Cultural Empathy and Jarring Trauma in the Color of Our Sky: A Study of Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity

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Abstract

Amita Trasi's *The Color of Our Sky* is a powerful work of cultural empathy that leaves the reader's feeling shaken by its jarring trauma. This book shed light on the cultural empathy and jarring trauma that have caused Indian outcasts, especially Bagnios, to perceive their traditions as a danger to their fundamental collective identities. The readers are profoundly affected by the terrible and depressing circumstances that the Indian outcasts live in. The narrative deepens the character development of those on both sides of the conflict, fostering narrative and cultural empathy and overcoming cultural gaps. The disturbing account of events illustrates the appalling conditions that the Indian population is living in. The concept of the caste system in India is explored in *The Color of Our Sky*, as well as how much it influences people's existences. That is how Mukta came to be. Frauen in her caste, which was lower than others, dedicate their lives to becoming the goddess' ally. This work of fiction will be studied using philosophical concepts of cultural empathy, narrative empathy, and jarring trauma with theoretical values of cultural trauma and collective identity. The ideas of Suzanne Keen, John Carlson and Jeffrey C. Alexander will have been used to analyse the text in question utilizing the theories of cultural trauma and collective identity. There will be qualitative research involved by using the idea of cultural empathy, the researcher will attempt to examine the perturbed work of this novel using critical analytical approaches.

Keywords: Cultural trauma, jarring trauma, empathetic culture, narrative empathy, collective identity, and cognizant narrative

1.Introduction

The reason for conducting this study is to place a premium on the cultural empathy and jarring trauma of low caste Indians through cultural trauma and collective identity. In *The Color of Our Sky* by Amita Trasi, the themes of cultural empathy and jarring trauma are explored, shedding light on the lasting impact of traumatic experiences on both individuals and communities. The novel delves into the complex dynamics of cultural empathy, highlighting the importance of understanding and connecting with individuals from different backgrounds. *The Color of Our Sky* by Amita Trasi offers a powerful exploration of cultural trauma and its effects on collective identity. In this compelling novel, Trasi examines the intertwining stories of two women, Tara and Mukta, whose lives are forever changed by a traumatic event that highlights the deep-rooted societal issues and injustices they face as women in their respective cultures. Through their shared experiences of trauma, Tara and Mukta navigate the complexities of their identities and grapple with the challenges of cultural assimilation and belonging. The novel brings to the forefront the concept of cultural trauma, whereby individuals and communities are confronted with traumatic events that have a profound impact on their collective identity and sense of self. The researcher of this study argues that *The Color of Our Sky* offers a nuanced portrayal of cultural trauma and its effects on collective identity. (Alexander,2004)

The Color of Our Sky by Amita Trasi is a powerful and emotionally gripping novel that delves into the complexities of cultural and narrative empathy and the lasting impact of trauma. Set in India, this novel weaves together the narratives of two women, Tara and Mukta, whose lives are intricately connected by a tragic event that shapes their destinies. Through vivid storytelling and rich character development, Amita Trasi explores themes of friendship, resilience, and the enduring power of hope in the face of adversity. As readers embark on this poignant journey, they are confronted with the harsh realities of human trafficking, caste discrimination, and the deep-seated scars of the past. *The Color of Our Sky* is a profound and thought-provoking novel that challenges readers to confront their own beliefs and biases, while also celebrating the enduring bonds of love and friendship that transcend cultural boundaries. In order to understand the subtleties of the caste system and the ways in which it serves to legitimize itself, it's important to understand the overall background of the novel and what Trasi is trying to convey. On the basis of the recent incidents happening in her own community, she chose to write about the theme and she broadcasted this regressive theme by becoming a cultural storyteller and shedding light on the incident of Mukta, the protagonist, who was sold under the guise of giving away as a slave girl. She wants to

inculcate in her readers to understand that such kind of activities and customs have an adverse effect on society and its people in the long run. It weakens the foundation of the country and shatters the lives of the ones who are being exploited because the low caste people are perceived to be not trustworthy and unreliable.

The book is an excellent presentation of cultural trauma and collective identity. Throughout the story, there are multiple displays of how a coping society will experience trauma in different ways and its consequences on identity. Culture or society grounding can be looked upon as the way of life a particular group of people are accustomed to. In most cases, culture usually changes due to a traumatic event. This is portrayed in the book where Mukta grew up branded as an "unwanted low caste village girl" from being part of the untouchable class in the traditional Indian way of the caste system. This heart-rending narration delves deep into the intricate themes of cultural empathy and jarring trauma, painting a vivid picture of the human experience amidst the backdrop of societal norms and personal struggles. Through the intertwining narratives of Tara and Mukta, the novel sensitively explores the complexities of cultural identity, the impact of trauma, and the resilience of the human spirit. Trasi skillfully navigates the delicate balance between cultural empathy and the harsh realities of trauma, creating a narrative that is both poignant and thought-provoking. The experiences of the characters serve as a lens through which readers can gain a deeper understanding of the profound effects of cultural differences and the lasting scars of trauma.

As the story unfolds, readers are invited to reflect on the power of empathy in bridging cultural divides and healing deep emotional wounds. Trasi's evocative writing style and intricate character development invite readers to explore the depths of human emotion and the enduring strength that can emerge from even the most harrowing of circumstances. Through The Color of Our Sky, Amita Trasi invites readers on a journey of self-discovery, cultural understanding, and ultimately, the transformative power of empathy in the face of adversity.

The novel follows the intertwined stories of Tara and Mukta, two young girls from vastly different backgrounds whose lives become interconnected by fate. Tara, a privileged girl growing up in California, is haunted by the disappearance of her childhood friend, Mukta, who was sold into prostitution in Mumbai. As Tara sets out on a quest to find Mukta and confront the trauma of their shared past, the narrative explores how she grapples with the cultural disparities between her life of privilege and Mukta's harsh reality.

The aim of the article is to explore the concept of cultural empathy (type of narrative empathy) and the enduring effects of trauma that mirrors the challenges faced by individuals and societies today through cognizant empathy. At its core, the researcher tries to delve into the complexities of human relationships and the lasting scars left by historical injustices. In a world grappling with issues of social justice, racial inequality, and displacement, the characters in *The Color of Our Sky* serve as poignant reminders of the power of empathy and understanding in healing deep-seated wounds.

2.Literature Review

During the 20th century, cultural trauma emerged as a distinct area of investigation within the social sciences, gaining increasing attention across a range of academic, clinical, and social fields. In the wake of human rights initiatives that followed the Second World War, and the various reparation movements of the 1970s, interest in the subject showed vigorous growth in the 1990s and into the 21st century. Despite this, fiction relating to cultural trauma is a relatively new area of concern. At its most basic level, cultural trauma refers to a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a collectivity, and by extension the individuals within it. At the individual level, the person has basic trust in themselves and others shattered, a loss of innocence. At the collective level there is cultural dislocation, a disconnect between past and future. Virtually by definition, cultural trauma is not directly represented in fiction as its effects are to delegitimize prior modes of meaningful expression and to undercut the possibility of envisioning a better future. Fictions about cultural trauma are about quest for meaning and identity, coming to grips with what has befallen the collectivity, and imaginings of a better future.

Marc and Alice are two adults adjusting to life in a foreign country; they are the Anglo protagonists of The Radiance of the King, a novel that Huxley wrote soon after moving to the United States. They are cultural outsiders living in a North African port city that is a mere shadow of a once glorious colonial enterprise. Because of this setting and Huxley's personal situation, the novel has been read as an allegory of France's defeat and occupation by Germany in World War Two and Huxley's own sense of dislocation from English culture. The novel can also be seen as a psychological allegory of the traumatic loss of childhood innocence and faith in the human/lofty potential of humankind that Huxley and his generation underwent during and after the two world wars. In the latter sense, Huxley is using the modernist expatriate novel form that examines one's own and nation's cultural dislocation and attempts to become reconciled with it.

In Obasan, the trauma is of internment during the Second World War and the mistreatment of Japanese Canadians by the Canadian government. Throughout the novel, the reader sees the effects of this collective trauma on the characters and their lives. Aunt Emily, a political activist committed to gaining redress money for the victims of internment, writes a journal to Naomi, the protagonist, to help come to terms with her past. Emily states, "I believe our silence, our evasiveness, has been the greatest mistake. We should not be afraid of telling the truth...the

children should have been told the truth, there should have been no cover-up" (Kogawa, 1993, p. 152). This passage goes on to discuss the effects of internment and the government's lack of acknowledgement, but it serves to highlight the theme of historical trauma throughout the novel and the effects on Naomi, who is now a school teacher still affected by the past and the lack of history education of what happened to Japanese Canadians.

Historical trauma often stems from specific events or patterns where a group of people are subject to long-term, collective adversity. Ancestors' spirits have no peace because the trauma has not been addressed and transformed; this results in it being passed down through generations. Markedly different from individual trauma, the symptoms of historical trauma can affect an entire group of people and are not limited to those who directly experienced the event. Intractable feelings of collective shame, depression, anxiety, and grief are often carried, even by those who were not alive when the events took place. This trauma influences the way in which an entire culture views the world and their place in it. Because historical trauma is often suppressed, it may unconsciously be acted out and cause more pain for the group victimized. It is sometimes acted out against other innocent groups (Sotero, 2006). All four novels examine various historical trauma experienced by the Japanese and Native American people. In Morri's case, he examines more contemporary history with post-war trauma and the history of the burakumin. Akiyama examines the activism and idealism of 1960's Native Americans. Furui presents pre-historical trauma with the burakumin as mentioned in part, and Momaday examines a broad range of Native American history pre-European American to the 1800s.

Through the medium of literature, authors have sought to characterize and give a voice to the collective experiences of historical travesty. It is shown that the traumatic history of a nation or people can have an adverse effect on the following generations. In this light, cultural trauma is a subject that is frequently explored in multiple novels. Knowledge of the trauma can have an influence on the portrayal of characters. An example of this is Art Spiegelman's graphic novel Maus. Here, Spiegelman looks to give an account of his father's experiences as a Polish Jew during the Holocaust. Through the use of visual metaphor, Spiegelman looks to represent the events of the past in a manner that would befit the nature of a graphic novel, and in doing so, creates a narrative that is rich with traumatic themes. This has a profound effect on the way his father is portrayed. The trauma of the Holocaust weighs heavily upon him, and it is represented by his deep depression and inability to connect to others in a positive light. His father's character comes across as somewhat cold and disdainful, often to the point of being quite unlikeable. When asked about this portrayal, Spiegelman's father replied, "You didn't make me look good." The reason for this is that those who have suffered from cultural trauma may develop defense mechanisms as a means of protection from further pain. They will often rationalize the need to appear insular and unsociable as a preventative measure from becoming too involved with others. This, in turn, has an effect on the characters of the following generations. In an attempt to connect with their elders, they too develop a similar mindset as a means of camaraderie. This is evident in Maus through the actions of Vladek, Spiegelman's father as a young man.

According to Simon, "symbolic expression is one of the principal ways in which societies remember and work through collective trauma" (269). Symbolism is an important element of trauma because it helps the society to remember their past as well as providing a way for the society to heal from their trauma. Duran claims that "using the known we [Native Americans] represent the unknown. The purpose of such a recounting is multifold; first, we must remember. Without memory we lose the lessons of experience and are doomed to repeat them" (223). Symbolism serves as a reminder and a lesson for future generations about what the society has been through. This can be seen in Joy Kogawa's Obasan, a novel about the internment of Japanese-Canadians during World War II. In Obasan, Kogawa uses the image of the billowing sea as a representation of the vastness of the trauma the Japanese-Canadians had experienced. Naomi, the protagonist, often has recurring dreams of the sea devouring her and her family, an image that is a parallel to how their lives had been consumed by the trauma of the internment. This is symbolic in that the sea is something huge, powerful, and unstoppable, which is what the internment had been like for the Japanese-Canadians. This image is used as a way of helping the society understand what they had been through by showing it in a way that is easier to digest while still keeping a strong portrayal of the trauma, an important factor in healing.

The eventual enslavement of India by the British Raj has led to cultural trauma that is reminiscent of this form of trauma on numerous levels, primarily reflected through the cultural evolution of India as detailed in works such as Amitav Ghosh's "An Antique Land" and "The Glass Palace." This form of cultural trauma affects the descendants of the enslaved culture with a feeling of worthlessness and regression due to comparing the current cultural state of their descended nation to the nation that was enslaved. Japan of World War II is a similar situation in this regard. The most notable example in recent times would be the African-American community and its cultural trauma as a result of its descendants of the slaves of the southern United States in the 18th and 19th century, with the highlight of this trauma being segregation during the Civil Rights Movement. This cultural and jarring trauma has contributed to the struggles of the African American community and a lack of true cultural progress in the modern day.

3. Research Methodology

Pedersen, Hugh C. Crethar, and John Carlson. Their theory involves teaching people to value and respect all people from all cultures by using their own experiences, as well as practical and theoretical techniques designed to create inclusion and acceptance of all cultures. Empathy's definition is the ability to comprehend and share another person's feelings. Cultural empathy is the capacity to understand the experiences of people from different cultures. There are two primary steps in cultural empathy: cultural empathetic understanding and cultural empathy response. Cultural sympathy differs from cultural empathy in that it is more cognitive than emotional, allowing the person to maintain emotional distance while still conveying understanding. Cultural empathy entails experiencing another person's feelings in a way that is more emotional than cognitive and bridges the gap between two people attempting to help one another.

An understanding of cultural empathy is a way of art in which a person imaginatively places themselves into another's position and view. It's a cognitively oriented form of empathy with a primary focus on understanding others rather than feeling compassion for them. The aim is to understand another person's thoughts, feelings, and worldview as if it were the other person's own, but without losing an "as if" quality (Herot,2000).

Through qualitative research, narrative empathy is utilized in understanding the story and narrative of others. In analyzing and understanding narrative, the researcher will be better equipped to grasp the subjective experience of another. It is here that the elements of empathy that involve affecting the other and taking his or her point of view occur. In trying to understand the subjective experiences of those being researched, it is important to understand the meaning of the experience to the researched. This is a major part of the process towards understanding the other's reality and the influence their experience may have on behavior and life events. By understanding how actions or events affect later life, often times the case when researching those from a clinical population, it is easier to understand the root cause and motivational factors triggering certain behaviors. With this understanding the researcher can make a comprehensive evaluation on how something can be best understood from the point of view of the person being researched. This form of understanding is key in understanding the existential or humanistic issues that are often the focus of clinical populations.

Cultural empathy techniques and approaches are often the most problematic aspect of researching within a dissimilar group from the researcher's own. Much has been written in cross-cultural psychology and method about various forms of participant observation and interview in different cultural settings. This work has shown the importance of achieving a cognitive understanding of another's worldview, but has not always shown the ways in which empathy can be generated. Quite frequently, researchers have reported frustration at their inability to develop empathy via standard qualitative techniques. Often theory and interview schedules derived from the home culture have seemed not to "travel" well and frequently provoke only a bemused or puzzled response from informants. Angrosino raises the possibility that research in some cultures may be characterized by a "lack of rapport, inadequate communication, leading to mutual frustration and eventual moribund termination of the project." He goes on to argue, with specific reference to research in the third world, that the large social and economic inequalities between the researcher and informant frequently make it hard for the latter to believe that the researcher can "get beyond his own culturally tinted view of the world and understand how things look from the native's point of view."

Over the past half century or so, sociologists have been particularly concerned with the ways in which societies remember major traumas in their pasts. The sociological concern with collective memory is based on the assumption that the traumas that societies remember and forget are an important key to the character of that society; what it is, and how it came to be that way. In the last two decades, the study of collective memory has moved into the wider arena of the cultural trauma (defined here as 'disruption of a group's essential framework for interpreting the world... that occurs when members of the group feel they have experienced a horrendous event that leaves them altered and usually degraded and in the ensuing struggle to understand what has even as well as to repair the collective damages to confidante...') and there now exists a significant body of work on how societies remember and forget events that they or their ancestors experienced, in immersion tragic or triumphant. The cultural trauma usually involves a process of silencing certain memories while promoting others and this process can go a long way towards determining the long term outcome for becomes the collective memory of the event. Cultural trauma is also often contested and for may exist differing collective memories of the same event between different groups within the same society. At the present time, the continuing of the sociological treatment of collective memory is one of the shaping features of the discipline.

Theoretically, work in this area has been largely inductive and based on the empirical work of sociologists and historians. While this has produced a rich tapestry of narratives about how different societies have experienced and remembered cultural traumas, progress towards a generalizable sociological theory of cultural trauma and collective memory has been limited. Cultural sociologists have tended to focus on the particular case and rely on the work of historians, while the work of social theorists has largely consisted of commenting on the cultural trauma created by particular events (e.g. the Holocaust, the dropping of the atomic bombs) rather than trying to provide a broad framework for understanding collective memory and societal identity. The first aim of this article

is to provide a theory of the cultural trauma and the formation of collective identity. By combining the work of cultural sociologists and historians with some of the grand theory proposed by various social theorists, the hope is to synthesize a body of work which can be used as a frame of reference for understanding the cultural trauma and collective memory of many possible cases.

Jeffery C. Alexander proposes that a cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways. An essential component of a cultural trauma is the injury it inflicts upon identity. Cultural trauma is not so much a specific event or set of events, but a sort of "master" event that has the power to change collective identity and in the process be changed by it. This is the reason why a given group may take possession of a particular event and claim it as its own, perhaps the paradigmatic example of this is the Holocaust, claimed by Jews as well as Israel to be the capstone of Jewish identity in all its ramifications. Cultural trauma is also about future generations, it is something that has lasting implications and must be worked through by coming generations who may not have witnessed the originating event. Finally, a cultural trauma is an event that shapes the way members of a collectivity view the world, their existential stances. It constitutes a loss of innocence in which the prevailing belief in the goodness of the world and its basic justness is replaced by a horror at the world's capacity for evil and an awareness of the precarious and contingent nature of security and the maintenance of cherished norms. Cognitive and symbolic frames come into being which color and influence the worldview of this group for many generations and speculative futures on how the world will treat them in light of their traumatic experience. All of these factors combine to produce new ways of being. A cultural trauma changes the mission of a group and takes it into a new direction.

The significance of this study lies in the combination of sociological research on collective memory with studies on medical theory that would provide a better understanding of the role of the state in terms of the right to the body and also aid in explaining why certain traumatic events in history have a lasting impact on identity while others do not. The case studies used in methodology to explain cultural trauma and identity, though diverse, are all examples of a social group experiencing a medical assault on their bodies. The American and Australian Indian case studies tell of a state's decision to remove native children from their homes with the intention of assimilating them into a foreign culture. The Canadian Indian residential school case describes a similar state policy which continued until 1969. The Jewish Holocaust survivors are an example of a group whose collective identity was affected by events that occurred many years ago. For this reason, the cumulative continuum between medical assault and cultural trauma is helpful for understanding why some cases have a lasting impact on identity. Findings of this study could also be applied to recent and current events such as the use of eugenics in 20th-century Puerto Rico, the Srebrenica massacre, and various events in the Middle East. In addition, the theoretical framework of this study could inspire further research in areas such as the changing nature of medical and war crimes and the identity of the children of immigrants.

Suzanne Keen's theory of narrative empathy builds on these psychological and rhetorical grounds. Keen finds that emotional responses to characters and the recognition of others' emotions are crucial to empathy. She argues that narratives invite us to take on the roles of others and experience their emotions. Such experiences, she maintains, are simulations that run on the cognitive and affective "machinery" of our minds. They enable us to understand others' emotions and provide a safe and rich environment in which to practice and improve this understanding. Narrative empathy is particularly powerful because it engages our minds at multiple levels, involving our perceptions of the characters, our own emotional responses to them, and intellectual evaluations of their lives and motives. Keen's theory is related to these traditional identifications of narrative empathy with allegory and exempla, but she provides a more precise account of how stories engage us in the simulation of others' emotions and make us more capable of this form of understanding. Her work has the potential to inform and be informed by psychological studies of empathy and theory of mind. So while it provides a clear and useful framework for understanding the emotional and intellectual work readers do in response to characters and events, it does not foreclose the possibility of future research on narrative empathy using diverse methodologies.

4.Text Analysis

Amita Trasi's *The Color of Our Sky* delves extensively into the topic of empathy for culture by skillfully illustrating characters who are attempting to navigate the intricacies of Indian customs, marriage, and society. The story explores the subtleties of Indian cultural traditions, including the deeply ingrained caste and class-based devadasi system and social stratification. Readers are given deep insights into the historical, social, and cultural backgrounds that influence the lives of the characters through their experiences and relationships. The characters' hardships and obstacles, which are firmly anchored in their cultural and societal origins, are meant to evoke empathy in readers. The paths taken by Mukta, a devadasi, and Tara, an affluent young lady, expose the underlying inequalities and injustices that exist in Indian society.

Readers can relate intimately to their struggles for agency, identity, and autonomy while living within the

confines of cultural standards. With its exploration of identity and belonging against the backdrop of cultural norms and expectations, the novel invites readers to reflect on the difficult relationship between belonging and self-worth. The internal struggle of Mukta navigating her devadasi identity and making peace with her history is a reflection of the global fight with identity and belonging. The book dispels myths and preconceptions about Indian society and culture through deft character development and narrative. It helps readers empathize and comprehend characters from different backgrounds by humanizing them and illuminating the nuances of their lives. It also promotes discussion and introspection on social justice, gender dynamics, modernism, and tradition.

"For a long time I did not know I was the daughter of a temple prostitute, that I was born into a cult that followed the sacred tradition of dedicating their daughters to the Goddess Yellamma. When the British ruled our country, Sakubai used to tell me the kings and zamindars would act as our patrons and support us with money. People used to revere us as if we were priests. We danced in temples, sang songs of worship, and villagers sought our blessings for important occasions. The tradition is no different today. Except that patrons owned us and supported us then, but now there aren't any kings and very few upper caste men who are willing to support us. Lower caste girls as young as eight are married to the Goddess in a dedication ceremony. In this tiny village of South India we are also called Devdasis—servants of God."(p.16)

Mukta's narrative showcases the vast tapestry of traditions, beliefs, and rituals that mould her identity and experiences, reflecting the various cultural terrain of India. Mukta's cultural heritage is sensitively and deeply portrayed in the story, which helps readers develop empathy and a better understanding of the variety of cultural experiences that exist within Indian society. Because of her cultural identity, Mukta has to deal with a lot of difficulties and hardships, such as prejudice, social stigma, and limited chances. The book sympathetically describes Mukta's journey, demonstrating the human resiliency present in the face of cultural adversity as she overcomes these obstacles with bravery, resolve, and tenacity. The work squashes myths and cultural preconceptions about the devadasi tradition via Mukta's story.

All facets of Indian culture are amply reflected in the sentences above. Mukta considers her background and the cultural customs that influenced her identity as the daughter of a devadasi, or temple prostitute. The centuries-old custom of committing daughters to the Goddess Yellamma as devadasis is explained by Mukta. Readers learn about the cultural customs and beliefs that have been passed down through the centuries in her village through her narration. Mukta draws attention to the historical background of the devadasi tradition by mentioning British colonial rule. She contextualizes the socio-cultural elements that have shaped the practice and its perceptions in society by recognizing the shifting dynamics over time.

Mukta's reflections on her devadasi cultural identity show the intricacies and difficulties she encounters in both her cohorts and society at large. Readers can relate to Mukta's difficulties to balance her traditional heritage with societal expectations and prejudices through her story. Mukta's assessment regarding the dearth of patrons and support for devadasis in modern times illuminates the socio-economic conditions that members of marginalized communities must contend with. Her analysis highlights how the sociocultural environment is changing and how this is affecting customs and means of subsistence. Through her narrative and cultural background, Mukta challenges preconceived notions and assumptions about the devadasi tradition and encourages readers to identify with her journey.

"Back in my village, when I didn't know what my life would be like, all I did was gallivant on the rocky terrain of the Sahyadris. I did not have any friends. The villagers did not allow their children to wander into the community of devdasis on the outskirts. Before I was born, there was a large community of women on the outskirts who were just like us—women who were destined to be slaves."(p.21)

Mukta thinks back on her early years in her village, especially the loneliness she felt because of her family's ties to the devadasi community. Through her story, Mukta reveals the prejudices and social hurdles that have kept her apart from the other kids in the community. The villagers' unwillingness to let their kids play with devadasi families highlights the deeply ingrained cultural traditions and social shame that permeate Indian culture.

Readers can relate to Mukta's loneliness and need for company through her memories of her isolated upbringing. Her story brings to light the common, cross-cultural human urge for connection and belonging. The way that Mukta's childhood isolation is shown contradicts preconceived notions and assumptions about marginalized populations such as the devadasis. The story invites readers to empathize with people who are frequently disregarded and stigmatized in society by humanizing Mukta's circumstances.

Whatever is in the girl's destiny," Sakubai said resignedly, looking out the window, already bidding me goodbye.(p.24)

Sakubai's resigned acceptance of fate in the above narrative shows a thorough comprehension of the customs and cultural norms that are common among the devadasi group. Sakubai's recognition of "the girl's destiny" represents the societal acceptance of assigned roles and fates in their neighborhood. It shows that they are aware of and cognizant of the limitations and social expectations that shape their lives. "Whatever is in the girl's destiny" denotes a faith in tradition and fate as guiding principles within their particular cultural setting. Sakubai's resignation shows a sympathetic grasp of the facts and cultural limitations that members of the devadasi group

must contend with. Sakubai's resigned manner conveys a courteous recognition of the customs and traditions that have been handed down through the ages.

There is a sense of veneration for the cultural history and societal systems that define their life, notwithstanding any personal concerns or problems. Overall, Sakubai's sympathetic comprehension and acceptance of the customs and cultural norms that characterize their group are evident in these sentences. Readers learn about the challenges of negotiating cultural norms and the significant influence of tradition on autonomy and identity inside the devadasi community through her resigned acceptance of fate.

"The scenery changed quickly from the bustle of Mumbai city, from the slums and the high rises to the greenery of the countryside, as the train went through the Western Ghats. For a minute I thought I could already see the village of Ganipur in the pleasant light of day—the village where Papa grew up."(p.172)

The book alternates between rural villages and urban Mumbai, highlighting the sharp differences between rustic and metropolitan life. From the peaceful countryside vistas to the busy streets of Mumbai, each location reflects unique cultural aspects. These words express the train's contemplation of the change from Mumbai's busy metropolis to the serene countryside as it passes through the Western Ghats. The protagonist recognizes India's tremendous geographic diversity by observing the shifting landscape. The chapter emphasizes the variety of landscapes that coexist in the nation by highlighting the change from the bustling urban environment of Mumbai to the tranquil countryside. An affection for rural life and cultural traditions can be shown in the eagerness to be in Ganipur, the place where the protagonist's father was raised.

This implies a strong sense of kinship and an appreciation of the significance of ancestry in Indian culture. The fact that Ganipur is mentioned as the father of the main character's hometown shows how important ancestral villages are to Indian culture. It emphasizes the significance of cultural past in forming personal identity by symbolizing a connection to family history and customs. The protagonist's emotional connection to their father's childhood and the memories connected to the hamlet is evident in their contemplation of Ganipur, which arouses feelings of nostalgia and longing for the past.

The novel *The Color of Our Sky* by Amita Trasi revolves around a theme of devastating trauma. The book explores how traumatic events can alter a person's life and relationships by delving into the emotional and psychological effects on them. Trasi deftly illustrates the intricacies of trauma via the story, emphasizing both its enduring repercussions and the difficulties people encounter in recovering from it. In the book, trauma is portrayed as a constant influence on the characters' attitudes, actions, and relationships rather than just as a single incident. Trasi explores trauma in a way that goes beyond superficial explanations and explores the long-lasting emotional wounds that jarring trauma causes.

In the middle of their anguish and suffering, the people in the book struggle to find healing and closure from their horrific pasts. Furthermore, the book demonstrates how resilient the human spirit can be when confronted with adversity. Trasi shows through the experiences of her characters how people can overcome their past traumas with courage and fortitude, which eventually opens the door to recovery and development. Trasi provides readers with a complex depiction of jarring catastrophe that strikes a deep emotional chord by illustrating the characters' inner battles and eventual victories.

"Women in our community do not know who their fathers are. They don't deserve a father. What makes you think you deserve one?" Sakubai yelled."(p.20)

The profound cultural pain that Mukta, her mother, and the community's grandmothers—who are known as Nitya Sumangali—experienced is revealed in these lines. These women bear heavy emotional and psychological costs as a result of this customary practice, which also contributes to the community's trauma cycles and gender inequity. The community's customs and beliefs are intertwined, which leads to the cultural trauma. First of all, according to the Nitya Sumangali tradition, Mukta and her female relatives are supposed to be the village's wives, representing their union with the goddess Yellama. Their bodies become the property of the community instead of being their own, and this practice robs them of the freedom to select their own spouses, condemning them to a life of exploitation and servitude.

Moreover, the community's tradition of not recognizing paternity contributes to a profound sense of rootlessness and alienation among women. The absence of acknowledgment of fathers deprives them of familial connections and reinforces the notion that they are undeserving of paternal care and support, deepening their sense of marginalization and worthlessness. The contention that women should not have dads and should only be used for the community's needs like Nitya Sumangali upholds a culture of oppression and dehumanization. It deprives women of their natural autonomy and rights, placing them at the bottom of the social hierarchy and sustaining oppressive cycles of trauma.

"What do I want?" She signaled to the man who left his place in the doorway, strode towards Amma, and held her hands behind her. Amma struggled and yelled at him. "Let me go," she said, and I pounced on him, my shaky hands trying to assail him with blows. Of course he was stronger and looked at me as if I were a mere fly to be swatted away. He picked up Amma like she was one of my cloth dolls and carried her inside, tied her hands with rope, and left her bound there." (p.23)

These lines describe a heartbreaking event in which Mukta's mother, Amma, is carried away by force by a man in spite of her objections. Mukta's fruitless attempt to protect her mother highlights the fragility and helplessness felt by the community's marginalized personnel. An ingrained culture of fear and injustice is facilitated by the normalization of violence and the acceptance of repressive societal norms, which also serve to maintain entrenched power relations and jarring and devastating trauma cycles. This incident illustrates how jarring trauma is passed down through generations in the community, as people like Mukta and Amma deal with institutional oppression and intricate social systems.

5. Conclusion

In a broader sense the researcher has tried to examine *The Color of Our Sky* from the conceptual standpoint of cultural empathy and jarring trauma utilizing the theoretical framework of cultural trauma and collective identity. The narrative events of *The Color of Our Sky* reflect this theoretical conclusion regarding the value of empathy in promoting better intergroup relations. The researcher has attempted to determine the impact of both a hit or a empathy in the process of reconciliation between groups that have a history of hatred and retribution by analyzing the characters in the novel and their interactions.

A sad, soulful, and revelatory story about a deeply troubled nation in transition. (Kirkus Reviews)

The portrayal of jarring trauma in the novel serves as a poignant reminder of the lasting effects of violence, loss, and displacement. Through the characters' journeys of healing and self-discovery, Trasi emphasizes the power of resilience, compassion, and forgiveness in overcoming adversity and rebuilding shattered lives.

The Color of Our Sky not only captivates with its rich narrative and emotional depth but also serves as a compelling exploration of the human capacity for empathy, healing, and transformation. It encourages readers to reflect on their own perceptions of cultural differences and the universal experiences of pain and hope that bind all the people together.

Trasi's exploration of cultural empathy highlights the importance of understanding and embracing different perspectives and experiences. By immersing readers in the vibrant and contrasting worlds of Tara and Mukta, the novel challenges preconceived notions and fosters a sense of empathy and connection across cultural boundaries. The novel dives deeply into the complexities of human connections, resilience, and the influence of previous traumas on contemporary life. Notwithstanding the jarring trauma and difficult storytelling, the novel is significant because it manages cultural empathy.

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