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<http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.11322>

Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 11(3) (2025) 250-261

EJAL
Eurasian Journal of
Applied Linguistics

Resistance and Voice: A Postcolonial Reading of Beverley Naidoo's *The Other Side of Truth*

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Received: 27 June 2025 | Received: in revised form 12 August 2025 | Accepted 20 December 2025

APA Citation:

Zeidanin, H., Al Zuraigat, A., Alkrarha, A. (2025). Resistance and Voice: A Postcolonial Reading of Beverley Naidoo's *The Other Side of Truth* *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 11(3), 250-261.

Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.11322>

Abstract

In this study, the intertwined themes of voice, resistance, and identity formation in Beverley Naidoo's *The Other Side of Truth* are explored in relation to how child protagonists resist authoritarian power structures and reconstruct selfhood in contexts of trauma and displacement. A qualitative research design, combined with close textual readings guided by postcolonial literary criticism and trauma theory, examined narrative structures, symbolic geographies, and character development to study how such literary means provide tools of resistance. The findings reveal that narrative voices serve as a form of political resistance. Through this recounting of truth, symbolic memory, language adaptation, and intercultural negotiations, Sade and Femi re-establish agency in a novel that undermines the hegemonic narrative and empowers the marginalized voices of children as political actors. This study indicates the pedagogical and political power of postcolonial children's literature, insisting to raise critical consciousness in young readers. Thus, storytelling becomes a healing act and a mode of political engagement. The present investigation may be somewhat restricted, concentrating as it does on one novel with a qualitative approach, thereby impeding extension of results.

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Keywords: Postcolonialism, Political Resistance, Voice, Exile, Identity

Introduction

Literature has become a potent tool for defying institutionalized oppression and racism (Amalia & Mustafa, 2025; Baillie, 2003). Particularly, Beverley Naidoo's *The Other Side of Truth* is a tale about Nigerian political refugees in England, a narrative that won the annual Carnegie Medal written by any British subject. This novel is a powerful exploration of children who face trauma, forced migration and political violence. Beverley Naidoo (b.1943 -) is a South African author of children's books. *The Other Side of Truth* Naidoo (2007b) has been selected for this study because it clearly represents children as active resistance agents. The novel is unique in that it combines political criticism with personal growth and makes it an important text for analyzing post-colonial identity and emotional resistance (Emling, 2024; Feagin, 2013).

Naidoo's evocative portrayal of journalism sets the seriousness of media in today's time. True, the media can be put to enable lies and feed political agendas, but at the same time, it can be highly effective as an instrument of resistance, particularly if journalists are driven by ethical narration (de Albuquerque & Gonçalves, 2024). The novel paints sympathetic reporters who assist Sade and Femi, the protagonists, as figures of integrity who fight for the truth at the expense of their safety. By way of presenting the media in

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.11322>

its dual functions-as repression's tool and vehicle empowerment, Naidoo invokes an ethical obligation that lies on writers and journalists to craft public narratives. Hence, Sade made efficient use of these journalists, an indication that media can be allies in the struggle for justice when employed responsibly.

Naidoo's novel not only places in relief the importance of narrative as resistance but also offers a critique of the media role in creating political realities (Hope, 2021; King, 2020, 2023; Wester, 2009). Truth telling through personal testimony or journalism can serve as a unifying force in the battle against political oppression. This narrative is a testament to the redemptive power of telling stories while showing how story recovers agency and empowers people to fight back against their would-be silent forces. This paper investigates how Naidoo places resistance ahead of voice and emphasizes how the protagonists Sade and Femi use storytelling, memory and moral agencies to challenge the authoritarian regimes and negotiate their cultural hybridity. Their movement from silence to speech is a metaphor for the restoration of power in post-colonial environments.

Children literature in postcolonial societies is intended to weave tales of resistance, identity, and empowerment (McGillis, 2000; Naidoo, 2007a). While there have been scores of scholarly articles on children's literature in the postcolonial era, very few have tied a postcolonial theory, a trauma study, and narrative ethics to the analysis of a novel with a child protagonist as a refugee. Scholars have increasingly focused on the literature of post-colonial children (Bradford, 2007; King, 2023; Washington & Segal, 1997; Webb, 2013). however, few have studied the narrative mechanism of resistance, especially the role of the child voice as a counter-hegemony instrument. The paper fills this gap by placing narrative agency at the center of post-colonial criticism. The study asks the following question: How can other sides of truth represent resistance to political oppression by the voice of the protagonist? How are exile, trauma, and identity crises represented and negotiated in the novel? How to use story telling as a political and psychological tool for empowerment?

Theoretically, the paper adapts an interdisciplinary perspective built upon the works of Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Edward Said, and trauma theorists, like Cathy Caruth, to question how literary narrative becomes a site of resistance. Regarding empirical research, the emphasis has been on aligning on the agency of the postcolonial child victim, which, in the greater sense, needs to be established primarily on full academic literature. This study fills that gap by applying a postcolonial critical framework to *The Other Side of Truth* and, through trauma theory and narrative resistance, showing how voice, memory, and agency are played out through the character of Sade. The present paper thus adds to the burgeoning field of postcolonial children's literature that illustrates how narrative itself becomes a means for political intervention and healing.

Review of Literature

Repression of intellectuals in postcolonial states

The repression of intellectuals is a common occurrence in the majority of postcolonial states where power dynamics are heavily influenced by the memories of colonialism. The acts of dissent, particularly intellectual writing and thinking, are understood as veiled threats to the status quo in these countries. The prosecution of intellectuals is evident of how the postcolonial governments tend to target writers, journalists, and even scholars, regarded as subversive for refusing to adhere to the line of official ideology. The vulnerability of intellectuals within these societies is not merely a question of individual risk; it is a structural part of oppressive systems, the presence of which hinges on the suppression of dissident opinion. In this sense, the contemporary post-colonial literature testifies against the state appropriation of truth and the eradication of other voices that would otherwise call for reform and justice.

Theoretically, the foregrounding of parrhesia, or freedom of speech, in intellectuals also expands the scope of intellectual resistance. Parrhesia, as defined by Foucault (2001), is the act of speaking truth to power no matter the risk involved. The Intellectuals embody this virtue by insisting on exposing the ills of government and violations of human rights at the risk of their life and everyone in their family. Their insistence on speaking out against state atrocities, at whatever personal costs, shows the revolutionary power in language. This kind of writing becomes a political act that does not only provoke others to begin questioning the state-sponsored discourse, but also starts a ripple effect on the minds of others regarding their individual truths. However, there are marks of repressive forces trying to silence such critical voices in a postcolonial state.

In postcolonial studies, intellectuals are inclined to refer to intellectual resistance as a process of decolonizing the mind—an idea most famously promoted by scholars like (Thiong'o et al., 1986). The essential argument is that colonialism does not just take over land or institutions; it also takes over how people think. As long as they embrace values and beliefs given by colonizers, these people would have their minds colonized. It is only when such groups begin resisting imposed ideologies that decolonization can happen—that is when people reclaim alternate ways of knowing, telling their stories on their own terms.

Empirical writings

Recent scholarship on children's literature in the postcolonial era has pointed out that it is a highly

responsible tool to mold cultural and political awareness from an early age in the children. Existing work can broadly be classified under four interrelated thematic strands: (1) hybridity and identity formation, (2) language and narrative control, (3) trauma, migration, and resilience, and (4) child agency and resistance. These four themes establish a theoretical and empirical context which allows for the evaluation of postcolonial writing in general and *The Other Side of Truth* by Beverley Naidoo, in particular.

Hybridity, Diaspora, and Identity Formation

Grzegorczyk (2014) examines how children's literature in a post-imperial context engages with residues of colonial ideology and identity politics, outlining how characters grapple with their hybrid identities. This understanding furthers the investigation into how children as protagonists exist within a contentious socio-political terrain in *The Other Side of Truth*. Pillai (2008) revisits the idea of cultural hybridity, particularly among diasporic narratives, and argues that children's literature provides a peculiar opportunity for exploration of in-between spaces of identity formulation. Ong (2022) undertakes a parallel examination of transformations in postcolonial narratives in global children's literature, particularly with respect to navigation of identity, displacement, and cultural transformation as storytelling devices. Central to the journey of Saade is the issue of the intersection of self-representation across boundaries.

Snell (2017) builds upon theories of spatial and national identity in postcolonial studies by examining how the construction of place in children's literature speaks to larger geo-political tensions. Her interpretations of symbolic locations strengthen the perspective of Britain and Nigeria in Naidoo's works as politically and emotionally charged areas.

Language, Narrative, and Resistance

Postcolonial literature, Bhandari (2022) contends, manifests resistance through language and memory, whereby it re-empowers historically marginalized groups through such narratives. In particular, her work theatrically represents the identity change that Sade undergoes in Naidoo's novel via voice and narrative control. Fernández (2021) analyzes the linguistic aspects of postcolonial narratives and examines multilingualism and code-switching as acts of resistance and identity construction. The implications of these can certainly be heard in Naidoo's linguistic context, where language, in fact, serves as a barometer and bridge for the various characters to develop their new identities.

Ahmed & Mahmood (2024) discusses how postcolonial children's literature in the classroom can serve an educational purpose in promoting thinking, feeling, and acting citizens through narrative. The stories exploring language and cultural conflicts tend to create a stronger impact upon children.

Trauma, Migration, and Psychological Resilience

Elshaikh (2016) explores trauma in children's literature and shows how stories of migration and conflict portray psychological resilience and identity construction. The investigations show that coping mechanisms such as silence, memory, and storytelling among children protagonists conform to clinical models of trauma recovery. McGillis (2000) makes a larger argument that puts into question the cultural authority of children's literature, positing that, at times, the literature for young people mirrors and often subverts imperial pedagogy. This theoretical insight positions Naidoo's novel as a direct affront to dominant cultural narratives regarding child trauma and adaptation.

Child Protagonists, Agency, and Resistance

Al-Lawati (2024) observes how young protagonists in diasporic fiction resist by performing daily acts or exerting personal agency rather than grand political gestures. Such an understanding pays rich tribute to the subtle yet equally powerful manifestation of rebellion by Sade and Femi in their alien ambience. Vitullo (2022) unravels how children's literature can equip young readers to engage in critical examinations of displacement and identity through intersectional considerations. AI Detector is a free online tool designed specifically for analyzing text from AI models like ChatGPT and Claude. Perfect for reviewing academic content, AI Detector is your trusted companion.

Kwateng-Yeboah (2025) considers African diasporic narratives within children's literature and argues for their place in constructing counter-narratives to Western conventions. In this respect, his case reinforces attesting *The Other Side of Truth* as a counter hegemonic text to stereotype representation of African societies.

Methodology

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative design rooted in interpretative literary analysis. The emphasis is on in-depth close reading supplemented by critical discourse analysis and postcolonial theory. Exploring how voice, resistance, and identity are shaped in *The Other Side of Truth* Naidoo (2007a), the study combines trauma

theory and narrative ethics.

Sampling and Population

The study used purposive sampling technique to identify such narrative segments that reflect main ideas connected to voice, trauma, identity, and resistance. Beverley Naidoo's book *The Other Side of Truth* was chosen via deliberately drawn samples because of its remarkable thematic interaction with postcolonial identity, exile, and child empowerment. It is a classic postcolonial children's book, hence an ideal case study for examining narrative voice and resistance inside a highly politicized setting.

Instrument and Procedure

The main tool was thematic textual study of the book. Selected passages were examined for narrative structure, symbolism, and character development connected to voice and resistance. Narratively followed were key symbols (e. g., cassette tapes, letters), character arcs (Sade and Femi), and discursive changes (silence to speech). Peer-reviewed literature in postcolonial studies, trauma theory, and children's books is included in secondary data. To interpret the results and guarantee depth as well as theoretical coherence, the researchers used scholarly frameworks (e. g., Bhabha, Spivak, Said, Caruth).

Data Analysis

A qualitative analysis was used to conduct a thematic coding technique. Through repeated readings, codes like parrhesia, trauma, hybridity, resistant narrative, and voice reclaiming were found. Furthermore, narrative methods including free indirect dialogue, first-person reflection, and focalization were investigated to grasp how voice turns into a political instrument. This structure lets theoretical knowledge be combined with narrative interpretation to produce a strong analysis of how postcolonial writing frames resistance by storytelling.

Results

The Other Side of Truth by Beverley Naidoo contained such narrative segments that reflected themes connected to voice agency, trauma and displacement, storytelling and resistance; and symbolic texture of memory and resistance. These are four main themes that were found to be central to the novel's depiction of political and personal resistance via the child protagonists Sade and Femi, as revealed through close reading and narrative coding. These four themes are expanded as narratives: (1) *Reclamation of Voice as Agency*; (2) *Trauma and Displacement as Persistent Forces*; (3) *Storytelling as a Form of Resistance*; (4) *Symbolic Artifacts as Anchors of Memory and Resistance*.

Reclamation of Voice as Agency

The figure of Folarin represents those activists and intellectuals whose voice speaks out against authoritarianism and corruption at tremendous personal sacrifices. His journalism career is a form of intellectual resistance that is perilous in nature in the majority of postcolonial nations, where the state wants to control intellectuals and their narrative to consolidate its hold on power. The novel thus reiterates that intellectual resistance remains potent against authoritarianism and promises to inspire future generations. Voice would then stand for agency which contests political repression in Nigeria where one can situate the silencing of Sade's father, a journalist devoted to truth. The silence imposed upon intellectuals becomes a narrative driver as the young protagonist, Sade, asserts the position of speaker and ethical observer. This thematic arc's backbone is her journey from terror to brave speech.

The foregrounding of parrhesia, or freedom of speech, in Folarin's character also expands the scope of intellectual resistance. Parrhesia, as defined by [Foucault \(2001\)](#), is the act of speaking truth to power no matter the risk involved. Folarin embodies this virtue by insisting on exposing the ills of government and violations of human rights at the risk of his life and everyone in his family. Folarin's insistence on speaking out against state atrocities, at whatever personal costs, shows the revolutionary power in language. This kind of writing becomes a political act that does not only provoke others to begin questioning the state-sponsored discourse, but also starts a ripple effect on the minds of others regarding their individual truths. It is not, however, without strings; Folarin's eventual arrest bears the marks of repressive forces trying to silence critical voices in the postcolonial state.

In addition to this unravelling action, Folarin's intellectual resistance becomes finally manifestly apprehended to emphasize the conditionality of truth in a repressive political context. The written works of Folarin may be censored in an effort to pacify his apprehension; however, their result still lingers onto his children Sade and Femi. Their journey of identity discovery and the reclaiming of agency through voice will demonstrate that intellectual resistance has an effect that transcends one's lifetime. Folarin's truth becomes interwoven with theirs in the very fabric of understanding identity, justice, and the necessity of against oppression speech. Thus, *The Other Side of Truth* indicates that intellectual resistance does not end with the

suppression of the intellectual or with the apparent defeat of the opposing side. Instead, it continues from generation to generation, as intellectuals like Folarin's ideas and principles are passed on to younger minds, who will inherit the mantle of truth and oppose again.

Sade's progressive development from bystander and coward to compelling voice forms an important part of her character's development. In the first instance, her father was arrested, and the whole family was 'exiled'; Sade's voice was muted indeed. Now, she must come to terms with herself as well as the violent interruption of her life. As Sade grapples with doubt and fear, she slowly builds enough strength to speak. Sade's internal struggle is an expression of a larger conflict: similar to silenced communities, having endured violence and silence, she must now work backwards into life reclaiming her voice and the right to tell her own story. Her voice having been hesitant and fragmented at first, comes to grow stronger; her ability to articulate her experience has brought her back some control in a world that has ceased to be her own. Sade's decision to speak out is particularly significant within the framework of her relationship with power.

Throughout the narrative, adult power structures—whether they be political leadership, government authorities, or even adults who care—tend to be barriers to Sade's agency. These women are located in structures of compliance and silence, and they habitually attempt to impose their own narratives onto Sade's life. However, Sade's resistance is not only located as an act of rebellion but also as a moral position against the complacency of the societies in which she lives. As she matures, Sade finds her voice and tells her own story- that which shatters others' perceptions of her role- a quiet refugee, a broken African girl, a powerless victim. Initially, she finds hesitant, scattered words, but as she unfolds her narration, her voice gets stronger. Sharing her experiences gives her back the power to narrate her life in a world meant to silence her.

Sade's words may count for little in the backdrop of power and authority. Figures of authority, along her way—government officers, teachers, or elderly members of the community—systematically restrict her agency. Of special note is the women in such systems, conditioned themselves by institutions that promote obedience, unwittingly function as silencers of Sade, every time trying to impose their narratives on Sade's lived experience. However, Sade's resistance is not only located as an act of rebellion but also as a moral position against the complacency of the societies in which she lives. Now that Sade has managed to find her voice, she breaks away from all trends assigned to her—no longer is she merely a traumatized African girl, a helpless refugee, or a voiceless victim. Her own words rewrite the narrative other individuals attempted to write about her life. Naidoo makes a valuable contribution to postcolonial literature by putting Sade's own voice at the forefront. In Sade, we hear a voice not often heard in mainstream discourse—that of a child refugee. Not only does Naidoo give Sade a voice, but she also challenges traditional stereotypes of vulnerable African children. Unlike traditional postcolonial accounts that cast children as passive victims, this novel shows Sade reclaiming her own narrative, redefining what it means to be a young refugee - not as a victim, but as one with inner resilience.

Discourse in the narrative of *The Other Side of Truth* lies at the heart of amplifying Sade's voice. The novel is written mostly from Sade's perspective, a narrative technique inducing readers to become immersed in her inner conflicts, moral dilemmas, and emotional life. Readers get to see Sade's psychological evolution as she contemplates her changing sense of self and her increasing understanding of the political forces governing her life in her internal monologues. By Naidoo's use of free indirect discourse, the reader may easily include Sade's voice into the third-person narration, giving the reader direct access to her ideas and emotions as shown. This method stresses the novel's emphasis on Sade's agency since her interior monologue presents an essential area of resistance. Sade can take charge of her story and assert herself in a society that seeks to erase her thanks in part to her reflective monologues, where she considers her past, anxieties, and ambitions.

The scene in which Sade confronts injustice and defends herself is possibly the most significant one. It dawns on her readers that she is going through an epiphany, a realization that she can speak and that the truth matters: this moment of hesitation before her speaking indicates to the reader that she is passing through an epiphany.

I must talk, but the words are stuck in my throat, like a boulder. But I think of my father, and I know I must talk. I must talk, because if I don't, then everything that he struggled for will be lost. If I don't talk, then I will be among them—the ones who let injustice happen and don't do anything (P. 161).

At this crucial moment, the internal battle inside Sade is between speaking out or keeping it all silent. She knows that to be silent would be a betrayal of everything her father worked for, and so it's important ethically that she finds the courage to speak. Sade's pronouncements are no mere private affirmations-each one affirms her agency and negates her father's struggle for the truth becoming meaningless. Her struggle echoes the novel's greater themes of defiance and speaking the truth, in which breaking silence is a potent act of resistance against oppression. Furthermore, Sade's progression of voice closely correlates to her evolving sense of identity. Sade does not know where she belongs at the beginning of the novel. She is separated from her family, estranged from her father, and thrust to survive in a foreign society. She feels the loneliness and seclusion related to forced relocation as a refugee living in a foreign country. But as Sade gains voice and starts to describe what she has suffered, she begins to craft a new identity, one based on her lived experience

as a victim of political oppression. It is a voice of reclamation of her identity, an identity that is not victimized and imposed on her but one of her own empowered voice. One of the most poignant moments in the novel is when Sade ponders the manner in which stories shape her identity. She says:

They say that children don't know what's going on. They think that we're too young to figure it out. But I know something now. I notice things, I overhear things, and I understand. And I am going to connect my story because no one is ever going to take that away from me (p.181).

For Sade, this affirmatively marks a passage, for it is the way she actually understands the complexities of the world around her. It is a conscious act of defiance against the silencing of children, especially marginalized children whom society ignores or dismisses. She asserts her right to tell her own story and refuses to be rendered invisible; by telling her story, she forces control over it. In this way, she makes an early step in establishing a place for herself in the larger political and social discourse.

Naidoo's employment of free indirect discourse and interior monologue also allows readers to glimpse the depth of Sade's emotional and psychological transformation. The shift from a passive, fearful child to an empowered, self-aware individual is explained with sympathy. In her reflective moments, Sade ponders the challenge of being a refugee and the burden of her father's legacy. Her inner struggles are at the center of her personality, bearing witness to the psychological toll of political violence and dislocation, and to the resilience that develops in surviving them.

Sade's voice as mediated by Naidoo, therefore, stands for resistance, resilience, and hope. It is an act of agency that opposes her voicing of her story in a world where dissent is to be silenced. *The Other Side of Truth* situates an otherwise marginalized and somewhat young protagonist at the center of its narrative, thereby articulating the relevance of placing in the spotlight voices rendered mute: those of the marginalized and oppressed, who have constantly been left out of central narratives. Sade's movement from silence to sounding her voice represents not only an individual move but also a collective one that bespeaks the universal struggle for justice, for truth, and for freedom of expression against the walls of political suppression.

Trauma and Displacement as Persistent Forces

In *The Other Side of Truth*, exile is not only the literal physical displacement of Sade and Femi from Nigeria to Britain, but also the more profound, agonizing loss—the breaking of identity, the alienation, and the quest for belonging—that ensues when people are torn from their home country. Every word of their story reveals the deep, unspoken wounds of the people who are forced to leave the familiar behind. For Sade and Femi, however, exile is more than a mere change of space; it is the deciding experience in the disruption of identity, for one is in a strange land where one has to learn how to live with cultural dissonance, racial prejudice, and bureaucratic indifference. Their journeys between Nigeria and Britain embody what [Bhabha \(1994\)](#) would describe as the third space of enunciation—a site where hybrid identities are forged in the liminal spaces between old and new, known and unknown. Sade and Femi struggle to reconcile their Nigerian heritage and British culture, thus forging new identities that embody both.

Through exile, Sade and Femi carry the tremendous weight of loss: the loss of home, the loss of identity, safety, and the migrant's sense of belonging. This is more than simply crossing a border; it is an attempt at finding out where they belong. Sade particularly grapples with the question of where she belongs in a world that seems to have no simple solutions. She is torn between the memory of her mother, representing the lost home, and the missing father, whose physical absence painfully reminds her of political oppression forcing her into exile. This dual loss - home and family - carries her journey, twisting Sade toward finding refuge in a place where she will be truly understood and accepted.

The psychological impact of displacement is worsened with the emotional and psychological torment of political turbulence, which brings about the differences between them. The sudden loss of their mother, separation from their father, and uncertainty about their status in the UK pile a lot of trauma on Sade and Femi. Such traumatic experiences are rendered through Naidoo's empathetic characterization of the children's emotional lives. Sade's silences, flashbacks, and nightmares are poignant windows into her trauma. Sade remembers her mother's death as well as her father's arrest as she is sitting in silence:

I've got my mom's voice stuck in my head, whispery and soft, but it evaporates before I can grasp it. And my dad. I don't know where he is, but I feel like he's trapped somewhere away from me, somewhere I can't get to. I can't help him. I can't help anyone (P. 120).

This memory captures Sade's sense of isolation and hopelessness in the wake of losing both parents and home. The ceaseless estrangement from her mother's voice and absence of her father evoke the instability and insecurity of the present exile, where memory flares repetition and an overpowering direct deprivation toward loved ones take turns with the episodic memory. In the hope that tomorrow will come, she lives in a memory flash of texting words like an email and feeling helpless in political violence and displacement. Sade's silence as a coping mechanism for the trauma she has suffered becomes a signature narrative in her journey.

Although this trauma is overwhelming, Naidoo harnesses Sade's voice to bring her pain to a powerful

medium of healing. The decision made by Sade in writing down her experiences and talking them through, to her aunt or with others she meets along the way, becomes cathartic for her. For Sade, writing is survival rather than self-expression. In a world which has brutally uprooted her, the written word is compass and anchor. Sade's secret letters to her murdered mother (Chapter 18) and her father's secret notebook (Chapter 22) stand for this desperate truth: writing preserves what exile attempts to eradicate - memory, identity, and the fragile thread that home lies along. As soldiers silence her father's testimony, Sade learns that writing can kill and save one from the horror of being forgotten. Writing is the therapeutic and expressive medium that Sade continues to pursue; she begins to manipulate her memories and slowly embroider her broken identity by making the articulations of her perceptions and feelings. Through writing, Sade is able to retain the memory of her mother and the fact of her pre-exilic life, which are constantly in danger of being erased through the trauma and dislocation of exile. Writing then becomes a lifeline, a means of getting hold of who she is amidst overwhelming forces of dislocation.

Such trauma faced by the children was hence not a personal malady but also an embodiment of the collective trauma that many postcolonial subjects faced when they found themselves uprooted from their homesteads due to political violence. Naidoo's rendering of suffering, both individual and collective, brings home the impact of political persecution on the everyday life of such children. In this sense, the trauma of Sade and Femi becomes representative of the common trauma of postcolonial societies, where dictatorial governmental political atrocities and subsequent displacement have left haunting psychological and emotional scars.

The psychological strain that Sade feels is aggravated by adaptation into an alien culture. Upon arrival in Britain, Sade and Femi confront, along with their fellow-rejects, prejudice based on skin color and social discrimination. Most of the social circles in which they try to fit look upon visitors, mainly from the third world, with suspicion and derision. Sade, almost turning paranoid, is catching on to these racial divides as she looks back over her experiences with classmates:

At school, I'm invisible. Nobody notices me, but nobody notices me neither. They just notice the color of my skin, or the way I speak. They don't have any idea about who I am. And I don't have any idea to make them notice (P. 102).

The lines serve best to convey Sade's keen sense of alienation in an unfamiliar new world where she becomes "other" by virtue of race and as an immigrant. Sade's inability to get along, from being seen for herself and not as a stereotype, accounts for the emotional burden of feeling foreign to a culture. The psychological cost of such alienation adds to what she already knows as traumatic and makes her even more isolated and confused.

Despite such setbacks, Naidoo also paints the resilience of the child protagonists. Yet all through the novel, Sade's trauma rings true, and her resilience and ability for recover are no less compelling. As she takes steps towards emotional recuperation, the relationships she forges- the most meaningful ones with her aunt and the others who provide her with support while in Britain- acquire paramount importance. Pushing through her terribly damaged emotions from her trauma, Sade comes back to her sense of belonging.

Storytelling as a Form of Resistance

Central to *The Other Side of Truth* is the belief in storytelling as resistance. The novel unravels itself into a fight for authorship over the story; a confrontation where whoever tries to obliterate, twist, or alter the truth becomes an adversary. To the extent that Sade's attempt to narrate her father's story in the media is an act of reclaiming narrative strength. By narrating her father's past, she resists not only the political forces that seek to muzzle dissenting voices but also the societal forces that strive to obliterate histories of oppression. To speak is to resist in a world that tries to condition the agency of such voices into dormancy. Narrating in postcolonial literature thus becomes counter-hegemonic ventures or counter-narratives to hegemony and reclaiming power from the masters of discourse.

By telling her father's story and telling a great deal about herself, Sade actively partakes in the making of her own life. Her public challenge of those authorities that have shattered her family's life is reminiscent of how post-colonial writers use literature to contest the prevailing historical narratives that supported imperialism. As stated by Said (1993), cultural representations importantly construct political realities, and post-colonial literature offers the very alternative to the imperialistic historical narrative that have long suppressed the voices of the colonized and the oppressed. Within this respect, Naidoo throws the personal journey of the young protagonist as a counter against broader socio-political hierarchies. The tale proves that even in extremely unfortunate circumstances, muted voices can still be heard along with their strong protests against those who try to stifle them.

The novel underlines storytelling as resistance against political oppression. Sade's decision to tell her father was a conscious act of rebellion against whoever would dare try to kill her family. Further in the novel, it becomes clear that narrative isn't merely a narrative of what happened, but rather an attempt to engage with the political forces trying to commandeer the truth. Sade's journey of speaking truth to power mirrors

the postcolonial writer's own action of rewriting history through the voices of subjugated people. As Said (1993) also contends further, the act of narration in postcolonial nations becomes a decolonization process in which the oppressed voices are raised and counter-narratives of such voices become resistance to the dominant narratives which colonizers presented.

Beyond telling a story of defiance, the novel also shows the dualistic nature of the media in postcolonial nations. The media in *The Other Side of Truth* is shown as a double-edged sword. It might be a tool of influence used by the strong to spread falsehood, exaggerate trauma, and impose hegemonic control over public opinion. The fact that the government may control the media and silence dissent highlights the peril of a media system collaborating in the erosion of truth. Under most post-colonial contexts, the media turns out as a propaganda tool perpetuating the ideological constructs of the elite while disenfranchising the oppressed voices.

However, the media could also be a platform for the subservient voices to reveal the concealed truths. It is Sade's experience of sympathetic reporters in the novel that tells how media can make a public into the activist social change. The truth is out, and the regime's efforts at repressing voices are exposed when Sade's father's story finally goes on air. Sade's use of the media demonstrates how storytelling can also be a means of resistance to reveal truths against dominant ideologies.

Symbolic Artifacts as Anchors of Memory and Resistance

In *The Other Side of Truth*, the spaces transcend their function as mere geographical locations and achieve deeper symbolic significations, standing for the socio-political tension and strife of the characters. The break between Nigeria and Britain is central to the novel's exploration of place politics. Nigeria is described as a sight of menace and repression, with political instability, statewide corruption, and authoritarianism forcing people into exile, just like the Solaja family in its hasty exit. The violence and oppression that beset their home are mirrored in their vulnerability, while the family's flight to Britain increases a feeling of political disconnection, through which displacement is characterized. Nigeria stands as a metaphor for the repressive forces of power that stifle freedom and agency; these streets and public places bear the presence of government watch and violence.

When viewed somewhat more closely, however, Britain itself turns out to be anything but a safe haven for which the Solaja family had hoped. It may provide sanctuary in a physical sense and, therefore, create other problems, such as institutional indifference, culture shock, and phenomena like xenophobia. This paradox is manifest in the refugee camp, which has been transformed into a liminal space where the Solajas—most especially Sade and Femi—must negotiate issues of identity, belonging, and survival. This shelter, both a haven and a prison, constitutes a space for emotional and social tension and is thus a contended space where characters are forced into reinventing themselves and negotiating their place in an unfamiliar society. Further, this conception of Britain as a land of hope and disillusionment underscores the precariousness of exile, where hope for safety exists hand in hand with rude realities of racism, administrative apathy, and problems of adapting to yet another culture.

Diverse settings in Britain, such as school and street in the city of London, also represent the challenges facing the Solaja children as they sort out their identities between racial and cultural discrimination. For example, there is a school that quickly establishes itself as a place of isolation and alienation for Sade because identification as a refugee distances her from her schoolmates. The anguish of attempting to fit in this alien world symbolizes the greater condition of postcolonial living in which one is trapped in between two lands. One is the primary land, which history has marred with trauma and loss and promises nothing of acceptance in a foreign land. However, the school - for Sade - would later become a space of renewal. Through interactions with her peers and teachers Sade learns to articulate her resistance to the imposed meanings attached to her refugee status. The shift in meaning of the school thus indicates where one might regain their power and take control; that is, even in alienating spaces, change is still possible.

Symbolic objects and artifacts also speak to memories, identity resistance, and emancipation, says Naidoo. The cassette tapes, photographs, and letters that have proven valuable to the family are endowed with importance in cultural and emotional terms. Solaja's objects are bitter reminders of her family's life in Nigeria ruined beyond reconstruction through political violence and exile. Particularly the tapes are about the struggle to keep a voice and memory and give a counter-narrative to the erasure of people's history incorporated in forced migration. The recurrent encounters with these objects throughout the novel provide important anchors for Sade and Femi's self-identification with their heritage and continuity in the face of displacement. Therefore, these artifacts become powerful symbols of resistance against the very erasure of identity that exile risks to engender; alternatively, they reaffirm the significance of keeping memory and narrating their tales.

The whole political symbolism of the settings in the novel further operates along the lines of struggle for identity and belongingness in a postcolonial society. The refugee camp mirrors the wider geopolitical events at work in the world. It provides a space for refugees, immigrants, and those from historically oppressed groups to meet and bear the ongoing effects of their displacement. The refuge, which on the surface seems to offer some sort of protection, is symbolic of the impermanence of the refugee status, where safety is never

guaranteed, and home is always questionable.

The streets of London, similarly, are a symbolic place for negotiating identity. While wandering through the unfamiliar city streets, Sade and Femi encounter both overt and covert racism and exclusion. These city streets are the domains of power of the wider society that shape the existence of refugees and immigrants in Britain, and which bring out the contradiction between the promise of a new life and the brutal awakening of cultural otherness and social inequality. But as Sade's journey continues, the streets are also a terrain of resistance, where she begins to reassert her agency and reclaim her identity. The city itself becomes a layered and densely packed symbol, fraught with difficulties and at the same time rife with opportunities afforded by migration, said Naidoo.

In general, settings for *The Other Side of Truth* should not be reduced to mere landscapes but should rather be perceived as symbolically representing the major issues of displacement, identity, and resistance. In these spaces, Naidoo locates the efforts of Sade and Femi to frame their lives in Britain—with a yearning for memory, cultural continuity, and self-empowerment under a political repressive regime. The blending of these symbolic images throughout the novel thus shows that place, memory, and identity cannot be treated separately, and that at the very heart of a postcolonial existence is present the assertion of one's voice with the struggle for resistance against erasure.

Discussion

In *The Other Side of Truth*, the political persecution that drives the plot is not only a personal disaster for all protagonists like Folarin, Sade and Femi, but also a grand metaphor for what political repression does to postcolonial nations. Folarin Solaja is the journalist whose arrest sets everything in motion. Demands for truth and openness make him a danger to the repressive government in Nigeria. It plunges Sade and Femi into an exile filled with trauma from dispossession and confusing identities, which is a reduction of the bigger experience of postcolonial peoples who sometimes find themselves suspended between loyalty to their homeland and to the oppressive authorities that seek to snuff out their voices.

Folarin's unfaltering pursuit of truth at the risk of imprisonment or death highlights the peril that intellectuals face if they challenge the existing political dispensation. Intellectuals, like Folarin, have the propensity to encounter the sharp end of government wrath because they have the ability to excavate corruption, promote critical thinking, and question the hegemonic discourses that are inextricably linked to the political elite's permanence in power. At a broader level, the novel positions Folarin as a figure for the intellectual class in postcolonial countries that embark on the laborious process of decolonizing the mind.

In the majority of postcolonial countries, intellectuals and writers have been central to the struggle to reclaim narratives, to expose the contradictions within the nation-building project, and to challenge the hegemony of colonial legacies. Folarin's persecution, his wife's assassination and exile of his children reflect the real fate of many such intellectuals, who have either been silenced or forced into exile by repressive regimes. Folarin's moral courage, however, falls within the overall narrative of such intellectuals who have shaped national debate, and highlights their function as change agents within both the postcolonial present and future.

Moreover, the novel creates a disruptive contrast between Folarin's intellectual resistance and the trauma of displacement that Sade and Femi experience. Just as Folarin's writing constitutes resistance in words, the children's resistance takes place in trying to reclaim their voices and their identities in a new, foreign land. Their exile defies the accepted course that resistance is meant to take in overt political action. Instead, their subtle means of resistance—navigating a new language, cherishing memories of their fatherland, and exhibiting their cultural identity in an alien society—stand against their father's vocal activism. Sade and Femi's resilience, in this sense, presents a subtler yet powerful form of intellectual resistance.

Naidoo portrays the psychological and emotional reality of forced migration through Sade's and Femi's estrangement, trauma, and adjourning ways of belonging. In this sense, travels are existential for children, who travel through acceptance rather than the physical journey. Sade finds strength to negotiate the way into her new life as she comes to terms with bereavement and lack of home, using her voice as a means of self-expression and her therapy. In its actions, *The Other Side of Truth* charts not only the personal effects of political violence and displacement but also maps out the greater quest for identity and belonging at the heart of the postcolonial experience.

Sade's movement from silence to address in *The Other Side of Truth* reflects the power of voice as an instrument of resistance, the theme of the story. As a child ensnared by political upheaval and displacement, Sade's progression to an active voice in the risky, possible confrontations of suppressive energies determines her empowerment against such forces. This thematic use of voice echoes Spivak (1988) contention that the subaltern, or oppressed groups, lack voice in a hegemonically dominated world. It appears that Sade's search for a voice almost as much as the will to resist oppressive forces in society serves as a powerful metaphor for

the wider struggle of reclaiming agency by postcolonial peoples. Like many, she has to discover herself.

In postcolonial studies, intellectuals are inclined to refer to intellectual resistance as a process of decolonizing the mind—an idea most famously promoted by scholars like (Thiong'o et al., 1986). The essential argument is that colonialism does not just take over land or institutions; it also takes over how people think. As long as they embrace values and beliefs given by colonizers, these people would have their minds colonized. It is only when such groups begin resisting imposed ideologies that decolonization can happen—that is when people reclaim alternate ways of knowing, telling their stories on their own terms. Folarin's writing, therefore, is a continuation of the larger decolonization of the mind movement, one that continues even after his arrest. Folarin, in his writing, seeks to break the mental chains over his society, and his children, displaced as they are, continue this work of reclaiming their agency through their own voices.

By likening Folarin's opposition to the idea of parrhesia, *The Other Side of Truth* illustrates the importance of truth-telling as a strategy for fighting political oppression. Truth-telling as opposition has the potential not only to reveal corruption and injustice, but also to mobilize change. Even though Folarin's resistance finally brings him to his muted end, it forms the basis for a much wider front against injustice and violation of human rights.

This study's results confirm the strong potential of postcolonial children's literature as a narrative space not only to tell stories, but also to act as a political site, a means for reconstructing identity, and healing. Each of the five themes that emerged from textual analysis may be viewed within larger theoretical frameworks borne by postcolonial studies and trauma studies, broadening the understanding of how *The Other Side of Truth* interacts with complex socio-political realities.

Voice as Political Agency

In reclaiming her voice, Sade represents the subaltern voice trying to speak in the midst of hegemonic systems that efface or appropriate marginal voices, as Spivak (1988) describes. Her narrating her own story, risking her own life, resonates with, and acts as a contrast against, Spivak's assertions regarding the epistemic violence that silences colonized subjects. Thus, within this epistemic matrix, Sade is no longer merely a fictional character, but the authorial enactment of a form of parrhesia—"fearless speech"—as articulated by Foucault (2001), thus situating her voice as an ethical and political act of intervention.

Narrative as a Mode of Resistance

The observation that storytelling is indeed a tool of resistance fits in with Bhandari (2022) contention that the postcolonial narrative reclaims memory and self-definition through the act of narration. Sade's diaries and statements, even as they seek to defy normative discourses, present counter-narratives to authoritarian ideologies. In this way, the novel performs what Said (1993) refers to as cultural resistance, the use of narrative to counteract the discourse of hegemonic authority over truth.

Trauma, Displacement, Resilience

Naidoo's account of trauma accords with Elshaikh (2016) position that children's literature can mark the emotional intricacies of postcolonial dislocation. While echoing clinical paradigms of trauma, the psychological symptoms of the characters, i.e. flashbacks, silence, dissociation, serve as metaphors of political voicelessness. The transition from silence to speech suggests a possible trajectory of recovery and resistance that further affirms storytelling as therapeutically potent.

Hybrid Identities in Liminal Spaces

School and refugee centers are places where hybrid identities undergo a negotiation process to develop what Bhabha (1994) calls a "third space" where hybridity is produced. Sade and Femi refer to cultural codes from both Nigeria and Britain in shaping new subjectivities that refuse being identified by narrow categorical boundaries. Indeed, liminal spaces produce sites of fluidity whereby the otherwise becomes politically charged concerning identity.

Memory, Symbolism, and Material Resistance

The symbolic material present in the novel such as letters, cassette tapes, and photographs foreground the idea of materiality of memory itself in the resistance against cultural erasure. They form the artifacts Kwateng-Yeboah (2025) refers to as "resistance texts," which provide some anchorage to diasporic identity against the tide of amnesia that is imposed upon it: these materials constitute disruptors of memory amnesia among the children. Their relationship with these objects means that they engage in a form of remembering, affirming both their agency and historical continuity against the fragmentation that enforced exile brings about.

Conclusion

Beverley Naidoo's *The Other Side of Truth* is a powerful illustration of how books for children in

postcolonial society could further political analysis and social change. Naidoo enables readers to witness the cultural conflict of exile, the emotional terrain of trauma, and the slow but steady reclaiming of agency through storytelling, truth-telling, and speech by letting Sade and Femi speak. The results of the research indicate that narrative voice is both a literary tool and a form of resistance. From quiet to speech, the characters' metamorphosis illustrates how literature can represent and inspire psychological toughness, cultural sensitivity, and political awareness. By giving child characters more priority than stories centered on adults, Naidoo reclaims children's literature as one of radical possibility.

This research has implications both literary and scholastic. For academics, it shows how voice in postcolonial literature evolves into a means of survival instead of just a symbolic role. It reminds teachers of the need of including these sorts of books into the curriculum to assist young readers in honing empathy, critical thinking, and social awareness.

One of the drawbacks of the research is its focus on a single novel and qualitative approach. Future study could be greatly helped by comparative analyses between areas or a protracted look at how young readers react to this type of literature. Ultimately, *The Other Side of Truth* is a history of defiance rather than just a narrative of displacement. It shows how stories persist and have the ability to voice out, stand up, and alter the planet even in the face of violence and eradication.

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