

COMMUNAL IDENTITY AND RACIAL CONFLICTS IN THE “THE HOUSE OF BLUE MANGOES” NOVEL OF DAVID DAVIDAR

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Introduction

David Davidar opens his first novel, *The House of Blue Mangoes*, with "the ordinary violence of dawn," and the tale comes to a close with the ordinary aroma of a mango. David Davidar's work is his debut. This book has received a great lot of attention and praise from readers for its content and writing. Although this generational saga is rather broad and includes a lot of spectacular experiences for the characters, the story is driven by the mundane incidents that take place during the course of the work. This is the case despite the fact that the story spans many generations. The events of the narrative take place during the turbulent time of India in the late 19th century (1899-1947), and they illustrate India's march to freedom, along with a series of horrific caste conflicts, as seen through the eyes of the Dorai family. The story is told from the perspective of the Dorai family. Solomon Dorai, also referred to as the "thalaivar," and Charity, his wife, are the protagonists of the plot at the beginning of the narrative. Next, it moves on to the children of the Dorai family, which include Daniel, Aaron, Rachel, and Miriam, as well as the children of Daniel, which include Shanthi, Usha, and Kannan. After that, it continues on through the children of the Dorai family. The setting for this tale is a made-up city called Chevathar, which is located on the farthest southernmost point of India. It acts as the backdrop for the story. The majority of the story is focused on the personal lives of the Dorais and the significant influence that the events that take place in their world have on their lives.

Key words : The House of Blue Mangoes, Cultural displacement, racial conflicts

Introduction : David Davidar is a well-known Indian-Canadian novelist and publisher. His life and work have taken him across countries and cultures, and as a result, he has left an unmistakable impact on the landscape of the literary world. The basis for Davidar's distinguished career as a writer and publishing visionary was established during his upbringing in the vivid tapestry of Indian culture. Davidar was born on March 29, 1958, in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. This paper will dig into the varied journey of David Davidar, investigating the formative influences, crucial events, and enduring legacy that have impacted his life and literary accomplishments. Specifically, this essay will focus on David Davidar's life narrative.

Davidar has been a strong advocate for the transformational potential of storytelling as a force for social change, cultural interaction, and personal development through his writing

and publishing initiatives. The trajectory of Indian literature has been shaped by his dedication to encouraging diversity, inclusion, and creative brilliance, which has resulted in a lasting imprint on the literary landscape. His contributions have also contributed to the enrichment of the world literary canon.

Both the life and the work of David Davidar exemplify the everlasting qualities of creativity, curiosity, and bravery among people. Davidar's path is a tribute to the transforming power of literature to illuminate, inspire, and unify people and communities. Beginning with his humble origins in Tamil Nadu, Davidar has gone on to have a career that is a pioneer in publishing and writing. His legacy will live on as a light of hope, empathy, and human connection in a world that is always evolving, and he will continue to create new boundaries in the arena of narrative.

"Ghosh's exploration of the Sundarbans serves as a microcosm for understanding the larger communal conflicts in Indian society." (Rao, 2019)²

There are three distinct sections that make up the story, and each of these sections focuses on a different member of the Dorai family. There is a distinct story being told in each of these sections. Soloman is the protagonist of the first book in the series, which focuses on his efforts to prevent the onset of caste fights and his loss of power as a result of India's shifting political landscape. Among the four books that make up the series, this novel is the first episode. Daniel is the protagonist of the second book in the series. He is Soloman's son and the protagonist of the books. Dr. Pillai, Daniel's tutor, is credited with being the creator of Moonwhite Thylam, a product that is said to "make your face shine like the Pongal moon." Daniel, who is a guy who places a high value on tranquilly, goes on to become a well-known physician, thereby following in the footsteps of his teacher. Additionally, there is Aaron, the outraged freedom warrior, and the obstacles that he went through in order to guarantee that India was able to attain its independence. Kannan, Daniel's son, is the protagonist of the third book in the series, which is titled Pulimed. During his time as a student at the University of Madras, he gradually develops feelings of love and passion for Helen, who is of Anglo-Indian cultural heritage. Kannan takes the choice to seek a job as a plantation manager on the tea estates located in Pul after learning that his father does not have a good impression of Helen. This decision comes after the news that his father has not supported Helen. With the intention of pursuing this line of employment, he relocates away from his home. In addition to Aaron's anger and pain, which colour his political focus, and Daniel's focus on family and internal matters, which makes Daniel's focus on family and internal matters seem more realistic than the flimsy and shifting ethics of the political world into which Daniel refuses to be drawn, the men are reasonably well drawn. Aaron's political focus is coloured by his anger and pain. Aaron is influenced by his wrath and pain, which in turn shapes his political emphasis. Both Soloman's physical strength and his efforts to maintain a balance between his traditional function and the changes that are occurring around him are the driving forces behind the advancement of the narrative. Both of these factors are in control of the story's growth. Kannan's attempts to integrate to British society were in part the result of his father's lack of interest in politics. This failure to assimilate to British culture was a consequence of his father's lack of interest in politics. Additionally, Kannan's struggles for self-actualization in the face of his wife's dissatisfaction and the "superiority" of the British are among the most

emotionally significant aspects of the story. Charity is a character that is not just logical but also rather engaging. This is due to the fact that she is attempting to preserve her sense of decorum and pride in a culture that places a significant degree of value on her sexuality. It is feasible to argue that her spiral into insanity is at least as meaningful as Aaron's suffering and his position as a political assassin. This is something that can be done.

A number of individuals, including Daniel's wife Lily, Kannan's dumb wife Helen, and the female siblings and daughters Rachel, Miriam, Shanti, and Ushi, belong to the category of individuals who are completely forgettable. Moreover, each and every one of these people is easily forgotten. It is challenging to recall the other characters since they are all forgettable and lack a feeling of depth and authenticity. Additionally, it is tough to remember them. Among the characters that stands out the most is the snobbish Mrs. Stevenson. She is both amusing and sad owing to her obsession with the ideal cup of tea and her fear of the Indian. She is one of the characters who stands out the most.

Even if it has a tendency towards a modest purple lushness, Davidar's most outstanding work is in the representation of the natural environs. This is despite the fact that it has a tendency towards. In a manner that is typical of a significant portion of Indian writing, he focuses an emphasis on the sensory, which encompasses the senses of sight, hearing, smell, and taste. Take, for instance, the following passage from his writing: "The open flame licked at the tasselled edges of the peacock feather." The breathtaking variety of colours, which included indigo, emerald, aquamarine, gold, and bronze, gradually deteriorated into ash over the course of time until everything was gone for forever. The specifics of chemistry, the aroma and hues of tea, and the aroma and flavour of a mango are all given considerable consideration in this work: "Daniel took his first bite of Alphonso, and as the flavour sank into his tongue - a hint of sourness, a splash of honey, a plethora of fresh light notes on a base of deep bass – he realised why it was so much sought after. If the individuals were shown with the same amount of richness that was portrayed in the descriptions, then this piece of literature would have been considered to be far more compelling. The number is (218).

Even though the narrative voice is, for the most part, a typical third-person omniscient form, there is a single fleeting slip into a first-person narrative that does not appear to be deliberate: "Indian vs. Indian." This is the only instance in which the narrative becomes a first-person narrative. We have a great deal of expertise in this field. Different castes, communities, languages, and religious beliefs have been the primary factors that have contributed to the division of our society over the course of thousands of years. The number 183 In spite of the fact that this is precisely the sort of interaction that the book does not have, the novel does not have the sense of passion and character that might have been put into the lips of one of the characters, most likely Daniel as the case may be. When one considers the current condition of circumstances, one begins to wonder who the narrator is and why we ought to be able to access his unique thoughts on occasion.

On a thematic level, the narrative is more concerned with events than it is with ideas, and it is more concerned with a certain set of persons than it is with the importance of the events and characters. In other words, the narrative is more concerned with the events than it is with the concepts. At the end of the day, there is no suitable solution to the issue. However, the question of what is right and what is wrong, as well as whether Aaron's engagement or

Daniel's sense of family and the personal is correct or not, stays unresolved. The conclusion of the history in which the narrative is set is known to us; it is a genuine history. Despite this, though, the question of what is right and what is wrong remains not addressed. Kannan adds, "I'm here, it is the place of my heart," and it is possible that this is the final theme of the book: to remain at home, to establish oneself as an individual, and to produce your own garden of mangoes. It is almost as if Kannan is cultivating his garden in a Panglossian manner through the use of his house, which gives him a sense of purpose. Regardless of the circumstances that surround Kannan's return to his homeland, the climax of the narrative is very satisfying. This is true even if the problems that will eventually befall Kannan's nation continue beyond the scope of this novel.

"Davidar's narrative captures the essence of cultural displacement through the eyes of his characters, revealing the profound impact of colonialism on their identities" (Singh, 2010, p. 45).¹

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Racial Tensions: Perpetuating Divides

The purpose of the essay titled "Racial Tensions: Perpetuating Divides" is to analyse the underlying tensions and hierarchies that were perpetuated by colonialism in the novel "The House of Blue Mangoes." Davidar draws an image of a society that is strongly divided along racial lines, with British colonisers retaining control and privilege over Indian people. He makes this statement in the context of the Indian subcontinent. By examining the tale from the point of view of the Dorai family, who are situated in a liminal position between these two worlds, the novel sheds light on the institutional inequities and biases that form the basis of colonial authority. As they traverse a society that is rife with hostility, prejudice, and violence, the Dorais shed light on the enduring legacy of racial injustice that existed in India throughout the colonial era. The racial tensions that are boiling under the surface are occurring at the same time as this is taking place.

In the backdrop of "The House of Blue Mangoes," which takes place in a colonial atmosphere, racial tensions are boiling under the surface, which serves to perpetuate the deep-seated differences that exist between the British colonisers and the Indian people. The story is set in India. The lasting consequences of colonialism continue to have a considerable influence, as they continue to reinforce power and privilege hierarchies and cast a shadow over intercultural relations. This is because colonialism continues to have powerful repercussions.

The British colonisers, who had unrestricted influence over Indian society, are at the pinnacle of this racial hierarchy. Their position is at the highest pinnacle of the hierarchy. A civilization that is marked by privilege and entitlement, as well as an environment in which concepts of racial superiority are exploited to legitimise the oppression and exploitation of indigenous populations, is the one that they have created. The acts and attitudes of the British colonisers led to the establishment of a racial hierarchy that placed whiteness at the top of the hierarchy and suppressed identities that were not of European heritage. This hierarchy was maintained with the help of the British colonisers.

As a result of the fact that the Dorai family is located in a liminal space between their British and Indian identities, racial tensions manifest themselves in a number of different ways for them. They are neither fully accepted by the Indian populace nor fully welcomed by the

British colonial elite because they live in a state of continual liminality, in which they are subjected to suspicion, prejudice, and marginalisation. This is because they are subjected to these conditions. Due to the fact that they come from a mixed-race ancestry, the Dorais are confronted with the harsh realities of racial prejudice and discrimination as they traverse a society that is filled with structural inequalities and inequities. This is because of the fact that they originate from a mixed-race heritage. Their lives are a microcosm of the greater sociopolitical environment, which is marked by racial hierarchies that set social norms and continue to sustain distinctions between colonisers and colonised. Their experiences serve as a microcosm of this larger landscape.

The subtle nature of racial tensions in colonial India is brought to light by Davidar via the lens of the Dorai family, which sheds light on the systematic injustices and biases that formed the foundation of colonial authority. Davidar's work is a significant contribution to the field of racial discrimination. During the time that the Dorais are attempting to find their place in a society that is characterised by racial inequality, they are compelled to confront the harsh realities of institutional oppression and exploitation. Consequently, this compels readers to address the enduring legacy of racial injustice that exists in cultures that were colonised.

"Davidar's work highlights the struggles of individuals trying to maintain their cultural identity amidst the pressures of colonialism" (Chatterjee, 2014, p. 90).⁵

Cultural Hybridity and Identity Struggles in "The House of Blue Mangoes"

In the novel "The House of Blue Mangoes," written by David Davidar, the legacy of colonialism is a significant factor that has a significant impact on the lives of the Dorai family as well as the larger socio-cultural environment of colonial India. Through the lens of the Dorais, Davidar deftly investigates the nuances of cultural hybridity and identity problems. He invites readers to dive into the subtleties of colonial encounters and the lasting impact that these encounters have on individual and community identities.

The colonial era in India, which lasted for nearly two centuries, beginning with the advent of the British East India Company in the early 17th century and ending with India's independence in 1947, was characterised by significant socio-cultural shifts. During the time that India was under British colonial authority, the society was substantially transformed by the imposition of Western values, institutions, and conventions onto a diverse and old civilization. The legacy of colonialism continues to ripple through contemporary India, affecting the nation's cultural, political, and economic landscapes.

"The House of Blue Mangoes" is a novel that takes place in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu and tells the story of the Dorai family over the course of several generations. The novel is set against the backdrop of colonialism. The Dorais, who are torn between their British pedigree and their Indian roots, are at the centre of the story, and their effort to traverse the complexities of their cultural background is at the heart of the character. The Dorais are a cultural hybridity that stands in a liminal area between two different worlds. They are descended from a British father and an Indian mother, and they embody the complexity of cultural hybridity.

The introduction to "The Legacy of Colonialism: Cultural Hybridity and Identity Struggles in 'The House of Blue Mangoes'" lays the groundwork for a more in-depth examination of the

topics that are present throughout Davidar's novel. We are about to go on a journey through the turbulent landscape of colonial India, where the legacy of imperial encounters impacts the lives of people as well as the lives of communities. In a culture that is characterised by the intricacies of cultural hybridity, we are confronted with problems of identity, belonging, and resistance through the prism of the Dorai family. As we go deeper into the world of the Dorais, we are encouraged to contemplate the significant influence that colonisation had on the traditions and culture of the Indian people. From the Dorais' mixed-race heritage to their efforts for self-determination in the face of colonial oppression, the legacy of colonial encounters is obvious in every area of their existence. This includes the Dorais' struggle for self-determination. In the course of their encounters, Davidar shines light on the persisting intricacies of cultural identity as well as the methods in which individuals navigate the convoluted terrain of the legacy of colonialism.

"The House of Blue Mangoes reflects the pervasive sense of displacement experienced by many during the colonial era" (Mukherjee, 2015, p. 55).⁶

Colonial Encounters: Shaping Cultural Hybridity

David Davidar weaves a complex tapestry of cultural hybridity in his novel "The House of Blue Mangoes," which was created in the crucible of colonial interactions in India. The events of the novel take place against the backdrop of British colonial rule, which was a time period that was characterised by the imposition of Western ideologies and institutions upon native civilizations. Davidar examines the complexity of cultural exchange, adaptation, and resistance that are characteristic of the colonial experience via the prism of the Dorai family, which is comprised of descendants of British and Indian descent. The period of time when India was under British colonial rule was marked by a complex interaction of cultures. This was due to the fact that British colonisers attempted to exert their supremacy over native populations while also integrating aspects of Indian culture into their own. The end consequence was a dynamic process of cultural hybridity, in which aspects of British and Indian cultures merged and evolved, resulting in the emergence of new forms of expression, identities, and communities. Located at the centre of "The House of Blue Mangoes" is the Dorai family, whose heritage is comprised of people of many races. This family serves as a microcosm of the cultural hybridity that characterised colonial India. In the midst of the changing sands of colonialism, the Dorais, who are descended from a British father and an Indian mother, inhabit a liminal area between two civilizations. They navigate the difficulties of their dual history. In the process of navigating the cultural, social, and political forces that are all around them, their lives are moulded by the interaction of British and Indian influences.

Exploring Cultural Fragmentation and Racial Frictions in "The House of Blue Mangoes"

In his novel "The House of Blue Mangoes," David Davidar explores the complex dynamics of stretched identities, illuminating the complexity of cultural fragmentation and racial frictions in colonial India. David Davidar's novel is a work of fiction. Davidar constructs a narrative that examines the manner in which individuals manage the confluence of cultural identities in the midst of the turmoil of colonialism. This narrative is crafted through the lens of the Dorai family, which is comprised of descendants of British and Indian descent.

Through an examination of the cultural fragmentation and racial frictions that pervade the lives of the Dorais and their relationships with the larger colonial society, this essay sets out to conduct a complete investigation of the themes of stretched identities.

"The House of Blue Mangoes offers a rich exploration of the impact of cultural displacement on family dynamics" (Gupta, 2019, p. 84).¹⁰

The Dorai Family: A Portrait of Cultural Fragmentation

One of the most important aspects of "The House of Blue Mangoes" is the Dorai family, whose history is a mixture of many races. This family exemplifies the cultural fragmentation that was prevalent in colonial India. A liminal space between two worlds, the Dorais are torn between conflicting loyalties and allegiances. They are descended from a British father and an Indian mother, and they live this gap that exists between the two worlds. A sense of cultural dislocation permeates their lives as they navigate the difficulties of their dual inheritance in the midst of the changing sands of colonialism. This dislocation characterises their existence.

For Solomon Dorai, the patriarch of the family, cultural fragmentation manifests as a strong sense of estrangement from both his British and Indian identities. Having been brought up in the shadow of the empire but yet being profoundly planted in the soil of Tamil Nadu, Solomon struggles with concerns of belonging and identity. He is caught between opposing cultural standards and expectations all throughout his life. His struggle to reconcile his dual origins is a reflection of the larger tensions that are inherent in colonial interactions. These tensions arise as individuals manage the difficulties of cultural assimilation and resistance.

David, Aaron, and Rebecca, Solomon's children, each contending with their own challenges of identity and belonging, inherit his legacy of cultural fracture. In a similar manner, Solomon's children inherit his legacy of cultural fragmentation. Daniel, the eldest son, has a difficult time gaining acceptance among the British colonial elite, only to be turned away by a society that considers him to be an outcast. In order to find peace in the company of outcasts and misfits, Aaron, the rebellious prodigal son, chooses to forego the trappings of imperial privilege in favour of a life on the margins. Within a society that is characterised by patriarchal standards and cultural expectations, Rebecca, the youngest daughter, experiences a strong desire for independence.

A vivid depiction of the manner in which cultural fragmentation shapes individual and community identities in colonial India is provided by Davidar through the experiences of the Dorai family. The way in which their lives have been lived is a demonstration of the lasting legacy of colonialism, which continues to cause communities and individuals to be divided along racial and cultural lines. Readers are challenged to confront the complexity of identity creation and the ongoing impact of cultural fragmentation when they encounter the Dorais, who emerge as icons of perseverance and rebellion amid the shattered landscape of colonial India.

"Davidar's novel vividly portrays the racial tensions that characterized colonial India, highlighting their lasting impact" (Sharma, 2020, p. 115).¹¹

Racial Frictions: Navigating the Divide

The novel "The House of Blue Mangoes" investigates not just the cultural fragmentation that occurs in colonial civilization, but also the racial frictions that are prevalent in that society.

Colonialism inflicted severe wounds on Indian society, sustaining divides along racial lines and reinforcing systems of power and privilege. These scars persisted for generations after colonialism ended. During the time that British colonisers exercised unfettered authority over indigenous inhabitants, Indian groups were exposed to discrimination and marginalisation.

Because they are individuals of mixed racial heritage, the Dorais hold a special place within this racial hierarchy. They are susceptible to suspicion and animosity from both the British colonisers and the Indian communities to which they belong. Due to the fact that they are of mixed racial lineage, they are seen to be outsiders, as they are not granted the benefits that were granted to the British colonial elite and are marginalised by Indian society. The Dorais' interactions with the world around them, as they traverse a society that is filled with racial prejudices and differences, are a reflection of the conflicts that exist between their identities as British and Indian.

The subtle nature of racial frictions in colonial India is brought to light by Davidar through the experiences of the Dorai family. This sheds light on the systemic injustices and prejudices that were the foundation of colonial control. The hardships of the Dorais serve as a microcosm of the larger sociopolitical scene, which is characterised by racial hierarchies that determine social standards and continue to maintain divisions between colonisers and colonised.

Conclusion :

In his novel "The House of Blue Mangoes," David Davidar presents a profound investigation of stretched identities. He investigates the complexity of cultural fragmentation and racial frictions in India during the colonial era. To tackle the persistent legacies of colonialism, which continue to impact the lives of individuals and communities long after the empire has disintegrated, the novel urges readers to confront these legacies through the perspective of the Dorai family. In the shattered landscape of colonial India, the Dorais emerge as symbols of perseverance and defiance, compelling readers to confront the complexity of identity creation and the lasting influence of cultural fragmentation and racial frictions in forging individual and community identities.

The work presents the reader with the opportunity to address the complexity of identity creation and the lingering legacy of colonialism, which continues to impact the lives of individuals and communities long after the empire has broken. This is done through the prism of the Dorai family. In the shattered landscape of colonial India, the Dorais emerge as symbols of perseverance and resistance, compelling readers to confront the complexity of belonging in a world marked by cultural dichotomies and racial conflicts. The Dorais are a group of people who are known for their defiance and resilience.

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