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INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA AND ROOTED COSMOPOLITAN IDENTITY IN SELECTED CONTEMPORARY INDIAN DIASPORIC FICTION

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By

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The challenges to contemporary cosmopolitanism with specific reference to marginalised communities is an area that has been shown to have a scarcity of literary study. Therefore, the present study is conducted to address this gap and highlight the problem of internalized homophobia among LGBTQ characters which is a deterrent to the construction of a cosmopolitan identity. The study is focused on migrant LGBTQ characters of the Indian diaspora in North America and how the presence of internalized homophobia deters the attainment of a cosmopolitan identity. Unearthing the challenges to becoming cosmopolitan due to internalized homophobia addresses the gap pertaining to LGBTQ narratives of the Indian Subcontinent whereby heteronormative traditions and beliefs of a homophobic environment that lead to the development of internalized homophobia deters LGBTQ characters from being autonomous and free despite being in a more accepting environment in a host country. Herein, this study first aims to examine the authors' depiction of the cosmopolitan social setting in the host nation in providing acceptance for alternative sexual orientations in the selected novels. Moving on, the second objective is to investigate the patterns of internalized homophobia that manifest in the selected LGBTQ characters. Finally, the third objective aims to explicate the development of internalized homophobia and expound on the authors' portrayal of internalized homophobia deterring the formation of a cosmopolitan identity in the selected LGBTQ characters. In doing so, this study utilizes textual analysis of the five selected novels, namely Rahul Mehta's No Other World (2017), Mala Kumar's The Paths of Marriage (2014), The Hungry Ghosts (2013) by Shyam Selvadurai, My Magical Palace (2012) by Kunal Mukherjee and Farzana Doctor's Stealing Nasreen (2007) by combining the concepts of rooted cosmopolitanism by Kwame Anthony Appiah and internalized homophobia by Ilan H. Meyer and Laura Dean to anchor the conceptual framework. The current study is significant in its efforts to highlight the challenges to developing a cosmopolitan identity within cosmopolitan fiction

of the Indian diaspora where previous research has mainly focused on ways to develop a cosmopolitan identity. This study concludes that societal conventions that are bred in heteronormativity are the root causes to internalized homophobia which in turn challenges the construction of a cosmopolitan identity. Therefore, future research could focus on fiction of other Asian diasporas who are also known for deep familial roots such as the Chinese, Koreans, or Japanese to determine the effects of internalized homophobia on the cosmopolitan values of the LGBTQ characters of Eastern Asian descent within a migrant background.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

HOMOPHOBIA DALAMAN DAN IDENTITI KOSMOPOLITAN DALAM FIKSYEN KONTEMPORARI DARI DIASPORA INDIA

Oleh

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Cabaran untuk kosmopolitanisme kontemporari dengan rujukan khusus
kepada masyarakat terpinggir adalah bidang yang telah terbukti kekurangan
kajian sastera. Oleh itu, kajian ini dilakukan untuk mengatasi jurang ini dan
menyoroti masalah homofobia dalaman di kalangan komuniti LGBTQ yang
menjadi penghalang kepada pembinaan identiti kosmopolitan. Kajian ini
difokuskan pada individu LGBTQ migran diaspora India di Amerika Utara dan
bagaimana kehadiran homofobia dalaman menghalangi pencapaian identiti
kosmopolitan. Menggali cabaran untuk menjadi kosmopolitan kerana homofobia
yang diinternalisasi mengatasi jurang yang berkaitan dengan narasi LGBTQ
dari Benua India yang mana tradisi dan kepercayaan heteronormatif
berserta persekitaran homofobik yang membawa kepada pengembangan
homofobia dalaman menghindarkan watak LGBTQ daripada menjadi autonomi
dan bebas walaupun berada dalam persekitaran yang lebih kondusif di negara
tuan rumah berbanding tanahair sendiri. Maka, kajian ini pertama sekali
bertujuan akan mengkaji gambaran pengarang mengenai latar sosial
kosmopolitan di negara tuan rumah dalam menggalakkan penerimaan untuk
orientasi seksual alternatif dalam novel yang dipilih. Seterusnya, objektif
kedua adalah untuk menyiasat corak homofobia dalaman yang terdapat
dalam watak LGBTQ yang dipilih. Akhirnya, objektif ketiga bertujuan untuk
menerangkan sebab perkembangan homofobia yang diinternalisasi dan
menerangkan gambaran pengarang tentang homofobia dalaman yang
menghalang pembentukan identiti kosmopolitan dalam watak LGBTQ terpilih.
Untuk berbuat demikian, kajian ini telah menggunakan analisis teks dari lima
novel terpilih, iaitu No Other World (2017) oleh Rahul Mehta, The Paths of
Marriage (2014) oleh Mala Kumar, The Hungry Ghosts (2013) oleh Shyam
Selvadurai, My Magical Palace (2012) oleh Kunal Mukherjee dan Stealing
Nasreen (2007) oleh Farzana Doctor dengan menggabungjalin konsep-konsep
kosmopolitanisme oleh Kwame Anthony Appiah dan homofobia dalaman

oleh Ilan H. Meyer dan Laura Dean untuk menjana kerangka konsep. Kajian ini penting dalam usahanya untuk mengetengahkan cabaran untuk mengembangkan identiti kosmopolitan dalam fiksi kosmopolitan diaspora India di mana penyelidikan sebelumnya lebih memfokuskan pada cara-cara untuk mengembangkan identiti kosmopolitan. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa fahaman masyarakat yang dibiakkan dalam heteronormativiti adalah punca kepada homofobia dalaman yang seterusnya mencabar pembinaan identiti kosmopolitan. Oleh itu, penyelidikan masa depan dapat menumpukan pada fiksyen diaspora Asia lain yang juga terkenal dengan pengaruh keluarga yang mendalam seperti etnik Cina, Korea, atau Jepun untuk menentukan kesan homofobia dalaman terhadap nilai kosmopolitan watak LGBTQ keturunan Asia Timur dalam fiksi diaspora.

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My parents, my sisters, my husband, and my friends; to all of whom have been the strongest support system throughout this journey, no words can describe my love for and gratitude towards you. Thank you for being there through the ups and downs, bearing witness to every drop of blood, sweat, and tears. Finally, I thank the Universe and God for providing me with this opportunity to fulfil my lifelong dream of a doctoral scroll.

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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Date: 12 August 2021

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Vikriti Evam Prakriti
What appears to be unnatural is also natural

Rig-Veda

1.1 Background of The Study

Ashwini Sukhthankar, in the preface to her book *Facing the Mirror: Lesbian Writing from India* (1999), intimates that the Indian lesbian is a status that is predominantly obscure and almost non-existent. She mentions that lesbians; "do not live outside the law, as gay men do in our country, we live between its lines." Indian lesbians live as a myth in society, within the domain of ignorance which is neither acceptance nor condemnation. Hoshang Merchant, renowned Indian gay author in the introduction to his latest book *Forbidden Sex, Forbidden Texts: New India's Gay Poets* (2009), reflects that "representation of homosexuality/homoeroticism, as it is understood today, is a western import and it is viewed as against 'Indian tradition'". The representation of queers and queer writing by prominent Indian gay authors and scholars alludes to the complicated and convoluted status of an Indian LGBTQ characters. Historically and societally, the queer characters of the Indian Subcontinent struggle to exist within and between the obliviousness and denunciation of the society. Such predicaments are the central element of representation in a lot of the contemporary queer writing from and of the Indian Subcontinent.

Renowned Hindu mythologist Devdutt Patanaik posited that "Queer manifestations of sexuality, though repressed socially, squeeze their way into the myths, legends and lore of the land" (3). India, the birth country of Hinduism and home to over 800 million Hindus at present times, is a land that is rich in culture, customs, tradition, beliefs, and Eastern values. Subsequently, India and the Indian Subcontinent are home to people who subscribe to various religious beliefs but more importantly who share customs and beliefs regardless of their religious beliefs. Homosexuality and any form of alternative sexual orientation are taboo subjects and were also forbidden by law until very recently. Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code delineated that sex with persons of the same gender is punishable by law. This law was only repealed in 2018 after countless battles and wars waged in the courtrooms. Nonetheless, the fact is that repeals in the court of law do not necessarily entail revolutions in the court of public opinion.

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In a landmark decision, The Supreme Court of India in April 2014 recognised hijras, transgender, eunuchs, and intersex people as a 'third gender' by law (Kotak). However, these alternative sexual orientations do not fall scrupulously in the modern Western taxonomy of gender and sexual orientation and contests the Western ideas of sexuality and gender construction. Despite lawful acceptance, decades and centuries of persecution and stigma still continue to plague the hijras wherein the word itself is often used derogatorily. Concurrently, acceptance of the third gender does no help for the gay, lesbian, or bisexuals as hijras do not reflect upon sexual orientation.

India's islandic neighbour, Sri Lanka, on the other hand, continues to criminalize any act of sexual orientation that is deemed out of the norm; homosexuality most definitely. Sections 365 and 365A of the Sri Lankan Penal Code that criminalize same-sex relationships still stand. Similar to the social environment of India, homosexuality is also a societal taboo in Sri Lanka. "Being persecuted for sexual orientation or gender identity has no place in our world today, and yet, individuals in Sri Lanka continue to face discrimination, abuse and a complete lack of protection for their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Individuals must not be discriminated on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity, but Sri Lanka has made little to no progress towards setting aside the laws that do" (Mahamoor). From these depictions, it can be garnered that homosexuality is both a crime: an unlawful state of being, and a societal taboo in Sri Lanka.

In spite of recent development in legislature and at the societal front showing positive advancements in acceptance of the LGBTQ community, people of alternative sexual orientations are generally stigmatized in society. Homophobia is ubiquitous and has its dark roots in the British imperial conquest which sought to 'civilize' the Indians by dictating how desire and love should be practiced and accepted. The aftermath of such confining doctrines trickled down from generation to generation and remained rooted and ingrained into societal norms and conventions so much so that any kind of open dialog about homosexuality in India has been hindered by the way that sexuality in any frame is infrequently discussed openly and remains mostly taboo. Merchant further explains that "owing to the nature and function of queer theory, queer writers and scholars in India attack the base or root of Indian tradition/culture, which is deeply rooted in homophobia, and re/read Indian culture(s) in the light of Western queer theory" (v). It is in line with this view that I have elected to study contemporary Indian novels that speak of the challenges of being gay in a cosmopolitan perspective while keeping in mind the deep-rooted seeds of homophobia within the predominantly traditional culture of the Indian characters of this study.

As Halperin argued, "Unlike sex, sexuality is a cultural production: it represents the appropriation of the human body and of its physiological capacities by an ideological discourse. Sexuality is not a somatic fact; it is a cultural effect" (13). Societal conventions that feed familial values have been precursors to how

sexuality and alternative sexual orientations have been perceived in Indian and the Sub-continent cultures. Ross in his book *Same-Sex Desire in Indian Culture Representations in Literature and Film, 1970–2015* notes that:

> Social constructionists frequently cite the supposed lack of a nomenclature of sexual orientation in parts of "the Global South," but the affirmation that the "West" invented this concept and coined the uniquely essentialist identitarian signifier of "homosexuality" is neocolonialist. Such condescension ignores the extent to which Euro-American sexualities were influenced by formations from outside this region, as well as the eclipsing of analogous taxonomies by the global spread of the British empire and its attitudes of Victorian Puritanism; the psychosexual configuration of homosexuality displaced, not fully but partially, many preexisting models on the subcontinent. (6)

Ross's comments give views as to how Western ideals of sexual construction which in actuality postdate Indian nomenclature of homosexuality are the conventions that prescribe the modern Indian depiction of same-sex desires and queer literature. Hence, societal conventions dictate that anything as unnatural as homosexuality should be abhorred and avoided at all costs which is a reason why children of Indian descent fear being gay as they would not be accepted by their families and elders. These ideas are running themes in Indian literature whereby authors and novelists strive to highlight the inadequacies and complications faced by Indian gay characters in the hopes of unearthing more awareness to the plight of the LGBTQ. As mentioned by Hoshang Merchant in his works, queer literature of India seeks to display the effects of traditions and culture that are deep-seated in homophobia.

Even with the very recent repealing of laws that criminalize homosexuality, the court of law does not represent the court of opinion and discrimination against the LGBTQ is far-reaching and deep-rooted within society. "Homosexual activists and practitioners across India and abroad enjoyed and celebrated the yet to come victory seeking a silver lining of hope for the betterment of their plight. But it is disheartening to acknowledge that amending or withdrawing section 377 is a matter left to parliament. Since identities are created by difference, exclusion and social injustice, it is the struggle of the long-stressed people who aspire to come into the mainstream but couldn't able to as their existence and identity have not yet been recognized as valid" (Ansari, 102). Ansari further explains that repeals of laws and wins in the courtrooms do not determine freedom and equality. Therefore, Indian LGBTQ narratives continue to lend voice to the struggles of the gay Indian character.

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People of South Asia, mainly India and Sri Lanka, and the respective diasporas carry the norms, practices, and traditions of their nation state and society into their migrant cultures. As immigrants seeking an escape from war, or enhanced economic stature, or simply an improved life, they carry their beliefs, values, and practices into the new world. An interesting idea would be to dive into discussing how much of their cultural identity mingles and influences their immigrant identities. In capturing the intricacies and nuances of immigrant life that subjects one almost immediately to a minority group, many authors of Indian and Indian Sub-Continent descent have sought to shed light on the trials and tribulations of the Indian immigrant. At the advent of the 21st century, more novelists have worked to highlight the grievances of the LGBTQ immigrants who are double minorities in terms of race and sexual orientation.

Among those writers, five authors, who are masterful in weaving their tales and have worked hard on delving deeper into the inner thoughts and gripes of immigrant LGBTQ individuals, have been chosen to glean valuable insights and information to inform this study. Shyam Selvadurai who rose to fame with his 1997's *Funny Boy* is a strong writer of LGBTQ issues among immigrants. With a strong backdrop of escape from civil war, *The Hungry Ghosts* (2013) follows the initiation of the protagonist, Shivan who is gay, and his family into Canada as they flee the war. Being part of a cosmopolitan society, Shivan's struggles with his own identity and sexual orientation are strongly relevant to the problem to be studied.

Authors Mala Kumar and Farzana Doctor, with *The Paths of Marriage* (2014) and *Stealing Nasreen* (2007) respectively, provide insights to female LGBTQ Indian characters in North America while *No Other World* (2014) by Rahul Mehta and *My Magical Palace* (2013) by Kunal Mukherjee depict the lives of male LGBTQ Indian characters. All the authors are LGBTQ immigrants of Indian descent themselves and their works of fiction are highly cognizant of that particular notion.

While pre-modern Indians reached the masses through texts and mythical stories, Indians and people of the Indian Sub-Continent have traversed the world since the era of sea voyages and the merchant trade began centuries ago. The modern-day immigrant, however, immigrates for reasons far more different than what they were during those times years ago almost always being in hopes of a better life. Chasing the American dream, for example, is no more just an expression as many Indians have crossed the Indian Sea in hopes of greener pastures. Migration and migrant literature are prevalent facets of postcolonial criticism as diasporic communities have become a constant of Western societies.

The idea that Western civilizations provide better opportunities, a more advanced lifestyle, and essentially greater quality of life has propelled the Indian diasporic community to flourish there. Migrant literature sheds more light on the issues faced by migrants in terms of hybridity and ambivalence in identity formation as propagated by the likes of Homi Bhabha. Nonetheless, while migration and mobility are celebrated junctures of cosmopolitanism (Appiah 618), more research is required about the Indian diasporic community vis-à-vis a cosmopolitan perspective; specifically, in relation to the LGBTQ members of the Indian diasporic communities within literary criticism.

Cosmopolitanism is a word derived from the Greek words "cosmos" and "polites" which essentially means "citizens of the world". The origins of the word imply its Stoic beginnings and the subsequent ideology advocated by a conglomerate of cynic Athenian philosophers who challenged the conventional notion that one should belong to a fixed community; a "polis". They believed that individuals should not be confined to living within and identifying with one particular community and should in fact belong to the "world".

The Greek, Diogenes, in the 4th century, proclaimed that he was 'a citizen of the world' i.e. a 'cosmopolitan'. Nonetheless, Diogenes's intentions when he chose to announce himself as a citizen of the world was more to disassociate himself from the tensed political climate of then-Athens rather than proclaiming a cosmopolitan philosophy of any sorts. The present-day outlook on cosmopolitanism, on the other hand, presents are less divisive, more inclusive perspective. "Cosmopolitanism is today primarily regarded as a specific idea, or behavioural pattern, represented by cosmopolitans or citizens of the world. Cosmopolitans, in turn, are those who consider themselves unfettered by the boundaries of existing political communities and their loyalty is not to any particular political community, rather they owe their loyalty to the more universal community of all human beings" (Beros 198).

Cosmopolitanism can be traced back to the ancient Greeks via Diogenes's aforementioned proclamation. It is a concept that continued being relevant and was later expanded through its inclusion in Kantian moral justice and Marx and Engels' *The Communist Manifesto* among others. Cosmopolitanism is a longstanding concept and its longevity is not without criticisms. One important criticism of cosmopolitanism is that there is discrepancy between theory and practice. Cosmopolitanism would be great in principle and terrible in reality. There is a solid polarity between the individuals who are in the ivory towers of the scholarly community and who have next to no or no effect on the truth of universal legislative issues, and the individuals who are in a place of political duty and who are separated from the advancement of hypothetical reasoning. These criticisms and exact history will be discussed in Chapter 3. Nonetheless, whether ancient Greek cosmopolitanism or contemporary cosmopolitanism, the concept has championed freedom, equality, acceptance, and cross-cultural conversations (Appiah 2; Beros 215; Nussbaum 9).

Consequently, a recurring theme in the depictions of characters and the goings-on in these literary themes reflect acceptance of all living beings with no prejudice, bigotry, or preconception of any sorts. This revelation is crucial as issues of gender and acceptance of the LGBTQ still engulf Indians and Indian communities that are depicted by a good number of Indian authors and their writings. While modern day eunuchs are still frowned upon, there are some people who do place them in a stance of respect and avoid being castigated by them. The question then arises as to why present-day movements still fight for recognition and equality for the LGBTQ when the queer is supposedly already holding somewhat significant and accepted positions in the social strata of the Indian society. Therein lies the complex and highly multifarious plight of the Indian LGBTQ community which increases the significance of this study in its effort to highlight the nuances of life as an Indian LGBTQ migrant character within the scope of literary authorship. As aforementioned, while the hijras are accepted within the Indian society as a third gender, this acknowledgement does nothing to elevate their stance or obtain equality for those of alternative sexual orientations or gender construction.

The heterosexist values of society, that proffer the notion that heterosexuality is the normal, acceptable, natural or superior form of sexuality (Williamson 98), do not allow for LGBTQ individuals to consider themselves normal, accepted, or of equal stature as a 'normal' heterosexual. These feelings of inadequacy, uneasiness, and social ineptness, in turn, are redirected and internalized by an LGBTQ character which results in the development of internalized homophobia. The key premise of internalized homophobia demarcates that gay people, like all other members of minority groups, are "subject to chronic stress due to their stigmatization" and develop self-hatred, exhibit shame, court secrecy and self-alienation (Locke 202; Meyer, "Minority Stress" 38; Meyer, "Prejudice" 678; Meyer and Dean 161).

Cultural cosmopolitanism posits the notion of one who identifies oneself as a cosmopolitan. It is essential at this juncture that we discuss the elements that constitute the cosmopolitan identity. Kwame Anthony Appiah, who is a strong proponent of contemporary cosmopolitanism, propagates that one be a rooted cosmopolitan. A cosmopolitan is one who identifies him or herself as a citizen of the world where there are no boundaries whether political, cultural, or geographical. This belief can be traced back to the Stoics and an advocate of recent times is Martha Nussbaum who believes that true cosmopolitanism is to negate borders and embrace all people as one people of equal importance. Strict ethical cosmopolitanism, as it is called, denounces nation-states and cultural heterogeneity in favour of equal recognition of all human beings.

While at first glance equal recognition of all human beings may seem like status quo of the globalized world what with its equal rights movements and push for gender equality, Kwame Anthony Appiah believes that strict ethical cosmopolitanism completely brushes aside cultural heterogeneity that can only

be derived from multiplicity of political states. He conveys the idea that one be a moderate rooted cosmopolitan who celebrates cosmopolitanism mixed with patriotism. Appiah believes that one should embrace differences of various members of a society and thrive in cross-cultural engagements while remaining rooted to one's own culture and roots.

Nonetheless, with new or renewed understandings come new questions. As Beros posits:

> At first glance, the cultural cosmopolitan position seems rather simple: all cultures are equal, and therefore they should be appreciated equally and everyone should have the same right to enjoy them. But then the question arises: what are we to do with cultures that are essentially non-egalitarian, with those that do not respect the equal rights of all individuals? What are we to do with cultures that treat genders unequally, the members of one religion different than the members of another, or treat people of different sexual orientations unequally? (203)

Unequal treatment, denial of basic rights, discrimination, and biases are rampant and almost synonymous with members of marginalized groups. I am interested to examine how these literary characters fare within a cosmopolitan society that encourages acceptance of differences and champions equal rights. In addressing this question, this study will focus on the LGBTQ characters within the Indian diaspora in Western shores.

Subsequently, the LGBTQ community is almost always plagued with stigma and prejudice by the society. The "internalization of these negative societal attitudes" has in turn caused people of the LGBTQ community to experience and project a form of internalized homophobia whereby discrimination that they face is mirrored internally causing severe stress, mental issues, and most detrimentally, self-hatred (Meyer 40; Meyer and Dean 161). Essentially, internalized homophobia transpires when LGBQT people are subjected to society's adverse bias, prejudice, and preconception towards LGBQT individuals which in turn results in LGBTQ individuals' self-loathing.

Herein lies the gap which this study wishes to address. Contemporary cosmopolitanism champions individuals as members of the global village who also belong to a particular nation-state or to a localized culture. Therefore, besides possessing cosmopolitan ideals of accepting differences, a pluralistic approach in society, and cross-cultural amalgamation in nurturing new hybrids of culture, one should also thrive in one's own culture while blending in with others' or local cultures. Hence, the real question that arises at this juncture is whether cosmopolitan values of the community or society they live in provide the social setting that allows LGBTQ characters in the chosen novels to accept

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themselves for who they are and be accepted by their localized group i.e., family units and friendships in turn. Consequently, this study seeks to posit the notion that internalized homophobia poses a genuine threat to the inculcation of a cosmopolitan identity and values. Despite possessing many of the essential tenets of cosmopolitanism, characters of the LGBTQ community of the Indian diaspora from the selected novels are unable to attain a cosmopolitan identity due to internalized homophobia. It can be assumed that the values, beliefs, customs, and conventions that are practiced in their home country are carried forward to the host nation hindering these LGBTQ characters from true freedom or acceptance of a cosmopolitan identity.

In manifesting itself, internalized homophobia causes an LGBTQ character to be ashamed, bitter, hide their true selves and in some situations, reject the presence of others in their lives. A true cosmopolitan society can only be achieved when all members of the community are accepted for their differences and given equal stature as heterosexuals. In addressing the many challenges to cosmopolitanism, internalized homophobia is a concept that this study seeks to highlight. Internalized homophobia among characters of the LGBTQ Indian diasporic community can be traced back to homonegativism as practised by the motherland of the diaspora. Despite having foremost literature of Hinduism identifying members of the third gender as accepted and embraced, the norms of the society dictate different conventions. In a community that upholds strong familial bonds, utmost respect for elders, and adhering to societal conventions, any form of 'rebellion' or non-compliance could deem the offender an outcast. With such pressures on an LGBTQ character, it is no wonder that they succumb to various anxieties, angsts, and unease.

This study is most noteworthy in its efforts to highlight the plight of the LGBTQ characters of the Indian diaspora within a cosmopolitan perspective based on works by the selected novelists. While various studies have addressed the pressures of homophobia on a LGBTQ character portrayed in novels, the concept of internalized homophobia and its relevance to the failure of developing a cosmopolitan identity need more attention. Besides that, findings of this study will seek to inform the cosmopolitan literary authorship on the express need for acceptance, embracing differences, upholding universal values of empathy and compassion, and espousal of shared beliefs and traditions in cultivating a true cosmopolitan society and connecting the dots between the seven billion and counting members of the global village. In doing so, this study will seek to highlight the issues aforementioned by adopting Kwame Anthony Appiah's concept of rooted cosmopolitanism and Meyer and Dean's concept of internalized homophobia to expound on the predicaments of diasporic Indian LGBTQ characters.

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1.2   Statement of The Problem

Previous research on cosmopolitanism in fiction has largely focused on cosmopolitanism essentially in a first-world, Western perspective. One such research, for example, is in relation to expatriate writers of the United States. This research entitled "Beyond the nation: American expatriate writers and the process of cosmopolitanism", conducted by Alexa Weik, provides a view of cosmopolitanism among the Western elites i.e. expatriate writers. Along the way, there has also developed the awareness of including non-elite communities and their perspective via cosmopolitanism. Another research entitled "Another layer of blackness: Theorizing race, ethnicity and identity in the US black public sphere" by Patrick B. Oray, on the other hand, looks into cosmopolitan consciousness among the Black community (another often marginalized community) in the US. Oray's research provided this study with some insights into cosmopolitanism and its effects among a non-elite community i.e. vernacular cosmopolitanism and this encouraged further questions to be asked and for this study to delve deeper into cosmopolitanism among other marginalized communities with specific reference to the queer communities of the Indian diaspora to be precise.

In addressing Indian English fiction, a study by Shoobie entitled "Cosmopolitanism in Indian English fiction" postulates that Indian English novels present a kind of micro cosmopolitanism whereby the nation state is preserved as the site for cultural and social formation. Shoobie's findings inform this study on how the practices of the nation-state, in both cases India, form micro cosmopolitan values within individuals. Therefore, this study seeks to espouse the notion that the nation state in forming micro cosmopolitan values in diasporic communities also inadvertently influences the mindset and identity of an individual. Concomitantly, cosmopolitan perspectives of the Indian community have been addressed essentially via Shoobie's study. This study, as a result, provides an outlook via diasporic Indian communities who have passed the borders of the nation state and thus proffers a different perspective on cosmopolitanism in Indian English fiction i.e. of the immigrants of the Indian Sub-Continent.

Another study of cosmopolitanism in fiction by Johansen entitled "Territorialized Cosmopolitanism: Space, Place and Cosmopolitan Identity" proposed a territorialized cosmopolitan by taking into account space in its literal and cultural terms and its effects on being cosmopolitan. This study also took into account both predominant strains of cosmopolitan; the liberal-bourgeois (i.e. elitist) cosmopolitan and vernacular (non-elite) cosmopolitanism. Johansen's findings indicate that territorialized cosmopolitanism establishes a persuasive development between the global and the local and this development between these two zones prompts moral and political duties to others (both human and nonhuman) both physically adjacent and far off.

Studies about internalized homophobia, on the other hand, have largely focused on the effects of internalized homophobia in the psychosocial and mental health aspect of LGBTQ individuals (Woodford et al, 2014; Johnson et al., 2008; Meyer, 2003; Williamson, 2000). This study seeks to postulate that internalized homophobia among LGBTQ characters of the Indian diaspora in the selected novels prevents them from truly attaining a cosmopolitan identity which in turn challenges the formation of a genuine cosmopolitan society. Meyer and Dean present an idea of analysing internalized homophobia and how it presents itself in LGBTQ individuals. These manifestations will be utilized to analyse the patterns of internalized homophobia displayed by the characters in the chosen novels.

As discussed via previous research, the liberal-bourgeois, elitist cosmopolitanism has been given more importance and more attention. At first look, the cosmopolitan position appears to be fairly basic: all societies are equivalent, and subsequently they ought to be acknowledged similarly and everybody ought to have a similar ideal to appreciate them. Nonetheless, at various points the question that emerges to me is: what are we to do with societies that are basically non-egalitarian, with those that don't regard all people as of equal stature? It is highly imperative for societies that treat sexual orientations unequally, that allows for individuals from one religion to be treated not quite the same as individuals from another, or treat individuals of various sexual constructions unequally be looked into. In addressing the unvoiced, vernacular, minority communities in a society, the LGBTQ characters of the immigrant Indian community are the focus of this study.

Cosmopolitanism champions the idea that members of society are equal, differences should be embraced, and that each member of society has obligations to society and the world. Appiah's rooted cosmopolitanism further explicates that while embracing differences and upholding diversification in a trans-global society, people should also preserve their roots and customs steeped in the culture of one's motherland. This study, in its efforts, seeks to postulate the challenges to attaining a true rooted cosmopolitan society at the roots of the society. A society is an embodiment of the values and beliefs of each individual member. Having a group of people within the society struggling with self-acceptance and self-hatred works towards the detriment of a cosmopolitan society. Therein lies the true test to accomplishing a cosmopolitan identity within all members of a society and hence a genuine development of a cosmopolitan culture.

I seek to present the highly complicated nuances of life for the Indian diasporic LGBTQ characters whereby the manifestations of internalized homophobia present a true challenge to being a rooted cosmopolitan. While Appiah champions the preservation of one's own roots and culture while being immersed in other cosmopolitan values of acceptance and equality, the LGBTQ characters that develop internalized homophobia are challenged in their ability

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to attain a true rooted cosmopolitan identity. As they innately maintain and preserve the values and customs of their roots, they inadvertently deny their very own rights and needs to be accepted. The conundrum that I have found these characters to be in is the niche that I am looking to closely examine and analyse. Their plight of somewhat being stretched between two different realities of rooted cosmopolitanism is the primary concern of this study.

1.3 Research Objectives

In questioning and shedding more light on internalized homophobia and the challenges this concept poses to rooted cosmopolitanism in the selected novels, the following research questions will guide this study:

  i) To examine the authors' depiction of a cosmopolitan social setting in the host nation in providing acceptance for alternative sexual orientation(s) in the selected novels
  ii) To investigate the patterns of internalized homophobia that manifest in the selected LGBTQ characters of the Indian diaspora from the selected novels
  iii) To explicate the development of internalized homophobia and expound on the authors' portrayal of internalized homophobia deterring the formation of a cosmopolitan identity in the selected LGBTQ characters of the Indian diaspora from the selected novels

1.4 Research Questions

In answering the aforementioned research questions, the overarching research objectives of the study are as follows:

  1. How does a cosmopolitan social setting provide acceptance of alternative sexual orientations in the selected novels?
  2. How does internalized homophobia manifest in the selected LGBTQ characters of the Indian diaspora in the selected novels?
  3. How does internalized homophobia develop and how does it challenge the formation of a cosmopolitan identity in the selected LGBTQ characters of the Indian diaspora in the selected novels?

1.5 Significance of The Study

As cosmopolitanism has been studied through Western and first world perspectives (Marciel, 2014; Weik, 2008) more research is needed in looking at cosmopolitanism among marginalized communities. Within the purview of literary criticism, as propagated by scholars like Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, the voices of the marginalized and subaltern were brought to light. As

migration and displacement took place due to various reasons, cultural hybridity was imminent and foreign cultures blended with local ones to form a new hybrid of culture. But within this hybridity lay grievances and the unheard voices of the less important. As is said that history is oft written by the victors, the lesser, 'third-world' cultures often lost out to bigger, 'first-world' cultures. Within the parameters of literary studies, this study is significant in its efforts to discuss and elevate issues within contemporary gay writing of the Indian diaspora.

Moreover, this study is most valuable in its effort to highlight the voice of the LGBTQ characters within the Indian diasporic community in a cosmopolitan society. Placed in a Western, elite society, I would like to find out if their voices are heard and status elevated. I also want to examine whether the adoptive culture is cosmopolitan enough for them to be accepted and if they are accepted, whether the social setting of acceptance allows them to accept themselves and feel a sense of belonging to their cosmopolis. Hence, this study is most relevant in its ability to answer some questions and shed some light about the plight of the Indian diasporic queer community in a Western cosmopolitan society of the selected novels.

Concurrently, this study is also significant as it delves a little deeper into the psyche of Indian migrant characters who have traversed the globe in seek of greener pastures. It also seeks to provide a two-pronged view of the queer as well as 'normal' Indian migrant characters and their perspectives of being in a cosmopolitan society. It is important to study if they conform to Western, cosmopolitan values or is there a form of vernacular cosmopolitanism that follows them there. If so, then whether there are similarities between both forms of cosmopolitanism or if the differences are more prevalent are vital to be explored in expanding our understanding of the cosmopolitan perspective. As answers for these many questions appear, the significance of this study will follow suit.

Furthermore, this study is unique in its efforts to espouse internalized homophobia as a challenge towards the realization of a fully cosmopolitan identity and in turn cosmopolitan society. While most research in the literary field has focused on the tools necessary for developing a cosmopolitan identity (Shoobie, 2016; Cottier, 2014; Weik, 2008; Johnson, 2008), this study aims to identify and highlight an issue that can hinder the development of a cosmopolitan identity particularly within LGBTQ characters of the Indian diaspora. Therefore, this study will also seek to showcase the grievances and tribulations of the Indian diasporic LGBTQ community as a minority group in society via the chosen novels of contemporary Indian diasporic writers.

Therefore, it is also imperative at this juncture to highlight the vital role this study plays in elevating the issues raised by the selected novelists in their writings. The authors of the five chosen novels have clearly put in a lot of work into

highlighting the issues within LGBTQ writing from the Indian Subcontinent. As the need for acceptance and fight against discrimination escalate, the novelists chosen display a bank of works that raise issues regarding the traditional and conventional approach to LGBTQ that is still prevalent in the Indian Subcontinent and diasporas.

Besides *The Hungry Ghosts* (2013) by Shyam Selvadurai that has been discussed adequately within literary studies, the other four novels i.e., Rahul Mehta's *No Other World* (2017), Mala Kumar's *The Paths of Marriage* (2014), *My Magical Palace* (2012) by Kunal Mukherjee and Farzana Doctor's *Stealing Nasreen* (2007) are from more contemporary writers and thus should be given more attention through literary criticism. It is pertinent that themes and issues regarding LGBTQ writing of the Indian Subcontinent and the diasporas be highlighted using contemporary writers. As the novels point towards homophobia and homonegativism as part of the Indian culture and belief system, this study takes on the need to explore the extent that these conservative belief systems affect Indian diasporic LGBTQ characters who have left their motherland as migrant characters.

1.6   Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study combines the concepts of rooted cosmopolitanism and internalized homophobia in the effort of answering the research questions posed. The statement of problem clearly discusses the gap in studying cosmopolitanism whereby there is scarcity in researching the challenges to developing a cosmopolitan identity. Similarly, the plight of the LGBTQ subculture in a cosmopolitan perspective needs further discussion. Therefore, this study seeks to highlight the challenges faced by LGBTQ characters of the Indian diaspora in attaining a rooted cosmopolitan identity. In doing so, the aforementioned concepts anchor this study to answering the research questions derived from the problem being studied. In the following subsection, I will discuss the two concepts that are being used in this study.

1.6.1   Rooted Cosmopolitanism

Kwame Anthony Appiah, the Ghanaian-British cosmopolitan guru, advocates rooted cosmopolitanism. This essentially reads as being cosmopolitan yet embracing one's roots, culture and nation-state as opposed to strict ethical cosmopolitanism as propagated by Martha Nussbaum. Nussbaum believes that all humans need to put humanity before all; the self, family, community, and nation-state. Appiah, on the other hand, encourages pluralistic values that embrace differences and thrive in cross-cultural conversations and yet do not disregard the importance of people's roots and innate patriotism.

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> The fundamental thought of the cosmopolitanism I defend is that the freedom to create oneself the freedom that liberalism celebrates – requires a range of socially transmitted options from which to invent what we have come to call our identities. Our families and schools, our churches and temples, our professional associations and clubs, provide two essential elements in the tool kit of self-creation: first, they provide ready-made identities - son, lover, husband, doctor, teacher, Methodist, worker, Moslem, Yankee fan, mensch – whose shapes are constituted by norms and expectations, stereotypes and demands, rights and obligations; second, they give us a language in which to think about these identities and with got which we may shape new ones.
> (Appiah, *Cosmopolitan Patriots* 625)

What is so poignant about Appiah's statement is that it proffers an insight into how having a cosmopolitan mind-set truly advocates shaping and reshaping who we are and where we belong in our community and ergo the world. His ideas invoke a social responsibility in each individual that goes beyond one's kith and kin and yet it does not strip away one's sense of belonging whether to a particular community, state, or nation. He argues that one need not do away with one's roots in embracing others, other cultures, and in seeking to identify with people of different backgrounds especially in what is essentially a cosmopolitan setting; communities made up of various cultures and people from different backgrounds.

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, I would like to proffer a conceptual framework that draws from Appiah's rooted cosmopolitanism. Based on Appiah's discussions and insights, I have derived rooted cosmopolitan tenets that will drive the discussion and anchor my analysis of the problem using the five selected novels. In his book *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in A World of Strangers* (2006), Appiah discusses his views on what being a rooted cosmopolitan entails and ergo gives us insights as to why being a rooted cosmopolitan should be the adopted principle of every member of a society.

Appiah ascertains that "cosmopolitanism shouldn't be seen as some exalted attainment: it begins with the simple idea that in the human community, we need to develop habits of coexistence: conversation in its older meaning, of living together, association" (18). He believes that being a rooted cosmopolitan entails being associated to people of the world, people around us through "conversation – and, in particular, conversation between people from different ways of life" (21). Thus, the first rooted cosmopolitan tenet that I would like to derive here is engaging in cross-cultural conversations and experiences.

Furthermore, Appiah pens that being a rooted cosmopolitan entails the idea of "recognizing our responsibility for every human being" (29). He further expands that as members of the global society, while we may not be able to agree to or adopt ways of other societies, it need not stop us from engaging with each other. The second rooted cosmopolitan tenet that I have derived, as Appiah suggests, is through acknowledging our shared beliefs and shared rights to being recognized and appreciated as fellow humans.

Moreover, Appiah celebrates the idea that "human beings are different and that we can learn from each other" (26). The idea that we are different and can learn from each other presents itself to me as the ability to accept differences devoid of prejudice. Hence, the third rooted cosmopolitan that I have derived from Appiah here is embracing differences by celebrating legitimate differences between people of various affiliation and cultural beliefs devoid of prejudice and biasness. This rooted cosmopolitan ideal as suggested by Appiah, in my opinion, is largely imperative in cultivating a cosmopolitan consciousness in individuals and the societies that are made up of these individuals.

Besides that, in order to lend a more relevant and detailed perspective to this study which is highlighting diasporic experiences of Indian LGBTQ migrant characters, Appiah's works on cosmopolitanism that predate this book need to be discussed as well. An important insight from Appiah's work "Cosmopolitan Patriots" brings to light his idea of celebrating migration, mobility, and diaspora.

> The cosmopolitan patriot can entertain the possibility of a world in which everyone is a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of one's own, with its own cultural particularities, but taking pleasure from the presence of other, different places that are home to other, different people. The cosmopolitan also imagines that in such a world not everyone will find it best to stay in their natal patria, so that the circulation of people among different localities will involve not only cultural tourism (which the cosmopolitan admits to enjoying) but migration, nomadism, diaspora. In the past, these processes have too often been the result of forces we should deplore; the old migrants were often refugees, and older diasporas often began in an involuntary exile. But what can be hateful, if coerced, can be celebrated when it flows from the free decisions of individuals or of groups. (618)

Therefore, Appiah's contentions place importance on migration and mobility as representative of cosmopolitanism which I derive as the fourth rooted cosmopolitan tenet for the purpose of this study.

As I have delineated the four cosmopolitan tenets as derived from Appiah's concept of rooted cosmopolitanism, it is also vital at this stage to discuss the two strands of rooted cosmopolitanism that reflects the identity of a rooted cosmopolitan. The first strand encompasses the onus of being a human respecting other cultures, learning from others, and cultivating a non-biased, prejudice-free approach to dealing with the other. The second strand entails the vocation to remain true to one's cultural affiliations and roots while embracing a global, cosmopolitan identity. These strands as well as the four aforementioned tenets will be used to analyse and study the social setting of the host country where the Indian LGBTQ characters I am studying migrate to in order to present a case for the acceptance of people of alternative sexual orientation.

1.6.2   Internalized Homophobia

The subsequent concept that makes up the conceptual framework of this study is internalized homophobia. Internalized homophobia is a psychological term derived to study, explain, and further understand the internal struggles of the LGBTQ community (Locke 202; Meyer 40; Meyer and Dean 161; Williamson 98). Sometimes also referred to as Internalized Heterosexism or Homonegativity, internalized homophobia is an idea considerably more nuanced than its basic definition would propose. Unmistakably, the idea of 'homophobia' in this unique situation, is deluding. The over-publicised notion that it is singular demonstrations of hatred and prejudice by others towards LGBTQ individuals that is 'homophobia' actually redirects our attention from the substantially more damaging mistreatment they experience from conforming to societal norms that is at the base of the issue.

The derisive and bigoted conduct of those nearest to us often has the most significant effect upon us. While they ought to be considered deplorable as people, the genuine guilty party is a forcefully heterosexist society that is characterizing what is 'typical', and in this manner what is 'correct' and 'wrong', through laws, strategy, culture, training, human services, religion and family life. This basic persecution is intended to "authorize" the sexual orientation that is deemed 'normal', minimize the rights of LGBTQ individuals, and keep heterosexual individuals and their connections in a place of predominance and importance. These heterosexist notions of the society ensure that heteronormativity (Butler 37) prevails and greatly diminishes the likelihood of alternative sexual orientations and beliefs being accepted. To answer the questions unearthed by this study, the findings and ideations of Meyer and Dean will be employed to study internalized homophobia and its manifestations in the selected LGBTQ characters.
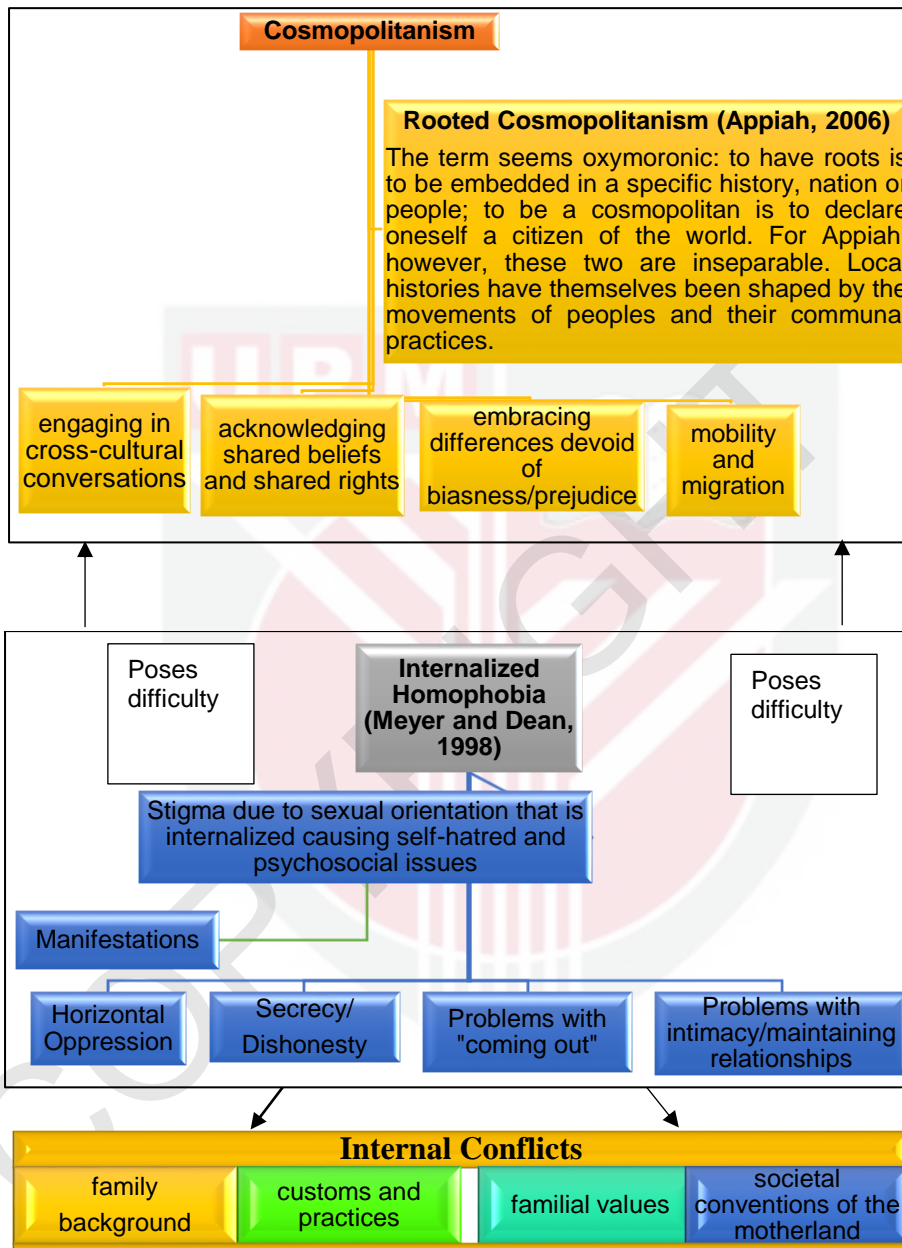
Meyer (1995) identified internalized homophobia as a source of 'minority stress' whereby some kind of disharmony or conflict is present between members of a minority group and the dominant social environment. Meyer and Dean (1998) infer that when LGBTQ individuals recognize their same-sex attraction, they begin to question their presumed heterosexuality and this is where self-labelling occurs (162). They further discuss that in many cases of closeted individuals, "he or she begins to apply the learned antigay attitudes to himself or herself" (163) and this manifestation is termed as horizontal oppression for the purpose of this study.

In many situations, gay men and women simply conceal their true identities especially when they have "failed to accept their own homosexual orientation" due to feelings of shame and guilt (164). Therefore, the second manifestation of internalized homophobia is highlighted as being secretive and concealing their orientation. Besides that, LGBTQ individuals also display an affliction of internalized homophobia when the 'coming-out' process fails (163). Thus, the third manifestation of internalized homophobia is referred to as having problems 'coming-out'.

The fourth manifestation of internalized homophobia as iterated in this study is having problems maintaining relationships. This manifestation is derived from Meyer and Dean's assertions that "gay people who internalize societal values about the centrality of family life for the attainment of intimacy and happiness are, by societal standards, doomed to failure because their sexual orientation cannot be accommodated" (165). These feelings of inadequacy are reflected in the inability to maintain relationships and intimacy.

The conceptual framework adopted by this study in order to answer the research questions posed is reflected in the diagram below:

1.6.3   Conceptual Framework

Cosmopolitanism

Rooted Cosmopolitanism (Appiah, 2006)

The term seems oxymoronic: to have roots is to be embedded in a specific history, nation or people; to be a cosmopolitan is to declare oneself a citizen of the world. For Appiah, however, these two are inseparable. Local histories have themselves been shaped by the movements of peoples and their communal practices.

| engaging in cross-cultural conversations | acknowledging shared beliefs and shared rights | embracing differences devoid of biasness/prejudice | mobility and migration |

Poses difficulty

Internalized Homophobia (Meyer and Dean, 1998)

Poses difficulty

Stigma due to sexual orientation that is internalized causing self-hatred and psychosocial issues

Manifestations

| Horizontal Oppression | Secrecy/ Dishonesty | Problems with "coming out" | Problems with intimacy/maintaining relationships |

Internal Conflicts

| family background | customs and practices | familial values | societal conventions of the motherland |

The diagram above refers to the conceptual framework of my study which relies on the concepts of rooted cosmopolitanism by Appiah and internalized homophobia by Meyer and Dean to answer the research questions aforementioned.

1.7 Research Methodology

In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, this study will employ a textual analysis of the selected novels. The novels selected are contemporary novels from the diaspora of the Indian Sub-Continent; mainly India and Sri Lanka. Novels from these countries were specifically chosen as they share the common theme of emigration of selected characters to a Western country. Therefore, the background setting of the novels will revolve around communities pre and post emigration of the characters. This criterion was deliberately chosen to highlight the "onset" of a cosmopolitan identity among the selected characters who have emigrated and subsequently the community around them. Although this study acknowledges the notion that cosmopolitanism does not necessarily occur only within any particular area such as urban vs rural or Western vs non-Western, emigration of the selected characters to a new environment; in this case a different country altogether, fulfils an imperative tenet of cosmopolitanism i.e. mobility and migration (Appiah 618). Experiencing new cultures and meeting people of differing values allow the characters to have a new perspective towards the issues plaguing them.

Thus, in order to highlight the issues of internalized homophobia, the novels chosen needed to consist of characters who were members of the LGBTQ community. Therefore, the main protagonists of all the novels are gay or lesbian, and therefore are able to allow this study to engage with the trials and tribulations of the aforementioned community in truly becoming cosmopolitan.

The novels selected are Rahul Mehta's *No Other World* (2017), Mala Kumar's *The Paths of Marriage* (2014), *The Hungry Ghosts* (2013) by Shyam Selvadurai, *My Magical Palace* (2012) by Kunal Mukherjee and Farzana Doctor's *Stealing Nasreen* (2007). The methodological approach of this study is based on the concepts of Appiah's Rooted Cosmopolitanism and Internalized Homophobia as conceptualized by Meyer and Dean. In line with this, this study entails a close reading and a detailed, in-depth analysis of the selected works. The study will be based on both primary and secondary sources related to the concepts, theories, as well as novels selected.

1.8 Scope & Limitations of The Study

This research focuses on highlighting the challenges towards the realization of a cosmopolitan society due to the concept; internalized homophobia. In pursuing a more detailed analysis of the problem at hand, this study will adopt the perspective of Kwame Anthony Appiah in discussing the concept of cosmopolitanism. While some other renowned cosmopolitan experts such as Martha Nussbaum and Paul Gilroy have provided alternate perspectives on cosmopolitanism, this study will be confined to the works and understandings of Appiah and his concept of rooted cosmopolitanism as its primary resource.

Nonetheless, other supporting resources will also be adopted in providing a more in-depth analysis of the issue.

Besides that, in addressing the concept of internalized homophobia, the empirical work and concepts of psychologists Meyer and Dean will be highlighted. Meyer and Dean's works in 1998 and thereon will inform this study on the concept of internalized homophobia and its role as a "minority stressor" (Frost and Meyer 99) which results in the internal conflicts that are manifested by the LGBTQ characters in my study. The manifestations of internalized homophobia, however, will be informed via various conceptual and empirical findings alike.

In addressing the limitations of this study, an imperative aspect that needs to be highlighted is the use of a pentad-lateral view vis-à-vis the five various texts from five different authors. This study acknowledges that a unifying factor would have been the use of one or two authors to provide a more sound understanding of the issue at hand. Nonetheless, this limitation will be countered with the notion that all five authors are able to provide fresh, current, and renewed outlooks to the challenges to cosmopolitanism due to internalized homophobia.

Moreover, having the opportunity to use contemporary releases also entails the limitation of the books not having much reviews or getting as much attention as a seasoned book from a veteran writer would. Nevertheless, the use of new books from relatively young and first-time writers highlights the ingenuity and congruency of the issues discussed by fresh writers to genuine problems in or of the society. *The Paths of Marriage* is Mala Kumar's debut novel, as is *My Magical Palace* for Kunal Mukherjee. Besides an award-winning debut collection of short stories, *No Other World* is Rahul Mehta's first foray into writing novels and *Stealing Nasreen* is also Farzana Doctor's first novel. Therefore, with an exception of Shyam Selvadurai's *The Hungry Ghosts,* a sound limitation of this study is that the books are predominantly new and the authors varied.

Besides that, another limitation that I would like to highlight is that the study of the LGBTQ characters is not implied from and is apart from the Gender Theory. While the issues of the LGBTQ are largely discussed under the purview of Gender Theory and even Psychoanalysis, this study is concerned with the psychological problem that is Internalized Homophobia and is not studied under the specific purview of the aforementioned theories. The quest was to find a problem that was internal and reflected the inner conflicts of the LGBTQ characters in attaining a cosmopolitan identity. The psychological problem discussed is a vessel or channel that exhibits the challenges to constructing a cosmopolitan identity which is the problem highlighted by the present study. Nonetheless, some ideas that are also prevalent within the Gender Theory may be present in some discussions of this study in relation to the social constructs of sexuality.

1.9 Justification of Texts

The novels selected in conducting this study are Rahul Mehta's *No Other World* (2017), Mala Kumar's *The Paths of Marriage* (2014), *The Hungry Ghosts* (2013) by Shyam Selvadurai, *My Magical Palace* (2012) by Kunal Mukherjee and Farzana Doctor's *Stealing Nasreen* (2007). Different authors who have produced five different books are deliberately chosen to provide richer and more detailed insights to the matter at hand. Contemporary writers of the Indian Sub-Continent diaspora have contributed to stories about lives and dispositions of members of the LBGTQ community as well as immigrant communities. These elements encompass the parameters that will be looked into in this study. Furthermore, analysing texts from five different authors provides a variety of perspectives and yet present a unified understanding of the issue addressed via this study.

Furthermore, with novels written between 2007 and 2017, this study will also shed light on how internalized homophobia challenges the cultivation of a cosmopolitan society through a more contemporary lens. These novels will be able to expound on the effects of internalized homophobia on developing a cosmopolitan mind-set; opening up questions about whether the weight of the matter has consistently been a downside of the community or whether there is at all any redeeming quality to the situation, by offering anecdotes and insights from a very current and present-day outlook.

Besides being contemporary, the texts are also chosen with the authors in mind. All the five authors have come out as being gay or lesbian as well as having immigration to a Western country in their repertoires. Therefore, it can be surmised that the accounts in the book, although fiction, is most probably informed by rich and experienced details from the authors and their respective backgrounds. Concomitantly, three books from male authors and another two from females have been chosen to tackle the issue of internalized homophobia and the challenges it presents to cosmopolitanism via well-rounded male and female perspectives.

Furthermore, the writers are also award-winning authors who have received recognition for their works. Shyam Selvadurai is a renowned author who has received critical acclaim since his *Funny Boy* days. *The Hungry Ghosts* is on the Shortlist for the Toronto Book Awards and the Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction as well as on the Longlist for DSC South Asia Literature Prize. Moving on, *No Other World* is the 2017 novel of Rahul Mehta whose debut short story collection, Quarantine, won a Lambda Literary Award and the Asian American Literary Award for Fiction.

Similarly, the Tales Pensieve Book Critic Site awarded Kunal Mukherjee the Best Debut Indian Writer title for December 2012 for his book *My Magical Palace.* Concurrently, Mala Kumar's *The Paths of Marriage* was selected as a 2015

finalist for the General/Dramatic Fiction Category of the Golden Crown Literary Society (GCLS) Awards and Farzana Doctor won the 2011 Dayne Ogilvie Grant from the Writers' Trust of Canada for an emerging lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender writer after *Stealing Nasreen* (2007) and *Six Metres of Pavement* (2011). Hence, this study opines that such award-winning novels from fresh writers will inform the research further and provide richer insights and details to the problem studied.

1.10   Organization of The Thesis

This study will be presented in six cohesive and correlated chapters. The first chapter will address the problem identified with regards to the concepts of cosmopolitanism and internalized homophobia and present three research questions that would encompass the objectives of the study. The second chapter will present relevant literature that is key to the aforementioned concepts and address the gap in research. Subsequently, the third chapter will present the conceptual framework of the study and discuss the application of the framework as the methodology to study the fictional novels selected. Next, the fourth chapter will analyse and discuss the findings of the study from all five novels selected in relation to the first research question. Successively, the fifth chapter will analyse and discuss the findings of the study from all five novels in relation to the second and third research questions. Finally, the sixth chapter will present a summary of all the findings and highlight the contributions of the study as well as recommendations for future researches in this particular area of study.

1.11   Definition of Terms

A compilation of the relevant terminology and respective definitions in relation to cosmopolitanism, internalized homophobia, and other pertinent elements of this study is presented as the following:

Cosmopolitanism: Diogenes denounced the political state of Athens and announced himself a citizen of the Earth, i.e. a cosmopolitan (Diogenes Laertius 1925: VI63)

Ethical/Stoic Cosmopolitanism: We should regard our deliberations as, first and foremost deliberations about human problems of people in particular concrete situations, not problems growing out of a local or national identity that confines and limits our moral aspirations. (Nussbaum, 1997)

Rooted Cosmopolitanism: A rooted cosmopolitan belongs to the human community and upholds universal values of concern, accepts and learns from

differences across multicultural communities while staying rooted to one's own culture and beliefs. (Appiah, 2006)

Cosmopolitan Identity: As a thesis about identity, being a cosmopolitan indicates that one is a person who is influenced by various cultures. Cosmopolitanism as a thesis about identity also maintains that belonging to a particular culture is not an essential ingredient for personal identity or living a flourishing life: one can select elements from diverse cultures, or reject all in favour of non-cultural options that are perceived as yet more important to particular people in living a flourishing life. (Brock, 2013)

Homophobia: A blend of the word homosexual and phobia from the Greek phóbos, meaning fear or aversion. Used to refer to heterosexual men's fear that others might think they are gay. (Weinberg, 1960)

Internalized Homophobia: Negative stereotypes, beliefs, stigma, and prejudice about homosexuality and LGBTQ people that a person with same-sex attraction turns inward on themselves, whether or not they identify as LGBTQ. (Meyer and Dean, 1998)

LGBTQ: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (Gale Research Co., 1985); Others whose sexual orientation and/or gender identity varies (National Institute of Health, USA)

Heteronormativity: Belief that heterosexuality, predicated on the gender binary, is the norm or default sexual orientation (Harris and White, 2018)

Diaspora: Diaspora and, more specifically, diaspora community seem increasingly to be used as metaphoric designations for several categories of people— expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities. (Safran, 1991)

Indian Diaspora: The largest Asian diaspora, and in the world, is the Indian diaspora. It constitutes a diverse, heterogeneous and eclectic global community representing different regions, languages, cultures, and faiths. The Indian diaspora is a genuine one in several respects: its spread across three continents, its long history, its auxiliary (or middleman) role within host societies, and the varying attitudes of its members—ranging from integrationist to particularist. An Indian homeland has existed continuously and Indian diaspora status has not always been associated with political disability or even minority status. The Indian diaspora is in the majority (as in Fiji) and it constitutes a large,

well-established, and sometimes dominant minority (as in Trinidad and Tobago, Nepal, Guyana, and Sri Lanka). (Safran, 1991)

1.12   Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has presented the background of the study by highlighting the framework of the study, the concepts to be applied, and the gap that the study wishes to address. Furthermore, the problem highlighted in this study in relation to the gap has also been discussed in the problem statement. The overarching research objectives and research questions that will guide this study have been determined and explained. The significance of the study, with regards to the placement of this study in the relevant field of research, has also been related in detail. The conceptual framework and relevant methodology have been relayed and the scope and limitations of the study have also been highlighted. Moreover, the justification of texts selected has also been presented. The following chapter will present an in-depth analysis of the literature related to the problem studied.

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BIODATA OF STUDENT

Shobana Jeyasingam is an English Teacher in a national primary school in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan. She has an academic background in the field of TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) having obtained a bachelors and masters in the aforementioned area. Even so, her foray into the world of literary studies was most definitely inspired by her love of books, reading, and the wonders of the fictional world. Fiction is part of real life and more often than not art imitates life. It is this belief that has driven her purpose of dissecting modern-day issues from the literary perspective with the hopes of finding insights that may inform the world of academia and research. It is with this intent in mind that she has chosen to pursue her doctoral studies within the field of English Literature.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

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