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RESEARCH PAPER

Challenging Boundaries in Harrow's *The Ten Thousand Doors of January*: A Postcolonial Feminist Study

[1]Ayesha Khan*, [2]Dr. Sadia Waheed and [3]Javeria Saleem

1. BS Student, Department of English, Government College Women University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, Department of English, Government College Women University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan
3. BS student, Department of English, Government College Women University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan

***Corresponding Author:** sadiawaheed@gcwuf.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

This study examines Harrow's The Ten Thousand Doors of January (2019) through the lenses of Homi K. Bhabha and Simone de Beauvoir. Harrow uses fantasy to critique colonialisation and celebrate women's resistance. The role of women in fiction and adventure literature has often been marginalised and overlooked. The novel presents the parallel story of January Scaller and her mother, Adelaide Larson, as they navigate their path under the rule of Mr. Locke, an Englishman who created an archaeological society. The society of Locke collects antiques and crafts from other worlds and closes and destroys the doors they find. The research involves close textual analysis, guided by Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex (1949) and Homi K. Bhabha's hybridity and 'Third Space' theories. It analyses how January, as a mixed-race individual with black skin, faces exploitation in Locke's household and how her father has been subjected to Locke's insatiable colonial greed. It examines how January exists in an in-between space and how doors symbolize a third world where the world intersects. Boundaries dissolve, allowing January, Julian, and Adelaide to defy social constraints and redefine their identities. The present study concludes how Hybridity and the concept of 'the other' reveal the resistance and transformation of marginalized identities against colonial and societal constraints in The Ten Thousand Doors of January.

KEYWORDS Colonialism, Third world, The other, Hybridity, Identity, Doors

Introduction

The distinctions between men and women have always been apparent. Historically, men have held positions of power, while women have frequently been assigned domestic responsibilities. The portrayal of women in fantasy literature is still often pushed to the margins. Men tend to dominate the narratives, whether in Tolkien's works, where Bilbo Baggins battles monsters, or in Paolini's fantasy series, where Eragon flies with dragons. Women are seldom positioned as central characters in these worlds. This marginalisation also reflects the impacts of colonialism, where the exploitation and greed of colonisers have harmed not only men but women as well.

Harrow mentioned in her interview that, upon examining children's literature in the context of British imperialism, it becomes clear that many such works function as colonial fantasies. These narratives often depict a fantasy realm where passive animals await the arrival of four foreign white children to rule them. The Ten Thousand Doors seeks to invert the problematic tropes that plagued childhood fantasy books, turning them inside out and backward to reflect homecoming themes rather than conquest (Harrow, personal communication, 7 August 2019). The powerful believed the world's true and rightful order had been established and would never change. They felt their empires would never fall and their progress would never falter. One of the core ideas in The Ten Thousand Doors is that

doors foster change, making it fitting to set the story in a time when people are obsessed with stagnation and a desire for stability.

Women have traditionally been viewed as the other in a male-dominated world, a perspective often reflected in fantasy. The women who ventured to discover the world beyond their own usually became the others in this new realm. Society ridiculed them when they tried to share their experiences, labeling them as hysterical or mad. In Beauvoir's theory, she argues that women will never be seen for who they indeed are. A woman can seldom be viewed as an individual in her own right. Bhabha has explored similar themes, focusing on hybridity and the concept of the other. He noted that after colonialism, people often struggle to maintain their roots, finding themselves in a liminal space where their identities become blurred and uncertain.

In the post-colonial portal fantasy "The Ten Thousand Doors of January" by Harrow, the narrative not only highlights history from a female perspective but also shows how the greed of colonialism imposes suffering on individuals. Harrow reflects her ideologies through her writing, presenting a story encompassing diverse experiences, not just those of white women. It also presents the struggles that Black women face in exploring new worlds. Adelaide's determination to pursue her love, regardless of what society says about her race, beautifully illustrates the power of true love. This concept strengthens the third-world theory, referring to areas where boundaries blur and two worlds merge. Individuals have broken these limitations by finding new worlds and doors.

Ultimately, it reveals how The Ten Thousand Doors of January illustrates January and Julian's marginalisation within a colonialist framework, utilising Simone de Beauvoir's concept of the Other. How does Adelaide's voyage defy gender stereotypes and criticise society's disregard for women's exploration? How does Homi K. Bhabha's theory of Hybridity connect to January's identification as a mixed-race character and the Doors' symbolic position as third spaces?

This study analyses the exploitation of colonisation, greed, and defiance of traditional gender norms and traditions. The analysis also reveals January Sculler's mixed-race identity and Julian's forced labor under Mr. Locke's colonialist ambitions, utilising de Beauvoir's concept of the Other and Bhabha's concept of Hybridity to highlight how the novel portrays the struggle for agency and self-definition within oppressive systems.

Literature Review

This portion critically surveys the scholarly work concerning colonialism, marginalisation, and the representation of identity and resistance in fantasy literature. It is titled 'Challenging Boundaries in The Ten Thousand Doors of January by Alix. E Harrow: A Postcolonial Feminist Studies.

In the article *"Women in Literature: The Impact of Feminism in Fantasy Literature" (2021), Jessica Dassler* observes that before the 1960s, fantasy literature lacked a feminist voice. Fantasy literature has evolved from myths to fairy tales to the fantasy genre recognised today; however, females only began to break into the genre after the Second Wave of the Women's Rights Movement. Before the 1960s, the second wave of the women's rights movement, males dominated fantasy literature, with writers who wrote three-dimensional and strong male characters and two-dimensional female characters. The female characters were primarily there to support and serve as love interests. Because men couldn't go about their lives without interacting with women, we can see that author such as *Marion Zimmer Bradley, Janny Wurts, and Raymond E. Feist* wrote about powerful women and the impression they had on the world around them. *Bradley's The Mists of Avalon* (1982) tells the Arthurian stories from the perspective of the women only. *Wurts' and Feist's Daughter of the Empire* (1987) narrate about a young lady who becomes a leader and change

the course of her nation. J.R.R. Tolkien, one of the most prominent fantasy writers, wrote the trilogy *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954), *The Two Towers* (1954), and *The Return of the King* (1955), having only four notable and memorable female characters Galadriel, Eowyn, Arwen, and Shelob. Even though Tolkien managed to write an epic fantasy without any prominent, extensive romantic notions, in reality, the women of The Lord of the Rings with romantic interests were only added to the trilogy to add realism.

According to *Gottschall* (2005), there are three times as many male protagonists as female protagonists. On average, the female protagonists were sexually mature teenagers or twenty- to twenty-nine-year-olds (p. 93). Female characters prioritised a partner's kindness over appearance. They were nearly uniformly described as physically attractive; "further, when there was information available on a character's physical attractiveness, there were approximately 50% more references per tale to female physical attractiveness than male" (p. 95). Finally, half of the female protagonists were categorised as active, as they took personal actions to tackle their problems.

Diana Kendall, in "*Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials"* (2000), argued that stereotypes primarily associated with men are rational, independent, strong, and dominant, whereas those associated with women are dependent, emotional, weak, and nurturing. These stereotypes prevalent in the real world are further explored and illustrated in fantasy literature. These stereotypes reflect the reader's world.

The dominant figure in society often perpetuates such stereotypes, whether it is a male, a king, or a nation. And the dominant one in society will always control the story's narrative. Men control the narrative of women by never encouraging their work. This leads us to the postcolonial dimension of the work, where it is acknowledged that the perspective of those who prevail often shapes the narrative of history. They claim they are the most civilised nation and came to educate the savages. Nobody has considered the nation's structure, folk tales, and future. If they hadn't been colonised, how would they have been nourished into a country without the influence of another country? So, the coloniser's role, be it in the Indians or Africans who have been heavily influenced by the British, or Koreans and Nepalese who have been influenced by the Japanese. They never truly experienced the evolution of their own culture.

In the article "*Literature as a Form of Resistance Against British Colonial Rule in India"* (2023), Ebada Wasiuddin notes that themes such as loss, nationalism, and pursuing personal identity are frequently explored in resistance literature. The subject of loss encompasses the multifaceted aspects of life, ranging from outward appearances to the destruction of language and landmarks, as well as the metaphysical and phenomenological, such as the sense of dislocation in a shifting society. As we see in *Twilight in Delhi by Ahmad Ali* (1940), the male protagonist reminisces about the British and their forceful involvement in the lives of Indians. And the resistance they showed was met with violence and further humiliation. The two nations on the subcontinent must embrace and adapt to another culture and its associated modules. The British never fully accepted the Hindus and Muslims, and never indeed rejected them. The propaganda of the white men's burden continued until they got separated on bitter terms and with many sacrifices.

The counter-narrative to colonial ideologies, myths, and stories has been frequently explored in works such as Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Gayatri Spivak's Can the *Subaltern Speak?* Aime Cesaire's *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land and Chinua Achebe's No Longer at Ease.* These writers investigate the colonial cause, reclaim their identity, and discuss the trauma and the psychological landscape of postcolonial lands, as explored in the essay "Postcolonial Literature Representation and Resistance."

Material and Methods

This study uses a qualitative textual analysis approach to investigate The Ten Thousand Doors of January through the lenses of postcolonial and feminist literary theory. Simone de Beauvoir is a foundational figure in feminist theory, best known for her seminal work The Second Sex (1949). In a patriarchal society, men are seen as the default, the norm, while women are defined with men and are considered secondary or the Other. This othering process dehumanises women and limits their freedom. De Beauvoir critiques the patriarchal structures that perpetuate women's oppression, including cultural, social, and economic systems. She examines how institutions like marriage, motherhood, and religion reinforce women's subjugation and limit their opportunities for self-fulfillment.

The literature has often been written from the perspective of the winners. The imperialistic approach in literature has consistently undermined the native people, who could never get their accurate representation. This analysis reveals the world through the lens of women. Women who were never central in the novel learn to fight, build, and struggle to find their true love, opening the doors that lead them to mysterious worlds. The postcolonial perspective of the novel is analysed through the lens of Bhabha's theory of Hybridity and the Third Space. As in Peter Berry's Beginning theory (1995), Bhabha introduces the concept of hybridity, which refers to creating new cultural forms and identities that emerge from the interaction between the coloniser and the colonised. This hybridity challenges fixed identities and binary oppositions, such as between coloniser and colonised. Bhabha's idea of the third space is that it is a critical site for forming hybrid identities. It is a space of negotiation and translation where different cultures intersect, resulting in new, hybrid identities that resist colonial binaries and essentialist notions of culture.

By applying these overlapping theoretical frameworks to close readings of the novel, the study looks at how Harrow challenges standard literary power structures and rewrites women's positions in both the fantasy and postcolonial canons. The story is studied as a space for negotiation and transformation, where hybrid identities arise and oppressed people obtain their voices.

Results and Discussion

Women and men are the most essential structures of a society. They are the pillars that hold a family together and shape its culture. The societal balance is often reflected in women's and men's roles in maintaining a social structure. Throughout the centuries, the roles men and women have chosen to accept have allowed them to continue their lives. The roles, when questioned, are met with resistance. These roles are challenged multiple times from various perspectives, especially by women. Who continuously question the roles that have been decided for them and why these roles are so dehumanising and disregarding. As literature reflects society, particularly in the realm of fantasy literature, the representation of women often portrays them as weak, soft, and nurturing.

The novel is the parallel story of January and her mother, Adelaide. January is not like any other girl in her surroundings. She is different in terms of colors and manner. Her caretaker, Mr. Locke, refers to her as "an in-between sort of thing" (Harrow, 2019, p. 7). She is black, and her father has usually been absent, so she lives in a big mansion with Mr. Locke as her caretaker. She is also a very troublesome child. And Mr. Locke always expects her to behave like a traditional girl. As women often seek external validation from men, they strive to act in a way that makes them worthy of love. As de Baoueir stated in her essay, women always try to define themselves as men have described them. And they will never be themselves. As in the novel, January is trying to get the approval of Mr. Locke by abiding by all the rules that Mr. Locke imposes on her. After January finds the door, she is not appreciated for finding something mystical and magical. Instead, she is punished by being

locked up in a room, and Mr. Locke says to her, "His eyes were stones, pressing down. "You will mind your place and be a good girl." I wanted desperately to be worthy of Mr. Locke's love. "Yes, sir," I whispered. And I was. (Harrow, 2019, p.16) Women went to great lengths just to be approved of by men. January, too, spent her next 10 years trying to fit into the model of a proper young lady, including eating appropriately, dressing up, and wearing a wire contraption over her breasts, etc.

The Otherness that women felt in their surroundings was always felt and experienced by January as she mentioned her trip to Mississippi and how when people see her make comments like, "West Indian, maybe. Or a half-breed, a perfectly unique specimen, odd-colored, perhaps, but hardly colored"(Harrow, 2019, p.13). Such comments make her feel belittled. She feels a strange sense of not belonging to the place where she lives. But even with these restraints and strangeness, she chose to go beyond the limits imposed on her. She chooses not to join society; instead, she embarks on a journey to explore herself and the doors that lead to a different world. As January mentioned about the doors, "We find, at some level, there is always a doorway, a dividing point between here and there, us and them, mundane and magical. Stories happen when the doors open, when things flow between the worlds."(Harrow, 2019, p.10) Her existence defies rigid categorisation imposed by colonial ideologies. As Homi K. Bhabha discussed, colonials created this fake world of belonging for the colonised nations, making them believe they never felt they belonged in their own skin. Mr. Locke, who is a dominant figure as a coloniser, mentioned in his speech:

But we are also here to celebrate something rather grander: the progression of humanity itself, for it seems clear to me that the people gathered here tonight are both the witnesses and stewards of a new era of peace and prosperity from pole to pole. Every year, we witness a decline in war and conflict, increased business and goodwill, and the spread of civilised governance to those in need. (Harrow, 2019, p. 74)

To demonstrate that he is the genuine man who has accomplished a great deal, he points to January: "She came to this household nothing but a motherless bundle." An orphan of mysterious origin, with not even a penny to her name. And now look at her!" "There she is! The picture of civility. A testament to the power of positive influences." (Harrow,2019, p. 74)

The coloniser only believed in the power of money and knowledge. They ruled on it and thrived. But when this power or knowledge was talked about by the colonised, they not only threatened but crushed them; when Mr. Locke took her to the asylum, just because she did not want to join the hypocritical society where her father was working tirelessly and bringing crafts from another world. And in the name of civilisation and saving the world, they are destroying and burning all those doors.

I mean, why should I want to join your Society? A bunch of fussy old aristocrats who pay braver and better men to go out and steal things for you. And should one of them disappear, you don't even pretend to mourn him. You just carry on—as if nothing—as if he didn't *matter*— (Harrow, 2019, p. 75)

Mr. Locke often makes January realise the power in these words, "power, my dear, has a language. It has a geography, a currency, and, I am sorry, a color…….it is simply a fact of the world, and the sooner you accustom yourself to it, the better." (Harrow, 2019, p. 42) These words highlight Mr. Locke's mindset and the strangeness and unhomeliness that January must have felt. January's upbringing reveals the desire to make January civilised and cultured. She is seen as an object of curiosity rather than an individual.

Even with this restriction and limitations imposed on her education, dressing, and imagination, she takes control of her narrative independently. She rejects the expectations

placed upon her and embarks on a journey of discovery. She discovered all the doors and her mother, whom she had been separated from for a long time. As her mother said to her, "Child, I have tried to find you every single damn day for seventeen years." (Harrow, 2019, p. 285) As she navigates a world where she feels like a stranger and doesn't belong, it is challenging for her mother to defy social norms, and it is equally difficult for her daughter. Adelaide said, "I guess that's how they found me: crazy as a loon, crawling at solid rock, crying."(Harrow, 2019, p. 285)

Julian is a scholar who studied portals, passages, and entryways in mythology. He met a woman named Adelaide Larson in 18oos. He somehow managed to go through a door, which deposited him on a land with abundant grass and a clear sky. He sees a woman with white skin and honey hair for the first time. They both fell in love. But he went again into his city the next day. The English Archaeological Society has burned the door through which he has come. Then, he spent the next 12 years writing and researching these doors and portals in his paper, "The Ten Thousand Doors: A Comparative Study of Passages, Portals, and Entryways in World Mythology." He wrote

that doors are portals between one world and another, which exist only in places of particular and indefinable resonance (what physical philosophers call "weak coupling" between two universes). While human constructions—such as frames, arches, and curtains—may surround a door, the natural phenomenon preexists its decoration. It also seems to be the case that these portals are, by some quirk of physics or of humanity, damnably challenging to find. (Harrow,2019, p. 45)

The doors he defined and searched for many years are literal and figurative metaphors for the change, not only for him, but also for his daughter. But when he finds his love after so many years, the tragedy happens. When he happens to cross the door without his wife and his daughter, where he is found by Mr. Locke, who takes him under his care, "I said to myself: Cornelius, here's a man in need of a little charity!"(Harrow, 2019, p.12) and then makes him a wanderer in the search for artifacts. He collects that artifact and searches different worlds to find one of his own. But Mr. Locke's greed was never satisfied, and he continuously made him stay away from his daughter. The father in the European Western is strange and 'other' because,

His skin is darker than mine, a lustrous red-black and his eyes arre so black that even the whites are threaded with brown. Once you factor in the tattoos—ink spirals twisting up both wrists—and the shabby suit and the spectacles and the muddled-up accent and—well. People stared. (Harrow, 2019, p.13)

Julian, as a man of dark skin and of non-European origin, is subjected to systematic racism and marginalisation. He is treated as an outsider both in his personal and professional life. He works as a field agent and faces continuous dehumanisation by society and Mr. Locke. These are the scenarios that Bhabha points toward. Although his knowledge and labors are appropriate, society never fully accepts him, illustrating how the coloniser uses the other while denying them equality. Still, we see the resistance and define it in his characters. He is determined to forge his path as described in "The Birth of Julian Scaller. A man shipwrecked and saved- A man hunting and hunted- a man hoping" (Harrow, 2019, p.184) by appointing a woman for the safety of his daughter, writing a book about his life and making sure her daughter read it and searching the door for his love and homeland. He reclaims agency over his life and challenges the structure that seeks to define him as other.

Adelaide's Voyage

Adelaide was born in 1866 with no father and a house full of Larson women. She led a life that was different from the women who surrounded her. They had farms on which all the women worked. All the men died in the Civil War. It is worth noting that this was a time

of rebellion in 1848, marked by chaos and revolution. And with such a hustling environment, these women were living their own lives. As described,

When Adelaide Lee was born, every last living Larson was female. Through poor luck, heart failure, and cowardice, their husbands and sons had left behind a collection of hard-jawed women who looked so similar to one another that it was like seeing a single woman's life spread out in every possible stage. (Harrow, 2019, p. 51)

Ade was never like another child; she was an explorer. And with such a hard life, she learned to live and create a life independently. She was a girl who solved the maze from the center outward. So, from the very start, she was never defined by the title imposed by society or patriarchy. Things changed when she saw a dark-skinned boy with tattoos swirling up his arms in her garden one day. She fell in love with him and gave him the jacket. She tells him to wait for her, but when she returns the following day, the door has been burned by a man from a big city. This enrages her, and she decides to find the doors and explore the world to find the boy who smells like a sea and salt, "if doors were real, then she would seek them out, ten or ten thousand of them, and fall through into ten thousand vast elsewhere, and one of them, someday, might lead to a city by the sea." (Harrow, 2019, p.63) Baoueir argues in *The Second Sex* that women must reclaim their agency. They need to take control of their own life. And the steering wheel of their life should be in their hands, not in someone else's. And Adelaide does that; she claims her life.

Traditionally, society anticipates that men will assume the role of explorers in their search for their own Cinderellas and princesses. However, Ade took the initiative to redefine this narrative by taking charge of her journey.. As the journey begins, so do the hardships, as people recall her: "witchy, fallen woman, wild-eyed American woman, wandering the streets with nothing but a fur cloak" (Harrow, 2019, p.12) Pointing towards the hypocrisy of a society that if a man has gone on an adventure like this, he would have been praised for years; in *The Witcher Series,* Geralt of Rivia has been praised for his journey across different kingdoms and for being intellectual and witty. But Ade's exploration is never celebrated. Things take a turn when, after discovering the door, she decides to make a boat that will sail in the ocean. But she is called "Lady Noah Of The Rockies: Colorado Madwoman Prepared For The Flood. Woman Builds Boat, Puzzles Locals" (Harrow, 2019, p. 92). She does what no other man has done. She crosses the world and searches for her love for 12 years. She defies all the stereotypes and becomes the woman she always wanted to be. By charting her course, she defies the notion that women cannot navigate the complexities of their own lives. Throughout her voyage, she demonstrates qualities such as resilience, bravery, courage, and resourcefulness, which are usually associated with masculinity. Adelaide resists being treated as an object or tool for men's ambitions. Her refusal to remain under society's feet and being tied by stereotypical chains is evident in her story. Her story further motivates her daughter to explore her destiny and reclaim her agency under Mr. Locke's rule. It is also a critique of the historical erasure of women's contributions to exploration and the broader narrative of human achievements.

Hybridity and Third Space

In scientific terms, a hybrid is an organism produced by the cross between different organisms or species. In The Location *of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha presents the notion of Hybridity. He argued that

Hybridity is the sign of colonial power's productivity, shifting forces, and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority) (Bhabha, 1994, p 160).

Hybridity is the emergence of new identities that transcend the distinctions of self and other, coloniser and colonised, or center and periphery. It is the concept of identities merging, as when a white American woman marries a dark-skinned man from the city of Nin. And their mixed-race girl, January, was born. January is not only a mixed-race month, but also one that never feels a sense of belonging on either side. Her identity is blurred. She is neither the coloniser nor the colonised; in a sense, she is between. As January explains these feelings: "To be part of some larger flock, not to be stared at, to know my place precisely. Being "a perfectly unique specimen" is lonely, it turns out." (Harrow, 2019, p. 24) she feels lonely but also long for the feelings of homeliness, or for the place where she belongs. She is navigating the intersection of her European and non-European heritage.

Her hybridity will soon challenge the coloniser's structure, as it holds the promise of a future where individuals will resist the pressure to conform and instead define themselves on their terms, when Mr. Locke wants her to be a proper young lady and join his society. This hybridity isolates her from society, where she is perceived as an "in-between" sort of thing. This strange position gave her a new perspective on things. She understands Mr. Locke's, the coloniser's, perspective. This perspective enables her to question and ultimately resist them when she is told to join society or when she is told that her father is dead. But she chooses not to believe in it. Even when she found the door to the city of Nin, she met her father and mother and spent some time with them. Then, she decided to explore the world. So, hybridity gives January power and strength as she can hold on to her dual heritage. It disrupts the dominance being imposed by the coloniser. She asserts her own identity and reclaims her unique ideology.

Jane, the caretaker appointed by Julian for her daughter, also presents the case of hybridity. She is a woman abandoned by her mother and lives in a missionary school with her younger sister. When her identity is stripped, Jane's sister forgets their native language and names, illustrating the erasure of Indigenous identity under colonial rules. "My sister forgot her entirely. She was too young. She forgot our language, land, and names…. She was happy"…... and I heard the unsaid *I was not."* (Harrow, 2019, p. 175) *Jane* decides to run away from school, and in the forest, she finds an ivory door that leads her to the world of the leopard women. It is a different world where women hunt and men stay at home. Where women can have multiple husbands. Jane feels at home there, and despite being different from her, she decides to live with them. And all those ladies do not impose on or harass her, but welcome her into their tribe. She spent the next twenty-two years with them. The hybridity that Jane faced was very different from that in January. While January was marginalised in the hybridity, Jane was glorified and supported. Hybridity is the merging of identities between cultures and societies, and no culture genuinely exists in its purest form.

The third space, as defined by Bhabha, is where the boundaries between the dominant and the submissive are merged. And you live in a place that belongs to no one, yet to anyone. In the novel, Doors are metaphors for the third space. This is where the boundaries between the worlds dissolve, and anyone can cross over into these worlds. There are no restrictions. As Julian said,

"Doors, he told her, are change, and change is a dangerous necessity. Doors are revolutions and upheavals, uncertainties and mysteries, and axis points around which entire worlds can be turned. They are the beginnings and endings of every true story, the passages between that lead to adventures and madness and—here he smiled—even love. Without doors, the world would grow stagnant, calcified, and storiless. (Harrow, 2019, p. 152)

The fact is that doors are the site of change and hybridity. And it poses a threat to the social order. And they destroyed all the doors they ever found. They want to suppress any potential threats that would create an interracial world. They describe their act as civilised and aim to bring balance and stability to the world. But in reality, they are afraid

that if another powerful nation were to come and conquer them. And it's a very deep-rooted concern because they have been doing this.

In conclusion, doors are metaphorically and symbolically the threshold of change. For January, it was to transform her identity and show her rebellion; for Jane, it was an act of serving and reclaiming her agency; and for Adelaide and Julian, it was to find their love across the world. Like Bhabha's third spaces, the Doors become sites of negotiation and new beginnings.

Conclusion

The analysis of The Ten Thousand Doors of January through the lens of postcolonial feminism sheds light on the historical power dynamics and gendered expectations. It also highlights the marginalisation of individuals under colonial rule through characters like January, Julian, and Jane. It shows the doors as literal metaphors and symbols for change. They signify the potential for transformation in spaces where hybridity blurs the stark boundaries between the inferior and the superior, illustrating how these identities can coexist in a third space—a vibrant realm of possibility. Where hybridity blurs the lines between the inferior and exceptional, and how they can coexist in a third space, it also suggests a defiance of traditional exploration through the Adelaide voyage. The Colonial fantasy is a critique of colonial ideologies. It also suggests the construction of identities and a sense of belonging, creating a hopeful version of the world where boundaries can be crossed and new stories can be written.

Recommendations

Future studies might look at the connection of gender, racism, and colonial resistance in speculative fiction, comparing works such as The Ten Thousand Doors of January to N. K. Jemisin's The Fifth Season and Susanna Clarke's Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell. Analyzing how speculative fiction intersects with postcolonial philosophy can provide light on tales of resistance and cultural preservation. Applying Bhabha's notion of hybridity to cinema and television may shed light on how visual media undermines colonial power systems. Furthermore, studying liminal areas in modern storytelling may give information on identity formation and societal restrictions. Research might explore the impact of cultural erasure and resistance in fantasy literature on discussions about imperialism, identity, and legacy. These routes promote a more in-depth understanding of the postcolonial narrative.

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