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Marginal Literature

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Zadie Smith – *White Teeth*

PRESCRIBED TEXTS:

National Research Council. "Theories of Discrimination," *Measuring Racial Discrimination*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2004.

Goldie, Terry. "The Representation of the Indigene", *Engaging with Literature of Commitment*. Volume 2, New York: Rodopi, 2012.

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UNIT – I

THEORIES OF DISCRIMINATION – NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

A governing body made up of councillors from each of the three Academies is in charge of the National Research Council (NRC), which is the operational arm of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in the United States. Private, nonprofit organisations known as the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine offer professional counsel on some of the most important issues confronting the country and the globe. Through their labour, good policies are shaped, public opinion is informed, and science, engineering, and medical research are advanced.

Theories of Discrimination:

This chapter aims to assist researchers in considering suitable discriminating models to inform their selection of measurement-related data and analytical techniques. We start out by going over four different forms of prejudice and the different ways that discrimination can be caused. The first three categories—intentional discrimination, subtle discrimination, and statistical profiling—are related to actions taken by people and institutions. Discriminatory practices that are ingrained in an organization's culture comprise the fourth category. Then, we contrast these discriminatory actions and institutional norms with the current legislative framework that establishes prejudice in the judicial system. We next go over the potential applications of these discriminatory actions and behaviours in the areas of housing, employment, criminal justice, education, and health. Lastly, we go over theories on how cumulative discrimination might affect disadvantaged racial groups in many contexts and throughout time in order to have long-lasting effects. The goal of this chapter is to give a collection of conceptual alternatives that can inspire and influence appropriate research study designs, rather than to rank the relative relevance of the various forms of discriminating.

Types of Discrimination:

Most people's conception of racial discrimination include white people expressing overt animosity towards persons who belong to underrepresented racial groups. However, discrimination can take many forms beyond overt actions, like being turned down for a job or a rental; it can also be covert and unconscious, like hostile nonverbal cues in speech or posture. Moreover, discriminatory practices against an individual may involve generalisations about members of a marginalised ethnic group that are presumptively applicable to that

particular individual (also known as statistical discrimination or profiling). Institutional policies, as opposed to personal actions, can also lead to discrimination.

Intentional, Explicit Discrimination:

In 1954, Gordon Allport, an early leader in comprehensive social science analysis of prejudice and discrimination, articulated the sequential steps by which an individual behaves negatively toward members of another racial group: verbal antagonism, avoidance, segregation, physical attack, and extermination. Each step enables the next, as people learn by doing. In most cases, people do not get to the later steps without receiving support for their behavior in the earlier ones. In this section, we describe these forms of explicit prejudice.

Avoidance is the decision to stay inside one's own racial group, or what social psychologists refer to as the "ingroup," rather than interacting with members of other racial groups, or the "outgroup." Members of underprivileged racial groups may be isolated in situations where people have the option to associate or not. People may self-segregate based on race in social settings. Discretionary interaction at work can push members of the outgroup into lower-status positions or harm the careers of those shut out of informal networks.

Segregation occurs when people actively exclude members of a disadvantaged racial group from the allocation of resources and from access to institutions. The most common examples include denial of equal education, housing, employment, and health care on the basis of race. The majority of Americans (about 90 percent in most current surveys; Bobo, 2001) support laws enforcing fair and equal opportunity in these areas. But the remaining 10 percent who do not support civil rights for all racial groups are likely to exhibit intentional, explicit discrimination by any measure. The data indicate that these hardcore discriminators view their own group as threatened by racial outgroups (Duckitt, 2001). They view that threat as both economic, in a zero-sum game, and as value based, in a contest of "traditional" values against nonconformist deviants. Moreover, even the 90 percent who report support for equal opportunity laws show less support when specific remedies are mentioned.

Physical attacks on racial outgroups have frequently been perpetrated by proponents of segregation (Green et al., 1999) and are correlated with other overt forms of discrimination (Schneider et al., 2000). Hate crimes are closely linked to the expression of explicit prejudice and result from perceived threats to the ingroup's economic standing and values.

Extermination or mass killings based on racial or ethnic animus do occur. These are complex phenomena; in addition to the sorts of individual hostility and prejudice described above, they typically encompass histories of institutionalized prejudice and discrimination, difficult life conditions, strong (and prejudiced) leadership, social support for hostile acts, and socialization that accepts explicit discrimination.

Our report focuses more on the levels of discrimination most often addressed by social scientists. In most cases involving complaints about racial discrimination in the United States, explicit discrimination is expressed through verbal and nonverbal antagonism and through racial avoidance and denial of certain opportunities because of race. Racial segregation is, of course, no longer legally sanctioned in the United States, although instances of de facto segregation continue to occur.

Subtle, Unconscious, Automatic Discrimination:

The psychological literature on subtle prejudice describes this phenomenon as a set of often unconscious beliefs and associations that affect the attitudes and behaviors of members of the ingroup (e.g., non-Hispanic whites) toward members of the outgroup (e.g., blacks or other disadvantaged racial groups). Members of the ingroup face an internal conflict, resulting from the disconnect between the societal rejection of racist behaviors and the societal persistence of racist attitudes (Dovidio and Gaertner, 1986; Katz and Hass, 1988; McConahay, 1986). People's intentions may be good, but their racially biased cognitive categories and associations may persist. The result is a modern, subtle form of prejudice that goes underground so as not to conflict with antiracist norms while it continues to shape people's cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. Subtle forms of racism are indirect, automatic, ambiguous, and ambivalent. We discuss each of these manifestations of subtle prejudice in turn and then examine their implications for discriminatory behavior.

The main effect of subtle prejudice seems to be to favor the ingroup rather than to directly disadvantage the outgroup; in this sense, such prejudice is *ambiguous* rather than unambiguous. That is, the prejudice could indicate greater liking for the majority rather than greater disliking for the minority. As a practical matter, in a zero-sum setting, ingroup advantage often results in the same outcome as outgroup disadvantage but not always. Empirically, ingroup members spontaneously reward the ingroup, allocating discretionary resources to their own kind and thereby relatively disadvantaging the outgroup. People spontaneously view their own ingroups (but not the outgroup) in a positive light, attributing

its strengths to the essence of what makes a person part of the ingroup (genes being a major example). The outgroup's alleged defects are used to justify these behaviors. These ambiguous allocations and attributions constitute another subtle form of discrimination.

Statistical Discrimination and Profiling:

Another process that may result in adverse discriminatory consequences for members of a disadvantaged racial group is known as *statistical discrimination* or *profiling*. In this situation, an individual or firm uses overall beliefs about a group to make decisions about an individual from that group. The perceived group characteristics are assumed to apply to the individual. Thus, if an employer believes people with criminal records will make unsatisfactory employees, believes that blacks, on average, are more likely to have criminal records compared with whites, and cannot directly verify an applicant's criminal history, the employer may judge a black job applicant on the basis of group averages rather than solely on the basis of his or her own qualifications.

When beliefs about a group are based on racial stereotypes resulting from explicit prejudice or on some of the more subtle forms of ingroup-versus-outgroup perceptual biases, then discrimination on the basis of such beliefs is indistinguishable from the explicit prejudice discussed above. Statistical discrimination or profiling, properly defined, refers to situations of discrimination on the basis of beliefs that reflect the actual distributions of characteristics of different groups. Even though such discrimination could be viewed as economically rational, it is illegal in such situations as hiring because it uses group characteristics to make decisions about individuals.

Organizational Processes:

The above three types of racial discrimination focus on individual behaviors that lead to adverse outcomes and perpetuate differences in outcomes for members of disadvantaged racial groups. These behaviors are also the focus of much of the current discrimination law. However, they do not constitute a fully adequate description of all forms of racial discrimination. As discussed in Chapter 2, the United States has a long history as a racially biased society. This history has done more than change individual cognitive responses; it has also deeply affected institutional processes. Organizations tend to reflect many of the same biases as the people who operate within them. Organizational rules sometime evolve out of past histories (including past histories of racism) that are not easily reconstructed, and such rules may appear quite neutral on the surface. But if these processes function in a way that

leads to differential racial treatment or produces differential racial outcomes, the results can be discriminatory. Such an embedded institutional process—which can occur formally and informally within society, the interactions among these processes that occur within and across domains. One clear example of this phenomenon occurs in the arena of housing.

In the past, overt racism and explicit exclusionary laws promoted residential segregation. Even though these laws have been struck down, the process by which housing is advertised and housing choices are made may continue to perpetuate racial segregation in some instances. Thus, real estate agents may engage in subtle forms of racial steering (i.e., housing seekers being shown units in certain neighborhoods and not in others), believing that they are best serving the interests of both their white and their nonwhite clients and not intending to do racial harm. Likewise, banks and other lending institutions have a variety of apparently neutral rules regarding mortgage approvals that too often result in a higher level of loan refusals for persons in lower-income black neighborhoods than for equivalent white applicants. Research also suggests that ostensibly neutral criteria are often applied selectively. Credit history irregularities that are overlooked as atypical in the case of white mortgage applicants, for example, are often used to disqualify blacks and Latinos.

Analysis:

The presence of discrimination and the effects of antidiscrimination policies assumes discrimination is a phenomenon that occurs at a specific point in time within a particular domain. For instance, discrimination can occur in entry-level hiring in the labor market or in loan applications in mortgage lending. But this episodic view of discrimination occurring may be inadequate. Here we explore the idea, that discrimination should be seen as a dynamic process that functions over time in several different ways.

First, *the effects of discrimination may cumulate across generations and through history*. For instance, impoverishment in previous generations can prevent the accumulation of wealth in future generations. Similarly, learned behavior and expectations about opportunities and life possibilities can shape the behaviors and preferences of future generations for members of different racial groups.

Second, *effects of discrimination may cumulate over time through the course of an individual's life across different domains*. Outcomes in labor markets, education, housing, criminal justice, and health care all interact with each other; discrimination in any one domain can limit opportunities and cumulatively worsen life chances in another. For instance,

children who are less healthy and more impoverished may do worse in school, and in turn, poor education may affect labor market opportunities. The possibility that the effects of discrimination cumulate over an individual's lifetime is rarely discussed in the literature on the measurement of discrimination. Yet even small initial disadvantages, experienced at key points in an individual's life, could well have long-term cumulative effects.

Third, *effects of discrimination may cumulate over time through the course of an individual's life sequentially within any one domain*. Again, small levels of discrimination at multiple points in a process may result in large cumulative disadvantage. For instance, children who do not learn basic educational skills in elementary school because of discrimination may face future discrimination in the way they are tracked or the way their test scores are interpreted in secondary school. Small effects of discrimination in job search (e.g., application or interviewing stages), job retention, job promotion, and wage setting may result in large differences in labor market outcomes when these effects cumulate over time, even if no further discrimination occurs.

There are many instances in which the application of neutral rules harms a member of a disadvantaged racial group because of discrimination at some other time or place in the social system. However, there is presently no case law that addresses these broad social effects; the law frequently will not deem the challenged conduct to be unlawful if it merely transmits, rather than expands, the extent of racial discrimination. Similarly, the law does not hold any agents or institutions responsible for problems outside their legitimate purview. Discrimination occurring in other domains or in society generally need not be remedied; hence, cumulative discrimination is not a legal issue. An employer who needs highly educated workers can hire them as he or she finds them, even if doing so means that only a small percentage of black or Hispanic workers will be hired because prior discrimination in educational opportunities limited the number of members of these groups with the requisite skills.

Whether cumulative discrimination is important across generations, across a lifetime in different domains, and over time within a specific domain are empirical questions. However, these questions have not been addressed to any great extent by empirical social scientists. In Chapter 11, we return to the issue of the importance of developing methods focused not just on measuring discriminatory behavior at a particular point in time in a

specific process but also on understanding the cumulative and dynamic effects of discrimination over time and across processes.

Discrimination manifests itself in multiple ways that range in form from overt and intentional to subtle and ambiguous, as well as from personal to institutional, whether through statistical discrimination and profiling or organizational processes. Discrimination also operates differently in different domains and may cumulate over time within and across domains. Regardless of which form it takes, discrimination can create barriers to equal treatment and opportunity and can have adverse effects on various outcomes. Clear theories about how discriminatory behavior may occur are important in order to develop models that help identify and measure discrimination's effects.

Although discrimination is sometimes still practiced openly, it has become increasingly socially undesirable to do so. Consequently, such discrimination as exists today is more likely to take more subtle and complex forms. Subtler forms of discrimination can occur spontaneously and ambiguously and go undetected, particularly at the institutional level. Although legal standards address specific forms of unlawful intentional or statistical discrimination, subtler forms are more difficult to address within the law. Thus, shifts in kinds of discriminatory behavior have implications for the measurement of discrimination. As we discuss in the next chapter, some types of discrimination may be more difficult to identify and may require collecting new and different data and the further development of new methods of analysis.

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE INDIGENE – TERRY GOLDIE

Author:

Terry Goldie is the author of the memoir *queersexlife* (Arsenal Pulp Press) and the editor of the anthology *In a Queer Country: Gay & Lesbian Studies in the Canadian Context* (Arsenal Pulp Press). His other books include *Pink Snow: Homotextual Possibilities in Canadian Fiction* (Broadview 2003), and *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Literatures* (McGill-Queen's, 1989). He is a professor of English at York University in Toronto, where he teaches Canadian and postcolonial literature with particular interest in gay studies and literary theory.

Summary:

White people have both an ambivalent view of the indigene, and a unified view of the indigene, but at its core, all they really do is play a chess game using only the white squares-pun intended-to move around. They refuse to delve deeper and say something authentic about the indigene.

Once upon a time, the Orient was widely accepted because it wasn't European, but eventually it was also seen as under-humanized, backward, and barbaric. They're two sides of the same coin, depending on where you look; hence, the ambivalent and unified views. The Indian, Maori, and Aborigine are Other and Not-Self, but the must also be Self.

- They are only important when they are of benefit to the imperialists.
- There's always something for someone-and the someone is usually the white people.
- For example: India is important because it belongs to the British empire. Canadians see India as "Other," so it should be alien. But since India is indigenous, it can't be considered alien; so Canada is the one who's alien. It's the ultimate UNO reverse card situation.

White culture always attempts to incorporate or mimic the Other, but they'll never succeed because of their White-ness, which is why they reject it instead. It's a constant love-hate relationship.

Indigenization: White people need to be indigenous to satisfy their greedy cravings, but it's an impossible dream. So to indigenize, they instead write about the indigenous people, but they still fail because they barely look at these people, let alone fully incorporate them into their stories; and that's how the ambivalence/unification problem begins.

The ambivalence/unification problem can be explained by saying they have a common thinking about it, BUT their thinking is limited. As they reach their limit, they start to devolve into these different inaccurate depictions.

This thinking could have developed when a white person moved to a new place and saw that the Other was better settled; so they tried to become that Other. Sex & Violence: anything exotic has the opportunity to be seen as sexy, but may easily become violent. They are poles of attraction and repulsion. A "bad" Other is a negative stereotype set upon the indigene, while a "good" Other is a positive stereotype.

Orality: White writers think the indigene think differently than they do, especially when it comes to religions and rituals.

Mysticism: The indigene becomes a sign of oracular power with the chance to become malevolent or beneficient. It's the same way how Spaniards thought about killing the babaylans first because the priestesses were mysterious, and could sway the crowd in their favor.

Prehistoric: The past is in the past. The indigene are reminders of the past, and they should stay there. People can look back on them, but they will never be our present nor our future.

The commodities are like a criteria that writers base their indigene writings on. As long as they exist, people will always be limited in their way of thinking and understanding the indigene.

Analysis:

Pawns on the Chessboard:

The characterization of the Indigene as the "Other" arises from the imperialist longing for an authentic identity rooted in the land, consequently bounding the Indigene within a semiotic field created by white signmakers. Terry Goldie compares these boundaries to a chessboard, where the cultures and practices of the Indigene fall under a static set of symbols, restricting movement to prescribed areas upon a single field of discourse, one created by British imperialists. White culture then chooses to either incorporate the Other through stereotypical adaptations and literature or reject the Other through alienation, by reframing the history of a nation to begin with the white man. These strategies are described by Avery Bell as "the settler appropriation of indigenous authenticity to give substance and distinctiveness to their own nationalist identity claims." White indigenization is thus a method of appropriating the distinct native identity to ensure that any "othering" only occurs to the Indigenous population.

In describing cultural appropriation within the context of the design practice, acknowledging it as inherently an appropriation of an interpretation of culture reveals the tendency to default to stereotypical motifs and symbols when designing for non-whites. For the Indigene, this means subjection to an architecture of misrepresentation and simultaneous devaluation of their existence. Moreover, Indigenous architecture is deemed obscure, frozen in time to be studied only in the context of vernacular tradition. Relegation to the past

prevents the Indigene presence from seeping into the design of the future. Lack of recognition for their true identity maintains the Indigene's image as the Other even when it comes to creating spaces for serving the needs of their communities.

Humanitarian Design and the Saviour Complex:

When vulnerable communities are placed on the sidelines, they are discredited and portrayed as incapable of imagining and enacting solutions to sustain themselves. Poverty-stricken regions fall victim to band-aid solutions, often due to assumptions of the experience of poverty rather than meaningful engagement with the affected populations. In some cases, the saviour complex emerges, whereby designers use disaster and poverty as opportunities to implement form-focused solutions with aesthetic appeal, achieving praise and distinction along the way for "tackling" such dire and complex social issues.

In "Beyond Participation," Gabriel Arboleda highlights the role of the starchitect in perpetuating the use of "normative tools of high architectural design" to address issues of poverty, but often failing to meet the objectives initially promoted. He lays the example of Shigeru Ban's log houses, designed for Ecuadorians after the 2016 earthquake, but ultimately never coming to fruition. False promises abandon communities trusting external sources to deliver the resources necessary for their survival after facing hardship. At the same time, reliance upon the designer as the saviour feeds the existing hierarchal nature of the design industry, thus maintaining a separation of people into the Other.

Similarly, innovation is attributed to Euro-American ideas, ignoring the layers of contributions made by non-whites to the history of architectural design and barring them from further influence. White ideas cannot translate into non-white contexts without the participation of the communities at stake. Otherwise, they risk stereotyping the practices of the people involved. Arboleda describes how Western depictions of Indigenous life in Guyana emphasize traditional materials such as thatched roofing. In reality, the Indigenous Guyanese population favours the use of more modern materials for their homes, namely zinc sheeting. Zinc sheeting provides clean surfaces for rainwater harvesting, a need discovered during community assessments, and which later became the focus of the housing development project in Guyana. Creating opportunities for community participation can drastically alter thoughtlessly conceived design objectives to build for the people rather than the ego.

What Does Participation Mean?

Participatory design in the traditional sense is understood as a shift from design "for" to design "with." While this change is significant in dismantling the architect's perceived authoritative presence, it continues to reinforce the designer as the translator, receiving input from the community and manipulating it to fit into the desired narrative and architectural design. According to Arboleda, the true meaning of participation can only be realized by a subsequent move to design "by." The designer becomes both a facilitator and a participant, helping to materialize the community's ideas. Networks that establish connections replace hierarchies and encourage active participation of communities in the public realm. This bottom-up approach addresses the high-design problem by empowering communities to invest in themselves. Bruno Marques et al. outline four steps to actuating bottom-up design: understanding of place, relationship building, respectful facilitation, and empowered participation. The value of these steps begins within the titles, each of which evokes a collaborative practice that focuses on the beauty of the process rather than the beauty of the object. Prioritization of people over form is the key to effective participatory design.

The Designer as the Advocate for the Indigene:

Additionally, bottom-up approaches recognize the Indigene as already possessing a participatory culture. While new to the imperialist, participatory design is not radical to the native, whose long-lasting tradition of intergenerational planning renders them experienced users of this social design strategy. Yet, the dominance of the design field by Euro-American ideals and methods edges out local practices and holistic planning integral to the structure and sustainability of Indigenous communities. As a participant of the design project, the designer must now become an advocate for the ideas of the community, negotiating with government officials for the resources and funding required to return to a mode of self-reliance.

While society recognizes differences, co-design is about re-structuring the design process to consider those differences by understanding that catch-all solutions to address complex social issues do not exist, especially when the cultural contexts change. Participatory design can combat popular narratives fashioned by the imperialist to recognize the presence of distinct cultural identities, including those that history tried to erase. As Goldie writes, "absence is also negative presence." If the true image of the Indigene is to persist, we must advocate for design practices that enable community empowerment and pursue thoughtful representations of diverse identities.

UNIT – II

VENUS – SUZAN-LORI PARKS

Author:

Suzan-Lori Parks (born May 10, 1963, Fort Knox, Kentucky, U.S.) is a multi-award-winning American writer/musician and the first African-American woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *Topdog/Underdog* which recently enjoyed its twentieth anniversary Broadway revival. The production won both the 2023 Tony Award, (Best Revival of a Play) and the Outer Critics Circle Award. Just last year, in 2023, Parks also had three new works which all received world premieres: at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, *Sally & Tom* (Steinberg New Play Award finalist) at Joe's Pub in New York City, *Plays for the Plague Year* (winner of The Drama Desk Award for Best Music in a Play), and, at the Public Theatre, Parks world-premiered a musical adaptation of the 1972 film *The Harder They Come* (Winner: Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding New Off-Broadway Musical).

Summary:

Venus is a biographical play by Suzan-Lori Parks about Saartjie Baartman, a freak show member known as the Hottentot Venus. The story, which takes place in or around 1810, tells the story of Baartman's birth as a Khoi-San person from South Africa and her journey to Paris and London, where she was displayed for her enormous buttocks. Caricatures of African American women have persisted and became problematic as a result of her "act," which exposed her to voyeuristic European audience, particularly in the Victorian era. Venus's historical background is barely mentioned in the play; instead, it focuses on the peculiar societal circumstances that allowed for her exploitation and life. It follows Venus's journey from the moment she leaves South Africa until her untimely death in Paris, focusing on her romantic relationship with her sponsor, Baron Docteur. The play questions whether Baartman had agency over her life path and exposes the racial clichés and stereotypes that defined the Victorian era. It also parodies the idea of the sideshow carnival that preys on exoticism.

Sarah, as "Saartjie," Bartman, is introduced in the drama. Her almost unnaturally huge buttocks, a hallmark of the illness Steatopygia, made her stand out even among her people in South Africa. She lives in a time when colonialism is at its height when brutality and exploitation are openly and shamelessly carried out. The entertainment industry is also

affected by the racial violence: one of Britain's most well-liked attractions is Venus's circus freak show. The play includes brief accounts of a few more individuals who were treated as freak show subjects, such as conjoined twins and bearded women who were turned into exhibits. Originally, a member of the circus committee uses threats of fame and fortune to force Sarah to flee her little South African town for London. When Sarah gets to London, these commitments rapidly become useless. There, The Mother Showman, the owner of a sideshow, purchases her at auction. He presents Sarah, dubbed "The Hottentot Venus" because of her curves, which are reminiscent of the classic Greek statue of Venus De Milo. Venus turns as the circus's face, appearing in commercials across Europe. Thousands of Europeans come to see her ostentatious bodily displays.

Venus gains a fan named Baron Docteur when she works for The Mother Showman. He eventually acquires her from her owner after becoming unhealthyly obsessed with her. She accepts to be his mistress in light of her situation and sets out for Paris, thinking at first that he genuinely loves her. When she learns that he is an unrepentant womaniser who has had numerous sexual partners, her convictions are completely dismantled. She has no idea that Baron Docteur plans to utilise her as the subject of a post-mortem scientific investigation. He never tells her or gets her permission, but he thinks that his research may shed light on steatopygia.

By the play's conclusion, Sarah has contracted gonorrhoea from Baron Docteur. Feeling humiliated and furious, he makes plans for her to suffer in prison until her passing. She dies tragically in her cell before spending much time behind bars. The Baron Docteur removes her skeleton from a plaster cast of her body when she passes away. They are displayed at the Musee de l'Homme, where they come to represent the epitome of black bodies being used for white people's financial gain.

Analysis:

The main theme of this play is exploitation; exploitation by the colonial British in their ever-widening Empire, and exploitation of those with physical afflictions who ended up in sideshows. On the face of it, Sarah would seem to be exploited; after all, she is "owned" rather than living freely and independently, and she is viewed as a physical freak first by Mother Showman, who wants her as a sideshow attraction, and subsequently by Baron Docteur, who wants her as a glorified science experiment. The play demonstrates the imperialist mentality that saw people as possessions and also as money-spinners rather than

as individuals, and also the mentality that saw the colonials believe themselves to be superior to the native peoples of any nation they colonized.

However, there is also another school of thought that believes the play does the polar opposite of showing the colonials as the exploiters; some scholars believe that it is Sarah herself who exploits her situation for gain; she remains in the sideshow for far longer than she has to just because she likes the fame and notoriety, and the fact that people literally travel the continent to see her in person. She manages very quickly to see how her own particular affliction can be used to take her where she wants to go and she devises a plan to exploit the colonials whom she knows to be obsessed with sideshow and freak show entertainment.

Whilst this is undoubtedly a play about exploitation, it is not easy to delineate between the exploiter and the exploited; each of the characters is exploiting the other in a particular way.

UNIT – III

ARROW OF GOD – CHINUA ACHEBE

Author:

Chinua Achebe**, (**born Nov. 16, 1930, Ogidi, Nigeria—died March 21, 2013, Boston, Mass., U.S.), Nigerian Igbo novelist. Concerned with emergent Africa at its moments of crisis, he is acclaimed for depictions of the disorientation accompanying the imposition of Western customs and values on traditional African society. *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *Arrow of God* (1964) portray traditional Igbo life as it clashes with colonialism. *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *A Man of the People* (1966), and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) deal with corruption and other aspects of postcolonial African life. *Home and Exile* (2000) is in part autobiographical, in part a defence of Africa against Western distortions. In 2007 Achebe won the Man Booker International Prize.

Summary:

Chinua Achebe wrote the engrossing book "Arrow of God," which was first released in 1964. Following "Things Fall Apart" and "No Longer at Ease," this is the third book in Achebe's African Trilogy. It delves into topics of colonialism, traditionalism, and the conflict between traditional and modern ways of life in early 20th-century Nigeria.

The main character, Ezeulu, is the high priest of the town's deity, Ulu, and the play is set in the fictitious Igbo village of Umuaro. Ezeulu is highly esteemed for his role as the go-between for the gods and the people. But the main focus of the narrative is on his dealings with the colonial authorities, represented by the British colonial government.

The story starts when colonial officer T.K. Winterbottom arrives in Umuaro. Winterbottom made ties with the local authorities as the British influence began to become more noticeable in the area. However, Ezeulu and other indigenous people oppose outside intervention in their customary way of life.

Ezeulu, who had previously shown no interest in politics, finds herself embroiled in a dispute between two groups in Umuaro. The first group, headed by Nwaka, supports the British colonial government and is in league with Christian converts. Akuebue, an old friend of Ezeulu, leads the second camp, which is in favour of upholding local traditions and opposing outside influence. The larger conflict in Umuaro between traditional Igbo customs and the invading forces of colonialism and Christianity is reflected in this internal fight.

Ezeulu finds it more difficult to fulfil his duties as high priest as he attempts to adjust to the changing dynamics in his society.

An important motif in the story is the "Arrow of God," which stands for both divine wrath and authority. At first, Ezeulu's selection to carry the holy arrow by the god Ulu denotes heavenly approbation. But the arrow takes on a more menacing significance as Ezeulu struggles with social and political unrest, signifying both heavenly power and possible devastation.

The relationship between Ezeulu and his sons is also essential to the story. There is tension between father and son after his oldest son, Oduche, becomes a Christian. Ezeulu finds it difficult to reconcile his traditional values with his family's decisions and the way the world is changing. Ezeulu becomes caught up in a chain of events that have catastrophic results for the village as tensions rise. Tragic events inevitably occur when tradition and modernity, native beliefs and colonial powers collide. In the face of colonial expansion, Achebe deftly examines the difficulties of identity, power, and cultural collision.

A moving analysis of the consequences of the protagonists' decisions opens the book. Once respected, Ezeulu is now alone and facing the hard reality of a world in transition. The "Arrow of God" becomes a representation of divine justice as well as a sobering reminder of the price of accepting or rejecting change.

Analysis:

Arrow of God takes place in 1920s Nigeria, long before the country gained independence but after the pacification era. Many Nigerians started abandoning their ancient beliefs during these decades, converting to Christianity, and enrolling their kids in mission schools to provide them with a more Western education. The colonial project is well along by the time the novel is set, with numerous British contractors and officials working in Nigeria to construct the infrastructure required to carry out the continent's ongoing efforts to "civilise" and modernise Africa.

The rural Umuaro and the British colonial outpost serve as the novel's two locations, contrasting two distinct worlds. Igbo rural life is depicted during this period of transition, when new cultural norms and belief systems are gradually replacing the old. In contrast, colonial officials argue the virtues of official colonial doctrine, such as "indirect rule," at the British colonial station. After Umuaro contacts the colonial authorities, we witness the gradual erosion of the deity Ulu's significance in Umuaro over a number of years. We see

directly how colonial officials like as Winterbottom and Clarke are impacted by the inconsistencies of colonial ideology at the British colonial station in Okperi. Additionally, we observe that Africans employed by the colonial government, such as John Nwodika, have a broader perspective on the world than people who have only known life in Umuaro.

With the power to look into the brains of all the characters in the book, the narrator is like a deity. It frequently occurs within the same chapter, leaping from one person's head to another. The narrator can easily switch between any character's point of view, although Ezeulu is the main focus of the story and we spend the most time in his thoughts.

The reference to the "arrow of God" pertains to Ezeulu's function in this book. Ezeulu is in the fortunate or unfortunate position of being Ulu's messenger, his "arrow," in his capacity as Chief Priest of the deity Ulu.

Ezeulu is a significant figure in Umuaro's religious and cultural life as Ulu's messenger, although he receives little respect and a lot of criticism. (In an intriguing story parallel, Ezeulu also shows no respect for the white man's messengers.) As God's arrow, Ezeulu is able to chastise Umuaro village by pretending not to announce the Feast of the New Yam. Without this proclamation, the people will not be able to harvest their new crops, which will cause a widespread famine.

Paradoxically, as people turn to the Christian church for support and safety, Ezeulu's persistence on punishing the Umuaro people causes the worship of his god, Ulu, to wane. Thus, it is possible that the title Arrow of God also alludes to the ironic notion that Ezeulu has evolved into a valuable instrument in the hands of the Christian God, aiding in the Christian religion's conquest of Ulu.

BETWEEN THE WORLD AND ME **– TA-NEHISI COATES**

Author:

Ta-Nehisi Coates (born September 30, 1975, Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.) is an award-winning author and journalist. He is the author of the bestselling books *The Beautiful Struggle, We Were Eight Years in Power, The Water Dancer, and Between The World And Me,* which won the National Book Award in 2015. His first novel, The Water Dancer, was released in September 2019. He was a recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship that same year. Ta-Nehisi also enjoyed a successful run writing Marvel's Black Panther (2016-2021) and Captain America (2018-2021) comics series.

Summary:

Between the World and Me is a letter written in three parts. Coates writes directly to his son Samori. Coates is forty years old, and Samori is fifteen. The text is not set up as a traditional narrative. Rather, it traces Coates' thoughts and feelings throughout his life so far. It is loosely chronological though sometimes interrupted with anecdotes out of chronological order. The plot has less to do with specific events and more to do with the way Coates' thoughts and opinions change over time.

Part I begins in the present, as a host for a news show interviews Coates. She asks Coates what it means to lose his body, and he answers her with all the knowledge he has gained over the years. Coates turns to his childhood, describing his life and family as he was growing up in the ghettos of West Baltimore. He first understands the gap between his Black world and the suburban white world in childhood, though he cannot articulate the reasons for the separation. Coates begins to give form to his thoughts by reading the many books on Africana that his father owns. He develops a belief system similar to that of Malcolm X and disagrees with the idea of non-violent protests.

Coates attends Howard University, and he evolves his beliefs significantly during this time. He constantly studies, reads, and questions everything. He turns to Chancellor Williams' *The Destruction of Black Civilization* as his main guidebook. He begins to think of Black people as "kings in exile," severed from their nation by plundering Europeans, and keeps a mental trophy case of African heroes. Debating with older poets and his teachers challenges his views, which leads Coates to journalism. He starts to think about Black history more objectively and less romantically. At Howard, he meets Kenyatta Matthews, and she becomes pregnant at twenty-four. He leaves Howard without a degree and moves with Kenyatta to Delaware, where he works as a freelance writer.

The main event in Part II is the police murder of Prince Jones, whom Coates met at Howard. This is an episode of police brutality in which the officer is not charged. Coates begins to write about Jones' murder and develops a rage at both the police and all of white America. Coates' family moves to New York City in 2001, and Coates finds himself unable to sympathize with the victims of the September 11 terrorist attack because he views them all as part of the system that brought down Prince Jones. Coates describes his life in Brooklyn as a new father with young Samori. His thoughts revolve around Samori understanding the weight and struggle he will have to go through as a Black man. The second main event of

Part II is a trip to France. Travel opens Coates' eyes to worlds outside of America. He realizes how much fear has damaged his life, and is able to better place himself in the larger context of the world as a whole.

In Part III, Coates visits Prince Jones' mother, Dr. Mable Jones. He is amazed by her composure and compares it to the steady determination of his grandmother and the protestors at sit-ins in the 1960s. Dr. Jones speaks about her own history and tells Coates more about Prince. After leaving, Coates sits in his car and rethinks his views of non-violent protestors. He used to think they were shameful not to fight for themselves, but he now believes they may have known that there was never any security to fight for in the first place. He reflects on attending Howard University's homecoming and the sense of Black power he felt within that group of people. His parting message to his son is to remind Samori to engage fully in the struggle of his life as a Black person, but to know he is not responsible for converting white people to the struggle. Coates is confident that white America will continue to plunder not only Black bodies but the environment, too. The text thus begins and ends discussing the white assault against the Black body.

Analysis:

A nonfiction book called *Between the World and Me* is written as a letter from the author to his teenage son at the time. For the purpose of providing his son Samori with the knowledge necessary to navigate the world as a Black man, Coates reveals throughout the letter his experience coming to terms with the realities and injustices of being Black in America. Coates exhorts Samori to reject the American Dream—that is, the version of it that is idealised by white people and completely devoid of Black people.

The book takes on the form of a tutorial as Coates tries to mentor his kid ahead of time through experiences and insights they might have as Black people in the world. The majority of Coates's life—nearly forty years—is covered in the book, as he experiences both constant change and continuity as a Black man across many eras and environments. Though occasionally the author deviates from the timeline to offer context or anecdotal evidence, the language is primarily chronological.

As a work of nonfiction, Between the World and Me lacks definite literary moments like a climax or inciting incident. The closest thing to a rising action, though, would be Coates's own growing understanding of this disparity in his quest to educate his kid for the reality of living as a Black man and to warn him against the lies propagated by white society.

Growing up in Baltimore, Coates became aware of the differences between the White suburban environment and his Black neighbours at a young age. Coates contends that the methods in which each race responds to terror demonstrate this divide. While the Black people Coates grew up with concealed their fear behind violence and boasts, White people used fear as a tactic of racism. Coates lists instances of these cover-ups, such as Black adolescent violence, music Coates listened to, and his own father's violent behaviour.

Every encounter that helps Coates decipher new misconceptions propagated against Black people builds upon his already heightened awareness and ultimately influences his decision to write a letter to his kid. For Black people, Coates contends, safety is an illusion since death and violence can strike so quickly and easily. While acknowledging the allure of trying to rule the streets, he argues against street or gang violence, saying that control is impossible over systems controlled by white people. He goes so far as to say that education, particularly the education he received in Baltimore, is a hoax since the real goal of the educational system is to control Black students rather than to teach them. For the Dreamers, these ideas of control and protection are realities, even though they are myths for Black people.

Coates's opinions keep changing as he gains more knowledge about Black history. While it may not be deliberate racism, Coates contends that teaching civil rights via the perspective of peaceful heroes upholds the Dreamers' structural control over Black bodies. White people furthered the propagation of the Dream by restricting the possibilities for resistance Black children can learn from, by dismissing heroes like Malcolm X, who rejected racial violence with his own violence. According to Coates, the impact of Malcolm X's efforts outweighs that of peaceful activists.

Many of Coates's prior ideas are revealed to be more mythology as a result of his stay at Howard University. For instance, the student body at the institution makes the argument to Coates that, despite the fact that Black people suffer from the same struggles as other Black people and are subject to Dreamers' oppression, they are not really the same.

Maybe the closest thing the novel has to a conclusion is when Prince George County police pull over Coates. Coates describes how Prince Jones, a former classmate of his, was assassinated by the same police agency, which has a reputation for using its weapons more frequently than any other department in the nation. The episode with the biggest stakes is the culmination of all the experiences Coates has shared up to this point. Coates could have been

in the same situation as Prince Jones, as evidenced by the fact that his death was made public concurrent with Coates's traffic stop.

Early on in the novel, Coates acknowledges that the struggle in the work has no conclusion. Rather than taking a descending action, Coates offers more examples to support the gravity of what he cautions Samori about. The idea that varied areas like Manhattan are better for Black people is something that Coates exhorts his kid to reject. He recounts an occasion in which Coates spoke out to defend his son from being manhandled by a white woman in a movie theatre, and the other white people around him vilified him for it. Coates contends that White people will constantly attempt to dominate the Black body, even in situations that appear safe.

In order to properly prepare Samori for the outside world, Coates aims to dispel any myths that may be present in his mind. In order to do this, he delves deeply into concepts of police brutality and slavery, avoiding the tendency of modern parents to minimise difficult subjects for their children. According to Coates, Samori is shielded from the harsh realities of his future by not being shielded from the grim realities of his history.

Coates does not conclude the book on a hopeful note since optimism is not always a given. Instead, he closes his son's letter with words of support. Samori now possesses the wisdom required to face the future. Coates urges Samori to be open-minded and curious about the world even if he will grow up in a different one.

THE COLOR PURPLE – ALICE WALKER

Author:

Alice Walker (born February 9, 1944) is an African American writer best known for her fiction and essays that deal with themes of race and gender. Her novel *The Color Purple* (1982) won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, and she has also published volumes of poetry, criticism, and nonfiction and is considered largely responsible for the resurrection of the work of author Zora Neale Hurston (*Their Eyes Were Watching God*). Walker was the first African American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and was inducted into the California Hall of Fame in the California Museum for History, Women, and the Arts in 2007. Her books have been translated into more than two dozen languages.

Summary:

The epistolary novel *The Colour Purple* is composed of letters from Nettie to Celie and from Celie to God. Celie may have been a fragile, abused black girl of fourteen at the start of the book, writing her letters to "Dear God." At the novel's peak, thirty years later, she has made her own way in a world that still values racism and male dominance. She challenges what she has been taught and battles her way through life. Changing her conception of God from an old, white, bearded male who is her opposite into a God who is all-encompassing and resides inside her is her most audacious challenge.

Celie and her sister Nettie part ways after Nettie marries off and moves away to pursue her own interests. Her lack of a voice and the fact that she can only write to God to express her feelings have caused her to endure numerous difficulties. She eventually meets Shug Avery, a woman who gradually teaches her how to be tough and advocate for herself, later on in the narrative.

After growing close, Shug Avery discovers through a letter from Nettie that Celie's husband has been keeping them a secret from her. Shug Avery and Celie go on to become close friends. After making the decision to go and take up Shug Avery, Celie receives a letter from her sister informing her that she will shortly be returning home. After a few years of battling to figure each other out, she was reunited with her sister around a year after receiving the letter. We learned that Celie had been raped by her father, Alfonso, from her first letter to God. He instructed her to keep what happened to God alone and not tell anybody else. She is removed from the faculty after becoming pregnant twice. The youngsters are placed up for adoption by Alfonso, and a local priest adopts them. Celie's father forces her to wed Mr. Albert when her mother passes away.

Celie finds married life to be extremely difficult as well. She had to take care of Albert's kids, do all household duties, have unpleasant dates with her spouse, and put up with needless, frequent beatings from him. After her sister Nettie gets involved and puts her up, Celie's situation temporarily gets better. Regretfully, Albert (who has always wanted Nettie to marry him before Celie and preferred Nettie to her) won't let Nettie stay in his home until she gives him something. He pursues Nettie when she departs and tries to rape her, but she manages to get away and goes in search of the Reverend, who is looking after Celie's kids.

Nettie starts working for the family as a maid. The Reverend Samuel, together with his spouse Corrine, are missionaries getting ready to go to Africa. One of their associate

missionaries is unable to go, so they offer Nettie the opportunity to accompany them to Africa. Nettie accepts with delight. Nettie starts writing to Celie on a regular basis as soon as she gets to Africa. She expresses her constant worry that her letters won't get to her sister by informing Celie that Albert had assured her she wouldn't hear from her again. As a result, Celie doesn't receive a letter from her for years.

Harpo, the oldest son of Albert, develops feelings for Sofia, a fifteen-year-old. She becomes pregnant quickly, and they tie the knot. Sofia is stronger than Harpo and resists his attempts to subjugate her in the same way as his father does Celie. After a while, Sofia grows weary of Harpo and decides to travel and stay with her sister Odessa. Albert learns that Shug Avery, his long-term mistress, is unwell. After he drives off, he brings her home, where Celie must look after her. Celie is happy to try; she believes Shug Avery is even more stunning in person. She recalls the first time she saw Shug Avery in a really lovely portrait prior to getting married.

Celie is first treated badly and with a bad temper by Shug Avery, but she eventually grows to love her. After Sofia leaves, Harpo turns his residence into a juke joint, but no one shows up. He makes the decision to invite Shug Avery, who might be a well-known jazz vocalist, to perform at his home. She concurs. Shug Avery is adamant that Celie go on the primary night even if Albert doesn't want her to. Shug brings in a sizable audience and sings a song specifically for Celie. Shug is about to go, but Celie tries to stop her by telling her that Albert abuses her. Shug swears he won't go until he does. Moreover, Shug finds out that Celie has never been into sex. Shug tries to teach Celie how to enjoy herself during sex, but it quickly becomes apparent that Celie is attracted to women and has no feelings for Albert. Later, Celie had her first sexual encounter with Shug.

One day, Sofia shows up at Harpo's house with Buster, her stand-in boyfriend. As they start talking after she spots Harpo, he asks her to bounce. Squeak, his new girlfriend, slaps Sofia because she is so envious. Squeak is instantly hit back by Sofia, who knocks out several of her teeth in the process. Sofia encounters the key and his wife, Miss Millie, shortly after arriving in town. Miss Millie, who is rather fond of the children and pleased with their hygiene, invites Sofia to take on the role of her nanny. The Mayor hits Sophia when she refuses, and Sophia strikes him down in retaliation. She is taken into custody and imprisoned for twelve years. Squeak is sent on an assignment to persuade Sofia to leave prison and take a job as a maid at the Major's home. When Squeak goes to see the warden, he rapes her. But

the visit is not in vain because Sofia is hired as a maid and moved into the Major's home. Squeak wants Harpo to address her as Mary Agnes after she has been raped.

Shug brings Grady, her replacement husband, with her when she returns to Celie and Albert. Shug informs Celie that Albert has been keeping Nettie's letters hidden for years and that they would soon find out what he is hiding from her. Shug calms Celie down even if she is enraged. They locate every letter together and start reading it.

The beginning of Nettie's missionary journey to Africa with the Reverend and his family is described in her early correspondence. The Olinka tribe reveres the roof leaf that each person uses to cover their roof because without it, their homes would be demolished in a matter of months. Corrine is envious since the locals see Nettie as Samuel's second wife. She soon forbids Nettie from using her clothes as a loaner or from having a private meeting with Samuel. Corrine finds out the truth about Nettie and her adoptive children before she passes away after a few years, as Olivia and Adam don't appear to be Nettie's own offspring according to Samuel. Samuel and Nettie get married shortly after, while on a trip to England.

A rubber manufacturing business builds a road through the Olinka village, destroying the entire village. They are compelled to move to a more desolate region with scarce water resources. The Olinka are compelled to utilise the new tin roofs, and the land's new owners tax them for water. Many of the people depart to join the mbeles, a group of indigenous people battling the adult male deep within the bush. Adam and Olivia had been great friends with Tashi, a young Olinka girl, since they arrived in Africa.

Tashi determines that in order to respect her culture, she must also go through the Olinka scarring ceremony on her face in addition to the cutting out initiation. However, she immediately goes to hitch the mbeles since she is so embarrassed of the marks. She is brought home by Adam after he pursues her, but she declines to wed him out of fear of being rejected. After being critical of Tashi for choosing to have scars, Adam now gets his face tattooed in order to look like her and make her feel less guilty. After Tashi and Adam tie the knot, the entire family decides to head back home.

Finding her sister's letters, Celie makes the decision to leave her house with Shug. She informs Albert that she is going. She stabs his hand with a fork as he tries to stop her. She tells him till he changes his ways and curses him for how he has treated her before she goes. In response, he says he won't be sending her any of Nettie's letters even though they keep coming in. Along with Shug, Celie moves to Memphis and begins producing a lot of

trousers. She eventually becomes so skilled at creating them that she starts getting regular orders. Shug assists Celie in turning the project into a company. Not long later, Celie discovers that despite everything, Alfonso—who she calls Pa—isn't actually her father; rather, he is the man who wed her mother following the death of her biological father, a prosperous businessman. Celie gets a call after Alfonso passes away informing her that Nettie and she now own the house where her family had lived.

While Shug elopes with her new partner, Germaine, a nineteen-year-old flautist, Celie fixes up her new home. Although Celie is devastated, she eventually runs into Albert when she goes to see Sofia's daughter Henrietta, and the two of them end up being close friends. He's come a long way since then. It seems that he let things go after Celie left and nearly starved to death. After Harpo eventually coerced him into sending Nettie's letters to Celie, he started to turn his life around.

After returning, Shug chooses to retire because her flautist has enrolled in a university. Celie is currently in a secure financial situation. Her company consists of her father's dry goods store, which she inherited, in addition to her new home. At last, Nettie arrives home with Samuel and Celie's adult children. Nettie and Celie embrace while lying on their bottoms with each other in their arms. Celie writes that in her entire life, she has never felt younger.

Analysis:

The Colour Purple, a landmark book by Alice Walker, is a moving illustration of the human spirit's resiliency and the transformational potential of redemption. The character of Celie appears in its pages as a powerful representation of these ideas, enduring the turbulent currents of bigotry and tyranny with steadfast tenacity. It is essential for a historian who is passionate about literary analysis to explore Celie's character, exploring her transformation from oppression to empowerment and the significant influence her story has had on the discussion of African American literature as a whole.

The story of Celie takes place in rural Georgia in the early 20th century, as she struggles with the interlocking forces of poverty, misogyny, and racism. Celie experiences horrific abuse at an early age from her father and then her husband, going through years of silent physical and mental suffering. A devastating indictment of the institutional oppression that pervaded every part of African American women's lives in the Jim Crow South, Walker's brilliant picture exposes the brutal realities of life for these women.

Celie's inner power shines brightly in the darkness around her, giving her hope despite the enormous obstacles heaped against her. Celie starts to express her agency in the face of tragedy and finds refuge in her frank and uncensored letters to God. These letters are intimate and personal. Celie uses these letters as a therapeutic way to express her suffering and as evidence of her steadfast confidence in the prospect of salvation.

Celie's interaction with other women in her life, especially Shug Avery and Sofia, is crucial to her self-discovery path. Celie finds inspiration and empowerment in Shug, a lively and self-assured blues musician, who helps her accept her own sexuality and rediscover her feeling of value. Similar to Celie, Sofia urges her to face the injustices of the world head-on and to demand respect and dignity for herself and her loved ones. Sofia does this with her fiery spirit and stubborn attitude.

Celie has a tremendous metamorphosis as her relationship with these ladies grows stronger; she frees herself from the chains of internalised oppression and self-doubt and becomes a strong, independent woman. She eventually musters the resolve to confront her abusers and take back control of her own life, marking the culmination of her journey towards self-actualization.

Celie's story is ultimately one of victory and atonement rather than just suffering and victimisation. She overcomes the constraints placed on her by society and learns the value of love, forgiveness, and self-empowerment thanks to her tenacity and unshakable faith. By doing this, she subverts popular conceptions of African American womanhood and provides a potent reminder that every person, regardless of colour or gender, is endowed with intrinsic dignity and humanity.

The importance of Celie's story in the larger framework of African American writing cannot be overstated, in my opinion as a historian. A groundbreaking book that provides a nuanced depiction of the complications of race, gender, and power in America, The Colour Purple gives voice to the experiences of marginalised women. Celie's journey acts as a timeless reminder of the human spirit's resiliency and the capacity for love and compassion to transform even in the face of hardship.

AZEEM IBRAHIM – THE ROHINGYAS: INSIDE MYANMAR'S HIDDEN GENOCIDE

Author:

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim is a Research Professor at the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, and a Director at the Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy in Washington, D.C. He has received the International Association of Genocide Scholars Awards on the Rohingya genocide; and awarded an Officer of the Order of the British Empire by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Along with "The Rohingyas", he has authored other seminal books: "Radical Origins: Why We Are Losing the War Against Islamic Extremism" and "Authoritarian Century: Omens of a Post-Liberal Future".

Summary:

Azeem Ibrahim's book The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Hidden Genocide provides a fascinating and comprehensive overview of the Rohingya minority's oppression in Myanmar. The author was able to effectively assess and pinpoint the political difficulties that the Rohingyas in Myanmar confront after years of careful investigation. By exposing the audience to the harshness of the rules that discriminate against the Rohingya and restrict their freedom of movement, access to education, and even job, the Rohingyas significantly contribute to the conversation. The author makes an effort to start a discussion and gives a thorough explanation of how harsh the dictatorship is in the twenty-first century.

This book offers a great starting point and basis for comprehending this minority of Muslims in Myanmar and their fight for recognition among the country's 135 ethnic groups. Ibrahim has meticulously documented the Rohingya people's agonising suffering, which culminated in the horrific genocide carried out by the Burmese government. Understanding the difficulties associated with being a Rohingya—who are largely perceived as outsiders from Bangladesh and Myanmar—is made easier by learning about the Rohingyas. The Rohingya are a stateless Muslim community that originated in Rakhine State, Myanmar, and are estimated to number one million. As a result, the government has the authority to remove their land at any time, and they are denied ownership and other rights related to it. Because of their roots in East Bengal, which is now Bangladesh, they are actually viewed as illegal immigrants by Myanmar.

The book The Rohingyas is structured into seven chapters, the first three of which are devoted to chronicling the Rohingya people's history and the causes of their persecution.

Ibrahim claims that the Rohingya originated in the former Rakhine Kingdom, which had Mrauk U. as its capital. Situated at the meeting point of Muslim and Buddhist Asia, the city grew to become one of the richest in the region and drew a large migrant population. But in 1785, the Kingdom of Burma—which later merged into British India—took authority over the Rakhine Kingdom. During the colonial era, the Muslim population in Rakhine experienced significant growth, tripling in size between the 1880s and the 1930s. The Rakhine State saw heavy fighting between Japanese and Allied forces during World War II, and this is where the first noticeable divisions between the Burmese populations of the future could be seen. While the majority of Muslims supported the British, the Rakhine Buddhists originally sided with the Japanese. A Muslim uprising in Rakhine occurred shortly after Myanmar gained independence from British domination, with the aim of creating an autonomous region for themselves and equal rights with the Buddhist ruling classes. After the uprising was put down, military administration over the area was established, and the rights that the Rohingya possessed before to the fighting were gradually reduced. Ever since, things have only gotten worse. Between 1978 and 1991, about 200,000 Muslims were forced into Bangladesh by oppressive government efforts. Regretfully, the Rohingya were not included among the 135 national ethnic groups listed in the new citizenship legislation that were established. As a matter of fact, they were essentially left stateless.

Ibrahim gives a detailed overview of Myanmar's attempts to "socially control" the Rohingya in chapter 4, along with the effects on the already largely disposed people. The Rohingya were not included in Myanmar's first census in over thirty years. Even in the first democratic elections following the end of military administration, Rohingya voters and candidates were denied access. The persecution of the Rohingya went out of control after Aung San Suu Kyi entered into a power-sharing arrangement with the military and became the de facto leader. The military in Myanmar frequently cracked down on the Rohingya, leading to an estimated 87,000 of them fleeing in large numbers, primarily to Bangladesh and Malaysia. The military called these crackdowns "clearance operations," but they also included multiple examples of violent torture, rape, murder, and village destruction. Suu Kyi denounced the violation of human rights, while the military of Myanmar has continuously denied carrying out crimes against the Rohingya.

The reason behind the international community's and the civilian parts of the Myanmar government's reluctance to assist and back the people against the heinous ethnic cleansing in 2012 is discussed in Chapter 5. The book truly shines here, outlining the

advantages and disadvantages of the genocide in Myanmar. The Rohingyas aid in our comprehension of the difficulties associated with engaging in politics, the function of the media, the freedom of the press to report on human rights abuses, and the problem of official corruption. Ibrahim also assisted us in comprehending the politics that lie behind Burma's democratic façade and clarified why political, economic, and social problems cannot be solved by state-run elections. In conclusion, the current state of affairs in Myanmar is depicted in chapters 6 and 7, along with recommendations for mitigating the situation. Ibrahim did a great job of analysing the ways in which the international community might contribute significantly to Myanmar's path of reconciliation.

Fundamentally, The Rohingyas is an in-depth account of one of the most serious humanitarian situations of our time. Ibrahim also addresses the crucial topic of why the government has not yet addressed the fundamental problems underlying the Rohingya people's suffering, in spite of multiple claims of violations of human rights and a refugee catastrophe. In addition, the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have made multiple unsuccessful attempts to bring justice to the victims of persecution in the state of Rakhine. Ibrahim contends in his conclusion that, as Myanmar gradually moves towards democracy, it must remember that the success of the new political order rests on the inclusiveness of its citizens and their sincere engagement in it. But given that the military and dishonest politicians control the majority of the authority, it appears that the Rohingya people's current difficult status and problems are only the beginning.

In the end, The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Hidden Genocide is a pleasure to read in every aspect, despite its sombre subject matter. Without a sure, everyone interested in modern Asian politics in general or the persecution of the Rohingyas in Burma in particular should read this book. Students from all social science fields who are interested in learning more about the Rohingya and the atrocities in Burma may find it especially helpful. Ibrahim creates incredibly special and one-of-a-kind art that astounds viewers with the terrible conditions that the Rohingya people face.

Analysis:

Azeem Ibrahim's book "The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Hidden Genocide" describes the systematic abuse and mass murder of Rohingya Muslims in the Rakhine state of Myanmar. The severe denial of this minority community by Buddhist fundamentalists, the

military, and ethnic extremists from other communities to turn Myanmar into a safe haven for Buddhism and a racially pure nation has compelled this population to flee abroad or face eradication. In this book, the author reveals the causes of the state's enslavement, discrimination, enmity towards the Rohingya people, and the ongoing oppression as a whole.

There are seven chapters throughout the entire book. The first chapter covers the history of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) up until 1948. The purpose of starting the book with a brief historical overview of Myanmar is to help readers comprehend the timing of the Rohingyas' presence in Arakan, or present-day Rakhine. In addition to the chronology, the chapter informs readers on the marginalisation, identity denial, and violations of fundamental civil rights that this minority community in a region predominately inhabited by Buddhists endured. According to the UN Charter, it is utterly irrational to deny people their fundamental rights and advantages because no State has the authority to declare someone stateless if they were born in that specific region.

The author has explained how the internal political dynamics, which oscillate between democracy and the military and then back to democracy, have impacted the situation of the Rohingyas in the second and third chapters, which cover the period from post-independence to 2015. It was a regular and deliberate practice for the regimes to victimise this peaceful society in order to divert attention from any crises (such the economic ones). By defining who is a citizen and who is not, constitutional provisions have strengthened racial hostility towards them and further degraded their lives by denying them access to land, education, free movement, and other opportunities. The fourth chapter, "Implications for the Rohingyas," which covers the period from 2008 to 2015, informs readers of the ongoing horrors that the Rohingya people in Myanmar must endure. Graduating through the pages has a terrifying effect because of the lawlessness and injustice this community has experienced at the hands of Buddhist extremists, the military, and the regime. They have been forced to either convert to Buddhism, remain in destitute camps, or flee the country because they are seen as outsiders. The book's current events demonstrate how the Rohingyas are left on their own in this exhausting turmoil.

The author has covered instances from all over the world in the fifth and sixth chapters of the book, "Genocide and international law" and "Genocide," respectively, that show how prejudice against a particular group over time normalises and how a lack of international voice creates the necessary conditions for massacring an entire community. The

intention was to convey to the readers that the persecution of the Rohingyas bore similarities to other incidents of human rights breaches around the world, such as the terrible war between the Hutu and the Tutsi minority in Rwanda, which resulted in the latter group's death. According to the author's thorough research of the "triggers" that blur the line between discrimination and open genocide, every shock to the political, environmental, or economic systems has the potential to wipe out a community. Beginning with the regime's insensitive policies, such as their removal from the 2014 census, depriving them of their fundamental electoral rights, obtaining official documents, and compelling them to either identify as Bengalis or end up in refugee camps, the Rohingya people bear the "statelessness" symbol for their ethnicity.

The author offers some solutions in the seventh chapter, "What Can Be Done?" These include internalising Rakhine and following the UN Charter's guidelines on citizenship and nationality, as well as enlisting the help of international organisations and players to exert pressure on the government so that the people facing one of the worst humanitarian disasters can find a way to put an end to the decades-long hostilities. "The Rohingyas" provides a comprehensive and extensive overview of the events occurring in Myanmar, focusing on the experiences of a specific minority community. For those who want a thorough grasp of Myanmar's reality and the implications of the current state of affairs for both the immediate and wider area, this book becomes a must-read. As stated in the book, the author hopes to raise awareness of the horrors occurring on this side of the globe and draw international organisations' attention to them. The Rohingya people live in a harsh and dismal world, and this book can provide us a thorough understanding of the horrifying circumstances that they have faced and will continue to face.

UNIT – V

MANGOES AND THE MAPLE TREE – UMA PARAMESWARAN

Author:

Uma Parameswaran -- poet, playwright, and short-story writer -- was born in Madras and grew up in Jabalpur, India. Parameswaran read extensively drawing motivation from epic poetry and Greek theater through her schooling and during the India-China war of 1962. Receiving the Smith-Mundt Fulbright Scholarship, Parameswaran moved to the United States to study American Literature at Indiana University earning her MA in Creative Writing. She completed her Ph.D. in English at Michigan State University in 1972. Currently she is a professor of English at The University of Winnipeg. Since settling in Canada, Parameswaran has devoted much of her writing and efforts in the literary field to creating an identifiable South Asian Canadian diaspora.

Summary:

Uma Parameswaran's *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* is a compelling study of family dynamics, cultural identity, and the conflict between tradition and modernity. Within the context of a South Indian family's journey to North America, the book explores the intricacies of immigrant existence and the endeavour to maintain one's cultural legacy in an unfamiliar territory. The conflict between the old and the new, represented by the difference between the mango tree, which stands for heritage and roots, and the maple tree, which symbolises the foreign surroundings of the immigrants' new home, is one of the novel's main themes.

The author creates a complex tapestry of the characters' inner tensions as they move between the two worlds with vivid images and expressive language. The maple tree represents the possibility of fresh starts and prospects in America, but the mango tree represents the protagonists' yearning for their native country and the difficulty they have adjusting to their new environment. *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* features a cast of well-drawn characters, all of them struggle with unique desires, anxieties, and insecurities. The protagonist, Meena, a young lady divided between her ambition to follow her own path in America and her Indian ancestry, is at the centre of the narrative. Meena's internal conflict reflects the issue of cultural identity more broadly as she struggles with issues of acceptance and assimilation.

The storylines of Meena's coming-of-age journey and her parents' troubles with their own sense of relocation are beautifully interwoven by Parameswaran. Flashbacks to the protagonists' past in India are also woven throughout the book, creating a vividly detailed background against which the events of the present day take place. He provides a nuanced examination of the immigrant experience from Meena's perspective, highlighting both the difficulties and the opportunities associated with making a fresh start in a strange country. The book is a moving commentary on the experience of being an immigrant and the need for belonging, as well as a meditation on the universal themes of family, love, and self-discovery.

To sum up, *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* is a strong and moving book that captures the universal human experience of struggling with identity, belonging, and the desire for one's native place. Uma Parameswaran takes readers on a voyage of self-discovery and cultural exploration that lingers long after the last page is turned with its vivid storytelling and well-drawn characters.

Analysis:

Introduction:

Uma Parameswaran's multi-layered novel *Mangoes on the Maple Tree,* explores a wide range of topics, offering readers a deep look at identity, cultural conflict, family relationships, and the experience of immigrants. The novel is on the Balasubramanian family and their struggles to adapt to their new country, set against the backdrop of Indian and Canadian cultures. We will look at the main ideas of the book in this essay, as well as how Parameswaran uses the characters, storyline, and narrative devices to develop and explore them.

1. Cultural Identity:

In *Mangoes on the Maple Tree,* cultural identity is one of the main themes. The conflict between valuing one's cultural history and seizing the chances and difficulties presented by a foreign environment is explored in the book. Parameswaran highlights the challenges of juggling several cultural identities with the help of the experiences of the Balasubramanian family. The main character, Meena, struggles between her need for independence and autonomy in Canada and her Indian heritage. Her quest for self-discovery is a reflection of the larger immigrant experience, which involves striking a balance between history and modernity, conventions and opportunity. The fight for cultural preservation in the face of assimilation pressures is highlighted by the symbolic contrast between the mango tree,

which stands for ancestry and continuity, and the maple tree, which represents Canadian identity. The generational gap in cultural identification among immigrant households is another topic Parameswaran examines. Meena and her sister Anu represent the younger generation's drive for uniqueness and adaptation, while Meena's parents, Raj and Shanti, stand for the elder generation's adherence to traditional values and rituals. Parameswaran highlights the intricacies of forming and navigating cultural identities in immigrant communities through detailed characterizations and interpersonal tensions.

2. Gender Dynamics:

Gender dynamics is another important issue in *Mangoes on the Maple Tree*, especially in the setting of the Indian diaspora. Parameswaran depicts the challenges and expectations that women encounter in conventional patriarchal civilizations, contrasting them with the evolving gender norms in Canada. Meena's story serves as a metaphor for the difficulties faced by Indian women who want to be independent and fulfilled in their own right. In addition to striving for education and professional prospects, she struggles with the pressure to live up to society's expectations of marriage and parenthood. Meena's pursuit of personal agency and disobedience of gender norms underscore the complexity of female empowerment in immigrant communities.

In addition, Parameswaran evaluates how female solidarity and mentoring can challenge gender norms and promote empowerment. Meena is inspired and guided by figures such as her maternal aunt Auntie Meera and her English teacher Mrs. Williams, who help her to embrace her uniqueness and challenge conventional gender norms.

3. Family and Relationships:

A major theme of *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* is family dynamics and relationships. Parameswaran explores themes of love, sacrifice, and intergenerational conflict while examining the intricacies of familial ties. The Balasubramanian family, which struggles with cultural adaptation and integration while attempting to preserve familial cohesiveness, represents a microcosm of immigrant experiences. The difficulties Raj and Shanti face in supporting their kids while upholding their cultural traditions highlight the conflicts and sacrifices that come with being an immigrant family. The connection between Meena and her parents, especially her father Raj, is at the centre of the book. Their opposing ideals and goals are a reflection of the larger cultural and generational gaps that exist within immigrant households. With empathy and subtlety, Parameswaran depicts the complexity of parent-child

interactions while emphasising how everyone yearns for acceptance, love, and understanding. The novel's depiction of interpersonal ties and relationships is further enhanced by Parameswaran's exploration of issues such as friendship, romantic love, and sibling rivalry.

4. Identity and Belonging:

Throughout *Mangoes on the Maple Tree*, themes of identity and belonging reoccur, representing the protagonists' quest for acceptance and purpose in a strange place. The ways that cultural identity affects people's sense of self and place in the world are examined by Parameswaran. Meena's path of self-discovery highlights the common desire for identification and belonging as she negotiates the challenges of cultural assimilation and individual agency. Meena struggles with issues of cultural integration and self-acceptance via her relationships with mentors, family, and friends. She finally finds comfort in accepting her mixed identity. In order to create a sense of belonging, Parameswaran also looks at the importance of community and cultural history. Meena finds solace in the company of characters such as Auntie Meera and Sanjay, who provide her with a sense of cultural continuity and belonging even in the face of constant change and adaptation.

5. Narrative Techniques:

Using a multi-layered narrative structure, Parameswaran brings the various threads of Mangoes on the Maple Tree together. The book is told through a sequence of interconnected vignettes, each of which provides a glimpse into the challenges and ambitions of a different family member. By using a fragmented narrative approach, Parameswaran is able to examine the complexities of familial relationships and reflect the complexity of the immigrant experience. In addition, readers are fully drawn into the sights, sounds, and textures of both India and Canada because to Parameswaran's brilliant imagery and evocative prose. Vibrant descriptions of the novel's settings, which range from Toronto's snow-covered vistas to Chennai's busy streets, elicit a sense of location and cultural diversity. Parameswaran creates empathy and emotional resonance by allowing readers to experience the richness and beauty of Meena's world through sensory description and poetic language.

Conclusion:

Uma Parameswaran explores gender relations, cultural identity, and the immigrant experience in her captivating novel Mangoes on the Maple Tree. The book provides readers with an insight into the intricacies of identity and the common pursuit of self-discovery through its well crafted characters, striking images, and subtle narrative. In an ever-changing

world, Meena inspires readers to appreciate their ancestry while blazing their own trail by navigating the difficult terrain of tradition and modernity. She also emerges as a figure of empowerment and resiliency. Parameswaran's moving story is proof of the storytelling's timeless ability to shed light on human nature and transcend cultural and geographic barriers. The novel provides readers a profound reflection on the intricacies of cultural identification and the universal yearning for belonging through its vividly portrayed characters, gripping storyline, and deep philosophical exploration. Readers are prompted to consider their own experiences with identification, belonging, and navigating cultural differences in a world growing more interconnected by Parameswaran's poignant depiction of immigrant life.

WHITE TEETH – ZADIE SMITH

Author:

Zadie Smith is a contemporary British writer celebrated for her nuanced and witty explorations of race, cultural identity, and modern society. Smith won numerous accolades for her debut novel, *White Teeth* (2000), which was released to great critical acclaim and has been hailed as a modern British classic. Since the release of *White Teeth*, Smith has released four novels, various short stories, and essays. Today, she is one of the most important contemporary writers of the 21st century.

Summary:

A recently divorced middle-aged man named Archie Jones attempts suicide inside a parked automobile on New Year's Day, 1975. Archie is found by a nearby halal butcher, who also saves his life. Rejuvenated after the rush of saving others, Archie finds himself in a house full of youths getting over a party. Clara Bowden, a tall, gorgeous Black woman somewhat younger than Archie, is one of these individuals. Six weeks after their first date, Archie and Clara tie the knot.

Clara and her mother, Hortense Bowden, a devoted Jehovah's Witness, moved to London from Jamaica. Clara ignores Hortense's religious beliefs. Hortense disapproves of Clara for getting married to a white guy after she marries Archie. Despite not being in love, Clara respects Archie as a nice man and is grateful for the life he gives her. Soon after getting married, Archie returns to much of his single life, hanging out at O'Connell's, an Arab-owned pub that serves as their second home. He spends most of his time with his friend Samad Miah Iqbal there.

The bond between Archie and Samad dates back to their time together in a British Army tank battalion during World War II. Samad and Archie had the opportunity to execute Dr. Perret, a Nazi scientist, during that period after assisting in his capture. The two teenage soldiers quarrelled over who ought to carry out the killing. Dr. Perret was led off the road by Archie Jones. After a shot was fired, Archie went back to Samad's side. Their kinship was so deep from this horrific experience that it survived nearly thirty years of separation following the war. When Samad and his brand-new, young bride Alsana leave Bangladesh for London in 1973, they settle in Archie's neighbourhood.

Over the following twenty-five years, the families of Jones and Iqbal continue to be friends. After their husbands spend a lot of time together, Alsana Iqbal and Clara Jones become friends since they have a lot in common as immigrants and wives of older husbands. Clara and Alsana give birth simultaneously. Magid and Millat are Alsana's twin boys. Irie is Clara's girl. The trio of kids attend to school together, play together, and engage in competition. When his twins Magid and Millat are nine years old in 1984, Samad develops feelings for their music instructor. Samad is a devoted Muslim, thus the relationship is causing him a lot of remorse. Deciding that he is not a good enough Muslim to be a role model, he swears to return the boys to Bangladesh so they can grow up in a traditional environment. But Samad can only afford to send one boy away. After giving it some thought, Samad decides to split up with Magid. Alsana reacts to Samad's decision to make this without asking his wife by becoming silent and furious for years.

The London twin, Millat, has a well-earned and well-cultivated reputation as a womaniser and strong guy by the time he starts high school. Irie Jones develops an obsession with Millat as soon as she reaches adolescence. Although Millat considers Irie to be a childhood buddy, she still goes out with him because she wants more. Irie and Millat are caught smoking after school one afternoon. As a kind of discipline, students must attend additional tutoring. Joyce and Marcus Chalfen, an elderly hippy couple, are their tutors. The FutureMouse is a new animal that genetic engineer Marcus Chalfen is developing to generate specialised cells on schedule. Irie and Millat are overtaken by the Chalfens. Joyce is so smitten with Millat that she lavishes him with presents and gives him hefty loans. Irie works for Marcus as his secretary.

The separation of Samad's sons has unanticipated repercussions. The elder son in Bangladesh, Magid, develops scientific interests and becomes anti-religious and pro-British.

Millat changes his aspirations in London, going from being a thug to a religious terrorist. He becomes a member of the radical KEVIN (Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic Nation), which sets anti-Muslim literature on fire. When Magid begins writing to Marcus Chalfen from Bangladesh, Marcus gains a new pupil. Joshua, the eldest son of Joyce and Marcus, has joined the animal rights organisation FATE (Fighting Animal Torture and Exploitation). After returning to Britain from Bangladesh, Magid joins Marcus as an assistant on the FutureMouse project. Millat and Magid are diametrically opposed to one another. Concerned about Millat's growing relationship with KEVIN are Joyce Chalfen and the Iqbal family. They come to the conclusion that reconciling the twins is the best course of action. Irie is tasked with arranging their encounter because she was both boys' childhood buddy. They had an intense sexual encounter when Irie visits Millat, but right away Millat drops on his knees and begs for forgiveness. Hurt beyond belief, Irie runs to Magid and makes love to him. Irie finds out shortly after that she is expecting a kid and that she will never be able to determine which of her twins is the father.

On December 31, 1992, Marcus and Magid organised a public display of FutureMouse's genetic progress. Opponents of the experiments, including Jehovah's Witnesses, FATE, KEVIN, and orthodox Muslims like Samad, gather to the Perret Institute to witness the debut of Future Mouse. The families of Jones and Iqbal are also present. At the head table is Dr. Marc Perret. Samad Iqbal discovers that Archie Jones had told a false story about having shot Dr. Perret in May 1945. Archie witnesses Millat drawing a gun at that same moment. For the second time, Archie puts himself in the way between Millat and his intended victim, sparing his life. Subsequently, Archie collides with the table, shattering the glass container containing Future Mouse. The mouse vanishes through a vent. Since the witnesses are unable to distinguish between the twins, Millat and Magid are both sentenced for their attempted murder. They receive a community service sentence. Joshua Chalfen and Irie Jones eventually fall in love. The narrative concludes on New Year's Eve in 1999. Irie, Hortense, her grandmother, Joshua, and her young daughter are sitting on a beach in Jamaica. That same evening, on the first night O'Connell's welcomes women, Archie and Samad play cards with Clara and Alsana in London.

Analysis:

In addition to discussing important topics like immigration, assimilation, colonialism, multiculturalism, racism, patriarchy, sexism, feminism, domestic abuse, genetic engineering, British colonial history, and the meaning of life, *White Teeth* is also a hilarious read. With her

unique narrative voice, novelist Zadie Smith combines cynicism, compassion for human fallibility, and a sense of absurdity. The narrator's voice is that of an omniscient observer who can look into the minds of all the characters equally and offer a broad, panoramic perspective on the irony of life. Samad Miah Iqbal and Alfred Archibald Jones are the two primary protagonists of the narrative.

Archie Jones is a drab, uninspired Englishman who marries Clara Bowden, a Jamaican immigrant who is considerably younger than him. Samad Iqbal, Archie's closest friend, is a devoted Muslim from Bangladesh who was forced into an arranged marriage with Alsana Begum, a considerably younger lady. Clara and Alsana become friends and raise their kids together because Archie and Samad spend most of their leisure time together. The two families reside in Willesden Green, a normally unremarkable suburb of London that is becoming more and more cosmopolitan and home to a diverse cast of personalities from all over the former British Empire.

The story follows the two families as they make their way through the late 20th-century societal upheavals, paying particular attention to the problems brought on by immigration, colonialism, and assimilation. Archie and Samad are hampered in their endeavours by a number of adversaries who are all motivated by the same goals—improving humankind. Drs. Marc-Pierre Perret, Marcus Chalfen, and Magid Iqbal are three generations of scientists that experiment with genetic engineering to try and remove unwanted human traits. Social workers and school administrators give well-meaning but frequently racist advice. The world of Archie and Samad is filled with emotional and psychological disorders, which are exacerbated by organisations of animal rights activists, religious fanatics, and Islamic extremists.

The narrative is meticulously arranged by time rather than being given in chronological order. Precise dates are frequently found in the text and are included in the section headings. The story's primary action takes place between 1975 and 1999, with 1857 flashbacks. Samad and Alsana Iqbal, two of the key characters, are from Bengal, whose history offers another framework for creating a chronology. Bengal is a British province at the time of the first incident, the Great Indian Mutiny of 1857. When Samad enlists in the British Army during World War II, Bengal is still a colony. Bengal becomes East Pakistan after the war, and subsequently Bangladesh. Many Bengalis, including the Iqbals, are forced to immigrate to England as a result of the economic collapse brought on by the violence and

natural disasters plaguing the new nation. Smith follows the Jones and Iqbal families through several generations, adding still another degree of chronological organisation. The first character is Mangal Pande, a Bengali hero of the Great Indian Mutiny and Samad Iqbal's great-grandfather. Born in 1993, the youngest character is the granddaughter of Archie and Samad. A typical dilemma faced by immigrants is that of watching their children grow up in a culture distinct from their own while also adjusting to their new life, as is the case with Clara Bowden Jones and Samad and Alsana Iqbal. The generation divide that affects all families is exacerbated for immigrant families since the parents worry that their disobedient teenagers are also becoming less connected to their culture. The parents have good reason to be afraid. Indeed, the multicultural and interracial world their British-born children now live in is even more distinct due to the influence of global youth culture.

The intricate plot's action spans multiple generations and takes into account the emotional wounds that each generation experiences. For instance, Ambrosia, a young Black servant, becomes pregnant by white Englishman Captain Charlie Durham, the grandmother of Clara Bowden. Hortense, Ambrosia's daughter, marries Darcus Bowden, a Black man, since she feels ashamed of her mixed race. Irie Jones, the daughter of Clara, feels deeply as though she doesn't belong anywhere after Hortense rejects her since Clara marries a white man. Similar to this, Samad Iqbal's fervent belief in Islam causes his younger twin, Millat, to turn into a fanatical Islamist, while the elder of his twin boys, Magid, rejects religion in favour of secularism and science.

The novel's climactic climax, in which the genetic engineers present Future Mouse to the world, is hinted at by the increasing action. Readers are left wondering which adversaries will cause the most disruption and how the protagonists will react as tension rises when all of the primary characters and their antagonists meet at one point. The pivotal moment occurs in a single, split second when Archie deflects a bullet, sparing Millat Iqbal from becoming a killer. As the old war myth that has kept Archie and Samad together for decades is suddenly shown to be false, they must rewrite their autobiographies as part of the falling action. Future Mouse, a non-human character, represents the concepts of racism, assimilation, and existence. The purpose of the small brown rodent is to change the gene pool through scientific research. Future Mouse is made to evolve into a different species after being cut off from its kind. Like Archie Jones, the reader wishes Future Mouse luck in its new life of freedom when, at the end of the narrative, Archie accidently smashes the glass box and allows it to leave.