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**THE EVOLVING CANVAS OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE: A
COMPARATIVE PROJECTION OF KASHMIRI, IRANIAN AND
VIETNAMESE REFUGEES' QUEST FOR IDENTITY AND DISTINCTIONS
OF DUALITY IN POST-MODERNISTIC FRAMES**

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Abstract:

Human dynamics are complex, abstract, and diverse at the same time, culturally, linguistically, and scientifically; and it's getting more complex in the post-modern era. The multitude of literary genres tries to encapsulate all of these in the best possible manner, but fragmentation is the obstacle to comprehensiveness. Comparative Literature is evolving, amid the life pacing with post-modernism. The inclusive feature of comparative literature ensures the inclusion of every aspect of all the spaces and provides a ground for a broader understanding of the text and the context. For sensitive issues like displacement and refugee crisis, Comparative study works as a framework for open and wide discussion and also gives flexibility, in terms of interdisciplinary observation and investigation. In the decentralized post-modern world, the study needs a multidisciplinary approach to cater to the issues of the post-modernistic setting of the society; hence it becomes important to have an apt framework for a comprehensive study. The questions and quest for Identity and the duality in the lives of refugees are getting grimmer and it has created a void in their lives. Be it Kashmir, Iranian, or the Vietnamese refugee crisis, there is a need for a standardized form of study and the comparative framework serves the purpose, which is required for the unification of diverse forms. Refugee literature is also evolving, it is taking a shape of a full-fledged literary genre, but like other genres, it lacks the comparative elements, which cause hindrance in its repletion. The objective of this study is to access the evolving state of comparative literature and its participation in the completeness and meaningfulness of the Refugee literature concerning the issues of identity and duality.

Keywords: *Identity, Duality, Kashmir Refugee, Iranian Refugee, Vietnamese Refugee, Post-Modernism, etc.*

The domain of Humanities aims to enhance the quality of human emotional and intellectual wellbeing; primarily it tries to establish equilibrium between the outer and inner ecosystems, both abstract and physical as they are directly proportional to each other. Without having a proper sync between the inner and outer settings of the human body and the world, respectively, men cannot live a concise life. The abstract and physical elements should function in such a way that it doesn't encroach on any aspect. However, these intellectual and scientific propositions appear fancy when the reality of life hits on them; a normal man or woman who tries to establish a link or communion between the two, however, finds it difficult to attain it in the true sense. This utopian thing can be brought to life in a



normal setting where lives in not indulged in any capital risk along with the crunches of daily utilities. However, as far as the cases of refugees are concerned, it portrays the dystopian tales leveraged by existential crisis and every possible disturbance and crisis of the post-modern world. The struggles in the lives of refugees are multidimensional, it is not limited to the physical or abstract it goes above and beyond. The refugee crisis around the globe is now well documented and visible, this is as real as any other phenomenon, refugee crisis is not something welcoming for which we can take pride rather it is a blotch on the humanity, however, the motto of this deliberation is the emergence of Refugee literature which is trying to provide a platform to the refugee voices, for the world to listen to them. The characteristic features of the Humanities discipline are very aptly and artistically put forward by the Refugee literature. Through the literary creations, it gives a shape to the reality of refugee lives, while portraying the reality; it also gives a sense of catharsis to the refugees.

In the post-modern era, literature has also developed itself with different literary forms and genres which encapsulate the complexities of human emotions and at the same time present the reality of the time and also the space in which they emerge. With time, literature is also transforming per the changes in the human both the emotional and the physical. The coming-of-the-age works are one of the finest examples of such literary development, these works are different than the classics but as far the literary appeal is concerned, they are no lesser than the classics. In the continuation to this list, Comparative literature stands firm and looks promising as it gives flexible and multiple ways to look at the things and enquirer the questions, and unfold the layers of the fan and facts. This paper not only focus on the evolving canvas of comparative literature but it also uses it as a testimonial framework for the authentication of Refugee literature because only after knowing all side, we cannot comment on any particular thing(s), hence it is important to have a full-fledged compare and contrast of the concerned subject. The refugee crisis around the world is different from one another, they have a different history, geography, politics, wars, and respective reasons but at the same time, the pain and the crisis of the refugees are the same around the world. Through the comparative literature, we try to find out both the similarity and the dissimilarities in order to have o comprehensive knowledge. Through the data gathered from the comparative analysis we give a generalised stance on certain happenings and the process of getting a comprehensive knowledge, a multidimensional approach is needed. Humanities have now taken a shape of sciences, where objectivity is required, through comparative analysis we can get that in humanities. This very same method has been used as a framework for the Refugee literature; even though they do differs from one another but at the same time they have few similar characteristics in the documentation and the portrayals of the subject.

The post-modernistic view frames the objectivity of the objective in a completely different manner it doesn't seek any approval and doesn't rely on certainties and fixities, it enquires for its own truth. The post-modernistic frames provide us an open ground to think and act, it gives us an exploring opportunity to look beyond the things which are not visible through the naked eyes. In the modern fiction the influence of distinct forms and methods can be seen in various elements of the literary creation, a mark of fixed perspective and approach still be seen (Caws, 2014); however, the modern fiction paved the way for the experimenting with the forms and method, it also contributed in the breaking away from the fixed notions of particularity which can be now seen into the post-modern works. The freedom which it provides is one of the most prominent features, the free hand with the forms and genre allows an author to build the literary creation as per the requirement of the subject matter, drifting away from the concrete line doesn't cause any problems and it tries to attain the quality of universal appeal. In the same comparative literature is evolving, for a diverse subject likes the refugee crisis which is complex and highly transformative the same approach can be utilised. The post-modern fictions are truly in the spirit of the men, it changes as the lives changes, it doesn't lay any idealistic approach which travels on a linear line, and it expends in all the directions with all its



pros and cons, hits multiple cords, and ranges in multiple dimensions (Nicol, 2009). The socio-political sphere in of post-modern era is also facing the multiplicity of influences coming from almost every agency, authority, or institution, the rapid growth and changes are redefining the social theories and applications are also becoming more and more individualistic and customised, it is generalised but again a completely different generalisation. In the Social sciences, the post-modernism hits the men both directly and indirectly; directly in terms of transformed economic and political spaces that are fast-paced and a mixture of various intellectuals and ideologies, it doesn't feature any single operating module, both right and left goes hand in hand; indirectly effects or affects are being observed in the expansion of materialistic effects on the socio-political living and fostering. Social science is struggling to adopt the resonating frequencies of post-modernism, which sometimes appears in favour and sometimes against the motion (Rosenau & Rosenau, 1992). As the society acquires the prevailing quality of the time, the inner and outer atmosphere of men also acquires them, again its effects may be positive or negative, it varies from man to man; in case it cannot be avoided. The application of post-modernism can be seen in almost sphere of the society either it exploiting Capitalist or threatening Communist, all have acquired some properties of post-modernism; to represent the working consciousness of men and women Literature has taken the access, it uses the post-modernist feature to bring out the best and worst of world affairs and the inner status of the humankind. Comparative literature tries to bring uniformity and let people contemplate the truth and eliminate the presupposed assumptions of men (Zepetnek, 1998).

In the post-modernist frame the tool of comparative literature is constantly developing in recent years there is a surge in the comparative discipline it is only because of universal applications. As far as the case of Refugee literature is concerned the comparative method brings out refugee literature from the limitations of post-colonialism. The post-colonial mode of studying is not apt for the contemporary yet aged issue of the refugee crisis that too in the post-modern setting in which looking at things is not rigid; on the contrary, post-colonialism still holds the influence and measures of colonial standards. The post-colonial has lived its days and now proving to be an obstacle (Ganapathy-Dore & Ramsey-Kurz, 2011). However, comparative literature is also not an absolute toll in the post-modern definition but it serves the flexible feature and does not hamper the meaning. Kashmir, Iranian, and Vietnamese refugee crises bring out the best tales of refugee struggles and survival and at the same time lay the foundation for the true form of Refugee literature. Particularly the post-modern writer Dr. Bhat, Dina Nayeri, and Viet T Nguyen respectively are the focus of this study as they are the product of the refugee crisis and writes of extreme post-modernism which makes them worthy enough to take as our foundation of discussion. These writers have lived and experienced the life of a refugee and at the same time won the battle for survival. Not only this they proved that the will of humans can conquer any hurdles. Both a refugee and writers have craved their stores without guilt and shame and made them available to let them know what happened to them. These refugee writers choose to tell their stories and once again they took refuge in the lap of literature which enables them to establish communication with the rest of the world. The comparative frameworks equip us to do a comparative analysis of their merit as writers and projection of their quest for Identity and Distinction of duality.

The Identity and Duality:

Identity in this post-modern world appears something very expensive as the post-modern disillusionment and at the same time, the ultra modernity has made mankind to take a search for the self in the vastness of everything. Men in the highly changing world order are being affected internally and externally. Every stratum of the society is racing to catch life and keeping themselves in a constant quest of sustaining post-modernism. The post-modern is standing against the human existential ability;



copied with the post-modern living amid the changes taking place best human abilities and the testament of human will is setting new standards. However, the certain unprivileged population is facing the dual kind of adversity in the post-modern age; the first one is the default consequences of a highly modernised society, and then secondly by the wrongs of politics of power, place, and things. The worst hit by it is the Refugees around the world whose lives are subjected to the mercy and cruelty of social politics. These refugees face several kinds of identity issues along with the natural refugee problems by looking at the graveness of the subject a separate discussion will be needed. There are various definitions of identity and different interpretations but what remains unchanged is the association of self with the people and places of sameness. In the post-modernism the identity thing is being used as an instrument of mobility as stability is again is just a concept that only exists in the utopian society hence mobility is what desired to have a place in the race; however, it is also used for the politics of power, divide and gain.

The Kashmiri, Iranian, and Vietnamese refugees are the front-line victim of refugee assassination and breaching of fundamental human rights, and even if they somehow got to live after winning the war of survival the war of identity awaits them. These three particular refugee crises are prime examples of such practices. Dr. M.L. Bhat, Dian Nayeri, and Viet Thanh Nguyen have rewritten their day of horror and their quest for identity respectively. The Kashmiri refugee Dr. Bhat, Iranian refugee Nayeri, and Vietnamese refugee Nguyen of three become refugees at early juvenile age when they don't even see all the seasons of the earth, along with their parents they fought the war for survival, and their fate was rewarded with all the qualities that needed for the survival and rising. While growing up they saw the fatality of refugee conditions and learned to deal with the consequence. From the very beginning of their life, they encountered unimagined nightmarish physical and psychological horrors. As far as the identity thing is concerned they were asked about their identity and their values as human beings. On the quest for asylum, they acquired several identities; they got moulded into the various shapes and sizes of different identity structures provided to them in order to be a similar copy of the native image.

Dr. Bhat, as a Kashmiri refugee faced double identity questioning as he was a refugee in his own country; he was questioned about his identity within the state, outside of the state, and what an irony of fate in his own country he struggle to find an identity and a place of association and forced to live in the refugee camps and rented quarters that too is hard to get with an identity of refugee. The year 1990s brought all kinds of disasters in the life of Dr. Bhat, it snatched his home and hearth, his culture and customary associations with the place and people, his ancestral blessing and legacy, and the wealth of Kashmir, and ultimately it snatched the very Kashmir from the Kashmiri. Dr. Bhat (2017) writes, "(a)ll along the route, I kept the Grave-Yard's Silence and maintained the necessary discretion not to disclose my identity" (Bhat, 72). What lies in disclosing the identity? Death and humiliation is the only answer. Dr. Bhat discarded his real identity amid the fear of religious and regional terror and he had to manufacture a new one which opens the door for escape and survival.

Similarly; Dina Nayeri along with her mother and young sibling faced identity interrogations while finding a way out of the revolution that hit Iran where there was no place for western thoughts and religion. Nayeri's mother embraced Christianity which was not allowed in the Islamic Republic of Iran, her new religious identity brought her myriad problems ranging from physical torture, sexual malignity, open abuse, life-taking threats, and everything evil and killing. Her Iranian identity longer remains valid to provide a safeguard in her own country, to make it worse her new religious identity forced her to fly Iran along with her children.

Nayeri's identity was initially influenced by her mother's identity as she grew up in her identity having both the Christian and Muslim influence, to make it more complex she acquired several other influences while living in the refugee camps. It is universally acknowledged that human



beings get influenced by the surrounding elements both internally and externally; similarly, refugees' internal and external qualities take an influence however, their impact varies from one individual to another. Dina Nayeri's identity was constructed out of many influences, she realised her identity as a refugee and also accepted it without any hesitation. Today, Nayeri is breaking the stereotypes both in her personal life as a refugee and also as a writer. She as a refugee writer has done justice to the refugee cause, works like *A Teaspoon of Earth and Sea* (2014), *Refuge* (2017), and *The Waiting Place* (2020) are the testimony of evolving canvas of *Refugee literature*. These works not only highlight the issues of identity and crisis of amalgamation into the skin of natives but they also speak for the identity questions being asked even from the naturalised refugees.

Viet Thanh Nguyen, Pulitzer Prize (2016) awardee refugee writer projects the identity struggles of Vietnamese people both within the two fractions of the Vietnam i.e. South Vietnam and North Vietnam; and the refugees of these two fractions facing the identity questions around the world. Viet Thanh Nguyen, is also a product of the same refugee crisis and has faced and somewhat still facing the identity questions. This author has chosen a little different genre to provide a projection of Vietnamese refugees' crisis of identity; he created a nameless character in his Pulitzer-winning work *Sympathizer*, that lives a life of dual identity of American Spy and Vietnamese Mole; created in the background of the Vietnamese refugee crisis which is also known as Second Indo-China War. This nameless character; however, is fictional but more than real representing the multiple class of Vietnamese refugees, ranging from refugees from the South to the north, in general, Vietnamese Boat people. The entire life of the nameless captain spent changing and wearing the identity clothes and in the end, he doesn't find himself on either side. Nguyen's protagonist not only represented the identity issue in the home but also in the country of asylum which always keep remaining about their true identity even after many generations.

Duality is an integral element that is borne out of identity crisis but in the rescue in order to let the subject survive on the alien land which frequently interrogates about who are you? Why are you? Whether it causes any harm or gives benefit but the subject has to go through these questions of identities until or unless they get into the skin of the native and acquire a dual status of social and personal space. Duality becomes an important tool of survival for the refugees, they build different layers and strata and use them to counter the questions and attain the flexibilities.

In the select refugee crisis namely Kashmiri, Iranian, and the Vietnamese refugees' duality serves as a way of stabilising or neutralising the position on the land of refuge. All the refugees irrespective of their struggles and crisis have to adjust themselves as per the socio-cultural law of the land in order to build a place in the host environment. Kashmir Pandit refugees, Iranian refugees, and the Vietnamese refugees, all of them embraced the dual nature of living and created an identity that originates from their struggles during the making of refugees and the aftermath of becoming a refugee. They went through various changes and modified themselves in the image of the natives siding their very own identity or prior identity. Here Duality is not accessed as any negative negation but it is used as a tool for survival and having a normal life after the turmoil of the refugee crisis. This becomes more important in the post-modern society where the world has turned into a global village where multitudes of identities are operating altogether. To cater to the complexities of post-modernism duality has to be used, it is now not limited to the refugee masses' introduction to the mainstream lifeline.

To conclude, the post-modernist frame provides a flexible outlook to one of the grimmest crises of our time; it doesn't erect any boundaries against the free will of men and systems. The refugee masses and the identity crisis are for real and a refugee has to deal with it throughout his or her life. Without having a stable space to live in no man or woman can imagine a life of fulfillment. Kashmir, Iranian, and Vietnamese refugees are the prime example of the identity threat and their



embracement of duality is also a seminal example that how with a flexible approach both the past and the present identity can live together in this vast world. Dr. Bhat, Nyeri, and Viet all have given a true projection of their respective identity issues and how duality functions in their lives which show us a way forward to a sustainable future and comparative literature is providing a methodology to discuss such advancements.

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