsin", "**shit**-nəcis", "**goddam**- alçaq, lənətə gələsən", "go to hell-cəhənnəm ol", "**bloody**- qanına bələn", "**son of a bitch**- it oğlu, qancığın balası", "**mother trucker (motherfucker)**- anası pozğun", "**shut your pie hole (shut up)**-çənəni qapa, mumla", etc. Lexical vulgarisms expressing ideas considered unmentionable in a civilized society.

Stylistic vulgarisms are terms with perfectly acceptable lexical meanings but derogatory connotations. The only reason they are improper in a civilized society is because of their stylistic value, which expresses the speaker's disdain for the subject of the discourse. - No element in the lexical definitions of the stylistic vulgarisms may be deemed immoral or obscene; these terms are known as four-letter words, and their usage is prohibited in any type of sexual activity due to their indecency. The stylistic implications, on the other hand, suggest their alienation from the cultural milieu and the author's disdain for the speech unit. Examples of this group include "**old bean**" (**old man** -qoca kişi), "**a nigger**" (a negro -zənci), "**smeller**" (**nose**-burun), "**pay dirt**" (**money**-pul), "**poop**- uşaq dilində pox," "**shite**-şərəfsiz, zibil," "**turd**- təzək, peyin nacins," "**crap**" (dirt - obscene terms for feces- zibil, pox), "**dogshit**- it poxu," "**horseshit**- at poxu, yaramaz" (Irish bull, bullshit, crap, shit, bull (obscene words for unacceptable behavior), etc. [11. 39].

To explore how vulgarisms have evolved in the Azerbaijani language, a mixed-methods strategy was employed. Qualitative data were gathered through interviews and focus group discussions with native Azerbaijani speakers from diverse age ranges and socio-economic statuses. Furthermore, a quantitative analysis was carried out by assessing the occurrence

and context of vulgarisms in Azerbaijani media, encompassing social media, television, and popular music.

## II. VULGARISMS AND THEIR TRANSFORMATION INTO THE AZERBAIJANI LANGUAGE

Many writers attempt to capture the mood and character of their characters without resorting to obscene language to preserve their authenticity. This is because writers employ profanity to assist the reader in empathizing with the character. The writer can grant the image freedom because of the way it thinks. Vulgarism is the Latin word *vulgaris*, which means "common folk," and vulgarism is an international term used to denote coarse (non-literary) words or expressions that are contrary to the norms of literary language [2. 20].

Vulgarisms are frequently employed in conversation out of habit, without considering their meaning, or as a way to mimic others who use them without coming across as too traditional or conservative. Unfortunately, these terms have become accepted in contemporary writing. Even good novels now contain the most obscene of them. Because of the relaxation of the taboo, terms that tarnish the literary language are now used nearly without restriction. But they'll never become part of the mainstream vocabulary of English and will always be peripheral. [5.118].

Vulgar language includes several types of profanity, insults, and curses – words that are meant to make fun of, degrade, and convey some undesirable aspects of people. Expletives serve the same purpose as interjections, which is to convey strong emotions, primarily irritation, rage, vexation, and similar feelings. Other than expressive prose, they are absent from all functional language styles.

While some authors believe that using profanity is improper, others employ it to add flair and illustrate the harsh realities of life. Realist prose and satire frequently employ vulgar language. [1. 98].

There are four ways to translate vulgar words:

1. **Find the appropriate equivalent word in the target language** – This approach to locating the best answer might seem to be found in a

vulgar word with a similar meaning and form in the target language. However, because language cultures differ and finding the right phrase isn't always available, this strategy might not always be applied.

2. **That word should be expressed in other words (rephrase)** - It may not always be successful in this way. Paraphrasing may be considered the most common way of translating vulgar words when a match cannot be found in the TL or when it seems inappropriate to use vulgar language in the TT because of differences in stylistic preferences of the SL and the TL. It might be suggested, however, that the translator is advised to apply this strategy only when he is left with no option but to paraphrase.
3. **You should give a literal translation** - This is the most unsuccessful method of translation and you should try not to use this method as much as possible. For example, if we write translation the word "*bitch*" literally, it will be translated as "*female dog/dişi it*". These are the most unsuccessful translation numbers.
4. **Translating by Omission**- Vulgar and taboo words can be found in English-language fiction, especially in American English. For example, the main character of Salinger's "*The Catcher in the Rye*" uses many vulgar words, swear words, and offensive expressions, and therefore the book was banned in different years and in different countries. Throughout the novel, Holden uses various vulgarities, such as: "damn", "hell", "crap", "ass", etc. In the novel, the word "goddam" is used 89 times, the word "hell" is used 63 times, and the word "damn" is used 39 times.

"They're nice and all - I'm not saying that - but they're also touchy as *hell*. Besides, I'm not going to tell you my whole *goddam* autobiography or anything. I'll just tell you about this madman stuff that happened to me around last Christmas just before I got pretty run-down and had to come out here and take it easy" [4. 1]. "Çox gözəl adamlar, - buna sözüüm yox, - ancaq neynəyəsən, bərk dəymədüşərdirlər. Bir də ki, mən sizə başdan-ayağa öz tərcümeyi halımı danışmaq

niyyətində deyiləm, sadəcə, keçən milad bayramında başıma gələn sarsaq bir əhvalatdan söhbət açmaq istəyirəm" [2, səh.5].

In the above examples, Tehran Valiyev, who translated the novel into our native language, translated the vulgar words used by the schoolboy by **omission**, has changed them into nonvulgar expressions. Such vulgarisms are also used a lot in the novel *"The Grapes of Wrath"* by Steinbeck, and the same vulgar words can be translated in different ways in different contexts. Examples of these include:

- **Hell!** – Cəhənnəmə ki! [8. 406].
- **Why, the little bitch!** – Balaca ifritə! Niyə axı?! [8. 413].
- **That big son-of-a-bitch of a girl, she belted me.** – O murdar böyük qız isə məni döydü. [8. 414].
- **I'm goin' in an' see the son of bitch myself.** – İçəri girib bu əclafı özüm danışacağam. [8, p.441].
- **You little son-of-a-bitch!** – Ay əclaf! [8, p.449].

In these sentences, the offensive word **"son of a bitch"** can be translated in different ways in different contexts and replaced by the words **"balaca ifritə", "murdar böyük qız", "əclaf"**

- **Hey, dumb shit** (Eyyy, qanmazın biri qanmaz!)
- **You, son of bitch, I said know your place!** (İt oğlu it, sənə dedim ki, öz həddini bil!)
- **What a freak you are.** (Necə də başiboş birisən)
- You are such a dork! (Sən tam bir beyinsizsən!) [12]

In these sentences, the words **"dumb shit," "son of a bitch," "freak,"** and **"dork"** are vulgarisms with an offensive meaning, and in the Azerbaijani language, these words are replaced by the words **"qanmazın biri qanmaz", "it oğlu it", "başiboş"** and **"beyinsiz."**

The use of vulgar words in Azerbaijan language can be divided into two categories based on their general function.

1. Words used to express emotions and feelings that are not attributed to someone: **"Lənətə gəlsin!"** from the Azerbaijani language. and its English translation "Fuck!"; "Shit!"; "Goddamn it!"; "Damn!"; "Hell!" We can use this as an example. [12]

2. Words used to insult someone: **"Küçük! (Son of bitch)", "Heyvərə (Idiot)"** (in Azerbaijani). In English, we can cite these words of this type as an example: "You bitch! (**Səni qancıq!**)", "You bastard! (**Səni Əclaf!**)", "Go to hell!" (**Cəhənnəm ol!**)", **"Kick your ass! (Sürüş burdan!)"** [11].

Social media and contemporary Azerbaijani media have significantly shaped the usage and acceptance of vulgarisms in everyday language. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have accelerated the spread of slang and vulgar expressions. For example, phrases like "söyən qardaş" (swearing brother) have gained traction through memes and online content, often referring humorously or provocatively to individuals known for their coarse language.

Television and music further contribute to the normalization of certain vulgar terms. Azerbaijani rap and pop music increasingly incorporate mild vulgarisms, reflecting a broader cultural trend of using language to challenge societal conventions and express rebellion.

This evolution of vulgarisms in Azerbaijani highlights the dynamic and adaptive nature of language. Borrowed terms are frequently modified both phonetically and semantically to align with the local linguistic context. Factors such as speaker intent, audience demographics, and the situational context play a significant role in shaping how these terms are adopted and understood.

A notable generational divide exists in attitudes toward vulgarism. While older generations often perceive such language as indicative of moral decline or disrespect, younger people view it as a creative expression of individuality and a means of asserting their identity. This divergence underscores the shifting norms surrounding language use within Azerbaijani society.

The impact of media in this transformation cannot be overstated. The proliferation of digital content has made new and adapted vulgarisms more accessible, and in some cases, more widely accepted.

This phenomenon mirrors a global trend wherein the boundaries of acceptable language are continuously redefined and renegotiated.

### III. CONCLUSION

The underworld's vocabulary is full of vulgar terms and idioms. However, not every statement that could be construed as coarse ought to be classified as vulgar. Incorrect grammar, unusual pronunciation, the wrong use of specific literary terms and idioms, and intentional word distortion can all lead to coarseness in speech. These are not vulgarisms; rather, they are speech irregularities. The term "coarse" is often used to refer to an imprecise expression. In addition to being inappropriately coarse, vulgarisms are also impolite and highly charged emotionally. Like any expression of excess emotion, they are difficult to understand in terms of their rational significance. [5. 119].

The use of profanity in artistic works stems from the fact that their primary stylistic functions are to define the cultural nature of the image, to expose its inner universe, and to individualize its discourse. [1, p. 98].

In real life, foul language is useful for expressing feelings and providing an expressive evaluation of the topic being discussed. They serve as characterization when they are used in literary works. Crude language becomes inane if it is used too often; it becomes an invective. (e.g., "You are so darn good-looking" (**Sən çox gözəlsən.**)).

This study showed that due to the nature of language, some vulgarities disappeared from the lexicon of a given language and some other new vulgarities have been introduced, over time.

The integration and adaptation of vulgarisms within the Azerbaijani language reflect a complex interplay of cultural dynamics, shifting societal norms, and individual modes of expression. As these linguistic elements become more ingrained in everyday communication, they serve as markers of the language's ongoing evolution and as indicators of broader socio-cultural transformations within Azerbaijani society. Future studies could delve deeper into the enduring effects of this linguistic shift, exploring its influence on the language's structural

integrity, as well as its broader implications for speaker identity and cultural perception.

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# Education Policies, Commissions, and Committees in Colonial and Postcolonial India: Their Role in Spread of Education in the Country

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## Abstract

*The present study aims to do an analysis and evaluation of various language policies in India. It is noteworthy that the Indian government introduced its latest National Education Policy, NEP 2020, on 29th July 2020. 'Fulfilling the requirements of the (twenty-first) century by transforming its education system' is the purpose of this new policy. Besides this, many educational policies, commissions, and committees were announced in pre- and post-independent India in order to improve its education system and make education available for everybody. This research paper deals with the aforementioned things in colonial India in particular and postcolonial India in general. The reason behind mainly focusing on education policies of Britishers time is not only to see the condition of education at that time but also to know what their motives were behind implementing these education policies.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The English left India in 1947, and it got independence from them. Prior to their departure from here, the local princes (and regional rulers) of the country and Britishers ruled here, which made it two Indias (Ghosh, 2000, X). They first of all here established the East India Company dated 31/12/1600 (Pandey, 2019, 614). The English did not introduce this company here to rule over Indians because it was mainly a merchant or trade company. However, they became interested in Indian society as well. The East India Company Britishers started interfering in India's political issues. They tried to divide the natives of the country in order to rule over them. They succeed in their mission also, as they slowly

and fully occupy the nation (R., 2014, 56). It was not very simple for those non-native government officials (the English) to easily rule and maintain the powerful position here without creating a group of collaborative people between themselves and Indians because of the differences of their cultures. This collaboration was also almost impossible in the absence of the same conversational language between them in order to form a common (homogenous) space of two cultures so that the rulers could coerce and persuade Indians to remain in the power. Therefore, for this purpose, they used education because it was people's/their belief that it (education) had the power of culturally reinforcing the same policies or things the colonialists targeted to achieve at the economic and political level (Basu, 1989,

707). So, the Britishers opened many schools, colleges, and universities and formulated education policies from time to time as they needed.

## II. BACKGROUND

It was not just that only the English worked in the field of education in colonial India. The Christian missionaries from the West were previously very active before the arrival of the British East India Company. Though they came here from the perspective of spreading Christianity, they actually initiated the modern Indian education system while attempting to do so. In the ruling areas of Portugese, the Roman Catholic missionaries were the first of any other who started education classes there. If it was renowned missionary Fancis Xavier's street classes, or the schools of missionaries touching their office or church buildings, aimed the conversion of locals to Christian religion. The missionaries from Portugal contributed in the education sector by establishing Porchial schools for elementary education, vocational preparation orphanages, a college (Jesuit) in Goa (1575), an institution like a university (Salsette), and religious colleges and seminars so that any clergyman from India could be trained there. The establishment of the French East India Company took place in 1664. Though they also worked in the same way as the Portuguese in education-related matters, the French did not show inclination only towards Christians. The company was focused only in the South Indian region, where it contributed greatly in educational matters. The establishment of a secondary school (Pondichery) with the purpose of providing liberal education and institutions like Chandernagore, Karikal, Madras, Mahe, and Pondichery was done by them. The French schools were not closed even when the Britishers started ruling India. They continuously worked with the same missionaries as they were working earlier. In the British Empire, India witnessed revolutionary changes in all spheres of life, including education (Pandey, 2019, 614).

## III. COLONIAL INDIA AND EDUCATIONAL PLANNINGS

After its establishment in the year 1600, the East India Company did not show any notable interest in improving and enhancing education in India. They also thought of only making profits as any other business and trade company (Basu, 1989, 711-12). It was only in the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century that individuals like Warren Hastings introduced a Calcutta Madarsa (1781), Jonathan Duncan, a Sanskrit college at Banaras (1792), and Lord Wellesley, the Fort William College (1800). If the first one was to provide Persian and Arabic education, the second for Sankrit, whereas the third was to train civil servants who were going to work for the company. It is noteworthy that the rulers of those times never thought to make arrangements for studying English (Chand, 2015, 111). Small primary schools called Pathshalas for Sanskrit education and Madarsas for Muslim education were still relevant by the end of 1810. As far as higher education was concerned, Hareet Kumar Meena cites that it was reachable to only upper-caste people (Meena, 2015, 85). The company thought only to grant and spend some money on education in 1813, when its charter was formed.

### 3.1. Charter Act (1813)

The British East India granted an amount of Rs. one lac for the education of Indian people with very difficulty in the 1813 Charter Act when evangelists and Christian missionaries pressurized. There was a provision in the above-mentioned Charter Act that, for the first time, opened the way for missionaries to do education-related work in India who wanted to use English education in removing ignorant and superstitious beliefs of its people and spreading Christinity (Basu, 1989, 711-12). However, the money could not be used in the field of education by the end of that year because of the controversy between Angilicists and Orientalists. The formers wanted to spend money on study of languages of India, while the latters supported using it in English language learning. This matter was resolved during the tenure of William Bentick (Chand, 2015, 111).

### 3.2 Macaulay Minutes (1835)

Macaulay strongly advocated in favor of English literature, western philosophy, and sciences in English in order to build India as a country of learned people. He said all Indian languages were incompetent for these purposes (Ghosh, 2000, 31). He revealed after a couple of years (31st July 1837) that the company intended first of all to provide education to the high-class people who were supposed or expected to teach the general public. In this way, they wanted to spread education in whole India (Meena, 2015, 87). He mentioned many other arguments in support of English education and language in schools and colleges for Indians. All arguments and recommendations of Macaulay with regard to education, though most of them controversial (Mondal, 2024, 3756) were accepted or endorsed by Governor General William Bentick (Meena, 2015, 87). Macaulay's policy on education paved the way to expand the educational landscape in the country. It was because of his too much attention and stress on English-related teaching of the natives that caused the emergence of education-related basic facilities or infrastructure. A number of schools, colleges, and universities were established in order to give Indians knowledge of the West and to teach them their values. Institutions from Britain were the models followed in establishing institutes of higher education, such as the University of Bombay and Calcutta. These universities produced highly intellectual people of India with education of European knowledge (Mondal, 2024, 3756-57).

### 3.3. Sir Charles Wood's Dispatch (1854)

On 19th July 1854, Sir Wood brought a practical plan to educate Indians all over the country. The systemization of the hierarchy of education as primary, high school, college, and university was also a provision of him. The private initiatives and enterprises in education were to be encouraged by a grant in the aid system. Whereas a state grant in aid education was also to support education in a state. The financial help to all institutions and related individuals without looking at them from a religious perspective, vocational courses for women, training of teachers, and scholarships for all talented students from private and government schools are some

highlights of Wood's Dispatch. In terms of medium of instruction, the schooling subjects were to be taught in vernacular or local languages, and university education was to be provided in the English language. The dispatch was a very important document of policy because it was the basis for all subsequent rules regarding the spread and dissemination of education in the country. Contrary to the expectations and recommendations made by Wood, the rulers were inclined towards education in universities; they gave priority to such institutions and also provided a grant for it in 1859 regulation (Chand, 2015, 111-12). Before that, the establishment of universities also happened in cities such as Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta, as per the recommendation of this policy. Though the spread of education among Indians seemed not as fast as it was expected to be because many important recommendations made by the dispatch could not be implemented properly, the government's grant in aid to encourage individuals so that they could participate and contribute in the education field through their private/aided schools their own funds also played a very vital role in developing the public school system (Meena, 2015, 89).

### 3.4. Indian Education Commission (1882)

Formulated under the chairmanship of William Hunter, who was an executive of the contemporary governor general of India, its other name is the Hunter Commission as well. The commission did a survey of India and gave recommendations like liberalization of the grant-in-aid system; the rulers should not establish any other institutions for education and management or control of basic education by local bodies, whereas education at the secondary and college levels should be provided under the management of a committee responsible for it. While the state had to work for all branches of education, basic education was the central concern of the Indian Education Commission because of no proper attention was given to it between the period of Wood's Dispatch and this commission (Pandey, 2019, 614). Moreover, it also proposed schemes for the improvement of the educational conditions or statuses of aboriginal tribes, lower castes, Muslims, and females (Meena, 2015, 89). The British government in India

approved the majority of the educational proposals of the commission (Pandey, 2019, 614). The acceptance of whatever the Hunter Commission recommended was effective in bringing about changes in contemporary Indian society and in the field of education. The spread of education was comparatively faster in the post-1882 time period. The contribution of native religion and philanthropy-related institutions in the development of the educational field was very high in comparison to the British Government. Consequently, Western and oriental education was disseminated in India. Apart from the above, Punjab University (1882) and Allahabad University (1887), among others, were also built as teaching as well as examining universities. However, despite all these developments in the area of education, basic education and women's education could not get enough attention even in this time period (Chand, 2015, 112).

### **3.5 The Tenure of Lord Curzon and Education**

The contribution of Lord Curzon was unignorable in the field of education. In fact, it was his priority; he tried to improve education through the 1901 Simla Conference, the 1902 Indian Universities Commission, and the 1904 Indian Universities Act (Pandey, 2019, 615). The University Act of 1904 was in response to the suggestions made by Sir Thomas Ralieggh-chaired university commissions (1902). In order to improve or enhance education at the university level, Lord Curzon said to give an annual grant of Rs. 5 lac per year in this university Act (Chand, 2015, 112). He also worked to improve the condition of basic or primary education in many ways (Pandey, 2019, 615). Whereas the most (earlier) policies of education though talked about education at the beginning level, the rulers also knew how important it was, and they also gave emphasis to its spread; they unjustly even more focused on education at secondary level, college, and universities (Chaudhary, 2007, 2). But it was the impact of the Curzon's right education policy that people became conscious across India, and the experts in the field of education gave their consent to provide education in mother tongue rather than in English. Thus, the number of primary schools increased in the years 1911-12 to 118262, which were 93604 in the year of 1901 (Pandey,

2019, 615). In this way, more than 26% of primary schools increased because of the effective policies of Lord Curzon.

### **3.6. The Calcutta University Commission, 1917**

Dr. E. M. Sadler was the chairman of this commission. It was a commission to spread university-level education among Indian people. The commission recommended 'to each province having a secondary and intermediate education board and intermediate and degree college classes levels with clear definition,' in order to promote higher education. In terms of medium of instruction, it preferred the use of mother language in secondary education English language in the colleges (Pandey, 2019, 615). The Indian government accepted many of the proposals of this commission, including the aforementioned ones. They proved to be really helpful in growing university-level education in the country. The Indians witnessed the establishment of universities such as Aligarh, Banaras, Dacca, Lucknow, Mysore, Osmania, and Patna between 1916 and 1921 (Chand, 2015, 112). Not only this, the intervention of government officers was reduced to a very large extent in the educational institutions (Pandey, 2019, 615) as Curzon thrust it while passing the Indian Universities Act (1904-05). As a result, universities in India freely and democratically grew and became possible only after the proposal of this university commission (Ghosh, 2000, 148).

### **3.7. Wardha Scheme of Basic Education 1937**

Mahatma Gandhi found many drawbacks of English education provided by the British government. The gap between very educated and uneducated people and the irrelevant primary education were some of its examples. Therefore, a conference was conducted on October 22 and 23 in 1937 on the topic of "National Education." The participants here discussed a new education system. They also passed a resolution, which inspired them to formulate a committee led by the renowned educationist Dr. Zakir Hussain. The preparation of a comprehensive syllabus was their work. The members of this committee mainly recommended that the syllabus should include basic handicraft, there should be an opportunity for service in order to make students interact with nearby people and build a school

community, and students should be provided education for free up to 7th grade and even without English. Both the central and state governments of India gave approval to the plan of education in independent India. In this way, there was a universal system for basic education across the free nation in some time (Chand, 2015, 112-13).

### **3.8. Central Advisory Board Scheme Report (1944)**

Mostly it is known as the Sergeant Report because Sir John Sargeant was the advisor of contemporary British government in the country in educational matters. Its aim was to reach a standard in education within a time limit of forty years that England also planned to touch. The Sergeant Report mentioned that basic education to the kids of three to six years, universal mandatory and even without any cost education to the children of six to fourteen years, and a higher education course of three years for beginners at university level who qualified higher secondary exams and got selection for universities. The report was also concerned with the public library system, adult illiteracy, and employment bureaus (Chand, 2015, 113). All these things were very important in increasing literacy in India. K.G. Saiyidain, an associate of the scheme, praised it for many reasons and called it the first complete or comprehensive plan of education at the national level. The Indian government's asking states to formulate five-year plans, establishment of the education department separately (1945), and University Grant Committee in 1946 were the important steps taken towards the spread of education when the Seargent report was submitted. (Ghosh, 2000, 173-75).

## **IV. EVOLUTION OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICIES IN INDIA**

### **4.1. University Education Commission in 1948**

Its other name is Radhakrishnan Commission as well. It was formed just the next year India got freedom from Britishers. They totally made the education system, especially university level, ineffective in their era. The standard of education was not only low; it was impractical as well. Therefore, in order to tackle all these problems, the Radhakrishnan commission was

brought into existence. The well-known University Grant Commission is the result of the recommendations of this commission; it discussed various issues after higher secondary education and recommended UGC, which was founded by the Indian government in 1953. After getting the status of statutory body in 1956, the University Grant Commission is active in the field of higher education in different ways (Sen, 2016, 17). Moreover, it recommended about many things in order to change and enhance higher education: the educational structure, standards of teaching, teaching methods, improvement in examination system, education of morality religions, women's education, various activities of students and their welfare, etc. It was a commission that covered almost all issues of university education (Ghosh, n.d.). As far as the language or the medium in which students were needed to be instructed, the commission endorsed their familiarity in local, national, and English language in the university. Not only this, the commission emphasized the replacement of the English language with any language of India without taking time if it could be done earlier (Ghosh, 2000, 179). Its recommendations were not only established but also recommended. Consequently, the country gradually developed an entirely new system of education (Pandey, 2019, 616).

### **4.2. Indian Education Commission (1964-66) and National Policy on Education (1968)**

The Kothari Commission of 1964 was the basis of the first national education policy of 1968 in India; even now, a lot of people regard it as a milestone in the (educational) history of this nation (Sen, 2016, 17). The commission that was about education at all levels, including sciences, in its report, recommended the practicality of education, among many other things. Like the University Commission of 1948, this commission also favoured the three languages, but with some changes; in educational and administrative works, modern languages of India should be developed and used in the related states, whereas all the mentioned languages were to be learnt at the primary levels and only two at the secondary level (Ghosh, 2000, 182-83). It also requested those who were concerned with

education to bring improvement in its quality by reducing or removing waste or useless things. There was a remarkable increase in education from primary to university at the end of 1966. The number of universities increased from twenty to seventy between 1947 and 1968; there were 18 higher education institutes of university level as well. (Sherman, 2018).

The national policy on education in 1968 came with a goal or agenda with seventeen main points. It emphasized that the children not older than fourteen years should be educated compulsorily. It was a policy to increase literacy among adults and incorporated English at the intermediate level along with other Indian languages. The commission was in favor of spreading Hindi across the nation; it weighted all Indians to learn it. ("The Significant Shift in the Education Policy of India," n.d.) It also focused on research education, education after 12th grades, and the development of a scientific mindset in the students (Balayogi, 2024, 10263). The seriousness of this commission can be understood from the fact that it recommended increasing the expenses on education to six percent of national income (Ghosh, 2000, 188). However, the national policy was not very effective in spreading education in India because it had many provisions found in the reports previously submitted.

#### 4.3. The National Policy on Education (1986)

The 1968 education policy, in many ways, was similar to the earlier plans, commissions, etc. It was criticized also for its flaws and not being as effective as it was expected to be. Therefore, a need was felt to formulate a more useful and comprehensive policy on education. The National Policy on Education brought basic changes in the education system. The scenario of school and college education totally changed when they introduced the 10+2+3 formula of education. It was also concerned with vocational courses to increase the competency of the learners to be adjusted in the job market. (Balayogi, 2024, 10263). In short, the policy included eleven characteristics that were very important in improving education and society ("The Significant Shift in the Education Policy of India," n.d.).

#### 4.4. The National Policy on Education 2020

This is the recent educational policy of India. It came with so many radical changes in the educational sector. If it is education of children, integration of technology, or training of teachers, the policy is concerned with all these things in order to make a powerful education system in comparison to other countries (Balayogi, 2024, 10264).

## V. CONCLUSION

India has one of the oldest education systems in the world. It keeps changing as per the demand of the time. So the policies are also formulated as needed. This article covered the educational policies in colonial and postcolonial India. It was not possible to cover all educational plans; some of them are not included. It is evident from the study that every educational policy has some good things and some drawbacks as well. Their role in the spread of education in India can not be totally discarded or ignored; if one educational policy failed in fulfilling its goals, another one was introduced with improvement. In this way, the NEP 2020 came recently. Its effects on education will certainly be seen in education and society.

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