

Subdued Resistance as a Force of Change in Rahman's Selected Short Stories

Abstract

The study explores how subdued resistance and subtle defiance are portrayed in Rahman's selected short stories. Rahman's stories are significant in shaping the passive acts of resistance and defiance that ultimately lead to revolutionary change in society. The current investigation offers a fresh perspective on how covert resistance can catalyze radical change in society. Through textual and thematic analysis of the short narratives, applying the postulates derived from James's theory of resistance, and examining the forms and patterns of subdued resistance, this study emphasizes how these actions led to significant revolutions in individuals and society. Moreover, the research posited Rahman's short stories as a counter-narrative, cross-examining prevailing literary works that favored explicit methods of effecting change. The results suggest that exploring subdued resistance in literature reveals its significant role in societal change, encouraging further research into its impact across cultural and interdisciplinary contexts.

Keywords: Subdued resistance, cultural defiance, identities

INTRODUCTION

Literature is the representation of life. This quality of literature has been used by the authors to propagate certain philosophies and change minds, with resistance to oppression among the many themes (Zala 26-27). The authors have drawn on the literature to show human struggle against oppression, replete with examples of overt rebellion, defiance, and revolutionary acts that catalyze social change. Along with these overt, loud examples, literature also presents covert, subtle forms of resistance and defiance against the oppressive acts of the powerful (Shah 39-40). The current study explores the patterns of this subtle and subdued resistance.

Background of Study

Literature has always been used as a tool to control minds, to propagate certain ideals, to practice power, and to resist power. It is used as a subtle force to reveal the patterns by which power is constructed and practiced in a society, and how resistance to that power is created and turned into a force to challenge those in power and break the status quo. Literature trains and prepares minds to rebel, to resist through the characters' overt, heroic acts of chivalry and valor. It also offers covert and subdued patterns of resistance that are rather slow-moving and

Muhammad Asif (Corresponding Author)

Dy District Education Officer, Taxila, E-mail: asif.edu71@gmail.com

Dr Rashida Imran

Department of English Language & Applied Linguistics-Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad,

Email: rashida.imran@aiou.edu.pk

apparently un-heroic, yet they serve as a tool to bring about permanent changes in individuals' minds and, ultimately, in society (Ardaa; Freire 43-50). Harlow (Layoun, 1989), in her seminal work, signifies the importance of literature that portrays and propagates covert acts of resistance. The acts of subdued and subtle resistance are woven under the surface and are removed from overt acts of rebellion and non-conformity. They are quieter modes of challenging the status quo. Unlike overt acts of bravery that attract immediate attention and win laurels, the covert and subtle acts of defiance and resistance are slower and demand more patience and perseverance. McKenzie-Mohr and Lafrance (2017) discuss the concept of the narrative of resistance, which, according to them, is the crafting of stories by individuals that present a counterargument or antithesis, instigating social and political change by igniting the desire to resist. Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) portrays the institution of slavery and explores how personal narratives can change individuals' minds, leading to a wave of change large enough to overturn power structures in favor of those enslaved. Weiss (2005) portrays in the novel the resistance of the working class against Nazi Germany. It is a great display of nonconfrontational resistance discourse against the oppressors. Kour (2024) argues that literature serves as a source of hope for the marginalized, enabling them to stand against corrupt forces without confronting them face-to-face in brutal onslaughts. Salve (2022) examines the impact of literature on various social movements in India, emphasizing how literary expressions foster solidarity and challenge oppressive systems.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the understanding of resistance in literature by shedding light on the often-overlooked, subtle dynamics of subdued resistance. It explores how individuals navigate oppressive structures and societal norms through subtle acts of defiance, offering a deeper insight into the complexities of resistance. By analyzing Rahman's short stories, this study enriches the discourse on literature's role in addressing societal issues and fostering critical thinking. It underscores how literature can serve as a mirror of the multifaceted nature of human resistance, thereby enhancing its relevance in contemporary discussions.

Problem Statement

This study attempts to portray how subdued resistance is perpetuated and serves as a force for change in society. The current study also attempts to address the apparent research gap in the limited literature on subdued resistance as a force of change. Existing studies predominantly emphasize overt and explicit forms of resistance. The subtle acts of defiance, nonconformity, and subversion that operate beneath the surface have been ignored. This gap underscores the need to examine the complexities of subdued resistance and its role in driving societal transformation. In Pakistani fiction, subtle defiance remains largely unexplored. Tariq Rahman's *Just a Child* and *The Olive Branch* portray powerful acts of opposition that reshape characters and challenge authority. This study examines how such subdued resistance functions as a transformative and retaliatory force while also redefining resistance as a psychological and socially reformative act. Many studies on resistance in the literature tend to focus on Western literary traditions and canonical works. There is a research gap in the examination of resistance, particularly subdued resistance, in the context of literature from non-Western and diverse cultural backgrounds. Rahman's short stories, rooted in a specific cultural context, offer an

opportunity to bridge this gap by exploring how subdued resistance is portrayed within diverse cultural settings.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To examine subtle resistance in Rahman's selected short stories
2. To explore the role of subtle resistance in reshaping the characters' development
3. To assess how subtle resistance serves as a force of retaliation in Rahman's selected short stories

Research Questions

1. What are the manifestations of subtle resistance in Rahman's selected short stories?
2. How does subtle resistance contribute to character development in Rahman's selected short stories?
3. How does subtle resistance serve as a force of retaliation in Rahman's selected short stories?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research is a qualitative textual analysis of selected short stories by Rahman to highlight the pattern of subdued resistance and its various subthemes portrayed through characters. Qualitative research is significant for analyzing themes such as gender, power, and resistance. As no numerical data are involved and only an in-depth psychological study of the characters is required, qualitative analysis is best suited to the research. The researcher has opted for this paradigm because it allows for a deep exploration of the often-subtle forms of defiance embedded in the narratives. By employing qualitative and textual analysis, it is easy to uncover the implicit ideologies, societal critiques, and the subtle ways in which characters resist and challenge the status quo. Together, these methods provide a comprehensive understanding of how Rahman's stories serve as a vehicle for subtle social and political critique.

Theoretical Framework

The applied theory is James C. Scott's theory of resistance (*Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, 1985), adapted by Stellan Vinthagen and Anna Johansson (*Everyday Resistance: Exploration of a Concept and Its Theories*, 2013), applied to a text of short stories. According to this theory, Scott has provided a perspective on hegemony and invisible power which has been influential though also controversial. Scott has talked of the idea of "transcripts", whereby he has discussed the social settings that deal with particular ways of speaking and behaving. Scott has discussed different characters and how they portray a new way of speaking and behaving. These methods have been particularly explained in situations where violence has been portrayed. These types of resistance affect both types of people, individually and in groups. Scott has observed that in social settings, both the dominant and the weak have been caught in the same web and face the same situation. Scott has expressed the psychological/ cultural view of hegemony as subconscious and internalized images. But with the concept of resistance, Scott explains that power lies somewhere between structure and

agency. Scott has suggested that there are clear connections between resistance and ideas of hidden power. Just like, according to Scott, hidden powers can be used by powerful actors to keep certain issues in solved forms. Similarly, some powerless groups can employ strategies of resistance to hide their actions from the powerful, using these methods to clarify the situation and make themselves invisible. An example of African-American spirituals is appropriate for these kinds of circumstances. Scott has also offered an idea of everyday resistance linked to daily chores. Scott has explained the daily resistance, such as foot-dragging, evasion, false compliance, pilfering, slander, and sabotage. Scott's ideas are more directly applicable in such a society where ideological resistance is disguised, and the status quo is part of the trend. These forms of resistance require little coordination and planning. Scott's ideas have been applied to political and social situations and explained in various literary texts.

Hebdige has introduced two Germanic terms related to his theory of subcultural ideas. These two terms are known as conjuncture and specificity. Subcultures form a new system that addresses communal and symbolic concerns and negates the older system, which deals with industrial society, norms, and regulations. But specifically, this system addresses age and class, and how people navigate society, keeping these phenomena in mind. People living in such social systems deal with specific styles. These styles are linked to phenomenal and social conjunctures that reveal their specificity. Subcultures mix with one another, blending different styles to portray true identity through hybridization, as seen across society. These identities operate with relative autonomy, together specifying the image of subcultures within a social system. These relative autonomies have been contracted by subcultures within a social system through a fractured class system, gender gaps, and work, among other factors.

Hebdige, in his theory, has discussed two groups: white working-class youth and Negro. These two groups deal with the revelation of true identity, whether it is openly admitted or partially suppressed by any social group. Black cultural forms have been considered highly significant because they convey key aspects of society. By observing these aspects, people determine the influence over each subcultural style. He has explored the relationship between different subcultures and their influence on society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature is replete with examples of resistance. Literary texts are pregnant with critical thought, helping people understand power structures and prepare to challenge them. Literature also offers a subtle form of covert resistance, i.e., subdued resistance, which is equally significant in bringing about the changes in society to stand up against the forces of the status quo. The current research seeks to reveal the patterns of subdued resistance portrayed in Tariq Rahman's short stories. Hadia's thesis (47) employs Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis to explore how South Asian fiction represents the resistance of female subalterns. Focusing on novels like *The Holy Woman*, *The Dowry Bride*, and *Brick Lane*, the study reveals how women navigate and challenge patriarchal constraints through subtle forms of resistance.

The study by Tamara (421) advocates for Quiet Resistance, defining it as a form of defiance driven by personal attachments rather than solely by justice. Contrary to the belief that only

justice-based resistance is legitimate, the paper asserts that Quiet Resistance should be recognized as genuine and emphasizes the importance of acknowledging resistance motivated by personal connections. In a study, Callegari and McHugh identify another type of resistance discussed in literary works (21). The study explains women's resistance and their struggle to maintain their identity in society. The researchers discuss the efforts of women who struggle to maintain their place in society (39).

The concept of subdued resistance in Edwidge Danticat's "Caroline's Wedding" and Chimamanda Adichie's "Imitation" is intricately woven into the experiences of migration depicted in these short stories (Amber, 229). As the characters navigate their transformative journeys to the United States, their interactions with the forces of Blackness, gender, and class reflect a subtle yet powerful form of resistance against the constraints imposed by neoliberal capitalism. Through a Black feminist lens, the stories invite a progressive reconsideration of diaspora, highlighting the resilience and complexity of these subdued forms of resistance (239). With reference to literature by Middle Eastern writers, Layoun discusses Harlow's ideals of subtle resistance and defiance. Layoun is of the view that it is not necessary to always choose militant ways to resist, as often it causes more damage to the oppressed, but it can be embedded in narratives to create awareness and to give a counter-narrative, i.e., a different perspective to show resilience and resistance against those using power as a tool to control. The same ideals are promoted by McKenzie-Mohr and Lafrance, who argue that storytelling and narrative can be used as tools for counter-storying, allowing marginalized and muffled voices to be heard (191).

The study by Jahangir and Rasool examines how Pakistani English novels portray subaltern resistance through characters who challenge elitist narratives. By analyzing works like *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, *The Murder of Aziz Khan*, and *The Pakistani Bride*, the authors highlight how marginalized voices assert agency within oppressive socio-political structures. The study by Singh (93) explores the concept of resistance in everyday life, emphasizing its multifaceted nature and various manifestations, including silence, opposition, cooperation, and ignoring others. It discusses how resistance emerges from power dynamics, such as children defying school rules, and how it contributes to social friction and change. Through the metaphor of theatre, it illustrates the interplay between human behavior and power structures, highlighting both overt and covert forms of resistance. Ultimately, the text underscores the pervasive nature of resistance in shaping social dynamics and collective experiences.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The discussion and analysis section presents a detailed qualitative textual analysis of Rahman's selected short stories, showing how often-overlooked, subtle forms of covert resistance challenge the oppressor. The analysis is theoretically grounded in the everyday resistance theory of Scott (as adapted by Vinthagen and Johansson), revealing how characters challenge the status quo and threaten power structures. The following is the analysis based on the postulates derived from the theory of resistance.

Resistance through Intersectional Identities and Cultural Defiance

In Tariq Rahman's short stories, resistance through intersectional identities and cultural defiance is portrayed through characters who quietly challenge oppressive socio-cultural systems. Rahman's narratives reveal that resistance often manifests in subtle acts of defiance shaped by the characters' intersecting identities, such as gender, class, and social status, ultimately reshaping the world around them. The close textual analysis of *Just a Child* highlights that the characters' actions and interactions show subdued resistance through intersectional identities and cultural defiance. A thorough study of the story through the theoretical framework reveals the implications of their actions and motivations within the story's social context. Central to the story is the child's fascination with the narrator's injury. Moreover, the narrator's flashbacks and reflections on the plight of resistance and the complex issues associated with it, in particular personal and social contexts, are integral to subdued resistance. Following is the analysis of textual excerpts taken from the story:

"One heard such a great deal about the dark ditches and the fatal rat-a-tat of the foe's machine guns, that the sight, validating as it were, the reality of that terrifying warfare, drew considerable attention" (Rahman 70).

In these lines, the narrator has highlighted that war has brought nightmarish trauma as an unavoidable and unnoticeable dilemma as a result of war. The war has been otherwise glorified as an institution of societies since the inception of mankind. The injured narrator has been bearing the baggage of suffering and is therefore resisting the so-called glorification of the war by countering the lustrous arguments of the common public, forcing them to see with their own eyes the catastrophes war has brought to their doorsteps.

"Old women could hardly dissemble their anxiety. "How dreadful," I heard one of them screaming, but all the invalids do discover this very restaurant. What did he do, I wonder?" (Rahman 70).

The narrator further engages readers through the horrific depiction of the pain experienced by the public, particularly women. Social contexts lure men into ideological thinking and compel them to incite one another to wage war. The women, however, are the ones who face the consequences of glorified notions of war, both by losing the ones they love and the social status they are left with, both during and after the wars. They live in the same society and, therefore, have a confusing state of mind. On the one hand, they resist notions of war because they can assess the gravity of their loss; on the other hand, they are forced to set their insecurities and losses aside because social conventions and norms do not allow them to show their dismay. Likewise, the women, in the context of the story, are unable to show their dismay at the harsh realities of war because societal norms show discomfort at such a weakness.

"I smiled. They reminded me of my own grandmother, whose possessions I pleased to fling down the window into the streets" (Rahman 70).

The narrator's flashback in the given text symbolizes the narrator's denial and rebellion against the family's tyrannical expectations of an individual. The excerpt further highlights how the narrator has established resistance as a historically significant cultural characteristic in opposition to the authority of culture and society. This act shows that the narrator's interest in throwing his grandmother's belongings is a defiance of societal norms. It also acts as an example of resistance through personal subculture within his society.

"The entourage was completed by a gracefully outfitted nobleman with an impression of quiet dignity around him" (Rahman 70),

The character, the narrator of the story, is talking about the typical representative of British colonial cultural behavior during the colonial reign. The protagonist's subsequent encounter with the British further highlights the colonized people's subcultural resistance to the colonizers. The narrator's identity is championed as that of a war veteran, insofar as his past actions during colonial rule are concerned. Moreover, his description of the British indicates his resistance to the British aristocracy's colonial attitude towards the colonizers.

"I busied myself in an English delicacy, the brag of the café, and examined the whole room for connections till my eyes came back to the child. He was still watching me" (Rahman 71).

This excerpt indicates performative resistance on the part of the protagonist in light of Butler's theory of performative resistance. In a public restaurant, the narrator, while eating an English dish, is conscious of looking around for acquaintances, thus indicating colonial and cultural identity. Whereas, the act of the boy looking at him shows an instance of performative resistance where the narrator's war injury is juxtaposed with the consumption of the colonial dish as a performative resistance.

"He brightened up, stood on his chair, and swayed his handkerchief to me" (Rahman 71).

The child's reaction to the narrator's expectations also serves as an instance of performative resistance, an unlikely behavior for children. The child's behavior contradicts and resists the orthodox norms of politeness in the story's social context.

"We greeted each other politely, but the sturdy aloofness of his blue eyes suppressed my geniality" (Rahman 71).

The text highlights the interaction between Sardar Hamayoun and the narrator. This excerpt highlights how performative interactions veil tension through forced politeness among social actors living and interacting with one another, regardless of their differences. Through controlled body language, the characters manage their feelings of hatred and discomfort toward each other. The control of social actors over their body language and tone is governed by the social norms of the society to which they belong.

"The reluctant little child stared at me with wide-eyed concentration. Not me, but innovation had engrossed his stare" (Rahman 70).

The lines are analyzed through Crenshaw's intersectionality approach. The analysis indicates that the way the narrator's injury shapes the child's reaction is based on the age difference between him and the child. Further, there is a difference in the level of experience and innocence between the child and the narrator. In expected social behavior, the child's stare response is marked by curiosity, whereas the same response from an adult would be reserved or conditioned by the social context. The difference in child and adult responses directly results from intersecting social identities across different age groups, generation gaps, or innocence towards orthodox norms.

"He kept on watching my leg keenly. It was an origin of attractive captivation for him" (Rahman 72).

The given lines also show the continuity of intersectionality in relation to identity, as the child seems fascinated by the narrator's injury. Again, the factors behind the fascination are the child's age and innocence, as the child has not been influenced by societal perceptions and established norms. Moreover, the fascination of the child also indicates intersectional resistance because the adult experience of the injured leg of the narrator neither directs the child to the trauma of war nor to the horrific physical imperfection of the narrator.

"This shocked the house. His sister--for so she looked to be--got him unhappy. His father rotated to inspect the room, compelled a well-bred smile on his face, and stalked over to me, with calculated arrogance" (Rahman 71).

The child's reaction to the narrator's injured leg contrasts subtly with his family's reaction. The family's reaction to the child's experience highlights how social norms work through power dynamics. As far as his sister is concerned, she leaps to control the child's behavior, while the father attempts to show forced politeness towards the narrator's broken leg. The actions of both the father and the sister reflect compliance with social expectations, while the narrator's bandaged leg signals the child's subdued resistance to social decorum.

"He stayed staring at my leg. The incapacity captivated him. It swelled his juvenile thoughts. It fenced me with a radiance of heroism; tinted me as a war hero, one of the kinds he heard so much about" (Rahman 72).

The child's fascination with the narrator's broken leg indicates the former's idealization of the latter as a hero, which consequently challenges society's orthodox connotations of disability. Traditionally, the disabled have been looked down upon as pitiable, poor creatures who need to be empathized with. Furthermore, the disability also results in a dehumanizing attitude of society towards the disabled, as per the existing social norms. However, for the child, the injury acts as a token of honor rather than a social stigma or physical weakness. Thus, the child's behavior highlights the child's subdued resistance through an intersectional lens.

"I stretched to shake hands with him when he came near. He smiled and drew out a dirty, wilted, tiny paw. I took it in simulated sombreness, taking an air of grave importance" (Rahman 73).

The interaction between the child and the narrator is a performative act that subverts the orthodox understanding of child-adult interaction. Here in the text under investigation, the narrator's behavior signals mock seriousness, and the child's enthusiastic response during the handshake shows a collective resistance by the characters as social actors, questioning social hierarchies and so-called formality.

"What is your name, sir?" he asked me with childlike inquisitiveness. 'You may call me Uncle Jahanzeb,' I expressed to him" (Rahman 73).

The excerpt above indicates that both the child and the story's narrator exhibit performative resistance to societal authority as they negotiate names with each other. The child's question to ask him for his name shows the child's resistance to adult authority regarding the decorum of conversation within orthodox societal norms. Moreover, it defines the child's identity and agency in relation to societal conventions.

"One day I told him that they had resolved to take the bandage off my leg. I would then be all right. 'All right,' he whispered in a small voice." (Rahman 77).

The given lines show the child's subdued reaction when he hears that the plaster on the narrator's leg has been removed. It is so because the removal triggers a conflict in the child's mind: he does not want to accept the change in the narrator's physical appearance, as the narrator's bandaged leg identifies him as a hero. This instance further illustrates a complex form of resistance regarding interpersonal relations and perceptions.

"Abruptly, I sensed a potent push and was shaken backward. The chair jumped down the slant and picked up speed as it went. I yelled out in fear as I found myself plunging down the slope...When I woke up, both my legs were in plaster" (Rahman 77).

The transformation in the child's behavior shows a more dramatic instance of resistance to the physical change in the narrator's appearance. It invokes anger and fury in the child as the appearance shatters his conception of a hero. Therefore, the child shows resistance by pushing the narrator down the slope. The child did so because he wanted to maintain the status quo in the face of change. Furthermore, his action indicates overt resistance to both the change in the narrator's physical appearance and the loss of the idolized conception of the narrator, as this development affects his constructed identity.

"I noticed I had become rather a hero among his friends. They'd all cluster around him in the meadow and tell them fascinating mysteries of the little war I had been through" (Rahman 74).

The text above highlights that the narrator's war experiences have elevated him to legend status among the children's friends in the suburbs. This behavior of the children towards the narrator

is the most subtle example of everyday resistance by ordinary children to society's established narratives. It further indicates that what the society has been ignoring as the brutal realities of the war has been idealized by the children. It also highlights that the children's resistance reveals their fascination with heroism, a subversive act in relation to society's otherwise impulsive and orthodox attempt to veil the brutal realities of war from children's experience.

The children in the story have formulated a subculture of resistance that questions the war experiences of both the narrator and the adults. Through this subculture, the children have constructed their own group and their own norms, which allow them to celebrate the crippled war-affected narrator against the dominant cultural narratives that present them as marginalized and pitiable survivors of war. Moreover, from the perspective of performative resistance, the narrator's identity as a hero has been constructed through the children's repeated performative acts, as they time and again celebrate the narrator as a hero rather than treating him as an injured, pitied, or dehumanized creature like the rest of society. The narrative has been constructed in such war that the children's subdued resistance towards disability of war-affected people, stigmatized as pitiable subjects, is a form of resistance that constructs a positive identity of the war-affected people. The children's positive behavior towards the narrator as a legend also stems from intersectionality, as they have been free of societal prejudices due to their innocence and relative inexperience compared to adults. Their intersectional identity as children allows them to view the narrator in ways adults might not, highlighting the multiplicity of perspectives that shape resistance.

"They imagined it as if we were the fire dragons of a fairy tale. We were the knights, and an atmosphere of enigma and amorousness enclosed our wartime heroism" (Rahman 74).

The fascination of innocent children with war is shaped by fairy tales in which knights and dragons embark on expeditions to underscore the power of the powerful. It indicates the children's resistance to the orthodox adult narratives that project war with either mundane or negative connotations. The romanticized conception of war among the children highlights everyday resistance to the associated tragedy and loss, in contrast to the adult conception of war. This conception of war among the children creates a subculture of tales of bravery and adventure about mythical heroes. The subcultural and mythical status of war among the children highlights a perspective that contrasts with the dominant culture's sense of war. Repeated storytelling of mythical narratives by the children is an instance of performative resistance that also constructs a positive image of the narrator, rather than framing him within orthodox cultural narratives about war-affected people. Children's age is a dominant intersectional factor shaping their narratives of bravery and heroism, fostering a subculture of resistance to the dismal, gloomy view of warfare.

"Their fancy had elevated me to a level almost mythical. Through the talismanic glass of glorious childhood, they viewed me" (Rahman 75).

The excerpt highlights the role of the children's perception in constructing the narrator's mythical identity. It is evident that despite the injuries and dominant cultural norms associated

with war-affected figures, the narrator is immortalized by the children as an ideal hero. It once again indicates that the children have consistently resisted narratives that marginalize and stigmatize the narrator's identity within a post-war cultural context. It is further analyzed that the repeated idealization of the narrator has created a subcultural identity and narrative around the narrator's heroism and bravery. The children neither consider the narrator's disability pitiable nor do they change their stance towards the narrator in light of dominant cultural norms and practices. Furthermore, their intersectional status as innocent members of society leads them to resist cultural labeling and consistently reinforce their norms by championing the narrator as a hero. The intersectional understanding of constructed identity also shows that subdued resistance shapes identity and constructs meaning.

The narrator's remarks here highlight how the children's everyday resistance has been reciprocated across several episodes in the narrator's construction of identity as a legend of a fairyland. Their everyday resistance has helped the narrator enjoy his newly acquired identity as a product of the children's imaginations. The narrator has resisted the orthodox social expectations imposed on him. The children's narratives further complement and help the narrator build his own narrative against societal expectations that he be an object of society's demands and a humble, passive individual with a passive identity defined by the society he is part of. The subcultural context also creates a space for the narrator to present an alternative identity rather than an established, passive one. Otherwise, the narrator, as a representative individual within expected cultural norms, would have been marginalized and would have remained satisfied with the established identity. The narrative of the children's resistance to societal expectations and norms, and the narrator's collective participation, accelerates everyday resistance to those norms. Likewise, the repeated performative resistance has helped the narrator to sustain his newly acquired mythical identity, which would have been diminished or curbed at its inception by the agents of existing norms. The children's repeated acts have made the narrator an active agent in resisting and reconstructing his individual identity. In an intersectional context, the narrator's identity as a war veteran and the children's imaginary constructs have combined to create a space for durable and significant resistance against the tyranny of the orthodox conventions of the society he is part of.

"It was amusing being the hinge of their thoughtful, wonderland world. Their fancy had raised me to a level almost mythological" (Rahman 75).

The final piece of textual evidence in the story "Just a Child" shows that the narrator's identity is established through the children's everyday, subdued resistance. As a result, this has cast the narrator as a symbol of bravery, power, and heroism. Moreover, the nature of the resistance is so strong that the narrator no longer feels himself to be a stigmatized and pitiable subject, because his identity has been subverted by the children's counternarrative of resistance. Furthermore, the subcultural layer of resistance has not only challenged the dominant cultural norms but has also imbued the narrator's new identity with alternative meanings. Both performative resistance and intersectionality complement, reinforce, and sustain the narrator's identity, providing it with a strong footing against orthodox conventions. On the one side,

resistance subverts the established norms of the society in which the narrator and the children are a part. On the other hand, it establishes meaning and value within the established subculture to counter societal bias.

In the story *The Olive Branch* the theme can be explored through the actions and interactions of the characters, particularly how they navigate their identities and resist societal or cultural expectations.

The Lord's misuse of the olive branch for personal gain and power is met with eventual resistance from the people and the knights. His cultural identity as a powerful and oppressive figure is ultimately challenged by the olive branch's symbolic power. The subdued resistance is seen in the way the knights and villagers refuse to follow his commands after the olive branch's influence. This suggests a collective cultural defiance of tyranny and oppression, in which the olive branch symbolizes a deeper, unspoken resistance to the Lord's authority.

"Then the Lord rearranged the Knights, but before the instruction was out of his mouth, the men who held him let out a scream which came from the most untamed part of the human heart. And they ripped him and dug their teeth down into his body, and their shrieks were worse than those of wolves after a kill" (Rahman 236).

In the short story "Saint Satan", this subtheme is portrayed through the very character of Satan himself.

Here are some textual evidences that support this theme:

"He was exasperated to talk to them, but they only giggled at him. He was infuriated. He was the Leader of Hell, and there they mounted tranquility, telling him that there was no Hell and no Satan. Goodness, what had the world come to? The evil spirit was really dissatisfied. "Even the evil spirit has his spirits, same as other people," he murmured, not helpful about his syntax, and strolled away.

"Just then one of the foulest contests in the long dress came over and approached Satan as an old assistant ... My beloved Sir, he said sincerely, I'm not his godliness Bishop ... It's all a fault really" (Rahman, 247).

Satan's embarrassment when mistaken for a religious figure underscores the tension between his identity and societal expectations. His resistance to being conflated with religious authorities, whom he opposes, is a subtle form of cultural defiance. This interaction highlights the complexities of his identity, which is entangled with the very institutions he seeks to undermine.

"Just then one of the worst frights ... and then with a final effort, "I'm Satan, gentlemen." (Rahman 248).

God's reinterpretation of Satan's actions as inadvertently contributing to human happiness challenges Satan's self-perception as a force of evil. This reframing represents a cultural

defiance of traditional religious interpretations, suggesting that even acts intended to disrupt can lead to positive outcomes. It also illustrates the intersectionality of Satan's identity, where his role as a rebel is questioned and redefined in ways that resist conventional binaries of good and evil.

The story *Just a Child* presents the subdued resistance through the characters' actions and interactions, highlighting the intersectional identities and cultural defiance. The author uses the flashback technique to present the child's fascination with injury, casting light on resistance and the complex issues associated with it, particularly in personal and social contexts, which are integral to subdued resistance. He presents the idea that injury is a burden of suffering, and he resists the glorification of war with lucid arguments that counter the public narrative. He is becoming a rebel against the family's tiny orthodox expectations as an individual. The story also presents the idea of performative resistance, with the narrator's war injury juxtaposed with the consumption of a colonial dish. Moreover, the disability of the child is presented as an honor in the story instead of a stigma or physical weakness. The behavior also highlights the child's subdued resistance through an intersectional lens. The story also shows everyday resistance, which is reciprocated across several episodes in the narrator's construction of identity as a legend of fairyland. Everyday resistance helps the narrator enjoy his newly acquired identity as a product of children's imagination and, in this way, he participates in resisting the orthodox social expectations attached to it.

Similarly, the story *The Olive Branch* presents resistance through the characters' intersections, particularly in how they navigate their identities and resist societal and cultural expectations. The Lord's action of misusing the Olive Branch for personal gain and power is met with virtual resistance from the people and knights. His cultural identity as a powerful and a pressive figure is ultimately challenged by the symbolic power of the olive branch. The subdued resistance is seen in the way of the night, and the villagers refuse to follow his commands after the olive branch's influence. Their act is collectively showing the resistance of local people against the operation figure and a collective cultural defiance against the tyranny and operation of the Lord's authority.

CONCLUSION

Rahman's short stories are replete with instances of subdued resistance. Rahman provides a platform to explore the underrated forms of resistance that serve as catalysts for change (Mahmood). The study is a journey that explores how Rahman, through his characters, educates people and prepares their minds to stand against the oppression and tyranny of the powerful by employing covert, subtle patterns of resistance, ultimately leading to change. The study seeks to find out how apparently soft and innocuous acts of resistance challenge the status quo and shake their power base, ultimately leading to breaking the power centers. Tariq Rahman's short stories collectively illustrate how subdued resistance operates on multiple levels—individual, social, and political. The characters are found posing threats through covert acts of defiance rather than overt rebellion. It is quite evident, as Scott has suggested, that subtle acts of resistance pose a threat to oppressive forces, as do open defiance. It is also revealed that,

through subtle acts of resistance, people unite and support one another covertly, ultimately leading to a great movement for change. Rahman's short stories portray diverse viewpoints that challenge existing power structures by educating individuals. Tariq Rahman's short stories offer a deep and detailed look at how small, everyday acts of defiance can challenge and change oppressive social and political systems. His stories show that even minor acts of resistance can make a big difference, highlighting the strength and resilience of those who are marginalized. Rahman's focus on these subtle forms of resistance offers a new way to understand how change can occur in societies. In his stories, Rahman illustrates resistance in various ways. Characters often use quiet actions, such as slow compliance or pretending not to understand, to resist their oppressors. These actions might seem small on their own, but they can add up to create significant disruptions. This approach shows how people manage to resist their difficult situations. Rahman also points out that solidarity among the oppressed can make these small acts of resistance even more powerful, leading to broader social change. His stories demonstrate that even small, persistent acts of defiance can lead to real change. By focusing on everyday resistance, Rahman shows that change often comes from gradual and subtle actions. These small changes can disrupt oppressive systems and lead to significant shifts in society. Rahman also shows how these subtle forms of resistance empower people. His characters use low-profile acts of defiance to assert their independence and cope with difficult conditions without facing direct punishment. This approach is especially important when open rebellion is too risky or not possible, making subtle resistance a crucial strategy for those facing oppression. Overall, Rahman's work redefines resistance by showing its many forms and wide impact. By focusing on small acts of defiance, he expands our understanding of how resistance works and what can lead to change. His stories offer new insights into social and political issues and highlight the important role of subtle resistance in driving change and challenging power.

REFERENCES

- Ardaa. (2024, February 12). The power of literature: How it shapes society and culture: From cultural expression to social change, exploring the impact of literature on our world. Medium. <https://medium.com/illumination/the-power-of-literature-how-it-shapes-society-and-culture-28dc42f04222>
- Callegari, D., & McHugh, S. (2011). 'Se fossimo tante meretrici': The Rhetoric of Resistance in Diodata Malvasia's Convent Narrative. *italian studies*, 66(1), 21-39.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1300.
- Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.
- Hebdige, D. (1979). *Subculture: The meaning of style*. Routledge.
- Hudson, W. H. (2023). *An introduction to the study of literature*. Atlantic Publishers.

- Kour, B. (2024). Unheard voices: Resistance literature and the fight for marginalized rights. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(1), 6038–6043. <https://doi.org/10.53555/kuvey.v30i1.9458>
- Lascelles, A. L. C. (2020). Black feminism in a neoliberal world: resistance in contemporary black women's fiction (Doctoral dissertation, University of Leeds).
- Layoun, Mary. "Harlow, Resistance Literature." *Middle East Report*, no. 159, July–Aug. 1989.
- McKenzie-Mohr, S., & Lafrance, M. N. (2017). Narrative resistance in social work research and practice: Counter-storying in the pursuit of social justice. *Qualitative Social Work*, 16(2), 189–205. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325016657866>
- T. (1987). *Beloved*. Alfred A. Knopf. Rahman, T. (2024). *Complete short stories*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378861229_The_Complete_Short_Stories_of_Tariq_Rahman
- Rasool, S. H., & Khan, J. (2022). Resisting the Elitist Narrative: Representation of the Subalterns in Pakistani Novel in English. *The Dialogue*, 17(2), 55–65.
- Salve, S. (2022). The narratives of resistance: The role of literature in social movements in India. *Kurdish Studies*, 10(2), 574–591. <https://kurdishstudies.net/menuscrypt/index.php/KS/article/view/3526>
- Scott, J. C. (1985). *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. Yale University Press.
- Scott, J. C. (1989). Everyday forms of resistance. *Copenhagen Papers*, 4, 33–62.
- Scott, S. (2013). Awa Tsireh and the art of subtle resistance. *The Art Bulletin*, 95(4), 597–622. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043079.2013.10786095>
- Shah, V. (2013). Literature: A catalyst of social change. *Journal of the Oriental Institute*, 72(1), 39–44. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376307811>
- Singh, Asha. "Cultural Scripts, Dialogue and Performance: Creating Processes for Resistance and Resolve." *Resistance in Everyday Life*, edited by Nidhi Chaudhary et al., Springer, Singapore, 2017, pp. 93–109. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-1035814_8
- Zala, J. B. (2013). Literature and society. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and*

Social Sciences, 1(5), 26–31.

https://www.raijmr.com/ijrhs/wpcontent/uploads/2017/11/IJRHS_2013_vol01_issue_05_05.pdf