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The Interdisciplinary British and American Studies Journal (IBAS Journal) is a rigorously *double-blind peer-reviewed, biannual* academic journal that fosters innovative scholarship in countries with British and American literary traditions. IBAS Journal welcomes submissions from scholars, researchers, and advanced graduate students working across disciplines, including *literature, language, culture, and society* of Britain and America. We are particularly interested in any kind of scholarly work from the Medieval Age to the present day. Our goal is to foster a deeper understanding of Britain and America through research conducted in a global context, including those from non-Anglophone countries.

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Dear Esteemed Reader,

Six months ago, we embarked on an exciting journey with the launch of the *Interdisciplinary British and American Studies Journal (IBAS)*. We're thrilled to present our second issue, a testament to the continued dedication to fostering academic excellence and promoting rich intercultural dialogue that we established from the very beginning.

Our mission remains steadfast: to create a dynamic platform for scholars, educators, and practitioners to share insightful research that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries. In this issue, you'll find a truly remarkable collection of papers, reflecting the global reach and diverse perspectives that make the fields of British and American Studies so vibrant.

This issue proudly showcases contributions from across the globe, demonstrating the universal appeal and critical importance of interdisciplinary research. From Europe and Africa to Asia, our authors bring unique insights and fresh perspectives. We are honored to feature scholarly works from different countries in this issue.

These distinguished papers, originating from diverse academic landscapes, profoundly underscore the journal's commitment to showcasing a wide array of scholarly voices and methodologies. Each article contributes significantly to our understanding of the cultural, linguistic, social, and literary dimensions that shape British and American societies, further enriching the interdisciplinary dialogue we champion. I extend my sincere gratitude to all authors not only for their invaluable contributions to our journal but also for their patience and understanding throughout the rigorous peer-review process.

Furthermore, I wish to convey my special thanks to the distinguished members of our Editorial and Advisory Boards, as well as our dedicated Reviewers. Their unwavering support and invaluable contributions were instrumental in the successful publication of this issue.

We hope this second issue inspires and informs your own scholarly pursuits. Thank you for being a part of the IBAS journey.

Warm regards,

Dr. Kenan Yerli

Editor
Interdisciplinary British and American Studies Journal

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Re(Claiming) Body and Mind: Maternal Discourses and Black Female Sexuality in Gayle Jones's *Corregidora*

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abstract

The corporeal, psychological, and sexual experiences of Black women constitute a critical site of intersectional analysis, where heteronormative, class-based, racial, and gendered systems of oppression converge. The reclamation of bodily autonomy and cognitive agency, alongside the reconstruction of sexual identity, necessitates Black women's strategic negotiation of what Patricia Hill Collins terms the "matrix of domination." Consequently, sexuality emerges as both a contested terrain and a locus of resistance, offering pathways toward individual and collective empowerment. Black women writers have consistently interrogated the complex negotiations inherent in simultaneously embodying the identities of "woman," "Black," and "American" across distinct historical epochs.

This study, grounded in African American feminist theoretical frameworks, examines the pivotal role of historical narratives and maternal discourse in the construction of Black female sexual identity as depicted in Gayl Jones' seminal novel *Corregidora* (1975). Through close textual analysis, this paper contends that protagonist Ursa Corregidora engages in a deliberate process of deconstructing the inherited maternal and historical narratives that have circumscribed Black women's sexual agency. The analysis demonstrates how Ursa subsequently reconstructs her sexual identity through a dynamic interplay between three symbolic domains: the maternal body (womb), collective historical trauma, and the transformative power of Blues music as cultural expression. This triadic framework reveals the complex mechanisms through which Black women negotiate inherited trauma while asserting sexual autonomy and cultural identity.

Keywords: empowerment, sexuality, identity formation, the blues, black feminism

Liberated woman. I know what I am, and I know what I want.

Beverly Marsden

1. INTRODUCTION

The reconstruction of sexuality and the assertion of bodily autonomy constitute foundational preoccupations within African American women's literary tradition, representing both thematic consistency and theoretical intervention across temporal and generic boundaries. Contemporary Black feminist scholars and creative writers have undertaken systematic efforts to destabilize hegemonic historical narratives that privilege and perpetuate representations of the sexually violated Black female body as inherently vulnerable and available for exploitation. The institution of slavery functioned as a totalizing system that produced racialized and gendered subjects positioned as inherently subservient, systematically degraded, and economically commodified through both productive and reproductive labor.

Harriet Jacobs's seminal narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) exemplifies the slave woman's testimonial genre, providing critical documentation of the mechanisms through which enslaved women were reduced to economic units valued primarily for their reproductive and sexual commodification. However, the transmission of survival strategies across generations paradoxically resulted in the perpetuation of plantation ideology within post-emancipation maternal discourse. This intergenerational transmission limited Black women's subjectivity to reproductive function, positioning them as "breeders" rather than recognizing their full maternal agency and personhood. Zora Neale Hurston's canonical novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) also illustrates this phenomenon through the character of Nanny, whose advocacy for marriage as economic security reflects the internalization of patriarchal protection myths despite her own experiences of sexual violence under slavery. Nanny's famous assertion that "de nigger woman is de mule uh de world" (1937, 14) simultaneously acknowledges Black women's systematic exploitation while reproducing the very ideologies that construct them as beasts of burden. Similarly, Great Gram in Jones's *Corregidora* embodies the perpetuation of reproductive instrumentality, demonstrating how trauma responses can inadvertently reinscribe the logic of the plantation economy.

Resistance to this ideological legacy necessitated multifaceted interventions across philosophical, political, social, and literary domains. Black feminist activists and literary critics initiated comprehensive cultural movements designed to facilitate community consciousness-raising while simultaneously addressing intergenerational trauma through the excavation of suppressed family histories and the restoration of severed maternal genealogies.

The intersecting systems of slavery and white supremacist ideology functioned to construct racialized female sexuality through the deployment of controlling images that justified ongoing exploitation. Patricia Hill Collins identifies three primary stereotypes—Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel—that operate as ideological mechanisms for rationalizing the sexual objectification of Black women while obscuring the structural violence that produces their subordination. These archetypal representations have demonstrated remarkable persistence, continuing to circumscribe contemporary African American women's romantic and social relationships through the reproduction of hypersexualized expectations and dehumanizing assumptions.

Bell Hooks' comparative analysis of racial and sexual exploitation reveals the particular brutality of sexual violence within the broader context of racialized oppression: "racist exploitation of black women as workers either in the fields or domestic household was not as de-humanizing and demoralizing as the sexual exploitation" (1982, 24). This observation underscores the ways in which sexual violence functions not merely as individual trauma but as a systematic technology of racial subjugation designed to fragment Black women's psychological integrity and communal bonds. The internalization of white supremacist definitions of Black female sexuality represents what Antonio Gramsci would term as hegemonic domination—the process through which oppressed groups come to accept and reproduce the very ideologies that justify their subordination. Enslaved and post-emancipation Black communities were subjected to comprehensive psychological conditioning designed to naturalize these hierarchical arrangements and suppress alternative frameworks for understanding Black female subjectivity.

Anneka Marshall's analysis illuminates the contemporary ramifications of this historical process: "objectification of black women as creatures of sex ... influences [their] identity and relationship" (1996, 5). This observation points toward the need for what Collins terms "self-definition"—the creation of oppositional knowledge systems that center Black women's own understanding of their bodies, sexuality, and subjectivity as a form of epistemic resistance to dominant cultural narratives. The literary and theoretical work of Black feminist writers thus represents more than aesthetic intervention; it constitutes what Audre Lorde identifies as the transformation of silence into language and action, creating new discursive possibilities for articulating Black female agency beyond the constraints of historical objectification and contemporary stereotyping.

2. ANALYSIS of *CORREGIDORA*

African American feminist critics and writers aimed to dismantle the constructed body politic that subjugated and limited female body reproduction. They created an intellectual and theoretical map that resisted the patriarchal control of sexuality, fertility, and pleasure. They aimed to challenge the idea that biology is a woman's destiny. According to Meena G. Sabala "women's bodies are primarily social constructs that define their experiences femininity in intersubjective relationships with others" (2010, 44). To problematize the construction of female body, mentally and physically, for procreation and male, African American women writers such as Gayl Jones, Toni Morrison, Toni Cade Bambara, Alice Walker, and Ntozake Shange complicated traumatic history, the impact of maternal discourses, motherhood, and the relationships between black men and women. Their arguments and endeavors initiated black feminist, and womanist approaches to empower black women and problematize their physical and sexual subjugation and exploitation. Within this context, Gayl Jones, in her 1975 novel *Corregidora*, challenges and complicates the "intimate violence and historical legacy of violation" (Davies 2005, 25). Jones's approach aims to liberate women from ancestral discourses, rape, and abuse within and across the races. She also seeks to challenge the perpetuation of the legacy of exploitation that cannot be understood without relating it to the Afro-American feminist movement.

It is acknowledged that black feminist thought dates back to Sojourner Truth and Anna Julia Cooper. Sojourner Truth, a former black slave and an abolitionist, addressed the audience at Ohio Women's Rights Convention with her historically famous speech "And Ain't I a Woman?" Later, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper established the NACWC (National Association of Colored Women's Clubs) and published her anti-slavery poem "Eliza Harris." Starting with Toni Morrison and her

first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, African American women authors, using slave narratives as literary foremother texts, problematized the black women's condition and the impact of white ideology. This encouraged black scholars and thinkers to seek for and introduce the principles of black literary criticism and black feminist theory to address their unique problems and concerns. Toni Cade Bambara edited the first anthology: *The Black Woman: An Anthology* (1970). Another significant manifesto that contributed to the development of the African American feminist movement and literary tradition was the Combahee River Collection.¹

In *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (2000), Patricia Hill Collins states that "African American women's oppression has encompassed three interdependent dimensions, "the economic, political and ideological" (2000, 4-5). The economic dimension involves labor and capitalist exploitation of black women labor. The political dimension excluded African American women from voting and working at public offices. The ideological dimension refers to cultural, racist, sexist, discriminatory ideologies that permeate social structure, which is regarded as usual unless complicated. In *Corregidora*, Jones depicts the impact of inherited sexual trauma among the descendants of exploited slave women within the matrix of domination, to borrow from Collins, intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Within these intersecting forces, rape and commodification of the black body became one of the central arguments that violated black women's wholeness.

Assuming discourses create that subject and body in a system in which they are embedded, we can see how power operates within this system to develop different discourses. For Michel Foucault, discourse can be "both an instrument of power and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault 1990, 101). Thus, power represents a "complex strategic situation in a particular society" (93). In other words, power is the structure of force relations within a society tied to discourse-cultural modes of understanding. As a corollary of power, resistance develops. In this sense, power is productive as it enables the suppressed to renegotiate the existing discourses and establish alternative discourses to reconstruct the new identity while deconstructing the old one. In this vein, African American literary critics, bell hooks, Barbara Christian, Patricia H. Collins, Adriane Rich, and Audre Lorde, to name a few, implemented mechanisms necessary to generate discourses on sexuality and sexual identity in order to resist the suppressive power and craft and liberate bodies. Ursa embodies the African American feminist movement's politics and enacts its principles by fighting against the power that asks her to give birth to new commodities. Thus, as we will discuss below, she finds ways of dealing with the oppression to liberate her body and mind.

Black women's sexuality reveals the convergence of heterosexism, class, race, and gender. In order to reconstruct their sexual identity, black females have to overcome multiple oppressions. For that reason, their sexuality becomes a site of resistance, which constitutes a path to empowerment

¹They declared their purpose as follows: "We are a collective of Black feminists who have been meeting together since 1974. During that time, we have been involved in the process of defining and clarifying our politics while at the same time doing political work within our own group and in coalition with other progressive organizations and movements. The most general statement of our politics at present would be that we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression, and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives. As Black women, we see Black feminism as the logical political movement to combat the manifold and simultaneous oppressions that all women of color face."

In “Transformation of Silence into Language and Action,” Audre Lorde, one of the pioneers of the Black Feminist Criticism, notes:

What are the words you do not yet have? What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you sicken and die of them, still in silence? I am the face of one of your fears. Because I am a woman, because I am black, because I am a lesbian, because I am myself. (1978, 42)

Lorde encourages self-achievement and self-realization through negotiating and deterritorializing the sovereignty of heteronormativity by reterritorializing the power/discourse dichotomy through which sexuality is uttered. Lorde articulates the need for resisting dominant values and urges women to act and voice their perspectives. Resistance would end the fears that the black female has been experienced historically. In this sense, Gayl Jones wrote perceptively about the precise inflections of racial and gender difference to black women’s experience of being both black and female have attained unprecedented levels of political and academic recognition by the turn of the twenty-first century. Like other black women writers, Jones challenged and problematized the representations of the differences that emphasized gender and race within power and resistance discourse. In so doing, she attempted to explore the meaning of being a “woman,” “black,” and “American” at different historical moments. Jones explains the relationship between black men and women. The rhythm and the repetitions in blues indicate that the simultaneity of various actions reminds the complicated men-women relationship and black female sexuality.

On sexuality, Foucault notes that “sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover. It is the name that can be given to a historical construct” (1990, 105). Sexuality is our construction, and it is not only discovering our secret and suppressed desires. Cultural-based variations play a significant role representing diverse sexual relationships, heteronormative and homosexual, and psychic shifts. Culture and community construct the sexual identity according to the world view they occupy. Therefore, cultural and communal discourses become a vehicle of introduction into the narratives of gender, sexuality, race, class, and agency. Ifeona Fulani aptly notes that “there are ways in which the history of enslavement and colonization, sexual exploitation, abuse and commodification of black female bodies created an extreme burden on the sexual identity of some black women” (Fulani 2011, 1). Similarly, in “The Occult of True Black Womanhood,” Ann duCille points out that “in the twenties, the fascination with the black female body, in particular, and the primitive sexual anatomy and appetite attributed to the African women increased the degree to which black female functioned as an erotic icon in the racial and sexual ideology of Western civilization” (1994, 592). Sexuality is rooted in the body’s materiality, yet it is culturally, socially, and historically defined, constructed, and articulated. Since the constructed sexuality is a discursive site, power and resistance fluctuate to renegotiate the sexuality. Within this context, Jones’s text opens up a series of crucial moments to contemporary African American feminist criticism that challenges historically generated race, gender, and identity problems. In *Corregidora*, Jones exemplifies reconstructing or recreating oneself in moments of resistance when one is challenged by race, gender, sexuality, family relations, and history’s traumatic impact.

2.1. Maternalism and Sexuality

The reconstruction of Black female sexual identity constitutes a central theoretical concern for this analysis, as it challenges essentialist conceptualizations of Black female sexuality as a fixed

identity category. Instead, this study positions sexuality as a dynamic site of negotiation, resistance, and reimagining. Frantz Fanon's psychoanalytic framework provides crucial insight here:

“if one wants to understand the racial situation psychoanalytically...as it is experienced by individual consciousness, considerable importance must be given to sexual phenomena” (1970, 160). This psychoanalytic lens reveals how racial trauma becomes inscribed upon and experienced through sexual subjectivity, necessitating an examination that moves beyond surface-level identity markers toward deeper psychological structures.

The theoretical intervention of this study lies in its challenge to maternal discourses that have historically demarcate Black female agency. Rather than accepting these discourses as deterministic, this analysis positions them as contested discursive and rhetorical terrains where identity emerges as “a site of active agency, desire, and performance.” Ashraf Rushdy's observation that “Corregidora is able to define the limits that a slave past can and should have on her, learning both the value and the dangers of remembering generation” (2000, 274) illuminates the complex negotiation between historical inheritance and individual agency. Ursa's paradigmatic resistance operates across multiple dimensions: she disrupts the politics of silence that have traditionally governed Black female experience, challenges the commodification of Black female bodies, and resists both vertical (intergenerational) and horizontal (contemporaneous) forms of oppression. Through this multifaceted resistance, she transforms Black sexuality and identity into new representational forms, articulated most powerfully through the blues tradition.

In *Corregidora*, maternal discourses function as what Marianne Hirsch calls complex ideological formations “based on maternal experience and capable of combining power and powerlessness, authority and invisibility, strength and vulnerability, anger and love, [that] construct sexuality to perform a historical task” (1989, 167). This theoretical framework reveals how sexuality becomes instrumentalized within intergenerational trauma transmission, serving historical rather than individual purposes. The process of renegotiating and reconstructing sexual identity within this context presents considerable theoretical and practical challenges, as it requires simultaneous engagement with and resistance to inherited traumatic narratives. Jerry W. Ward Jr.'s analysis positions Ursa as “imbued with this primitive belief in the duty of a black woman, connected as it is to a circumscribed vision of woman's possible development” (1982, 100), highlighting how patriarchal ideologies become internalized through generational transmission. This internalization exemplifies what bell hooks theorizes as the ongoing “devaluation of black womanhood [that] occurred as a result of the sexual exploitation of black women during slavery” (2015, 54). Ursa's characterization embodies hooks' theoretical framework while simultaneously problematizing the naturalization of these inherited constraints through maternal discourse.

Employing Michel Foucault's theoretical framework of power and resistance, Barbara Bush's analysis identifies “women's control over their bodies” as constituting “power relations at a most basic level,” noting that “Power over women was exercised through control over their sexuality, a form of oppression rarely experienced to the same degree by slave men” (1996, 204). This gendered analysis of power relations reveals how sexual control functions as a primary mechanism of domination. Ursa's resistance operates on dual levels: it disrupts the intergenerational transmission of exploitative power structures embedded within ancestral narratives while simultaneously engaging in what Rushdy identifies as healing work, “motivated by the need both to bear witness and to heal the mind” (2002, 277). Through this dual process, Ursa recuperates her subjective agency and liberates Black female sexuality from the commodifying constraints of both Black and white patriarchal gazes, ultimately reconstructing sexual identity as a site of empowerment rather than exploitation.

Toni Cade Bambara observes that “one of the most characteristic features of [the Black] community” is the pervasive “antagonism between [Black] men and women” that reproduces white supremacist power structures within intimate relationships (1970, 106). *Corregidora* inaugurates its narrative with a visceral demonstration of masculinist violence that results in the protagonist’s forced hysterectomy, establishing the Black female body as a contested site of interracial power dynamics. The novel’s opening sequence dramatizes this foundational trauma: Mutt’s jealousy-driven assault propels Ursa down a flight of stairs following her nightly blues performance, precipitating a miscarriage and subsequent hysterectomy that renders her permanently sterile at twenty-five. This act of intimate partner violence positions Mutt as both epistemic and corporeal threat, embodying what bell hooks identifies as the internalization of patriarchal dominance within Black masculinity.

Barbara Bush’s incisive analysis reveals that “where sexuality and reproduction were concerned, slave women were quadruply burdened by both black-and-white patriarchies and by both gender and racial oppression” (1996, 210), a framework that resonates powerfully with Deborah King’s theoretical concept of “multiple jeopardy.” This intersection of oppressions exemplifies the systematic commodification of the Black female body across political, economic, and sexual domains. For Ursa, the womb and reproductive capacity constitute the primary markers of sexual identity imposed through historical indoctrination—a psychological inheritance that perpetuates what Freed identifies as the way “slavery remains alive in the present” (2011, 409). The profound disconnect between physical intimacy and emotional experience becomes evident in Ursa’s sexual relationship with Tadpole McCormick following her hysterectomy. Despite engaging in physical intimacy, Ursa’s psychological response—or lack thereof—reveals the depth of her trauma. Her acknowledgment that “she feels nothing when Tadpole is inside her” demonstrates how the surgical removal of her reproductive organs has severed not merely her biological capacity for motherhood, but her fundamental connection to sexual embodiment itself. This detachment illustrates the lasting psychological violence of reproductive coercion, where the Black woman’s sense of self remains inextricably linked to her commodified reproductive function even after its physical elimination.

Tadpole’s response to Ursa’s reproductive trauma reveals the extent to which Black male sexuality has been similarly colonized by reductive ideologies that fragment intimacy into functional components. His crude assertion—“I want to help you... Damn you still got hole, ain’t you? As long as a woman has a hole, she can fuck” (1975, 82)—epitomizes what bell hooks identifies as the internalization of white supremacist sexual paradigms within Black intimate relationships. This reduction of female sexuality to anatomical availability demonstrates how the commodification legacy of slavery continues to foreclose possibilities for authentic erotic connection between Black men and women, transforming sexual intimacy into a mechanistic transaction rather than a site of mutual vulnerability and pleasure.

Tadpole’s formulation exemplifies what Lisa Hinrichsen terms the historical sedimentation of violence, the ways in which “distinctive acts of violence are located in and entangled with historically and socially sedimented modes of denial, disavowal, and misrecognition” (2015, 4). His inability to recognize Ursa’s psychological devastation, coupled with his reductive focus on anatomical function, reveals how plantation-era objectification continues to shape contemporary Black sexual relations through what might be termed “inherited emotional illiteracy,” the incapacity to recognize or respond to trauma beyond its material manifestations. Ursa’s internalized response—her anxious questioning of “what good [she is] for a man” (Jones 1975, 25)—depicts the profound extent of her psychological colonization by patriarchal valuation systems. This rhetorical formulation is

analytically significant for several reasons: it reveals her inability to conceptualize female worth beyond male utility; it demonstrates the absence of autonomous desire or reproductive longing in her self-reflection; and it exposes the foreclosure of interiority that prevents readers from accessing her deeper psychological processes. This narrative strategy functions as what Toni Morrison calls “unspeakable things unspoken”—the traumatic silences that structure Black women’s subjectivity within patriarchal discourse.

The text’s refusal to grant access to Ursa’s inner emotional landscape regarding potential motherhood represents a deliberate aesthetic choice that mirrors the historical silencing of Black women’s reproductive desires and maternal ambitions. This absence functions as presence—the very inability to articulate maternal longing becomes a symptom of the ways in which slavery’s reproductive instrumentalization continues to colonize Black women’s imagination of their own possibilities. Her self-denial and diminished self-worth operate as manifestations of what Patricia Williams terms “spirit murder,” the psychological violence that accompanies material oppression. Through Ursa’s fragmented subjectivity, Jones interrogates the mechanisms through which patriarchal norms reproduce within Black women’s self-conception, demonstrating how oppression is internalized. The protagonist’s inability to imagine worth beyond male validation reveals how thoroughly plantation logic has penetrated contemporary Black gender relations, transforming women into perpetual supplicants seeking validation for their diminished existence.

This analysis aligns with Patricia Hill Collins’ theoretical framework positioning sexuality as both autonomous oppressive system and constitutive element of intersecting dominations: “sexuality can be conceptualized as a freestanding system of oppression similar to oppressions of race, class, nation, and gender, as well as part of each of these distinctive systems of oppression” (2000, 134). Her sterility becomes the precondition for reconstructing alternative forms of sexual subjectivity within what Houston Baker terms the “blues matrix,” a cultural framework that privileges improvisation, survival, and transformation over biological reproduction and patriarchal validation. The hysterectomy thus operates as both violent rupture and enabling condition, severing Ursa from reproductive duty while creating discursive space for articulating desire beyond maternal function. This liberation enables her eventual navigation toward blues-inflected sexual agency that privileges personal pleasure and creative expression over genealogical obligation and male approval.

Domestic violence functions like a conduit through which Ursa renegotiates her sexuality, deeply influenced by familial history. In other words, Ursa’s act of subversion, as Butler puts out, is a “product of the terms of violence,” which opens a possibility to oppose the existing power and discourse and creates her own space (Butler 1990, 122). Ursa can subvert hegemonic discourses and signify black female sexuality through this space and operations of power. As Sirene Harb acknowledges, “in her quest for self-refashioning, Ursa revisits, and works through, the controversial implications of the trans-generational tales that dominated her childhood, in order to determine the limitations that she should impose upon the invasive slave past and its haunting details” (Harb 2008, 118). Rejecting discursive oppression and the stories that Great Gram told her, she breaks the yoke of the past and the limitations the past imposed upon her. Through Ursa and giving her the discourse rather than language to tell of her sexual identity, Jones contributes to growing discussions of black womanhood’s sexual politics and uses the Blues as a literary device to empower black women.

To create a distinct and unique form of resistance, Black feminist critics, according to McDowell, “ought to move from this Black women writer employ literary devices in a distinct way, and to compare the way Black women writers create their own mythic structures” (1980, 158). In *The Black Feminist Thought*, Patricia Hill Collins asserts that “Black women’s sexuality is either ignored or included primarily concerning African American men’s issues” (2000, 124). Ursa has nightmares about her ancestral past after the hysterectomy and says: “I dreamed with my eyes open. All the Corregidora women with narrow waists and high cheekbones and wide hips. All the Corregidora women dancing. And he wanted me. He grabbed my waist” (Jones 1975, 61). Simon Corregidora, a Portuguese Brazilian plantation owner, repeatedly raped three generations of Corregidora women—Ursa’s great-grandmother, grandmother, and mother—and prostituted the women to white men. bell hooks argues that “the political aim of this categorical rape of black women by white males was to obtain absolute allegiance and obedience to the white imperialistic order” (1982, 27). The slave women’s body is consumed for male pleasure and capitalist investment. The body is commodified both as a sexual object and as a breeder. As Marshall succinctly explains, “under enslavement the endeavors of slave-owners to increase the fertility of Black women in order to maximize profits entailed the systematic control of the sexuality of female slaves” (Marshall, 1996, 8). This practice, as Ursa problematized saying, “he made them make love to anyone, so they couldn’t love anyone” (Jones 1975, 104), prevented the Corregidora women from taking pleasure and desiring sex.

In *Reconstructing Womanhood*, Hazel Carby notes that “the exploitation of black sexuality led to the repression of passion and the repression or denial of female sexuality and desire” (1987, 174). For that reason, Ursa’s quest to reclaim her sexuality, desire, and subjectivity opens up possibilities to leave the traumatic impact of the past behind and encourages her to desire and hate for her own sake and pleasure. To reclaim their bodies, minds, and desires, black women resisted victimization through their sexuality and created a paradigm shift to emphasize their commitment to productivity that would distort gazes on the sexuality. The historical discourses that supported negative stereotypes influenced the way black men and community perceive black women. Since Simon Corregidora commodified Ursa’s matrilineal descent during slavery in Brazil, the idea of making new generations and rape haunts Ursa in her nightmares. Corregidora wants to dance with her. Ursa is afraid that Corregidora would commit incest with her as he did with her grandmother and mother and use her as a concubine to give birth to new commodities since every child born from slave women became a “golden” commodity for the master. Jones, through Ursa, problematizes the “procreation [as it is] a slave-breeder’s way of thinking” (1975, 22). Corregidora’s utterances such as “Ain’t even took my name. You Corregidora’s, ain’t you? Ain’t even took my name. You ain’t my women” exemplify the traumatic effects of past stories (1975, 61, emphasis in original). The dreams and flashbacks throughout the novel are inextricably entangled with conflicting and overlapping historical formations.

Historically formative discourses and moral practices played a significant role in constructing and limiting the space of identity and the subject- what Foucault calls “modes of subjectivation” (1990, 32). To resist and challenge the historical formations, Jones highlights the fact that Ursa’s challenge to traditional manifestations of sexuality is “detachment toward oneself and the Constitution of relation with oneself tending towards the destruction of the form” of the constructed self (1990, 69). Ursa shows that subjectivation entails freedom, aesthetics practices, technologies of the self, and modes of self-fashioning. Madhu Dubey agrees with Jones’s assertion that by memorizing and narrating their history, the Corregidora women aim to free themselves from historical traumas and “claim the power of their wombs” to assert the power of maternity denied by “Corregidora’s incestuous violence as an oppositional strategy” (qtd. In Fulani 2011, 11).

Therefore, Ursa must find a way to separate her from traumatic and undesirable epistemic and corporeal violence of the past in order to self-fashion herself.

In this sense, losing the womb becomes a discursive practice and acts as a resistance to the historical narratives and maternal discourses. The act breaks the ties with coercive subordinate domination that slavery imposed on the black body. The subordination, which is mostly inescapable, is fixed by birth and race. Ursa's resistance alters these formations as her empowerment "requires transforming unjust social institutions that African Americans encountered from one generation to the next" (Collins 2000, 273). In this sense, losing the womb, I would argue, initiates the process of empowerment, which provides analytical inquiry of choice and fascination that would liberate her from constructed black female roles and sexuality. In other words, this act would enable her to control her own desires, pleasures, and choices. Thus, by ignoring or rejecting the constructed identity, Ursa dismantles the exploitative logic that equates sexuality to productivity. In addition to that, she politically and historically refuses misrecognition or non-recognition and authentically becomes "a whole human being" (Douglass 2004, 26).

2.2. The Blues as Recuperative Force

The theoretical significance of alternative expressive modalities becomes paramount in understanding Ursa's resistance to hegemonic structures that seek to constrain Black female subjectivity. The blues emerges as a critical counter-hegemonic space what might be theorized as a site of aesthetic subjectivation that enables the transformation of traumatic experience into empowered articulation. This process operates beyond mere emotional catharsis; it constitutes a fundamental reconfiguration of power relations through cultural production. Houston A. Baker Jr.'s seminal theoretical contribution in *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature* (1984) provides the conceptual framework for understanding this substitutive dynamic. Baker's definition of the blues matrix as "a womb, a network, a fossil-bearing rock, a rocky trace of a gemstone's removal, a principal metal in an alloy, a mat or plate for reproducing print or phonograph records" (1984, 3) offers multiple metaphorical registers for comprehending the blues' generative capacity. The explicit invocation of "womb" establishes the theoretical foundation for understanding how aesthetic practice can function as reproductive substitute—not merely compensating for biological loss but providing an alternative mode of creation that exceeds the limitations of biological reproduction.

This matrix functions as what might be theorized as a cultural womb—a generative space that produces agency, recognition, and subjectivity for Ursa. Her psychological journey, occurring "within her psychological boundaries" (Nunes 2010, 69), represents more than individual healing; it constitutes a fundamental reconfiguration of her relationship to historical trauma, collective memory, and prescribed social roles. Through this reconstructive process, Ursa moves beyond the constraints of her ancestral inheritance to claim what might be understood as presentist agency—the capacity to determine her own relational and sexual terms. The novel's conclusion, which positions Ursa in a relationship of potential equality with Mutt, suggests the successful completion of this reconstructive project. Her achievement of relational equality emerges not through the recovery of biological function but through the cultivation of alternative forms of power and agency mediated by blues aesthetics. This transformation demonstrates how cultural production can function as a site of decolonizing work, enabling the reconstruction of Black female subjectivity beyond the constraints of historical trauma and biological determinism.

Steven C. Tracy's theoretical framework positions the blues as "an assertion of autonomy and a consolidation of power within the context of a world that wishes to diminish or eliminate that power" (2004, 123). This formulation reveals how aesthetic practices function as more than artistic expression; they become mechanisms of political resistance that operate through cultural rather than directly confrontational means. As a blues singer, Ursa's blues performance transcends individual artistic practice to become a vehicle for transmitting collective memory while simultaneously asserting individual agency. Through this dual function, she navigates the complex terrain between historical obligation and personal liberation. Similarly, Ann duCille's critical observation that the blues "are the metaphor around which Jones works the magic of her text, the medium she uses to enable Ursa to tell her story" (1994, 567) shows the metafictional dimensions of this aesthetic strategy. The blues functions not merely as thematic content but as structural methodology or a narrative technology that enables the articulation of experiences that resist conventional representational modes. This aesthetic framework becomes particularly significant when considered alongside Ursa's physical trauma and reproductive loss.

The theoretical implications of Ursa's transition to performing at Happy's extend beyond career pragmatism to encompass what might be understood as reproductive substitution through cultural production. The blues becomes an alternative generative capacity: a means of producing cultural rather than biological offspring. This substitution operates through what Tracy characterizes as the "creative celebration of [...] overcoming of hardship" (2004, 123), transforming sites of trauma into sources of empowerment. Through blues performance, Ursa reconstructs her relationship to productivity, creativity, and legacy, establishing aesthetic creation as a form of resistance to the biological determinism that has historically constrained Black female agency.

This process of aesthetic subjectivation enables Ursa to reclaim what might be termed as her sexual sovereignty—not merely the right to sexual pleasure, but the broader capacity to determine the terms of her own embodied experience. The blues provides a discursive space where traumatic memory can be transformed into empowered narrative, where historical burden becomes cultural resource, and where individual healing contributes to collective resistance. In this formulation, aesthetic practice emerges as a crucial site of decolonizing work, enabling the reconstruction of subjectivity beyond the constraints of historical trauma.

What do you remember?
I could feel your thing. I could smell you in my nostrils.
What do blues do for you?
It helps me explain what I can't explain. (1975, 56, emphasis in original)

The ontological permanence of the blues in Ursa's experience and her assertion that blues "is something you can't lose" (Jones 1975, 97) establishes a crucial dialectical relationship between loss and retention, absence and presence. This formulation gains theoretical significance when positioned against the traumatic loss of her reproductive capacity: while the physical womb has been surgically removed, the blues emerges as an inalienable cultural inheritance that cannot be severed from her embodied experience. This permanence functions as both consolation and compensation, offering a form of generative capacity that transcends biological determinism.

Grace McEntee's theoretical intervention positions the blues as fundamentally resistant to categorical containment, noting that "the blues defies the definition of categorization" (2006, 94).

This definitional elusiveness becomes theoretically productive when considered alongside McEntee's broader claim that the blues, "whether a musical form, broader aesthetic framework, stylistic element or underlying mood that inspires them, ranks as one of the formative artistic forms in African American expressive culture" (2006, 94). The blues' categorical fluidity mirrors its functional versatility in Ursa's reconstructive project: it operates simultaneously as artistic practice, therapeutic process, and political strategy. Through this multivalent engagement, Ursa deploys blues aesthetics to articulate what might be understood as a revolutionary sexual politics—one that challenges both the commodification of Black female sexuality and the reduction of women to reproductive function.

The blues in *Corregidora* emerges as a form of working-through that operates beyond traditional therapeutic models, engaging cultural memory and collective experience as resources for individual healing. Caroline Brown's analysis illuminates the complex temporal dynamics inherent in blues-mediated healing: "What begins with closure becomes increasingly multifaceted as Ursa ... submerges herself within her reflections and the blues process itself, which is not only her singing but the struggle to understand and work through her feelings of rage, resentment, bitterness, and conflicted desire" (2004, 121). This formulation reveals the blues as more than performative outlet—it constitutes a psychological methodology that enables the transformation of traumatic affect into empowered subjectivity.

With the blues, Ursa resists the social, political, and psychological dimensions of misrecognition and domination. In other words, her resistance is the embodiment of affectionate relations between personality, sexuality, political experiences, and language within the scope of the struggle for her sexual identity and representation of the black female body. In that subjectivity, Ursa can define her sexual identity by resisting and removing "rocky traces of a gemstone," which is the legacy of slavery, and the roles assigned to the black female body, and she unearths her consciousness and identity, which were hidden by ancestral discourses" (Baker 1984, 3). With her memories, Ursa resembles "a fossil-bearing rock," which carries essential evidence from the past that conveys messages to future generations. The matrix to transfer the evidence and told and the untold story of the past is the blues. Baker explains:

The blues are a synthesis. Combining work songs, group seculars, field hollers, sacred harmonies, proverbial wisdom, folk philosophy, political commentary, ribald humor, elegiac lament, and much more, they constitute an amalgam that seems constantly to have been in motion in America – invariably becoming, shaping, transforming, and displacing the peculiar experiences of Africans in the New World. (1984, 5)

Thus, Jones affirms the blues' role as recuperative, shaping, and transforming discourse of power, which "witnesses to painful misfortune or sexual conditions" (McEntee 2006, 94). It shapes Ursa's new identity and transfers her from a commodified black body to a liberated, empowered, and autonomous black body that resists exploitation of both black and white males. Baker also notes that "the blues comprise a meditational site where familiar antimonies are resolved in the office of adequate cultural understanding" (1984, 6). Therefore, Ursa has to create her own song. 'A song,' she says, that would touch [her], touch [her] life *and theirs*' (1975, 59, emphasis in original). Her song aims to express "troubles and desires of [Ursa as a] performer or her sympathetic audience" (McEntee 2006, 94). Similar to the devastating conditions that inspired the blues in its historical course, the painful situations and memories inspire Ursa to sing a song that would mark her identity achievement.

The maternal and historical discourses divided the body and the mind. When Ursa loses her womb, her body and mind are separated and cannot reunify due to the painful memories of her past. Ursa realizes that giving birth to new generations “has different kinds of meanings: that while it is a literal call to make babies, it is also a call to pass on important history about slavery to others, which she can do with or without a womb” (Allen 2002, 268). As mentioned above, black women created a paradigm shift to avoid negative stereotypes about her sexuality and found motherhood as a protective shelter. Losing her womb takes away her sanctuary: motherhood. This is significant because to reclaim her body and mind, Ursa does not need the protective space of motherhood and her sexuality, which denied her subjectivity. For that reason, blues as a productive force and culturally enriching performance, challenges constructed discourses on sexuality and shifts Ursa’s victimization to her triumph. By “shaping, transforming, and displacing the peculiar experiences” and recuperating maternal discourses’ traumatic effect, the Blues help Ursa construct a sexually autonomous and sensuous identity (Baker 1984, 5). With the recuperative force of the blues, she discovers that she can desire sex and have pleasure because the blues “help her to explain what [she] can’t explain” (Jones 1975, 56). As Angela Y. Davis argues, “the historical context within which the blues developed a tradition of openly addressing both female and male sexuality reveals an ideological framework that was specifically African American” (1998, 4). The blues reveals the possibility of a productive narrative to transmit cultural and historical memory to future generations. The blues also helps her to introduce survival strategies for those who used to suppress their hysteria. Ursa wanted a “song that would touch” her life “*and theirs*” (Jones 1975, 59). Ursa becomes a symbol, and through the blues, she creates her defense mechanism against the exploitative system of slavery that abused black women. The blues acts as a conduit to usher their silence and passivism into an eloquent and active struggle against the black body’s commodification.

The blues act as a consciousness-raising force that would strengthen the black female body. Despite its recuperative function, the blues is described as worldly music and is associated with the devil. Songs that do not glorify God are considered devilish and are not sung in churches because of various themes such as sexuality, infidelity, loss of a lover, and injustice. For that reason, blues songs may be destroyed in terms of religious understanding as the lyrics are not conducive for church congregations. In this sense, the blues are used as a force against historical and social rhetoric and against religious rhetoric that may subjugate free thinking. There are moments in which the text exemplifies the notion that the blues is regarded as devilish. This fact is articulated through Ursa’s mother in the following manner:

-Songs are devils. It is your own destruction you’re singing. The voice is a devil.’

-’ Naw, Mama. You don’t understand. Where did you get that?’ ‘Unless your voice is raised up to the glory of God. (1975: 53)

The blues, challenging already established discourses of dominancy, becomes the political language of the oppressed. In other words, it creates a space for resistance to false, distorted, and reduced conceptions of black female identity and sexuality. When Ursa talks to her mother, she aims to manifest her creative agency and deny a formative conflicting aspect of the mother-daughter relationship to explain the role of the blues in reconstructing her sexual identity when she says, “Yes, if you understood me, Mama, you’d see I was trying to explain it, in blues, without the words, the explanation somewhere behind the words” (1975, 66). Through her discourse, she rejects the matrix of oppression, which impedes Ursa’s ability to use proper reasoning. As Ana Nunes states, “the Corregidora women’s historical text is uttered to object to and replace a master’s narrative that tried to

erase them from the memories of humankind” (2011, 79). The blues replaces the master’s narrative and gives Ursa a voice to reconstruct black female sexuality and define her own philosophy of existence.

For Ursa, the blues as a performance represents profound crucial adjustability and elated life force. The rhythm and cadence in blues convey a much deeper meaning to the listeners than the words, which dominates the novel’s final scene. For the significance of the blues songs, Davis notes, “The blues songs [...] offer us a privileged glimpse of the prevailing perceptions of love and sexuality in post-slavery black communities in the United States” (1998: 41). From this perspective, Ursa sees herself “desperate [and] eventually abandons her damaged self-definition to sing” and empowers herself (Gottfried 1994, 568). It is striking that Ursa vehemently wants to sing after the hysterectomy. Ursa remembers a dialogue with Mutt, which is significant in terms of the role of the blues, reminding us of the “call and response” technique that creates a considerable coherence that unites the body and the mind through the rhythms:

“What bothers you?”
“It bothers me because I can’t make generations.”
“What bothers you?”
“It bothers me because I can’t.”
“What bothers you, Ursa?”
“It bothers me because I can’t fuck.”
“What bothers you, Ursa?”
“It bothers me because I can’t feel anything” (Jones 1975, 90)

Rejecting silence and Eurocentric discursive systems with her dialogue, Ursa emphasizes that internalizing the blues is the best way to overcome her trauma. For her, the blues creates a social and political space free of anxieties, worries, and sadness. Thus, instead of maternal and historical narratives that always reminded her of the fact that for many slave women experienced: “her father, the master. Her daughter’s father” (Jones 1975, 59), Ursa creates a culture-based narrative form to free herself from the psychological bound of the past and reclaim her own story and mind.

The blues’ recuperative function works well with Ursa in her journey to self-actualization and reconstructing her sexuality. Dubey argues that “toward an expression of black feminine sexuality and identity, the blues also passionately engages with the masculine, interrupting the feminine continuum affirmed in matrilineal theory” (Dubey 1995, 263). In the final scene during the act of fellatio, which may be read “as psycho-political position-taking in a neo-slavery situation,” Ursa reclaims her own desire and achieves sexual control over her partner (Gysin 2004, 147). The blues helps Ursa “to explain what [she] can’t explain” (Jones 1975, 56). Now, she is conscious of the power she had; her self-empowerment reminds us of what Beverly Marsden succinctly puts in the epigraph I used, ‘I see myself as an achiever. I see myself as an independent liberated woman. I know what I am, and I know what I want’ (qtd. in Marshall, 1996, 32). Ursa as an achiever, embracing the power of control, knows what she wants. The blues provides a discursive public space that complicates and destroys sexual oppression and denial of maternal discourses on productivity.

Although it seems that the fellatio scene is servicing of the male, subordinated to male pleasure, in which Ursa is on her knees and hold Mutt’s ankles while she is performing fellatio, it actually empowers her as she has the power to control the whole process. There are two different criticisms of this final scene. While some critics such as Bruce Simon reads the scene as a “literal return to the history of slavery” (Simon 1997, 102), and Elizabeth Goldberg, who argues that Ursa’s

performance can be read as a denial of her desire and pleasure, I challenge their interpretations and argue that the act empowers her and reminds Mutt her potential power activeness and destruction. Ursa “discovers a potentially destructive feminine power situated at the very edges of heterosexuality” (Dubey 1995, 258), and she knows that she has a choice to emasculate Mutt, who is aware of this power and acknowledges Ursa’s power. When Ursa tells Mutt that she could kill him. I read this scene as reversing the control of power, and both partners take pleasure from their sexual relationship while both reject the legacy of slavery which inflicted both male and female. Joanne L. Freed’s reading of the scene supports my argument stating that “Mutt and Ursa assert the possibility of their own intimacy and pleasure, revising together the forms of sexuality produced by slavery in which they are both implicated” (Freed 2011, 417). Ursa, not literally but metaphorically, emasculates Mutt destroying his masculine privilege and uses sexuality as a weapon of rebellion.

Ashraf Rushdy states that she is “aware of the dangers of wielding that power” as well (Rushdy 2000, 282). Ursa also complicates and destroys the legacy of slavery, which is enacted in an earlier scene depicting objectifying logic ownership as Mutt maintained that logic through his utterance, “your pussy is a little gold piece, ain’t it, Urs. My little gold piece!” (Jones 1975, 60). This ownership is acknowledged through maternal discourses and repeated several times throughout the text: “It’s my ass, ain’t it? When I screwed you last night and asked you whose ass it was, you said it was mine” (Jones 1975, 164). However, in the final scene, she unshackles the historical master-slave dialectic and shows that she is not under the control of maternal discourses or black male sexual and political oppression, but desires and pleasure. It is possible to read this moment as reclaim her sexuality, physicality, and spirituality and rejecting “matrix of domination” and “interpersonal domain of power,” to borrow from Collins, which maintained sexual exploitation through maternal and historical discourses.

Ursa problematizes the disappearance of pleasure and desire by taking control of her body and mind in the final scene. Ursa formulates the constitutive aspects of freedom within power relations. In this scene, she conjures up scenes from her past, which symbolize “hate and love” in her mind and takes control of her own sexuality (Jones 1975, 184). In the first section of the novel, she was a passive love maker whom her partner dominated and had no control over the process, yet at the very end, she is an active agent and controls the whole process. Mutt is passive while Ursa is active; she knows who she is and what she wants. The repetitions, “a moment of pleasure and excruciating pain at the same time, a moment broken skin but sexlessness, a moment just before sexlessness, a moment that stops before it breaks the skin: I could kill you,” signify important characteristics of the blues (1975, 184). During the final scene of the novel, the repetitions insinuate that the blues and sexual identity intertwined in Ursa’s sexuality, which creates an assemblage. In this scene, blues reflects love and pain, and the agency is tied to sex. It is also an articulation of cultural, sexual, and aesthetic resistance to exploitation. The consciousness that her songs taught enabled her to accept the lack of fertility and define herself as a sexual body. She is capable of taking control of her life and fulfil her desires taking control in her hands. In doing so, she also challenges the master-slave relationship by directing our attention to the ambiguity and destructive aspect of the maternal narratives suggesting alternative discourses and epistemologies. In other words, Ursa invites the reader to investigate and re-establish the relation between maternal discourses, memory, and history to transform and liberate individuals of historical burdens.

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3. CONCLUSION

This analysis has demonstrated that Black female sexuality and fertility function as contested sites where structures of domination and resistance intersect, ultimately serving as crucial mechanisms for the reconstruction of sexual identity and agency. By employing Black feminist theoretical frameworks in conjunction with blues cultural analysis, this study has illuminated the complex negotiations through which Black women navigate what Michel Foucault identifies as the paradoxical relationship between power and resistance within subjugated populations. The findings reveal that even within systems of oppression, marginalized subjects retain the capacity for transformative agency.

Gayl Jones’ *Corregidora* emerges as a paradigmatic text that interrogates the intricate connections between blues music and identity formation, thereby exposing the multifaceted discourses surrounding gender, sexuality, slavery, and neocolonial power structures that continue to shape contemporary Black women’s experiences. The novel’s significance extends beyond its historical context to offer critical insights into twenty-first-century debates about female authorship, cultural authenticity, and resistance narratives.

The blues emerges as both aesthetic form and epistemological framework through which Ursa—and by extension, Black women more broadly—can articulate experiences of trauma while asserting cultural agency. This musical tradition provides not merely a medium of expression but a theoretical apparatus for understanding how marginalized communities transform pain into power, silence into voice, and victimization into survival. Ursa’s narrative trajectory from psychological fragmentation to integrated selfhood exemplifies what Audre Lorde terms the transformation of silence into language and action. Furthermore, this study contributes to broader scholarly conversations about intersectionality, demonstrating how race, gender, class, and sexuality operate as mutually constitutive rather than additive categories of identity. The analysis reveals that Black women’s liberation requires not only the dismantling of external oppressive structures but also the internal psychological work of reconstructing selfhood from inherited trauma. Ursa’s achievement of self-reliance and independence represents more than individual empowerment; it models a broader blueprint for collective resistance and transformation.


The implications of this research extend beyond literary analysis to inform contemporary discussions about sexual agency, reproductive justice, and cultural preservation within African American communities. By centering Black women’s voices and experiences, this study challenges dominant narratives that position Black women as perpetual victims rather than active agents of change. The text ultimately argues that true liberation—the reclamation of body, mind, and sexual autonomy—requires both individual psychological transformation and collective cultural resistance, processes that Jones masterfully renders through Ursa’s blues-inflected journey toward wholeness. This investigation opens avenues for future research examining how other contemporary Black women writers employ cultural forms—music, oral tradition, visual arts—as vehicles for reimagining Black female subjectivity in the twenty-first century. Additionally, comparative analyses exploring similar themes across transnational Black women’s literatures could further illuminate the global dimensions of these resistance strategies.

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Irish Music and Dance in Tourism Discourse: A Corpus-Based Study of Irishisms

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abstract

This article investigates the role of culturally marked realia – namely Irishisms related to the semantic field of traditional music and dance – in shaping Irish national identity within tourism discourse. Traditional Irish music and dance are central not only to Ireland’s cultural heritage but also to the linguistic strategies used to promote authenticity, heritage, and communal values to global audiences. To explore this, we formulated two research questions: How are music- and dance-related Irishisms distributed and contextualized in corpus data? Do their representations reinforce or challenge the notion of authenticity? Among key objectives were examining frequency and collocational patterns in corpus-based data, exploring their pragmatic use in tourism discourse, and finding potential hidden meanings through deconstructive analysis. Using GloWbE (Global Web-based English) corpus, the study analysed lexemes such as “céilí”, “session”, “craic”, “bodhrán”, “uilleann pipes”, “clarsach”, “reel”, and “jig”. A complementary qualitative analysis of 50 tourism texts related to music and dance – travel articles, forum threads, events descriptions, and branding materials – was conducted. Discourse analysis uncovered both explicit messaging and underlying identity constructs. A deconstructive lens revealed contradictions in the portrayal of Irish music as “ancient” and “authentic”. Findings show that Irishisms play a crucial role in marketing and transmitting cultural identity, especially through contexts like festivals and pub culture. The idea that tourism discourse merely reflects heritage is challenged: narratives of marketing campaigns commodify cultural symbols and reshape tradition. For instance – traditional Irish music: much of what is presented as “ancient” actually developed after the Great Famine in the late 19th century.

Keywords: Irishisms, Irish English, corpus linguistics, tourism discourse, cultural realia

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1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Despite growing scholarly interest in tourism discourse (Hannam and Knox 2015) and the commodification of culture (Monica, Pujolar, and Duchêne 2014), relatively little research has focused on how lexical Irishisms related to the semantic field of music and dance are used within tourism branding to construct and commercialize national identity. Irishisms refer to linguistic features either borrowed from the Irish language or characteristic of the Irish variety of English. They can be found at any level – ranging from phonological features and morphological units to lexical items, idiomatic expressions, and syntactic structures (Filppula and Hickey 2007). However, in this study, we focus exclusively on lexical Irishisms and aim to address the existing gap in the literature by investigating how lexemes such as “céilí”, “session”, “craic”, “bodhrán”, “uilleann pipes”, “clarsach”, “reel”, and “jig” function within tourism discourse as markers of cultural identity.

All Irish-English translations in our study are taken from *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* (Ó Dónaill 1977), available at teanglann.ie. All etymological definitions and historical usages, unless otherwise indicated, are sourced from the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED Online, n.d.).

Methodological Clarification

To ensure methodological transparency, the study applied both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Using GloWbE (Global Web-based English) corpus, a set of above-mentioned Irishisms was examined. These lexemes were searched manually using the interface’s “List” and “Find matching strings” functions. Frequency counts and collocates were generated using the corpus’s intuitive tools, with collocates ranked by raw frequency.

For qualitative analysis, 50 tourism-related texts were selected from a balanced range of sources – split 50/50 between editorial articles and promotional campaigns. The full list of analyzed texts is available from the author upon request. Selection criteria were the following: 1) relevance to traditional Irish music and dance; 2) presence of afore-mentioned Irishisms; 3) relatively recent (up to 10 years) publication by prominent Irish tourism or media organizations. Key sources included: Ireland.com, Visit Dublin, Irish Traditional Music Archive, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Heritage Ireland, National Museum of Ireland, Royal Irish Tours, Discover Ireland, *The Irish Times*, *The Irish News*, *The Irish Independent*. These platforms were chosen due to their role in shaping the public image of Irish cultural identity. Building on this corpus-based and discourse-oriented data, we now turn to a broader cultural context by examining the historical and social significance of Irish music and dance.

Traditional Irish music, song, and dance have long been central to the social and cultural life of the Irish people. Historically, Irish communal life often developed around musical gatherings (Murphy 2018), and today these elements constitute not only cultural heritage but also essential assets in the branding of Ireland as a tourist destination. Irish music is actively integrated into tourism marketing, contributing to a unique cultural image of Ireland and drawing visitors seeking heritage-based experiences (Hannam and Knox 2010). This is extremely vital for the members of the Irish diaspora, who strive for a deeper and more meaningful connection with their ancestral heritage (Everett 2016).

The presence of Irish traditional music is evident across diverse sectors of the tourism industry, ranging from internationally known festivals such as *Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann*, *Cork Folk Festival*, *Ennis Trad Fest*, and *Temple Bar TradFest* to thematic travel routes like the *Wild Atlantic Irish Music Tour*, *Musical Pub Crawl*, and *Irish Music and Folklore Online Tours*. Music is also a defining feature of many iconic Irish pubs that also function as creative spaces for various performances (Murphy 2014). Such prominent Irish pubs include *The Brazen Head*, *The Celt*, *Darkey Kelly's*, *O'Donoghue's*, *The Crane Bar*, and *Matt Molloy's*. These places are actively promoted in tourism brochures and websites for their music sessions and warm atmosphere, thereby symbolizing that the tradition of Irish music is living.

The important role of traditional Irish music in the global branding of Irishness is further evidenced by its widespread use in advertising campaigns by major Irish brands such as Guinness, Bushmills, Tullamore Dew, Jameson Irish Whiskey, and the national airline Aer Lingus. These campaigns strategically employ recognizable Irish musical motifs and by doing so – evoke feelings of warmth, community, and hospitality. Apart from music, they actively employ semiotic elements such as photographs of landmarks associated with dance, music and “craic” – for instance, lively pub fronts in Galway Old Town or Dublin’s Temple Bar during music sessions, wall murals of céili dancers in Derry, or festival stages at *Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann* or the Saint Patrick’s Day parade. Traditional souvenirs featuring the Irish harp, uilleann pipes, or the shamrock, which is a registered trademark of the Republic of Ireland, are also widespread cultural symbols used by Irish brands.

Fáilte Ireland, or Irish tourism board, actively promotes Irish music and dance through digital media and targets both domestic and international tourists. In 2024, Ireland launched a new international campaign – Fill your heart with Ireland – which aims at promoting the country across major tourism markets such as Great Britain, the USA, Canada, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, and the Nordic region. It employs Irish music as a key element of Irishness together with the concept of “craic”, Irish gastronomy, hospitality and pub culture.

Irish musical heritage maintains a strong presence in global popular culture. The soundtracks of iconic films such as *Titanic*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Braveheart*, *The Quiet Man*, and *Song of the Sea* incorporate Irish folk elements to evoke myth, nostalgia, and a distinct atmosphere of dramatic anticipation. Irish folk ballads like *Leave Her Johnny* and *The Wild Rover* appear in the game *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*, while Celtic music textures are integrated into *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*. Contemporary artists across genres draw upon Irish musical traditions, from Irish rock bands like *The Corrs*, *Mumford & Sons* and *Clannad* to international performers such as *U2*, *The Cranberries*, *Loreena McKennitt* and *Ed Sheeran*.

Dance also plays a critical role in Ireland’s performative heritage. Irish traditional dance, with its distinctive rhythmic patterns and cultural symbolism, has long served as a vehicle for national identity (Moloney 2006). Emigrants and deportees across history used dance and song to preserve community spirit and cultural memory while abroad. Events such as house parties (historically called *céili*, from the Irish “visit”) provided platforms for music and dance before these practices moved into public pubs and venues during the postwar era.

Musicologist Mick Moloney, a prominent Irish-American scholar and performer, frequently described as a “champion of Irish culture” (Sisario 2022), has emphasized the centrality of traditional music and dance in expressing Irish identity globally. He notes that such symbols often

gain stronger resonance among diasporic communities than in Ireland itself and supports this claim with personal observation:

Shortly after arriving in the United States in 1973, for example, I discovered that Irish traditional music was just one part of an arsenal of potent ethnic symbols that were used to represent Irish ethnic identity in a multicultural society. Paradoxically, the very symbols treated with affection and respect in America – including the shamrock, shillelagh, and leprechaun – were already considered old-fashioned (even embarrassing) back in the home country. (Moloney 2006, 133)

Today, Irish music and dance continue to evolve, acquiring new interpretations and significance. It is argued that the strength of Irish traditional music can be seen most of all in the remarkable ubiquity of public sessions now taking place in bars all around the world (Moloney 2006, 134). At the linguistic level, lexemes in Irish such as “ceol” (music), “craic” (fun), “bia” (food), and “caint” (conversation) are frequently used in promotional texts written in English for musical events, especially within diaspora contexts. These Irishisms infuse tourist discourse with cultural depth and emotional appeal, acting as indexical markers of Irish identity and authenticity.

Pubs are central to the semiotic construction of Irishness. According to the 2012 edition of the *Lonely Planet* guide to Ireland, pubs are portrayed as “the number one attraction for visitors coming to Ireland” (McGreevy 2012, 7).

Irish pubs abroad function as cultural ambassadors, offering immersive spaces where tourists and locals alike engage with Irish music, food, and language in curated environments (Murphy 2014). As Murphy states further: “The pub is at the very heart of Irish society. In its typically perceived setting, it is often the focal point of the local community, a meeting place, a place in which to gossip, a supporter of local events, a haven from the trials of the everyday work environment” (2014, 196).

The *Lonely Planet* guide (Lonely Planet 2012, as quoted by McGreevy 2012, 9) characterizes the Guinness Storehouse – one of Ireland’s iconic tourist destinations – as an example of strategic branding, marketing and commercial persuasion (McGreevy 2012, 9). Therein lies the persisting difficulty with the commodification of culture, which can be even more pronounced when we investigate how something as traditionally Irish as the pub is exported beyond Ireland:

The Irish Theme Bar is a commodified cultural form that has mobilised a series of signs and symbols associated with an alcohol-centred stage Irish identity ... The cultural reproduction of such ethnic signs represents a reification of their meaning. As a consequence an essentialised conception of ethnicity is constructed, commodified and consumed. (McGovern 2002, 78-79)

This insight on commodification of Irish pubs, music and live sessions underlines the urgent need to critically examine the linguistic and semiotic strategies underlying tourism branding. We will turn to this task in more detail further in this study; for now, we shift focus to the corpus-based analysis of music- and dance-related Irishisms and their patterns of usage within tourism discourse.

2. TRACING IRISHISMS THROUGH CORPUS-BASED APPROACH AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Addressing Research Question 1, namely how music- and dance-related Irishisms are distributed and contextualized in corpus data, we can claim that one of the most widespread Irishisms is the lexeme “craic”. It is a popular mental concept, unique to Irish culture, which conveys a spirit of humour, friendliness, and authentic hospitality. Despite its deep cultural association with Ireland, “craic” has English etymological roots. The original spelling, “crack”, was used in Northern England and Scotland as early as the 18th century. It was only in the mid-20th century that the term entered the colloquial register of Irish English in its Irish Gaelic-influenced orthographic form “craic” (Hickey 2011, 272).

There are several definitions of “craic”: 1) fun or enjoyment; 2) chat or conversation; 3) a wild or eccentric person. In contemporary tourism discourse, “craic” is particularly prevalent and is used almost exclusively in the first and the second meaning. “Craic” can be found in almost every description of Irish pubs or restaurants, where it symbolizes a joyful, informal atmosphere. For example, *Gallaghers Boxty House*, a traditional Irish restaurant in central Dublin, hosts gastronomic workshops titled *Irish Craic & Cuisine*. These events are held in the home of the restaurant’s owner Anna, a local who familiarizes guests with the broader sociolinguistic context of “craic” as used in modern Irish English.

Collocational usage in response to Research Question 1 demonstrated that the lexeme is embedded in present-day Irish English discourse, namely appearing in greetings such as “What’s the craic?” or “How’s the craic?”, roughly translating to “What’s new?” or “How are things?”. The most frequent collocates among adjectives are “great”, “good”, “mighty”, “brilliant” (Fig.1), which render a meaning of a lively evening or an enjoyable event. Less common but still in use – “savage” or “deadly”, which are synonymous with great craic but differ in degree of intensification. Other less popular instances show “no craic” or “minus craic”, which refer to dull or uninteresting occasions. The idiom “the craic was ninety” shows quite high frequency in Irish English (Fig.1) and describes moments of peak entertainment. This phrase might have gained popularity through the song *The Craic Was Ninety in the Isle of Man* by a famous Irish band *The Dubliners*.

HELP	①	★	RE-USE WORDS	ALL	US	CA	GB	IE
1	①	★	GREAT	251	3	1	13	226
2	①	★	GOOD	129	1	1	19	104
3	①	★	BIT	108			2	105
4	①	★	HAVING	72		1	5	65
5	①	★	IRISH	50	2		3	43
6	①	★	MIGHTY	44			2	42
7	①	★	MUSIC	37	1		3	33
8	①	★	ENJOY	36	1		5	29
9	①	★	AGUS	27	1	1	1	23
10	①	★	FUN	24	2		1	21
11	①	★	NINETY	23				23
12	①	★	CEOL	20	1		1	17
13	①	★	IRELAND	16			1	15
14	①	★	OH	15				15
15	①	★	BRILLIANT	13				13
16	①	★	BAR	13			2	11
17	①	★	MISS	13				13
18	①	★	DEALER	12			10	2
19	①	★	ENJOYING	12			2	10
20	①	★	BANTER	11				11
21	①	★	PINTS	10			1	9
22	①	★	PUB	10				10
23	①	★	ALTOGETHER	10				10
24	①	★	DUBLIN	10	1			9
25	①	★	PUBS	9				9
26	①	★	ENJOYED	9			1	8
27	①	★	CRACK	8	2		2	4
28	①	★	CEOIL	7				7
29	①	★	LADS	7	1		1	5
30	①	★	LAUGHTER	7			1	6
31	①	★	CANT	7				7
32	①	★	PLENTY	7				7
33	①	★	PINT	6				5
34	①	★	APOLLO	6			6	
35	①	★	WHATS	6				4
36	①	★	LOCALS	6			2	4
37	①	★	DANCING	6				5
38	①	★	CHAT	6	1		3	2
39	①	★	BEER	6			1	5
40	①	★	FESTIVAL	6				6

Figure 1. The most frequent lexical collocates of the lexeme “craic” in the GloWbE corpus.
*Screenshot captured from the corpus interface.

Drawing on frequency patterns, as shown in Figure 2, “craic” is used almost exclusively in informal communication and has a strong prevalence in Irish English compared to other English varieties.



Figure 2. Frequency of the lexeme “craic” in the different varieties of English in the GloWbE corpus.

In response to Research Question 2, we examine how “craic” is represented in tourism narratives and how its use contributes to the construction of cultural authenticity. As one of the most recognizable Irishisms throughout the world, “craic” is not merely a lexical unit – it contains an entire emotional frame that aligns Irish character with joy, warmth, and informal sociability. Its frequent appearance in promotional materials, restaurant slogans, and pub descriptions illustrates how language is used not just to reflect but to actively construct a commodified version of Irish culture.

This commodification of “craic” demonstrates how language undergoes both semantic revaluation and symbolic appropriation in service of branding. In his *Companion to Irish Traditional Music*, Fintan Vallely (1999) suggests that use of “craic” in English is largely an exercise on the part of Irish pubs to make money through the commercialisation of traditional Irish music. It is widely argued that such terms become marketable assets in late-capitalist economies, repurposed to add cultural value to tourism products (Heller, Pujolar and Duchêne 2014). In this context, “craic” becomes a semiotic anchor for stereotypical Irishness that is both emotionally potent and commercially strategic (Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern 2002, 91).

The shift in spelling of the lexeme is one more branding instrument. As noted earlier, the original English spelling “crack” was used in the mid-20th century in the colloquial register of Irish English together with the Irish Gaelic-influenced orthographic form “craic”. Donald Clarke (2013), writing in *The Irish Times*, links this shift in spelling to the strategic rebranding of the Irish pub as a tourist attraction during the 1990s.

It is not only language that undergoes commodification – performative traditions such as music and dance are equally embedded in these processes. “Craic” is embodied in Irish social life, which is often organised around music. We now turn to another key Irishism: “session” or “céilí” in Irish – now synonymous with Irish (and Scottish) traditional social dancing. It originally meant simply “a visit”; “an evening’s entertainment involving a visit to whichever house in a community was hosting the gathering on a particular evening” (Murphy 2018). From the linguistic perspective, “céilí” has undergone semantic broadening as it originally referred merely to a home visit, and is now widely used to denote a traditional dance event or even a social gathering involving music and dancing.

This integral part of both Scottish and Irish culture continues to hold significant sociocultural value today. These informal gatherings of musicians take place in pubs, private homes, and at festivals, where traditional Irish music is performed collectively. The modern format of such sessions emerged in the mid-20th century among Irish emigrants in London, and since then, their

popularity has grown steadily in various countries (Rogers 2020). Murphy (2018) states that informal music gatherings today are commonly held in pubs, where the musical performance blends with friendly conversation, craic, singing, storytelling, and general mischief.

The lexeme “céilí” illustrates the functional flexibility of Irishisms as it appears as a verb in digital media (e.g., articles titled *How to céilí dance?*, *Want to learn how to céilí dance with your friends..?*). It is present almost exclusively within Irish English (Fig.3) while the term “session” is broadly used in English within academic, technical, or business contexts (Fig.4). In Irish English though, it has a culturally specific connotation, referring to informal musical gatherings in pubs or homes.



Figure 3. Frequency of the lexeme “ceili” in the different varieties of English in the GloWbE corpus.

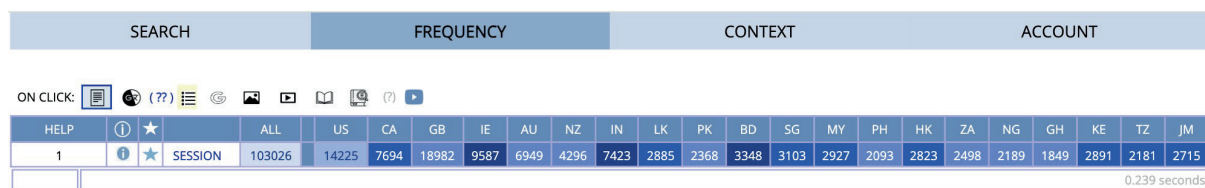


Figure 4. Frequency of the lexeme “session” in the different varieties of English in the GloWbE corpus.

Corpus-based evidence from GloWbE confirms the frequent use of Irishisms like “bodhrán” (traditional Irish drum), “uilleann pipes” (elbow pipes), and “clarsach” (Celtic harp) (Fig. 5,6,7). The etymology of these lexemes often reinforces their cultural embeddedness: “uilleann” derives from the Irish “elbow”, referencing the playing technique of the pipes (Moloney 2006). While such terms are less common in general discourse, they are prevalent in specialized music-related contexts, especially on websites such as thesession.org or discoverireland.com, where musicians and enthusiasts discuss playing styles, materials, and historical significance of instruments.

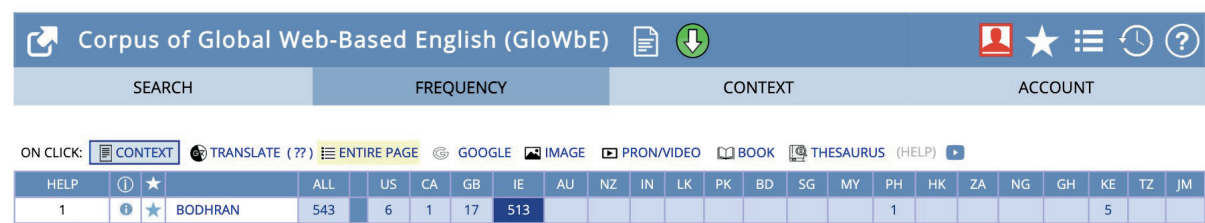


Figure 5. Frequency of the lexeme “bodhrán” in the different varieties of English in the GloWbE corpus.

The lexeme “bodhrán” appears over 500 times in GloWbE’s Irish English sub corpus, often discussed in relation to craftsmanship and performance technique (Fig.5). Similarly, “uilleann pipes” occur alongside other instruments like the fiddle and flute, often in contexts emphasizing their uniqueness. “Clarsach”, although much rarer (Fig.7), appears in historical and heritage-related texts. These findings demonstrate how Irishisms function not only as linguistic tokens but also as markers of national identity.

Among the lexemes analysed, especially “clarsach”, a Celtic harp, stands out not only as a musical instrument but also as a national symbol. The harp is featured on the Irish passport and in the logos of world-famous brands such as *Guinness* and *Ryanair*; in the logos of Irish tourism-related institutions like *Heritage Ireland* and *Kilkenny Castle*, and Irish media, for instance the newspaper *The Irish Independent*. The logo of an airline group *Ryanair* incorporates a stylized harp wing, exemplifying the creative use of national symbols in contemporary graphic design. As Moloney (2006, 126) notes: “There is also the tradition of the Irish harp, once an elite instrument, which since the late eighteenth century has been emblematic of the country of Ireland itself”.



Figure 6. Frequency of the lexeme “uilleann pipes” in the different varieties of English in the GloWbE corpus.



Figure 7. Frequency of the lexeme “clarsach” in the different varieties of English in the GloWbE corpus.

Scholars in the field of musicology highlightspecific defining characteristics in Irish dance music that distinguish it and make it easily recognizable. Musicologist Luke McDonagh (2022) identifies among these its internal melodic coherence, distinct regional and individual stylistic features, as well as the presence of variation and ornamentation.

The most widespread form of Irish dance music today is “reel”, a musical form that developed as early as the mid-18th century. Etymologically, the lexeme reel derives from Old English “rēolan”, meaning “to whirl” or “to rotate.” A semantic analysis of the term reflects the core principle of the dance: quick, rotational movements, often involving a partner’s change of direction, which resembles spinning or twirling in place.

In the context of social media and marketing, the term “reel” is now widely used to denote short video clips, especially on platforms like *Instagram* and *TikTok*. These new media trends have led to high global frequency of the lexeme “reel” in all major English varieties represented in the GloWbE corpus (Fig.8). While in Irish English the term carries the same media-related meaning

its usage is still more commonly associated with music discourse, where it refers to a dance or musical style.

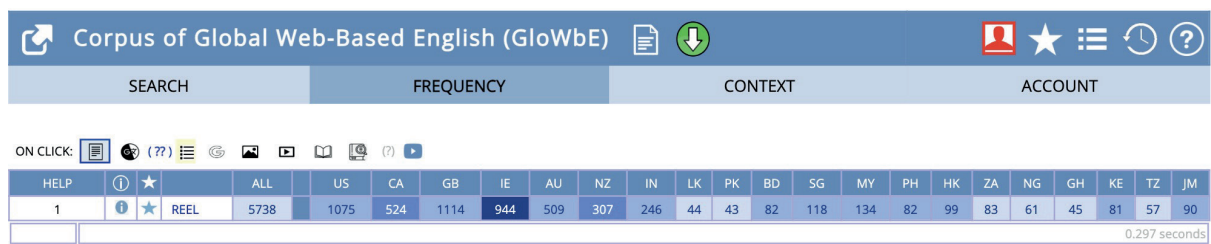


Figure 8. Frequency of the lexeme “reel” in the different varieties of English in the GloWbE corpus. Screenshot captured from the corpus interface.

Another prominent form of traditional Irish dance music – second in popularity only to the reel – is the jig. The jig also denotes a lively folk dance that gained popularity in Ireland as early as the 16th century. There are several types of jigs: light jig, single jig, double jig, slip jig, and treble jig, the latter performed in special heavy footwear known as jig shoes (Randel 2003).



Figure 9. Frequency of the lexeme “jig” in the different varieties of English in the GloWbE corpus. Screenshot captured from the corpus interface.

The etymology of the lexeme “jig” is disputed, and most sources suggest that the word has either French or Italian origins – most likely from the French “giguer” meaning “to jump” or the Italian “giga”, referring to a type of dance as well as a musical instrument that accompanied it (Horst 1987). In Irish English, the lexeme “jig” is attested in corpora, particularly in GloWbE (Fig.9), in contexts related to dance, music sessions, and the naming of specific tunes (e.g., The Kesh Jig, The Templehouse Jig, Foxhunters’ Jig). It frequently appears with such collocates as names of instruments (e.g., accordion, fiddle), cultural events (céilí, feis), or as part of idiomatic expressions conveying spontaneous emotional reactions – such as “do a jig of joy”, an idiom found across various English varieties, which means “to be so happy or excited that one could dance in a happy or jubilant manner”.

While GloWbE corpus data confirms the frequent use of musical lexemes such as “session”, “céilí”, “bodhrán”, “uilleann pipes”, “jig” and “reel” in Irish English, particularly in culturally embedded contexts, it is equally important to examine how these Irishisms and, more importantly, the musical traditions they represent – are discursively framed within tourism promotion. Further in this article we explore how these lexemes function within ideological constructions of Irishness.

3. CONSTRUCTING AUTHENTICITY IN IRISH TOURISM DISCOURSE

In line with broader scholarship on linguistic commodification, we observe that certain Irishisms like “craic”, “session”, “sláinte”, “bodhrán”, “clarsach” and others function not only as lexical items but as communicative resources, shaped by socio-economic forces and recontextualized within tourism branding. As Muth and Del Percio (2017) also argue, the transformation of language into a commodity often involves subtle forms of linguistic policing – processes by which specific forms of expression are controlled, promoted, or suppressed in order to produce commercially desirable speakers and discourses. In the case of Irish tourism, the above-mentioned lexemes are not just celebrated for their authenticity but also instrumentalized as symbolic and emotional assets that align with rules of marketing, affective engagement, and self-branding.

Irish music sessions, which are extremely popular in Irish pubs today, also function as a performative commodity. They are often viewed as a balance of performance, community, and commerce in the scholarly discourse. For instance, Adam R. Kaul (2007) broadly analyzes the concept of the Irish music session from the ethnographic and sociocultural perspective. In fact, “even though this ‘casual, participatory, and seemingly spontaneous activity’ functions as a powerful symbol of Irish cultural heritage, its authenticity is shaped by the commercial logic of tourism economies. In commodified contexts, cultural symbols are isolated and detached from the communities that produce and sustain them” (Kaul 2007). There is a risk that certain tourism practices – like Irish music sessions for example – might lose their cultural integrity and meaning through the reduction of cultural practices to exchange-values. In order to prevent them from performing merely a symbolic function, Irish musicians should hold a mission of curating the musical content and social flow of the session and create what Kaul reframes as “credible” performances (2007) – grounded in local tradition and producer control.

This commercialization of Irish music, which manifests itself in paid sessions, coexists with a parallel discourse that idealizes the session as an uninterrupted continuation of ancient Irish musical traditions. Tourism discourse frequently presents “traditional” Irish music as an ancient and authentic element of Irish culture, often referred to as a practice dating back to the medieval period. Numerous events, festivals, and tours promote this idea of long-standing musical heritage. However, having applied a deconstructive approach, we managed to reveal the internal contradictions and alternative meanings behind this narrative.

From a poststructuralist perspective, which involves disassembling and interrogating complex textual structures (Hannam and Knox 2015), we thoroughly analyzed promotional texts about Ireland to uncover contradictions within the portrayal of Irish “traditional” music and reveal its implicit or concealed meanings. According to this methodology, as Hannam and Knox claim (2015), texts are not closed or stable systems – they inherently contain conflicting elements and permit re-interpretation. When applied to tourism discourse – namely our case with Irish “traditional” music – this approach enables us to go beyond superficial marketing narratives and explore what cultural meanings have been distorted or omitted in the construction of tourist imaginaries. Tourism narratives – especially those driven by commercial objectives – often rely on romanticized depictions of tradition and heritage as such portrayals are more effective in attracting and persuading potential consumers. In our examination of Irish “traditional” music, the deconstructive approach has proven to be especially productive.

Moloney (2006) states that the structure and style of what is now recognized as “traditional” Irish music emerged relatively recently and is a product of cultural adaptation and reinvention during times of socio-economic upheaval. He writes:

There are many pervasive myths about Irish traditional music-the biggest of all being that it is very old. There are some mediaeval strains in the music, particularly in the nondance forms, and some traditions such as the music of the harpers can be traced back to the seventeenth century. But the form, structure, and style of the traditional music played today in fact come from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most of the repertoire is in fact post-Famine. (Moloney 2006, 126)

Authenticity is viewed as an inherited and fixed quality, particularly within heritage discourse. However, our analysis reveals that authenticity can also be a socially constructed phenomenon. A particularly relevant example, discussed below, illustrates this process: the construction of authenticity through performance and participation in Irish music sessions.

In recent years, due to effective marketing, the institutionalized practice of “seeding” sessions with paid musicians has become especially widespread across Ireland. An analysis of various digital resources – like social media pages of Irish pubs, restaurants, hotels, and cultural organizations – confirms this trend that such sessions are held almost daily throughout the country. They are often called “seeding” sessions, which refers here to the strategy of ensuring a session will happen by arranging for a small number of paid musicians to be present at a specific pub. These paid musicians initiate the session and other unpaid musicians might join in. In this way, the session can grow organically into a larger, more communal event – one that is later associated with having a great craic – a concept often linked to spontaneous enjoyment. For many tourists, the spontaneity and emotional resonance of the moment are more important than any alignment with historical continuity. Thus, we might claim that authenticity in this case emerges as a quality of the process, not merely the product of cultural performance.

We have discussed linguistic and performative commodification above, and now we turn to the commodification of Irish cultural symbols connected to the semantic field of music. In tourism contexts, the names of traditional Irish instruments, which we have previously analyzed with a corpus-based approach, namely “bodhrán”, “uilleann pipes”, and “clarsach” – frequently appear in music festival brochures and articles (written discourse), guided tour narratives and speeches at festivals (oral discourse). Additionally, they are increasingly used as branding devices across a range of commercial domains. These lexemes function as markers of cultural identity, which are recognizable far beyond Ireland.

These cultural symbols are frequently portrayed on handcrafted souvenirs, mugs, T-shirts, and decorative items – often in stylized or exaggerated forms to make them more memorable. Interior designs of Irish pubs, restaurants, and tourist centres, also feature these traditional Irish musical instruments. Sometimes real instruments are placed, other times walls are adorned with painted bodhráns or uilleann pipes. In such contexts they serve as commodified signs – objects of affective value that capture tourist attention. These symbolic forms help maintain interest in Irish culture, but they also might raise critical questions regarding heritage preservation and commercial appeal.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The research questions in this study have been posed to explore the role of music - and dance-related Irishisms in shaping cultural identity within tourism discourse. Such Irishisms play a crucial role in the construction and branding of Irish national identity within contemporary tourism discourse. By combining corpus-based linguistic analysis with critical discourse and deconstructive

methodologies, the article has demonstrated that lexemes such as “craic”, “session”, “céilí”, “bodhrán”, “uilleann pipes”, “clarsach”, “reel”, and “jig” function not only as lexical units but as culturally marked realia which frequently perform affective function. These terms serve as indexical markers of Irishness, recontextualized in the global marketplace.

The findings show that these lexemes most frequently appear in informal contexts, where the language aims to build connections, atmosphere, or authenticity – namely in relation to Irish pubs, festivals, and branding within the Irish diaspora. Additionally, the application of a deconstructive approach demonstrates contradictions within prevailing tourist narratives that portray Irish music as very old and authentically medieval. Instead, our analysis confirms that the structure of what is now considered “traditional” Irish music was largely formed in the post-Famine period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This finding supports the claim that tradition is a dynamic cultural construct.

Similarly, Irish music sessions function not only as cultural events but also as a performative commodity. As Kaul (2007) argues, the session is often perceived as a balance of performance, community, and commerce, yet its authenticity is deeply shaped by the commercial logic of tourism economies. Yet these music sessions, while not rooted in Irish historical tradition that dates back centuries ago, still foster experiences that feel authentic to participants. Their authenticity lies not in heritage but in the communal spontaneity, emotional engagement, and performative credibility that define the moment.

The implications of these findings lie beyond the field of linguistics into broader discussions about globalization, urbanization, cultural politics, and the ethics of marketing – and heritage branding in particular. As Ireland is often marketed as an impressive both natural and cultural destination, there is an urgent need to ensure that tourism narratives balance the demands of marketability with the preservation of cultural integrity.


Future research might expand the scope by applying multimodal analysis to visual and audiovisual elements of tourism branding, such as posters, music videos, social media campaigns, and live performances. Ethnographic research could also prove powerful in terms of capturing audience perceptions of Irish sessions and musicians’ perspectives on heritage, authenticity, and commodification. Furthermore, comparative studies involving other – to some extent linguistically and culturally similar tourism discourses – such as those found in Scottish or Welsh contexts – could provide valuable cross-cultural insights into how heritage is globally marketed.

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Memory of Loss and Amnesia in *When We Were Orphans* and *The Buried Giant*

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abstract

This research explores the concepts of memory, loss, and identity in Kazuo Ishiguro's works *When We Were Orphans* and *The Buried Giant*. Utilizing Jan Assmann's theories on collective and cultural memory, it examines how personal and social memories influence, alter, or weaken both individual and collective identities. The study emphasizes the differing representations of memory—one character's pursuit to reclaim broken personal recollections to reform his identity, and the other's path of facing shared amnesia enforced by social influences—to examine how memory serves as both a means of self-awareness and a method of dominance. The study thoroughly examines how Ishiguro's stories illustrate the use of history and memory for political and cultural purposes, highlighting the dual nature of memory and amnesia. The study argues that by examining trauma mechanisms, cultural dislocation, and the engagement with difficult realities, both individual and collective memories are crucial for establishing identity and continuity, but are also vulnerable to distortion and repression. The results indicate that identity is not static but is constantly transformed through processes of remembering, forgetting, and narrating stories. Although personal memories serve as delicate foundations for identity, the manipulation of collective memory illustrates how amnesia can divide communities. Ishiguro ultimately proposes that neither full recall nor absolute amnesia results in stability; instead, it is a careful, continuous balance between facing the past and progressing. This analysis reinterprets Ishiguro's work to show memory not merely as a point of crisis but as a vibrant, influential element in shaping identity.

Keywords: amnesia, collective identity, individual identity, loss, memory

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1. INTRODUCTION

Memory is a vital mechanism in forming both individual and collective identities, serving as a source of personal histories and a malleable construct influenced by cultural, societal, and political forces. In *When We Were Orphans* (2000) and *The Buried Giant* (2015), memory is portrayed as a multifaceted and frequently contentious aspect of human experience—capable of maintaining identity or causing its deterioration through trauma, amnesia, and collective loss of recollection. These pieces investigate the complex relationships between memory and forgetfulness, highlighting how individuals struggle with fragmented recollections and societal amnesia while trying to rebuild or conceal their identities.

When We Were Orphans focuses on the protagonist, Christopher Banks, as he embarks on a quest that represents an internal exploration for missing family and the alignment of personal recollections with disillusionment. His idealized recollections conflict with stark truths, highlighting the intricacies of memory development following trauma, societal turmoil, and displacement during war. Contrariwise, *The Buried Giant* depicts a community enveloped in shared forgetfulness, where both individual and collective recollections are altered and systematically removed. Axl and Beatrice embark on a quest to reclaim their lost memories, emphasizing the destructive impact of enforced amnesia on personal connections and communal unity, illuminating the fragile relationship between memory, identity, and authority. This research thoroughly analyzes how Ishiguro's stories represent and question the processes through which memory shapes both individual and shared identity. Utilizing theories of collective and cultural memory, particularly those posited by Jan and Aleida Assmann, the study investigates how remembrance and forgetfulness function as instruments of power—able to shape, uphold, or deconstruct identities. Additionally, it explores how societal influences, such as authority and policies on cultural memory, impact the mechanisms of either collective erasure or preservation. This investigation encompasses examining how trauma, historical silence, and cultural dislocation are conveyed through memory—either as a means of healing or as a means of domination. The article seeks to address two key questions: In what ways does Ishiguro illustrate the relationship between personal and shared memory in shaping and weakening identity? And second, what role does the act of remembering or forgetting play in shaping characters' personal development and the cohesion or fragmentation of their communities in *When We Were Orphans* and *The Buried Giant*?

By tackling these inquiries, the study seeks to clarify the significant function of memory in forming human identity in Ishiguro's works and to develop discussions regarding the social consequences of shared memory and amnesia. This analysis emphasizes how Ishiguro's stories reflect the shared human experience of facing the past, showcasing the lasting significance of memory—serving as both an element of identity and a possible source of trauma.

2. METHODOLOGY

The idea of collective memory was initially put forth by Émile Durkheim, who proposed that collective memory encompasses the common beliefs, principles, traditions, and recollections that unite a community. He highlighted the importance of shared memory in fostering a feeling of unity and togetherness among members of a group, along with its influence on forming the group's identity and principles. Maurice Halbwachs (1992) built upon Émile Durkheim's idea of collective memory by highlighting the significance of social groups and their interactions in influencing personal memories. Halbwachs contended that our memories are more than individual reflections; they are also affected and molded by the communities we are part of.

According to Halbwachs: "[n]o memory is possible outside the frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections." (1992, 43). Consequently, a person consistently belongs to various social groups during their lifetime, be it family, politics, religion, nationality, or others. Halbwachs states that these groups provide a framework for individuals to incorporate their memories. Halbwachs argues that people can belong to various groups at the same time, asserting that "it is individuals as group members who remember" (1992, 48).

Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann, German Egyptologists and cultural theorists, expanded Maurice Halbwachs' idea of collective memory by examining the notion of cultural memory. They built upon Halbwachs' concepts by highlighting the influence of culture and history in forming collective memory, particularly regarding how societies create and share memories across generations. In "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," Jan Assmann differentiates his concept from Halbwachs' "Communicative Memory" in this way:

Just as the communicative memory is characterized by its proximity to the everyday, cultural memory is characterized by its distance from the everyday. Distance from the everyday (transcendence) marks its temporal horizon. Cultural memory has its fixed point; its horizon does not change with the passing of time. These fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance). We call these 'figures of memory.' (Assmann 2011, 128-129)

Assmann posits that cultural memory is an evolving process that transforms over time and shapes personal and collective identities, along with societal values and convictions (2011,17). He distinguishes between communicative memory, characterized by informal sharing of memories in a society, and cultural memory, which pertains to organized methods of memory transmission such as monuments, rituals, and historical narratives. In "Communicative and Cultural Memory," Jan Assmann describes cultural memory in the following way:

Cultural memory is an institution. It is exteriorized, objectified, and stored away in symbolic forms that, unlike the sounds of words or the appearance of gestures, are stable and situation-transcendent. They may be transferred from one situation to another and transmitted from one generation to another. Unlike communicative memory, cultural memory is disembodied. In order to function as memory, however, its symbolic forms must not only be preserved but also circulated and re-embodied in a society. The disembodied status of cultural memory is another reason why it was not recognized as a form of memory until recently. (Assmann 2011, 17)

Memory serves as the basis for forming both personal and cultural identity and significantly impacts social interactions, as individuals draw on past experiences to validate the personas they present. Recognizing the essential role of memories in social interactions, Kenneth Gergen defines memory as a "type of social skill" (1994, 101), whereas Jan Assmann considers memory to be the foundation of identity (Birke 2008, 1). Studying memory encompasses multiple disciplines and promotes teamwork among diverse fields, resulting in an interdisciplinary initiative with wide-ranging implications. This study intends to examine how personal and communal identity shapes through memories of loss and amnesia in *When We Were Orphans* and *The Buried Giant*, using Jan Assmann's theory as a basis.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Nikolina Mikolčić's dissertation, *Memory and Loss in Kazuo Ishiguro's Works* (2024), presents a comprehensive analysis of how themes of memory, trauma, and unreliable narration function

across five of Ishiguro's major works of fiction including *When We Were Orphans* and *The Buried Giant*. At the core of Mikolčić's argument is the concept that memory in these novels serves not just as a narrative element but as a disruptive influence that molds identity, affects choices, and complicates the journey of recovering from past trauma. Using theorists like Paul Ricoeur and Jan Assmann, Mikolčić places Ishiguro's writing within wider discussions about collective and individual memories, especially in post-war settings. The research highlights that Ishiguro's characters frequently grapple with fragmented or altered memories, mirroring postmodern concerns regarding historical accuracy and individual identity.

Chia-chin Tsai (2024) examines *When We Were Orphans* as a narrative centered on trauma, asserting that the protagonist Christopher Banks's investigative journey embodies a sorrowful attachment to a vanished "homeland" –Shanghai- and an unresolved Oedipal longing for an unblemished completeness. Utilizing insights from LaCapra and Žižek, Tsai illustrates how Banks merges historical loss with existential deficiency, sustaining melancholia. Hayley Angle (2024) examines self-fashioning through memory in *When We Were Orphans*, noting how character's nostalgic reconstruction of past exposes the fragility of identity. She highlights Ishiguro's ambivalence toward nostalgia—both as a destabilizing force and a tool for envisioning alternative futures. Nikolina Mikolčić (2024) compares memory's unreliability in *When We Were Orphans* and *The Buried Giant*, demonstrating how collective amnesia in *The Buried Giant*, and personal memory gaps (in *Orphans*) obstruct healing. Both novels, she argues, depict trauma as cyclical, with characters trapped in repetitive, unresolved grief.

Yang and Zhang (2024) analyze *The Buried Giant* through ethical literary criticism, demonstrating how characters' identity reconstruction requires confronting painful memories rather than escaping through amnesia. Their study reveals that Ishiguro frames forgetting as an ethical failure, with self-reconciliation emerging only through engagement with trauma. Zheng (2024) utilizes Assmann's cultural memory theory to assert that *The Buried Giant* uses mythical and spatial symbols (e.g., the giant's cairn) to critique imposed amnesia. The study highlights how cultural memory reactivates collective identity, enabling historical reckoning and healing. Lacalle (2024) contrasts enforced forgetting with selective memory in *The Buried Giant*, showing how Ishiguro's characters navigate between historical erasure and fragmented recall. The work aligns with Zheng's emphasis on memory's role in resisting oppressive narratives.

Although recent studies thoroughly investigate the destabilizing impacts of memory and ethical obligations in Ishiguro's literature, a significant void persists in methodically exploring how the interplay of memory, loss, and amnesia contributes to the development of individual and collective identities. Current research emphasizes trauma's cyclical characteristics or the unreliability of memories but lacks a cohesive framework that illustrates how disjointed memories actively shape identities on both individual and collective scales. This research tackles this gap by exploring how Ishiguro's protagonists navigate identity development—rather than just its crisis—through active processes of remembering, forgetting, and narrative reconstructing.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1. Individual and Collective Identity Formation in *When We Were Orphans*

In *When We Were Orphans*, Christopher Banks's trip to Shanghai represents a profound search to rebuild his shattered identity linked to childhood grief. Plagued by the painful loss of his parents,

Banks's homecoming transforms into both a mental and emotional endeavor to come to terms with his memories and seek a sense of belonging. His recollections from childhood, like the analogy of kids as "the twine that held the slats together," emphasize the significance of family ties in forming individual identity and maintaining social stability. As the passage suggests, "it was we children who bound not only a family, but the whole world together," emphasizing how family and memory serve as vital links in self-understanding (Ishiguro 2000, 44).

Hayley Angle notes that Christopher's struggle to understand his "English identity" is complicated by his detachment from England and the influence of stereotypes, which leaves his sense of self fragmented and constructed from unreliable recollections (Angle 2024, 37). His return to Shanghai signifies an attempt to recover what was lost—his family, his cultural roots, and his sense of self—highlighting the role of memory and loss in shaping identity. Scholars like Hornung and Eakin emphasize that exploring memory through autobiography acts as a means of self-discovery and healing, "as a form of psychotherapy or as an instrument in the process of self-discovery" (Hornung 1997, 222). Eakin further explains that autobiography mediates identity formation, "reaching back into the past not merely to recapture but to repeat the psychological rhythms of identity" and to solidify a "self-made existence" (Eakin 1985, 226). Ultimately, Banks's journey exemplifies how personal loss and memory are integral to understanding and reconstructing one's identity.

Christopher's quest for his parents is, in fact, a quest for his own identity, which has been undermined by the conflicting and contradictory narratives surrounding his past. In his effort to present himself as a renowned and successful detective, he is likely trying to reinterpret his childhood memories to cast them in a more favorable light, in order to move beyond the image of a lonely, desolate orphan. Christopher's search for his parents represents a profound desire for connection and a sense of belonging. The absence of his family has led to a fragmented identity, and locating them serves as a means to regain that feeling of completeness.

In *When We Were Orphans*, memory serves as a crucial mechanism in the quest for identity, profoundly influencing the life and experiences of Christopher Banks. Ishiguro delves deeply into how both treasured and hurtful memories shape people's views of themselves and their surroundings. As the story progresses, Christopher undertakes a journey that goes beyond physical borders and explores his inner self, aiming to uncover the enigmas of his history and comprehend the disjointed identity that has arisen following his childhood sorrow. This section explores how *When We Were Orphans* distinguishes itself from Kazuo Ishiguro's earlier writings by thoroughly analyzing memory's role in forming identity amid trauma caused by loss. In this novel, Christopher starts with an idealized view of his childhood and his parents' absence, holding onto a story that helps him manage his sorrow. Yet, as he investigates further into the enigma of their disappearance, he faces the discord between recollection and actuality. This clash forces him to create and revise his memories, altering his identity in the process. In contrast to other protagonists who simply contemplate their histories, Christopher proactively crafts a new story that reconciles his cherished memories with the difficult realities he discovers. This active involvement with memory underscores a shift from Ishiguro's prior works, accentuating the conflict between treasured memories and difficult truths. Christopher's talent for exploring the complexities of his past through creation, instead of simple reflection, demonstrates a complex relationship with memory as a means for reconstructing identity. This motif profoundly connects with the themes of loss and trauma. Ultimately, this transformation highlights both the vulnerability of memory and its ability to influence our identities, rendering *When We Were Orphans* a distinctive investigation of selfhood in Ishiguro's body of work.

The novel examines the delicate and restorative qualities of memory, demonstrating how loss disrupts and reshapes individual identity. The protagonist, Christopher Banks deals with reconciling his disjointed childhood memories with the harsh truths of adulthood, highlighting memory as a dynamic, frequently unreliable process of shaping oneself. Jan Assmann's memory theory offers an essential framework for grasping this dynamic. He contends that memory is not a static store of history but an evolving creation that shapes both individual and communal identity: "memory is the faculty that enables us to form an awareness of selfhood or identity, both on a personal and collective level" (Assmann 2011, 109). Time and space further mediate this process, as identity can only be understood in relation to temporal and spatial markers (Assmann 2011, 109). Christopher's evolving memories illustrate this conflict, as his recollections—blurred and conflicting—embody both his desire for clarity and the unsettling effects of loss.

A pivotal point in Christopher's journey arises when he faces the reality of his parents' vanishing, an insight that shatters his romanticized version of childhood. At first, he holds onto the conviction that his parents were abducted by opium traffickers, a story that coincides with his mother's ethical opposition to the opium traffic (Ishiguro 2000, 44). However, as Kaya Özçelik notes, this belief is ultimately shattered when Uncle Philip discloses the harsh reality: Christopher's father left the family for another woman and passed away in Singapore, while his mother became a concubine to a warlord (Özçelik 2019, 1152). This discovery compels Christopher to reevaluate his history, highlighting the gap between recollection and truth. His perfect image of Uncle Philip—previously a source of admiration and a possible father figure—shatters when confronted with reality (Ishiguro 2000, 71). This disenchantment highlights a wider theme in Ishiguro's writings: the unavoidable conflict between nostalgic childhood memories and the intricate realities of adult comprehension. Christopher's repeated description of his memories as "hazy" further illustrates the instability of recollection. He reflects: "[...] a memory which even then, when I was nine years old, had already grown hazy in my mind" (Ishiguro 2000, 51). Later, he laments the gradual erosion of his past: "I have been obliged to accept, in other words, that with each passing year, my life in Shanghai will grow less distinct, until one day all that will remain will be a few muddled images" (Ishiguro 2000, 41). Özçelik interprets this haziness as emblematic of memory's subjectivity, arguing that "the memories that Banks remembers and tells are questionable regarding their reliability" (Özçelik 2019, 1154). This unreliability does not merely reflect forgetfulness but an active renegotiation of identity in response to loss.

Ultimately, *When We Were Orphans* suggests that memory is not a fixed record but a narrative continually rewritten to make sense of absence and trauma. Christopher's attempts to reconstruct his past reveal memory's dual role: as a refuge from loss and as a tool for self-reinvention. The novel thus aligns with Assmann's assertion that memory is foundational to identity, even as it remains vulnerable to distortion. In the face of irreparable loss, individuals reshape their memories not merely to recover the past but to forge a bearable present.

While Christopher Banks's journey primarily revolves around his personal struggle with memory and identity, his experiences also reflect broader themes of collective memory and cultural belonging. His fragmented recollections of Shanghai are not merely individual but are deeply intertwined with the historical and social narratives of colonialism, war, and displacement. As Jan Assmann argues, cultural memory functions as a binding force, shaping both personal and communal identities through shared symbols and obligations (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995, 131). Christopher's quest to reconcile his past mirrors the collective

need to preserve and reinterpret history, suggesting that individual identity formation cannot be fully understood without considering its relationship to larger cultural frameworks.

The novel presents memory as unsteady yet indispensable force in shaping identity. The protagonist, Christopher Banks, grapples with the disintegration of his childhood recollections, revealing how personal and collective histories intertwine in the process of self-definition. His journey—marked by nostalgia, disillusionment, and a quest for truth—exemplifies Jan Assmann's assertion that memory is "the faculty that enables us to form an awareness of selfhood or identity" (Assmann 2011, 109). Through Christopher's fragmented recollections of Shanghai, Ishiguro interrogates the reliability of memory and its role in mediating cultural belonging.

Christopher's idealized vision of his childhood home underscores the malleability of memory. He describes the house in the International Settlement with childlike grandeur: "The carefully tended 'English' lawn, the afternoon shadows cast by the row of elms separating my garden and Akira's; and the house itself, a huge white edifice with numerous wings and trellised balconies." (Ishiguro 2000, 31). Yet he immediately undercuts this image: "I suspect this memory of the house is very much a child's vision, and that in reality, it was nothing so grand" (31). This tension mirrors Birgit Neumann's argument that memories are "imaginative (re)constructions of the past in response to current needs" (Neumann 2008, 334). For Christopher, the "Englishness" of his childhood home serves as a psychological anchor, compensating for his later displacement. The lawn, elms, and balconies symbolize not just a physical place but a constructed identity—one that privileges colonial order over the chaotic realities of Shanghai.

Christopher's struggle to reconcile his English heritage with his Shanghai upbringing manifests in his fraught relationship with Uncle Philip. His question—"How do you suppose one might become more English?" (Ishiguro 2000, 45)—reveals an acute awareness of his hybrid identity. Philip's response—"It'd be no wonder if you grew up a bit of a mongrel. But that's no bad thing" (46)—highlights the paradox of colonial identity: while cultural mixing is inevitable, it destabilizes the hierarchies of "Englishness" Christopher associates with belonging. This duality intensifies when Christopher leaves Shanghai, a moment rendered with poignant dissonance: "I had cast my gaze towards the shore one last time, wondering if even now I might catch sight of my mother ... But I was conscious even then that such a hope was no more than a childish indulgence." (Ishiguro 2000, 18). Here, the "shore" symbolizes the threshold between his lost past and an uncertain future. His suppressed grief "my tears were more of anger than sorrow" and performative cheerfulness "We should be reaching the sea fairly soon, don't you think so, sir?" reflect Charlotte Linde's claim that identity requires "continuity through time" (Linde 2009, 222). By severing his physical ties to Shanghai, Christopher fractures his sense of self, forcing him to reconstruct identity through unreliable memories.

Christopher's return to Shanghai reframes his personal loss as part of a collective trauma. His detective work—piecing together his parents' disappearance amid war and colonialism—mirrors notions on cultural memory where individual and communal histories intersect (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995, 131). The revelation that his father abandoned the family and his mother became a warlord's concubine (Özçelik 2019, 1152) shatters his nostalgic narrative, forcing him to confront the violence embedded in his childhood idyll.

The novel's closing scenes, where Christopher reunites with his institutionalized mother, underscore memory's role in reconciliation. Her fragmented recollections parallel his own, suggesting that identity is not fixed but perpetually reconstructed. As Silvia

Caporale Bizzini notes, memories “connect past and present” (Bizzini 2012, 70), and for Christopher, this connection hinges on accepting the contradictions of his history.

4.2. Construction of Individual and Collective Identity in *The Buried Giant*

This section examines how *The Buried Giant* explores individual identity formation through the lens of memory and forgetting. Focusing on Axl and Beatrice’s fragmented recollections, the analysis demonstrates how enforced amnesia disrupts personal identity while the act of remembrance becomes a means of self-reconstruction. Utilizing Jan Assmann’s theory of cultural memory, the discussion emphasizes the conflict between personal memory loss and the underlying desire to recover one’s history as a basis for construction of identity.

In *The Buried Giant*, Ishiguro presents memory as both a destabilizing and restorative force in shaping individual identity. Elderly couple sets out on an adventure to trace their son—a quest spurred by vague, mist-obscured recollections—exemplifies the fragility of selfhood when memory is eroded. As Gurova observes, the novel investigates memory’s role on two levels: “the collective memory in which the unity and harmony of the group [are] affected, and the individual memory in which the impact is mostly on the integrity of one’s self and one’s relation to others” (Gurova 2021, 57). For the couple, the “mist” symbolizes not just communal forgetting but a personal crisis of identity. Their dialogue reveals this dissonance:

“You’ve long forgotten, princess, but our son’s waiting for us. [...] He may be grown with children of his own by now, but he waits for us even so.” (Ishiguro 2015, 32). Here, Beatrice’s insistence on their son’s existence contrasts with Axl’s uncertainty, illustrating how memory constructs—and distorts—personal narratives. Their belief in the son’s survival, later revealed as a repressed memory of his death, underscores Assmann’s argument that identity relies on “the continuity of memory” (Assmann 2011, 109). The mist, as a magical metaphor for trauma, severs this continuity, leaving the couple adrift in a liminal state of half-remembered grief.

The physical journey mirrors their psychological struggle to reclaim identity. Lupack notes that their quest is “to reach the village of their son” (Lupack 2015, 118), but the deeper impetus is the need to reconcile with the past. When Beatrice confesses, “I fear the mist more than any monster” (Ishiguro 2015, 56), she articulates the terror of irrevocable forgetting—a fear tied to the loss of self. Kaiissar elaborates that the couple’s journey is ultimately “to recover their lost memories” (Kaiissar 2022, 6), suggesting that remembrance is an act of self-preservation.

The novel’s climax, where the dragon Querig’s death lifts the mist, forces Axl and Beatrice to confront their son’s death. This moment of reckoning aligns with Assmann’s claim that “identity is founded on the ability to recall the past selectively” (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995, 130). Beatrice’s plea to the ferryman—“You won’t allow years to separate us?” (Ishiguro 2015, 317)—reveals her desperation to retain their shared memories, now the bedrock of her identity. Yet Axl’s reluctant acquiescence to her crossing alone underscores the incompleteness of their reconstruction.

In *The Buried Giant*, Kazuo Ishiguro explores how forced forgetting disrupts individual identity formation, a process deeply tied to memory. Utilizing Aleida Assmann’s theories of cultural memory, this section analyzes how the novel portrays the deterioration of individual and collective memory as a means of control, ultimately undermining the self. Assmann differentiates communicative

memory—casual, everyday memories exchanged among people— from cultural memory, which is formalized and maintained through rituals, texts, and monuments (Assmann 2011, 6). When these memory systems are altered or wiped, identity itself becomes disjointed.

The novel's central metaphor—the mist of forgetfulness—embodies this rupture. Beatrice's lament, "It's queer the way the world's forgetting people and things from only yesterday and the day before that. Like a sickness come over us all" (Ishiguro 2015, 36), underscores the pervasive loss of communicative memory. Without the ability to recall even recent experiences, individuals like Axl and Beatrice struggle to maintain a coherent sense of self. Their fragmented recollections of their son—"When they were pushing me just now, it was our son I remembered...Let's go to our son's village" (Ishiguro 2015, 48)—highlight the destabilizing effect of memory loss on familial and personal identity. Assmann argues that memory is not merely retrospective but *constitutive*: it shapes how individuals understand their place in the world (Assmann 2008, 200). Thus, the mist does not merely obscure the past; it actively dismantles the foundations of identity.

The novel further illustrates how institutionalized forgetting, a form of repressive erasure (Teo 2019, 508), severs individuals from cultural memory. King Arthur's decision to bury the massacre of Saxon civilians under a spell of collective amnesia exemplifies this. As Yugin Teo notes, the enchantment ensures that "individual recollections spontaneously fade and die with their former owners," while communal memory is "reconstructed within a transgenerational framework" (Teo 2019, 508). This deliberate erasure prevents the Saxons and Britons from forming identities rooted in historical truth, leaving them susceptible to manipulation. The villagers' reluctance to discuss the past—"in this community the past was rarely discussed...it had somehow faded into a mist as dense as that which hung over the marshes" (Ishiguro 2015, 7-8)—reflects the success of this repression. Without access to shared narratives, identity becomes atomized and precarious.

Axl's journey exemplifies the struggle to reclaim identity through memory. As Ayaka Nakajima observes, his gradual recovery of "*poignant memories*" allows him to "*recognize his past life*" (Nakajima 2018, 54). Yet this process is fraught. Beatrice's instinctual connection to Axl—"I can feel things about him" (Ishiguro 2015, 27)—suggests that emotional residues persist even when explicit memories fade. However, unresolved grievances resurface as fragments, such as when Beatrice's posture stirs in Axl "distinct shadows of anger and bitterness" (Ishiguro 2015, 294). These moments reveal Assmann's assertion that repressed memories do not vanish but linger as "*latent*" knowledge, shaping behavior unconsciously (Assmann 2011, 145). The novel thus portrays memory not as a static archive but as a dynamic force that, when suppressed, distorts identity.

The climax of Axl and Beatrice's journey—realizing their son's death—forces a reckoning with the costs of forgetting. Axl's reflection that the mist "*allowed old wounds to heal*" (Ishiguro 2015, 361) suggests a tension between memory and self-preservation. Yet his question to Beatrice—"Could it be our love would never have grown so strong down the years had the mist not robbed us the way it did?" (Ishiguro 2015, 361)— suggests the contradiction of identity development through suppression: the self evolves, yet sacrifices genuineness. Catherine Charlwood argues that Ishiguro's characters often exist in a state of "*incomplete remembering*," where unresolved memories perpetuate crisis (Charlwood 2019, 1050). For Axl and Beatrice, identity remains provisional, shaped by absences as much as by recollections.

In Assmann's terms, *The Buried Giant* depicts a society where the collapse of cultural memory—orchestrated by power—precipitates a crisis of individual identity. The novel's characters, severed from both personal and collective pasts, embody the fragility of the self in the face of enforced forgetting. Their struggle to remember becomes, ultimately, a struggle to exist.

Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant* interrogates how forced amnesia disrupts the formation of collective identity based on the cultural memory studies. The novel's central metaphor—the mist—embodies a deliberate erasure of history, revealing how communal forgetting destabilizes social cohesion. As Aleida Assmann argues, cultural memory is not passive recollection but an active "reconstruction" that binds communities through shared narratives (2011, 6). When this process is manipulated, identity fractures. The Saxon and Briton villages, stripped of their pasts, descend into mutual suspicion and violence, illustrating Halbwachs's claim that collective memory is the "body of shared concerns" that sustains group identity (1992, 128–29).

The mist, engineered by King Arthur's regime, enforces a peace built on oblivion. Beatrice's observation—"It's queer the way the world's forgetting people and things from only yesterday and the day before that. Like a sickness come over us all" (Ishiguro 2015, 36)—captures the erosion of communicative memory, the everyday recollections that anchor personal and communal ties. Without these, communities lose their moral compass. The Saxon villagers' hostility toward outsiders—"in this community the past was rarely discussed...it had somehow faded into a mist" (7–8)—demonstrates how amnesia breeds paranoia. Jan Assmann notes that forgetting "severs the thread of time," leaving groups adrift in a perpetual present (2008, 200).

Wistan's quest to kill the dragon Querig symbolizes a revolt against state-sanctioned forgetting. His defiance—"Let the mist vanish so Saxon and Briton alike can face the past!"—reflects the Assmannian view that confronting traumatic memory is necessary for justice (Ishiguro 2015, 314). Yet the novel resists simplistic resolutions. Axl's dread—"Who knows what old hatreds will loosen now?" (340)—acknowledges the paradox: while amnesia perpetuates injustice, remembrance risks cyclical violence. This tension mirrors Aleida Assmann's warning that cultural memory is both "a resource and a burden" (2011, 145).

The climax underscores the impossibility of sustaining identity through oblivion. Gawain's dying words—"We meant to heal wounds, not reopen them!"—betray the fragility of Arthur's peace (Ishiguro 2015, 314). His selective memory, glorifying British heroism while burying Saxon suffering, exemplifies what Yugin Teo calls "repressive erasure" (2019, 508). In contrast, Wistan's vow to "carry the memory of our people even if the land *forgets*" (Ishiguro 2015, 357) asserts memory as resistance. Yet his victory is ambiguous; as Borowska-Szerszun notes, he seeks not reconciliation but a "new victor's narrative" (2019, 38), repeating the cycle of exclusion.

Ultimately, Ishiguro suggests that collective identity cannot thrive in the shadow of amnesia. The ferryman's demand—"What can you tell me of your shared past?" (Ishiguro 2015, 350)—reduces Axl and Beatrice to silence, symbolizing the cost of erasure. The novel aligns with Jan Assmann's insistence that memory, however painful, is the "thread that stitches communities across time" (2008, 200). To forget is to surrender not just the past, but the future.

5. CONCLUSION

Kazuo Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans* and *The Buried Giant* offer a profound lens through which to examine the interplay of memory, loss and amnesia in individual and collective identity formation. Both novels interrogate how memory—whether eroded by trauma, manipulated by power, or reconstructed through narrative—shapes and destabilizes the self and the community.

While *When We Were Orphans* explores the psychological fragmentation of an individual contending with unreliable recollections, *The Buried Giant* depicts the societal consequences of enforced forgetting. Collectively, they uncover Ishiguro's main argument: identity is not a stable essence but an evolving process, constantly shaped through acts of recollection and oblivion.

Christopher Banks's journey in *When We Were Orphans* illustrates the fragility of personal identity when established on unreliable memories. His romanticized memories of Shanghai and his parents act as psychological anchors, but their slow deterioration compels him to face harsh realities. According to Jan Assmann, memory is the capacity that enables us to create a sense of identity, and Christopher's journey underscores this. His story transitions from wistful recollection to hesitant acceptance, demonstrating how memory shapes identity—not by maintaining factual accuracy, but by allowing people to cope with loss. Likewise, in *The Buried Giant*, the disjointed memories of Axl and Beatrice's son highlight the essential function of memory in maintaining connections. Their effort to harmonize their history with the mist's obliteration reflects Assmann's assertion that identity depends on the stability of memory; when this connection is broken, the self disintegrates into uncertainty.

While *When We Were Orphans* highlights the unreliability of personal memory, *The Buried Giant* broadens the exploration to encompass communal identity. The fog-induced forgetfulness undermines personal relationships and the essence of community, causing Saxons and Britons to be lost in shared distrust. This supports Assmann's claim that collective memory comprises the shared interests that unify communities. The tension in the novel—between Wistan's call for historical accountability and Gawain's advocacy of forgetting as a way to maintain peace—underscores memory's dual functions: a driver of justice and a possible trigger for violence. Ishiguro complicates the moral obligation to remember, indicating that although forgetting maintains injustice, recalling risks triggering ongoing revenge.

This research fills an essential void in Ishiguro studies by showing how his main characters actively shape their identities through memory, instead of simply yielding to its disintegration. Christopher Banks's narrative transformation and Axl and Beatrice's reluctant reconciliation with their history illustrate identity formation as a flexible process. While previous research highlights the destabilizing impacts of trauma, this examination reveals how characters navigate their broken identities through narrative, selective memory, and, ironically, the embrace of forgetting. The novels collectively suggest that identity is not purely individual or fully collective but arises at the conjunction of personal memory and collective history.

Addressing the research inquiries, Ishiguro illustrates memory as a two-sided blade—crucial for identity but susceptible to distortion. In *When We Were Orphans*, Christopher's individual recollections are intertwined with colonial stories, whereas in *The Buried Giant*, shared forgetfulness undermines both personal and collective identity. Remembering fosters healing but can also reopen

old wounds—Axl's fear of past grievances—while forgetting provides fleeting tranquility but leads to ongoing historical erasure (Arthur's mist). The novels propose that a balance—avoiding complete recollection and total forgetfulness—might be essential for enduring identity.

In conclusion, Ishiguro's works suggests that identity is a narrative process, constantly redefined through interaction with memory and loss. Through Christopher's reimagined youth or Axl and Beatrice's poignant acceptance of their child's demise, the stories assert that remembrance is a form of regaining agency—yet it also entails facing the weight of history. For both communities and individuals, the challenge is to create identities that recognize the past without being bound by it. Through this approach, Ishiguro not only charts the delicacy of memory but also highlights its lasting strength in influencing our identity and our potential future selves. Ultimately, this study reinterprets Ishiguro's memory narratives as dynamic processes of identity development rather than simply instances of crisis by integrating Assmann's cultural memory theory with in-depth textual analysis. It promotes academic understanding by illustrating how his characters—through forgetting, inventing, and reshaping—represent the complicated yet robust essence of identity amid loss.

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The Feminist New Historicist Approach in Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*

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abstract

The fundamental premise of this research is to conduct an analytical study of *The Pickup* (2011) by Nadine Gordimer in the light of Feminist New Historicism to emphasize the necessity of recognizing, interpreting, and integrating women's contributions into scholarly discourse. How far does Gordimer present a feminist new historicist vision of the community of South Africa in the post-apartheid era? To investigate this question, a systematic approach will be employed to discuss Feminist New Historicism and its application to South African literature by scrutinizing *The Pickup*. Given that gender analysis is greatly influenced by Foucauldian perspectives and prevailing concerns in self-fashioning processes, Stephen Greenblatt initiates an effort to reconceptualize the interconnection between New Historicism and third-wave feminism to achieve reconciliation between them. Feminist New Historicism is a cultural practice that is concerned with gender erasure and an emancipatory strategy for enunciating women's voices in marginalized societies as an attempt to exceed the limits of the development of women in third-world communities. Women should find a place for themselves in competitive and masculine communities where men use their power of masculinity as evidence of their control and superiority. As a reaction, women successfully struggle against such domineering power and, consequently, are transformed from empowerment to disempowerment. Throughout the novel, Gordimer articulates the dire conditions of the Eastern and Western women in the third world by depicting the characters of Julie and Ibrahim's mother and sisters, revealing how they overcome the miserable situations imposed on them by patriarchal power. Ultimately, Gordimer illustrates women's quest for empowerment within the post-apartheid political and societal framework, delineating religion, silence, language, and land as effective means of resistance against oppressive dominant ideologies. In essence, Feminist New Historicism is considered a hopeful attempt to avoid traditionalism in reading women's history under patriarchal control.

Keywords: feminist new historicism, gender blindness, the post-apartheid era, power, language, land

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1. INTRODUCTION

Most of the past histories were written by men about men with a great deal of ignorance and denial of all achievements of women in the context of history. Patriarchal power reduced history per se into man's story; in other words, "Herstory is history with a difference" (Hamilton 2003, 194). When comparing the influence of feminist projects and other social, political, cultural, or psychoanalytical ones in the postmodern era, it is not surprising to detect the late feminist influences on historical studies. In fact, *Representation*, the most prominent journal on New Historicism, produced from the 1980s to the end of the 20th century around 70 volumes, very few of which discuss gender analysis of women's history (Lai 2006, 20).

Important feminist historians refute the Foucauldian thoughts that block women from any attempt to articulate their own past. In her essay, "History as Usual? Feminism and the New Historicism", Judith Newton seeks to eliminate the contrast and variance in reconstructing history by juxtaposing male and female topics in historical and cultural discourses. She concludes her essay by announcing that when women's contributions to culture and history can be taken into consideration, New Historicism will "produce more than history as usual" (1988, 166). Similarly, in her book, *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power, and the Body*, Jana Sawicki charges Foucault with disengaging women from political life, declaring that woman is the source of oppression and persecution in the male-dominated society, so there is a prerequisite for applying gender-blindness (1991, 101-02).

Accordingly, the research presents a detailed survey of the tenets of Feminist New Historicism, its theoretical foundations, and prominent figures. Greenblatt's Feminist New Historicism calls for gender-blindness by paying more attention to the marginalized women, who are somehow neglected in the light of Foucault's New Historicism which focuses on patriarchal power. This contrast underlies the evolving focal point within feminist literary theory, where Greenblatt's approach seeks to expand the systematic scope beyond patriarchal structures to involve the experiences of marginalized and depressed women. This has paved the way for the emergence of tension between New Historicism and third-wave Feminism. The research attempts to reposition women's status using Greenblatt's new historicist concepts of power and control. New Historicism can be helpful for addressing feminist discourses and investigating the role of literature in South Africa in the post-apartheid period through tackling the concepts of the power-resistance paradigm, self-fashioning, language as a discursive power, and land.

In addition, the research highlights a short critical biography of Nadine Gordimer, the era in which she lived, and a discussion of her literary achievements. Strikingly speaking, Gordimer has been chosen, in particular, because she is one of the most important political activists who are highly concerned with human rights in the post-apartheid era. Moreover, she is perceived as a feminist new historicist who motivates readers to remain aloof from the meaningless traditional Historicism and pursue innovation in tackling history in terms of feminist issues. Gordimer believes that it is her responsibility as a novelist to deepen through the thorny issues prevailing in the post-apartheid era. *The Pickup* offers a picture of the new South Africa and its common dilemmas of class, love, and family, the setting of which is post-apartheid Johannesburg. Besides, the novel portrays an idealistic portrait of the other world, and its inhabitants represented in Julie Summers, the white woman from South Africa, who intends to immigrate to her husband's Arab village and feels fascinated by the traditional value of the Arab community and the hugeness of the desert.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The intersection of New Historicism and Third-Wave Feminism characterizes a crucial area of inquiry within literary and cultural perspectives, as their theoretical frameworks emphasize the contextual nature of power, identity, and history. New Historicism is a literary approach whose focal point is situating literary texts within their appropriate historical, political social, and economic contexts, illuminating how power relations and cultural narratives influence both literature and society. Conversely, Third-Wave Feminism challenges worldwide concepts of gender and advocates for fashioning individual identity and deconstructing fixed gender roles. This literature review aims to examine the key concerns and representatives of New Historicism and Feminism with a special reference to Third-Wave Feminism, discussing how New Historicist methodologies highlight the gendered and power dynamics within literary texts investigated through a third-wave feminist lens, and demonstrating how their convergence enhances significant interpretations of literature and culture.

2.1. New Historicism

New Historicism is a literary term formulated by the American critic Stephen Greenblatt in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a reaction against formal literary theories such as New Criticism, Formalism, Structuralism, and Deconstruction, practiced by F. R. Leavis, I. A. Richards, and others. Such formal literary methodologies focus on interpreting literary works based on their textual fabric without paying any attention to their surrounding political, historical, cultural, religious, economic, or social contexts, which have a great deal of contribution to providing literary works with satisfactory and accurate interpretations (Williams 2003, 115). Accordingly, M. H. Abrams presents a brief definition of New Historicism in his reference book, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, as follows:

New Historicism, since the early 1980s, has been the accepted name for a mode of literary study that its proponents oppose to the formalism they attribute both to the New Criticism and to the critical deconstruction that followed it. In place of dealing with a text in isolation from its historical context, new historicists attend primarily to the historical and cultural conditions of its production, its meanings, its effects, and also of its later critical interpretations and evaluations. (2007, 218-19)

Abrams demonstrates that the fundamental essence of the new historicist approach concentrates on revolting against the formal methodologies of literary theories in which the text stands isolated from its historical, cultural, social, and political context. Consequently, the literary work is analyzed based on its text without paying attention to its context. This is the very reason for the advent of New Historicism.

The philosophical perspectives of the German philosopher Fredrick Nietzsche paved the way for the emergence of New Historicism, motivating critics and historians to set aside the meaningless traditional historicism by saying: "break, break, O my brethren, these old tables of the pious! Break in pieces by your speech the maxims of the world-calumniato]" (Nietzsche 1953, 183). Then, New Historicism was expanded in America due to the momentous achievements of the new historicists in Medieval, Victorian, Modern, and contemporary studies such as those by Michael Foucault, Stephen Greenblatt, Louise Montrose, Catherine Gallagher, Lee Patterson, and Ronald Levaio (Chocano 1997, 17).

Stephen Greenblatt (1943-) is the outstanding pioneer and practitioner of New Historicism who is greatly influenced by the thoughts of Michael Foucault, Clifford Geertz, and Raymond Williams. He defines New Historicism as an effective practice rather than a literary theory since it has been developed by the new intellectual American practices and methodologies, namely "Cultural Poetics".

Greenblatt widens his discussion on Cultural Poetics in *Shakespearean Negotiation: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* by defining it as "a study of the collective making of distinct cultural practices and inquiry into the relations among these practices" (1988, 5). Most American studies on New Historicism were published in the prominent academic periodical, *Representation*, which serves as a leading literary platform for critical discourse in this field (Williams 2003, 121).

2.2. Feminism

Feminism is a literary and social movement that has emerged to advocate the rights of women who are fully or partially marginalized in a male-dominant society. It is concerned with the wretched circumstances of such women who seek equality with men. Most female writers involve themselves in this issue, taking it as their obligation to express the suffering, oppression, and subjugation of women under the umbrella of the prevailing patriarchal society. Female writers employ fierce terms in their feminist writings to react against the patriarchal practices of men. These terms include but are not limited to violence, oppression, segregation, subjugation, and subordination. It helps in making women a separate entity in society. It can be argued that feminism is considered an alternative term for the empowerment of women. It is a wave of awareness and consciousness whose purpose is to enlighten women throughout the world about their rights and liberty. In fact, the origin of Feminism dates to the texts of Samuel Richardson where Clarissa Harlow had to refute the traditions of the phallogocentric society and exerted her outstanding efforts to protect herself from the oppressive male society (Mohammad 2023, 443).

Feminism passed and evolved through distinct and diverse historical waves, each one of which has been characterized by specific purposes, approaches, and contributions. Throughout these waves, prominent female writers played vital roles in shaping feminist concepts. The First Wave Feminism (Late 19th – Early 20th Century) focused on equality for women in legal terms. Its prominent figures requested securing the rights of women to vote as an effective means to reach their overall emancipation. One of the most notable figures of this wave is Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902) who argued that women's disenfranchisement was a form of inequality that delayed and hindered the progress of women and their empowerment (Stanton 1848, 24). The Second Wave of Feminism (1960s–1980s) developed its scope from legal rights, which is the focal point of the first wave of feminism, to cultural, social, and political issues to reconstruct women's identity within society. One of the most significant pioneers of this wave is Betty Friedan (1921–2006) who criticized the model of housing homemakers, asserted that many women felt unsatisfied, and believed that societal obligations imposed on women prevented them from discovering their true identities (Friedan 1963, 176).

The Third Wave of Feminism (1990s–2010s) centered on diversity and intersectionality. Its main objective is to involve women of different racial, social, and cultural backgrounds in all areas. One of its major practitioners is Butler (1956-), an influential philosopher known for gender theory, who claimed that gender is not a static biological identity but rather a group of social performances (Butler 1990, 33). The Fourth Wave of Feminism (2010s–Present) is concerned with digital technology and social media to address current feminist causes, focusing on issues like sexual harassment and the rights of gender identity. One of the most important pioneering figures of this wave is Tarana Burke (1973-), who played a crucial role in revealing sexual assaults and empowering female fighters and survivors (Burke 2018, 52).

3. FEMINIST NEW HISTORICISM

Based on the premise that gender analysis is strongly affected by Foucauldian thoughts and dominant interests in self-fashioning forces and the exchange of political power, Greenblatt starts an initiative towards reconciliation between New Historicism and third-wave feminism. He ultimately finds a shared theoretical platform for both New Historicism and Feminism, calling it Feminist New Historicism. In the Foucauldian new historicist approach, there was great difficulty in combining New Historicism and Feminism because of the mainstream of male performance. However, in the light of Greenblatt's perspective, Feminist New Historicism becomes a prerequisite approach in the politics of the repressed women and a reaction against privileging male issues over female ones in the context of history. Furthermore, it becomes a cultural practice that is concerned with gender erasure, and an emancipatory strategy for enunciating women's voices in marginalized societies as an attempt to go beyond the limits of the record of women living in third-world communities (Lai 2006, 21). In this context, the challenge against patriarchal practices is not simply through revealing the hidden fact of women's past or resisting the dominant male power, but through exploring the fundamental assumptions on which dominant patriarchal practices are based. This strategy can provide a radical transformation in interpreting power politics. Consequently, the concern is directly shifted from male practice in history to multiple diverse histories, the end that Feminist New Historicism seeks (24).

4. POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE AND SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICS

Postcolonial literature and South African politics, as a background of the novel under study, must be discussed before deepening through Gordimer's literary interests. Postcolonial literature has acquired the great attention of many scholars all over the world. The term 'Postcolonialism' is originally employed by historians to describe the period following the era of colonization, and discusses its cultural, political, and linguistic outcomes (Lakshmi 2019, 131). The conditions of women in post-colonial contexts have been jeopardized since they have been victims of colonial domination, suffering from marginalization, oppression, suppression, and voicelessness. Considering the depressive status of women in the postcolonial paradigm, Spivak believes that women have witnessed and experienced double forms of repression under the forces of patriarchy and colonialism (1988, 45). As a reaction, feminists adopt an oppositional stance against their inferior and marginalized status and request enhancing their position in society as well as spreading the principles of equal opportunities for women all over the world.

South African literature is a proper domain for uncovering various struggles in the new course towards liberation and democracy. During the apartheid era, it focused on recording political, public, and historical issues like the unfair distribution of land without paying any attention to personal lives. Since 1994, South Africa has started a new political period through the democratic election of Nelson Mandela that declared the advent of the post-apartheid period or what is so-called "the New South Africa". This has led to the abolishment of the arbitrary laws of distributing lands and depriving blacks of their benefit; and the implementation of a legislative constitution that has been enacted for the advantage of all. Additionally, equality has become the absolute right of all people, regardless of their gender or color. The legislation of New South Africa has paid a great concern to literature and its paramount significance in tackling South African history during and after the apartheid period (De Smet 2004, 8-9). The transitional period between apartheid and post-apartheid systems was marked by escalating assaults and violations to the extent that South African peasants left their farms out of atrocity committed against them, most South African women were raped at least twice throughout their lives, and South African rich people were forced to head for closed communities. Besides, blacks need to feel integrated with others after a long period of segregation and suppression. Hence, post-apartheid literature is concerned with individual and private affairs (AL.Musawi 2012, 47).

5. NADINE GORDIMER

Nadine Gordimer, the recipient of the Nobel Prize in literature in 1991, is considered one of the most prominent novelists in the history of South Africa during the eras of apartheid and post-apartheid. She is regarded as the voice of conscience and truth of the blacks under the grip of the rigid system of apartheid. Gordimer was born on 20 November 1923 near Gauteng, an East mining town outside Johannesburg, South Africa. Her mother compelled her to stay at home because of her oversensitivity towards the violent events in South Africa. Accordingly, Gordimer felt very isolated and spent her childhood time writing at home. The harsh system of apartheid had a great influence on her public and personal life. Her childhood memories of the cruel domination of the apartheid system were embedded in her own thoughts and had a significant influence on creating her individuality. Her father made a great contribution to forming her political concern and identity. Although she felt sympathetic towards the black people under the apartheid regime, her father never expressed sympathy towards these depressed people. As a matter of fact, Gordimer got the political fight from her mother who was a political advocate too. Throughout her youth, Gordimer observed the foundation of the Nationalist Party in 1948, in which the white people passed rigid regulations on original black people to demean them on their land (Talat & Guha 2015, 16159). She was a close and supportive companion of Nelson Mandela until his liberation and release in 1990. Later, she joined the African National Congress, viewing it as a possible alternative for ending the depressive conditions of black people under the dominance of the apartheid regime (Padhi 2014, 36-37).

Due to her high disturbance with the issues of racism, prosecution, and dehumanization of blacks in South Africa, Gordimer dedicates her novels to penetrating the texture of the South African community during apartheid and post-apartheid periods and echoes the psychological atmosphere inside the country by depicting the transformation of the black people from the phases of passivity and blindness to the phases of positivity and resistance. In an interview, Gordimer talks about racial discrimination in the South African community: "In South Africa racism in its brutally destructive guises, from killing in conquest to the methodology of colonialism, or certified as divine religious doctrine, took the lives of thousands of Africans and stunted the lives of millions more systematically" (Gordimer 2009, 71). Gordimer has an inner belief in the reformatory role of novelists, claiming that novelists have the absolute right to share their political stances about the apartheid system. In this connection, she calls for gender-blindness and pays more attention to the wretched situations of marginalized women who are neglected in the light of Michel Foucault's New Historicism. Thus, Gordimer makes a "remarkable move outwards, from closely observed turns" of South Africa's historical and social aspects, manifesting an interest in "how issues of national identity are traversed by the surges of global and transnational flows, means and potentialities" (De Kock 2005, 76). Her novel, *The Pickup* embodies "post-Apartheid literature of transition" which illustrates how Gordimer distracts her attention from discussing the miserable conditions of African people to the harsh circumstances of Arabian ones, addressing more wide-ranging issues such as alienation, displacement, and otherness.

6. ANALYSIS OF *THE PICKUP* IN THE LIGHT OF FEMINIST NEW HISTORICISM

6.1. Power

This section analyzes *The Pickup* in the light of the feminist new historicist approach in full depth and shows how women employ forms of struggle to gain power during the post-apartheid system through self-fashioning, religion, language, and land. Power has a prominent role in the feminist new historicist approach. According to U.R. Anusha, Foucault refutes the Marxist methodologies that reduce the role of power to economic interests, claiming that power is not a delimiting force;

rather, it is generative and has a brilliant influence on all social relations and identities throughout the ages (2006, 1). The concept of power relations has a considerable place in the new historicist notion of power. It is not only represented in the nation-state notion but also in the power-subversion paradigm. In this concern, new historicists concentrate on the intrinsic power relations in a particular culture at a specific time to disclose how the State controls its citizens and exploits them as mere subjects (2).

As a matter of fact, the State controls its citizens internally more than externally. One may feel free from one's colonizers, but it does not necessarily mean that he/she becomes free from his / her internal conflict. From this point, Foucault refers to the key role of resistance, indicating that it is an urgent requirement for the existence and continuation of power relations. He clarifies this paradigm in his masterwork, *Sex, Power and the Politics of Identity*: "If there was no resistance, there would be no power relations.... So resistance comes first, and resistance remains superior to the forces of the process; power relations are obliged to change with the resistance" (1997, 167). Power cannot be observable in the public arena and the Country loses its domination gradually in the absence of resistance, so the concept of power lies in its relation to the concept of otherness and in the way it focuses on the relationship between domination and resistance. Moreover, resistance is considered a great threat to power, so it must be contained.

Gordimer conveys the experience of the power relation between Eastern and Western people in the South African community during the post-apartheid period. *The Pickup* is considered a social combination of post-apartheid South Africa and Saudi Arabia. Edward Said asserts that it "is a masterpiece of creative empathy... a gripping tale of contemporary anguish and unexpected desire, and it also opens the Arab world to unusually nuanced perception" (1990, 263). The power relation is extremely demonstrated and proven in the novel through female characters: Julie who has a great desire to attain her identity after sloughing from her father's routine by living in Saudi Arabia, a Muslim community located in a desert Eastern country; and Ibrahim's female relatives who fight against the patriarchal power that (according to the novelist's view) marginalizes, demeans, and abandons women in a Muslim country.

For more elaboration, Julie is a white luxurious girl who is very disgusted with the tyrannical system that dehumanizes blacks and Arabs in her country, South Africa, calling for spreading equal treatment among all people: "She abrogates any rights that are hers until they are granted also to him. This means she will follow no obedience to truthfulness ingested at school, no rules promulgated in the Constitution...." (*PU* 2001, 55). Thus, she never has the sense of belonging in her Western country, fighting to restore her lost identity and gain powerfulness in another one; that is why, she regards Ibrahim, the eastern man from Saudi Arabia who works in South Africa, as a pickup to realize her goal, choosing his homeland as a proper place to fulfill her lost desires after marrying him. Due to his excitement with the Western countries and their bounties, Ibrahim gets furious because Julie decides to leave her country which gives her full privileges, considering such a decision some sort of ignorance, naivety, and stupidity: "You cannot live in my country, it's not for you... You can wish you were dead, if you have to live there" (95).

Julie receives multiple warnings from her family and friends not to create a connection with Ibrahim because they are totally different and not suitable for each other. For instance, a friend of Julie's father tells her: "He's not for you" (*PU* 2001, 32). Her father also disapproves of such a relationship with an Eastern man, threatening her that she will be deprived of her individuality, freedom, and independence in Ibrahim's Eastern country; a bad, poor, unsafe, polluted, and backward third-world country that has experienced disastrous political upheavals, and where women are subjected to men, demeaned, deprived of their liberation and treated as slaves according to their culture and religion:

"You are out of your mind... you choose to go to hell in your own way" (98). This is the strongest stereotype of most Western people towards the Easterner ones, which Edward Said criticizes in his masterpiece, *Orientalism*. He resents the widespread ideology of the "Orient", the "other" or the "colonized" which has been prevalent by Western intellectuals who have narrated false myths about their laziness, deceit, inability, stupidity, irrationality, assimilation, violence, and corruption (1978, 1).

6.2. Self-Fashioning

Self-fashioning is a central concern in the feminist new historicist approach in general and the concept of power in particular. The individual is controlled by his powerful State which never believes in his ability to confront its domination. Resisters have independent movements in a particular historical situation against these dominant ideologies which distinguish and judge people according to class, race, gender, and color. That is why Greenblatt calls for shifting from dominance to resistance and achieving the balance between dominant and subordinate ideologies (Williams 2003, 134-35).

In this context, Greenblatt pays great attention to self-fashioning within the framework of Feminist New Historicism. He reviews these perspectives in detail as follows:

Self-fashioning engages submission to an absolute power or authority situated at least partially outside the self—God, a sacred book, an institution such as church, court, colonial or military administration... Self-fashioning is achieved concerning something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile. This threatening Other... must be discovered or invented to be attacked and destroyed. (1980, 9)

Hence, Greenblatt is preoccupied with the role of the individual, refusing his political and social restriction, and declaring his powerfulness to revolt against oppressive ideologies. He reveals that the individual is fashioned partly by submission to religious, cultural, political, or social institutions to which he belongs, and partly by confrontation and resistance with the other who is either contained or destroyed. In this regard, Chung-Hsiung Lai points out otherness as a relevant term to the concept of power relations in general and self-fashioning in particular. It stimulates the desire of possession to suppress and deform the image of the other. The other possesses and is possessed by the self; otherwise, it will lead to aggression and brutality (2006, 15). In a word, the self is reflected and understood in the light of the other.

6.3. Forms of Struggle to Gain Power

As mentioned earlier, Feminist New Historicism is concerned with the great role of women, refusing their limitation in the course of politics and acknowledging their powerfulness to resist. In this context, Gordimer weaves her novel in a way articulating women's struggle to gain power in the post-apartheid era. She seeks forms of struggle that are somehow weird but effective. Regarding Julie, she resists the oppressive ideologies of South Africa and chooses to relocate from South Africa where her identity is lost to Saudi Arabia where her identity starts to flourish. Regarding Ibrahim's female relatives, they resist the patriarchal structure within their Arab country and start to change with the assistance and support of Julie. The following section will handle these effective forms which are religion, silence, language, and land, and how Gordimer delineates them within her narrative.

6.3.1. Religion

Religion is a powerful tool which Greenblatt discloses in his new historicist approach. He shows that the self can be fashioned by submission to religion; that is why Gordimer employs it as an effective element for gaining power in her novel. In the light of the feminist new historicist approach,

Gordimer shows to what extent women adhere to religion as a spiritual means to draw power or shift from disempowerment to empowerment. She portrays religious cults as a catharsis for dilemmas and assimilation of others' religious beliefs as effective ways to attain power as will be highlighted in the following section.

The power of religion has diverse perspectives in *The Pickup* through Ibrahim's mother and Julie. Ibrahim's mother trusts religion to attain power; she always prays in a secluded corner, asking Allah to support her and protect her family: "The mother perhaps at her prayer rug asking divine help to protect her son on his endless journey" (PU 2001, 248). As for Julie, she sticks to religion as a form of struggle to gain power but from a different perspective. She easily assimilates into Ibrahim's Muslim community, arranging her appointments according to the muezzin's call to prayer. When she pays a visit to Sidi Yusuf, a tourist site in Ibrahim's country, she has a deep desire to buy all the posters of Islamic monuments such as *Ka'aba* in Makkah, the Prophet's Masjid in Medina, the Dome of the Rock, and the inscribed verses of The Holy Quran. She esteems abstinence from food, water, and lust from sunrise to sunset during the Holy month of Ramadan. Additionally, she puts a scarf over her head, keeps her blouse closed, and never gets out of the house without a male companion. Although she reads Qur'anic verses in a loud voice to herself in order to seek exhortation, encouragement, inspiration, advice, and consolidation, she also regards religion as a powerful thread that can assist her in assimilating into the sense of the Arab community and eradicate the economic or political barriers between her and Ibrahim's relatives: "Religion for her is perhaps less spiritual than the containment of life in a society" (124). According to Justin Neuman, religion, for Julie, is not an obstacle hindering her from fulfilling her individuality and liberty as the political and economic divides do; this is an important thing that can be learned and practiced easily without an absolute belief in it (2014, 177).

6.3.2. Silence

The concept of silence is an important form of struggle adopted by people to gain power. In colonial discourses, silence is considered a form of disempowerment; it also implies a dissent of the suppression of the black people in general. According to Benita Parry, silence "has been read as a many accented signifier of disempowerment and resistance, of the denial of a subject position. . . . an inviolable voice on which discourses of mastery cannot impinge and, thus, as an enunciation of defiance" (1996, 152-53). In a similar vein, women in some Arab countries are compelled to be silent since they are totally deprived of expressing their own views on the patriarchal bias. Hence, silence is regarded as a form of resistance on the part of Arab women who reject the biased misuse of power and control under the patriarchal system.

In *The Pickup*, Gordimer puts her marginalized female characters in the mode of silence to achieve their economic, social, and political goals. She achieves a positive point from her female characters' silence, which leads to their triumph, satisfaction, pride, and declaration of identity. Besides, she demonstrates the diasporic female characters in the other country. The aftermath of this diaspora is suffering, segregation, and ultimately silence (Shahri 2013, 13). Julie feels puzzled and stays silent upon arriving at Ibrahim's community: "If she was strangely new to them, she was also strangely new to herself" (PU 2001, 123). However, she increasingly gets rid of her sense of diaspora, alienation, and loneliness by participating with Ibrahim's female relatives and producing a communicative cycle among them. Thus, silence has a considerable role in developing linguistic and emotional ties among women in *The Pickup*. On the same scale, the silence of Ibrahim's female relatives in certain situations is interpreted as a form of struggle against the tyrannical ideology of their own country. Gordimer thinks that Muslim women are used to loneliness, segregation, and silence because of their Islamic traditions and conventions; they are confined, in her point of view, to a harem corner in their houses and are not permitted to be noticed or accompanied by anyone except their escorts.

She supports her point of view by describing Ibrahim's mother as a "monumental silence" (125). Thus, it can be said that women's silence was a sign of powerlessness and suffering which gradually changed to a state of challenge and transformation until becoming an effective tool of struggle to restore power. Hence, silence is connected to Greenblatt's thoughts dictating that people can gain power by being submitting to some forms of struggle, silence is one of it.

6.3.3. Language

Language is an outcome of the current dominant ideology that feminist New Historicism uses for reconstructing the self. Greenblatt regards language as a discursive power that is connected to self-fashioning and the issue of identity on the ground that it is an effective means of expressing our opinions and communicating with others (Lai 2006, 4). In a speech entitled, "The African Writer and the English Language", Chinua Achebe wondered: "Is it right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else's? It looks like a dreadful betrayal and produces a guilty feeling. But for me, there is no other choice. I have been given the language, and I intend to use it" (1975, 62). Frantz Fanon divides in his masterpiece, *Black Skin, White Masks*, identity into two selves: people in the white mask and people in the black mask; the former speak their native language as their mother tongue and a real manifestation of their own identity; and the latter are greatly aware of their indigenous identity, but use a disguised identity to assimilate into other traditions and cultures during colonialism (qtd. In Lai 2006, 16). Paradoxically, practicing the mother tongue is viewed as a sign of inferiority, naivety, and indiscretion, whereas practicing a foreign language is viewed as a sign of superiority, rationality, and positivity.

The main aim of colonialism is to destroy the heritage of the colonized and control their economic and political wealth which cannot be operative without colonizing their mental space and tools of self-determination. Colonizing the mind entails suppressing the mother language and applying the foreign one (Wa Thiong'o 1986, 16). The African people refused to adopt the African language as a means of spiritual subjugation. They did not notice any contradictions between maintaining their native language and practicing the foreign language. Although the working class was historically forced to practice the language of their masters, they exerted their efforts to preserve their mother language by Africanizing the foreign language. They adopted what is called pidgin, which means coining new terms and expressions by mixing foreign and mother languages. Through this functioning plan, the African language was still alive and active in the daily speeches, ceremonies, occasions, and political battles by means of poems, orature, myths, riddles, and proverbs (23).

Language is a significant vehicle for restoring power which "is only through mutually beneficial interactions that the wounds from a shared painful history may be healed" (Andindilile 2013, 19). It is considered a focal point of power relations as it uncovers the struggle between communities and the hierarchical power in the apartheid and post-apartheid periods. Language cannot be limited or controlled; it exceeds the borders of history. The culture, history, identity, and values of any nation are conveyed by language. Culture reflects realistic portraits of certain communities to the world by means of oral and written language. Accordingly, the feminist new historicist approach fosters the interconnection between language and reality on the ground that recognizing reality totally depends on language. Cultural forces have paramount importance in creating history and circulating languages. It is not enough to realize cultural codes only to consider the thoughtful importance of language. One must realize all the political, economic, and social forces of each culture.

The perspective of Achebe and Fanon can be best applied to *The Pickup* which shows how female characters maintain their language as proof of their power, but when it corresponds to their power loss, they are totally forced to use and speak others' language. Upon interaction with Ibrahim's female relatives, Julie becomes fully aware that her ignorance of their own language reveals her

power loss and the Eastern's power over her. She desires to learn their own language to manage her life there. Her lack of Arabic language while lodging in an Arab country makes her feel lonely and segregated; that is why she insists on learning Arabic to gain power in the new country. She along with Ibrahim's female relatives stare at each other in deep incomprehensibility and mystery; no one can imagine or realize the life of the other. It is a great motivation for Julie to learn their own language and assimilate into their culture: "I have to learn the language" (*PU* 2001, 121). Consequently, she tells her mother to send her a copy of the translated Holy Quran. She also decides to teach Ibrahim's female relatives her foreign language "in exchange for lessons in their language" (143). Gradually, the female neighbors of Ibrahim "join the exchange, picking up Julie's language, Julie picking up theirs" (150). They establish a female open and communicative cycle in the kitchen through which they can get rid of their silent mode and exchange pidgin language with each other (255). In the end, Julie "spoke Arabic, the foreigner understands enough, now" (268). Thus, the kitchen symbolizes hope for the upcoming possibilities between the East and the West since it is considered a witness to the linguistic and emotional bonds among the female community. Through teaching one another's language in an exchange, they reach reconciliation between the East and the West. In a word, language is inseparable from us as human beings. It is an influential means of communication, interaction, and a carrier of culture that pushes us further from our existing world to theirs.

6.3.4. Land

Land plays an important role in Greenblatt's Feminist New Historicism though it is less important than the self in his analysis (Lai 2006, 15). Gordimer conveys the involvement of the land in terms of power relations, accentuating that individuals' identity and social relations are an integral part of their relation to the environment (Lijcklama à Nijeholt 2014, 13). In *The Pickup*, Gordimer articulates how relocation or immigration is viewed as a struggle to restore power for the Western and the Eastern alike. Some of the Eastern people have an inner desire to relocate to another country: "'Relocate' they're saying ... because of the constrictions of poverty or politics, or by choice of ambition and belief that there's be an even more privileged life, safe from pitchforks... the rebellious poor and the handguns of the criminals" (*PU* 2001, 48). Julie, as a representation of the Western people, has the privilege of moving from one country to another and afford the costs of relocation. She intends and chooses to go beyond the boundaries to attain her identity. In this connection, the concept of "the country" has great importance for Julie.

In this regard, Gordimer tackles the cultivation of land and its influential contribution to achieving identity and restoring power. According to C. Mount, *The Pickup* presents an analysis of the restorative power of the pastoral (2014, 101). Gordimer's inspiring mind takes Julie from a luxurious family in South Africa to a poor village in Saudi Arabia, a place where is "buried in desert" (*PU* 2001, 122). The desert has a focal role in shaping Julie's individuality and independence; she realizes that restoring power requires relocating to a space away from her own homeland; that is why her cultural identity flourishes in the desert land of Saudi Arabia. She ultimately loses her sense of segregation and finds in the desert land a place where she can escape from the emotionlessness and exploitation of her foreign culture. She is so joyful and excited about the fact that there is neither struggle, demarcation, nor discrimination in the desert:

The desert. No seasons of bloom and decay. Just the endless turn of night and day. Out of time: and she is gazing- not over it, taken into it, for it has no measure of space, features that mark distance from here to there. In a film of haze there is no horizon, the pallor of sand, pinktraced, lilac-luminous with its color of faint light, has no demarcation from land to air. Sky-haze is indistinguishable from sand-haze. All drifts together, and there is no onlooker; the desert is eternity. (*PU* 2001, 172)

There is a striking contrast between the points of view of Eastern women represented in Ibrahim's female relatives and Western women represented in Julie towards the desert. On the one hand, the desert is considered a source of empowerment for Julie since she explores the sense of liberty, belonging, hope, comfort, peace, and consistency through her experience in the desert. On the other hand, the desert is considered a source of disempowerment for Ibrahim's female relatives since they view it as a motionless and miserable place that imposes repressive barriers: "Silence is a desolation; the desert" (*PU* 2001, 34). On the contrary, Julie is thrilled to lodge in the desert land and feels so thrilled by the expansion of the rice fields in Ibrahim's village and intends to buy land near the oasis to invest her money in this prosperous land project. Ibrahim is astonished by Julie's unwise decision, confronting her saying: "You can buy part of the oasis already under cultivation... And you can get permission to drill for a well... With money, you can buy anything from the government. The landowners who call themselves a government" (215). He along with his female relatives still believe that her desire to settle in the desert is another adventure, "another adventure to hear from her, from her rich girl's ignorance, innocence" (216).

Thus, the attitudes of the Eastern and Western towards the desert land express their ideologies. The desert is viewed as a place that fascinates Julie in, drives Ibrahim's female relatives out, and demonstrates their unavoidable separation. Moreover, the desert signifies empowerment and independence for the Western women who can move freely in the desert, while it signifies disempowerment and subordination for the Eastern women whose movements are restricted in their own country. The destabilization that they suffer spurs them to show their struggle against the leading powerful ideology. Although the desert is considered a solution for Julie, it is considered an obstacle for Ibrahim's female relatives. By demonstrating the role of the desert in restoring power and attaining identity, Gordimer reaches reconciliation and peaceful co-existence between Eastern and Western women: "The sands of the desert dissolve conflict: there is space, space for at least one clear thought to come" (*PU* 2001, 231).

7. DISCUSSION

Through analyzing many aspects of Feminist New Historicism in *The Pickup*, it can be argued that Gordimer calls for gender-blindness by paying more attention to the marginalized women who are totally neglected in the light of Foucault's New Historicism that focuses on the patriarchal power. The novelist criticizes the wretched situations of women under the patriarchal society where men use their power of masculinity and dominance over women as evidence of their control and superiority. Gordimer advocates Feminist New Historicism, pointing out that women should find a place for themselves in masculine communities. As a reaction, women positively and effectively struggle against such a domineering power and are transformed from the phase of disempowerment to the phase of empowerment.

Julie successfully sloughs from her skin to experience a new life in a different country with numerous traditions and conventions. Julie has a strong conviction, leading her not to be affected or guided by anyone. Only her firm determination guides her in her self-discovery journey without any kind of compulsion. Julie pays no attention to the hardship or difficulties that might confront her in her escape journey. She decides to take the risk and follow the path that is full of obstacles. She finds in her intercultural marriage with Ibrahim a catalyst for achieving her utopian dream and emancipation from the oppressive constraints of her country: "the kind of love-making that is another country, a country of its own, nor yours nor mine" (*PU* 2001, 96). It is supposed that love exceeds racial, religious, and ethnic divides. Thus, Julie's romantic relationship with Ibrahim links differences and represents a resort to another country from where her new identity can flourish. Ultimately, Julie achieves a new identity and gains power by intimately interacting with Ibrahim's relatives.

Out of her sense of responsibility for her gender; Gordimer articulates the miserable conditions of the Eastern women in the third-world community by depicting the characters of Ibrahim's mother and female relatives, revealing how they overcome the cruel situations imposed on them by patriarchal power. Women in Eastern countries, according to Gordimer, are stripped of their freedom, and are subordinate to the male patriarchy: "The men were conducting, giving orders..... It is not usual for women to sit down to eat with the men" (*PU* 2001, 120, 22). They are confined to "the women's quarters of the house, where the daughters remained during the visit... it was not allowed for a male to see his female cousins" (128). Hence, their task is restricted to being responsible for household duties and bringing up children. Although Ibrahim's mother is forced to keep silent in her Muslim community, she is an intelligent woman with a distinctive mind. In her childhood, she kept discussing with her father, arguing with him to let her learn in school to have the ability to write and read The Holy Quran; she memorized a lot of Quranic verses by heart: "In those days she was the only girl among the boys there" (137). However, her marriage hindered her from completing her education. She had no alternative to choosing another life; "but it was arranged, she was married. And here she has been in this house, giving us birth, feeding us, boiling water to clean us" (137).

However, Ibrahim's mother stands against the patriarchal power prevailing in Eastern Muslim society and endeavors to preserve a powerful place in her household. Indeed, she is described as "the presence of this house..... The powerful presence" (*PU* 2001, 119-20). The family affairs are discussed on Fridays on her part without any participation or contradiction on the part of Ibrahim's father, the matter which questions and demeans his masculinity and superiority in such an Arab Muslim family: "The mother directed everything, she was obeyed as the guardian... the ingredients she chose and the methods of preparation she decreed were followed" (195). Ibrahim's mother made a great contribution to her son's life. She makes her brother, Yaqub, transfer the possession of his workshop to Ibrahim to get him closer to their lives. Thus, her power and authority in the family are crystal clear in her spiritual devotion, as was revealed earlier, in addition to the good relationship she portrays with the whole family. In sum, Ibrahim's mother represents the absolute presence of family, maternal love, and support for her husband and children.

People lodging in religious communities, which are completely different from their own, must either keep isolated or participate in the communities surrounding them. This is what happened with Julie. When she decides to relocate to her husband's country to live in his Muslim homeland, she comprehends that her identity and liberty begin to be limited among Ibrahim's female relatives because Ibrahim's mother has autonomous dominance. In turn, Julie emulates the way of struggle adopted by Ibrahim's mother to gain power, taking her as a good model to follow. To achieve her goal, Julie has great curiosity to know the exact restrictions imposed on women in these closed communities; so, she involves herself in the household chores, cooks with Ibrahim's female relatives in the kitchen, and accepts the warm invitation of Ibrahim's female neighbors to have a tour in their desert land.

Progressively, Julie starts to discover a wonderful meaning in her life, finds her lost identity among Ibrahim's female relatives and neighbors, feels less segregated than she was in her old life, receives a heartfelt welcome from the Eastern women by adhering to their religious and communal beliefs, appears very humble to her new family, treats them as equals to her, and forms a female communicative cycle with Ibrahim's female relatives and neighbors to address the issues of liberation and independence. However, it can be stated that Julie's ability to assimilate into any country is outstanding evidence of the power of her skin color and culture. Her relocation to the East is considered a powerfulness to her nature and culture since she gains success in shifting her own identity to the desired one: "She had made her choices; here it was. She was the one with the choices. The freedom of the world was hers" (*PU* 2001, 115).

Remarkably, Julie achieves her independent identity by taking the desert and Ibrahim's female relatives into her own consideration as important means for achieving her lost identity. After her refusal to immigrate with her husband to the USA, she discovers that her flourishing relationship with the female members of the family is a more precious alternative than any other connections she created in her old life. Undoubtedly, not only Julie but also the young men call for emancipating the Eastern women from the limitations imposed upon them. Nevertheless, they are stumped between paying attention to women's interests as an integral part of their resistance or letting them determine their identity and liberty through the way they intend themselves. For instance, Ibrahim's revolution against his Eastern community springs somewhat from the marginalized position of women that he completely rejects (Brister 2012, 43).

In this context, Ibrahim calls for gender-blindness, claiming that women's concerns are considered part and parcel of their revolutions, stressing that men should provide women with opportunities to decide their fate themselves. They "are the ones now with their revolution. Oh, it's part of ours. But they want to decide for themselves... They want to study or work anywhere... the modern world where men still think we're the only ones to have a place. We must get one of them to speak..." (PU 2001, 178). Hence, Ibrahim is ambitious to favor women's choice, emancipation, and individuality. Although Ibrahim feels sympathetic toward the wretched conditions of women in his Arab communities, he cannot cope with the idea that women cannot comply with patriarchal orders or obligations. He is so astonished by his wife's refusal to depart with him. He cannot imagine how women have personal desires and needs that should be satisfied: "Women here – his home- do what their men tell them to do" (227). Hence, Gordimer rejects the hegemony of men over women; she portrays the great contribution of women to reconstructing history as some sort of reaction against Foucault's New Historicism that pays attention to (his) story, totally neglecting (her) story.

8. CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, the researcher has employed Feminist New Historicism in *The Pickup* to portray the unusual feminist viewpoint of how the life of women should be lived under certain conditions. Julie's decision to relocate to a very different country from her own is an obvious demonstration of the unique nature and abilities of women who can create new lives in different circumstances. Julie is considered a model of a woman who does not get confused about the decisions she makes despite the hardships she encountered throughout her self-discovery journey. In a word, Julie is truly an unconventional feminist figure who succeeds in validating her female existence on her accord. In addition, the researcher has depicted the process of power relations between Eastern and Western women, highlighting how each one of them Eastern considers the other a pickup or a golden opportunity that must be seized. Moreover, she has highlighted how Gordimer uses the power of religion and silence as effective tools of struggle to gain power. Further, the research has showed how Gordimer has handled the issue of language, as an influential element to gain power, from a different perspective; Julie employs her foreign language as evidence of her authority and superiority as well as a form of struggle against the miserable conditions of the Eastern women and consequently takes a step forward towards reaching the phase of reconciliation and peaceful existence between the East and the West. In this context, Gordimer has approved that exchanging each other's native language is a momentous power for restoring power. Furthermore, the researcher has clarified how Gordimer has demonstrated how land has a great role in achieving identity and restoring power. She has articulated how the desert is a source of powerfulness for the Western women and a source of powerlessness for the Eastern women. Ultimately, it could be said that Gordimer's *The Pickup* has lots of implications in relation to Feminist New Historicism. By grappling with the issues investigated throughout the whole research, Gordimer has truly stretched the meaning and function of third-wave feminism and history according to the dictates of Feminist New Historicism.

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Impersonalization in English Scientific Discourse: Calculus of Means and *ESP* Applicability

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abstract

This article examines the key distinctions between English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and General English (GE), focusing particularly on the concept of impersonalization. Driven by the need to provide undergraduate engineering students with real-world writing abilities, this study looks at how passives and related impersonal style features are used. It seeks to illustrate that impersonal statements in written scientific and academic contexts can be expressed through a variety of linguistic mechanisms, such as agentless passive constructions, impersonal general pronouns, if-clauses, and personification. This research employs a corpus-based methodology to investigate the linguistic tools employed to eliminate any personal references to maintain a more formal or neutral tone in English academic discourse. Additionally, it seeks to analyze the prevalence of impersonality in English research articles spanning multiple fields, such as dentistry, civil engineering, and mechanical engineering. The study specifically aims to address the following question: What are the linguistic structures used to indicate impersonality? Are there notable differences in the ways various disciplines express objectivity, clarity, and formality, which are usually the driving forces behind impersonalization in academic writing? A collection of 30 primary empirical research articles from dentistry, civil engineering, and mechanical engineering was examined using both qualitative and quantitative analyses through the corpus linguistic method.

Keywords: English for specific purposes, impersonalization, agentless passives, personification

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1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of English as a global lingua franca, combined with the trends of globalization in fields such as science, education, and commerce, alongside factors like migration arising from political and social turmoil, as well as multiculturalism, has highlighted the need for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and the development of language skills designed for particular goals. Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) programs throughout Europe, especially those focusing on English, are driven by the expansion of the common European area, increased job and educational prospects, cross-border business operations, the international framework established by the European Union, and governmental initiatives that promote multiculturalism.

A significant distinction between English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and General English (GE) resides in the utilization of impersonal language. Generally speaking, scientific and academic writing adheres to an objective tone, which is often regarded as absent in General English. The discourse found in scientific papers is characterized by its argumentative nature, aiming to convince the scientific community to embrace the novel knowledge and arguments put forth, ultimately integrating them into the established corpus of 'scientific knowledge' or 'facts' recognized by consensus in the respective field. To achieve this objective, scientific writing intentionally minimizes the researcher's presence within the text, thereby fostering an 'objective' style that appears to allow the facts to be communicated independently. One approach to achieving objectivity involves the application of a communicative technique referred to as impersonalization. Impersonalization, in the context of communication strategies, refers to the avoidance of direct references to specific individuals (Luukka & Markkanen, 1997) and the use of impersonal grammatical constructions (Malchukov & Siewierska, 2011; Siewierska, 2008a, 2008b). Furthermore, Marín Arrese (2002) describes impersonalization by the degree to which the identity of the agent is concealed. This technique shifts the emphasis to the information presented, reducing the attention given to the authors' roles and thereby prioritizing the substance of the discussion over the identities of those presenting it. As a result, it plays a crucial role in fostering a more impartial tone within scientific and academic writing. Additionally, Hyland (2002, p. 1095) observed that the characteristic of impersonality is a fundamental aspect of expository writing, reflecting the positivist view that academic research is inherently empirical and objective. In her exploration of various genres, Berman (2014) indicates that the preference for impersonal structures in expository writing is a common trait of this form of discourse. She suggests a discourse-based continuum of impersonalization, which ranges from interactive conversation at one end, through personal narratives and fictive accounts, to informative texts, expository discussions, and research papers at the opposite end.

However, recent academic research conducted over the past ten years has demonstrated that scientific discourse is not a singular or uniform entity; rather, it differs significantly based on disciplinary norms and cultural expectations (Hyland, 2006). Moreover, research exploring English scientific written discourse has revealed numerous variations among disciplines. These variations encompass aspects such as authorial stance (Kuo, 1999; Bondi, 2005; Groom, 2005), the use of pronouns (Kuo, 1999; Fløttum et al., 2006), hedging and mitigation techniques (Hyland, 1998; Vold, 2006), and the application of questions (Hyland, 2002; Ionitiu, 2025), among others.

In the subsequent sections, I will illustrate various linguistic structures that contribute to establishing an impersonal tone in scientific discourse. This aims to guide and encourage my ESP students to adopt effective strategies for conveying and implementing impersonalization when dealing with a scientific writing task.

2. METHOD

The descriptive comparative approach was used in this study because it seeks to objectively describe and explain linguistic behaviors associated with impersonalization as a communication technique in English research papers. Additionally, quantitative approaches were employed, particularly to identify the frequency and distribution of impersonalization usage across various fields and to produce findings that can be generalized. To reveal the inter-disciplinary nature of our discourse analysis focused on English for Dentistry and English for Civil and Mechanical engineering, we employed methods of corpus linguistics to construct and examine a corpus. In the absence of an existing corpus in these disciplines, we utilized BootCat, a software tool for corpus creation developed by a team of linguists at the University of Bologna in Forli. BootCat functions as a type of “crawler”, often referred to as a “spider”, which is a software tool that gathers information from web pages through queries. We assembled a basic corpus by using the Google search engine, generating tuples (data structures) for BootCat from keywords such as “dentistry/ dental medicine, civil engineering/ mechanical engineering/ engineering sciences”. We meticulously reviewed and aggregated the hyperlinks to enable BootCat to develop a pertinent corpus. This collection provides the researcher with a diverse array of linguistic tools to attain her objectives and address the posed inquiries. The examples are retrieved from a collection of 30 scientific articles in the fields of dentistry, civil engineering, and mechanical engineering, which were published on <https://www.sciencepublishinggroup.com/> from 2023 to 2025. The typical article length is approximately 15 pages, contributing to a corpus of around 600 pages of text. Science Publishing Group (SciencePG) operates as an Open Access publisher, featuring over 300 online, peer-reviewed journals that span a diverse array of academic fields. These subjects include but are not limited to chemistry, education, medicine and health, architecture, and civil engineering, as well as electrical, mechanical, and computer sciences, alongside sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science, and administration. We have analyzed the corpus using some linguistic tools such as Voyant Tool and Analyze My Writing, and then manually verified. Though the Voyant tool was used to show some characteristics like the total number of words, the number of word types, the lexical density, and data on the average number of words per sentence, Analyze My Writing was used to verify the reliability of the information provided by the prior instrument, and identify the passive forms and impersonal structures in the corpus. Both tools detected the same number of words used in the corpus, but the main difference lies in the 25 most commonly used words:



Figure 1. The author’s own processing using Analyze My Writing.



Figure 2. The author's own processing using the Voyant tool.

Since Analyze My Writing gave me the possibility to recognize the passive structures as well, we have noted that 24 out of 30, or 80% of our scientific articles, deployed at least one form of passive structure, while the remaining articles employed a variety of impersonal structures such as abstract nouns (paper, study, research, analysis, etc.), impersonal pronouns or it-clauses.

3. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The linguistic features of impersonalization include agentless passive constructions, commonly referred to as short passives. These can be further categorized into agentless present passives (which may or may not exhibit progressive or perfective aspects), agentless past passives, modalized agentless passives, and impersonal constructions. The latter group consists of impersonal pronouns, 'It-clauses,' and personification. This section will emphasize that agentless passive construction is the most frequently employed among these options. This observation further reinforces the notion that passive constructions are widely utilized in English academic writing (Biber et al., 1999) and have subsequently attained a significant degree of conventionalization (Hyland, 1998; Swales, 1990, 2004). Hyland (1998) stresses how writers use well-established linguistic tools to present themselves and engage with their audience. He talks about how self-mentions, attitude markers, boosters, and hedges are employed in discipline-specific and socially controlled ways. For Hyland, conventionalization includes both structure and interpersonal meaning, namely, how authors position themselves in relation to their audience and statements.

The notion that academic writing is influenced by established communicative goals inside particular discourse groups was first presented by Swales (2004). Here, convention refers to the process by which specific rhetorical forms get normalized across disciplines. In a nutshell, both academics see conventionalization as a socially created process that prioritizes linguistic options and interpersonal relationships in writing, as well as discourse community norms and genre structures.

Writers use the accepted rhetorical and linguistic techniques in scientific publications to fulfill the criteria of their scholarly circle. Linguistic conventions such as the use of passive voice, impersonal language, precise, specialized, and technical vocabulary, or nominalizations contribute to coherence, legitimacy, and clarity.

The widespread use of passive constructions in scientific writing appears to diminish the role of the researcher who undertook various actions, including formulating hypotheses, collecting data, interpreting results, drawing conclusions, and composing the final document. The following examples illustrate the different types of activities:

3.1. Passive construction associated with hypotheses.

Passive constructions are frequently employed in scientific writing, particularly when addressing hypotheses. This tendency arises from the preference to emphasize the action or outcome instead of the individual executing the action. Below are several examples of passive constructions related to hypotheses.

"Moreover, in relation to what considered literature indicates, the strategy that has already been formally subscribed to and is the result of a collaborative and multistakeholder process that is highly formalized, however perfectible, has been assumed as relevant" (Retrieved from Leo De Daniela and Altamore Sara. "Renewable Energy, Landscape Protection and Tourism Development, a Territorial Plan Experiment in Italy." *Urban and Regional Planning*, 10(1), (2025): 42-54. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.urp.20251001.12>)

"The antibacterial activity of *Aloe schweinfurthii* was tested through the parameters of bacterial inhibition." (Retrieved from Mengong Moneboulou Hortense Perpetue et al.. "Antibacterial Activity of *Aloe schweinfurthii* Gel in the Preservation of Periodontal Ligament Cells of an Erupted Immature Permanent Tooth." *International Journal of Dental Medicine*, 11(1), (2025): 10-19. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijdm.20251101.12>)

These examples help to focus attention on the hypothesis rather than on the researcher performing the study.

3.2. Passive construction on the execution of the study.

Such constructions play a significant role in maintaining an objective and formal tone, which is often preferred in academic and scientific writing. The use of passive voice promotes objectivity by focusing on the action or result of the research rather than the researcher. This method makes the writing appear more neutral and devoid of bias. Utilizing the passive voice shifts the emphasis to the results or methods used, rather than highlighting the researcher conducting the study. This aligns well with the aim of emphasizing the research itself. The use of passive voice can assist in maintaining a uniform tone throughout the document, particularly when detailing methods, procedures, and outcomes.

Destructive tests were conducted on the reinforced concrete specimens shown in Figure 4." (Retrieved from Shimoi, Nobuhiro, Nakasho, Kazuhisa, and Yamauchi Yu. "Comparison of Crack Measurement and FEM Analysis Using Infrared Camera for Concrete Surface of Coating-type Resin Sensor. *Journal of Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering*, 10(1), (2025): 27-35. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.jceee.20251001.13>)

'Daily and accumulated distillate yield for the still distillers have been studied and analyzed". (Retrieved from Oni, Oni, Adam, Hamza Yusuf, and Oguike, Raphael. "Evaluation of Modified Conventional Still Distiller Using Coupled External Passive Condenser: An Experimental Study." *Industrial Engineering*, 8(1), (2024): 13-19. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ie.20240801.12>)

3.2. Passive Construction on the Execution of the Study

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“(…)treatments were conducted according to the procedure of VIPT group and RCT group; follow-up examinations were conducted at 1 year after treatment with the records of clinical and radiological examination.” (Retrieved from Liu, Yun and Sun Jin. “Clinical Evaluation of Vital Inflamed Pulp Therapy as Treatment Options for Deciduous Molars with Periapical Periodontitis.” *International Journal of Dental Medicine*, 10(1), (2024): 14-17. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijdm.20241001.14>)

3.3. Passive Construction Related to the Analysis of Results

The passive voice is often used to emphasize the actions taken and the results produced rather than drawing attention to the individuals performing those actions. This approach aids in preserving an objective and formal tone, which is typically favored in scientific discourse. Here are several examples of the application of passive voice in research papers related to dental, civil, and mechanical engineering.

“In the third stage, students' determination, analysis and synthesis studies were focused on the design field, and the results were obtained on how to direct the design by synthesizing the data.” (Retrieved from Dizdar, Safiye Irem. “Building Design in Historical Environment-Periodical Study-Haydarpaşa / Selimiye.” *Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning*, 9(3), (2024): 54-63. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.larp.20240903.11>)

“Regional and national reports have been analyzed, with insights at the regional and provincial scales from ISPRA-Superior Institute for Environmental Protection and Research, ARPA-Regional Environmental Protection Agency and ISTAT-National Institute of Statistics.” (Retrieved from Leo, Daniela De and Altamore Sara. “Renewable Energy, Landscape Protection and Tourism Development, a Territorial Plan Experiment in Italy.” *Urban and Regional Planning*, 10(1), (2025): 42-54. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.urp.20251001.12>)

“(…) pulpotomy was performed to expose all canal orifices.” (Retrieved from Chen, Qianer, He, Jiahui, Liu, Yun, and Sun, Jin. “Application of Inflammatory Vital Pulp Therapy in the Treatment of Apical Periodontitis in a Deciduous Molar: A Case Report.” *International Journal of Dental Medicine*, 10(1), (2024): 10-13. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijdm.20241001.13>)

3.4. Passive Construction Concerning Meta-Text, Specifically the Act of Writing

The use of passive voice in relation to meta-text, particularly in the writing process, can improve the clarity of academic writing, thereby making it more accessible and impactful for readers. Meta-text frequently discusses its own composition, content, or intent. For instance, an author might indicate the arrangement of their essay within the text itself. This offers readers valuable perspectives on how to understand the primary text. It may encompass clarifications regarding the methodology, the reasoning behind specific decisions, or the framework of the document. Furthermore, it elucidates the intention and extent of the text, often responding to possible inquiries or apprehensions the reader may possess. Meta-text is especially beneficial in academic and technical writing, where precision and direction are vital for enhancing the reader's comprehension. The examples provided demonstrate the application of the passive voice to articulate the different stages and actions that comprise the writing process, emphasizing the actions rather than the individuals executing them.

“In this study, the Soil Conservation Service Curve Number loss method was selected to estimate direct runoff from a specific or design rainfall as also adopted in [17].” (Retrieved from Adedokun, Adebayo, Adewara, Monsur, and Adaradahun, Oluwayemisi. “Flashflood Hazard Assessment in Yewa South Lga.” *Journal of Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering*, 10(2), (2025): 49-59. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.jccee.20251002.11>)

“This research was designed using an experimental method, where 1 battery module equipped with a passive cooling system in the form of a box that gives the PCM (paraffin + bamboo carbon + TiO₂) which is used to absorb heat that occurs in the battery due to the work of the battery used to drive the motor.” (Retrieved from Made Arsawan, I., Dewa Gede Ary Subagia, I., Putu Sastra Negara, I., Nengah Ludra, I., Bagus Puspa Indra, I. “Utilization of Biomaterial (Bamboo Carbon) as Phase Change Material (PCM) for Electric Vehicle Batteries Cooling Media.” *American Journal of Science, Engineering and Technology*, 8(4), (2023): 199-205. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajset.20230804.14>)

“The data supporting the outcome of this research work has been reported in this manuscript.” (Retrieved from Apinsathanon, Pongsakorn. “Utilizing Intraoral Scanning and Computer-Aided Design/Manufacturing for Creating a New Dental Crown to Match an Existing Removable Prosthesis: A Case Report.” *International Journal of Dental Medicine*, 10(1), (2024): 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijdm.20241001.11>)

The occurrence of the passive voice, as noted by Lachowicz (1981), enables the authors to present their work in a manner that is receptive to various interpretations. Statistical analysis by Swales (1990) reveals that a minimum of one-third of the predicative verbs found in ESP texts are articulated in the passive form. The regular employment of passive constructions aligns with the characteristics of source materials that emphasize objectivity, brevity, and a coherent progression of ideas. The initial step in recounting and analyzing scientific texts requires an objective tone, which is significantly strengthened through the application of the passive voice. Moreover, in scientific literature, the object of the action frequently holds greater significance than the subject executing it, and the passive voice enables the object to take a central and prominent role within the sentence structure. In addition, concentrating on the subject of the action often improves both the brevity and clarity of scientific writing. Moreover, this grammatical structure enables authors to maintain a degree of detachment from their assertions, as emphasized by Hyland (1998). Huddleston and Pullum (2002) suggest that the agentless passive voice is intended to reduce direct ownership of ideas by the author. This approach is commonly perceived to enhance the objectivity of the text in comparison to works that feature first-person expressions. These constructions may be further classified depending on the finiteness of the verb, distinguishing between finite and non-finite passive constructions. The passive constructions that employ finite verbs can be additionally organized into present passive constructions, past passive constructions, and modalized passive constructions. Common examples from various sections of scientific publications identified using Analyze My Writing are listed below:

3.5. Agentless Present Passives (with or without progressive or perfective aspects)

“These challenges, however, are being addressed through ongoing research into AI algorithms that improve system adaptability and the development of more cost-effective robotic solutions” (Retrieved from Omar, Ebrahim Ansa. “Systematic Review of Innovative Approaches in Tunnel Construction and Design.” *American Journal of Construction and Building Materials*, 8(2), (2024): 20-34. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajcbm.20240802.11>)

“*Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants gave their written or oral consent before being interviewed.*” (Retrieved from Asekere, George, Ampiah, Vida, Letsyo, Emmanuel, and Hlovor, Ishmael Kwabla. “Reimagining Road Safety: Leveraging Technology to Combat Road Fatalities in Ghana.” *International Journal of Science, Technology and Society*, 13(1), (2025): 25-34. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijsts.20251301.13>)

“*To address the complexity of this procedure, several approaches have been introduced, including direct methods, indirect methods, and direct-indirect techniques*” (Retrieved from Apinsathanon, Pongsakorn. “Utilizing Intraoral Scanning and Computer-Aided Design/Manufacturing for Creating a New Dental Crown to Match an Existing Removable Prosthesis: A Case Report.” *International Journal of Dental Medicine*, 10(1), (2024): 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijdm.20241001.11>)

3.6. Agentless Past Passives

“*Discussions were held on how these determinations could provide input to the design in the process of studio education, and evaluations were made on how spatial and social change could take place.*” (Retrieved from Dizdar, Safiye Irem. “Building Design in Historical Environment-Periodical Study-Haydarpaşa / Selimiye.” *Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning*, 9(3), (2024): 54-63. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.larp.20240903.11>)

“*The nonlinear buckling critical load was found to be 20.5% lower than the linear critical buckling load, demonstrating that early geometric flaws had a considerable impact on the pipe's bearing capacity.*” (Retrieved from Chuxiang Lin, Weili Wang, Yongmei Zhu, Jian Zhang, Suzhou Zhang, et al. “Design and Mechanical Characteristics Analysis of Deep Sea Manifold System.” *Engineering Science*, 8(1), (2023): 6-13. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.es.20230801.12>)

“*A branch oral salivary suction device was designed to improve the efficiency of diagnosis and treatment and the comfort of patients.*” (Retrieved from Jie Zhou, Qing Yuan, Xue-Jing Lin, Zheng-Rou Wang, Yang Yang, et al. “The Utility Model Relates to a Branch Salivary Suction Device for Oral Cavity.” *International Journal of Dental Medicine*, 9(2), (2023): 45-47. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijdm.20230902.13>)

3.6.1 Modalized Agentless Passives and Subjectless Modal Constructions

Modal constructions and modalized agentless passives are related but not the same. Subjectless modal constructions are usually passive and have no subject, featuring a modal verb. Modalized agentless passives are a type of passive sentence that purposely omits the agent, often using a modal to express necessity or possibility.

“Port cities, situated between land and sea where two distinct flow spheres converge, can be described as interfaces linking forelands and hinterlands, creating intercontinental crossroad connections” (Retrieved from Samarani, Samer. “Exploring Port City Porosity and Flows within Port Regions: The Case Study of Port of Malaga and Port of Beirut.” *Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning*, 9(3), (2024): 64-72. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.larp.20240903.12>)

“From this it can be concluded that when lightning stroke happens to shield wire or tower body, operating voltage or phase voltage will be decreased as insulator voltage goes beyond operating voltage thereby reducing phase voltage to very small value.” (Retrieved from David, Adebayo Adeniyi, et al. “Earthing System Analysis for Steel Tower Carrying 33kV Line.” *Engineering Science*, 9(2), (2024): 21-38. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.es.20240902.11>)

“The risk of aerosol transmission can be reduced through good scientific protection, standardized operation, rinsing and disinfection, and the use of isolation and strong suction equipment.” (Retrieved from Chu-Han Song, Xiang Guo, Xian-Yan Lin, Jin-Mei Guo, Ya-Xin Bai, et al. “Potential Risk Factors for Aerosol Transmission in the Dental Office and Strategies for Prevention and Control.” *International Journal of Dental Medicine*, 9(2), (2023): 32-37. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijdm.20230902.11>)

“The results obtained can be used for changing the company’s strategic plan (...) The paper also illustrates how the model can be used and enhanced.” (Retrieved from Mutahar, Abeer Mubarak and Tarhan, Ibrahim Ethem. “Strategic Planning Model for a Construction Company in the Event of an Earthquake.” *Journal of Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering*, 10(1), (2025): 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.jccee.20251001.11>)

A widely used structure in English academic writing for achieving impersonalization is personification, which confers agency upon inanimate or abstract entities. This method also facilitates the deflection of responsibility onto non-human subjects such as *tables*, *figures*, and *documents*. Moreover, non-living entities such as *paper*, *study*, *discussion*, and *analysis* serve as the subjects that take cognitive action verbs as their predicates. Various studies that have examined the occurrence of these metonymies in scientific English have yielded differing outcomes. Myers (1992) observed that such constructions occur infrequently and categorized them as a marginal phenomenon. Conversely, Swales (1990) argues that they are, in reality, rather common in English. In my corpus, every document features sentences of this nature, especially within the introductory and concluding sections. The most common words identified within our corpus by Voyant-tool and Analyze My Writing were:

Rank	Word	No. of occurrences	Percentage
1.	analysis	21	1.89%
2.	research	21	1.89%
3.	study	18	1.62%
4.	paper	9	0.81%

Table 1. The author’s own processing using Voyant and Analyze My Writing

This particular form of grammatical metaphor, which identifies the *paper*, *study*, *discussion*, or *analysis* as a metonymic agent, possesses an impersonal characteristic. Given that the activities of discussing, proposing, focusing, and exploring are all cognitive processes performed by the researcher, the use of this grammatical metaphor allows the author to avoid specifying the true agent, consequently minimizing their presence in the text. The frequent use of this construction supports Banks’ (1996) claim that, together with the passive voice, it exemplifies a feature of English academic discourse that aims to diminish the visibility of human agents. Consequently, there exists a prevailing notion that scientific writing is inherently objective, impersonal, and focused on providing information, designed to obscure the author's identity while emphasizing factual content and the pursuit of an independent truth.

“The research showed building B2 showing optimum seismic performance against earthquake force from any direction.” (Retrieved from Adyeel, Abu Huraira Mohammed, et al. “Comparative Analysis of Seismic Performance of RC Buildings with Variation of Column Size and Orientation.” *American Journal of Civil Engineering*, 13(1), (2025): 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajce.20251301.11>)

“Finally, the paper indicates that NDT techniques are critical for assuring the safety, durability, and preservation of concrete structures, thereby significantly contributing to the upkeep of our built environment.” (Retrieved from Tefera, Belay Bayu and Tarekegn, Abraham Gebre. “Non-Destructive Testing Techniques for Condition Assessment of Concrete Structures: A Review.” *American Journal of Civil Engineering*, 13(1), (2025): 10-31. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajce.20251301.12>)

“Furthermore, this study provides a comprehensive roadmap for future research initiatives aiming to fully utilize the capabilities of technology design teams.” (Retrieved from Gomaa, Attia Hussien. “Digital Twins for Improving Proactive Maintenance Management.” *Engineering Science*, 9(3), (2024): 60-70. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.es.20240903.12>)

“This review aims to summarize the current knowledge on the use of zirconia ceramics in dental implant prosthodontics and assess its potential to replace titanium while maintaining high success rates.” (Retrieved from Aguirre-Osorio, Andres Filipe. “The Role of Zirconia Implants in Implantology: Potential Benefits and Challenges.” *International Journal of Dental Medicine*, 11(1), (2025): 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijdm.20251101.11>)

The employment of such metonymies serves not only to cultivate an appearance of objectivity but also to create a certain distinction between the researcher and the research itself. This method frames the research as a separate entity, independent of the researcher themselves. It is a common practice in academic discourse to describe the process of drawing conclusions as an intrinsic aspect of the natural world rather than as an intentional behavior performed by researchers. The conclusions are articulated in a way that suggests they are directly derived from empirical evidence (see Hyland, 1998, p. 18). This method effectively obscures the researcher’s involvement by highlighting a truth that arises directly from the reality rather than showcasing the researcher’s subjective interpretation of that reality. The examples below illustrate the use of scientific language in verbs like indicate, suggest, demonstrate, reveal, find, show, and give rise to.

“This study aims to demonstrate the harmful effects of textile mill effluent on the soil.(...)The investigation has shown that toxic colors and significant levels of organic pollutants are present in the effluent produced by textile processing facilities (...)” (Retrieved from Dhaker, Nirma, Mehta, Preeti., Sen, Pankaj, Mehta, Rajeev, and Bhatt, Abhilasha. “Impact of Textile Dyeing Effluent on Soil Quality Parameters.” *Industrial Engineering*, 9(1), (2025): 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ie.20250901.11>)

“The study found that the introduction of rubber dam isolation reduced particulate matter in the air by 70% around a diameter of about 1m.” (Retrieved from Jie Zhou, Qi-Yan Lin, Qing Yuan, Xue-Jing Lin, Mu-Yuan Dai, et al. “A Rubber Protective Barrier for Oral Protection Against Accidental Swallowing.” *International Journal of Clinical Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery*, 9(1), (2023): 1-3. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijcoms.20230901.11>)

“Moreover, in relation to what considered literature indicates, the strategy that has already been formally subscribed to and is the result of a collaborative and multistakeholder process that is highly formalized, however perfectible, has been assumed as relevant” (Retrieved from Leo De Daniela and Altamore Sara. “Renewable Energy, Landscape Protection and Tourism Development, a Territorial Plan Experiment in Italy.” *Urban and Regional Planning*, 10(1), (2025): 42-54. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.urp.20251001.12>)

Scholarly writers (Alley, 2018; Taylor et al., 2018; Morris, 2024; Skrylnyk, 2024) frequently employ personification as a means to avoid explicitly presenting themselves as the responsible parties, thus attributing responsibility to non-human elements. These elements include various abstract nouns such as *idea, process, methodology, illness, action, metrics, initiative, and forecast*. The commonly used abstract nouns that serve as subjects include *study, result, analysis, data, and research*.

“The data obtained from this research suggest that the designated truck lane reduced CO2 emissions along the Cuesta Grade.” (Retrieved from Edward Tang, Hatem Abou-Senna, Anurag Pande, Robert Bertini. “High-Resolution Modelling of Carbon Dioxide Emissions Before and After the Implementation of a Designated Truck Lane.” *American Journal of Traffic and Transportation Engineering*, 7(1), (2022): 19-27. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtte.20220701.13>)

“All data in this study were statistically processed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (version 26.0). Descriptive analysis was used for general data, and quantitative data are presented as means ± standard deviations. Analysis of variance was used for data analysis of three or more groups, the chi-square (χ^2) test was used for comparison of counting data, and Kappa analysis was used for consistency analysis.” (Retrieved from Chen, R., Zhang, J., Dai, Y., Tan, X., Liu, Y., et al. “Correlation Between Ultrasound Manifestations and Traditional Chinese Medicine Syndrome Differentiation of Breast Nodules.” *International Journal of Chinese Medicine*, 8(1), (2024): 7-14. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijcm.20240801.12>)

The activity undertaken by the researcher is interpreted as a noun (such as *examination*, *analysis*, *investigation*, or *observation*) and assumes the syntactic function of the subject. Even though these nouns stand for activities the researcher performs as part of his scientific work, these words accurately convey the notion that the actions are not completely dependent on the observer. Rather, it suggests that the data leads to an undeniable conclusion that is easy to make. Additionally, this impersonal approach broadens the scope of agency to encompass the reader. Consequently, the researcher, who engages in the activities of *examination*, *investigation*, and *observation*, effectively encourages the reader to participate alongside her, thereby facilitating a shared journey toward identical conclusions.

“Further investigation is needed to determine the conditions under which 3D scanned geometries provide more accurate results than idealized geometries.” (Retrieved from Pack, Adam, Barfuss, Steven, and Sharp, Zachary. “Using Experiments, 3D Scanning, and CFD to Analyze the Variance in Energy Losses Through Pipe Elbows.” *Applied Engineering*, 8(2), (2024): 69-79. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ae.20240802.12>)

“Through a thorough examination of contemporary research and methodologies, this paper aims to enhance the academic and professional discourse concerning the future of steel structures.” (Retrieved from Azanaw, Girmay Mengesha. “Revolutionary Steel Structures: A Comprehensive Review of Current Trends and Future Directions.” *Applied Engineering*, 8(2), (2024): 89-101. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ae.20240802.14>)

“On day 15 (group 8), observations of the NiCr metal surface immersed in saliva with a pH of 7 revealed a corrosion pattern characterized by the presence of smaller cracks and holes, along with a discernible oxide layer.” (Retrieved from Pratiwi, Putri Dhianita, Indrastuti, Murti, and Ismiyati, Titik. “Exploration of Metal Ion Release from Nickel-Chromium Denture Material: The Role of Saliva pH and Immersion Duration.” *International Journal of Dental Medicine*, 10(2), (2024): 18-30. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijdm.20241002.11>)

Siewierska (2008a, 2008b) posits that impersonalization is intrinsically associated with the concept of agent-defocusing, with the term “agent” denoting “the causal participant of an event, also referred to as the actor, instigator, or initiator” (2008a, p. 7), whereas the concept of defocusing is characterized as diminishing “the prominence or salience of what is considered to be the norm” (2008a, p. 7). In addition, Siewierska contends that agent-defocusing encompasses instances in which (a) the agent is not completely defined, (b) the agent's significance is diminished in relation to its typical subject or topic role, or it may include both of these elements. Furthermore, impersonal pronoun use (*they/you*) is seen as a site of cross-linguistic diversity, while passive voice constructions (such as agentless passives) are often regarded as a major agent-defocusing mechanism across languages.

3.7. Impersonal Pronouns Referring to an Unidentified Human Agent

The employment of generic personal pronouns like “one” and “we” allows for the reference to unspecified individuals in such contexts. The pronoun “one,” which indicates “people in general” (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 353), is used more commonly than “we” to achieve a sense of impersonalization:

“If you take into account that the ratio of the rates of these reactions is determined by the equation (22), *one* can state equal concentrations of CO₂ and H₂O in the studied mixtures at 800 K after reaching the equilibrium stage of these two mutually reversible radiation chemical processes.” (Adapted from Khagani Mammadov. “The Initiators of the Appearance of Organic Compounds on Earth, the Distribution of Natural Radionuclides in the Plant Mass.” *Journal of Energy, Environmental & Chemical Engineering*, 6(1), (2021): 16-23. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.jeece.20210601.13>)

The English pronoun *one* is typical of formal communication and is often regarded as prompting the listener to “identify with the group at issue” (Haas 2018a: 174) to a lesser extent than the pronoun *you*. Additionally, it has been noted that *one* is often found in NEVER contexts (e.g., Moltmann 2010: 463-466; Rudolf 2016: 115), although this association has diminished in prominence over time (Haas 2018b).

3.8. It Clauses:

As described by Hewings and Hewings (2002), it clauses feature a construction that initiates with 'it' which is functioning as a non-referential and anticipatory subject (Biber et al., 1999, pp. 155, 332; Quirk et al., 1985, p. 1391). Such constructions can aid in rendering statements more general and less direct which is advantageous in formal writing or speeches. It-clauses have the ability to alter the focus or emphasis within a sentence. They frequently underscore the action or the complement instead of the subject, allowing for the formulation of general statements without the need to identify the actor performing the action. In formal contexts, the relatively infrequent impersonal constructions, specifically those containing it-clauses, can be extended into the structure It + is + adjective + that. The commonly employed adjectives in this configuration include possible, likely, and clear. Additionally, another pattern involves the use of the linking verbs appear and seem, however, we haven't found any examples with 'seem' or 'appear' within our corpus.

“From this, it is clear that factor 1 accounted for considerably more variance than the remaining four factors before rotation.” (Retrieved from Amao, Funmilayo Lanrewaju. “Factors Influencing Residents’ Perception of Privacy Across-Selected Public Housing Estates in Ibadan.” *Urban and Regional Planning*, 10(1), (2025): 1-41. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.urp.20251001.11>)

“It is known that ionizing radiation can simultaneously decompose numerous molecules of carbon dioxide and water, which are very difficult to decompose under the influence of other initiators.” (Retrieved from Khagani Mammadov. “The Initiators of the Appearance of Organic Compounds on Earth, the Distribution of Natural Radionuclides in the Plant Mass.” *Journal of Energy, Environmental & Chemical Engineering*, 6(1), (2021): 16-23. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.jeece.20210601.13>)

“(…) it is inevitable that aerosols carrying pathogenic microorganisms will be dispersed in the air through dental cleaning operations once the patients themselves originally carry pathogenic microorganisms, exposing health care workers and the next patient working in this environment to potentially dangerous aerosols that may cause infection.” (Retrieved from Chu-Han Song, Xiang Guo, Xian-Yan Lin, Jin-Mei Guo, Ya-Xin Bai, et al. “Potential Risk Factors for Aerosol Transmission in the Dental Office and Strategies for Prevention and Control.” *International Journal of Dental Medicine*, 9(2), (2023): 32-37. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijdm.20230902.11>)

As technical and scientific articles are full of information, which is to be expected given that written texts tend to be more explanatory, and as a result, they will naturally have more lexical terms that carry information, increasing lexical density, our primary goal as teachers is to encourage ESP students to employ a language that is impersonal, cautious, and factual, utilizing specific and technical vocabulary, as well as passive voice constructions, to express their results objectively. In medical and engineering sciences papers, impersonal style features like passives are more prevalent and useful than in many other registers, and students’ writing often shows misapplication of these elements, hence making them worthy of study when teaching, for example, writing skills.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study, which employs a corpus-based methodology analyzing scientific articles in dentistry, civil, and mechanical engineering, uncovers a range of impersonal constructions characteristic of this genre. These consist in the deployment of subjectless or agentless modal constructions, the passive voice forms, and various applications of grammatical metaphors.

The results of this study will aid researchers in comprehending how to cultivate interest and curiosity in scientific subjects among ESP students through agentless passive constructions, impersonal general pronouns, it-clauses, and personification. Moreover, the examples discussed in this article contribute to a deeper understanding of various linguistic structures and functions employed to express impersonalization in English, especially in dentistry, civil, and mechanical engineering. This knowledge will support non-native writers in crafting research papers in English that maintain a suitable level of objectivity, allowing them to focus more on the informational content of their work than on describing their personal involvement in the research activities conducted.

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From Woolf to Nelson: A Glance at the Feminist Movement

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abstract

The notion of feminism, in its capacity as both a movement and a conceptual framework, has demonstrated a consistent historical presence. Its fundamental tenet is the advocacy for gender equality, with the objective of achieving parity of rights for the sexes. The intellectual and philosophical currents of the Age of Enlightenment significantly shaped the historical trajectory of feminism in the 18th century. Subsequently, the feminist movement has consistently adapted its form and focus in response to the prevailing socio-political contexts of each era, thereby maintaining its enduring relevance. This movement, which questions the place and roles of women in society, initially emerged in the political and social spheres. Its influence was not limited to social and political domains. Feminism has been strongly reflected in various fields, such as literature, art, cinema, science, and business. In this study, the evolution of the feminist movement will be analysed through the works of prominent literary figures, ranging from Virginia Woolf to Alondra Nelson.

Keywords: feminism, sex discrimination, social inclusion, social justice, women's rights

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1. INTRODUCTION

As a theory, a movement and an approach (Hooks 2000, 9) feminism has not followed a uniform line of development throughout history, but has been shaped by various phases and different views. It is clear that the ideas of the Age of Enlightenment and the socio-political events and phenomena of each subsequent period influenced and developed the feminist movement. Feminism has undergone several transformative phases throughout its historical struggle, commonly referred to as "waves" within the framework of feminist theory. Rather than unfolding in isolation, each wave has built upon the accomplishments and insights of the previous ones, contributing to a cumulative progression in both theory and practice.

The focus of the First Wave of Feminism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was the achievement of women's legal and political rights. Feminists aimed to ensure that women are recognized as having equal natural rights with men (Donovan 2006, 17). The principles put forward by Isaac Newton, one of the most influential thinkers of the Age of Enlightenment, had profound repercussions not only in mathematics but also in politics. Consequently, Enlightenment thinkers argued that individuals have absolute (a priori) natural rights. This understanding paved the way for the emergence of the Doctrine of Natural Rights (Donovan 2006, 18). During this period, feminists drawing upon the doctrine of natural rights, objected to the exclusion of women from full citizenship rights (Donovan 2006, 29). The idea they put forward was that the perspective directed towards women should be about having full societal and political participation.

In line with this doctrine, the core tenet of this early feminist thought was that women possessed the same fundamental natural rights as men, necessitating the alignment of legal frameworks with this principle. Consequently, the First Wave of Feminism largely focused on securing these foundational rights that had previously been denied. This period saw women achieve crucial advancements within the political sphere, most notably the right to vote, which served as a fundamental means for their voices to be formally acknowledged and represented. The Second Wave of Feminism covers the period between 1960 and 1980. The prominent issues that this wave focuses on are gender equality, workplace rights, reproductive rights, sexual freedom. This movement defended women's social, economic and cultural rights. Unlike the first wave, it was more inclusive and emphasized gender roles. In this way, it breathed new life into the resistance for gender equality and contributed to the struggle. Third wave feminism is a movement that emerged in the 1990s and has continued until today. The focus of this wave is on issues such as intersectional feminism, gender identity and sexual orientation. The aim of the movement is to be more inclusive, considering the different groups and their identities, and to do so in a cumulative way (Schuster 2017, 248). The fourth wave of feminism emerged in the 2010s, during the rise of the internet and technology. This wave has focused on anti-sexual harassment, digital activism, body positivity and global women's rights. Accompanied by technological means, macro-level awareness has been realized (Phillips and Cree 2014, 939). This phase of the feminist movement succeeded in reaching out to the masses, breaking down the criticisms of feminism's lack of inclusiveness in the past. Thus, the struggle for gender equality gained a new dynamism.

Feminism has manifested itself across various societal spheres throughout its different phases. It has been shaped, both adversely and beneficially, by the challenges encountered historically. While this evolution has fostered a heightened awareness of diverse experiences, the movement has consistently adapted and fortified its struggle at each stage, a process that continues to this day. It is possible to see its influence in various fields such as literature, art, cinema, science and the business world. Within this context, this study attempts to understand how key figures from Virginia Woolf to Alondra Nelson in feminist movements articulated their pursuit of equality from the micro level to the macro level.

2. WAVES OF FEMINISM

2.1. The First Wave

In the historical conjuncture, women have been dominated by the masculine hegemony and exploited in various ways. Since Ancient Greece, various analogies have been established between women and nature. These associations have devalued women and nature, made them vulnerable to exploitation and negatively affected both sides. The reign of patriarchy is not a new phenomenon; its roots go back to the Pythagoreans.

Looking at the history of Western Philosophy, a table called the Pythagoras Table of Opposites on gender draws attention. When gender-based evaluations in that table are analyzed, it is seen that the distinctions are portrayed by superior features of the masculine side. That these distinctions carry gendered roles and characteristics is undoubtedly understood from the title of the table opposites (Lloyd 1984, 3).

It is seen that the Age of Enlightenment was influenced by positivism. This influence was also reflected in feminist movements and gave rise to various theories and approaches in the following periods. If the First Wave of Feminism is considered as a beginning, this beginning undoubtedly occurred in the light of values such as equality, freedom and human rights that emerged as phenomena of the French Revolution. Sir Isaac Newton, one of the most important figures of the Age of Enlightenment, laid out the basic paradigms that shaped the ideological structure of the Age of Enlightenment in his *Principia Mathematica*. This understanding is based on the view that the universe is regulated solely by simple, mathematical laws. Newton's proposal not only influenced the field of mathematics, but also had profound repercussions in political science. The notion that individuals are inherently entitled to absolute (a priori) rights from birth laid the groundwork for the "framework of natural rights". This framework posits that every human being is born with fundamental claims—most notably, the rights to life, liberty, and happiness (Donovan 2006, 18).

The focus of the first wave process in question includes more fundamental and natural rights compared to other waves. During the era of this wave, women fought for their political rights due to the conditions of the time they lived in. The foundations of this process were laid in the 18th century when women began to demand their rights (Ataman 2022, 286). Throughout the 19th century, social roles were redefined and women's rights were discussed more. These developments paved the way for the emergence of the Suffragette Movement in the United Kingdom at the beginning of the 20th century (Ataman 2022, 287).

The Suffragette Movement represented a struggle for women to have the right to vote. In this process, many women expressed their demands for rights through written texts, while others took direct action to improve their living conditions. The Suffragettes, who were among these determined and resilient women, were not content with merely expressing their thoughts in writing, but preferred to take more active and concrete steps to achieve their rights (Ataman 2022, 286). Acting with a radical understanding, the Suffragettes did not content themselves with mere rhetoric, but took concrete actions and resorted to strategies that exceeded legal boundaries (Ataman 2022, 291). They engaged in various acts of civil disobedience such as damaging public and private property, clandestine acts of arson, destruction of mailboxes and large-scale window breaking (Ataman 2022, 291-292). Detained suffragettes went on hunger strikes while in prison and were subjected to harsh treatments, including force-feeding. In 1913, Emily Davison—one of the movement's most prominent figures—was killed after throwing herself under the king's horse at the Epsom Derby, an event that marked a turning point in the global fight for women's rights (Ataman 2022, 294). The Suffragette Movement illuminated the path for women's rights activism worldwide and became a foundational pillar of modern feminist movements.

By primarily fighting for political rights, women have truly shaken the privileged position of the patriarchal policy makers who govern society. Political rights were not only important for women's voice, but they also provided women the ability to assert their existence and rightful place. In this way, women stepped into areas where they were influenced but not influential.

Virginia Woolf is one of the most important and prominent writers of English literature. Woolf created striking works with the revolutionary techniques she used. Because of her highly innovative and progressive views, Woolf is regarded as one of the pioneers of feminist criticism. Although her ideas are often seen as foundational to or more resonant with the Second Wave of Feminism, Virginia Woolf's early work is chronologically linked to the First Wave due to her contemporaneous engagement with feminist thought and social critique. Virginia Woolf advocated for women's empowered presence and their unrestricted ability to articulate their perspectives through writing.

The events that led Woolf to deal with the subject of women and fiction in her books were the lectures she gave at Cambridge University and several colleges. It could be said that the book she wrote later *A Room of One's Own* was born out of these conferences, which were profoundly shaped by her observations of gender dynamics, including the clear distribution of roles in her own childhood home. In her household, while her father handled financial and intellectual affairs, her mother meticulously cared for the needs of her husband and eight children (Woolf 2010, 854).

Woolf also had an indirect relationship with a group called the Cambridge Apostles, in which men held intellectual consultations. This group played an important role in laying the foundations of the Bloomsbury group, of which Virginia Woolf was a member and was founded in the early 20th century. Some of the members of the Cambridge Apostles group took their intellectual brainstorming to the Bloomsbury (Reed 1992, 38).

The Cambridge Apostles group appears to have consisted solely of men, while the Bloomsbury group has a wider range of members, both male and female. The Bloomsbury group not only held discussions in the fields of art, literature and philosophy, but also achieved both individual and group successes on social issues (Reed 1992, 38).

This group created a free discussion platform while discussing gender equality, in this way it became a source of inspiration for future generations. Traces of a collective struggle can be seen in the works of Virginia Woolf, who stands out as the realistic voice of that group. Woolf allegorically described the suppressed talents of women throughout history in her book *A Room of One's Own* by using metaphors.

Woolf employs several allegorical metaphors to communicate her feminist vision. These include the notion of equal opportunity symbolized by "Shakespeare's sister," the hope for solidarity among women as seen in the story of Chloe and Olivia, and the rejection of binary gender roles in favor of emotional and intellectual balance in her concept of androgyny. Through these metaphors, Woolf offers a transformative perspective that resembles the reflective techniques used in cognitive behavioral therapy, inviting readers to engage critically with their own beliefs. With *A Room of One's Own*, she not only critiques social structures but also initiates a cultural dialogue, leaving behind an enduring intellectual legacy that continues to influence generations.

Virginia Woolf's well-known statement: "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" offers more than a literary reflection (Woolf 1929, 4). It identifies the material conditions that shape, and often limit, women's ability to participate in intellectual life.

A parallel can be drawn with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, in which the pursuit of self-actualization is contingent upon the satisfaction of more basic requirements (Maslow 1970, 46). In Woolf's world, lacking money and space meant that creative freedom was out of reach. What makes her argument even more compelling today is how it fits with Amartya Sen's idea of capability.

Although Sen's capability theory emerged much later, its core ideas resonate with Woolf's emphasis on structural conditions for self-realization. Sen defines capability as "the set of valuable functionings a person has effective access to, representing the effective freedom to choose between different functioning combinations that one has reason to value" (Sen 2000, 75) .

For Woolf, then, the problem was not whether women were "allowed" to write. It was whether the conditions necessary for writing—privacy, time, money—were actually available. The absence of such conditions was not coincidental; rather, it reflected a broader pattern of exclusion rooted in patriarchal social structures. *A Room of One's Own*, in this sense, represented more than a physical location; it stood as a symbol of intellectual sovereignty and institutional legitimacy. That difference, between permission and possibility, remains just as urgent today as it was in her time. "Let me imagine, since facts are so hard to come by, what would have happened had Shakespeare had a wonderfully gifted sister, called Judith... She died young—alas, she never wrote a word." (Woolf 1929, 33). In this passage, Woolf, with her impressive and powerful narration, reveals that social constraints systematically inhibit women's creativity. Looking at the sub-layers of the surface narrative, it can be seen that these narrative questions the suppressed voices of women. "Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size." (Woolf 1929, 25-26). With this narrative, Woolf expresses that men's need for women's presence is motivated by self-interest. This reveals that the system is in the hands of patriarchal domination and its functioning is based on a relationship of self-interest. It is seen that the relationship of interest in question is just like capitalism. This situation led to the sprouting of the concept of ecofeminism in the following process and enriched the struggle of feminism. Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* is one of the early classics of feminist thought and it laid the foundation for other waves of feminism to gain momentum.

2.2. The Second Wave

The Second Wave of the Feminist Movement is a women's rights movement that was influential in the 1960s in Western countries, particularly in the United States, and continued until the late 1970s. It is widely accepted that the initial step of this movement was initiated by Simone de Beauvoir's seminal work, *The Second Sex*, published in France in 1949 and in the United States in 1953. However, *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan, published in 1963 in the United States, was a prominent early influence on the Second Wave.

The motto of the Second Wave Feminist Movement was "the private is political" or "personal is political". Guided by the slogan "the private is political", the Second Wave sought to rectify the omissions of its predecessor. This involved foregrounding issues like the impact of perceived biological differences on women's societal roles, confronting sexual violence, and advocating for reproductive and sexual autonomy.

Carol Hanisch's essay, "The Personal is Political" written in 1969, challenges the idea that issues experienced by women in everyday life are merely private or individual. Through what she termed the "Pro-Woman Line", Hanisch argued that such struggles—often labeled emotional instability or personal inadequacy—are in fact manifestations of structural oppression (Hanisch 1970, 77). By highlighting how topics like marriage, motherhood, sexuality, and physical appearance are deeply shaped by patriarchal norms, Hanisch redefined these so-called personal experiences as inherently political. This conceptual framework laid the groundwork for feminist consciousness-raising groups, which sought to generate political insight from shared personal realities.

A powerful early expression of this framework emerged during the 1968 protest against the Miss America Beauty Pageant. Feminists, including Hanisch, used the event to call attention to the objectification of women's bodies and the ideological power of beauty standards. With slogans such as "Miss America is a big boob," the protest sought to reveal how aesthetic expectations, far from being neutral or voluntary, were saturated with political meaning (Hanisch 1970, 76-78). As Hanisch noted, the pressure women feel to be beautiful is not a matter of personal choice, but a demand imposed by patriarchal systems (Hanisch 1970, 78).

The real beginning of this change was the fact that although women supported the labor force during World War II, after the war they were brought back to the role of housewives and tried to be put into the mold of the ideal woman who only took care of housework and children (Beauvoir, *Le Deuxime Sexe* 1949, 425-466).

It can be said that Beauvoire emphasizing in this passage that being a woman at that time was a perception imposed on women socially and culturally. Another problem of women in this period was the inadequacy of the rights granted in the legal sense. Legal regulations such as the Equal Pay Act in 1963 for women to demand equal pay and the Civil Rights Act in 1964 for women to obtain equal rights in every sense in business life emerged in the USA, in order to solve these problems. In Europe, the effect of this situation was observed as women having more say in areas such as education, labor force and marriage (Beauvoir, *Le Deuxime Sexe* 1949, 608).

Feminist politics is the struggle to end patriarchy, to end the social, political, and economic systems that support male supremacy. The second wave of feminism was based on criticizing gender inequality in society and the responsibilities placed on women in this society. Feminists of this period argued that being biologically female was not a limit to participate in business life and that they were independent individuals.

During this period, the female body was one of the most important issues of feminism. Issues such as contraception, women's health, sexual freedom and abortion were the main issues of feminist struggle in this period. The widespread use of birth control pills in the late 1960s was a huge development for feminists at the time. Compared to the first wave, the second wave allowed women to express their ideas and express themselves in the fields of cinema, art and literature.

Betty Friedan, one of the pioneers of this wave, described the dissatisfaction that women experienced internally in the male-dominated system as the problem that cannot be named. This problem was dedicated to women who could not experience a sense of fulfillment despite obeying the norms imposed by society (Friedan 1963, 15).

The second wave marked the beginning of a new era of women's struggles not only in legal and family life, but also in sexuality (Rubin 1975, 276-309). Following all these problems, the second wave led to the diversification of feminism. The diversity of women in social and cultural life has been divided into different branches, focusing on deficiencies in different fields and producing solutions to them. This diversification enabled feminist thought to spread more rapidly internationally. As a result, women became more conscious about defending their rights and accelerated the feminist movement. For example, the second wave of social feminism argues that the oppression of women is not only related to gender but also to class structure. This type of feminism defines women's domestic work as exploitation by a capitalist economy. According to this idea, women's emancipation requires the overthrow not only of the male-dominated society but also of capitalism. As a result, social feminism aims to liberate women not only from economic freedom but also from the constraints of class differences. Another type of feminism is radical feminism (Daly 1968, 153).

This is because patriarchy affects people deeply, both socially and culturally, and these effects cannot be overthrown by superficial reforms. Within this diversity, one of the most prominent types is "African-American Feminism" or "Black Feminism". Compared to other forms, this perspective focuses not only on gender and class distinctions, but also on racial and ethnic identity. It deals specifically with the double-layered discrimination that black women are subjected to because of their gender and race. This discrimination is on a different level than the inequality white women face. Bell Hooks, one of the key figures of this movement, writes in her book:

Oppression means that you are not free to fully experience the meaning of your life, to live the life you want to live. And it's not just a question of freedom from white male oppression, it's a question of freedom from all forms of oppression (1981, 117).

Another movement is Lesbian Feminism, which is still controversial today. This movement posits that women's emancipation is possible not only through gender equality but also through freedom of sexual orientation or freedom from the institution of compulsory heterosexuality.

While the terms "lesbians who are feminists" and "Lesbian Feminism" might appear conceptually similar, it is crucial to differentiate between them. "Lesbians who are feminists" refers to individuals who identify as both lesbian and feminist, embracing feminist principles within their lived experiences and political activism. In contrast, "lesbian feminism" denotes a distinct theoretical framework and political movement that emerged within the Second Wave. A central idea of lesbian feminism is the critique of compulsory heterosexuality and its role in perpetuating patriarchal systems. It advocates for women-identified women and often proposes female separatism as a strategy to create women-centered spaces and foster solidarity among women, thereby disengaging from male-dominated structures.

From this perspective, engagement in heterosexual relationships, coupled with traditional domestic labor and child-rearing within patriarchal frameworks, is often viewed as reinforcing patriarchal submission. For this reason, some prominent lesbian feminist theorists posited that challenging heterosexual norms, even for bisexual women, could be a necessary political act towards collective liberation (Rich 1980, 14). For lesbian feminists, being with men, doing housework, raising children, etc. is submission to patriarchy. For this reason, challenging heterosexual norms, even for bisexual women, could be a necessary political act towards collective liberation (Rich 1980, 14).

Another important title of Second Wave Feminism is Postcolonial Feminism. It criticizes Western-centered feminist movements from a new perspective. Postcolonial feminists aim to offer a more inclusive and equal understanding of third world women who have been colonized and discriminated against by the West (Spivak 1988, 90). This movement, which examines and presents us with elements based on colonialism and related class differences other than race and sexual orientation, has brought a new perspective to the feminist struggle. All the movements mentioned here are the building blocks of feminism we advocate today. The second wave of feminism not only defended women's rights but also created an intellectual transformation that questioned social structures and power relations, a transformation that still inspires the struggle for women's emancipation and equality (Beauvoir 1953, 641)

As the Second Wave of Feminism gained momentum, feminist social work developed as another significant branch within its diverse movements. Feminism and social work intersect through their shared commitment to social justice and the empowerment of disadvantaged populations. As a rights-based profession, social work provides an institutional framework for addressing the very inequalities that feminism seeks to challenge. Feminist social work, which emerged from

grassroots activism led by women working with women in their communities, incorporates a critical perspective on power, gender, and systemic oppression (Dominelli and McLeod 1989, quoted in Dominelli 2002, 6).

Feminist social work benefits from holistic frameworks that acknowledge the multiple layers of influence on women's lives. By addressing issues not only at the individual level but also across broader systemic and cultural contexts, it aligns with feminist values of empowerment and justice. The integration of such approaches into social work practice strengthens its capacity to respond meaningfully to gender-based inequality.

Feminist struggle is not only a critique of structural inequality but also a vision for a more just and inclusive world built through solidarity. This solidarity must transcend identity groups and evolve into a broader social commitment—one that challenges gender norms in language, media, education, and institutional practices. Feminist social work exemplifies how rights-based professions can carry feminist ideals into everyday life.

2.3. The Third Wave

Thanks to the feminist movements in the First and Second Waves, women gained rights such as voting, working in male fields and began to gain more representation in society. However, feminists who perceived the persistence of old repressive attitudes towards women, and deemed earlier feminist movements insufficient for achieving true equality, developed new ideas that ultimately triggered the Third Wave. The difference between third wave feminists and first-second wave feminists is that they include differences such as race, religion and identity in the concept of equality. “Third-wave feminism ‘respects not only differences between women based on race, ethnicity, religion, and economic standing but also makes allowance for different identities within a single person’” (Snyder 2008, 180).

Furthermore, third wave feminists do not completely reject the ideas of other-wave feminists as do first and second wave feminists. While supporting women's struggle to gain individual rights and representation in society, they redefined feminism by expanding its conceptual boundaries rather than rejecting earlier frameworks.

Third wave feminists aimed to break the perception that feminists had to remain unmarried or try not to look feminine in order to go against tradition, and to show that feminism is an idea that allows women to make free choices. They claimed that feminism had no right to judge women's appearance, decisions or actions. Setting criteria to define women's lifestyles was seen by third wave feminists as incompatible with feminist perspective. “In some respects, feminism can be viewed precisely as the conscious struggle with the ‘demands of femininity’. For third-wavers, feminism requires not a particular set of choices, but rather acting with a ‘feminist consciousness’, defined as ‘knowledge of what one is doing and why one is doing’.” (Snyder-Hall 2010, 256).

One of the main focuses of the Third Wave was that women did not receive equal pay as men while working to gain their economic freedom. Since men were seen as the sole source of income for the family by society, employers paid men more than women for the same job. Receiving lower wages despite putting in the same physical and mental effort bothered women and even caused them to fall into financial difficulties when they had to struggle alone. Moreover, working women still had responsibilities at home. It was their duty to come home from work, do housework, look after their children and keep the house in order.

Third wavers have developed an inclusive approach to equality and challenged sexism by addressing the challenges faced by both women and men from a non-judgmental feminist perspective.

Other issues that the third wave examined and brought to the agenda of feminism were diversity, identity, sexuality, race and class differences, apart from gender equality and equal rights.

In 1990, American feminist philosopher Judith Butler wrote her book, *Gender Trouble*, on the study about issues of gender, feminism and identity. While writing, the author observed the people on the east coast of America, where she lived, and was influenced by their lives, cultural environment and gender-based discrimination they were exposed to and reflected these observations in her book. Butler's book became more popular than even she could have predicted at the time it was published. *Gender Trouble* created a tremendous impression in France and Germany and later in other countries, while giving a rise to new discussions on gender. It became one of the important books about feminism studies that triggered third wave feminism and shaped the ideas of the Fourth Wave.

Butler basically deals with affairs such as the distinction between sex and gender, woman as the subject of feminism, controversial identities, the relationship between language-gender-politics, body politics and theories of the psychoanalysts. Gender is discussed as an abstract and rather mentally perceivable concept named by society. According to Butler, the concept of gender did not arise from biological and cultural backgrounds. She also reveals that there is no difference between gender and sex. "If the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construct called 'sex' is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all" (Butler 1990, 10). Butler puts forward that the body of a human is in a constant state of construction and is nameless before society names it. She deals with the fact that gender is an act and that individuals perform it rather than displaying their own reality.

Butler criticizes feminism and accuses of making a mistake in trying to make it seem women a distinct, nonhistorical group with common characteristics. "If one 'is' a woman, that is surely not all one is; the term fails to be exhaustive, not because a pregendered 'person' transcends the specific paraphernalia of its gender, but because gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities" (Butler 1990, 6).

Furthermore, she criticizes feminist theory in her book. Butler strongly opposes the discourse in the feminist theory about the representation of women in politics matters. Because political power recreates the individual and puts her in a mold. Representation does not provide legitimacy and liberation for women.

Additionally, generalizing that feminism is only about women's problems or that all women experience the same problems is a shortcoming of feminist theory. Moreover, the term woman is not fully inclusive of the individual, it is an understatement. Labeling women by gender overshadows their other personality traits.

Butler's point was not that feminism should eschew such policies as reproductive choice, gender equity in pay and hiring, or parental leave. She observed only that to advocate them in the name of "women" would inevitably generate "multiple refusals to accept the category" by women who did not recognize their interests in such policies and by feminists who did not consider themselves oppressed as "women." (Disch 1999, 546).

Biased discourses in the theories put forward by famous psychoanalytic philosophers and feminist theorists are also the target of Butler's criticism. She questions whether the concept of masquerade

and femininity as expressed by Irigaray are the same, and the idea that femininity is the role women play not their general characteristic.

It has often been observed that transformation begins with language—a premise that appears to be deeply embedded in Cixous's work. Rather than treating literature as a neutral ground, she exposed it as a space already saturated with masculine norms. Through her concept of *écriture féminine*, she didn't just advocate for women to write—she invited them to reclaim the very act of writing as resistance.

This was not merely a theoretical contribution; it functioned as a political intervention. Cixous saw that changing language meant changing what is sayable, what is imaginable. That's why her work still resonates: because the revolution she called for starts not only on the page, but in the voice.

Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies—for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement. (Cixous, Cohen and Cohen 1976, 875).

This passage illustrates how, according to Cixous, writing becomes the means through which women can challenge historically embedded discourses and reinsert themselves into symbolic and literary structures from which they have long been excluded.

Donna Haraway is an American scholar in the history of consciousness and feminist studies. Haraway studied ecofeminism, which intersects the women's movement with the environmental movement around discussions of equality and exploitation, and cyberfeminism, which argues that bodily boundaries are disappearing thanks to technology.

In 1985, Haraway published the essay *Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the 1980s* later updated to *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century*. In this article, she used cyborg metaphor to argue that the fundamental contradictions in feminist theory and identity should be combined like the combination of two different structures such as machine and organism. “The cyborg is a matter of fiction and lived experience that changes what counts as women's experience in the late twentieth century. This is a struggle over life and death, but the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion” (Haraway, 2010, 2044)

E. Ann Kaplan is an American author, academic and teacher who researches women in film. Kaplan, who studies psychoanalysis, touched upon Freud's theory that hysteria in women arises from fantasies rather than traumatic memories, and compared hysterical women with soldiers who experienced post-war trauma. She coined the term future tense trauma cinema and examined how our cultural concerns are reflected in science fiction films.

Kaplan created a tangible example of the changes in feminist theory and feminist perspective by mentioning that the radical changes in society and the post-Cold War political process they were in effected feminist author's studies on feminism. “My increasing knowledge of efforts of women around the world to work against their specific oppressions in their own ways, including study of their national cinemas and women's roles in such institutions, together with my own travels over the years have inspired the new directions of my current work. Writing in 2004, I find myself in a vastly different social, political, and technological context from when I wrote both *Women and Film* (Kaplan 1983) and *Looking for the Other* (Kaplan 1997), such as could not have been envisaged in the 1970s, 1980s, or 1990s” (Kaplan 2004, 1241).

Laura Mulvey is a British feminist film theorist and filmmaker. Mulvey criticized the use of a male perspective in classic Hollywood cinema and the portrayal of female characters as objects to be looked at. She claimed that between 50's and 60's years, more male characters were used as subjects in films and that they were shot from a perspective that brought male characters to the forefront in the audience's impression.

She is known for her male perspective theory and has influenced third wave studies by her book on feminist film theories. Writing about visual pleasure and narrative cinema in 1975 was an act of great courage and enabled feminist studies to blow the cobwebs away. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" describes the manner in which the traditional visual apparatus of mainstream Hollywood 'narrative' film looks at women. As passive objects subordinated to the male gaze" (Mulvey 2010, 1953)

2.4. The Fourth Wave

The Fourth Wave of Feminism is strongly associated with the rise of social media and digital activism, particularly in the early 2010s. This development in the digital world enabled women to reach more people through internet. Unlike earlier feminist waves, it developed within digital spaces like Twitter and blogs. This wave enabled campaigns such as #MeToo and #TimesUp to emerge. Women used these tools to share experiences and organize collectively.

Social media allowed women to create a global awareness across race, class, and sexuality. The movement took on an intersectional character through online mobilization. This multidimensional approach empowered more inclusive participation. Feminists used digital platforms to criticize dominant social norms.

Fourth Wave Feminism became defined by its engagement with digital spaces. Issues like harassment, violence, and inequality gained broader attention. Digital activism helped normalize discussions previously considered taboo. This wave redefined feminist discourse through constant online engagement.

Critics argue that Fourth Wave Feminism is too dependent on social media. Some claim it centers white, middle-class perspectives, excluding others. Despite such critiques, it remains a powerful global force. Its immediacy and accessibility continue to attract new generations. During this period, the concept of intersectionality became one of the most fundamental principles of feminism. One of the most beneficial aspects of the fourth wave was that issues such as violence and harassment were brought to the fore, and in this context, all the norms that patriarchy had been trying to normalize for centuries began to be discussed uncensored.

Fourth Wave Feminism is characterized by an increase in digital activism. Social media and digital platforms where women can freely make their voices heard have gained significant global popularity. One of the biggest breakthroughs that brought this wave to the forefront was the #MeToo campaign (Mendes, Ringrose ve Keller 2018, 4).

Initiated by Tarana Burke, this campaign has gained worldwide fame. It allowed women to speak out about sexual and verbal harassment without fear. However, these campaigns did not stop there, they also created a space for women to empower and unite.

Unlike other waves, social media has allowed this wave to spread faster. As of the early 2010s, fourth wave feminism has tried to achieve what they wanted by creating pressure through the media in order to achieve their goals.

With campaigns launched on social media on abortion rights, gender equality and LGBT issues, they made their demands known to the whole world. In the fourth wave, feminists defended not only women's rights but all gender identities and tried to break down social norms.

As influential as the Fourth Wave Feminism has been, it has also been subject to criticism. Some people argue that the movement is only on social media and has no impact on the real world. In addition, it has been argued that this wave was not fully inclusive and only advocated for 'white and middle class' women. Some critics even argue that activism on social media is superficial and does not fully address the intended audience (Gill 2016, 3).

The Fourth Wave of Feminism is marked by its close entanglement with digital technologies and networked communication. As online platforms have become central to feminist mobilization, concepts such as clicktivism, slacktivism, hacktivism, and hashtag activism have emerged (Castillo-Esparcia, Caro-Castaño ve Almansa-Martínez 2023).

These forms of digital engagement reflect both the democratization of activism and its commodification. While the internet facilitates access, visibility, and rapid mobilization, it also hosts growing threats such as cyberbullying, hate speech, and performative solidarity. Feminist scholars like Alondra Nelson have called for a critical approach to digital activism, warning against the reproduction of structural inequalities through seemingly liberating technologies. Her work highlights the importance of intersectionality, digital justice, and the ethical use of technology as a means of empowerment.

Alondra Nelson emphasizes that fourth wave feminism has gained great momentum in the digital age. She states that technology and social media have enabled women to make their voices heard and organize against social problems. This is a different aspect compared to previous waves of feminism (Nelson 2016, 80).

According to her, the fourth wave is the turning point of the feminist movement. This is why egalitarian initiatives on social media feature heavily in Nelson's work.

As a result, the fourth wave has a power that continues today and whose effects increase day by day, gathering women all over the world at a common point. It is divided into sub-branches such as intersectional feminism, queer feminism, black feminism and reaches new people everyday thanks to social media.

Fourth Wave Feminism, which takes a significant stance on women's rights, continues to reach new people every day with the spread of social media.

3. CONCLUSION

This study explored the historical development of feminist thought through literary examples, interpreting feminist writers within their broader socio-political contexts. It approached the evolution of feminism as a layered process shaped by internal critique and social change. The core of feminist ideology—gender equality and social justice—has persisted through each wave, although its expressions have evolved.

The historical development of the feminist movement closely parallels the generational expansion of human rights. Just as human rights began with civil and political liberties (first generation), later expanded to include social and economic rights (second generation), progressed to cultural and

collective rights (third generation), and eventually incorporated digital rights (fourth generation), feminism has evolved in a similarly layered manner (Vasak 1977, 29).

Each wave of feminism corresponds to these categories, addressing the specific inequalities of its time. This analogy allows us to view feminism not as a fragmented or episodic struggle, but as a cumulative and transformative process of social intervention.

While the First and Second Waves focused on legal recognition and social equality, they often neglected intersecting issues of race, class, and sexuality. In response, the Third and Fourth Waves developed more inclusive and intersectional approaches, challenging binary gender systems and embracing identity-based differences. The Fourth Wave, in particular, expanded feminist discourse into the digital realm, amplifying concerns such as gender-based violence and invisible labor. Throughout these developments, literature and art have remained crucial tools for feminist imagination and critique. The works of pioneers like Virginia Woolf, centered on female autonomy, continue to serve as foundational texts of feminist consciousness. In this way, feminist thought has not only evolved alongside the framework of human rights but has also helped reshape and expand its boundaries by centering marginalized experiences.

The production of works centered on women's rights in the field of literature has enriched the theoretical framework of the feminist movement and brought it to a broad ground. All these processes ultimately show that Feminism aims to improve the well-being of women in the issues of social injustice and inequality and takes actions towards this goal.

However, for feminist ideals to move beyond discourse and take root in everyday life, they must also be integrated into institutional practices.

Meanwhile, digital platforms offer new spaces for sustained feminist engagement, visibility, and intersectional dialogue. Yet beyond digital or professional tools, what sustains feminist transformation is a culture of solidarity embedded in society at large—one that values empathy, equity, and collective responsibility across all genders. Feminist struggle does not settle for mere survival; it aims to build a life grounded in equality and dignity.

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