

Intersecting Margins: Literary Narratives of Multidimensional Identity and Marginalisation

Dr. Jasmine A. Choudhury

Associate Professor in the Department of English at The Assam
Royal Global University, Guwahati, Assam, India.

Abstract

This chapter explores how contemporary literature represents intersectional identities with the use of innovative narrative strategies. It argues that narrative form itself can create intersectionality and thus make complex, layered experiences accessible to the reader by moving beyond traditional analyses that view marginalised identities as separate categories. The study focuses on Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987/ 2004), Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands /La Frontera* (1987/ 2012), and Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003) as they offer distinct yet convergent literary articulations of multidimensional identity, enabling a comparative exploration of how race, gender, language, memory, and migration intersect to produce varied but structurally connected experiences of marginalisation. It examines how narrative techniques like fragmented and dual perspective narration, non-linear temporality and linguistic hybridity reflect the multi-dimensionality of marginalisation. *Beloved's* fragmented voices and temporal disjunctions show how race, gender and historical trauma interact; the use of dual perspective narration and diasporic temporality in *The Namesake* presents generations of cultural dislocation; and the use of linguistic hybridity and genre-blending in *Borderlands* presents Chicana queer border identities. With

the use of theoretical frameworks of intersectionality, trauma theory, diaspora studies, and postcolonial criticism, the study demonstrate how narrative form can function as a site for expressing intersectionality; thus creating an interdisciplinary framework that combines literary analysis with critical theories about identity and social marginalisation. In conclusion, the study contends that literature does more than simply portray marginalisation; it acts as a performance of the very complexity of those who live at the intersection of many overlapping social forces (Crenshaw, 1989).

Keywords: *intersectional identity, narrative strategy, marginalisation, non-linear temporality, linguistic hybridity*

Introduction

Literature has, over the years, provided a reflection of the disparities and inequalities in society, as well as an understanding of people living on the margins. Traditionally, however, studies usually viewed individuals belonging to marginalised communities (race, gender, class, sexual orientation, nationality etc.) through discrete categories, without noting how all of these identities intersect and provide meaning to each other through lived experience. The historical oppression faced by a Black woman cannot be reduced solely to race or gender, because it is produced at the intersection of these social constructs. Similar is the case of people from the diaspora and linguistic minorities who experience an overlap of various powers and constraints acting upon their existence.

This study analyses Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987/2004), Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987/2012) and Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003) to examine how formal strategies (i.e., fragmentation, multiple perspectives, non-linear time, linguistically hybrid text and

others) highlight the complexity of life lived at multiple margins. In *Beloved*, fragmented and ghost-like voices convey the psychological and historical trauma that Black women experienced following slavery. In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldúa constructs the complex identities of queer Chicana border dwellers by using code-switching and blending of genres. In *The Namesake*, Lahiri conveys the complexities related to the displacement of people from one culture to another through her use of dual perspective and temporal framing to present her characters' experiences. Their narrative forms serve as a place where marginalised individuals express their unique experiences highlighting their intersecting marginalities. Using the theory of intersectionality, this study demonstrates how authors use narrative strategies to create multilayered, interconnected representations of marginality.

Beyond Single-Axis Identity

Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989) idea of intersectionality looks at how multiple power systems are interrelated to create the identities of individuals (or groups) instead of viewing systems of power in isolation. To her, Black women aren't just Black or women; their experiences are shaped by overlapping systems of racism and sexism (139-40). This challenges "single-axis frameworks," which assume that an individual category describes a person's identity while ignoring how social hierarchies are constructed together (Crenshaw, 1989, 140). Traditional scholars often focus on race as the basis for interpreting the work of Black authors or writers classified as "marginalised." Alternatively, many feminist scholars pay attention only to the gendered nature of literary texts, without addressing how the experience of racialisation or immigration has shaped the author's voice or representation. As stated by Patricia Hill Collins (2000) the interdependent and mutually-constructing systems of oppression create an overall model of domination (225).

This chapter looks at how these intersections are represented through different narrative forms, each using literary devices to convey the experience of intersectionality: fragmented narrative order, non-linear temporality, shifting focalisation, polyvocality, and hybrid language. These devices enable readers to understand that characters have overlapping experiences of living in multiple power structures simultaneously. Thus, narrative form helps readers understand the multiple ways identity is formed (i.e. as relational/ as unstable/ as historical). By disrupting linear time and using two or more conflicting accounts in order to create a single story, writers establish tension and negotiation as an inherent part of living along multiple intersections of identity. In *Beloved*, this intersection is made up of different aspects of identity—being Black, being a woman, and the after-effects of slavery. By using fragmented narrative structure and multiple perspectives, Morrison depicts a fragmented psychological state, resulting from experiencing a traumatic past. In “The Site of Memory,” Morrison (1995) states that though writers often “drop a veil over these proceedings too terrible to relate” (90) her purpose is to “rip that veil” (91), through the use of fragmentation and non-linear time. In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldúa generates an alternate form of writing and dialects (English, Spanish and Chicano) to blend autobiography, poetry, history, and theory (Anzaldúa, 1987/2012) and perceive an identity based on contradictions (*mestiza* consciousness) (77). In *The Namesake*, diasporic identity is formed by the interrelating forces of migration, ethnicity, understanding generational differences, and class mobility. The use of oscillating climes between India and America, and from parental to child viewpoints create a site-specific realisation of the divided consciousness of an immigrant’s identity (Lahiri, 2003, 48–49).

The diversity in primary texts show how intersectionality works transnationally and cross-culturally while reaffirming that multi-dimensional oppression is both unique and not shared equally between cultures, thus presenting ways to view forms of writing differently. The study thus outlines three different narrative techniques: fragmentation and haunting in *Beloved*; hybrid language and generic disruption in *Borderlands/La Frontera*; and dual perspective and diasporic temporality in *The Namesake*.

Crenshaw (1989) argues that discrimination is experienced based on one's race and gender. Therefore, intersectionality challenges "single-axis frameworks" that don't account for multiple identities, the way structural oppression creates variety within an individual's identity, and the nature of social hierarchies themselves. Collins (2000) extends this idea to include oppression through a "matrix of domination," where all aspects of oppression (race, class, gender, and sexual orientation) interact and create power in society. Intersectionality demonstrates that one's lived experiences are affected by multiple factors at once and through the relationships of those experiences.

Narrative Form as a Site of Intersectional Expression

This study posits that narrative form is an epistemological tool—the way a story is presented has an impact on how the reader understands knowledge around identity, history, and power. Cathy Caruth (1996) describes trauma as being non-linear and returning through fragmented pieces, repetitions, and disjointed time (4). Dominick LaCapra (2001) differentiates between a completed story and the continuation of working through a traumatic event, with the disruption of time representing unresolved violent actions in the past. Therefore, both fragmentation and non-linearity do

not exist as merely an authorial style, but rather represent the formal depiction of a historical event that has occurred.

Theories on diaspora and postcolonialism demonstrate that the narrative strategies used to mediate identity can be quite elaborate and complicated. Stuart Hall (1990) describes cultural identity as something that is constantly at work, rather than being a static entity, and there is no single correct version of it because of historical breaks (225). Similarly, Avtar Brah (1996) describes the diaspora as a set of interconnected relationships and spaces where different forms of time and place meet. The result of these spaces is often that the same situation can be recounted in two or more ways (dual perspectives) and/or the same situation may be interpreted differently at different times due to changes in the meaning of what was previously agreed upon in a particular situation (temporal fluctuations). These two strategies resist teleological narrations of assimilation/ return and instead reflect the contradictory, multiple characteristics of diasporic subjectivities. Post-colonialism and borderlands theory point to the conceptual importance of hybridisation when it comes to language. According to Homi K. Bhabha (1994), it is through the in-between places of speech (2) that cultural meaning is created through hybridisation and this is manifested in the subversion of dominant norms and values. Anzaldúa (1987/2012) posits that *mestiza* consciousness is a way of living in contradiction based on the hybridisation of language and culture (78). As such, both code-switching and genre-blending serve not only as means to convey information, but to undermine established hierarchies of language and question the authoritative nature of monologic discourse. Thus, the hybridisation of narrative serves to theorise identity itself.

The theoretical frameworks of intersectionality, trauma theory, diaspora studies, and postcolonial criticism all have in common the premise that narrative structure mediates the ways social knowledge is created. Typically, linear and unified forms of narrative assume there is some kind of coherent subjectivity, or linear historical progression; however, fragmented, polyvocal, and/or hybrid forms of narrative demonstrate an alternate way to carry the narrative/message forward by depicting the simultaneity of different systems of power creating tension and ambiguity between the characters' lives. This study highlights the performativity of intersectionality in narrative form through a focus on the use of fragmentation and haunting in Morrison's *Beloved*, dual perspectives and diasporic temporality in Lahiri's *The Namesake*, and code-switching and hybrid genres in Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*.

Fragmented Voices, Layered Lives: Trauma and Multiplicity in *Beloved*

Situated in the historical aftermath of American slavery, *Beloved* (1987/2004) resists the conventions of linear historical narrative, with Sethe's story unfolding not as a coherent autobiography but as a fractured assemblage of voices, temporal disruptions, and spectral presences. Rather than seeing emancipation as resolution, Morrison speaks of "rememory," the persistent return of traumatic history into the present (Morrison, 1987/2004, 49). These formal strategies highlight intersectional dimensions of Black womanhood in post-slavery America, where race, gender, motherhood, and historical trauma come together in inseparable ways.

Sethe's trauma of brutally killing her infant daughter rather than allowing her to be returned to slavery cannot be judged in isolation without understanding the structural

violence of chattel slavery. Morrison refuses to isolate maternal guilt as an individual psychological condition and situates it within the racialised and gendered dehumanisation of enslavement. Spillers (1987) argues that the institution of slavery led to the “ungendering” of the Black female body, rendering Black women simultaneously racialised, commodified, and sexually violated (67). Sethe’s scarred back, described as a “chokecherry tree” (Morrison, 1987/2004, 7), becomes a living site of this intersecting brutality. Morrison’s narrative structure mirrors the multiplicity of her identity (mother, formerly enslaved woman, fugitive, and survivor) as layered and inseparable by rejecting singular perspective and chronological constancy.

Beloved’s fragmented narration shifts among Sethe, Denver, Paul D, and eventually the ghost Beloved. These shifting focalisations not just provide multiple viewpoints, they highlight how subjectivity fractures under trauma. Often blurring the boundary between personal memory and collective history: “Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay” (17) Sethe’s reflections represent not just individual recollection but the enduring presence of slavery’s violence within communal consciousness. Illustrating the intergenerational transmission of trauma (Hirsch, 1997), Denver’s perspective, i.e., her isolation and fear which are shaped by both her mother’s act and the community’s withdrawal, show how historical oppression reproduces marginalisation across generations.

Beloved’s own voice intensifies this fragmentation with her monologues, often syntactically disjointed and minimally punctuated, dissolve the boundaries between individual and ancestral memory: “I am Beloved and she is mine” (Morrison, 1987/2004, 105). This evokes both infant consciousness and the collective trauma of the Middle

Passage, suggesting that *Beloved* is more than a single lost child— she represents “Sixty Million and more” **Africans who died** because of the **transatlantic slave trade** through capture, the Middle Passage, enslavement, and its brutal legacy (Morrison, 1987/2004). Avery F. Gordon (2008) conceptualises haunting as the return of repressed social violence that structures the present (8). In this sense, *Beloved* functions as a spectral manifestation of unresolved historical trauma, and literalises the persistence of slavery’s afterlife within Black female subjectivity.

The recursive unfolding of the narrative around crucial places and events like Sweet Home, the escape, the infanticide, through flashbacks and partial revelations highlight the intersectional representation with its non-linear temporality. This reflects the psychic nature of trauma which resists direct narration and instead returns belatedly in fragmented form as Caruth states (1996, 4). Until well into the novel, Morrison withholds the full account of Sethe’s act, allowing readers to experience the disorientation that characterises traumatic memory. Temporal disruption works both on theme and form, aligning readers’ experience with the fractured temporality of trauma survivors.

The novel challenges the linear historical narrative that sees emancipation as closure. For formerly enslaved individuals, freedom does not erase structural or psychic oppression, as depicted by Baby Suggs. A powerful spiritual leader in her prime, Suggs ultimately stopped preaching and singing, portraying her marginalisation by fading into silence. Signalling exhaustion and disillusionment, her silence underscores the limits of intersecting racial terror and communal silence. Voice and silence in *Beloved* work as political measures: what can be spoken and what remains unspeakable show systemic constraints. Sethe’s reluctance

to speak out about the infanticide, referring only to “what I did” (Morrison, 1987/2004, 91) shows the limits of language on facing extreme violence. Silence here denotes shame as well as the impossibility of proper representation. Similarly, the neighbours’ failure to warn Sethe of approaching slave catchers reveals the internal fragmentation caused by oppression. Resisting reductive moral judgment, Morrison’s polyphonic narrative allows these tensions to coexist without any resolution.

The fragmentation in *Beloved*’s narrative form is not just aesthetic but also a structural necessity. The use of multiple narrators, spectral disruptions, and absence of chronology show the lived reality of intersecting race, gender, and historical trauma. The recurring line “It was not a story to pass on” (137) shows how traumatic memory disrupts linear storytelling and resists conventional narrative closure, aligning form with the remnants of an oppressed past. Sethe’s declaration “Beloved, she my daughter. She mine,” (100) encapsulates both maternal attachment and the hauntingly traumatic legacy of slavery, while formulating identity not as stable but as contested and fragmented. Paul D’s insistence “You your own best thing, Sethe. You are” (136) reflects a moment of self-assurance after being dehumanised for years. Narratively, Morrison uses such lines to foreground individual identity reclamation amid intersecting oppressions. Since the forces shaping her life overlap and are destabilising by nature, Sethe’s experience cannot be contained within a linear, unified narrative.

Linguistic Hybridity and Border Crossings: Queer Chicana Identity in *Borderlands/La Frontera*

Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza (1987/2012), is situated at the U.S.–Mexico border as Anzaldúa writes as

a Chicana lesbian intellectual. She theorises that identity is defined through many separate crossings (i.e., geographical, linguistic, cultural, racial, and sexual). The “borderlands” are more than just physical areas, they are also a psychic and social space that exists through contradiction and negotiation. As a queer Chicana subject, Anzaldúa records her experience of marginalisation from a variety of intersecting identities based on ethnicity, gender, sexuality, language and/or nation. Her text demonstrates her multi-layered identity and positionality through hybrid use of language, multi-genre and non-linear style of writing.

Central to Anzaldúa’s project is the concept of the “*mestiza* consciousness,” a mode of awareness forged through inhabiting multiple, often conflicting identities (Anzaldúa, 1987/2012, 77). Such consciousness contends against binary conceptions about the world (self/other, Mexican/American) thereby celebrating ambiguity and contradiction. Anzaldúa experiences oppression of racism, sexism, homophobia, and linguistic marginalisation all at once. She employs multiple formal strategies, including code-switching among English, Spanish, and Chicano Spanish, and refuses to translate many Spanish-language passages, thereby disrupting monolingual expectations and challenging the presumption of a linguistic hierarchy that privileges standard English. This aligns with Bhabha’s (1994) notion of hybridity, wherein meaning emerges in the “in-between” spaces of cultural enunciation (2). Swiftly navigating languages, Anzaldúa resists the dominance of standardised English and supports Chicano Spanish as a legitimate expressive medium. Language thus is a site of struggle and affirmation: “So, if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language” (Anzaldúa, 1987/2012, 59). Linguistic hybridity thus performs the liminality of border identity, enacting rather than merely describing cultural

in-betweenness. The bilingual aspect of this narrative is also indicative of the internalised linguistic oppression that Anzaldúa describes; Chicano Spanish, frequently associated with improper or wrong use of language, serves as a signifier of the social marginalisation of this group. By using multiple dialects and speech patterns in her narrative, Anzaldúa challenges the authority of standardised discourse.

Genre hybridity contributes to this intersectional articulation by fusing autobiography, history, cultural theory, and poetry within one text. This further breaks down the borders that have historically been used to create distinction between disciplines. Just as Anzaldúa rejects being described as belonging to one specific sexual or cultural identity, she also describes *Borderlands* as unable to fit into any one of these genres. Embodied or personal experiences provide a means of knowing and understanding, which challenges the tradition of knowing through separation or detachment from one's experience (objective or scientific). Such an approach resonates with feminist epistemology, which foregrounds situated knowledge and embodied subjectivity (Collins, 2000). Using a series of non-linear narrative structures is yet another way she formally enacts intersectional identities through her writing. Rather than presenting a chronological life story, Anzaldúa works through memories, myths, cultural analysis, and spiritual reflection. The borderlands are presented as cyclical, recursive, and layered; past and present, indigenous history and contemporary politics coexist within the same textual moment. This disruption of time is reflective of trauma theory's observation that cultures have been marginalised through time many times over, thus rendering their histories non-linear in nature (Caruth, 1996). For Anzaldúa, however, fragmentation can represent the creative potential of the development of a new consciousness, formed in the midst of

contradictions. Ultimately, the formal strategies of *Borderlands/La Frontera*—code-switching, genre hybridity, and non-linear structure—embody the multidimensional marginalisation of queer Chicana identity. Language enacts cultural and racial liminality; genre-blending mirrors the refusal of categorical containment; fragmented temporality reflects both historical dispossession and creative reconstitution. Through these formal devices employed by Anzaldúa, she illustrates that identity at the border is not something that exists or is created once and for all but something that continues to exist through ongoing negotiations among multiple overlapping axes of power.

Anzaldúa's assertion that the border "*es una herida abierta...*" (is an open wound) fuses geography with cultural conflict, articulating the pain of living at multiple margins. It uses metaphor and spatial imagery to convey cultural, racial, and geopolitical marginalisation: "The U.S.-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds" (3). Anzaldúa envisions identity not as inherited but as actively constructed across intersecting cultures: "So, don't give me your tenets and your laws... making a new culture—*una cultura mestiza*—with my own lumber..." (22). Her declaration that she must "stand and claim my space" to build "*una cultura mestiza*" emphasises the active formation of identity at the crossroads of cultures and power. When she insists "Until I am free to write bilingually... my tongue will be illegitimate" (59) she cannot accept herself, and ties the politics of language directly to the politics of intersectional identity. By explicitly linking language, identity, and legitimacy, she foregrounds how narrative (and self-expression) is shaped by intersecting cultural norms.

Displacement, Duality, and Diaspora: Negotiating Generational Margins in *The Namesake*

Exploring the Bengali-American immigrant experience through the generational tensions between Ashoke Ganguli and his son Gogol, *The Namesake* (2003) explores how identity becomes created at the intersection of cultural migration, generational differences, and race from an overall genealogical perspective. Instead of showing assimilation as a simple, one-way process, Lahiri uses shifting points of view and changes in time to reflect the instability of diasporic identity, establishing that immigrant identity is constantly shaped and reshaped in different ways.

At the centre of the novel is the struggle between Ashoke, who reminisces constantly about past events in India and uses language and cultural rhythms from his homeland while starting anew in Massachusetts; and his son Gogol, who feels ashamed of being from Bangladesh, of inheriting a name that has no cultural relevance to either American or Bengali culture, and growing up in a prejudicial environment. Ashoke's relationship with memory, language, and culture in the context of his origins has helped shape how Gogol views himself – both through legacy and as a burden – by representing his discomfort with his hyphenated identity through his unusual name, which has, like his identity, no real place within either society. This generational conflict reflects what Hall (1990) describes as the diasporic condition of “being” and “becoming” (225), in which identity is shaped by both historical continuity and present dislocation.

Lahiri's dual perspectives reflect how both cultures exist simultaneously. Within the text, the reader often observes the thoughts and feelings of Gogol; however, there is also access to the interior world of his parents Ashoke and Ashima.

This switching back and forth within the story structure does not allow the reader to prioritise either Ashoke and Ashima's cultural experience over that of Gogol's. Feeling isolated after moving from Calcutta to America, Ashima's isolation is due to her inability to speak both English and Bengali well, and because of being separated from her family (Lahiri, 2003). Lahiri's observation "For being a foreigner, Ashima is beginning to realise, is a sort of lifelong pregnancy—a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts" (49) conveys the endurance of immigrant identity, where cultural displacement becomes persistent rather than temporary. This metaphor highlights an immigrant's experience of marginality as ongoing, unsettled, and bodily, reflecting how identity feels in a diasporic setting.

In addition, Gogol's experience of being called by the nickname of his father constantly reminds him that he has different cultural identities (American and Indian) and he struggles with this cultural divide. He changes his name legally to Nikhil to create an identity for himself separate from his father's culture. The relationship between Gogol's culture based on his parents' experience and his desire for a different type of identity creates tension between the homeland and hostland as well as the tension between traditional identity and self-defined identity. Instead of transcending the generational gap, Lahiri creates a space in the text where the experiences of both characters can exist. The resultant dual focalisation of the text parallels the interconnectedness seen in diaspora theory and demonstrates that one's identity is created through the negotiation of cultural experiences rather than the replacement of one culture with another (Brah, 1996). Through shifting perspectives, Lahiri defies any single-axis model of an immigrant's identity. Gogol's struggle comes from a combination of generational and cultural events,

which is captured by the narrative form. Temporal structures underline diasporic duality with the novel covering the decades, alternating between Ashoke's recollections of his almost deadly train accident in India and Gogol's present-day experiences in the United States. This back-and-forth from the past to the present lends diasporic temporality, where different times exist together. Ashoke's journey from India to North America was prompted by the influence of Goggle the writer and their experiences living with family in India after the accident. This pivotal moment in the past affects Ashoke's son and how he shapes his life in America through a different set of cultural and familial values.

Gogol understands temporality in a different manner—his sense of self is oriented toward the future (romantic relationships, career aspirations, and self-definition independent of his parents). At the same time, however, his pursuit of a future is often impeded by the obligations of immediate family and the influence of the cultural memory of the families from whom they come from. The repeated returns to these various forms of reflection create a sense of continuity between the present and the past. An assimilationist narrative of immigration, which is usually seen as a clean break with the past, is not supported by Lahiri's non-linear development.

Using naming as a narrative device to explore identity fluidity and cultural negotiation in diasporic life, Lahiri highlights how personal identity is reconfigured amid intersecting pressures of heritage and assimilation: "Nikhil. It wasn't the name he was *born with*" (243). The evocative question "How many times does a person write his name in a lifetime—a million? Two million?" (98) presents Lahiri's use of naming as a motif for navigating selfhood in a space that is culturally liminal, thereby highlighting the repetitive/ritualistic nature of identity affirmation through naming. Situated at different intersections of identity and heritage

(Russian literature vs. Bengali culture, American culture vs. Indian culture), Gogol attempts to align himself with cultural norms in America by taking on the name “Nikhil.” However, when he learns the history of his name after the death of his father Ashoke, the meaning of his name changes. The story of his name becomes an intersectional space for love from his father, history of migration, and literary memories, implying that one’s identity formation is not possible in isolation from interconnected narratives.

Ultimately, *The Namesake* demonstrates that the immigrant experience is not reducible to cultural difference alone. Shaped by generational expectation, racial positioning, linguistic negotiation, and historical contingency, Lahiri’s narrative strategies like dual perspectives, temporal oscillation, and symbolic naming facilitate this complexity. She enacts the multidimensionality of diasporic life by structuring the novel around relational subjectivities rather than singular consciousness. In doing so, the narrative form itself becomes a vehicle for representing intersectional marginalisation. Neither fixed nor unified, identity in *The Namesake* is produced through displacement, duality, and the ongoing negotiation of generational margins.

Form as Intersectional Praxis: Narrative Strategies for the Margins

The narratives studied above show that identities based on race, gender, migration and historical trauma cannot be adequately represented through single, linear forms of representation. Morrison uses fragmentation and polyvocality in *Beloved* to show how slavery has created psychic/historically-based divisions in identity for black women. The use of recursive time, different narrative voices and perspectives, and the experiential disintegration of time

and place compels readers to reckon with the continued existence of racialised and/or gendered violence (Morrison, 1987/2004).

Anzaldúa's radical formal experimentation in *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987/2012) involving code-switching between the English and Spanish languages helps challenge mono-lingual authority, thus validating the vernacular of the borderland. Occupying multiple margins through her identity as a queer Chicana subject, Anzaldúa's writing embodies intersectionality not only through the content but also the structure of her narrative, whereby she refuses to represent any of her marginal identities through a singular voice, in a stable genre, or in a linear timeline. By declaring that the border is an open wound, she uses spatial metaphor to render geographic marginality palpable, fusing identity and place in a single evocative image.

The Namesake's narrative structure uses dual focalisation and diasporic time to show how generations of immigrants deal with marginality. The use of Gogol and his parents' thoughts shows that identity is created through relationships, not through individuals alone (Lahiri, 2003). Temporal layering and perspective shifts in the narrative structure show the intersection of culture, generational expectations and racial positioning. Rejecting assimilationist teleology, the narrative structure emphasises the instability and multiplicity of diasporic subjectivity. Lahiri's observation that "being a foreigner... is a sort of lifelong pregnancy" (49) frames immigrant experience not as an ongoing phase but as a persistent condition, placing identity at the crossroads of culture, place, and belonging.

These texts present literature as a place where marginalised identities are represented and built into the

structure of the narrative. Crenshaw (1989) describes how systems of power are overlapping—together they create connection and this kind of relational logic when translated into a narrative practice appears as a polyphonic voice or voice of confusion, hybridity and disruption of time. This perspective has interdisciplinary implications related to the integration of literary criticism and critical race theory, gender studies, diaspora studies and post-colonial studies to show how valuable is the dialogue among disciplines. Fragmented narratives and code switching are not only examples of aesthetic devices, but they also intervene in larger debates related to representation, power, and the creation of knowledge. The texts in study drive home a point: literature today not only gives voice to those who have been silenced, but also modifies narrative structure to reflect identities shaped at the intersections of race, gender, migration, sexual identity and history. By modifying form, Morrison, Lahiri, and Anzaldúa show that intersectionality is both theory of identity and a practice of narrative, one characterised by multiplicity, relationality, and structural transformation.

Conclusion

The study reveals that the lived experience of marginalisation does not occur along one axis, but rather emerges from the interaction of a variety of identity markers. Morrison's fragmented and multi-voiced narrative captures the intersections of race, gender, and historical trauma in the aftermath of slavery in a way that creates a way to remember events rather than follow a linear pattern. Lahiri's concise writing style, use of dual perspectives, and non-linear time structure exemplify the experience of diasporic identities, the experience being one of constant renegotiation between different generations and cultures. Anzaldúa's experimental blending of genres and code-switching challenge the

conventions of traditional literature and redefine language as tool for resistance and self-definition.

The focus on form as an intersectional practice furthers discussions across disciplines regarding marginalised identity and experience in literary texts. Attention to method is equally as important as attention to content/representation of identities. Literature is thus conceived of as both a representation for marginalised individuals and a site for the multiple complexities associated with living at the intersections of marginalisation to be performed, challenged, and redefined.

References

- Anzaldúa, G. 2012. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (4th ed.). Aunt Lute Books. (Original work published 1987)
- Bhabha, H. K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge.
- Brah, A. 1996. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting identities*. Routledge.
- Caruth, C. 1996. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Chakravarty, S. 2010. "Naming, Identity, and Diaspora in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 46(3), pp. 299–310. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2010.482788>
- Collins, P. H. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Cho, S., Crenshaw, K. W., & McCall, L. 2013. "Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 38(4), pp. 785–810. <https://doi.org/10.1086/669608>
- Crenshaw, K. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989 (1), pp. 139–167.

Dutta, M. 2015. Negotiating Indian-American Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's Fiction. *South Asian Review*, 36 (2), pp. 75–88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02759527.2015.1053413>

Gordon, A. F. 2008. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (2nd ed.). University of Minnesota Press.

Hall, S. 1990. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora". In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. pp. 222–237. Lawrence & Wishart.

Harris, T. 1991. "The Trauma of Memory in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*". *African American Review*, 25(4), pp. 625–636. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3041901>

Hirsch, M. 1997. *Family frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*. Harvard University Press.

LaCapra, D. 2001. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Lahiri, J. 2003. *The Namesake*. Houghton Mifflin.

Maldonado, L. 2008. "Language as Identity in Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*." *Journal of Chicana/o Studies*, 6 (1), pp. 45–60.

Morrison, T. 1995. "The Site of Memory". In W. Zinsser (Ed.), *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*. pp. 83–102. Houghton Mifflin.

Morrison, T. 2004. *Beloved*. Vintage International. (Original work published 1987)

Spillers, H. J. 1987. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book". *Diacritics*, 17(2), 65–81. <https://doi.org/10.2307/464747>.

ORCID: 0009-0009-6033-4815

Dr. Jasmine A. Choudhury

Email: jachoudhury@rgu.ac

Dr. Jasmine A. Choudhury is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at The Assam Royal Global University, Guwahati, Assam, India. She has done her Ph.D. in African-American literature from the Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay School of English and Foreign Languages Studies, Assam University, Silchar, Assam. She has published a number of research papers in national and international journals of repute, and presented papers in international conferences and seminars. Her current research focuses on Memory Studies, Diaspora Studies, Trauma Studies, Partition literature, and Posthumanist Studies.