

Reflections of Identity and Desire in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter: A Lacanian Reading

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تجليات الهوية والرغبة في سلسلة هاري بوتر لج. ك. رولينغ: قراءة لاكانية

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Abstract:-

The research investigates J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter world by using Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theories as the analytical framework. This study surveys the complex relationship between identity and desire as Rowling depicts it in her wizarding world. The series of Harry Potter displays characters who experience both identity creation and disintegration through their desires as well as the influences of the Other. Based on the concepts of the mirror stage together with the symbolic order and objet petit a this analysis examines how Harry Potter-characters Harry, Hermione and Ron deal with adolescent growth as they pursue self-discovery. The research analyzes three crucial elements - the Deathly Hallows, the Invisibility Cloak, and the Mirror of Erised which embody desires, empty spaces in the self and the pursuit of personal health. Harry Potter series creates an optimal environment for analyzing universal themes of identity development and the pursuit of desire and self-meeting-Other through Lacanian interpretation and analysis. Through this analysis the researchers establish that Harry Potter happens to be an everlasting literary achievement which demonstrates psychological depth because of its ongoing importance in modern cultural dialogue.

Keywords: Identity, Lacanian Psychoanalysis, Desire, Harry Potter, Mirror Stage.

المخلص:-

يستكشف البحث عالم هاري بوتر الذي أنشأته ج. ك. رولينغ من خلال استخدام نظريات جاك لاكان في التحليل النفسي كإطار تحليلي. تتناول هذه الدراسة العلاقة المعقدة بين الهوية والرغبة كما تصوّرهما رولينغ في عالم السحرة. إذ تعرض سلسلة هاري بوتر شخصيات تمر بعمليات بناء الهوية وتفككها، وذلك من خلال رغباتها وكذلك من خلال تأثير "الأخر". وبالاستناد إلى مفاهيم "مرحلة المرأة"، و"النظام الرمزي"، و"الشيء الصغير a" (objet petit a)، تدرس هذه القراءة كيف يواجه كل من هاري، وهرميون، ورون مرحلة المراهقة في سعيهم لاكتشاف ذاتهم. يحلل البحث ثلاثة عناصر محورية - مقدسات الموت، وعباءة الإخفاء، ومرآة إيريسيد - والتي تجسد الرغبات، والفراغات في الذات، والسعي نحو السلام الداخلي. تتيح سلسلة هاري بوتر بيئة مثالية لتحليل موضوعات عالمية مثل تطور الهوية، والسعي نحو الرغبة، ولقاء الذات بالأخر، وذلك من خلال تفسير لاكاني وتحليل نفسي معمق. ومن خلال هذا التحليل، يخلص الباحثون إلى أن سلسلة هاري بوتر تعد إنجازاً أدبياً خالداً، يكشف عن عمق نفسي كبير، نظراً لاستمرار أهميته في الحوار الثقافي المعاصر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الهوية، التحليل النفسي اللاكاني، الرغبة، هاري بوتر، مرحلة المرأة.

Introduction:-

People of every age experience enchantment when reading the Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling due to its powerful combination of magical content with fast-paced narrative and complex moral elements. Magic alone cannot define Harry Potter's masterpiece because it constructs an insightful exploration of societal elements and human behaviors and wrestling between good and evil forces. The story Dimensionalities Harry Potter weaves a tone that shows how power and identity affect human life within social systems while exhibiting heroes and friendship victories.

Themes of societal alienation and dehumanization arise as potent motifs in Rowling's expansive wizarding universe, striking a deep chord with readers. Tales of people deprived of their humanity and cast into the margins of society abound, from the marginalization of magical beings like as werewolves and house elves to the exclusion experienced by figures like Harry Potter and Severus Snape. However, readers are drawn in by the psychological aspects of alienation and estrangement that permeate the story rather than just the outward displays of otherness. (Mulvey 16)

The researchers set out to uncover the complex web of human experience, desire, and subjectivity that constitutes Rowling's masterpiece by taking on a Lacanian interpretation of Harry Potter. By attempting to shed light on how individuals negotiate the maze-like passageways of selfhood while under the crushing weight of cultural standards and the Other's scrutiny. The inquiry provides a unique perspective from which to analyze the mechanisms of dehumanization and social alienation at work inside the wizarding world—a society that, in many ways, reflects the complexity and paradoxes of our own—through Lacan's conceptual framework.

Essentially, the goal of this research is to illuminate the deep connections between Lacanian theory and the themes that underlie Rowling's story. By examining the ways in which the fragmented character of identity, and the need for recognition interact with more general socio-political processes. The researchers intend to reveal the secrets that lie beyond Harry Potter's surface by using Lacan's psychoanalytic lens as a looking glass, encouraging readers to go on a voyage of introspection and critical thought.

Through an exploration of the intricate depths of Rowling's literary masterwork, readers are reminded of the timeless power of narrative to shed light on the human condition and encourage them to face the darkness that lie within their own souls. The researchers intended to face the ghosts of the past, to reckon with the specters of the present, and to imagine new possibilities for the future — a future where the bonds of empathy, understanding, and solidarity triumph over the forces of division and exclusion through the exploration of dehumanization and social alienation in Harry Potter.

Research Question and Objectives:

By using a Lacanian approach this study investigates the ways J.K. Rowling shows dehumanization alongside social isolation and their subsequent effects across the Harry Potter series. The study identifies instances where characters encounter the terms to determine how Lacanian theory strengthens our understanding of key themes while evaluating the mental and societal conditions surrounding the terms' appearance. This research aims to shed light on broader issues of identity, power dynamics, and social norms by exploring the connections between Lacanian concepts and the experiences of characters in the wizarding world. It also contributes to the scholarly discourse on Lacanian psychoanalysis and Harry Potter.

Literature Review:

The cultural importance and thematic complexity of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series have been thoroughly examined in prior scholarly works. Numerous facets of the story, such as how it handles identity, power relationships, and societal criticism, have been examined in studies. Discussions on social alienation and dehumanization have come to light in this corpus of work as major issues within the wizarding community. The representation of oppressed groups, such as werewolves and house elves, as well as the experiences of characters who face prejudice and exclusion, such as Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, and Severus Snape, have been studied by academics. (Nel 36)

Furthermore, a useful framework for deciphering the psychological intricacies of Rowling's story is Lacanian psychoanalytic theory. Scholarly investigations have explored

Lacanian notions like the mirror stage, the gaze, and the symbolic order, shedding light on their applicability to the character arc and structural organization of Harry Potter. But although previous research has shed light on specific themes and theoretical frameworks, there is still a lack of studies that thoroughly examine how dehumanization, social alienation, and Lacanian psychoanalysis connect in J.K. Rowling's fictional world. By combining previous research, analyzing the themes of dehumanization and social alienation in Harry Potter via a Lacanian lens, and providing fresh insights into the psychological and socio-political aspects of Rowling's story, this study aims to close this gap. (Gupta 408)

Methodology:

A qualitative research approach based on theoretical interpretation and literary analysis is used in this study. Utilizing the rich literary content of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, the study entails a critical examination of pivotal passages and story arcs that illustrate instances of social alienation and dehumanization. The research establishes repeated subjects and motifs through thematic coding therefore revealing wizarding world portrayals and meanings. The research applies Lacanian psychoanalytic theory as its conceptual basis to investigate the mental mechanisms that shape both storytelling properties and character behavioral responses .

The research examines the interaction between Lacanian concepts such as the mirror stage and the gaze and the symbolic order in order to uncover hidden meanings within Rowling's story. This study utilizes available knowledge regarding Harry Potter and Lacanian psychoanalysis to establish its findings within the boundaries of literary analysis and theoretical discourse. The research seeks to advance our knowledge of how Rowling depicts dehumanization and social alienation in her literary works by analyzing these concepts using multiple psychoanalytic methods.

Theoretical Framework:

The Harry Potter books by J.K. Rowling undergo analysis using Lacanian psychoanalytic theory that functions as the research backbone to study dehumanization and social alienation themes within these literary works. Analyzing these psychological elements within the story becomes much deeper when we understand the

theories about subjectivity and desire and the symbolic order through Jacques Lacan's psychological framework. The theories demonstrate the techniques which characters use to understand relationships and personal identity within their magical world of societal disruption. According to Lacanian theory the mirror stage serves as a primary concept which explains how identification with mirror reflections shapes individual self-identity as well as how people recognize each other. (Lacan, 'Ecrits' 5)

In Harry Potter's magical world Harry and Hermione and Snape display various struggles with acceptance from their peers alongside their self-awareness which makes them react to the external social judgments and observations of others. (Heilman 231)

The symbolic order notion by Lacan explains how linguistic elements together with societal rules control the relationships between people and their experiences. Magic has created a system of hierarchical organization while implementing exclusion within the wizarding world thereby demonstrating how symbolic systems can shape perception in self and others. The study focuses on analyzing system structures through which human dehumanization and social estrangement occurs to reveal the behavioral paths of characters within Rowling's symbolic realm in their search for agency while seeking social connections.

The research delves into the complete psychological dimensions together with social and political elements which emerge through dehumanization and social alienation in Harry Potter by constructing its examination from Lacanian psychoanalytic concepts. The study seeks to make significant contributions to cultural discussions about literature together with identity and subjectivity in present-day society. (Lacan 'Book I' 27)

What is Real? The Lacanian Mirror Stage

The Mirror Stage, the Symbolic, and the Real are key ideas in Lacanian psychoanalytic theory that provide insight into how subjectivity is formed, language dynamics operate, and reality is organized. (Lacan 'Ecrits' 36)

The term "Mirror Stage" describes a critical period in a child's development when they start to create a cohesive sense of identity

and identify themselves for the first time in the mirror. This stage, according to Lacan, lasts from six to eighteen months and is distinguished by a critical period of self- and misrecognition. A sense of unity and wholeness is experienced by the youngster when they look in the mirror; their picture of themselves seems more full and cohesive than their real fragmented experience of their body. The basis for the development of the ego, or the "I," which forms a key component of the person's psychological structure, is this association with the reflection in the mirror. (55)

According to Lacanian theory, the domain of language, culture, and social institutions that mediate human experience and interpersonal relationships is referred to as the symbolic world. Specifically, language is essential in forming subjectivity and structuring the symbolic order. People use language to access social roles, cultural norms, and shared meanings that shape how they see the world and their place in it. The existence of signifiers—words, pictures, and symbols—that allow for communication and communicate meaning is what defines the symbolic. But there is also a basic absence or lack that characterizes the Symbolic, since language can never adequately express the depth and complexity of actual experience. (Lacan, 'formative' 3)

The Real, according to Lacanian philosophy, is that which defies representation and escapes symbolization. It is the area outside of language and symbolic frameworks where experience is pure and unfiltered. Because it includes the chaotic, unpredictable parts of life that cannot be fully integrated into the Symbolic order, the Real is defined by its disruptive and painful quality. The Real, which resists symbolization, yet has a strong hold over subjective experience; it appears during *jouissance* (a word for extreme pleasure or delight that verges on agony), anxiety, and desire. (Lacan, 'Ecrits' 84)

Within Lacanian psychoanalysis, the Mirror Stage, Symbolic, and Real work together to produce a triadic framework that defines subjectivity and reality. Analysts and academics can learn more about the intricacies of the human experience, the processes of identity development, and the mechanisms of social and cultural mediation by investigating the interactions across these domains. These ideas provide a strong foundation for comprehending how tales create meaning, reshape how people see themselves and

others, and deal with the basic conflicts between language and silence, illusion and reality, and lack and need in the context of literary study. (96-98)

Otherness and Alienation in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter

Dehumanization takes many different forms in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books, reflecting the intricate power structures, social strata, and biases that exist within the wizarding community. A notable instance of dehumanization is when magical entities, such as goblins and house elves, are treated like inferior beings with little agency or rights. Dobby and Kreacher, two examples of house elves, are portrayed as meek and obedient, constrained by magical contracts and social norms that rob them of their individuality and dignity. In a same vein, goblins are marginalized and discriminated against in wizarding society, assigned to jobs at Gringotts Bank and not granted full citizenship rights. (Probyn 142)

In addition, the representation of some characters, like Voldemort and the Death Eaters, represents the dehumanization of people who adhere to ideas of pure-blood superiority and work to exterminate those they believe to be inferior. Voldemort and his adherents perpetuate cycles of fear and prejudice by devaluing the lives and humanity of those who do not fit their limited definition of wizarding purity via their acts of violence and tyranny. (Rowling, 'Chamber' 23)

The show also looks at the dehumanizing consequences of authoritarian control and institutionalized oppression, especially in places like the Ministry of Magic and Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. A culture of dread and distrust is fostered by political corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, and censorship, which also erodes individual liberties and promotes compliance and obedience. (Udden, 'Politic' 97)

In addition, during their travels, characters like Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, and Severus Snape deal with dehumanization in various ways and struggle with questions of moral ambiguity, identity, and belonging. As he deals with the demands of fame and destiny, Harry, the "Boy Who Lived," is objectified and mythologized by others, depriving him of his humanity and agency. Hermione challenges ingrained ideas of blood purity and magical supremacy as she confronts bigotry and prejudice from pure-blood racists, despite

being a Muggle by birth. Snape, on the other hand, represents the intricacies of atonement and selflessness, battling both inner demons and social norms to maintain his humanity in the face of hardship. (Probyn, 'Indecision' 142)

In J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series that provides a subtle examination of dehumanization by examining the ways in which prejudice, power, and fear interact to marginalize and oppress people in the wizarding community. The series encourages readers to address the underlying inequities of institutional prejudice and to stand up for the principles of empathy, equality, and solidarity in the continuous fight for social justice and human dignity via its rich tapestry of characters, conflicts, and ideas. (136)

Here are selected excerpts from the text focusing on specific instances of dehumanization within J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series: Firstly, the treatment of house-elves demonstrates itself when Dobby serves the Malfoy family and Kreacher serves the Black family. The house-elves experience complete domination because their mistreatment occurs right before the audience in situations where they endure punishments after failing to follow commands or pursue their own interests. (Rowling, 'Prisoner' 35)

Through its depiction of house-elves Rowling shows wizard dehumanization by reducing living characters into usable or possessable objects based on wizard convenience. The house-elves suffer from systemic injustices within wizarding culture because their mistreatment reveals the widespread disrespect that exists for their core rights and their dignity. Secondly, Treatment of Non-Human Magical Creatures: "Goblins, in particular, face discrimination and marginalization within the wizarding world, as evidenced by their limited rights and access to employment opportunities. The goblin rebellion led by Griphook in Harry Potter and Deathly Hallows highlights the systemic injustices faced by goblins and their struggle for equality and recognition." (Rowling, 'Chamber' 35)

Thirdly, Voldemort and Death Eaters portrays that Voldemort's quest for pure-blood supremacy and his disregard for the lives of non-magical beings and 'blood traitors' reflect a fundamental devaluation of human life and dignity. The torture, persecution, and murder carried out by Voldemort and his followers serve to

dehumanize both the victims and perpetrators, perpetuating cycles of fear and violence within the wizarding community. The Ministry's discriminatory policies and its suppression of dissenting voices, as seen in the scapegoating of Muggle-born witches and wizards, contribute to a climate of fear and mistrust. The hierarchical system at Hogwarts along with its strict disciplinary procedures through figures of authority reveals how institutional hierarchies create dehumanizing effects. (Rowling, 'Chamber' 35)

Through Harry's fight against his chosen one identity while Hermione breaks pure blood beliefs and Snape struggles between his loyalty and sense of right and wrong the author demonstrates the many ways an individual handles systemic oppression. The Harry Potter books display dehumanizing situations throughout their narrative structure by depicting how magicians treat magical creatures and demonstrating the actions and beliefs of Voldemort and his followers. These particular events demonstrate the story's criticism against society and its many complex layers. The series by J.K. Rowling investigates numerous dehumanization subjects throughout its pages which include institutionalized oppression and individual standoffs against systematic adversity. Rowling desires readers to deeply analyze authority through her theme studies while examining bigotry using controlled characterizations in the wizarding world.

The Representation of the Process of Otherness and Dehumanization

Harry Potter demonstrates dehumanization throughout its series because Rowling constructs this complex theme through multiple characters and narrative elements. Rowling presents dehumanization through explicit cases of oppression together with subtle institutional discrimination to invite readers into understanding wizarding world dynamics regarding power distribution and discrimination realities.

The series reveals one significant case of dehumanization while showing its oppressed groups in detail starting with house elves and magical non-human animals. House elves Dobby and Kreacher demonstrate the condition of slavery through their captivity because wizarding society restricts their free choice through enchantments and traditions. The slave torture inflicted by wizarding overseers mirrors the dangerous outcomes of servitude which demonstrates a broader disregard for human rights and dignity in basic respects.

Within wizarding culture non-human magical beings like goblins endure social exclusion and bigotry since they remain in inferior societal positions without receiving equality under law. The uprising of Grip hook in Harry Potter and Deathly Hallows sheds focus on the structural inequalities that oppressed groups must contend with, while also highlighting the fight for equality and recognition among non-human entities. (Freud 34)

Rowling tackles more subdued kinds of dehumanization through societal hierarchies and entrenched discrimination in addition to overt acts of injustice. A culture of fear and division is sustained by the Ministry of Magic and Hogwarts School, two establishments that engage in discriminating behaviors and hierarchical systems. These institutions demonstrate the pernicious nature of institutional dehumanization by marginalizing people who do not fit the mold and by scapegoating Muggle-borns and imposing conformity. (Rowling, 'Prisoner' 22)

Moreover, the show delves into the dehumanizing views and deeds of figures such as Voldemort and his Death Eaters, who uphold the notion of pure-blood superiority and endeavor to exterminate those they consider inferior. They deprive their victims of their humanity via acts of brutality and persecution, seeing them as expendable roadblocks in their quest for dominance. This picture emphasizes how violent extremist beliefs are at their foundation and how they dehumanize people in society. (47)

Rowling deftly depicts dehumanization in all of its manifestations via complex characterizations and thematic investigations, inspiring readers to consider questions of identity, power, and social justice. The series encourages readers to critically analyze the similarities to actual systems of injustice and to support the ideals of empathy, equality, and solidarity in the continuous fight for human dignity and liberation by shedding light on the complexity of oppression and resistance within the wizarding world. (Rowling, 'Sorcerer' 16)

Social Alienation Incorporated in Rowling's Harry Potter:

The issue of social alienation is prevalent in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books, impacting both small and large characters as they grapple with the intricacies of the wizarding world. Characters experiencing social exclusion because of their heritage or skills can

be examples of social alienation, as can the wider societal differences that arise during turbulent and conflict-ridden periods. (Rice 13)

Harry Potter, who feels extremely alone because of his notoriety as "the Boy Who Lived" and the conditions of his childhood with the Dursley family, is a well-known example of social alienation. Harry gets hero worship from his wizard peers in spite of having constant feelings of loss and maintaining challenges in establishing meaningful connections. Harry's lonely situation grows worse because he lacks parents and must endure being Voldemort's descendant (7)

The unconventional nature of Aurora Lovegood together with Hermione Granger causes their characters to socially disconnect from wizarding customs within the magical world. The Muggle heritage of Hermione triggers white supremacist persecution and prejudice against her but Luna endures rejection from peers because of her unusual behavior. Their narratives demonstrate how people must handle social systems while recognizing both the value of acceptance and belonging in an environment that values standardization above individuality. (20)

In addition, via the representation of disadvantaged groups like werewolves, squibs, and mythical beings like giants and centaurs, the series delves deeper into issues of societal alienation. Wizarding society's majority views these marginalized entities with prejudice resulting in both animosity and feelings of loneliness towards them. Through his dedication to creatures without magic and his fight against werewolf stigma Remus Lupin demonstrates that kindness from misunderstood groups creates positive outcomes to heal social prejudice.

The social exclusion between wizarding communities becomes more serious when Voldemort takes power because Muggle-born people and dissidents become subjects of persecution. Under the chaos of social uncertainty and growing anxiety Hogwarts forms a divide between "pure-bloods" and "Muggle-borns" which mirrors societal rifts at such times. During periods of turmoil individuals face complicated challenges regarding their loyalties and attachments through the example of Severus Snape who faces difficulties with his loyalties and sense of belonging. (Rowling, 'Chamber' 12)

Lacan's Hallmarks in Harry Potter

An analysis of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books from a Lacanian perspective offers an intriguing way to look at the complexity of subjectivity, desire, and identity in the wizarding world. By utilizing Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic ideas, a fresh perspective may be taken on the series' character development, narrative dynamics, and thematic complexity.

The idea of the mirror stage, which holds that identification with an idealized image reflected in the mirror mediates the construction of the self, is central to Lacanian thought. Characters like as Harry Potter, Hermione, and Voldemort struggle with issues of identity and self-perception; they frequently have to face skewed representations of themselves that have been created by society pressures and outside expectations. Others mythologize and objectify Harry because he is the "Chosen One," and he finds it difficult to reconcile his own identity with the heroic ideal that has been placed upon him. Hermione, a witch of Muggle descent, must negotiate issues of acceptance and belonging in a society that values pure blood ancestry, while Voldemort's fractured personality illustrates the damaging effects of a narcissistic obsession with control and power. (Lacan, 'Ecrits' 37)

Understanding the function of desire and the search for completeness in the story is made possible by Lacanian theory. Characters like Draco Malfoy and Severus Snape struggle with unmet expectations and unsolved issues, looking to others for approval and acknowledgment as they negotiate the difficulties of ambition, love, and loyalty. Snape's unfulfilled passion for Lily Potter and Draco's endeavor to meet his family's standards serve as prime examples of the ways in which issues of subjectivity and identity connect with need and want. (45)

Similar to this, Lacanian ideas like the Other and the symbolic order offer a framework for comprehending the relationships between language, power, and social standards in the wizarding community. The Death Eaters, Hogwarts School, and the Ministry of Magic are examples of establishments where the symbolic order is upheld via disciplinary actions, bureaucratic supervision, and ideological indoctrination. The oppressive imposition of social standards is embodied by characters such as Cornelius Fudge and Dolores

Umbridge, and the gaze of the Other has a constant impact on people's subjectivities and actions. (19)

Harry Potter, according to Lacan, highlights the ways in which psychoanalytic theory deepens our comprehension of the psychological nuance, thematic complexity, and sociopolitical significance of the story. One can examine the relationship between identity, desire, and power and gain new insights into the literary universe created by J.K. Rowling. This allows readers to delve deeper into their imaginations and explore the depths of human experience while traveling through the wizarding world. (23)

Conclusion:

The rich tapestry of themes, characters, and narrative complexity found in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books lend itself to a thorough examination using a variety of theoretical frameworks, including Lacanian psychoanalysis. Rowling invites readers to interact with the intricacies of the human experience and societal dynamics inside the wizarding world by deftly fusing themes of dehumanization, social alienation, and identity construction across the whole series.

The story assumes unexpected dimensions when viewed through the prism of Lacanian philosophy, as characters struggle with issues of power, desire, and identity. The idea of the mirror stage sheds light on the ways in which figures like Voldemort, Hermione, and Harry must deal with warped reflections of themselves that are the result of internal strife and outside expectations. The wizarding social structures and institutional oppression as well as the assignment of norms and social hierarchies become explained through Lacanian perspectives of the symbolic order and the Other.

Utilizing Lacanian analysis for *Harry Potter* helps readers discover greater psychological elements and thematic development and social-political connections present throughout Rowling's work. Through its depiction of character experiences Harry and Hermione go through as well as the degraded treatment of oppressed groups the series delivers an advanced examination of power dynamics and identity quest for acceptance in a magical world.

Also it invites audience interpretation while enabling readers to approach their personal desires and social exclusion and identity

processes against societal norms. People worldwide have embraced Rowling's literature because it explores fundamental truths as well as universal themes. Readers engage in self-discovery through critical thinking after finishing the pages of the book.

Suggestions for Further Studies:

The study has two significant limitations because it focuses exclusively on particular themes from *Harry Potter* books and because textual analysis requires human interpretation that may lead to personal bias. Although a Lacanian framework successfully reveals psychological aspects in the text it does not establish complete understanding of every interpretation or reader's perspective. Research in this area should expand upon existing limitations by using intersectional methods for understanding dual identity binaries with dehumanization and alienation as well as reader responses to authors' intentions and alternative theory examination for better social-cultural interpretations.

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