THE USE OF THEATRE AND MASKS: A STUDY OF SUTURED IDENTITIES IN CAREY'S *THE UNUSUAL LIFE OF TRISTAN SMITH*

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CERTIFICATION

Statement of Original Authorship

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ABSTRACT

This research undertakes an in-depth analysis of the sutured identities of the selected characters of Peter Carey's novel *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith* through the lens of Stuart Hall's notions about how the conscious or unconscious fusion of cultural roots and migratory routes of individuals bring about their sutured identities. Through the textual analysis of Carey's novel from the postcolonial perspective, this research explores how the selected characters of the novel consciously or unconsciously construct their sutured identities to confront their incoherent and ruptured identities and consciously or unconsciously strive for constructing cohesive narratives of their Selves. It unearths the causes and effects of the sutured identities of the selected characters and discusses how they adopt, handle and manage their sutured identities in the context of their intracultural, transcultural and transnational experiences and brings to the fore important factors that shape, influence and disrupt their sutured identities. This study not only provides a functional definition of the concept of the suturing of identities, but it also propounds a valuable critique on the gaps and issues related to Hall's notions about the suturing of identities.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1.Introduction to the Study

This study, postcolonial in its nature, concentrates on an investigation of sutured identities within the scope of theatre and masks through the textual analysis of Carey's renowned novel *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith* (1994). It undertakes a comparative analysis of the sutured identities of the novel through the lens of Stuart Hall's notions about how the conscious or unconscious fusion of indigenous roots and migratory routes of individuals bring about their sutured identities. It reveals the process of the sutured identities of the selected characters and expounds important factors that contribute to the construction, influence and disruption of their sutured identities. This study explores and analyses how the selected characters of *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith (TULTS)* construct and manage their sutured identities in the context of their intracultural, transcultural and transnational experiences by virtue of their experiences of theatrical performances and Carey's treatment of masks. that enables them to construct for themselves their sutured identities consciously or unconsciously. This study not only provides a functional definition of the concept of suturing of identities, but it also presents a valuable critique on the gaps and issues related to Hall's notions on the subject of suturing of identities.

1.2 Research Question

How does Carey's *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith* explore the notion of sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill through the metaphors of theatre and masks?

1.3 Research Methodology

For examining the sutured identities of the selected characters of *TULTS*, this postcolonial study employs textual analysis, which is also known as content analysis, as the research methodology. Latent coding[1] which is used in a qualitative research for exploring the implicit and intrinsic meanings of a text has been applied in this analysis of Carey's novel with a view to examining the sutured identities of its selected characters and their positive and negative impacts on their lives. For the current study, the viewpoints of eminent cultural theorist Stuart Hall, delineated in *Questions of*

[1] "A researcher using *latent coding* (also called *semantic analysis*) looks for the underlying, implicit meaning in the content of text" (Newman 276).

Cultural Identity (2011), provide the theoretical framework, which has been applied to the investigation of the research question.

The textual analysis presented in this research is restricted to the study of the sutured identities of the three major characters of *TULTS*, that is, Tristan Smith, the protagonist of the novel, Felicity Smith, his mother, and Bill Millefleur, his biological father. Since Tristan is the protagonist of the novel and the first-person narrator too, he, essentially, becomes the primary focus of this research regarding the process of the suturing of identities. The analysis of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill revolves around Carey's use of the imagery and metaphor of theatre, performances and masks to reveal the nature, process and impacts of the sutured identities of these characters in the novel that expands our perception about the notion of the suturing of identities substantially especially from the postcolonial perspective.

1.4 Background of the Problem

The concept of the suturing of identity takes its origin from a unique concept propounded by an influential cultural theorist, Stuart Hall. In his essay "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?", Hall mentions the problematic nature of identification (Hall prefers the use of the word 'identification' instead of 'identity') contending, "Identification is, then, a process of articulation, a suturing, an over-determination not a subsumption" (Hall and du Gay 3). He, subsequently, proclaims, "There is always 'too much' or 'too little' — an over-determination or a lack, but never proper fit, a totality" (Hall and du Gay 3). Hall asserts that the relationship between individual experiences and identity cannot be a complete encapsulation or a perfect fit since it is characterised by a constant oscillation or negotiation between "too much" and/or "too little". His reference to the constant oscillation or negotiation between "too much" and "too little" is highly pertinent to this study of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill from *TULTS* as the discussion in the next chapters unfolds.

In the above-mentioned essay, Hall expounds, "The notion that an effective suturing of the subject to a subject-position requires, not only that the subject is 'hailed', but that the subject invests in the position, means that suturing has to be thought of as an articulation, rather than a one-sided process, and that in turn places identification, if not identities, firmly on the theoretical agenda" (Hall and du Gay 6). This assertion of Hall underscores the significance of the profound concept of suturing. However, neither Hall nor any other social or psychological theorist has unequivocally defined, explained or

applied the phenomenon of the suturing of identity bringing to the forefront the nature, the whole process, the opportunities and threats associated with it and a range of complications involved in it. Therefore, the concept of suturing has remained largely hidden and obscured for those interested in the discussions related to the notion of identity.

This study ventures to define what suturing is, how the process of suturing initiates and continues and what advantages and disadvantages can be found in it for an individual. While doing so, this focused study brings to the foreground the nature, complexities and the details of the notion of the suturing of identities that have been largely ignored or remained underexplored by writers, critics, theorists and researchers.

Owing to the phenomena of globalisation, diverse cultural influences, changing socio-cultural scenarios and the ongoing dislocations of people in the pursuit of their personal aspirations and due to the ongoing social and cultural challenges, the world of today has become complex that affects human identity in multiple ways. This complex nature of the world means that individuals often grapple with a multitude of social, cultural, economic, psychological and ideological influences and pressures that directly or indirectly contribute to the constructions, deconstructions and reconstructions of their identities. Consequently, they experience an acute sense of unbelonging and uncertainty because of their experiences of physical and psychological displacement, alienation, marginalisation and otherness. On the other hand, some other individuals find their social or cultural dislocations as a blessing in disguise for themselves as they come across fresh opportunities for transcultural and transnational exposure and personal growth related to the economic and socio-cultural aspects of their lives.

The analysis of the characters of *TULTS* suggests that a sutured identity challenges any binaries because it blends the elements of different socio-cultural influences and ideological perspectives that enable the individuals to experience both the negative and positive effects simultaneously. This is what makes suturing a particularly fascinating concept and metaphor — as with the stitching of a cut or wound, suturing suggests a degree of pain in the process of healing and unifying. This thesis borrows this concept to explore the nature of the socio-cultural, physical and psychological wounds of individuals and the fragmented elements of their identities.

The transcultural and transnational experience offered to individuals by their willing or unwilling dislocation and migration provides them with a valuable experience of

stitching new identities for themselves using their abilities for socio-cultural adaptability and a willingness to engage in the process of suturing themselves in accordance with their immediate social, cultural and political environment. The transcultural and transnational experiences of the diaspora demand an interplay between their ancestral roots and migratory routes. Besides, owing to the lopsided interaction between the locals and the migrants, their identities, especially those of the latter lose their solid basis because of their exposure to varied transcultural and transnational influences and challenges due to their ongoing interaction with the people of different socio-cultural, political, hierarchical and ideological backgrounds. This study brings to the foreground that the cultural experiences of Tristan, Felicity and Bill impact their identities considerably and give birth to their sutured identities that are more empowering, more flexible and more beneficial for them for their survival in a new cultural locale despite some of their threatening socio-cultural and psychological repercussions.

Referring to Hall's remarks in *Questions of Cultural Identity* about the concept of identity that, "There has been a veritable explosion in recent years around the concept of identity" (Hall and du Gay 1), Elirea Bornman cites Bauman who states that this "'explosion' has since 1996 triggered an avalanche" (25). This human predicament has been beautifully encapsulated by T.S. Eliot in his famous poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" in which the protagonist underscores the need "To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet" (2). Consequently, human beings, sometimes, succumb to wearing different masks and perform different social roles in accordance with the nature of their route/s or circumstances.

Carey, by virtue of his extended metaphor of physical and theatrical masks, explains how Tristan, Felicity and Bill handle the challenges relating their identities not only in their theatrical performances but also outside the theatre in their interactions within their indigenous cultural locale as well as during their interactions with their *others* [2]in the foreign lands. These masks play a critical role in the construction of their sutured identities as the characters, consciously or unconsciously, suture some elements of their

[2] According to Ashcroft et.al. ,"In general terms, the 'other' is anyone who is separate from one's self. The existence of others is crucial in defining what is 'normal' and in locating one's own place in the world. The colonized subject is characterized as 'other' through discourses such as primitivism and cannibalism, as a means of establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view" (139).

masked identities with their personal identities to acclimatise themselves with their immediate social, cultural and political settings.

Against this background, the current study probes into the causes and effects of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill by bringing to the foreground Carey's masterful use of the imagery and metaphors of theatre, performances and masks in *TULTS*. The analysis of these literary tools employed by Carey provides several valuable insights to us in the next chapters enriching our understanding about the phenomenon of the suturing of identities, its intricate process, the factors responsible for it and the threats and opportunities provided by it to the selected characters of *TULTS.*

1.5 Introduction to the Study and Its Significance

The interplay between roots, that represent the ancestry and heritage of human beings, and routes, that epitomise their physical, social, and psychological journeys, holds a pivotal position in the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of their identities. Hall postulates that the social, cultural and ideological routes of individuals play a pivotal role in the intricate process of fabrication and evolution of their identities. In *The Journal of the International Institute*, Stuart Hall, in "A Conversation with Stuart Hall" stresses upon the significance of people's routes in order to comprehend their identities in a befitting manner. "Instead of asking what are people's roots, we ought to think about what are their routes, the different points by which they have come to be now; they are, in a sense, the sum of those differences" (np). These journeys provide invaluable insights into the connections individuals maintain with their places of origin and the cultural narratives and discourses that configure and reconfigure their sense of self. According to Hall, identities are not static but rather continuously evolving, at times undergoing profound transformations under the influence of an individual's history, culture, and socio-political environment. It provides a lens and the theoretical framework for this study through which we can examine how the selected characters for this research, that is, Tristan, Felicity and Bill construct, negotiate, reconstruct and renegotiate their identities in response to their changing landscapes and construct sutured identities for themselves knowingly or unknowingly because of their connections with theatre, performances at the real theatre and the theatre of the world and their experiences of wearing different masks. It enables them to construct different

identities for them on and off the stage which are consciously or unconsciously sutured with each other.

Various researchers and writers have strived to analyse and critique Hall's notions of identity offering a variety of views. For instance, Ien Ang probes into Hall's viewpoint on identity as a process of becoming calling into question its authenticity by criticising it as an idealistic notion. Ang argues, "There is something distinctly idealistic, if not utopian, in the statement that identities are a matter of becoming rather than being" (ch.9). Thus, Ang calls Hall's excessive stress on the migratory routes of individuals in question insinuating that the attachments of individuals with their native culture and its narrative play a critical role in determining their identities. Fiona Cownie, while acknowledging postmodern critiques of identity, declares that Hall's concept of identity needs to be reconceptualised as a matter of identification laying emphasis on the role of individuals in shaping their identities (11).

Hall's emphasis on the significance of the migratory routes of individuals in determining their identity is hailed by Sanolde Desai and Manjistha Banerji who stress upon the significance of migration as a process rather than an isolated event (337). It can be expounded by a famous cliché, "There is no growth in a comfort zone and no comfort in a growth zone" (Elmore 80) that resonates with Hall's emphasis on the transformative potential of migration and physical and psychological journeys of human beings that play a decisive role in shaping their identities. This bouquet of viewpoints underlines the ongoing academic, sociological and psychological discourse generated by Hall's viewpoints. However, it is worth mentioning here that amidst these discussions and critiques, Hall's inimitable notion of the suturing of identity remains notably underexplored and substantially disregarded. This aspect highlights the significance of the present study that unearths the intricacies of the notion of the suturing of identity shedding ample light on its complex process that has the potential to further enrich our understanding of the slippery nature of identity. It edifies us how individuals construct and negotiate their multifaceted identities in a constantly fluctuating world, especially after the phenomenon of globalisation. By examining the metaphor of suturing and applying it to the analysis of the characters of Tristan, Felicity and Bill in *TULTS*, this study attempts to bridge the gap in existing research and offer fresh insights into the dynamics of identity formation because of the notion of suturing of identity by providing a definition of the concept of the suturing of identities and

examining various critical factors involved in the construction of sutured identities of the selected characters of *TULTS*.

A sutured identity is designed by multiple factors involving more than physical spaces. There are sociological factors, psychological motivations, economic concerns and emotional connections as well that are directly or indirectly responsible for the construction of an identity. This study investigates what conscious and/or unconscious motivations drive the strategies adopted by the selected characters as regards the process and construction of their sutured identities to cope with the challenges of their survival in their different social settings especially in the foreign countries where they undergo the painful experiences of displacement, dislocation, liminality, alienation and marginalisation.

This research significantly contributes to the existing knowledge and information about the concept of identity in general and the suturing of identities in particular. The use of the theatrical imagery and masks by Carey brings to the foreground the theatrical experiences of Tristan, Felicity and Bill and their experiences of enactments of different roles at the theatre and circus bring about ruptures in their identities. In order to suture these ruptures in the pursuit of attaining cohesive identities, these characters, consciously or unconsciously, embrace the process of suturing their on-stage identities with their off-stage ones via the use of literal and metaphorical masks. However, this suturing has multiple social, cultural and psychological ramifications that, despite offering a temporary relief to these characters, it fails to provide them with completely stable, neat and cohesive identities.

A number of authors, researchers and theorists such as Steph Lawler, Michael J. Sandel and Paul J. D'Ambrosio, Bill Aschroft, Homi Bhabha, Ruthellen Josselson and Michele Harway have discussed the significance, enigmatic nature and crisis of identity and some of them have also explored the roots and routes symbiosis as well that has been discussed and analysed in the next chapter. However, this study addresses the need to delve more deeply into the process and nature of a sutured identity by analysing the characters of Tristan, Felicity and Bill from the lens of theatre, performance and masks. The in-depth analysis of the sutured identities of these characters in the next chapters informs us of the flux, versatility and unpredictability associated with their sutured identities. Despite offering them much-needed sense of empowerment to encounter the challenges of alienation, marginalisation, liminality and otherness especially in the foreign cultural, political and ideological contexts, their sutured identities continue to

manifest the symptoms of their physical and psychological wounding. Despite their earnest efforts to stitch new identities for themselves, these characters often fail to conceal the marks of the stitches that act like permanent scars, and, at times, we notice that these stitches reopen and trigger the process of dehiscence.

This research not only sheds light on the benefits of a sutured identity but it also draws our attention to the negative implications of and challenges associated with it. It suggests that the proper understanding of the concept of suturing of identities can be helpful for human beings to create a culture of inclusivity that not only tolerates cultural opposition but also encourages and promotes cultural diversity. Otherwise, the consequences can be alarming to the extent of creating an acute existential crisis as is obvious in the painful death of Felicity and the return of Tristan and Bill to their native country at the end of the novel. The analysis of the characters and the discussion on their sutured identities in the next chapters will be very helpful for understanding the concept of a sutured identity and bringing it to the forefront as an instrument of identity negotiations, empowerment, social legitimacy and a door that opens economic as well as socio-cultural opportunities.

With regard to the connection between belonging and sutured identities, Germain Greer writes on the asphyxia related to the concept of belonging in the following words: "Belonging is limitation. Belonging can mean staying in the run-down house in the run-down street of a long-dead industrial town, caring for the aged parent until all hope is gone" (x). Greer's remarks highlight the complex relationship between the notion of belonging and that of sutured identities. She considers belonging a potentially restricting experience. To her, belonging to a specific setting or community refers to committing oneself to certain responsibilities and constraints. It implies that the human desire to belong can force them to remain fettered in certain situations out of a sense of social, communal and moral affiliation that may limit the scope of choices and decisions for them.

For Tristan, Felicity and Bill in *TULTS,* their desires for belonging to one or the other culture or discourse reveals the tensions and challenges encountered by them because of their sutured identities involving certain sacrifices and compromises along with the promises of a better future. They strive hard to belong to the social settings where they experience a sense of alienation. Ironically, this belonging demands a certain kind of unbelonging from them. Suturing, thus, functions as a tool for addressing their issues of belonging providing them with rich experiences of transformation and reorientation.

This study informs us how these characters, by virtue of their sutured identities, attempt to come out of the shackles of the constraining and paralysing aspects of historical discourses that disallow any departure from their cultural and historical origin. However, the irony lies in the fact that their sutured identities — releasing them from certain fetters — stitch them into a new set of belongings. It discloses that the quest for an independent and fully empowered identity is highly improbable if not impossible. Thus, the cyclical process of rupturing and suturing seems to move on for humans throughout their existence. Before we analyse the critical role of the metaphors of theatre, performances and masks by Carey in revealing the process of the construction of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill, it is imperative to understand what a sutured identity is and how the process of the construction of a sutured identity commences and continues and what its chief characteristics are.

1.6 What is a Sutured Identity?

In order to understand what a sutured identity is, it is imperative to discuss what suturing is and how this metaphor is related to the construction of the identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill in this study.

1.6.1 What is Suturing?

Suturing, an essential skill in medicine and surgery, is a common procedure performed by surgeons or physicians to close a surgical incision or an injury using stitches or sutures to bring the edges of the wound together. It not only helps the patient in ensuring healing of a wound or injury, but it also decreases the physical and psychological pain, anxiety, discomfort and the risk of complications bringing about a temporary or permanent sense of relief for the patient. Thus, the fundamental purpose of suturing is to heal a wound, protect it from any threat or risk of infection and provide some relief to the patient. However, this study uncovers a contrasting narrative by accentuating that the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill remain susceptible to a constant "risk of infection" despite their promises of healing and relief because of the continuing social and psychological torment stemming from their profound experiences of identity conundrums and socio-cultural predicaments. It is worth mentioning here that the relationship between suturing as a medical terminology and a literary one has certain limitations which have been underscored in this research.

Discussing a suture, Brian Finney writes, “What is “suture”? Literally it means “to sew together”. The term is most frequently used in surgery where the lips of a cut or incision are sutured or stitched together” (131). Finney, subsequently, highlights the significance of the metaphor of suturing with all forms of narrative and literary analysis. He declares, “All forms of narrative necessitate sewing over discontinuities — jumps in time or location, switches from one consciousness to another, changes from one plot-line to another” (131). Subsequently, he underlines the significance of a suture with reference to a narrative by asserting, “Every narration also has to bridge the gap that always separates it from the audience to whom it is addressed” (131). Finney’s exploration of the notion of suturing is not only embedded in its literal meaning but it also goes beyond that as it indicates the metaphorical significance of a suture in a narrative and literary analysis. The act of suturing, according to Finney, which essentially involves stitching together the lips of a wound or incision, develops into an instrumental metaphor for the mechanisms employed in storytelling. He believes that the concept of suturing in the context of storytelling plays a critical role in creating a sense of continuity and coherence not only for the author but also for the reader despite the inherent fragmentation and disjuncture in it. Regarding the discussion on the notion of the suturing of identities, Finney’s metaphor brings to the foreground how we can look upon identity itself as a narrative that calls for stitching together its different aspects for constituting a coherent whole. The concept of the suturing of identities involves integrating various elements of self to form a coherent and unified identity like a narrative that addresses gaps and discontinuities to engage its audience.

1.6.2 Nuanced and Intricate Nature of a Sutured Identity

In the context of cultural theory, psychoanalysis and the complexities associated with the perception of human identity, the metaphor of suturing carries profound significance as it reveals the intricate process of stitching together the various fragmented and ruptured elements that construct the sutured identity of an individual. Like a surgeon who strives to suture the lacerated wounds of a patient to bring stability and relief, the act of suturing identity involves joining together the diverse facets of one’s identity in a quest for healing one’s transcultural, transnational, social, political and ideological wounds and injuries.

The metaphorical connection between the surgical suturing of wounds and the suturing of identity brings to our notice the inherent complexity and uncertainty in both

processes. There is still no absolute assurance of success in a surgical procedure, despite the meticulous efforts of a skilled surgeon to suture a wound. The outcome of the procedure is contingent upon multiple factors, such as, the nature of the injury, the response of the patient to the treatment and the capability of the surgeon. There is always a likelihood that the stitches may not hold together perfectly because of the complicated nature of the injury, mishandling of the procedure by the surgeon or mismanagement of the precautionary measures by the patient. Similarly, the anticipated stable and integrated sutured identity may remain a cry in the wilderness because of the complicated nature of socio-cultural engagements of individuals and mismanagement of the process of the suturing of identities by them. Various factors, such as cultural conflicts, personal traumas, or social, communal and national pressures, can complicate the process of the suturing of identity and throw obstacles in the conscious or unconscious journey of the individuals towards a unified and stable sutured identity. The analogy between surgical suturing and the suturing of identity highlights the nuanced and intricate nature of a sutured identity.

The metaphors of theatre and masks employed by Carey in *TULTS* brings to the foreground the attempts of Tristan, Felicity and Bill to reconcile the disparate and conflicting pieces of their identities for a sense of wholeness and stability in the quest for their personal and communal aspirations. The analysis of the sutured identities of these characters reveals that, at times, the process of suturing of identities happens unconsciously for the characters because of their unconscious connections with the past, ancestral roots and a collective consciousness. However, in some cases, this study reveals that the characters deliberately strive for stitching new identities for themselves for adjusting themselves with the changed social and cultural surroundings.

The sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill may be seen as a *modus operandi* for forging and maintaining their sense of identity in different social contexts. They also reflect their conscious or unconscious strategies to respond or adapt to various challenges and opportunities throughout the novel. In *TULTS*, we recognise the issues related to the sutured identities of the characters through the narration of the protagonist, Tristan, who acts as the first-person narrator in the novel sutured with the actions and storyline in Efica and Voorstand even before his birth. The study of the novel itself seems a suturing operation for the readers who are engaged in its narration by virtue of various strategies of involvement and estrangement. With the help of glossaries, maps, invented language and footnotes, the readers are sutured with the narrative of the novel

through the narrator. The study of the novel seems an incessant process of disruption and resumption, alienation and attachment, and separation and suturing as the readers stay connected, simultaneously, with the real world and suture themselves with the narrative of the novel about the fictional countries of Efica and Voorstand consciously or unconsciously. It disrupts and sutures the identities of the readers too as sometimes they get disconnected with the narrative because of the complexities related to the issues of sutured identities of the characters and make a conscious effort to decipher them, and some other times, they get sutured with the power of the narrative experiencing a willing suspension of disbelief.

1.6.3 The Definition of a Sutured Identity

The concept of suturing acknowledges that identity is neither predetermined nor fixed, rather it is a continuous, complex and unpredictable process of stitching together various aspects of human experiences with human identity. As mentioned earlier that a sutured identity has not been explicitly defined by anyone including Hall, this study proffers the definition of the phenomenon of suturing that is as follows:

> Suturing is a conscious or unconscious process of or attempt at darning/stitching fragmented elements of an individual's identity, which often confronts the incoherent and ruptured nature of existence. It manifests as a transformative power and challenges the concept of cultural specificity for various reasons not limited to diasporic contexts, such as, pursuing a personal ambition, overcoming the agony of marginalisation, alienation or otherness, or seeking the acceptance of the people of a disparate culture and discourse for bringing partial or temporary relief in an incoherent ruptured life of the individual facilitating the process of the creation of a cohesive narrative of self.

This definition highlights that the suturing of identities can be an outcome of a conscious or unconscious process that indicates agency and control simultaneously. A sutured identity transcends the socio-cultural, communal and national barriers and breaks the heavy fetters of a claustrophobic cultural discourse as the individuals undertake a conscious or unconscious journey of evolution and transformation pursuing their personal ambitions that also offer them a valuable opportunity of transcultural and transnational interactions, redefinition and realignment of their identities and stitching new identities for themselves in new socio-cultural and ideological settings. The process of acquiring a sutured identity gets triggered because of some social, economic

and psychological motives such as overcoming the painful feelings of marginalisation, liminality, otherness and alienation in a foreign land by making some conscious or unconscious compromises to secure a nod of approval from the hosts of a foreign country. The driving force behind a sutured identity is an individual's desire for attaining some relief, albeit a temporary one in his/her otherwise ruptured and incoherent existence.

1.6.4 The Nature of a Sutured Identity

An important attribute of a sutured identity is its ability to hold multiple chunks of an individual's identity together. Like a suture that holds together different edges of a wound and strengthens the human body by doing so, a sutured identity also signifies strength and resilience for an individual in the face of adversity, liminality and ongoing challenges of life. As a tapestry is woven from threads of multiple colours and textures, a sutured identity can be perceived as a collage or fusion of multiple and diverse personal, social and cultural influences that create and construct inimitable and vibrant identities for individuals.

Expanding further on Hall's notion of suturing, this study suggests that suturing—notwithstanding its psychological consequences — is an effective tool in positive identity construction and pain management too. As sutures close physical wounds initiating the process of recovery, the process of the suturing of identity functions as an effective procedure to help an individual recover or fight against the emotional pain caused by the feelings of unbelongingness in a foreign territory. By addressing the emotional pain associated with identity ruptures in different cultural surroundings, individuals can either be defeated by the experience of suturing or experience relief, though for a short period of time, and find a path towards psychological recovery.

Carey's use of theatre and masks reveals suturing as an active process in *TULTS* in which the characters make choices and compromises to traverse through their existential challenges in different environments. This agency empowers them to shape their identities making some pragmatic adjustments in their cultural and ideological values for seeking their personal aspirations. It provides them with an enriching opportunity to handle and manage the challenges of cultural clashes, trauma, displacement, alienation, otherness, liminality and marginalisation that destabilise an

individual's identity and hamper his/her growth in a certain land especially in a foreign territory. Hence, suturing serves as a coping mechanism for the characters of *TULTS* helping them manage the pain and distress caused by the ruptures in their identity and providing them with the required strength and hope in the face of adversity.

Suturing, typically associated with the medical practice of stitching wounds to promote healing, is positioned in this study as a process of mending psychological and emotional wounds through Carey's extended metaphors of theatre and masks. Tristan, Felicity and Bill have been portrayed as the characters undergoing painful and psychologically distressing experiences that destabilise their identities and hinder their prospects for personal growth especially in foreign lands where they experience the issues of alienation, marginalisation and otherness. Their conscious or unconscious efforts for suturing through their theatrical, social and metaphorical masks represent their conscious or unconscious decisions and compromises with reference to addressing their emotional and psychological injuries inflicted by the challenges of surviving in a foreign culture and locale. Their choices and decisions represent their agency in actively recrafting and realigning their own identities through their personal and communal experiences. It demonstrates that they are not passive victims of the issues related to their personal and cultural identities rather they appear before us, at times, as active agents in their own healing and growth. Thus, suturing denotes a process that is deliberate, promising and meticulous notwithstanding its threats. However, the unconscious or conscious compromises made by the characters in the novel reveal that, sometimes, the process of suturing happens with them despite a lack or absolute absence of a conscious effort on their part. Just as a medical surgeon's sutures call for precision and expertise, the process of socio-cultural and psychological suturing involves a meticulous effort for its fulfillment. However, if it is not handled efficiently, the process of dehiscence can start with its own complications and after-effects. As in case of the surgery of a patient, medical counselling and communal support are required for his/her recovery, the communal support and the nod of approval from the people of the host country as well as the foreign locale are critical for the success of the process of the suturing of identity. Otherwise, they experience several psychological conflicts and feelings of internal instability because of the inconsistent, contradictory and unpredictable nature of their sutured identities.

1.6.5 An Integrated and Evolving Identity

By consciously or unconsciously embracing the process of suturing, the selected characters in *TULTS* do not merely try to return to their previous state among their *others* but they also strive voluntarily or involuntarily to create fresh and integrated identities incorporating their past experiences including the painful ones. Hence, suturing provides them with a rich opportunity to emerge as more flexible, more empowered, more resilient and more integrated versions of themselves fortified with the ability and prospects of not only surviving but also thriving in diverse, conflicting and hostile environments. Suturing enables them to embrace the diversity within themselves urging them to celebrate the multi-layered nature of their identity instead of blindly adhering to an insulated version of their cultural identities. The acknowledgement of diversity in human beings, their cultures and discourses fosters a more tolerant and more flexible viewpoint that promotes a more inclusive approach towards others. Thus, suturing encourages adaptability paving the way for personal as well as communal growth. By virtue of consciously or unconsciously undertaking the process of identity suturing, Tristan, Felicity and Bill learn to adjust themselves to new circumstances and cultural contexts like a chameleon while retaining connectivity with their primary culture and identity. Thus, suturing plays a valuable role in the reconstruction and evolution of identity and pain management by bringing about various positive changes in humans including cultural assimilation, empowerment, coping with the challenges of survival in the face of existential threats, acceptance of diversity, psychological management of the issues of marginalisation, alienation and otherness and the promises of personal growth.

Suturing of identities is not a static process. The study of the selected characters of *TULTS* suggests that their sutured identities keep evolving throughout their lives and involve reevaluation, realignment and restructuring their sense of self and identity. Diana Ventura explains the continuation of the process of suturing in the life of human beings in their attempts to overcome their pains by stating. “For once inner healing is found in one area of brokenness, another aspect of pain quickly emerges. The pilgrim must remain committed; soon he or she will depart on a new journey through some other pain” (23). It demonstrates that suturing is an ongoing process that is not an end rather it is a means to an end. Ventura’s critical insight explains that suturing is an

ongoing journey of integration and evolution — a commitment to traverse through various layers of pain and growth.

This study makes it evident that suturing is not an exclusive or outright solution to a problem. It is, on the other hand, an integral part of the complex network of challenges individuals have to encounter during the pursuit of their personal ambitions. Suturing is, as a matter of fact, both a response to and a reflection of the multifaceted nature of human identity. It is a continuous journey of adaptation, integration, reconfiguration and transformation.

1.6.6 Agency vs Control

At times, the process of the suturing of identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill is something that happens to them as if unavoidable external forces or circumstances are controlling and shaping their identities, such as, cultural clashes, social obligations, and experiences of displacement, otherness and marginalisation. On the contrary, there are instances in the novel that demonstrate that the characters actively engage as agents in the construction of their sutured identities. Such instances reveal that they consciously make choices and decisions about how to navigate the challenges and ruptures they encounter. They actively seek out new experiences or consciously embrace elements of different cultural or social elements to weave into their evolving identities to achieve their coveted goals in the changing socio-cultural environments. These instances highlight their agency in the construction process of their sutured identities. The symbiosis between external pressures and social obligations, and personal choices and decisions adds depth to our perception of the notion of the suturing of identity.

Suturing functions as a bridge helping the characters to traverse through the chasm between their cultural roots and the unfamiliar territories they encounter. It facilitates them to build fresh connections and explore new horizons that transcend the confines of their claustrophobic attachment to their cultural identities. The characters, at times, actively engage in the process of stitching their identities because of their theatrical experiences, making choices about which mask to wear and which one to discard. This agency empowers them to transcend the limitations imposed by societal expectations and cultural norms, ultimately crafting identities that are uniquely their own. In *TULTS*, the process of the suturing of identity of the selected characters is not only the celebration of the beauty found in the seams, scars, and patches that fabricate the complicated tapestry of their existence but also the evidence of the evolution,

adaptability, and empowerment emerging from embracing their history and crafting a dynamic sense of self in the polarised worlds of Efica and Voorstand where their existence itself becomes an ongoing performance.

1.7 How a Sutured Identity Comes into Being

A sutured identity often takes its origin from the ruptures or fractures in the sense of selves of individuals including cultural ruptures caused by migration and relocation, trauma and emotional ruptures caused by discrimination, violence and loss of authenticity, identity ruptures caused by acute existential crises and experiences of alienation and marginalisation. In the case of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill, their experiences of cultural conflicts, displacement, and marginalisation fracture their identities creating for them a conscious or unconscious need for suturing. However, the sutured identities of these characters fail to ensure permanently stable or coherent identities for them. It demonstrates that the sutured identities of these characters that emerge as a response to their identity ruptures and fractures continue to bear the seams and scars of their physical, socio-cultural as well as emotional ruptures because the success of a sutured identity is contingent upon the approval of the natives of a society. However, Alfonso Perez-Agote, in this context contends, “Each definition of identity includes others who do not accept that identity” (29). Thus, a sutured identity while addressing the ruptures of an individual is, ironically, not free from its own ruptures and fractures bringing to our perception that fragmentation and ruptures are a part of human existence, and the construction of a stable and neat identity is only an illusion.

A sutured identity comes into being when different personal, social, cultural and political elements of an identity are stitched together consciously or unconsciously. The sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill are based on a complex interweaving of their diverse aspects and experiences in terms of their perception of the notion of identity and their oscillation due to their shifting attachments between their indigenous cultural identity and a newly-acquired identity aligned with their altered socio-cultural landscape. The cultural heritage and attachments, social expectations and pressures, and personal experiences and aspirations of the selected characters play a crucial role in the construction and deconstruction of their sutured identities.

The sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill are an outcome of negotiated identities that emerge because of the intersection of their multiple fragmented identities. The element of liminality in the identities of these characters can be explained in the words of Josselson who contends, "In our increasingly complex globalized world, many people carry distinct, often conflicting, psychological identities with regard to gender, race, ethnicity, or nationality. People live at the edges of more than one communal affiliation, bridging loyalties and identifications" (3). Josselson's contention highlights a fundamental aspect of contemporary human experience that is closely in consonance with the notion of suturing of identity. In the modern, interconnected and diverse world, individuals frequently experience a tension of straddling multiple socio-cultural and psychological identities. Suturing, in such a situation, functions as a means of coping with the challenges of living at the periphery of various conflicting and contradictory communal affiliations fostering a sense of belonging in individuals in a world where identities are constantly fluctuating and evolving. Thus, a sutured identity is fragmented, conflicting, inconsistent and unstable in its essence.

The study reveals the fragmented nature of the identities of the selected characters and how they grapple with their multiple identities to establish at least a semblance of belonging. Thus, a sutured identity is an outcome of identity disruptions that has both positive and negative and dimensions; the former promise an enriched and profound approach to existence whereas the latter lead to personal and communal ruptures and intolerance in the society. Roy Schwartzman writes in this regard, "The metaphor of suturing describes an ongoing, often provisional, process of creatively recrafting personal and collective identity after extreme disruption" (279). It is important to note here that a sutured identity indicates brokenness and disintegration on one hand, but on the other hand it provides an opening for welcoming fresh ideas and new approaches that help the selected characters live in compatibility with the people of discrete cultures and traditions. In this context, Richard Rushton's words become very pertinent when he notes, "Suture shows us the logic of a two-way street: it is both an opening up of an alienation gap in the subject as well as a promise that this gap can be filled in" (109). Rushton's remarks regarding the alienation gap in this context refer to the disconnection or estrangement that individuals may feel from their own identities. Suture, as a concept, underscores this gap by recognising the fractures and discontinuities in the identities of individuals. It recognises that people undergo a loss of belonging in some complex

situations. Furthermore, the process of suturing promises a reconciliation between fractures and discontinuities within individuals.

1.8 Significance of a Sutured Identity

The sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill hold profound significance for them especially as regards their experiences with theatre and masks. For these characters, their sutured identities represent a meticulously enacted performance on the macrocosmic scale on the stage of the world. Like professional actors, these characters utilise various literal and metaphorical masks that represent different facets of their identities to cope with their diverse challenges in their respective socio-cultural settings. By virtue of their theatrical experiences wherein the world of drama and that of reality intertwine, these characters get an opportunity to experiment with different characters and characteristics of themselves. Their ability to handle different masks as a coping mechanism, consciously or unconsciously, to deal with the complex challenges of their existence reveals that these masks are not mere facades or means of artistic expression to entertain others; rather they allow them to conceal their ruptured and fractured identities. However, during the analysis of these characters in the next chapters, we come to know that even the use of different masks by them brings about some fissures and ruptures in their identities despite the process of suturing because of their transcultural and transnational encounters.

The experiences of carving out sutured identities for themselves help the characters manage the trauma of schism. The sutured identities of the selected characters are accommodating and supportive for them in providing them with a framework for integration that has curative and therapeutic ramifications and proves helpful for them in overcoming the trauma of schism. Since trauma leads an individual to a sense of fragmentation and disconnection, the integration processes of sutured identities enable the characters to experience, though for a short time, a sense of reconciliation and wholeness. Thus, the discussion and textual analysis in the next chapters reveals that the sutured identities of the selected characters for this research have some healing, soothing and restorative impacts too despite their personal, social, cultural, ideological and psychological repercussions.

Suturing, despite its several threats and tensions, inculcates a culture of flexibility and tolerance in the selected characters and becomes a harbinger of peace, stability,

coexistence and harmony for them regardless of their ethnic or cultural differences. It can also be recognised as a deliberate or indeliberate strategy adopted by them because of their theatrical experiences for social validation and canonisation. We observe that, at times, Tristan, Felicity and Bill stitch for themselves their sutured identities to appease their *others* and for demonstrating their conformity with the expectations of their *others*. They make conscious or unconscious compromises for the purpose of gaining acceptance for themselves, especially in foreign lands. The deliberate or indeliberate strategies of the characters to appease their *others* can be compared with their acts of wearing different masks for dissimulating some aspects of their identities and simulating to be what they are not.

It is important to note here that a sutured identity is, by no means, an inferior or subverted identity; it is, on the contrary, an enriched and complex identity with deeper levels and layers of significance that provide an opportunity of rewriting, writing back and restructuring to the selected characters of *TULTS*. Their sutured identities, sometimes, serve as a valuable strategy for camouflage and dissimulation in which their theatrical experiences of wearing different masks plays a crucial role. It can be used as an effective tool for escapism from the unbearable expectations of an indigenous culture and its strenuous and exacting pressures. Thus, suturing serves as an important mechanism for providing individuals with an emotional sanctuary and sense of security, especially in foreign lands. Furthermore, the dialogic process in this cosmopolitan world among the people representing diversified cultural values urges them to coexist with one another regardless of their different, conflicting and antagonistic ideological discourses as well as personal and social engagements. Thus, suturing — despite its ambivalent, complex and unpredictable nature — can be regarded as an important trajectory for personal maturity and foresight of an individual who refuses to stick to unnecessary and irrational adherence to his/her cultural discourse and narrative.

As far as cultural continuity is concerned, it is the goal of every social group for the promotion of their cultural values and ethos to strive for a stable communal identity. In this regard, Jorg Schulte et al. write, "Cultural continuity implies an idea of shared religious, cultural, emotional and moral values, realized through practices of social and cultural bonding" (3). On the other hand, cultural discontinuity unlocks new vistas and possibilities for an individual and challenges the concept of cultural specificity and sufficiency. Since every culture has its own richness, value and flavour, if we shut the

doors to other cultures for us, we are likely to experience claustrophobic feelings and fall victims to internal asphyxia. This asphyxia becomes a critical reason for a stagnant, lethargic and prejudiced identity that unwelcomes and dampens any cultural or discursive dialogue or interaction. We must be mindful of the fact that any irrational and unwarranted adherence to a specific culture curtails the chances of natural growth of an individual. Such adherences have serious socio-cultural and psychological ramifications. In spite of its negative consequences, a sutured identity provides more resilience and more flexibility to an individual regarding his/her outlook on life.

Cultural exchanges, a vital component in the construction of sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill, find their resonance in their theatrical world in *TULTS*. These exchanges, marked by heightened intercultural awareness, act as a dynamic backdrop against which the multi-layered identities of these characters and the process of suturing of the multiple identities of these characters are revealed. Within the realm of the theatre and the use of various masks by them, they embark on a conscious, and at times an unconscious, journey of defying the rigidity of their cultural, traditional and political narrative. They embrace the influence of their rival culture that constitutes a cultural collage that forms the basis of their sutured identities. These identities, however, are not without their complexities as these characters continue to oscillate between feelings of instability and confusion. In this regard, Cownie aptly notes, "The postmodern contribution to the debate on identity emphasises its fluidity, and the way in which individuals are fragmented into a number of selves, so that different 'selves' may emerge in different contexts" (11). Cownie's contention is pertinent to the process of the suturing of identities especially within the context of the characters of *TULTS.* According to her, the notion of identity is a fluid, complex and multi-dimensional construct that is aligned with the postmodern perspective on identity. It insinuates that individuals possess multiple selves that come to the surface in distinct contexts. It resonates with the experiences of the selected characters of *TUTLS* within and outside the theatre. Their constant practice of donning masks in the theatre provides them with a remarkable ability to present before the audience different human characteristics as required by their performances. This theatrical experience, consciously or unconsciously, affects their identities and allows them to be able to stitch new identities in accordance with their immediate social settings like chameleons.

1.9 Theatre, Masks and a Sutured Identity

This study brings to the foreground how Carey's use of theatre and masks in *TULTS* assists Tristan, Felicity and Bill to undertake their journeys of the suturing of identities and interact with their *others* in Efica and Voorstand. Lawler contends, "to be a person is to be a mask — to play a role" (105). As far as the notion of the suturing of identity and its relationship with theatrical, literal and metaphorical masks is concerned, individuals often wear masks, both literal and metaphorical, to steer their journey of existence through the multifaceted social, cultural and discursive challenges they come across. These masks, like performances in a theatrical arena, allow the characters to stitch various elements of their identity together knowingly or unknowingly in accordance with the requirements of their immediate socio-cultural contexts. As we know that a mask can concurrently conceal and reveal, the selected characters of *TULTS* consciously or unconsciously use their literal and metaphorical masks to reveal some specific elements of their identities while, synchronously, concealing others. In *TULTS*, by virtue of Carey's use of masks and theatrical performances, suturing extends beyond a mere physical act. It turns into a profound exploration of how Tristan, Felicity and Bill — as Lawler suggests — wear masks that allow them to assume different roles that help them stitch together the fragmented elements of their identities — as actors and the characters they perform — deliberately or involuntarily. Thus, Carey's use of masks and theatre serves as a powerful metaphor for the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of identity emphasising the malleable and uneven nature of the self.

The theater, as a representation of the world in the microcosm, provides Tristan, Felicity and Bill with a useful platform where they, willingly or unwillingly, experiment with different personas, getting into different masks that trigger the process of the suturing of their identities. It reveals that these masks function more than mere facades for them in the novel. Suturing, in the context of theatrical performances of these characters becomes the process of transitioning between different roles for them. It constructs their sutured identities which are unique, flexible, pragmatic, promising and empowering despite their profound socio-cultural, ideological and psychological implications such as internal turmoil, fragmentation and ruptures of identities, identity crisis, loss of authenticity, experiences of fluctuating sense of belonging and an acute sense of guilt and betrayal. The scars of their past are not removed; rather they become an integral component of their identities. These scars act as the reminders for them that the

construction of their sutured identities is fundamentally based on the process of disintegration of their indigenous cultural identities that, sometimes, produce the feelings of instability, loss of belonging and an acute sense of guilt in them. A close analysis of these sutured identities of the characters brings to our notice the severity of physical and metaphorical wounding and injuries experienced by these characters during the process of the construction of their sutured identities.

1.10 Significance of Hall's Selection for the Study

Stuart Henry McPhail Hall (1932-2014), born in Jamaica, is a renowned cultural theorist who migrated to the United Kingdom in 1951. He is regarded as one of the founding figures of British Cultural Studies which is also famously known as The Birmingham School of Cultural Studies. He also served as a professor of sociology at the Open University. He was a prolific writer, and his contribution to postcolonial theory and about identity is widely acclaimed all over the globe. David Morley states, "During the 1980s and the 1990s Stuart had developed a large body of theoretical work on questions of race and ethnicity, diaspora and identity" (Hall and Morley 4). While referring to Hall's relevance and contribution to the concept of identity, Morley states, "… in his later life, Stuart was increasingly preoccupied with questions of identity and subjectivity, especially concerning those on the racialized margins of the former colonizing nations (Hall and Morley 13).

Hall contends that identities of individuals undergo a process of evolution and transformation by virtue of the tension/s between their ancestry and sense of belonging and their socio-political environment, displacement and diversity of experiences. He believes that the migrants experience temporary attachments, ruptures and discontinuities, unstable points of identification and meeting points between their roots and routes under the influence of their economic ambitions in the modern globalised world. He argues that routes also supplement and broaden an individual's thought process by providing him with an opportunity to unlearn and relearn things in a new social setting. However, this unlearning produces some noticeable cracks in their identities and makes them experience ruptures and discontinuities regarding their attachment to the roots of their identities. Consequently, the diasporas experience the conscious or unconscious process of constructing sutured identities.

For Hall, taking identity as a unified whole is an improbable phenomenon. He believes that our identities are stitched up and sometimes torn apart because of the influence of

our ‘roots’ (culture, history, religion, nationalism, unconscious memes etc.) and ‘routes’ (journeys, experiences, learning, foreign exposure, self-discovery, interaction with our *others* etc.). Owing to the prevalent conflict and tension between roots and routes of an individual, his/her personal identity undergoes the process of breaking, mending, breaking again, suturing and transforming into a new and distinct entity which, in itself, remains fluid. Furthermore, there are some other considerations as well which account for the phenomenon of suturing of identity such as stereotyping and social pressures that force the self to capitulate under pressure or react on account of tensions and compulsions and become a transmuted object. Hall calls it the “process of becoming rather than being” (Hall and du Gay 4). Hall’s selection for this study has been motivated by his unique concept of the suturing of identities that he hints at but does not discuss in detail.

Helen Davis, while talking about Hall says, “Hall may not have all the answers, but he knows better than most how important it is to keep asking questions” (3). Hall is of the view that it is very problematic and demanding to find “an integral, originary and unified identity” (Hall and du Gay 1). According to Hall, it is befitting to use the word ‘identification’ instead of ‘identity’, and states that identification “is constructed on the back of recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation” (Hall and du Gay 1). Hall opines that identification is not a stagnant or fixed concept. He believes in the evolution of identity and regards it as an ongoing process. “In contrast with the ‘naturalism’ of this definition, the discursive approach sees identification as a construction, a process never completed – always 'in process’” (Hall and du Gay 2). He reiterates these words in *Essential Essays: Identity and Diaspora* when he remarks, “... identities are never completed, never finished, that they are always, as subjectivity itself is, in process” (Hall and Morley 69). He further insists, “Identity is always in the process of formation” (Hall and Morley 69), and it is “not a sealed or closed totality” (Hall and Morley 72).

Hall’s notion of the suturing of identity, as discussed earlier in this chapter, takes its origin from his remarks, “Identification is, then, a process of articulation, a suturing, an over-determination not a subsumption. There is always ‘too much’ or ‘too little’ – an over-determination or a lack, but never proper fit, a totality” (Hall and du Gay 3). He suggests that individuals are not seamlessly integrated into a pre-existing framework rather they are constantly engaged in a process of negotiating their identities. On the

contrary, they continue to grapple with an excess or insufficiency of influences, experiences, and interactions that shape their sense of self.

Since the notion of the suturing of identity is related to its fragmentation, Hall asserts in this regard that identities "are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply[,] constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions" (Hall and du Gay 4). As regards the fluid and capricious nature of identity, Hall opines, "They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation" (Hall and du Gay 4). Hall believes that this transforming nature of identity is the product of the process of globalization and the process of "forced and 'free' migration which have become a global phenomenon of the so-called 'post-colonial' world" (Hall and du Gay 4). These views of Hall hold a significant place in the discussion related to the notion of the suturing of identity.

Hall believes that in order to perceive the exact nature of the concept of identity, we need "not the so-called return to roots but a coming-to-terms-with our 'routes'" (Hall and du Gay 4). This concept also illustrates the flexibility, evolution and multiplicity accorded to the conception of identity which further testifies that identity is not static and unified; rather it evolves and, sometimes, metamorphose being subject to various variations because of the influence of environment, culture, history, and the subject position of the individual in the power structure of a society.

In *The Journal of the International Institute*, Hall, in "A Conversation with Stuart Hall" stresses upon the significance of people's routes in order to comprehend their identities in a befitting manner. "Instead of asking what are people's roots, we ought to think about what are their routes, the different points by which they have come to be now; they are, in a sense, the sum of those differences" (np). Subsequently, in the same conversation Hall talks about the influence of different routes adopted by an individual on his/her life and identity. "These routes hold us in places, but what they don't do is hold us in the same place" (np). He posits that these different routes are not worthless rather they help shape up and enrich a personality. Therefore, they should not be considered merely "a series of leaps in the dark… but they did have some logic, though it's not the logic of time or cause or sequence. But there is a logic of connected meaning" (np).

Hall accentuates the role of the *Others* – those with inherently dissimilar identities – in the process of the suturing of identity as they serve as a mirror through which people perceive their own identities in a more appropriate manner. The dynamic interaction with the *others* emphasises the relational and ever-evolving nature of identity that is subject to constant fluctuations and devoid of coherence and stability. In essence, Hall's perspective on identity suturing aligns with the view that identity is not a static, singular construct but a complex, ongoing process influenced by a multitude of factors, including culture, history, discourse, and encounters with diverse *others*. In this regard, Hall asserts, "… identity, far from being a matter of self-creation, is, rather, best understood as something constructed in and through dialogic process – in which individuals attempt to develop a sense of their identity in (sometimes conflictual) interaction with identities thrust upon them by others" (Hall and Morley 5). Thus, according to Hall, individuals go through the process of reviewing and reshaping their identities when they come across people of inherently dissimilar identities especially in foreign lands.

The above-mentioned positions of Hall are very relevant to the debate between the roots and routes of identity. He postulates that the cross-cultural interaction of an individual with his/her *others* makes him/her experience a certain kind of identity crisis that results in the rediscovery and redefinition of his/her personal identity. Hans Bertens echoes this idea of Hall by saying, "We also become ourselves by way of other perspectives and other views of who we are. We also become ourselves under the 'gaze' of the 'Other' or 'great other'" (Bertens 161). Thus, the *other* serves as a foil for an individual in order to see his/her identity in its real colours and shades. In other words, the concept of identity cannot be appropriately comprehended without bringing the *other* in the process. "The notion that identity has to do with people who look the same, feel the same, call themselves the same, is nonsense. As a process, as a narrative, as a discourse, it is always told from the position of the Other" (Hall and Morley 71). His notion of the suturing of identity acknowledges the dynamic nature of identity in a globalised world characterised by cultural shifts, dislocation, and fluidity. Identity, according to Hall, is not a fixed, unchanging entity but rather a construct influenced by history, culture, language, and external encounters. For him, it is an ongoing process, constantly adapting and evolving. This perspective challenges the idea of a unified and stable identity accentuating the intricate interplay between sameness and difference and the impact of discourses, representations, and power structures on an individual's self-

conception. Hall stresses the importance of recognising the routes of the identities of individuals which are shaped by interactions with different cultures, languages, and social groups and play a critical role in shaping their identities. These encounters can lead to identity crises, prompting individuals to review and redefine their self-concept. By virtue of the conflict and identity crisis caused by human being's contact with their *others*, their explicit character and approach towards their identity comes to the foreground and makes them a valuable case study for the study on the notion of the suturing of identity. In this regard, Bertens states, "Since our identity is constituted in interaction with what is outside of us and reflects us, it is relational – a notion that introduces the idea of difference into the process of identity construction (161).

1.11 Significance of Carey and *TULTS* for the Study

Peter Carey, an Australian novelist, was born on May 7, 1943. He is a three-times recipient of the Miles Franklin Award. He has also won the Booker Prize twice besides being nominated for it one more time. He has many other awards and distinctions to his credit too for being a phenomenal writer of novels and short stories. He migrated to America in 1990 and began a career teaching Creative Writing at New York University. During his stay in America, Carey must have experienced the phenomenon of the fragmentation and the suturing of identity because of his personal experiences of living in two different countries. Therefore, his insights on the subject of identity, postcolonial identity, identity ruptures, the use of different socio-cultural identity and the suturing of identity carry substantial weight.

The selection of Carey for this research can be aptly understood through the contention of Panayiota Chrysochou regarding the exiled writers. She remarks, "The exiled writer writes to confront the trauma of exile, and so the narrative becomes both a testament to that trauma and a method for the author to recover her/his subjectivity" (74). She further states, "Not only does the notion of home become a common trope for the exiled writer or artist, but the process of writing itself also becomes the only mode wherein home may be regained or preserved" (74). These viewpoints of Chrysochou underscore Carey's personal experiences of migration that must have been very enlightening for him to understand the issues related to identity suturing of migrants and diaspora. Therefore, Carey's selection for this study can hardly be overemphasised. However, this study deals with the selected novel of Carey not as an autobiography but as a work

of pure fiction and analyses the causes and effects of the sutured identities of its selected characters.

TULTS, a famous novel by Carey, was published in 1994. It transports us into a fictional world, Efica that is known for its theatrical traditions that demonstrate the resistance and defiance of the Eficans against the intervention of their neighbouring country, Voorstand into their daily life affairs. Tristan, the protagonist of the novel, is a physically deformed character with several challenges regarding his survival and a mystery associated with his real parentage because three characters of the novel can claim to be his father. Despite his severe physical incapacities including his facial malformations, he, inspired by his mother Felicity, dreams of becoming an actor that makes him suffer from several issues related to his identity. His journey from Efica to Voorstand in the latter half of the novel also offers us useful insights regarding the study of the symbiosis between his cultural roots and migratory routes and his sutured identity. Felicity, a powerful character in the novel, belongs to Voorstand but decides to settle in Efica when she is eighteen years old in pursuit of some economic ambitions with her dreams of setting up a theatre to challenge the famous theatre of the Voorstanders. The tension between her Voorstandish roots and Efican routes creates several challenges for her and makes her undergo the experiences of a disrupted, fragmented, restructured and sutured identity as she continues to grapple with her personal desires and the burden of societal expectations from her. Her decision of settling in Efica situates her in a foreign country with its different indigenous social and cultural set of values and conventions from those of the Voorstanders. Thus, she seems torn between her Voorstandish and Efican identities because of the collision between the Efican and Voorstandish cultures represented through their theatres and theatrical performances. The study of her character provides us with profound acumen and enlightening observations regarding her sutured identity.

The third character from *TULTS* selected for this research is Tristan's biological father, Bill, because of his experiences of a torn and sutured identity due to his divided loyalties for both Eficans and Voorstanders. He deserts his handicapped son, Tristan, and his mother in the pursuit of his personal aspiration of seeking a career in Voorstandish circus and theatre. The study and analysis of his character offers us with very valuable insights into the clash between his Efican roots and Voorstandish migratory routes that bring about his fractured, wounded and sutured identity to the foreground. His intense desire for fame, material success and recognition compels him to make several

compromises regarding his identity as he experiences a severe tension between his Efican and Voorstandish identities, his personal ambitions, his departure from his Efican heritage and the societal pressure of the Voorstanders to appease them in order to gain some semblance of social legitimacy during his stay in Voorstand. Such profound challenges of his life destabilise his identity leading him to adopt a sutured identity willingly or unwillingly for his survival in his respective social environment.
In a nutshell, the selection of Carey and *TULTS* for this research has been sprung from the profundity of the metaphors of theatre and masks highlighted through the themes of the novel that provide us with valuable insights and impart valuable understanding to us as regards the study of suturing of identities of its characters.

1.12 Chapters of the Study

This study comprises six chapters. The first chapter introduces the study, the research methodology, significance of the study, its theoretical framework, background of the problem, definition, process and the significance of *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith* the suturing of identity and the selection of Carey, *TULTS* and Hall for the study. The second chapter discusses the literature review that incorporates and critically analyses what different writers, theorists and researchers have written about the concept of identity in general and about the suturing between the cultural roots and migratory routes of identity in particular. This chapter also discusses the gap filled by this research regarding the understanding of the sutured identities that has never been undertaken in such details before. The third chapter discusses the significance of the theatre, the most significant symbol in the novel for the study of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill. It discusses and analyses the sutured identities of the characters through Carey's use of theatre, its whole setting and the use of different masks by the characters to construct sutured identities for themselves consciously or unconsciously. Chapter four presents a detailed textual analysis of the significance of the use of literal and metaphorical masks by Carey to reveal the process of the suturing of identities of the selected characters. Chapter five analyses the most critical metaphor of the mask of Bruder Mouse in the novel to reveal the process of the suturing of identity of Tristan, the protagonist of the novel. It discusses and brings to the foreground the significance and the remarkable influence of the mask of Bruder Mouse for the construction of a sutured identity for the deformed Tristan. Chapter six, the final chapter of the study, presents to us the conclusion of the study regarding the use of theatre and masks by

Carey to reveal the process of the sutured identities of the characters, its findings and its significance for the readers, academia and researchers.

CHAPTER TWO

The Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the available scholarship on and the complexities associated with the theories of identity, an insight into Hall's notions of identities that provide the lens for the analysis of the sutured identities of the characters of *TULTS* in the next chapters and, subsequently, it focuses on the available discussions related to the concept of the suturing of identities. The concept of identity and issues related to it have been discussed for a long time by writers, critics, and researchers from cultural studies, literature, sociology and psychology. Scholars have been striving to answer the questions related to the notion of identity, the flux associated with it, the impact of cultural exchanges owing to the phenomenon of globalisation and migrations on a prodigious scale, issues related to otherness, marginalisation and the symbiotic relationship found between the self and the society. However, it has been noticed that the concept of the suturing of identity has remained largely underexplored that grants significance to this research that has been conducted with a postcolonial proclivity.

It is worth mentioning here that the literature review of this study primarily revolves around the intricate interplay between the roots and routes of identity that plays a significant role in the construction of a sutured identity and, therefore, holds a pivotal position in this research. It signifies the importance of this study as it provides new and valuable knowledge on the concept and process of the suturing of identity in exploring and examining the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill in Carey's *TULTS*. The review of the literature in this chapter identifies and underscores that a sutured identity emerges as a consequence of the mutually influential relationship between the cultural roots and the migratory routes of individuals. While existing literature often discusses these two elements separately as if they were mutually exclusive, this study underscores the symbiotic relationship existing in them while, concurrently, examining the process, construction and nature of the sutured identities of the selected characters of *TULTS*.

This chapter also provides discussion on the metaphors of theatre and masks for the construction, fragmentation and suturing of identity. By examining existing literature on identity studies, cultural theory, and the intersection of literature and identity, this review provides a comprehensive foundation for our analysis of how the interplay

between the cultural roots and migratory routes of Tristan, Felicity and Bill deconstructs their personal identities to create a conscious or unconscious opportunity for them to suture them. Moreover, the review of the literature presented about theatre and masks is critical in understanding the use of these metaphors by Carey in the novel as remarkable tools for shaping the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill.

2.2 Identity

A brief discussion of the standpoints of some critics, theorists and authors on "Identity" is essential before we delve into the available literature review as regards the notion of the suturing of identity as it foreshadows the discussion in the forthcoming chapters. Quoting Julien Green in his book, Alex Nosa Ihama writes, "The greatest explorer on this earth never takes voyages as long as those of the man who descends to the depth of his heart" (1). The words of Green draw our attention to the challenging nature of one's curiosity about knowing one's identity. The significance of identity and one's curios interest in it has been very appropriately mentioned by Jaydipsinh Dodiya who states, "Identity is concerned with the self-esteem and self-image of an individual, a gender, a community, a class, race or a sex or a nation — real or imaginary dealing with the existence and role: who are we? What position do we have in society vis-a-vis at international arena" (150)? Hence, an explicit symbiosis between identity and the existence of an individual can be observed which means that the existence of an individual depends immensely on the bearing of identity he/she demonstrates consciously or unconsciously. While deliberating on the symbiotic relationship between identity and the nature of human existence, Sandhya Rao Mehta states, "A person is defined by an identity and it impacts whatever he or she does; from the relationships they form, to the work they do and everything in between, an individual's identity is related to race, class and gender" (75). Thus, the identity of an individual plays a critical and decisive role in his/her overall existence and ascertains the nature and roadmap for his/her life.

The words of Green, Dodiya, and Mehta collectively enlighten us about the profound interconnection between the identities of individuals and their existence. While Green's words highlight the challenging and transformative nature of the journey of self-exploration, Dodiya presents identity as a multi-dimensional concept that spans individual, communal, and societal levels that brings to the forefront its centrality to

self-esteem, self-image, and the role of the individual in society. Mehta further solidifies this connection by illuminating how the identities of individuals impact every aspect of their lives and how it is intricately linked to race, class and gender. The arguments of these critics enlighten us that our identity is not just a facet of who we are, rather it is the fundamental element of our existence that plays a pivotal role in shaping our decisions and choices.

The traces of human beings' curiosity, to know about their identity, take us back to the ancient Greek civilisation which held a firm belief in "the admonition at the Oracle of Delphi *gnothi seauton*", meaning: "Start gaining a proper discernment of what you are, what you are to be, and what you are to do" (Buford viii). Just as the Greeks believed in self-knowledge, philosophers of the recent past were also not unmindful of the significance of it, for instance, in *The Prison Notebooks* Gramsci says: "The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is: "knowing thyself"; as a product of the historical process to date, [a product] which has deposited in you, an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory. The first thing to do is to make such an inventory." (qtd. in Louise 19). Emma Wild-Wood also argues, "Someone without identity is nowhere. It's good to belong to a particular family, a particular group" (7). This idea resonates with a common proverb on being-in-relation: *Mutuni Watu* (a person is people)" (Wild-Wood 7). Therefore, the significance of the concept of identity, and its 'infinite traces' in relation to one's society, culture and social hierarchy can hardly be overemphasised though defining identity in an incontrovertible manner is no easy task.

The ambiguity in defining the concept of identity has been very adequately indicated by Lawler, a renowned sociologist, who believes, "'Identity is a difficult term: more or less everyone knows more or less what it means, and yet its precise definition proves slippery" (1). She, further, opines that this slipperiness related to the notion of identity makes it extremely difficult for anyone to come up with an "overarching definition" of the epistemology, development and working of identity (2). She argues that one can get some cognisance of one's identity when it is threatened by some external factors such as one's interaction with people of different identities. In this context, she contends, "In popular culture, it tends to be explicitly invoked only when it is seen as 'being in trouble'. So, we are accustomed to hearing the phrase 'identity crisis' in which people

are not quite sure who they are" (1). As Elsie Jones-Smith says, "You look for the opportunity that exists, even in a negative situation. You adopt the sentiment that behind every crisis lies an opportunity" (44), this identity crisis serves as an opportunity for individuals to get a better understanding of their identities. Jeffrey Richards asserts in this regard, "Identity is only meaningful when placed in opposition to something else" (6). Thus, when individuals adopt various social, cultural, discursive and migratory routes during the course of their existence, they come across several challenges related to their identities. Sometimes, they experience serious crises concerning their identities owing to the subsequent ruptures and disintegration in it because of their exposure to new social, cultural, political and ideological settings. These crises urge them to review, revise, realign and redefine their concept of identity that consciously or unconsciously triggers the process of the suturing of the ruptures found in their identities owing to their experiences of socio-cultural and psychological fragmentation.

Though Lawler believes that it is improbable, if not impossible, to discover a precise definition of identity, some writers have tried to do so. While citing Bergsma and van Peterson, Peter J. Peverelli says, "... identity is the perception of personal unity, the conviction to remain unchanged and essentially the same" (1). However, Peverelli demonstrates his dissatisfaction with this definition of formation of identity "as one-way traffic" (1) which means that "Identity seems to originate from within the person" (1). He argues that "... identity should have three aspects: how I perceive myself, how others perceive me and the interaction between those two" (1). Wild-Wood refers to the fluidity found in the concept of identity. He argues, "Any individual or group is made up of many identities that vary in significance for the subject at any given time or circumstance" (9). This unstable nature of identity defies a categorical definition and leaves us fumbling for this into various corridors of uncertainty.

N.D. Arora and S.S. Awasthy, Irene Leigh and Varun Gulati and Garima Dalal also fumble into these corridors of uncertainty and discuss its various dimensions. Arora and Awasthy believe that identity refers to "the culture of a people" and "common identification with a collectivity or social category" and "certain differences from others" (231). Furthermore, they argue, that identity also refers to "certain shared culture, values, ideals individuals cherish" and refers to "human beings as self-contained unitary individuals who carry their uniqueness deep inside themselves like

pearls hidden in their shells" (231). While Arora and Awasthy take a somewhat categorical stance as regards the definition of identity, Leigh alludes to the convolutions associated with the notion of identity and its relation to one's society when he elucidates, "Identity is a complex and developing cognitive and social construction encompassing an array of characteristics or identity components that connect the person to specific social groups..." (4). Gulati and Dalal also refer to the evolving nature of identity which is subject to one's cultural background which itself is dependent upon multiple factors by saying, "Identities are cultural constructs, not to be considered as pre-given and stable facts of our lives; culture is also a construct, not fixed, and immutable based on unchangeable essence" (63).

The above-mentioned discussion brings to the foreground that identity is not a fixed or monolithic concept. It is fluid and evolving contingent upon an individual's cultural background, societal roles, and interactions with the world. The journey of identity is marked by challenges, crises, and opportunities, as individuals continually revise and redefine their sense of self in response to a changing world.

2.3 Literary Criticism on the Suturing of Identity

The longstanding debate between the essentialists and the social constructivists reveals that according to the essentialists, identity is fixed, predetermined and deeply rooted within an individual. For them, identity is stable and unchanging. On the contrary, the social constructivists contend that identity is fluid and unstable that evolves with the passage of time because of the life experiences and interactions of individuals. The discussion in the next chapters reveals that the notion of the suturing of identity introduces the idea that identity is not a singular, unchanging core but a complex interplay of various factors, including an individual's roots and routes. It calls into question the essentialist perspective of a fixed and unyielding identity. In this regard, Heiner Müller's assertion becomes pertinent when he articulates:

> He who is identical with himself might as well have himself buried, he doesn't exist anymore, isn't moving anymore. Identical is a monument. What we need is the future and not the eternity of the moment. We have to dig up the dead again and again, because only from them can we obtain a future (qtd. in Kalb 15).

The concept of the suturing of identity complements the viewpoint of the social constructivist by highlighting the role of both internal and external factors in identity formation. It acknowledges that individuals actively engage in the process of identity construction, consciously or unconsciously integrating their roots and routes. However, the notion of suturing of identity contests the purely external perspective of the social constructivists bringing to the foreground the symbiosis between agency and control of individuals in constructing and shaping their own identities that reveals that identity is not something imposed thoroughly by the social influences and pressures, but it is also determined by the personal experiences, decisions and choices of individuals.

In his groundbreaking work, *Orientalism*, Edward Said befittingly highlights the significance of the journeys of individuals and their subsequent impacts on their rigid viewpoints regarding their cultural and communal roots. He asserts, "The more one is able to leave one's cultural home, the more easily one can judge it, and the whole world as well, with the spiritual detachment and generosity necessary for true vision" (259). Said's valuable insights bring the idea to the foreground that the departure of individuals from their cultural comfort zones leads them to explore diverse socio-cultural experiences that, consequently, enrich their perspectives, not only in relation to their own identity but also in understanding the identities of others. This concept aligns significantly with the notion of the suturing of identity that postulates that identities are not predetermined rather they keep on evolving by virtue of diverse socio-cultural experiences of the migrants. The phrase "spiritual detachment and generosity necessary for true vision" encapsulates the recognition that venturing beyond one's cultural home and roots is essential for gaining profound insights into one's identity. This approach not only enables individuals to critically assess their own realities but also provides them with the capacity to objectively analyse foreign cultures that allows them to construct their sutured identities consciously or unconsciously.

Mark B. Salter's perspective on the notion of the suturing of identity introduces a nuanced and metaphorical dimension to the discourse on the nature of identity that can be critically connected with the views of essentialists and social constructivists. Suturing has been described by him as, "a process of knitting together the inside and the outside together and the resultant scar..." (734). Explaining the nature of a sutured identity, Salter claims, "Sutures are never always or completely successful, just as stitches in a wound may lead to healing but also leave a trace of their own through the

scar" (735). He relates suturing with the Greek god Hermes, "Hermes is an apt patron: messenger to the Greek pantheon, the god of boundaries, travellers, and strangers — noted for oration, persuasion, charm and change. The suture better represents this messaging, transition, implication between the inside and the outside" (738). The metaphorical exploration of suturing identity by Salter demonstrates his concurrence with the ideas of the social constructivists as regards the imperfections, transitions, and external influences involved in identity formation. His incorporation of mythology and symbolism stresses the performative and communicative dimensions of identity which play a critical role in the construction of a sutured identity.

As regards the significance of routes of an individual and their physical and psychological importance, Susan Stanford Friedman further states that, "routes imply travel, physical and psychical displacements in space, which in turn incorporate the crossing of borders and contact with difference. Roots, routes, and intercultural encounter depend upon narrative for embodiment" (151). Wild-Wood and Mehta also believe in the significant role played by an individual's routes in the context of his identity development, and proclaim that migration of an individual makes him undergo the process of transformation of identity as regards the roots of his/her identity. The former presents his argument by saying, "… migration brings or hastens change by providing migrants with a new set of life experiences that, in dialogue with the old set of experiences, negotiate an altered identity" (Wild-Wood 1) whereas the latter asserts, "Migration leads to separation, yet it can be seen as a reincarnation in a new place marked by a new culture, different adjustments and an opportunity to re-define oneself" (Mehta 82). These perspectives of Friedman, Wild-Wood and Mehta collectively underscore the dynamic nature of identity, which is continually influenced and reshaped by an individual's journeys and encounters along diverse routes. This aligns with the concept of suturing of identity that recognises identity as an evolving process subject to various social and cultural influences and transformations brought about by experiences along the routes undertaken by individuals.

As regards the psychological impacts of sutured identities in a foreign land in order to appease the local people and gain their acceptance in their society, Mehta's views seem relevant and pertinent when she argues, "..., this construction of new identities is never very easy, nor is the transition from old to new ones smooth (53). Subsequently, she

cites Said that living in exile is the summit of misfortune to strengthen her argument with regard to the challenges faced by the diasporas. Moreover, she believes that exilic individuals lead a life of constant confusion and mental uneasiness (53). Her perspective on the construction of sutured identities resonates profoundly with the challenges encountered by individuals in foreign lands. Her views highlight the intricate interplay between the self and the *other*, and suggest how the process of sutured identity construction is marked by both internal turmoil and external challenges in the pursuit of acceptance and belonging in a new society.

Just as the process of suturing involves stitching together disparate fragments and pieces, our identities are composite constructions that are shaped and reshaped because of various socio-cultural and personal influences. In this regard, Marina Oshana posits that the extent of attachment individuals hold to their identities significantly influences how they perceive and adapt to the world around them. According to her, "Our identities are the repository for much of what we absorb in the world and are the filter through which our lived experience is processed and interpreted" (2). This perspective underscores the profound impact of one's identity on one's experiences in a foreign land. On the other hand, Mehta offers a different viewpoint contending that it is the lived experiences of individuals in a foreign environment that hold sway over their identities. She articulates this perspective by stating, "The interaction of traditional culture with the culture of an adopted alien land brings about a transformation in the personality of a person" (82). Mehta further explains that the experiences of such individuals are shaped by a complex interplay of economic factors, personal skills, and political relationships between their country of origin and the adopted one (82). Consequently, she argues that the socio-cultural and migratory routes of individuals encompassing their journeys and experiences in a foreign land play a crucial role in prompting them to reevaluate, reshape, and redefine their identities. These contrasting viewpoints offer valuable insights into the dynamic process of identity transformation which is central to the exploration of suturing of identity.

Unlike the modernist and essentialist worldview that revolves around linear development in a unified and monolithic world, the postmodern approach of looking at the world is characterised by questioning fixity and highlighting fluidity and instability in everything which includes human identity as well. This fluidity and instability of

identity has been very appropriately discussed by Zygmunt Bauman in his essay "From Pilgrim to Tourist — or a Short History of Identity" in which he argues, "Indeed, if the modern "problem of identity" was how to construct an identity and keep it solid and stable, the postmodern "problem of identity" is primarily how to avoid fixation and keep the options open" (Hall and du Gay 18). For him, "the catchword of modernity was creation; the catchword of postmodernity is recycling" (Hall and du Gay 18). Bauman's concept of "recycling" closely aligns with the notion of the construction of a sutured identity. The unstable and fluid nature of identity has been explained by Chrysochou in the following words: "Identity, as it exists and is performed within particular discourses, is never a stable site which the referent of that identity can rely on. Rather, identity remains in flux, transitioning between, among, and outside the discourses that have produced it" (74).

Bauman's notion of "recycling" finds resonance in the perspectives of Sandel, D'Ambrosio and John Rowan and Mick Cooper who assert that identities are subject to an ongoing, evolutionary process, constantly shaped and reshaped. Sandel and D'Ambrosio assert, "... our identities are shaped by our self-interpretations. Changes in our roles and relationships do not simply happen to us; they typically reflect, and contribute to, revisions in the narratives by which we seek to make sense of our lives" (275). Rowan and Cooper further challenge the monolithic notion of identity by remarking "…in a world characterized by multi-fragmented social positionings and the deconstruction of absolute truths, the notion of a unified self begins to stand out like a relic from a bygone era" (11). These insights from Sandel and D'Ambrosio and Rowan and Cooper underscore that the diversified narratives of individuals relating their identities are susceptible to revision and recalibration. This revision and recalibration plays a critical role in the construction of sutured identities especially for those who experience transcultural and transnational interactions in foreign lands.

The concept of the sutured identity as illuminated by scholars like Rowan and Cooper finds resonance in Bhabha's exploration of identity. Bhabha's perspective discards the idea of fixity accentuating the vibrant and evolving nature of identity. He asserts that identities of individuals are not static rather they are a product of their social interactions and environment, shaped by exposure to the outside world. Bhabha contends that cultural exposure, encompassing socio-cultural and migratory routes,

fosters adaptability in individuals within new contexts, challenging their perceptions of fixed identities. This adaptability compels them to think beyond narratives of original subjectivities (2). Bhabha introduces the idea of "in-between spaces" where new signs of identity emerge, and collaboration and contestation take place in defining the idea of society itself. According to him, it is in the *in-between* spaces that "initiate new signs of identity and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself" (2), and it is in the interstices that "the intersubjective and collective experience of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated" (2). Consequently, the identities of individuals are intricately tied to their experiences, continually evolving, reshaping, and redefining themselves through interactions with people of diverse ethnicities, cultures, and linguistic backgrounds. Bhabha's idea of the "moment of transit" aligns with the concept of the construction of sutured identities. He articulates his critical positioning in the following words:

> Beginnings and endings may be the sustaining myths of the middle years; but in the *fin de siecle*, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion (2).

Bhabha's understanding of identity in flux has played a critical role in Hall's viewpoints related to the notion of suturing of identity. In the context of the creation of sutured identities, Josselson and Harway acknowledge, "In our increasingly complex globalized world, many people carry distinct, often conflicting, psychological identities with regard to gender, race, ethnicity, or nationality. People live at the edges of more than one communal affiliation, bridging loyalties and identifications" (3). Josselson and Harway's insights are highly relevant to the study of sutured identities. In our contemporary interconnected world, individuals often grapple with multiple social, cultural, personal and psychological identities associated with gender, race, ethnicity and nationality which tend to overlap and intersect triggering the process of the suturing of these multiple fragments of human identities. This complexity reflects the essence of sutured identities, where individuals embody a mosaic of affiliations, both rooted in their heritage and shaped by their diverse experiences.

Subsequently, Josselson and Harway talk about the process of acculturation "by which a member of an ethnic national, or racial group remains attached to his/her cultural

background while simultaneously acculturating to the mainstream values and more" (5) which Bhabha calls hybridisation of the individual. Thus, Josselson and Harway (3) and Bhabha (2) suggest that one of the major causes of the construction of a sutured identity is an individual's cross-cultural interaction with the people of diverse identities owing to his/her migration into foreign lands. This migration has a distinct leverage on the social, economic, cultural and psychological existence of diasporas and makes them adopt multiple identities willingly or unwillingly and intentionally or unintentionally in order to assimilate themselves in the foreign land.

The views of Oshana, Rohinston Mistry, and Rowan and Cooper contribute significantly to the discourse on sutured identities due to the interplay between roots and routes of identity. Oshana argues that despite the multiplicity found in the concept of identity, the self retains its distinctive nature "as the agential subject and as the object of reflexive concern [and] must exist as a distinct being and must persist, under some plausible description, as a continuous subject" (17). Her perspective brings to the forefront the idea that individuals — even while grappling with various cultural experiences and identities — continue to possess a core sense of self that persists and endures through these transformations. This viewpoint has been elaborated by Mistry, an India-born Canadian writer, in his interview with Noah Richler states, "There are two places. There is the place where I write (Canada) and the place that I write about [India], and I think I have to consider them both as home. If either one was taken away from the equation, then it would collapse for me" (qtd. in Maver 10). Mistry's statement accentuates the significance of both the place of belonging and the place an individual writes about as constituting a sense of home. The duality lying in this sense of home sheds light on the complex nature of diasporic identity in which individuals absorb elements from multiple cultures resulting in stitching multiple identities. This stitching and blending of cultures are central as regards the concept of the suturing of identity wherein individuals negotiate, reconfigure and relocate themselves consciously or unconsciously in accordance with the diversity of their cultural experiences. Thus, both Oshana and Mistry concur that the diaspora from various parts of the world absorb disparate elements of the cultures they come across, and this absorption results in the production of sutured identities in them. However, Judith Martin et al. emphasise the significance of a cultural identity by asserting, "Cultural identity is important for people's sense of self and how they relate to others. A strong cultural identity can

contribute to people's overall well-being. Identifying with a particular culture helps people feel they belong and gives them a sense of security" (59). This viewpoint brings to the foreground the significance of staying connected with one's cultural roots in order to reap the fruits of communal and cultural companionship.

As regards the discussion on the construction of sutured identities, Rowan and Cooper refer to different schools of thought such as the exponents of modernism and postmodernism; the former talk about serial pluralism "the way in which people could move through different apparent personalities as they moved through life. People could be changed by age, by the influence of other cultures, by shattering life experiences, by marriage and so forth" (5) whereas the latter talk about simultaneous pluralism "the way in which a person can maintain a dynamic portfolio of alternative self-concepts as they move through the world" (5). Thus, the supporters of serial pluralism observe a linear and gradual evolution in the concept of identity whereas the advocates of simultaneous pluralism discern multiple transformations in an individual's roots of identity owing to his exposure to a foreign land and culture.

Rowan and Cooper's views on identity — as seen through the lens of the concept of the suturing of identity — are deeply rooted in the ongoing discourse about how individuals construct and negotiate their identities in a globalised world. Their differentiation between serial pluralism and simultaneous pluralism provides valuable insights into the process of the suturing of identity. It illuminates that the evolving nature of identity — which holds a pivotal position in the discussions related to the concept of suturing — can take various forms and its development may be prompted by a combination of both serial and simultaneous processes depending on the nature of the experiences of individuals.

The contentions of Said and Oliver-Rotger help us understand how a sutured identity is constructed. They believe that an individual's identity definitively undergoes the process of revision and redefinition consciously or unconsciously owing to his/her exposure to the diverse cultures. Said expresses this idea by saying, "No return to the past is without irony, or without a sense that a full return, or repatriation, is impossible" (Reflections on Exile Said xxxv) whereas Oliver-Rotger indicates, "What "returnees" do not always realize or accept is that when they "return," the consequences of time have acted on both the place and on themselves: they do not only return to a different place but are also no longer the same people who had left" (49). Said's assertion highlights the profound impact of exposure to new cultures on one's sense of self. His

notion of exile points toward a fundamental transition in identity where the individuals become acutely cognisant of the dynamic nature of their identities. For Said, this shift is not a mere physical relocation but a mental and emotional one as well. Oliver-Rotger emphasises that when individuals return to their place of origin after exposure to different cultures, they may fail to realise or fully endorse the extent to which time has acted upon both the place and them. The viewpoint that returnees are no longer the same people who left is pertinent to the notion of the suturing of identity since it underscores the need for individuals to accept their consciously or unconsciously reconstructed and realigned identities in the light of their evolving experiences.

Martin Bommas' views also help us understand the nature of a sutured identity. He writes in his book, "The various aspects of a person's identity interact in different ways, depending on circumstance, to produce a sense of self within that person" (61). These words of Bommas indicate the fragmented nature of human identity that lays the foundation of the process of the suturing of the multiple fragments of human identity in accordance with the social and cultural settings around the individuals. We can find a parallel between this dynamic interaction and the concept of sutured identity that recognises that individuals consciously or unconsciously customise and symmetrise different aspects of their identity to cope with the challenges and requirements of the changing social, cultural and ideological settings.

Suturing of identity, as a strategic device of camouflage in a foreign land for social and cultural legitimacy, can be understood through Bhabha's contention about his concept of mimicry when he says, "It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled — exactly like the technique of camouflage practiced in human warfare" (85). Bhabha's reference to a "mottled background" brings to our notice that an identity can be a patchwork of multiple similar or dissimilar influences, personal experiences and cultural references that constitute a diverse and complicated whole. Furthermore, it can be inferred from Bhabha's reference to warfare that the constitution of an identity can be strategic and deliberate choice of an individual — though it is not always the case in the construction of a sutured identity — depending on the context. Bhabha's notion of mimicry as camouflage has several similarities with the concept of the suturing of identity that has been discussed in the next chapters.

The claim of Martin et al. regarding the experiences of liminality is also relevant to the process of suturing of individuals as they "thrive in their lives on the margins of two

cultures. They see themselves, rather than others, as choice makers. They recognize the significance of being 'in between', as many multicultural people do" (64). Martin et al.'s comment about sutured identities thriving in the margins and making choices relates to the standpoints of Bommas, Said, and Oliver-Rotger who recognise the dynamic nature of identity because of the transcultural and transnational experiences of individuals. These individuals carrying a sutured identity — enriched with the experiences of multiple social, cultural and ideological experiences — understand the significance of occupying an "in-between" space where they have an element of agency despite some control as regards their decisions and choices that ultimately shape and transform their identities. This perspective of Martin et al. is contrary to Bommas' point of view which indicates that the construction of a sutured identity is something that happens to individuals naturally.

Jacques-Alain Miller notes, "...suture became something far more fundamental to the constitution of all forms of human subjectivity. In essence, if all human subjects are riven by a fundamental lack — a central tenet of Lacanian psychoanalysis and its notion of barred or split subject — then suture provides ways of filling up this fundamental lack in the subject" (108-09). The fundamental lack pointed out by Lacan is a critical aspect of human subjectivity that highlights that individuals are inherently fragmented and incomplete. Miller's argument regarding the significance of sutures for filling up the fundamental lack in the subject is crucial because when individuals engage in the suturing of identity, they consciously or unconsciously undertake the challenge of stitching the inherent breaches within themselves in the quest of a more coherent identity. Therefore, sutures do not serve merely as an outer covering, but they refer to a critical process that attempts to address the profound sense of lack embedded in all human subjects.

Unlike Geoff Stokes who believes, "At its most rudimentary, to assert an identity is to distinguish oneself or one's group in a certain way and to differentiate oneself or one's group from others" (5), Andrey Makarychev and Alexander Yatsyk use the term "suturing" to describe a process that combines elements of de-bordering and re-bordering. They claim, "Suturing denotes a specific mix of de-bordering and re-bordering under which a dispersed identity is stabilised by means of incorporating elements of a different semiotic order. Concomitantly, external meanings are used as reference points for fixing dislocated and unstable identities" (7-8). Their statement highlights the complex and vibrant nature of a sutured identity. It involves breaking

down the existing boundaries of identity and integrating different elements from diverse cultural and semiotic contexts. They argue that the process of suturing is instrumental in bringing at least some semblance of stability in an otherwise "dispersed identity". Sutured identities, according to Makarychev and Yatsyk are neither isolated nor autonomous; rather they are deeply interconnected with external cultural and semiotic influences.

Makarychev and Yatsyk argue, "Suturing might have two dimensions — temporal and spatial. In a temporal sense, the suture supposes the cementing of identity by means of recurrent references to historical experiences that serve to infuse old meanings into this identity. This is how nostalgic discourse works: they reconnect contemporary identity to its historical predecessors" (6). Makarychev and Yatsyk's notions relating the notion of the suturing of identity accentuate the dynamic and multi-layered nature of a sutured identity that is carved out by the constant symbiosis between historical legacies and contextual factors. According to them, suturing, in its temporal dimension, acknowledges the role of history and memory in the construction of identity wherein individuals consciously or unconsciously rely on their heritage and past experiences to define themselves.

As far as the spatial dimension of a sutured identity is concerned, Makarychev and Yatsyk contend that suturing recognises the fluidity of identity boundaries. They further contend, "Spatially, the concept of the suture can be applied to complex situations when no strict line of demarcation between competing or rival identities is possible, which gives a green light for applying this concept..." (6). It indicates that identities can be porous and adaptable and, therefore, they are contingent upon diverse cultural influences. Their viewpoints regarding the notion of suturing underline the dynamic nature of a sutured identity in a constantly fluctuating globalised world in which historical discourses and cultural pluralism constantly influence individuals regarding the construction, redefinition and realignment of their personal identities.

Though a sutured identity offers several social and cultural benefits to an individual, it creates an identity conundrum in individuals too. Citing Ambedkar, Joshua-Amadi stresses upon one's constant connection with one's cultural identity by writing, "Unlike a drop of water which loses its identity when it joins the ocean, man does not lose his being in the society in which he lives" (28). Explaining this viewpoint, Joshua-Amadi

contends, “You need a firm sense of identity as a foundation to your being. With this identity comes a sense of purpose that gives your life direction and meaning. Without it you become confused and perplexed with life, drift along purposelessly and will ultimately waste your life” (28). Hence, while a sutured identity provides us with enriching life experiences and broadens our outlook about human interaction, Joshua-Amadi urges us to maintain a strong connection with our primary and inherent sense of self.

Despite several material and social benefits of the process of the suturing of identity, its psychological consequences have been masterfully explained by William Safran who points out the aporia or predicament of the people with sutured identities. He remarks:

> Some diaspora persist and their members do not go home because there is no homeland to which to return; because, although a homeland may exist, it is not a welcoming place with which they can identify politically, ideologically, or socially; or because it would be too inconvenient and disruptive if not traumatic, to leave the diaspora (qtd. in Missbach 190).

Safran’s viewpoints bring to the foreground the predicament and potential trauma of those possessing sutured identities. Since suturing involves the incorporation of diverse elements, leaving the diaspora may upset this delicate balance for them in their native places. Returning to their native and cultural roots might compel them to get rid of certain elements of their sutured identities that are in dissonance with their cultural and communal identities. Hence, they embrace the permanent aporia of remaining in the diaspora, at least in some cases, as some elements of their sutured identities become integral to their existence.

The significance of the idea of suturing can be understood through the contention of Salter who claims, “The suture is pregnant with meaning — not only by what it creates and separates, but also in the way that it connects and distinguishes. It renders visible the raw power that must be exerted to hold the two together and apart” (740). Salter’s remarks encapsulate the quintessence of the concept of the suturing of identity by bringing to the foreground the reality that the construction of a sutured identity is an ongoing process subject to fluctuations and ongoing adjustments involving an incessant interplay between weaving together and pulling apart different threads of their identity

consciously or unconsciously in order to secure the nod of approval from their immediate socio-cultural audience. In this context, Maria Caterina La Barbera's contention seems relevant when she states, "Belonging emerges from a complex process of appropriation and (re)interpretation of social boundaries that depends on whether those who are on the other side of the boundary may accept or reject the minority group" (4).

La Barbera's contention regarding the acceptance or rejection of the minority group by those "on the other side of the boundary" underscores the significance of the external pressure and social influence which play a pivotal role in the process of the construction of a sutured identity as this study reveals. Thus, the perception of individuals about themselves, the expectations of society and a quest for a sense of belonging play a critical role in the discussions related to the construction of a sutured identity. In this regard, Floyd Collins contends, "Clearly our identity is a major issue for all cultures: we derive our sense of identity from a sense of continuity or discontinuity, from our position in larger culture, and from our sense of place" (16).

As regards the element of agency in the construction of identity, Donna LeCourt identifies some meeting points concerning the influence of discourse. Her viewpoints relate to the discussion on the construction of a sutured identity. She argues, "Identity can be imagined as the meeting point of discourse and self wherein the subject makes a choice, influenced by other discourses and social relations, to invest in particular subject positions and take them on as part of identity construction" (38). Le Court's contentions involving the role of discourse, self, and external pressures regarding the construction of identity can be compared with Hill's concept of masking as a transitional state (91) and La Barbera's emphasis on social boundaries and acceptance (4). The perspectives presented by Le Court, Hill and La Barbera contribute significantly to our understanding of how individuals construct sutured identities by consciously or unconsciously engaging with several subject positions and making necessary adjustments and compromises about their sense of self in different social contexts.

2.4 Literary Criticism on Theatre and Mask

Since the use of the metaphors of theatre and masks by Carey in *TULTS* is central to this study of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill, the perspectives of different critics, theorists and authors will inform our analysis of the sutured identities

of these characters in the next chapters. The remarks of Hill concerning the relationship between masks, theatre and the concept of identity illuminate the transformative power of masks and their capacity to shape and redefine our identity — a concept that is pivotal to the discussion regarding the suturing of identity. While enlightening us on the historical background and the primary purpose of masks, he argues, "Masking is intimately linked to the concept of person. The word *person* derives from the Latin *persona*, which is the ancient word for the mask used by actors in Greek and then Roman theater. The masks had a double role, both hiding and revealing" (91). As regards the connection between a mask and the concept of identity, Hill contends, "From the theatrical standpoint, the actor in a theatre who assumes a mask by means of a character type, voice patterns, and physical alterations establishes a new identity" (91). This notion parallels the idea of identity as a performative act, a concept central to the suturing of identity. In both cases, identity is not a fixed, immutable entity rather it is a dynamic construct influenced by external factors, choices, and performative elements. The duplexity mentioned in his remarks resonates with the idea of the suturing of identity wherein the elements of an individual's identity are hidden or transformed while others are brought to the foreground contributing to the creation of a fresh sutured identity.

The remarks of Park regarding the significance of masks in constructing personhood are closely connected to Hill's observations about the relationship between masks and the concept of identity. According to Park, personhood is largely dependent on the donning of different masks. He believes, "It is the donning of these social masks that allows us to know both ourselves and others, and that throughout an individual's life these masks are employed with a greater or lesser degree of conscious deliberation for varying social functions" (qtd. by Rowe11). While Hill's insights emphasise the performative aspect of identity within a theatrical setting, Park's views focus on the social masks that individuals put on throughout their lives. He believes that the act of donning various social masks plays a phenomenal role in both self-recognition and understanding others. His perspective aligns with the notion that individuals consciously or unconsciously adopt different roles and personas in various social contexts during the course of their lives to fulfill their different needs. Thus, whether in a theatrical context — as discussed by Hill — or in the context of social interactions — as emphasised by Park, the donning of masks can be seen as a fundamental aspect of the construction of a sutured identity.

Hill also reveals the utility of a sutured identity and the element of agency and masking involved in it by stating, "... masking is a transitional state one occupies while on the way to a place of which one wishes to be a character (91). Hill's outlook on masking as a transitional state suggests that individuals don masks or assume specific identities momentarily as a part of their conscious or unconscious journey toward becoming the character they aspire to be. In such a situation, a mask functions as a tool for self-discovery and experimentation providing a rich opportunity to individuals to strategically or involuntarily adopt different identities while traversing through the path to self-realisation. When Hill speaks of "occupying a transitional state", he suggests that individuals are actively engaged in the process of identity construction. It demonstrates that identities of individuals remain, most of the time, in a state of flux as they undergo the deliberate or unconscious process of shaping and reshaping by them. The act of masking, in this context, serves as a useful tool for bridging the gap between their present and coveted identities.

Susan Valeria Harris Smith notes, "The concept of "social self" as distinct from a private one, introduced by William James in *Principles of Psychology*, forms the basis of modern psychological theories about the self as a player of parts" (126). Her reference to James' notion of the "social self" as distinct from the private self accentuates how individuals make willing or unwilling identity compromises in their social settings. It implies that we play different roles and, intentionally or unintentionally, wear various masks in our interactions with others. Subsequently, she writes, "Sociologists, such as Burns in *Theatricality: A Study of Convention in the Theatre and in Social Life*, argue that the social self is not organic, but is, rather, a performed character, a part learned" (126). It brings to the foreground the notion that identity is performative that aligns with the nature of a sutured identity as well. She further writes, "According to this theory, man is always masked in the presence of others. From this perspective, social roles are patently dramatic" (126). It highlights the ubiquitous nature of masks and performance in the context of our social existence and interactions. It insinuates that our social roles are inherently dramatic that underscores the theatricality of identity construction. As regards the discussion about the process and construction of a sutured identity, this theatricality underlines the vibrant and fluctuating nature of identity as individuals switch between different roles and masks in order to handle the challenges of their changing social environments.

Florian Coulmas's viewpoints are closely aligned with those of Smith when he remarks, "People who move between two systems, therefore, feel that to present *their* self in everyday life they have to act differently, adjusting to the stage directions of the place where the scene is set" (97). Subsequently, he argues, "Those who are able to do so easily have been said to switch between two identities, while those who are not may feel, and be perceived as, out of place in one of the settings or in both" (97-98). While Smith differentiates between a social and a private persona signifying that people wear different social masks in different social settings, Coulmas builds upon this idea as he notes that people are obliged to make some necessary adjustments in their behaviour to cope well with the challenges of their social environments. He suggests that those who can do this easily may switch between two identities, while others who struggle with this adaptation may feel out of place in one or both settings. The ability of individuals to seamlessly navigate the complex stage of human life, switching between different roles, brings to the forefront a profound sense of a sutured identity that reveals the ability of individuals to wear the most appropriate masks that best fit their performance on the stage of the world. However, Coulmas underscores the challenges related with handling different masks for reaping the fruits of a sutured identity since a poor performance may lead to the individuals' feeling out of place and at odds with the roles required in their social environments. Smith emphasises the importance of using a mask carefully by asserting, "The assumption of such a protective persona affords the masker freedom and control unless he yields to the mask or commits an irrevocable act in the mask; he must never become the other, only play at being the other. As long as the mask, the public face, and the face, the true self, are kept separate, the masker remains in control" (53). The astute management of a masked identity, as propounded by Smith, provides individuals with the agency to control the impact of external expectations, while any mishandling in this regard might result in individuals' becoming controlled by these social and cultural expectations of the people around them.

Carl Kerenyi's perspective on the function of masks, as cited in Sears Eldredge's work, underscores a fundamental aspect of the construction of a sutured identity. According to Kerenyi, "The principal function of the mask is to transform and thereby to unite, or, perhaps more fundamentally, to unite and thereby transform" (qtd. in Eldredge 5). He further contends, "This function of the mask as an agent of transformation is the most recognized and discussed aspect of masks in the literature" (qtd. in Eldredge 5). The transformative power of masks pronounced by Kerenyi demonstrates the fluidity and

adaptability associated with the notion of a sutured identity since individuals wear different literal and metaphorical masks in different social settings or phases of life in the pursuit of some stability in their personal identity.

While talking about the role of masks and their connection with the construction of a sutured identity, Dennis Kennedy notes, "Masking carries with it a double notion of hiding and transforming identity" (376). Kennedy's viewpoint aligns with the perspectives of Hill, Park, and Kerenyi by underscoring the multifaceted nature of masks. The viewpoints of these critics help us infer the role of literal and metaphorical masks in the construction of sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill in the next chapters. The use of masks by individuals that conceals and reveals various aspects of their personal identities according to these critics leads us to derive some important conclusions regarding the sutured identities of the selected characters of *TULTS* as has been discussed in detail in the next chapters.

Christine Sylvester brings before us a significant use of masks in giving a voice to those on the periphery in a Greek drama. She writes that the Greek masks "were intended to give a louder, more noticeable voice to the characters they portrayed. If we apply this to social actors who are traditionally marginalised from political processes, we can discern that the donning of particular masks might enable them to achieve a louder political 'voice', or political agency" (25). Sylvester draws our attention to the purpose of Greek masks which was to amplify the voices of the characters they represented. This amplification brings to our notice an important characteristic of the theatrical mask, that is, to empower characters in different theatrical settings allowing them to have a more significant impact on the unfolding narrative. In relation to social actors who are marginalised or often excluded from political processes, the viewpoints of Sylvester are pertinent to our study of suturing of identity since, according to her, wearing specific literal or metaphorical masks enables individuals to achieve a strengthened social and political voice or agency. Her remarks steer us towards the empowering characteristics of a sutured identity for individuals in different social and cultural settings.

Smith's contention that masks unshackle individuals from social and religious fetters and provide them with an opportunity to express various emotions to integrate themselves in a particular social setting reverberates with the idea that masks can serve as tools for the transformation and adaptation of identity. In this context, masks serve as a means to temporarily hide or reveal different aspects of one's identity. She articulates her aforementioned views in these words, "Most anthropologists and

psychologists agree that the mask liberates man. Behind it he is free both to express joy, pain, or anger without social or religious restraints and to mimic and mock those who sanction and impose the restraints" (2). She further asserts, "Masking in the theater is the supreme irony. The actor is, after all, no more than a man in a metaphorical mask. He is removed from the audience by the role he plays. Masked, he is removed once more, for the only reminder of his true self, his face, is concealed. The idea that the actor is "removed from the audience by the role he plays" brings to our notice the performative nature of identity. While masked, the actor personifies a character that is not necessarily compatible to his/her off-stage persona. This aligns with the nature of a sutured identity where individuals simulate and perform different facets of their identities in accordance with the requirements and challenges of their socio-cultural contexts. Moreover, in a sutured identity, individuals selectively obscure or reveal different facets of their identity keeping in view the demands of their fluctuating circumstances. In this context, the masks act as a symbol of concealment and transformation providing the actors with a rich opportunity to fully embrace and perform the identity associated with their character.

Smith further claims, "A mask is usually thought of as a shield or disguise protecting the identity of the masker" (12). Smith's contention that a mask is typically seen as a shield or disguise sheds light on the dual nature of masking. It functions as a shield, screening the genuine identity of the actor as well as a powerful instrument for expressing and representing different identities. This dualism indicates the intricate interplay between the screened and the exposed facets of identity that is the central point in discussions related to the process, construction and reconfiguration of a sutured identity.

Smith also stresses upon the social and psychological truth linked with the idea of masking. Quoting Yvan Goll, they write, "We have forgotten entirely that the primary symbol of the theatre is the mask. The mask is rigid, unique, and impressive. It is unchangeable, inescapable; it is Fate" (18). Subsequently, they discuss the significance of a mask in the social and psychological life of an individual by asserting, "Every man wears his mask, wears what the ancients called his guilt" (18). They shed more light on the powerful link existing between a drama and a mask by stating, "In the mask lies a law, and in this is the law of the drama. Non-reality becomes fact... [the stage] becomes "superreal" when it knows about things behind things" (18-19).

While emphasising the importance and connection of a mask with a masker and the stage, Smith contends, "The masker signifies a double existence, for he is at once himself and someone else. In this duality lies the basis for all uses of masks on the modern stage, for in this duality lies the omnipresent consciousness of the theater, of role playing, of temporary transformation" (2). This contention of Smith underscores the profound role of masks in the theatre. It underscores how masks function as a catalyst for the dual existence of the actors on the stage. They represent the essence of theatricality, role-playing and, more importantly, they highlight the transient nature of transformation on and off the stage.

On the holistic role of a mask, Smith's views provide us with a valuable insight related to the construction of a sutured identity and its relationship with the social requirements and challenges faced by individuals. They assert, "A sense of theater, of audience, is implicit, of course, in all masking on or off the stage. Man gains nothing by wearing a mask in isolation, for alone he is free to be himself" (3). This perspective of Smith resonates with the idea of a sutured identity which reflects the conscious or unconscious attempts of individual at sewing together, modifying and performing various facets of their identities in accordance with their social contexts and in the quest of fulfilling the expectations of those around them for gaining their social sanction and validation. In isolation, individuals are not obliged to screen or camouflage their authentic selves.

While the views of the critics discussed in this section primarily highlight the utility of wearing masks at theatre and during social interactions and as an instrument of camouflage and concealment, Efrat Tseelon declares, "In the classical theatrical tradition of [Greece] and Rome the mask was used as identification of character, not as a deception or disguise" (4). She, subsequently, draws our attention to the stigma attached to the donning of a mask in the Middle Ages. Citing Napier, she brings to the foreground the value of masks in the Middle Ages in the following words:

> At the beginning of the Middle Ages Augustine (who is credited with introducing the Christian notion of the person) posed theatre and its personae as antithetical to true identity. From medieval times onwards, the mask acquired evil and sinister connotations. It has come to connote disingenuity, artifice, and pretence in contrast to original identity, which connotes truth and authenticity (qtd. by Tseelon 4).

Tseelon's insights bring to the forefront the historical significance of a mask as a tool for character identification and the ensuing stigma attached to it. This historical shift

from authenticity to pretence in the perception of masked identities reflects the intricate dynamics of identity construction and the role of society in its recognition and validation.

Since the notion of the suturing of identities deals with the idea of blending and blurring the boundaries, indicating the element of blurring the boundaries and suturing in a theatrical identity, Richards contends, "Indeed, theatrical identity is confusing, heterogeneous, not always contained by clear markers of gender, race, class, ethnicity" (16). This complexity and confusion relating a theatrical identity aligns with the notion of the suturing of identity, as it implies the fluidity of a theatrical identity due to various influences and demonstrates that it is not neatly defined by conventional markers.

The intricate connection between the use of theatre as a metaphor and the sutured identities of the characters can be understood through Sam Wiseman's contention that presents performers as devoid of personal autonomy in the context of defining or redefining their personal identity. In this context, he states, "Performative sites, institutions and histories, then, are always battlegrounds upon which differing conceptions of identity are contested. Performers are not simply free to assemble their own identity but must constantly negotiate cultural and social pressures" (3). Performers, thus, are not autonomous agents regarding their identities but they have to deal with socio-cultural expectations and constraints. A performative identity, like a sutured identity, is not a given but it is a product of ongoing conflicts and interactions. Influenced by the contradictory and opposing modes of cultural and political propaganda and entertainment of Efica and Voorstand, the selected characters undergo the process of suturing of identities, consciously or unconsciously. This suturing refers to the way the multiple fragments of their identities are voluntarily or involuntarily stitched together. These fragmented identities produce a sense of pain and leave scars on their identities and overall existences.

Coulmas propounds a completely different viewpoint from Wiseman by arguing, "It is easy to avoid being offensive, but it takes cultural knowledge to blend in and present the person you want to be in different settings" (98). It implies that individuals possess the ability to shape their identities intentionally stitching themselves to different situations and social contexts by consciously choosing which facets of their identity to highlight. In the context of the suturing of identity, this highlights the active role individuals play in constructing their own identities and the adaptability they demonstrate in managing the expectations of diverse environments. He also claims that

performing in front of different audiences with similar effect by acting differently is neither abnormal nor pathological. He calls it "evidence of bicultural competence" (98). His notion of "bicultural competence" aligns with the core concept of a sutured identity bringing to the foreground that individuals deliberately engage in the process of stitching different facets of their identity together to adapt to the expectations and nuances of multifarious social scenarios.

Acting and performance enable the characters to suture their personal identities and adopt new roles that provide them with rich experiences on and off the stage. Theatre represents the world in the microcosm. In the words of Wiseman, "Popular theatre helped forge ideas of nation through means of commonality and differentiation, as cultural traditions take on meaning through a system of differences, where people come to know themselves as a community and as different to "others" outside of the community" (13). Thus, the experiences of multiple identities help the characters grow significantly and discover and develop their skills and hidden potential that enable them to unchain themselves from the claustrophobic limitations of their cultural and societal boundaries and provide them with a magnificent opportunity to redefine and realign their personal identities through the process of suturing of identities.

2.5 Literary Criticism on Peter Carey and *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith*

Since no one has discussed the issue of the suturing of identity in *TULTS* before this research, the review of literature on this novel is restricted to what different writers and critics have written about Carey and the issues related to identity in *TULTS*. For most of the writers, the novel highlights issues related to one's national identity, one's attachment with one's indigenous culture and native land and one's response towards the intrusion of the agents of colonisation.

Carey's treatment of his characters in his selected novel for this research with reference to the study of sutured identities is of considerable significance for any academic discussion on this subject because of his personal experience of migration and settling in a foreign land. The value of the insights provided by Carey regarding the notion of identity and the concept of the suturing of identity because of his experiences of straddling between two different cultures and his cross-cultural interactions can be fathomed befittingly through the words of N.D.R. Chandra who writes, "Immigrant writers are like journeymen who are caught between two or more cultures. The characters of cross-cultural writings are compared to life in the New World (in which

they are in) with the ways and values in the native world in which they are more accustomed to" (293). Chandra's metaphor of "journeymen" for immigrant writers represents their transitional status because of their movement between different cultural landscapes. This transitional status grants the experiences of fragmentation and the consequent suturing of identity to them that gives a special significance to their viewpoints on identity-related issues in general and the suturing of identity in particular. Chandra's mention of characters in cross-cultural writings being compared to life in the "New World" with the values of the "native world" draws our attention to the ongoing negotiations and tensions experienced by immigrant writers and their characters. Citing Paul Giles, Keyvan Allahyari writes, "Carey's move to the United States has been an enriching step forward, enabling him to view his Australian background through a much more transnational perspective" (26). Thus, Allayari also underscores the significance of Carey's personal experience of being a "journeyman" which, according to Allayari has been "an enriching step forward" for him regarding his perspective. However, it is worth mentioning here that the information related to Carey's life has not been the focus of this study and has no impact on the analysis of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill in the subsequent chapters. The review of literature related to Carey's life in this section only serves as the rationale for the selection of Carey for this study. The significance of Carey for this study on suturing may well be perceived by virtue of the arguments of Chrsochous who notes:

> As a result of dislocation, the "true" identity of the subject is questioned. The exile, torn between places/spaces, attempts to mediate between past relations to region and a newly acquired transnational subjectivity. Subsequently, this causes the exile's cultural identity to appear ever more unstable (75).

These lines befittingly relate to Carey's experience of dislocation from Australia to America and offer valuable insights into the notion of suturing of identity within his works because of his personal experiences of exile and being "torn between places/spaces". *TULTS* reflects the issues relating cultural identity that emerge from such dislocation and mediation between past and present spaces. Carey explores the flux in cultural identity by virtue of his own experiences as an exile. Through his literary endeavours, Carey's personal and first-hand experiences of migration, dislocation and exile confer depth and authenticity upon his insights on the discussion related to the suturing of identity since his writing is imbued with the enriching experiences of living between two disparate cultures. Chrysochous's contention in this regard further

enlightens us what Carey must have gone through personally because of his displacement. She writes, "The experience of exile is especially disorienting in an unfamiliar environment in which the subject must reclaim a new identity for her/himself" (73).

Robert L. Ross, O'Reilly and Andreas Gaile locate elements of postcolonialism and national identity in their critical analysis of Carey's writings. Ross believes, "The quest for national identity in a postcolonial nation has steadily played a pivotal role in Peter Carey's highly imaginative fiction" (121) whereas O'Reilly is of the opinion that, "Peter Carey is a consummate narrator of Australia's post-colonial trajectory and its movement into globalization" (32). As regards the postcolonial nature of Carey's writings and the theme of national identity in them, Gaile also finds elements of "colonialism in its various stages, and national identity" in the works of Carey. Thus, the issues of postcolonialism, national identity and globalisation come to our notice when we go through the literary criticism available on Carey.

O'Reilly and Ross find the elements of postcolonialism in the selected novel of Carey for this study. According to O'Reilly, "Peter Carey's *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith (*1995) is one of the most forthright discussions of the post-colonial reality of Australia" (27). The postcolonial nature of this novel of Carey for this study can also be affirmed by this statement of Ross, "*The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith* (1994) invents a contemporary postcolonial nation called Efica to represent Australia and to signify its dubious role as an unofficial colony of the United States (called Voorstand in the novel)" (121). This comment of Ross reveals that through portraying Voorstand as an agent of dubiousness and political maneuvering, Carey wants to plead the case of the people of Efica. Since Efica in this novel characterises Australia, which is the native land of Carey, we can find some important insights from him on the issues related to the notion of identity and how a sutured identity comes into being because of his personal experience of living in two different countries, that is, Australia and America. He represents these two countries through two imaginary countries, Efica and Voorstand, respectively whose conflicting cultural and political discourses find suturing in Tristan, Felicity and Bill through his use of the metaphors of theatre and masks in the novel.

Apart from the central theme of conflicting cultural and political discourses of Efica and Voorstand in *TULTS*, we can read the novel as an indirect critique of American capitalism and imperialism as Voorstand represents America in the novel. As regards the role of capitalism and American imperialism, Cornelia Schulze in her essay,

"Trapped in a Narrative Labyrinth" notes, "The first instrument used by late capitalism to subordinate human beings is the unstoppable and worldwide expansion of American imperialism and culture" (Gaile 123). Thus, *TULTS* seems to be a critique of capitalism and imperialism through its implied criticism of economic and political domination of Efica by Voorstand. However, this thematic exploration is not the central focus of this study.

Nicholas Jose and Damien Broderick and Van Ikin remark that Carey's novels unambiguously indicate that he is cognisant of the colonial marginalisation of the inhabitants of Australia due to which his concern for the identity of his people and his country can be discerned from his selected novel for this research that reveals that notwithstanding his stay in America, he stands true to his indigenous identity and the national concerns of his people. Jose states "Carey continues to write about, to reimagine and to reinvent his home country from the critical distance of New York" (1043) whereas Broderick and Ikin find several postcolonial issues in *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith* "the center/periphery division, Efica's negative self-definition based on its differences from the dominant Voorstand culture, the complete eradication of an indigenous people and culture, and the feeling in Efica of being culturally abandoned by rapacious colonizing figures" (138).

In his essay, "Simulation, Resistance and Transformation", Bill Ashcroft writes, "*The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith* is Peter Carey's liveliest and most unrelenting reflection on the postcolonial dilemma of Australian society. No other contemporary novel addresses so many postcolonial issues in Australian culture" (199). Ashcroft further asserts, "*Tristan Smith* is driven by a consuming cultural thesis: that all culture, identity, and the power relationships they invoke are a product of simulation. In this respect Tristan's story inhabits one of the most fraught and contested spaces in postcolonial studies" (199).

Ryan-Fazilleau writes in his article, "In *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith*, within the context of a study of the relations between culture and imperialism, the pain of unbelonging is once more central to his concerns, this time as it affects national cultural production". He goes on to comment, "In this novel, the pain of unbelonging is materialized through the creation of a protagonist whose multiple physical handicaps condemn him to social exclusion" (121). He, subsequently, writes:

> ...Carey wishes to educate his readers in Australian colonial and neocolonial history but that he believes the only way to get them to read to the end is by

entertaining them. *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith* is a work of historical popularization that seeks to reach a wider reading public than the one that would read a history book" (124-25).

Ryan-Fazilleau further writes about Carey in his article, "He is also following in the footsteps of postcolonial writers who have chosen literature as their medium because they consider they have been denied access to the ranks of those who write History" (qtd. in Collingwood-Whittick125). Thus, according to Ryan-Fazilleau, Carey skillfully utilises the power of storytelling to enlighten his readers about the colonial and neocolonial history of Australia. He believes that Carey employs this technique to reach a broader audience that brings to the foreground Careys' belief that literature can serve as a more appropriate means of disseminating historical knowledge that otherwise may have remained shrouded in academic circles. Ryan-Fazilleau also finds a postcolonial proclivity in Carey in his attempt to use literature as a platform to address historical narratives that have often marginalised their voices, making a significant contribution to the available discussions on identity and the discourse pertaining to belonging and historical understanding.

Keeping in view the above-mentioned literary criticism related to Carey's writings, it can be said that a great deal of literary criticism available on him and his writings is only confined to the elements of postcolonialism in his writings and his concerns with national identity. However, the study of *TULTS* offers a valuable opportunity to go beyond that and analyse the sutured identities of its selected characters, that is, Tristan, Felicity and Bill. Therefore, this study ventures to highlight and dissect Carey's valuable contribution in this regard that brings a fresh and significant aspect of Carey as a novelist and brings to the forefront his valuable insights related to the notion of identity and the notion of the suturing of identity.

2.6 Conclusion of the Chapter

The discussion in this chapter can appropriately be concluded by the insightful remarks of Bertens that highlight the flux found in the concept of identity. He, befittingly, claims, "… since the social and personal configuration in which we find ourselves at a given point will inevitably change, identity is not something fixed and stable, it is a process that will never lead to completion. Identity not only is subject to constant change, it can also never be coherent" (162). Thus, it seems that human identity is

surrounded by a constant air of uncertainty and unpredictability. The idea that identity is not a stable entity rather it is an ongoing process characterised by constant change and perpetual incompleteness underscores the volatile nature of human identity. It challenges any notion of identity as a coherent and unchanging construct.

The collage of perspectives offered by a range of critics, theorists, and authors in this chapter brings to the foreground the multifaceted approaches and viewpoints regarding the concept of identity, the intricate dynamics between the ancestral roots and the migratory routes of individuals and the complex process of forging a sutured identity. These multiple literary, sociological and psychological perspectives furnish valuable insights that inform our exploration into the construction of sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill in Carey's *TULTS*. It is worth reiterating here that the scarcity of existing literature on the process, construction and issues related to suturing of identity only emphasises the significance of this undertaking by the researcher.

The discussion in this chapter underscores the need to delve deeply into the notion of the suturing of identity, its process, its impacts on the social, cultural and psychological lives of individuals and its overall significance in the body of discourse available on the issue of identity. Here lies the significance of this undertaking as it explores and investigates the process, construction and effects of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill in *TULTS* which will have a substantial significance for the academia, critics and researchers. The dispersed and assorted viewpoints of different authors, theorists, critics, sociologists, psychologists and researchers presented in this chapter on the performative nature of masks, their role in the construction of a sutured identity, Carey's use of literal, theatrical and metaphorical masks as agents of transformation, relationship between masks, social selves and sutured identities and suturing as a coping mechanism of survival and meeting the social expectations will inform our understanding of the analysis of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill in the upcoming chapters highlighting the significance of this focused study on the subject and the critical importance of the new knowledge it offers.

CHAPTER THREE

Theatre and the Suturing of Identities

3.1 Introduction

Before analysing the connection between theatre and a sutured identity let us recapture what suturing is, how it happens, what it achieves, what its impacts on a human identity are and how agency and control play their roles in its constitution. To reinforce the concept of the suturing of identities, it is pertinent to mention that suturing, in a metaphorical sense, refers to the act of joining together disparate elements to create a cohesive whole. This process involves both connection and separation, as well as continuity and rupture. It also involves healing and wounding, as the act of suturing can mend what has been torn apart. The subjects, sometimes, have agencies in this process, as they must decide what to join and how to do so. However, at some other times, they seem unaware of the process of stitching and sewing of different elements of their identities because of the social influences and personal interactions with people of different backgrounds. It indicates contradictions and inconsistencies within the process of suturing of identities.

The significance of the use of the metaphor and imagery of theatre by Carey can be perceived through the words of Coulmas who argues, "Everybody always acts; which means that personal identity, rather than being given, is created in the interaction of self with others" (97). Carey's use of the theatre metaphor is closely linked with the study of the process of the suturing of identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill. The exploration of Carey's ingenious use of the theatre metaphor underscores the performative, complex and fluctuating nature of human identity during the interactions of human beings with their *others* on the macrocosmic theatre of the world. During their performances on and off the stage, Tristan, Felicity and Bill have been noticed to twine and untwine disparate threads of their performances with their personal identities.

The fluctuating nature of the identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill because of their on and off-stage experiences can be befittingly understood through the contention of Paola Manfredi and Elena Massardi who claim in one of their essays:

> ... the Self is anything but given; it's not a well-rounded figure and perhaps, its image resembles more the one produced by a kaleidoscope. The Self is at the junction of intrapsychic, interpersonal and extra-subjective dimensions, it's the changeable result of internal forces, both conscious and unconscious, of interpersonal relationships, that are expressed and constituted in environments of different and interacting level and sizes (2).

3.2 The Theatrical Setting of the Novel and the Sutured Identities

The setting of the novel is a theatrical and fictional world in which various cultures have collided and merged, reflecting the impact of colonialism and cultural imperialism and creating an opportunity for the constitution of sutured identities of the selected characters that reflect their struggle for recalibration, redefinition and reconstruction of their identities through their performances on and off the stage. When we analyse how the process of the suturing of identities in the characters of *TULTS* takes place, we come to know that Tristan's and Bill's travels to Voorstand and Felicity's settlement in Efica expose them to new cultures and different traditions that disintegrate and complicate their identities.

They experience fissures in their identities — though on different levels — as they are obliged to traverse through the cultural differences and expectations of their cultural audience while also grappling with their own sense of self and belonging. In this regard, the setting of the novel offers a rich and complex backdrop regarding the study of the sutured identities of the selected characters of the novel. It is a world in which the identities of the characters keep on fluctuating, breaking and suturing owing to the influences of a variety of cultural, social, and historical forces. The tension between these forces outlines the disintegrated identities of the selected characters that are sutured consciously or unconsciously in their bid to achieve their social, cultural, political and economic ends.

3.3 The Feu Follet Collective and the Metaphor of the Theatre

The Feu Follet is an Efican theatre that demonstrates the suturing between the Efican and Voorstandish means of entertainment. It is depicted not merely as a passive reflection of societal issues but as a catalyst for change and transformation. Through its performances, the theatre attempts to bridge and suture the gap between Efican and Voorstandish means of entertainment exemplifying the suturing of cultural elements.

Its sutured identity is manifested in the characters' personal and collective experiences. It also celebrates and disseminates the cultural heritage of the Eficans while addressing its historical conflicts with Voorstand and the resultant scars that emerge because of the suturing between the two opposite countries represented by their theatre and circus respectively.

The study and analysis of the characters of Tristan, Felicity and Bill reveals that the ostensible purpose of the theatre in the novel is different from Carey's intentional use of it as a thematic literary device. The study and interpretation of this thematic literary device plays an instrumental role in our understanding of the constitution and reconstitution of the identities of these characters. The theatre of the Feu Follet provides the characters with a rich experience of performing not only in front of the spectators for their entertainment but also engaging with a larger social, cultural and political sphere during their off-stage interactions with them using their theatrical experiences of performing different roles and wearing different masks that help them stitch different elements of their theatrical and personal identities together to cope with the varied expectations of their socio-cultural, communal, political and ideological audience.

The Feu Follet theatre is a vital instrument of political resistance, agitation and identity formation in the novel. It occupies a central position in this exploration of the sutured identities of the chosen characters owing to its potent and evocative imagery and its function as a medium of expression, entertainment and persuasion. It serves as a powerful tool for presenting the Efican discourse to counter the hegemonic narrative of Voorstand. In the context of the role of theatre regarding the opposing narratives, quoting Helen Gilbert, Jacqueline Lo writes, "In the past decades or so, theatre has been increasingly recognised as a critical resource for the study of wildly competing discourses about the nation, particularly in countries with a history of strong state intervention into cultural practice" (vii). Gilbert further argues that theatre has the clout to "register, reiterate and/or contest modes and models of national belonging" (qtd. in Lo vii), as it is "always a site of circulating representational forms" (qtd. in Lo vii). Tristan tells us how his mother Felicity employs theatre not only to amuse the audience but also to articulate the Efican national discourse through the performances of the actors, who "devised a sort of agitprop, part circus, part soapbox, in which they attacked our country's craven relationship with yours" (Carey 9). These lines represent Felicity's personal choice for suturing the elements of theatre and circus. As the theatre represents partial elements of Efican values and Voorstandish influences, Felicity's sutured self

also demonstrates a combination of her Efican and Voorstandish identities. The use of the word "devised" by Carey in the above quotation draws our attention to the element of willful articulation in Felicity's sutured identity that reflects her personal choice to embrace an Efican identity despite belonging to Voorstand. These lines also emphasise the significance of "performance" or "acting" different elements of identities to amuse a different audience. It characterises the utility of a sutured identity in different contexts for a different audience.

Felicity exploits theatre as a useful platform for entertaining the audience as well as engaging them in disseminating critically significant political and social discourse. She creates an inimitable fusion of entertainment and political commentary through the performances of the actors. As far as the significance of the theatre in relation to public discourse is concerned, Holdsworth proclaims, "The theatre, taking in a communal public arena, can be one of the ways that members of a nation contribute to public discourse, a national conversation, which opens up the possibility for reflection and debate" (2). Hence, the dual role of theatre entertains the audience and opens a window into the intricate nature of identity in a world characterised by the constantly shifting national boundaries and cultural influences. The role of theatre as a significant space for the exploration and expression of identities further stresses the transformative power of art and performance in the construction of a sutured self. The suturing between the role of the theatre as a platform for entertainment and a tool for socio-political critique brings to the foreground the suturing in the identity of Felicity who embraces an Efican identity despite the influence of her Voorstandish background that is reflected through her blending of Voorstandish ways of entertainment with those of the Eficans. Her character reflects a suturing between her Voorstandish heritage and influences and her commitments to her Efican values and socio-political narrative.

Carey's ingenious use of the metaphor of theatre and the theatrical experiences of the characters can be discovered in the fact that in the process of suturing, Tristan, Felicity and Bill wear different masks and play different socio-cultural and political roles on the stage of the world like actors on the stage of a theatre. They also attune their behaviours and switch between different roles like stage actors to calibrate themselves with the expectations of their socio-cultural and political audience to meet the challenges of their diverse social settings. Like stage actors, they stitch and construct new identities for themselves when they are required to play different roles in their lives because of their existential crises, personal ambitions or the expectations of the people around them.

The perpetual theatricality of these characters while they traverse through the process of the suturing of their identities demonstrates the performative and evolving nature of their sutured identities that transcend the barriers of their insulated and claustrophobic cultural identities.

3.4 Voorstandish Sirkus and the Feu Follet Collective

The Voorstandish Sirkus and the Feu Follet Collective represent two different forms of entertainment of two ideologically different nations. Carey presents them to denote two different schools of thought, narratives and socio-political agendas. While Voorstandish Sirkus showcases technological advancement with its use of lasers and videos and its high-risk performances of acrobats and jugglers, the Feu Follet is a humble politically motivated theatre designed to entertain and edify the audience through the works of great literary figures such as Shakespeare, Brecht, Moliere, Ibsen etc. While the Voorstandish Sirkus focuses on the razzle and dazzle and thrill, the Feu Follet Collective concentrates on inspiring the audience by virtue of its attempt at confronting them with uncomfortable truths related to the threats surrounding their political ideology, cultural legacy and national identity. The Sirkus entices the Eficans with displays of power, glamour, and wealth, becoming a source of temptation for them. In contrast, the Feu Follet represents an attempt to preserve and express Efican history, culture, and identity thereby resisting the dominance of Voorstand.

The Feu Follet that is a French name represents the cultural identity of the French-speaking population in Efica whereas Voorstandish Sirkus takes its origin from a Dutch/Afrikaaner name. Carey's choice of these names is significant to our discussion on the sutured identities of Trisan, Felicity and Bill. On one hand, the choice of names from Carey alludes to the idea that there is a strong connection between a personal identity and the cultural context of individuals. On the other hand, the ability of the characters to adapt themselves in accordance with the diverse elements of both the Feu Follet Collective and the Voorstandish Sirkus reflects their ability to suture the different elements of their identities for constructing a fresh, rich and dynamic identity for themselves. The investigation of Carey's use of the names from two different languages demonstrates that personal identities are not restricted to one specific culture or language challenging the notion of cultural or lingual specificity. It implies that the notion of suturing involves a movement and switching between individual behaviours, languages and socio-cultural norms and patterns.

Because of the cultural invasion of Efica by Voorstand, Felicity, who is a Voorstander by birth, disassociates herself from her Voorstandish roots so much so that she changes her name and becomes a symbol for resistance against its policies to control the Eficans. "Felicity Smith was very critical of her own people. It was because of this, she changed her name from Smutts to Smith: she did not want to be a Voorstander" (Carey 6). While addressing the Voorstandish audience through his narration in the novel, Tristan says, "She did not like the way your country used us" (Carey 6). Thus, we can discern that Felicity deliberately strives to stitch a new identity for herself blending contrasting aspects of the two entertainment forms to resist the cultural invasion of the Eficans by the Voorstanders.

The Feu Follet represents the strategic use of the theatre by Felicity to embody and promote Efican national identity. Through adept employment of dramatic techniques like irony, symbolism, and political satire, Felicity endeavours to vocalise the concerns of the voiceless Efican populace, especially in response to the cultural invasion by Voorstanders. Felicity knows what she wants and does it with a strong intent. Tristan tells us, "There was no Efican playwright, none of any talent who shared our passions or our politics, so the company devised its own material" (Carey 55). The Feu Follet Collective serves as a potent tool for challenging the status quo and unveiling the hidden political agenda of Voorstand.

By crafting original material and ingeniously blending elements of the Voorstandish Sirkus, the theatre effectively disseminates its powerful message to a broader audience. It becomes a platform for dissent and resistance, a means of voicing Efican cultural values while condemning the oppressive influence of Voorstand. Tristan says in this regard, "There was juggling and feats of strength and acrobatics, but everywhere with both a story and a purpose. We mocked our snivelling 'alliance' with Voorstand, publicly libelled the silk-shirted facheurs[3] who ran the Red Party" (Carey 55). Felicity challenges the status quo and tries to expose the political agenda of the Voorstanders. Tristan sheds ample light on the role of the Feu Follet Collective in the lives of the Eficans by saying, "… it was periphery shouting at the centre" (Carey 32).

Theatre becomes a lens through which the complexities of identity, cultural dynamics, and personal struggles are examined. The characters' roles on and off the stage become symbolic representations of their real and performed selves, demonstrating the blurred

[3] Thieves

boundaries between reality and imagination. The novel demonstrates how theatre, imagination and performance shape the choices and decisions of the characters, and how they play a critical role in constructing, deconstructing and suturing their identities consciously or unconsciously. Theatre, in the novel, plays a crucial role in relation to the study of the sutured identities of the selected characters as it enables them to negotiate their sense of self and belonging vis à vis different social, cultural and political contexts. It also serves as a powerful medium for the expression, communication and performance of the identities of the characters and how these identities undergo the process of suturing.

The Feu Follet Collective, the Efican theatre, has been presented in the novel by Carey as a tool for demonstrating the gulf between the two opposing political and social narratives and how the Voorstandish narrative controls and manipulates the social and political affairs of the Eficans. Tristan says about the contribution of the Feu Follet to the lives of the Eficans, "What this poor theatre saw itself doing was inventing the culture of its people" (Carey 50). Therefore, we can find the mechanism of control and propaganda sutured with the means of entertainment of both Efica and Voorstand in the Feu Follet. Therefore, we discern that despite socio-political differences between the two fictional countries, the Efican theatre unwittingly succumbs to the allure of Voorstandish entertainment. It represents the Efican cultural values but, at the same time, it merges the elements of Voorstand Sirkus for entertaining its audience. This suturing between the means of entertainment becomes a critical reason for the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill.

The concept of broken and sutured identities is effectively explored through the lens of the theatre as its performers vie with the conflicting elements of both Efican and Voorstandish cultures. Therefore, it has been observed that since the theatre of Feu Follet represents a suturing between the elements of entertainment of both the Eficans and the Voorstanders, its performers also experience and manifest the conflicting elements of both cultures and discourses through their sutured identities. Tristan introduces to us the Feu Follet Collective in a proud manner by claiming, "we were an avante garde, not only artistically, but also morally" (Carey 66). The theatre's claim of being avant-garde not only artistically but also morally underscores its determination to maintain its unique identity amidst the influence of Voorstand Sirkus. It indicates that despite accepting the influence of Voorstand Sirkus, the Efican theatre wants to maintain its individual status. This distinction serves as a means to protect the Efican

heritage and individuality making it evident that the suturing between the two forms of entertainment is driven by economic considerations rather than ideological purposes. An element of ambivalence and paradox can be found in the act of defiance and confrontation by the Feu Follet because the secret of its popularity primarily lies in the suturing between the elements of Efican culture represented through its theatre and the elements of Voorstandish cultural traditions represented through its circus. This suturing directly or indirectly influences the process of suturing of Tristan, Felicity and Bill.

The influence of Voorstandish Sirkus that is a popular place for entertainment in Efica is also noticeable in the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill. It suggests that the identity of each character is marked by a fusion of Efican and Voorstandish influences resulting in a complex amalgamation of values, beliefs, and aspirations. It reflects the power, economic dominance and assumptions of superiority of Voorstand and its intervention in the daily life affairs of the Eficans. Tristan describes the influence of Voorstand Sirkus in the lives of the Eficans by saying:

> It was through your charm and your expertise that you conquered us, with your army, yes, and with the VIA[4], but you kept us conquered with jokes and dancers, death and beauty, holographs, lasers, Vids, with perfectly engineered and orchestrated suspense (Carey 294).

While quoting Blandford, Wiseman writes, "Theatre provides the scope for meaningful proportions of the population to be involved with and affected by its role in the construction of national identity" (13). The Feu Follet provides the selected characters with various identities but at the same time it confuses them when these multiple identities are consciously or unconsciously sutured. It is especially pertinent regarding the sutured identities of Bill and Tristan who experience evident crises of identities after embracing their sutured identities. They keep shifting their loyalties as they encounter diverse challenges thrown at them by their circumstances. On the other hand, Felicity does not manifest considerable symptoms of wavering or vacillation despite carrying a sutured identity that is a combination of her Efican and Voorstandish identities.

As discussed earlier, the Feu Follet theatre demonstrates a suturing between the Feu Follet Collective and Voorstandish Sirkus that represents the influence of the literary works as well as the skills of acrobats and jugglers on Felicity who is the body and soul

[4] Voorstand Intelligence Agency

of the Feu Follet Collective. In this context, Tristan says, “Many of the Feu Follet actors had some sort of connection with the indigenous circus and my mother used to like to shape her plays so that they used or developed, wherever possible, these disappearing skills” (Carey 25). Felicity stitches the features of a Shakespearean theatre and the dramatic and theatrical skills of Brecht, Moliere, Ibsen etc. with the elements of Voorstandish Sirkus that is very popular in Efica to entertain as well as enlighten the audience. The strategic selection of the playwrights for the performances at the Feu Follet also indicates a nuanced suturing between art and agenda by Felicity. She sutures the socio-political narrative of the Eficans with the performances of the actors in order to achieve her socio-political ambitions. This process creates a fusion of the cultural identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill as the socio-political agenda of the Feu Follet becomes intertwined with the artistic expression of the selected plays.

As the plays of Bertolt Brecht are well-known for their commentaries on social and political issues, the themes of these plays inspire the audience regarding the social and political conditions of Efica. Brecht’s emphasis on questioning social norms and the status quo helps broadcast the socio-political agenda of the Feu Follet Collective and Felicity. The references of the plays of Shakespeare and Brecht have also been used to share Felicity’s attempts for critical, social and political enlightenment of the audience and giving a rich experience of exploring assorted and sutured identities to the actors.

Whereas the plays of Shakespeare provide the audience with a rich experience of dialogues, imagery, dramatic techniques such as the use of asides and soliloquies that develop the ability of psychoanalysis in the characters and the audience, the plays of Brecht offer them a rich experience of critical thinking on social and political issues such as ideology, resistance, effects of the socio-political narratives on human agency and morality. The enactments of the plays of these writers not only enlighten the audience but also serve as catalyst for the journey of suturing and identity transformation of the actors. Steve Blandford contends in this regard, “... the act of live performance itself draws attention to the idea that identities are performed and that different versions of identity can compete for our attention or allegiance” (3). As they take on various roles and embody different characters, the actors consciously or unconsciously engage in a process of exploration of multiple identities. This reflects the concept of suturing identities in which the actors experience a fusion of their own identity with that of the characters they portray on the stage. Their performances also

bring to the foreground the clout of the theatre, especially regarding bringing notable changes in the identities of the performers and the audience creating an immersive experience for both the actors and the audience. The strong impact of these powerful plays makes the characters and audience experience the "willing suspension of disbelief" propounded by S. T. Coleridge (qtd. in Burwick 194) that blurs the boundaries between the fictional and real world and sutures them together.

Bill, who comes from the background of circus, also becomes an important influence on Felicity vis-à-vis the suturing between the elements of a theatre and a circus in the performances presented at the Feu Follet Collective. In this regard, Tristan says, "Seeking to invent an Efican national style in drama, she [Felicity] began then to incorporate circus skills into her shows" (Carey 41). Subsequently, Tristan narrates to us:

> Our Shakespeare had tumbling, slack ropes, posturing, trapeze and general acrobatics, and in the case of the Scottish play she had designed a kind of jungle gym which could suggest a room in the palace, say, but also a scaffolding on which some fight scenes could be choreographed (Carey 25).

Felicity's "invention" of an Efican national style in drama and her efforts to incorporate circus skills in her enactments of Shakespearean and other plays represent a conscious and an inimitable suturing between two different schools and traditions of performance. The element of adaptability which is the core of a sutured identity can be found in Felicity's use of slack ropes, trapeze and general acrobatics. An overt instance of suturing can be found in the multi-purposed jungle gym that serves as a room of a palace as well as a fighting arena according to the need of the script. An apparent attempt at suturing the cultural elements from Felicity can be observed in her attempt to suture the elements of Efican and Voorstandish cultural traditions. Thus, we can find an element of improvisation and suturing in the Feu Follet Collective that appears to be a blend of Efican values and political agendas as well as Voorstandish means of entertainment. The performances of Tristan, Felicity and Bill at the Feu Follet provide them with rich experiences of possessing, handling and managing multiple identities simultaneously and allow them to undergo the conscious or unconscious process of fragmentation, stitching and suturing of their identities. However, sometimes, it seems that the fusion of multiple identities leads these characters to identity conundrums.

As discussed earlier, the Feu Follet theatre in the novel has been used as a tool for propaganda to shape the public opinion of the Eficans as regards the constant and increasing intervention of the Voorstanders in their every day and political affairs. Such a use of theatre has been befittingly explained by Wiseman who contends:

> Theatre is intrinsically connected to the nation. Not only does it enhance "national' life by providing a space for shared civil discourse, entertainment, creativity", but it is also "deeply implicated in constructing the nation through the imaginative realm (13).

Thus, the Feu Follet has a dual role in the novel as regards the study of the sutured identities of the selected characters of *TULTS*; it offers them a public platform for a variety of forms of cultural expressions and social interactions, and it also shapes and influences their identities which discloses the performative and complex nature of a sutured identity that is contingent upon the relationship between the cultural identity and the external influences of individuals.

It is affirmed that the Feu Follet serves as a medium of exploration, evolution and transformation of identities by giving the selected characters of *TUTLS* the enriching experiences of the suturing of identities especially as regards Tristan. It provides solace, optimism and escapism to the deformed Tristan from the feelings of alienation, detachment and marginalisation. In this regard, Wiseman rightly writes, "Performativity... emerges as both a potentially emancipating activity for marginalized groups, and a powerful source of ideology and propaganda for authorities" (1). Through the Feu Follet theatre, Carey brings to the foreground the idea that social realities and identities are constructed, contested and sutured by means of repetitive acts of performance. Performativity, while being an emancipating tool for the marginalised groups, can also function as a tool of manipulation for authorities. The examination of Carey's narrative brings to the forefront the twofold nature of performativity. It can function for the marginalised people as a tool for empowerment providing them with a profound opportunity to suture their identities with those of the mainstream people. On the contrary, it can also be employed by authorities to assert their hegemony through reinforcing their political agenda. Thus, the performances reflect a unique suturing between acts of resistance as well as control.

The Feu Follet provides Felicity, Tristan, and Bill with various opportunities to assume different identities by performing diverse roles. It becomes a significant cause of their conscious or unconscious attempts at constructing sutured identities for themselves. For

example, Felicity can transform into Ophelia, Hedda Gabler, Nora, Kroon Princess, Lady Macbeth, or a Witch, depending on the requirements of the drama and her own physical conditions. These performances endow her with multiple identities that are sutured as the distinctive traits of these characters are deliberately or inadvertently interwoven in her personality indicating that suturing is not merely an act of mimicry; it involves a conscious or unconscious choice of the individual regarding which elements to adopt and which ones to let go.

After giving birth to Tristan, Felicity becomes a poor fit to play the attractive Lady Macbeth. Instead of playing the role of Lady Macbeth, she chooses to play the First Witch holding the ugly and deformed body of her son, Tristan, in her hands, to intensify the effect of horror and terror on the stage. Her decision to stitch herself with the First Witch is influenced by the change in her physical condition and circumstances as well as her personal preference. It epitomises the nature of a sutured identity which is dependent on the external factors as well as the personal agency of an individual. The horrifying appearance of her son and the change in her physical appearance symbolise the tormenting personal struggles of Felicity whereas her ability to suture herself with the changing circumstances signifies the resilience of her sutured identity in coping with and alleviating the pain of her personal handicaps. The sutured identity of Felicity, thus, brings to the foreground a broader reality that our identities are neither stable nor static, but they are rather sewn together from a patchwork of personal experiences, fluctuating circumstances and choices and decisions of human beings.

The Feu Follet Collective seems both an expression of identity and a challenge for the Eficans to resist the cultural and political assault from Voorstand. Nadine Holdsworth contends in this context:

> Theatre has the potential not just to reflect what is happening in a nation at any given time but, via its discursive, imaginative and communal realm, to contribute to the creation of the nation through the cultural discourses it ignites, the representations it offers and the stories it chooses to tell (8).

The Feu Follet functions not only as an agent of cultural norms and values of the Eficans, but it also actively participates in structuring and suturing their collective imagination and national discourse by providing them with a dynamic platform to critique and satirise the issues prevalent in their society and its opposing culture and society.

To conclude the discussion in this section, it is inferred that the exploration of the setting of the theatre provides us with a controlling metaphor in the novel for the ways

in which identities of the characters are constructed, performed and sutured not only on the stage but also in the outside world. The Feu Follet theatre sutures Tristan with the prospect of transcending his limitations and entering the world of creativity and imagination at least for some time. It sutures Felicity with an opportunity to publicise her views and socio-political agenda whereas it sutures Bill with an opportunity to qualify for getting a contract in Voorstand with better economic prospects. Thus, the Feu Follet Collective functions as a catalyst for the process of the suturing of identities of the selected characters. The process of suturing between the real and imagined lives of the characters reflects the process of suturing between their cultural and theatrical identities. It enables them to overcome the asphyxia caused by the social constraints and expectations and experiment with new roles in their lives.

By engaging themselves in theatrical roles and performances, Tristan, Felicity and Bill can temporarily step out of their everyday lives and immerse themselves in alternative identities. This process of suturing enables them to break free from social constraints and find liberation in the realm of creativity and artistic expression. Thus, the investigation of Carey's metaphor of the theatre brings to the forefront theatre as a performative space where it becomes an outlet for their real selves that otherwise have to be hidden due to social constraints. The process of suturing assists them in coping with the challenges pertaining to their personal and social lives and finding some meaning in their existence. While cultural identities limit their choices, theatrical performances allow them to sample different flavours of life and discover new possibilities for themselves. The process of suturing between these two provides them with a balanced approach towards their lives. However, the real challenge associated with a sutured identity is to strike a perfect balance between the cultural and newly acquired identities.

3.5 The Theatre and Tristan's Sutured Identity

Tristan's extraordinary life on and off the stage reveals his sutured identity, which is fraught with inconsistencies, contradictions, ambiguities, and uncertainties. His sutured identity sometimes empowers and liberates him from the tormenting weight of his physical and facial deformities, but other times, he suffers from a severe sense of psychological predicament and an acute sense of guilt and infidelity. He questions his origins, his purpose, and his destiny, despite his corporeal limitations. He also confronts different versions of history, culture and politics in Efica and Voorstand. He strives to

find his place and his voice in a world that is constantly changing and often hostile to him. Theatre enables him to express himself, pursue his dream of becoming an actor, create some meaning out of his chaotic life due to his corporeal anomaly, uncertain parentage and the subsequent loss of his mother, and challenge the status quo by stitching a more empowered and dynamic identity for himself consciously or unconsciously. In the words of Salter discussed in the previous chapter, the theatre provides Tristan a rich opportunity of "knitting together the inside and the outside together and the resultant scar" (734). It allows him to stitch a sutured identity for himself by consciously or unconsciously blending disparate elements of his theatrical identities and his personal identity to handle the challenges of his painfully distressing existence.

As far as the study of Tristan's character in relation to Carey's use of the metaphor of theatre and theatrical imagery is concerned, we discern that the Efican theatre where he performs various roles for different audiences serves as a metaphor for an arena for the representation of his identity crisis as he struggles to explore and suture his identity amid the multiple masks he wears. His sutured identity brings to the foreground the element of impermanence in his Efican as well as Voorstandish masks which can be understood through Hill's contention of masking as a "transitional state" (91) discussed in the previous chapter. His sutured identity reflects his theatrical profession as well as his postcolonial condition. Tristan's identity is a patchwork of cultures stitched by the setting of the novel. He shifts and adapts as an Efican, downtrodden outcast, and mirror of the ruling powers that have scarred his world. The theatre is his stage, where he dons and sheds masks for his audience. His fractured identity reflects his theatrical career, as he tries to suture his personal identity with his roles.

For Tristan, the transformative process of the suturing of identity stems from his exposure to the world of theatre and the circus in both Efica and Voorstand. The foundation for his acting career is laid in the Feu Follet where he witnesses and participates in several theatrical performances including those of his mother and other actors. In the second half of the novel, the Voorstandish Sirkus also plays a crucial role in shaping his identity transforming him from a deformed outcast into a celebrated performer adored by fans who venerate him as a deity upon his arrival in Voorstand in the latter part of the novel. It resonates with the contention of Mafredi and Massardi discussed earlier that "the Self is anything but given" (2). However, this new-found

success and fame situate him into “intrapsychic, interpersonal and extra-subjective dimensions” (Manfredi and Massardi 2) that also bring to the forefront the tensions between his Efican and Voorstandish identities posing a significant challenge of striking a delicate balance between his loyalty to his motherland and his personal aspirations of becoming a renowned actor.

Tristan’s identity undergoes visible fissures as he strives to manage the conflicting elements of his cultural and theatrical experiences from both Efica and Voorstand. This process of sutured identity — a fusion of these diverse influences — suggests that Tristan’s personal choice and preference play a pivotal role in its construction. It implies the agency he wields in shaping his own destiny, actively stitching together diverse influences. However, at times, societal pressure and the narratives surrounding him appear to influence his identity leaving him unaware of the ongoing process of the suturing of his identity.

The realm of theatre serves as a crucible for the process of suturing for Tristan steering him to experiment with different facets of his identity and stitch them together through various roles and masks as skillfully as he can. His ability to change his appearance and narrative allows him to adapt to different circumstances and audiences showcasing the versatility of his sutured identity. Nevertheless, the contradictory and often conflicting cultural influences from Efica and Voorstand exert a profound impact on his identity construction influencing the ways he perceives himself and the world around him. Amidst his journey of transformation, Tristan carries the scars of violence, loss, and betrayal, which deeply wound him that represent the pain associated with the stitching of the lacerated parts of body during the process of suturing. However, he consciously or unconsciously undertakes this process of stitching in the quest of healing and relief from the incessant pain of his existence.

Tristan’s process of stitching together a sutured identity mirrors the complexity of human existence wherein individuals must negotiate with various facets of their identities to find a sense of belonging and purpose. Carey’s use of theatre as a metaphor helps us explore this journey that adds a layer of depth to the narrative emphasising the performative nature of identity and the transformative power of the stage in constructing a sutured self for Tristan. Eventually, Tristan’s pursuit of a sutured identity unveils his quest for a coherent and stable identity in a world characterised by diverse influences and experiences.

Tristan's first appearance on the stage is intrinsically linked to the world of theatre, foreshadowing the profound role of theatre in shaping his future life. As Felicity is forced to enact the role of the First Witch in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* due to the change in her physical appearance after giving birth to Tristan, she unveils Tristan from his concealed position within her cloak mere moments after his birth at the Mater Hospital. He emerges as "a gruesome little thing, slippery and sweating from his long enclosure in that rubber cloak, so truly horrible to look at that the audience can see the Witches must struggle to control their feelings of revulsion" (Carey 31). This introduction to the world of performance foreshadows the pivotal role theatre and acting will play in Tristan's life journey and constructing a sutured identity for him that assists him to shield himself from such horrifying and heartrending responses of the people around him.

Tristan's identity undergoes continuous construction, restructuring, and negotiation due to the various social and psychological quandaries he faces. His disability, the ambiguity surrounding the legitimacy of his birth, and his inferior position in a Voorstand-dominated socio-political setting all contribute to the construction of his complex and multi-layered sutured identity consciously or unconsciously. Theatre proves to be a transformative platform for him as he becomes a part of the Feu Follet Collective learning invaluable theatrical skills. It reminds us of Bauman's concept of "recycling" (Hall and du Gay 18) discussed in the previous chapter. This environment offers him a rich opportunity to recycle and immerse himself in diverse roles, experiencing the nuanced shades of identity. Through these experiences, he learns the art of simulation and dissimulation, adeptly slipping into new characters while concealing his personal identity and intentions. The agency he demonstrates in adopting the identity of Bruder Mouse (discussed in detail in chapter five) represents his ability to stitch a new persona for himself symbolising his quest for empowerment and a socially-sanctioned sutured identity.

The analysis of the parallelism between Tristan's literal and metaphorical births into the world of theatre brings to the foreground the suturing between his personal life and his artistic pursuits. Theatre becomes a metaphor for his journey of identity formation, enabling him to explore the intricacies of selfhood and the art of embodying diverse roles. The concept of intersectionality serves as a lens through which we can understand the complexities of his identity. The intersections of disability, birth legitimacy, and social marginalisation interconnect, shaping his experiences and influencing his

choices and decisions. The transformative power of theatre allows him to transcend these intersections offering a realm of agency and personal choice despite the unavoidable social and cultural control. The act of simulation and dissimulation serves for him as a survival mechanism in a society that may not fully embrace his attempts at the construction of a sutured identity.

Tristan's journey is emblematic of the universal human quest for belonging, empowerment and a coherent identity. Through theatre, he discovers the freedom to forge and perform new identities enabling him to transcend the limitations imposed by his marginalisations. We discern that because of his theatrical experiences, in the words of Josselson and Harway mentioned in chapter two, Tristan starts to "live at the edges of more than one communal affiliation" (3). His evolution as an actor parallels his evolution as an individual, showcasing the profound impact of artistic expression and self-representation on the human experience. Tristan's sutured identity and his exploration of theatre and acting create a rich tapestry of themes that highlights the ability of performance and power of theatre to construct a sutured identity for individuals joining multiple fragments of their theatrical and personal identities.

Tristan's deformed and deshaped body emerges as a metaphor for the distorted cultural, political, and historical lives of the Eficans denoted by the pervasive interference of the Voorstanders in their daily affairs whereas his persistent pursuit of becoming a great actor is a conscious or unconscious attempt to refuse to capitulate to his physical deformity and perceived ugliness by suturing himself with the promising and enchanting world of theatre. The theatre and the circus provide him with a stage to craft new identities and suture them with his personal identity. This novel experience of suturing allows him to reimagine himself beyond the limitations imposed by his appearance. However, the intricate suturing of the various elements within his identity introduces new complexities leaving him grappling with feelings of unbelonging, uncertainty, and ambiguity at the end of the novel.

In his yearning for acting, Tristan delves into the lives of historical and fictional characters finding solace and inspiration in their narratives. His personal identification with revolutionary and ambitious figures like Napoleon insinuates his rebellious spirit that refuses to conform to social stereotypes. In this context, Tristan says, "I devoured histories and fictions, personally identifying not only with revolutionaries but with figures like Napoleon whom I was expected to despise" (Carey 70). By devouring

histories and fictions, Tristan unconsciously integrates these personas into his own psyche manifesting their influence in his decisions and choices.

Tristan's decision to leave Felicity and Vincent to return to the Feu Follet exemplifies his radical self that is motivated by a desire to forge his path in the world of acting. The paradoxical identification with Napoleon — despite harbouring animosity towards him — exemplifies the element of ambivalence in Tristan's sutured identity. By assimilating the ambitious nature of this historical figure, Tristan accepts the mask of Bruder Mouse even in the face of his disdain for Voorstand and its circus characters. Here, we can find an element of "the spiritual detachment and generosity necessary for true vision" (Said 259) in Tristan. Napoleon's persona also serves as an emblem of spiritual detachment, strength, ambition, and generosity — qualities that Tristan finds empowering as he traverses through a world that perceives him as different and downgraded. His identification with a figure who represents power and leadership offers Tristan a means of coping with the mask of Bruder Mouse empowering him to command the stage with authority and presence.

The profound impact of the theatre on Tristan's life becomes evident when he implores his mother in his impaired voice, expressing his need for theatre and his belief in being destined to become an actor. "I… [5]need… a…theatre. Maman…I… have… a… destiny" (Carey 99). However, Tristan understands that his mother never envisioned him as an actor, and it is only desperation that leads her, later on, to allow the idea to take root, influenced by Bill. He says, "It was never my mother's plan that I should be an actor, and if she had not been desperate she would not, I am sure, have permitted the seed to be planted by Bill Millefleur" (Carey 67). This tension between the mother and the son creates fissures in Tristan's identity — motivating his conscious or unconscious attempts to construct a sutured identity — driven by a quest and yearning for coherence and stability.

The turning point occurs in Tristan's life when Felicity moves into Vincent's house after a confrontation with Claire Chen, a significant member of the Feu Follet Collective. Tristan's deep interest in theatre and his earnest desire to pursue an acting career come to the forefront when, despite knowing it is not the best time to discuss his future, he shares his aspirations with his mother, only to have them brushed aside with dismissive words by her about coping with serious problems in life (Carey 128). This

[5] These dots represent the brokenness in Tristan's voice.

rejection leaves Tristan feeling betrayed, abandoned, and emotionally shattered emboldening his determination to fight for a higher category of life and reclaim his place in the theatre he considers part of his heritage as the son of two actors (Carey 129). Driven by an unyielding resolve, Tristan decides to reconnect with the Feu Follet Collective without seeking Felicity's permission or informing her of his decision. The image of him carrying his skateboard under his arms ascending uphill on his knees like a pilgrim symbolises the arduous journey he embarks upon despite his physical disabilities. This pilgrimage signifies his exposure to the real world where unforeseen challenges related to his attempts at stitching a new identity pulling together the fragmented pieces of his identity pan out. These painful experiences become important stimulus for his conscious or unconscious suturing between his Efican and Voorstandish identities leading him to embrace the mask of Bruder Mouse, later on, as a means of finding partial or complete relief. Hence, the role of theatre in the construction of a sutured identity for Tristan is pivotal, serving as a transformative force that both fractures and mends his sense of self. His deep connection to the world of acting and the Feu Follet Collective provides him with a stage to experiment with various identities and roles.

Despite constant discouragement and warnings from Felicity, Tristan continues to pursue his coveted ambition of becoming an actor and starts reading Stanislavsky who is regarded as a leading Russian theatre director because of his valuable acumen about theatre, rehearsals and acting skills and regarded as the co-founder of Moscow Art Theatre. Stanislavsky's ideas related to the "art of experiencing" and "art of representation" (Benedetti 146) explicate the process of the suturing of identity of not only Tristan but also of Felicity and Bill in *TULTS* befittingly.

Stanislavski asserts that actors must empathise with the characters they want to play and strive hard to experience the psychological experiences and emotions of the characters and then they must represent those emotional experiences as appropriately as they can. In other words, the art of experiencing is related to emotional, psychological and internal aspects of a performance whereas the art of representation alludes to the external aspects of the performance on the stage for the audience. Talking about Stanislavsky's ideas, Anatoly Efros writes:

> To experience a role, according to Stanislavsky, means really to think and feel it each time, but to represent a role means after having experienced it once, to notice the external form of its natural expression of emotion, and then having

noticed the external form of its natural expression of emotion, and the help of trained muscles. This is how the art of experience differs from the art of representation" (81).

The rehearsals and practise of experiencing and representing different roles on the stage of the Feu Follet Collective enables Tristan, Felicity and Bill to make the required adjustments in their social and cultural roles on the stage of the world. It helps them in stitching new identities for themselves and suturing themselves with their social settings.

Tristan's interest in Stanislavsky's works represents his obsession with the idea of acting, theatre and performance that plays a critical role in increasing his interest in theatre and acting granting him rich experience of multiple identities. When these multiple identities get intertwined through his art of experiencing and sutured with the passage of time, Tristan's personal identity also goes through visible transformation that is manifested through his art of representation. His choices and preferences are also realigned as he sets new goals for himself, especially when he decides to visit Voorstand. This visit, in the words of Wild-Wood discussed in the preceding chapter provides him with "a new set of life experiences that, in dialogue with the old set of experiences, negotiate an altered identity" (1).

Though Felicity has a profound influence on Tristan's existence, Bill also plays a critical role in his becoming an actor. Wally tells Bill how important he has been to Tristan and how Tristan used to pine for him and how he used to do the exercises Bill had taught him. Wally tells Bill, "You were the one who let him imagine he could be an actor" (Carey 370). Wally informs Bill that Tristan did those exercises taught by Bill for ten long years and all those things were the centre of his life. Thus, the suturing between Stanislavsky's teachings, Felicity's and Wally's company and Bill's influence in Tristan's life underscores the transformative power of theatre and mentorship in shaping his identity and constructing a sutured identity for himself intentionally or unintentionally.

Tristan's belief in the transformative power of acting is based on his illusion that a skilled actors' performances can evoke enthusiasm and emotional fervour in the audience, overshadowing any physical shortcomings they may have. He envisions a moment on stage when the crowd becomes so captivated by the actors' skills that they are swept away by a collective feeling of excitement and beauty, leading them to overlook or even embrace physical imperfections. He believes, "At such times, even a

deformed person becomes beautiful" (Carey 103). This belief reflects Tristan's deep yearning for acceptance and recognition, as he hopes that through acting, he can stitch an identity for himself that may break the shackles of his physical deformity and find some escapism from his painful existence. Subsequently, we are informed by Tristan, "In the histories I had read there was always the defining moment when the hero had to act wilfully, selfishly" (Carey 103). Tristan's belief in the defining moment of the hero's acting wilfully and selfishly in the histories he reads highlights his fascination with powerful and transformative acts. He demonstrates his willingness to act selfishly in pursuing his personal ambitions by seizing control of his identity construction and his destiny on his own terms. For the willing pursuit of his selfish goals, he disparages the instructions of his mother and, later on in the novel, we observe that he defies the societal norms of the Eficans in Voorstand as well by suturing himself to the Voorstandish cultural norms. His metaphorical migration from a deformed person to an actor can be seen not as "separation" but "reincarnation" in the words of Mehta (82).

Tristan's act of going into hiding in the theatre with a blanket, a flashlight, and a clasp knife signifies his yearning for a private space to explore his aspirations and identity away from the influence of others, particularly his mother. The blanket and flashlight symbolise his search for comfort and illumination whereas the clasp knife serves as a multifaceted metaphor in the novel including the unconscious impact of the famous dagger scene in *Macbeth* before the murder of King Duncan. The knife also embodies a form of protection reflecting Tristan's vulnerability and the need to shield himself from the judgments of others. Moreover, it becomes a symbol of Tristan's resilience and determination to cut through the barriers that confine him, allowing him to carve out his own path and identity. Afterwards, the knife is used by Tristan to manifest his aversion for his adopted identity of Bruder Mouse when his mother is ruthlessly murdered by VIA.

Tristan's profound commitment to stitching his identity and future with the theatre is highlighted when he lays Stanislavsky's book on a pillowslip on the dusty floor of the theatre. Placing his hands on the cover of the book and his heart, he solemnly vows never to abandon the world of acting (Carey 104). This pivotal moment reveals his selfish will to become an actor and his deepening connection with the theatre, where he envisages his physical disability not as a hindrance but as a unique advantage. His realisation that his deformed shape can be intriguing and captivating represents a significant insight into the opportunities associated with a broken identity. Instead of

viewing his corporeal shortcomings as a disadvantage, he perceives them as an opportunity to create a distinctive and fascinating persona on the stage. His acknowledgment that he is an actor with a shape that is already interesting reflects his recognition of the potential to harness his unique physicality to craft compelling and memorable performances. In a broader sense, this realisation serves as an important point of awakening and carries a powerful message about the metamorphosing potential of embracing one's fragmented identity that stimulates the process of suturing between the fragments of one's self.

Tristan's escape through the metal pipe of Mater Hospital represents his deep-seated longing for liberation and transformation whereas the ecstasy of performance becomes a metaphor for his yearning to go beyond his physical constraints and societal perceptions. In this moment of rebellion, Tristan embraces the possibility of becoming someone greater than his circumstances like Mark Anthony or Richard III. He says, "My hands were numb, bleeding, but I was transformed. I was no longer one of the pitiable wretches I had left behind upstairs. As I descended, I was an actor — Mark Antony, Richard the Third, the Phantom of the Rue Morgue" (Carey 155). Tristan's allusion to iconic characters like Mark Antony, Richard the Third, and the Phantom of the Rue Morgue indicates his profound connection to the world of theatre and the metamorphosing power it offers. His intentional or unintentional aspiration to construct a sutured identity for himself by blending different fragments from these characters brings to the foreground his optimism and hopes associated with the process of suturing. However, a little while ago, the harsh judgment of the people calling him a "monster" (Carey 156) highlights the dissonance between his internal aspirations and the external perception of others. This discord exemplifies the struggles and challenges he faces in reconciling his desired identity as an actor with the societal labels and prejudices imposed upon him because of his physical deformities. It divulges that Tristan's journey towards constructing his sutured identity is characterised by a process of constant push and pull between his own aspirations and the external expectations of society. We can find a subtle interplay between fantasy and reality in the construction of his sutured identity. His theatrical experiences enable him to stitch different aspects of his enacted characters with his personal identity consciously or unconsciously and enjoy a shift of power against his society by challenging its stereotypical ways of being and thinking. However, the responses of the people around him serve as constant reminders for his obligations to embrace his personal and cultural identity.

On Bill's arrival at the Feu Follet Collective after his professional assignment with Saarlim Sirkus in Voorstand, Tristan presents before him the performance of Hairy Man by stepping on a ladder and going up and hanging there upside down despite severe physical pain. Going up the ladder symbolises his evolution as an actor and the evolution in his identity. It also demonstrates his process of celebrating a new identity and shedding his previously deformed one. When Bill climbs up the rusty old ladder to get hold of Tristan, the latter gets excited. At this moment, Bill's sutured identity also comes to our notice when Tristan says, "Bill "smelt of fame, of foreign spices and dry-cleaning" (Carey 72). In this episode, we can find a striking juxtaposition between the evolution of Tristan and Bill that has been represented by their climbing up the ladder. Tristan's going up the ladder demonstrates his transformation and evolution because of his sutured identity but the physical pain he has to endure alludes to the pain associated with stitching a new identity. Bill's smell of fame and foreign spices and dry-cleaning also refers to the transformation in his identity because of his exposure to a different culture that consciously or unconsciously constructs a sutured identity for him.

When Wally beholds that Tristan is up on a ladder, the former gets worried about the latter's life. However, Bill asks him to relax as "It's the circus in his blood" (Carey 76). Thus, Tristan's performance indicates a suturing between his acting and circus skills because of his mother's acting profession and his father's circus career. It signifies that the merging of the two seemingly disparate worlds of his father and mother is part of Tristan's essence. It implies that the process of suturing had started in Tristan even before his birth. His identity, therefore, is seemingly rooted in his ancestry and the disparate influences of his mother and father that underscores the complex nature of his sutured identity.

The tragic and profound impact of Felicity's death on Tristan's life and identity widens the cracks in Tristan's identity prodigiously. Felicity's political aspirations are tarnished and hampered by Gabe Manzini's plot to defame her through a scandalous newspaper story about her affair with Vincent. This malicious act damages Felicity's reputation and undermines her chances of winning the election. Later on, we learn that Felicity is hanged by Gabe Manzini who pronounces it as an act of suicide for the general public. While Tristan comes down the stairs, he hears the scuffling. Here, Tristan makes a very important comment about theatres where life and death are acted out, and catharsis is experienced. Tristan's comment, "Theatres are always full of scuffling, shouting, cries — it is the business of the theatre: life, death, catharsis (Carey

222)" emphasises the theatricality of life itself. However, when faced with the tragic reality of his mother's death, Tristan is confronted with the stark difference between the theatrical world and real life. Initially, he struggles to accept her death imagining it to be another piece of enactment in the theatre. This moment serves as a poignant reminder of the limits of theatrical illusion and the harsh realities of life where death is not merely a performance but an irreversible loss. His fragmented and sutured identity is further revealed as he transitions from envisaging himself as "Napoleon" to feeling like a "coward" in the wake of his mother's death (Carey 231). This transformation points out the complexity and vulnerability of Tristan's sutured identity, which is deeply intertwined with significant figures and events in his life. The portrayal of Felicity's death and its impact on Tristan's sutured identity reflects a critical exploration of the human condition. It delves into the themes of loss, disillusionment, and the struggle to find meaning in the face of tragedy. The impact of Felicity's death on Tristan demonstrates the psychological issues related to a sutured identity such as a profound sense of remorse, internal turmoil, disorientation, infidelity, betrayal and guilt.

Felicity's death becomes a symbol of shame in Efican history due to the circumstances surrounding it (Carey 223). Tristan's attachment to the Voorstandish traditions through the mask of Bruder Mouse adds to his complex emotions as he feels impotent to prevent her tragic fate. Despite the turmoil caused by Felicity's death, it also opens new possibilities for Tristan. He gains a sense of independence and adventure, as demonstrated by his decision to travel to Voorstand with Wally after a few years. This journey exposes him to the culture and traditions of Voorstand enriching his worldview and contributing immensely to the process of the suturing of his Efican and Voorstandish identities as he gets the unmediated experience of the culture and traditions of Voorstand.

In the aftermath of his mother's death, Tristan intensifies his efforts to develop his acting and circus skills. Despite feelings of shame and inadequacy, he persists in rehearsing and refining his performance abilities. This determination showcases his resilience and commitment to the world of theatre and performance, even in the face of personal doubts and shortcomings. The Feu Follet, despite its darker connotations, remains a sanctuary for Tristan, a "safe house" despite being "the deepest, darkest hole on earth" (Carey 236) where he can continue to cultivate his artistic talents and find solace amidst the chaos surrounding him. "I still rehearsed my circus swings and tumbles, juggling, a whole illusionistic repertoire, but I did it with a shame that came

from knowing that I lacked the courage to be the Great Figure I had previously imagined" (Carey 232). While Tristan continues to rehearse and refine his skills as an actor after his mother's death, we can notice a profound sense of doubt and a growing awareness of his personal limitations that reveal the darker aspects and occasional failures of the process of the suturing of identity revealing the fact that a sutured identity is neither smooth nor unproblematic.

To conclude the discussion in this section, it is stated that in the labyrinthine world of *TULTS* the journey of sutured identity for Tristan finds its emotional nexus in the enigmatic realm of the Feu Follet Collective. Through the performances, masks, and roles he adopts, Tristan transcends the confines of his deformity and emerges as a celebrated performer, adored and venerated in Voorstand. Nevertheless, the symbiosis between his Efican roots and his ambitions in Voorstand brings to the forefront the tensions that challenge his sutured identity. The Feu Follet Collective, an instrument for expressing Efican pride, confronting cultural invasion, and resisting social constraints, not only empowers Tristan but also confronts him with the scars of violence, loss, and betrayal. As he stumbles through the interplay of cultural influences, the Feu Follet serves as both a mirror and a chisel, reflecting and shaping his identity with each performance. In this mesmerising fusion of art and life, Tristan finds himself entwined with the essence of theatre where the blurring boundaries between the real and the performed selves mimic the intricate stitching of his identity. Just as the theatre itself stands at the periphery, shouting at the centre, Tristan's sutured identity — emblematic of his nation's struggle— stands as a powerful testament to the complexities of human existence. The relentless pursuit of performance skills by Tristan, the complex intertwining of the acting heritage of his mother, the circus background of his father and his steadfast commitment to theatre highlight the vibrant and evolving nature of a sutured identity. Tristan's struggles with self-doubt, guilt, remorse and shame disclose that suturing has its own dark moments, contradictions, inconsistencies and limitations.

3.6 Theatre and Felicity's Sutured Identity

The Feu Follet Collective allows Felicity to disseminate her personal, literary and political views. It also offers her an opportunity to stitch new identities for herself that enables her to consciously or unconsciously redefine and restructure her personal identity, challenge societal norms and resist the political intervention of the Voorstanders. The study of her sutured identity brings into contention the argument of

Richards who writes that, "identity is never singular nor inchoate, but even in its most emphatic forms is permeable at the margins and subject to mutation" (18).

We observe that not only she, but other characters also undertake constant simulations and dissimulations in the theatre as they pretend to be what they are not and engage themselves in concealing their personal identities from the audience under her directions. We get a reference to her sutured identity right at the beginning of the novel when Tristan says, "My maman was a foreigner, but she loved Chemin Rouge with a passion barely imaginable to the native born" (Carey 8**)**. Subsequently, Tristan narrates, "It was no small thing to her that I should be an Efican, and she betrayed her foreign birth in the way in which her ambitions for each of us, the country and the child were not humble" (Carey 9). Later on, we are told by Tristan, "My maman had a curious network of loyalties" (Carey 12). These statements from Tristan highlight the suturing between Felicity's Voorstandish and Efican identities. Nevertheless, as the novel unfolds, we recognise that Felicity has stitched a new Efican identity for herself and has disassociated herself almost completely from her Voorstandish roots. Though we can find some elements of her Voorstandish identity sutured with her personal identity, apparently, she seems to have sutured herself with the Efican culture and traditions very strongly.

The profound significance of theatre in Felicity's life concerning issues of identity becomes apparent through Tristan's insightful words when he says, "… you could imagine that theatre could still change the destiny of a country. In Efica you could have the illusion of being a warrior in a great battle, and when you toured you lived with others who shared the same illusion" (Carey 77). He contemplates how theatre holds the power to shape the destiny of a nation allowing individuals to immerse themselves in the illusion of being warriors in grand battles. During tours, they share this illusion with fellow performers, collectively envisioning and inventing their nation's culture. He remarks in this regard, "When you toured, you performed as if art mattered. Doing agitprop under a petite tente[6] you were inventing your nation's culture" (Carey 77).

Through her theatrical productions featuring the works of iconic playwrights like Shakespeare, Brecht, Ibsen, and Moliere, Felicity endeavours to articulate the cultural and national perspectives of the Eficans challenging the dominating influence of Voorstand. Her efforts reveal a sutured identity, as she, being a born Voorstander, has

[6] "Small tent used by family circuses in islands of Efica (Carey 419)

painstakingly woven a new identity intertwined with her Efican routes. Her strong suturing with her Efican identity remains evident until her tragic demise that brings to the foreground how she ties herself with the Feu Follet Collective and the Efican cultural traditions.

The issues related to Felicity's suturing with the Feu Follet can be understood by a contention of Said who asserts that "once banished, the exile lives an anomalous and miserable life, with the stigma of being an outsider (*Reflections on Exile* 181). Subsequently, he claims, "Much of the exile's life is taken up with compensating for disorienting loss by creating a new world to rule" (*Reflection on Exile* 181). Felicity's efforts to connect herself passionately with the Feu Follet demonstrate her attempts at creating a new world to rule to compensate for her disorienting loss due to her resolve to live as an exile in Efica permanently. Thus, she decides consciously or unconsciously to stitch an Efican identity and suture herself with the Efican cultural setting. However, she fails to remove the stigma of being an "outsider" in Efica which is obvious in her lamentation that she remains a Voorstander for the Eficans despite her best efforts (Carey 117).

The significance of the Feu Follet in Felicity's life is evident when she engages in a heated argument with Bill. He criticises the theatre, accusing its performers of being impervious to criticism and dismissing precision in acting as a mere style (Carey 93). Felicity gets upset and infuriated by his words defending the importance of the theatre passionately chastising Bill and claiming, "You little snot. You shallow, vain, posturing little snot. Don't you dare act out your vulgar Sirkuses and come and tell me that what we do here does not matter" (Carey 94). Her emotional response underscores how strongly she has stitched herself with the Feu Follet. Her assertion also reflects her unwavering dedication to using art as a tool to challenge prevailing norms and elevate the Efican culture. Thus, theatre serves as a platform for Felicity to express her sutured identity firmly blending her Voorstandish background and Efican heritage. The Feu Follet becomes a sanctuary where she can passionately communicate the cultural aspirations and challenges faced by the Efican community striving to break free from the hegemony of Voorstand. Hence, suturing, in Felicity's character, comes to our attention as a critical strategy to communicate her socio-cultural, political and moral values.

The profound significance of theatre in Felicity's life is palpable when she remains on stage almost till the moment of giving birth to her baby. With her great acting skills,

she conceals her condition from onlookers as she walks to Mater Hospital during her performance as Lady Macbeth. Her physical prowess and acting talent allow her to maintain her composure and camouflage her real condition during her performance and her journey towards the hospital. Tristan says in this regard, "No one watching her sandy path beside the river bed would have guessed at what her body was experiencing. She was an actress of the most physical type, and for the first half of her journey her walk was a triumph of will" (Carey 8). However, complications arise during her walk, resulting, as ill luck would have it, in Tristan's physical deformity. When Felicity learns about Tristan's complicated shape after giving birth to him, she summons the courage to ask the doctors to "Unswaddle him" (Carey 16). Then we are told, "She heard herself say it. She was aware of removing herself from herself, of becoming a character whom she could watch. She closed her eyes, breathed a little — in-out, in-out" (Carey 16). In that moment, we witness Felicity slipping into different identities suturing herself with different characters as needed as if she were an actress observing herself from a distance. Her ability to embody various roles in her acting career helps Felicity stitch herself consciously or unconsciously with different characters as the situation demands. She can become Ophelia when she is with her lovers, transform into Nora when asserting her and her child's rights, or even emulate Hedda Gabler when dealing with multiple lovers simultaneously. Her wealth of experience in the acting profession enables her to deftly shift between identities stitching herself with and unstitching herself from various roles. The insinuated comparison of Felicity's death with that of Hedda Gabler's suicide or Ophelia's tragic demise adds complexity to her identity's portrayal. Whether she is murdered by Gabe Manzini — as Tristan conjectures — or her death occurs by her own hand, her identity remains sutured to multiple fragments of her individuality — both as a person and an actor.

As discussed before, Felicity's remarkable ability to adapt and stitch a new identity for herself comes to our view when she — instead of playing Lady Macbeth — decides to play the role of the First Witch in Shakespeare's *Macbeth.* This conscious choice to take on a different character because of her physical condition showcases her capacity to fuse her personal life with her professional identity, effectively suturing them together. By opting for the role of the First Witch, Felicity demonstrates her creative ability to handle her dual roles as an actress and a mother. She recognises the significance of her condition and skillfully incorporates it into her performance. This decision reflects her ability to craft a new identity that harmonises her personal life with

her acting career. Moreover, the act of holding Tristan in her hands while being on the stage further underlines the suturing of her identities as it symbolises the fusion of her roles as a mother and an actress blurring the boundaries between the personal and the professional aspects of her life. By doing so, Felicity not only acknowledges her maternal responsibilities but also integrates them into her identity as a performer. Felicity's switch between Lady Macbeth and the First Witch demonstrates her remarkable ability to adapt herself to the situation and craft a new identity that effectively sutures the personal and the professional aspects of her life.

The fractured, destabilised and sutured identity of Felicity comes to the foreground during her conflict with Bill when he receives a lucrative offer to join Saarlim Sirkus in Voorstand. It highlights the suturing between Felicity's passion for acting and theatre and her covert desire for financial stability. This internal struggle highlights the complexity and ambivalence of her identity as an Efican actress torn between her loyalty to the Feu Follet and her desire for financial security despite her disdain for Saarlim Sirkus. Felicity's conflict is evident in her ambivalent emotions as she reluctantly consents to Bill's departure while masking her anxiety with a smile. Her acquiescence is influenced by the precarious situation of the Feu Follet perpetually facing an uncertain future and the lure of the money that could potentially save the theatre. Tristan narrates to us, "… the future of the theatre was always in doubt. The thought of all that Sirkus money drove her crazy with guilt and longing" (Carey 53). However, her identity remains fragmented and unsettled as she tries to persuade Bill not to compromise his artistic integrity for money. She appeals to his sense of belonging and purpose emphasising their role as Efican actors with important work to do, the creation of their own country's cultural narrative. She asserts, "You're an Efican actor. You belong here, with us. We have important work to do. We have a whole damn country to invent (Carey 53)". Felicity's remarks bring to the foreground the inherent contradictions and inconsistencies found in a sutured identity especially regarding the concept of belonging. On one hand, she disassociates herself from her indigenous Voorstandish roots by suturing herself strongly with her Efican identity. On the other hand, she reproaches Bill for deviating from his cultural roots and defying his sense of belonging. The conversation between Felicity and Bill sheds ample light on the nature of Felicity's sutured identity, which is complex, inconsistent, contradictory, unstable and unpredictable.

Through Felicity's breakdown and confrontation with her fellow actors led by Claire Chen, we discern the fragility and instability of her identity. She grapples with feelings of failure, loss, and alienation, longing to create a meaningful Efican national identity while struggling against the labels imposed on her by others based on her origin. Felicity's identity predicament can be perceived through the arguments of Said:

> The exiled subject becomes identified through the process of othering, and though all subjectivities are characterized by difference, the exile's sense of otherness is emphasized by an erasure of identity, as the exile lacks connections to both native and present lands. Unable to locate one's identity in either location, the exile is Other both at home and away from home (qtd. in Chrysochou 73).

The notion of a sutured identity emerges prominently as Felicity tries to fuse together her Voorstandish heritage with her deep commitment to embodying an Efican identity and culture. However, this process becomes challenging as her efforts are met with misunderstandings and judgments from others leaving her feeling unfulfilled and adrift. The tensions between her dual identities prompt her to quit the Feu Follet and venture into politics seeking a new sense of direction and purpose by stitching a new identity for herself. It is conveyed to us by Tristan in the following words, "Bill had abandoned her, and my maman was unexpectedly adrift, drowning. This unseemly rush into politics was the only life raft Vincent could offer" (Carey 126). Despite her passion for Efica and dedication to the theatre, Felicity finds herself perceived as a Voorstander that creates a dissonance between her personal identity and how others perceive her. She expresses her frustrations by saying, "I don't know what we are. Or maybe it's just me still a Voorstander after all" (Carey 117). Her struggle ultimately contributes to her untimely demise as her sutured identity becomes a potential threat to the cultural and political discourse of Voorstand. Tristan shares with us saying, "The maman loved Efica but she was born in Voorstand. The Voorstanders did not hate her personally. They stole her life — Manzini, the VIA, someone" (Carey 222). Through Tristan's reflections, we can perceive Felicity's internal turmoil and her desire to find a sense of belonging and purpose. Vincent's influence and Felicity's shift into politics reflect her attempts to forge a new path but it also indicates the malleability, vulnerability and even the failure of a sutured identity if it is not managed properly.

The discussion about Felicity's connection with the Feu Follet and its influence on her life and identity reveals that she has a strong ideological and emotional bond with the

theatre which enables her to express her resistance to the Voorstanders' interference in Efica. Her acting skills allow her to adopt and integrate multiple identities as well as to cope with the fragmentation and suturing of her selfhood. Felicity's struggles at the Feu Follet exemplify how a sutured identity can subvert stereotypes and challenge the status quo. Her sutured identity defies the stereotypical submission of the Eficans to the Voorstanders and asserts her uniqueness and autonomy in the face of marginalisation and oppression. It also disrupts the dominant discourse and power structure of the Voorstanders and serves as a source of empowerment, creativity and recognition of the complex heritage of the Eficans.

To wrap up the discussion in this section, it can be stated that Felicity's love for theatre serves as the very fabric that intertwines and reinforces her sutured identity. The theatre, with its versatile and transformative nature, becomes the platform for Felicity to express her multifaceted self, stitched together from her Efican roots and Voorstandish upbringing. As a social activist and artist, she strategically uses the Feu Follet Collective to challenge the cultural dominance of Voorstand and resist its influence on Efica. Through her performances and choice of playwrights, Felicity aims to disseminate her political message giving voice to the voiceless and confronting uncomfortable truths about her homeland. The theatre allows her to embody diverse characters and perspectives offering a cathartic release from the constraints of her sutured identity. While Felicity's identity remains fractured and unstable, the theatre provides her with a stage to explore and reconcile the complexities of her being.

The analysis of Felicity's character reveals the complex nature of a sutured identity. It offers her feelings of empowerment and a sense of belonging in Efica. However, we find inconsistencies and contradictions in her sutured identity as she undergoes feelings of alienation in Efica during the episode of her exchange of harsh words with Claire Chen. It demonstrates that she remains an outsider for the Eficans that reflects the clout of one's ancestry and cultural roots for others. Felicity's tragic death highlights the social, cultural and political threats associated with a sutured identity. Thus, her character reveals the pros and cons of a sutured identity very appropriately. Her death demonstrates that she fails to demonstrate the required "bicultural competence" and "blend in and present the person [she] want[s] to be in different settings" in the words of Coulmas discussed in the previous chapter (98). Felicity's experiences of brokenness

and otherness can be explained in the words of Pamela Couture et al., "Understood as positioning, an identity makes claims upon those to whom it is projected in social life. As such, it must be negotiated with the competing claims of others" (15). Felicity's sutured identity delineates an incessant struggle because of the predicament of competing claims.

3.7 Bill, Theatre, Circus and His Sutured Identity

Tristan describes Bill as "very young — just twenty two, but tall and handsome, olive-skinned, dark-eyed, with finely chiselled, beautifully shaped lips" (11). He also tells us that Bill was the only one who claims paternity when Tristan is born, while the other two potential fathers hesitate. "My mother had been with him when she conceived" (Carey 11), Tristan reveals. Bill was nineteen when he joined the Feu Follet. Tristan tells us about Bill, "And although he had never been inside a theatre until he walked into the Feu Follet, to her he was going to be the best actor in Chemin Rouge" (40). Later, we witness the suturing of Bill's circus and acting skills because of his interaction with Felicity, his experiences at the Feu Follet Collective and his background as a horse-rider in a circus.

Bill's relationship with theatre begins when he falls in love with Felicity after watching her performance as Ophelia — the epitome of fidelity, innocence and constancy in love — in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1599-1600). It underscores the interplay between Felicity's "art of experience" and "art of representation" that enables her to suture her personal identity with that of Ophelia. Bill has a background as a circus horse rider, but Felicity introduces him to the Feu Follet Collective where they fall in love with each other. His theatrical life enables him to adopt and perform various roles and identities, both on and off the stage. However, he abandons Efica and his family after Tristan's birth, and joins the Saarlim Sirkus in Voorstand. He becomes a "traitor" in Tristan's eyes, but also remains an "Ootlander"[7] for the Voorstanders. It demonstrates the social and psychological predicament of a sutured identity that individuals with sutured identity continue to oscillate around a state of in-betweenness among their native people as well as in the foreign lands. They become outsiders in their own cultural setting and the foreign locale. Bill's predicament can be understood through Said's assertion, "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is unhealable

[7] An Efican word meaning "outsider"

rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted" (*Reflections on Exile* 173). Bill's ruptured and, subsequently, sutured identity brings to the foreground the nature of the suturing that it fails to address the inherent "unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place" (*Reflections on Exile* 173). Though exiled individuals, such as Bill, enjoy temporary relief through their sutured identities, they fail to surmount their essential sadness. The identity conundrum and the socio-cultural quandries faced by Bill can also be summed up through Said's words, "The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever" (*Reflections on Exile* 173).

Bill's character is a combination of contradictions and inconsistencies. While he displays honesty and courage by claiming the paternity of Tristan, he struggles to confront the reality of his child's deformity and ugliness. His decision to leave for Voorstand is driven by an offer to work in the Saarlim Sirkus that offers him an escape from his current situation. However, this choice also leads to his confrontation with Felicity culminating in his abandonment of both his son and partner. Tristan eloquently narrates the compromises Bill must make to adapt to Voorstand, highlighting the complexities of his identity transformation. Tristan tells us, "He was, by definition, not a Voorstander. When he spoke his lines in Saarlim, he would need to abandon his soft, self-doubting Efican *patois — Shapoh, mo-ami, mo-chou, cambruce*[8] — learn to speak with a clip to his consonants, give up his Feu Follet habits of irony and self-mockery" (Carey 51). Tristan also addresses the Voorstanders and tells them how Bill will be perceived by them and by himself. "To you he would be an exotic performer introducing live animals into the Sirkus. But to himself (and to us) our circus boy would be acting out, with his own body, the surrender of our frail culture to your most powerful one" (Carey 51). Tristan discloses the impact of these compromises on Bill's identity by saying, "He would be singing your songs, telling your stories, and this went strongly against the grain, undercut the whole notion of who he thought he was" (Carey 52). Thus, we witness Bill's internal struggle and the psychological toll of compromising his personal identity at the altar of a sutured identity for the sake of opportunity and acceptance. It showcases the challenges he faces in reconciling and

[8] These are everyday Efican expressions.

suturing different cultural facets and the internal conflict that arises when his identity is sutured and gets subjected to internal as well as external pressures.

The encounter of Bill with the two Eficans and the slashing of his cheek with a box-cutter provide important insights into the threats and social difficulties associated with navigating a sutured identity. Bill becomes famous in Efica because of his exposure to Saarlim Sirkus in Voorstand that underscores the recognition and fame he has achieved in his acting career which Felicity also exploits to promote her Efican theatre. However, the incident with the two young Eficans unveils the underlying tensions and hostilities that can arise due to the complex interplay of identities. One of them hurts his cheek with a box-cutter that Bill considers a pen for an autograph. The mistaken assumption of wanting an autograph, followed by the derogatory term "Tapette" (Carey 78) being used and the subsequent slashing of his cheek, reveals the conflict between his perceived celebrity status and the reality of his sutured identity being perceived as foreign, different and antagonistic. The metaphorical significance of the wound on Bill's cheek cannot be overlooked as it represents the social threats and visible scars of his sutured identity — a physical manifestation of the inner turmoil he experiences. The scar serves as a potent symbol of the internal conflicts he wrestles with torn between his Efican and Voorstandish backgrounds leading to a breach of loyalty to his original Efican identity. The pain and anguish associated with the wound symbolise the emotional toll of having a fractured sense of self and the complexities of suturing hostile and incompatible cultural identities.

Bill's arrival in Efica to attend the funeral ceremonies of Felicity brings to the foreground the challenges he faces due to his sutured allegiance between Efica and Voorstand. It sheds light on the influence of theatre and theatrical performances on the Eficans' perceptions and their difficulty in distinguishing genuine emotions from the staged ones (Carey 308). The fact that Bill's genuine grief is perceived as theatrical and pretentious by the Eficans highlights how theatricality has become ingrained in their lives blurring the lines between reality and performance. It indicates the powerful role that theatre plays in shaping the Eficans' understanding of emotions and expressions. The rejection of Bill by the Eficans due to his decision to settle in Voorstand signifies the complexities of a sutured identity and its connection with the idea of belonging. Said articulates this predicament by asserting that "any sense of belonging or affiliation — or any reconstruction of these — is eliminated through displacement and exile" (qtd. in Chrysochou 73).

Despite his genuine feelings of grief and attempts to embrace his Efican identity, Bill's association with Voorstand is seen as perfidy by the Efican community. This reflects the challenges faced by individuals with sutured identities, torn between two cultures and struggling to find acceptance in either. In Efica, he is considered a foreigner and, later on, we come to know that in Voorstand he is treated as an "Ootlander" that signifies his outsider status in Voorstand despite spending two decades there which further adds to his identity dilemma. This underscores the impediments in fully belonging to a culture different from one's own and the barriers and prejudices that can persist despite one's genuine efforts to adapt. Ironically, Bill becomes a Voorstander for the Eficans, but remains an Efican for the Voorstanders that demonstrates the failure of the suturing of his identity in yielding the desired outcomes for him. This causes him social, political and emotional pain. Bill's struggles with acceptance, divided loyalties, and economic difficulties paint a vivid picture of the complexities of sutured identities offering readers a deeper understanding of the concept of suturing.

In Voorstand, Bill faces economic difficulties and regrets leaving Efica through a letter he writes to Tristan while Tristan and Wally are in Voorstand. He asks Tristan to use his influence with Mrs Peggy Kram to extend his contract in Voorstand. It highlights the practical implications of a sutured identity disclosing how financial struggles can further complicate the already intricate process of reconciling multiple allegiances. Bill's remorseful admission in the same letter that he should have stayed in Efica indicates that he is deeply connected to his homeland. He expresses his feelings of remorse by writing to Tristan, "Should have stayed in Efica, that is my feeling now. It was certainly a better life in Efica. We are 'creatures of our place'" (Carey 394). This notion of being tied to one's place of origin adds depth to the exploration of identity and belonging in the context of suturing. Despite his efforts to adapt and integrate into Voorstandish society, Bill remains marked by his Efican roots leading to social and emotional difficulties. He confesses to Tristan that he is seen as an Ootlander, a horse rider, a barbarian (Carey 395). We can imagine the scars on his identity and his state of mind because of his sutured identity. We can detect the traces of divided loyalties in Bill's sutured identity. He is torn between his desire to be with his family in Efica and the allure of Voorstand where he finds a sense of familiarity and recognition. This internal conflict highlights the complexities of his sutured identity and the difficulties in reconciling his multiple allegiances.

Suturing in Bill's character is vivid when we are told that he looks forward to going to Voorstand despite having an intimate relationship with Felicity after returning to Efica to spend his vacations. Tristan states, "Bill wanted to be out of there. He could not wait. He thought of women he knew in Saarlim, young sophisticated, very pretty. He thought of shops he might visit. Restaurants where he was known" (Carey 97). Thus, Bill becomes a victim of divided loyalties and ambivalence because of his sutured identity. On one hand, he wants to stay in Efica and have a good time with his wife and son but on the other hand, he is keen to return to Voorstand. It demonstrates that suturing, that is an outcome of a ruptured identity, has its own ruptures that indicates that a ruptured and unstable identity is perhaps part and parcel of human condition.

To conclude, it can be stated about Bill that his sutured identity finds a profound connection with his experiences in both the theatre and circus worlds. From his early days at the Feu Follet to his journey with the Voorstandish Sirkus, he grapples with the clash between his Efican heritage and his aspirations for economic stability and recognition in Voorstand. The theatrical performances allow him to assume different personas, blurring the lines between reality and fiction, while the circus provides a tantalising escape from his troubled past. Nonetheless, the constant push and pull between these contrasting identities leaves him contending with a sense of belonging and purpose. The theatre and circus serve as powerful mirrors, reflecting his internal struggles and external challenges, ultimately revealing that a sutured identity can be both a source of strength and a profound source of vulnerability.

3.8 Conclusion of the Chapter

As Tristan, Felicity and Bill traverse through the conflicting worlds of Efican theatre and Voorstandish Sirkus, they encounter a conflict between their cultural affiliations and personal ambitions. This conflict, ultimately, steers them to a conscious or unconscious suturing between diverse influences within their identities. Theatre serves as both a reflection and an agent of change, allowing them to explore, experiment, and reconfigure their identities through various roles and performances. The theatrical stage becomes a metaphor for their lives, where they experience the suturing between real and performed selves, art and life, reality and imagination.

The analysis of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill through the lens of theatre underscores the performative, vibrant, adaptive and evolving nature of their sutured identities on the stage of the Efican theatre and Voorstandish Sirkus. Suturing

emerges as an ongoing performance of the characters who perform different roles in the grand theatre of life. Their roles keep on shifting as per the requirements of the script of social contexts. Suturing comes to our view as the art of switching seamlessly between disparate roles these characters play while striving concurrently to maintain a coherent narrative. In the drama of the suturing of identity, the audience is society whose approval serves as the applause for these characters.

Felicity's strategic or/and involuntary suturing between the diverse elements of the Feu Follet Collective and the Voorstandish Sirkus reveals the role of theatre and performances in inculcating critical thinking, inspiring cultural resistance and challenging dominant discourses. This role of Feu Follet is also significant in the evolution of Tristan from a non-entity to an important member of the theatre. However, the socio-cultural and psychological challenges of Felicity and Tristan disclose the problematic and fluctuating nature of their sutured identities. It has also been observed that suturing functions both as a promise and a challenge for Tristan, Felicity and Bill. On one hand, it offers them some comfort and reassurance especially during their interaction with their *others*. However, on the other hand, it also entails for them the risk of becoming dependent on the approval and support of others. Moreover, it exposes them to the potential stress of conflicting with or conforming to the judgments and expectations of others.

The study of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill suggests that the construction of a sutured identity is an ongoing process of structuring, negotiation and restructuring that is fashioned and refashioned by their experiences and worldviews due to their personal interactions. The sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill reflect the undeniable influences of the memories of collective consciousnesses of communal and national identities of these characters. Thus, the study of the sutured identities of these characters offers to us a more expansive and more inclusive understanding of and approach towards the subtleties associated with their sutured identities taking into consideration the diversity and dynamism of their personal interactions and lived experiences.

Sutured identities of the characters challenge and reset the divides and boundaries on the bases of their cultures, political ideologies and national discourses. The analysis of the connection between theatre and the sutured identities of Tristan, Bill and Felicity enlightens us that their identities are fluid and evolving. They stitch their identities with those of others with the threads of words and deeds through their interactions. They

weave their stories and reshape and realign their identities consciously or unconsciously. Throughout the process of suturing, they change, grow and stay dynamic. Their sutured identities insinuate that their identities are points of attachments between the narratives that they construct themselves and position themselves in certain ways, and their personal and subjective experiences and conscious or unconscious choices regarding their responses to these narratives.

Throughout the novel, the identities of the selected characters for this study, that is, Tristan, Bill and Felicity are in a perpetual flux, as they strive hard to reconcile their own sense of identities with the multiple roles they are obliged to play on and off the stage to integrate and suture themselves with different societal contexts. Tristan, especially with the issues related to his physical malformations, is urged to navigate the expectations of his family and the people around him including his colleagues in the Efican theatre, and the inhabitants of the countries he visits.

The analysis in this chapter brings to the foreground that a sutured identity can be helpful if the subjects are wise enough to know when to simulate and when to dissimulate, when to engage and when to resist and when to interact and when to evade. The discussion in this chapter reveals the issues with Hall's concept of a sutured identity. There is an element of fragmentation and pessimism in Hall's notion of suturing as it overlooks its potential of resistance and solidarity especially for the diasporas and the marginalised people in the foreign lands. He does not acknowledge the potential for empowerment in identity, rather he sees it only as a site for negotiation and struggle. For him, it deals with margins and excesses, so it appears that he ignores the likelihood of finding common ground. However, the suturing of identities has far-reaching consequences as it refers to the complexity and diversity of human experiences. It is both a wound and a healing; a patchwork of fragments stitched together by virtue of assorted experiences of individuals. It can be a deliberate or involuntary strategy to cope with issues relating to identity, trauma, displacement, marginalisation and economic conditions.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Masks and the Sutured Identities

4.1 Introduction

The examination of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill draws our attention to their identity constructions by means of the process of stitching of their different physical and metaphorical masks used by them in their real and theatrical lives. Throughout the novel, Tristan, Felicity and Bill are found in the process of changing themselves and their mannerisms to adapt themselves in accordance with their adopted identities in various situations consciously or unconsciously like chameleons because of the theatrical as well as personal and social requirements. The significance of the masks and disguises as strategic devices can be noted through the contention of Levi Strauss. Citing Strauss, Eldredge writes, "It is by reason of the face and by the face that man communicates with man. It is by disguising or transforming his face that he interrupts that communication, or diverts it to other ends" (6). Thus, in the intricate tapestry of human interaction, the face serves as the foremost channel of communication between individuals. It is through the expressions that grace this canvas that emotions are conveyed, connections are forged, and understanding is nurtured. However, the face, like a double-edged sword, also holds the power to disrupt this communication. By veiling or altering their countenances, individuals interrupt or redirect the flow of communication. Disguises and transformations become instruments through which one can manage the complexities of social interactions concealing intentions or adopting new identities in accordance with the need of the hour. As far as the relationship of mask with suturing is concerned, it is stated by Ben Elliott and Chantal Conneller, "... masks are sites of convergence for diverse sets of often opposed things: materials, bodies, identities, meaning, action, relationships, spaces, and ideas" (659).

The masks of the selected characters of *TULTS* empower them, provide them with an option to camouflage their intentions and present different shades of their identities to their different audience in different conditions. These masks weave and tell their stories. However, we notice that, at times, there is an element of ambiguity and uncertainty in these characters regarding their commitment to their own stories, their personal identities and their concept of belonging. In this regard, citing Eliade in his article,

Tseelon writes, “The mask shares some basic troubling features with the stranger in modernity: both defy order, introduce ambiguity and suggest lack of commitment and the questionability of belonging and not belonging” (6). It suggests that wearing masks in the theatre — both literal theatre as a place of entertainment and the metaphorical theatre, that is, the world where human beings perform different roles — signifies a lack of commitment to a singular identity.

In the world of *TULTS*, masks serve as powerful symbols that shed ample light on our understanding of the notion and process of the suturing of identities through the analysis of the literal and metaphorical masks of Tristan, Felicity and Bill. Among these masks, the enigmatic figure of Bruder Mouse (discussed in detail in the next chapter) takes the centre stage representing the complex symbiosis between the real and the performed selves. Bruder Mouse becomes a theatrical persona for Tristan allowing him to transcend his physical deformity and embrace the transformative power of performance. Similarly, Felicity strategically employs masks in the Feu Follet Collective to challenge the cultural invasion of Voorstand and resist societal expectations. As for Bill, his sutured identity is shaped by the metaphorical masks he dons to navigate the conflicting influences of Efica and Voorstand. The masks of these characters reveal the nature of their identities and bring to the foreground their conscious or unconscious attempts at stitching fresh identities for themselves in accordance with their socio-cultural, political and discursive contexts. Through these masks, the characters confront their fractured identities, delving into the realm of theatre where they skillfully attempt at stitching together the fractured elements of their identities. The use of masks becomes a metaphorical reflection of the multifaceted nature of their existence where the demarcation between truth and illusion and identity and performance blurs. Their masks function as forces of transformation in shaping the destinies of these characters by constructing sutured identities for them.

Masks and theatrical performances have gone hand in hand since ancient times. In the ancient Greek plays, wearing masks was the norm. In the modern theatre, masks have been replaced by make-up, wigs, body paints and costumes. However, we can still witness that characters wear different metaphorical masks while playing different characters. In *TULTS*, we notice that characters such as Felicity, Bill and Tristan wear different masks to play different roles on the stage. The conscious or unconscious use of these theatrical and metaphorical masks help these characters simulate and

dissimulate their identities according to the requirements of the situations and stitch their identities accordingly.

Theatre and masks help initiate the process of decentring of the being which is the starting point for suturing of identities. The on-stage and off-stage performances of Tristan, Felicity and Bill consciously or unconsciously affect their identities. Their masks, with the passage of time, get sutured with their personal and social identities as we can find the elements of their theatrical personas acting in their real lives as inseparable parts of their existence. For instance, Felicity becomes a loyal and innocent Ophelia when she is with her lovers. She becomes a Nora— a protective mother and an aggressive disillusioned wife —when arguing with Bill because of the apprehensions regarding the future of their son when he decides to join Saarlim Sirkus in Voorstand. Even before the time of giving birth to Tristan, she walks to the hospital with as much dignity and grace without showing any signs of distress or panic as that of a Kroon Princess, that is, perhaps an Efican expression for a Crown Princess. Subsequently, she becomes the First Witch on the stage soon after giving birth to Tristan.

In the world of *TULTS*, the masks of Tristan, Felicity and Bill do not function merely as disguises, but they also reveal their internal struggles as contended by Hill (91) who highlights the dual role of masks for hiding and revealing. These masks illuminate the complex process of the suturing of identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill bringing to the foreground a voluntary or involuntary suturing between their "art of experiencing" and "art of representation" in the words of Stanislavsky discussed in the previous chapter.

4.2 Significance of Masks and Their Utility

The significance of masks as regards the analysis of the characters can be understood by the words of Roger Caillois quoted by Eldredge that, "It is a fact that all mankind wears or has worn a mask. This enigmatic accessory with no obvious utility, is commoner than the lever, the bow, the harpoon or the plough" (3). This brief statement holds significant implications and offers a critical analysis of the human condition and the role of masks in shaping our lives and identities. It brings to the forefront the inherent truth that every individual engages in some form of masking or facade at various points in their lives due to the requirements of some social roles, the fulfillment of some societal expectation or personal disposition. Thus, masks are not merely a theatrical or superficial construct, but an intrinsic part of human existence rooted in and sutured with our need to exist, adapt and be accepted by others.

The connection between masks and sutured identities prompts us to question conventional notions of belonging and explore the multifaceted aspects of human existence. According to Germaine Greer who writes in the preface of *The Pain of Unbelonging: Alienation and Identity in Australasian Literature*, "There are those who will tell you that it is human destiny to unbelong, because we were designed for heaven. All human life is exile, as far as such believers are concerned. Everywhere is diaspora" (qtd. in Collingwood-Whittick ix). Greer challenges the traditional idea of belonging and roots. She posits that human life inherently involves a degree of unbelonging emphasising that this sense of unbelonging is not a flaw but rather an integral aspect of human existence. She considers the idea that human beings need roots erroneous. She stresses the idea that we must accept our inherent unbelongingness as we do not have any roots; rather we have feet (ix). She asks a very pertinent question, "Rootless may be bad, but is rooted any better" (x)? She suggests that human beings, through their movements and mobility, strive to free themselves from the confines of fixed belonging. In doing so, they attempt to stitch together new identities that encompass multiple facets of their experiences and cultural influences. According to her, belonging is limitation. She further argues, "When we put borders around Aboriginal territories and pen the people inside them, we turn belonging into a punishment. Born people need a navel but not an umbilical cord" (x). In the characters like Tristan, Felicity and Bill we find the element of inherent unbelongingness and their conscious or unconscious efforts to stay away from the "punishment of belonging" through their movements and mobility and their conscious or unconscious attempts at stitching new identities for them. However, we find limitations even in their efforts to break free from the umbilical cords of their roots. Their pursuit of fresh sutured identities can be understood in the light of Greer's assertion regarding the "punishment of belonging". By attempting to transcend the confines of fixed roots, they seek to escape the limitations and borders that are related to belonging to a specific group or culture. This resonates with their use of masks as tools for handling the challenges of their sutured identities.

The theatrical and figurative masks of Tristan, Felicity and Bill epitomise their efforts to navigate between different cultural, social, and personal aspects of their lives. Just as unbelonging is viewed as an inherent condition by Greer, the characters' adoption of masks reflects their engagement with this inherent unbelongingness, as they traverse through the boundaries between their cultural roots and their desire for autonomy. However, we can observe the limitations inherent in these attempts of the characters.

Despite their conscious or unconscious efforts, the characters find themselves constrained by the very identities they construct. This notion is reminiscent of Bhabha's concept of the "Third Space" mentioned in his influential book *The Location of Culture*, where identities are not fixed but are constantly negotiated and transformed. We can find this constant negotiation in the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill represented by virtue of their masks in *TULTS*.

The masks in the novel accentuate the ability and requirements of the selected characters to present different faces to different people in different situations as T.S. Eliot (2) says in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" mentioned in the introduction of this study. The changes in their public and private personas are necessitated by their socio-cultural and political contexts. As discussed earlier that masks play a critical role in the process of the suturing of identities of the selected characters for this study as they become an inseparable part of their identity, Jaan Valsiner holds almost opposite views about a mask. According to him, "Mask is a distancing device that introduces Otherness into the relation of the person with oneself" (166). He, further, asserts, "Masks help us to enter social roles — yet we may be relieved once a masked performance is over and we can relax in our natural human state in our privacy" (164). It suggests that masks create a psychological barrier between the individuals and their original selves as they lead to the emergence of different personas that can lead to a sense of detachment or distance from their selves. It also highlights that wearing a mask can be a temporary experience, therefore, once the performance of a particular masked social role is over, individuals feel relieved to return to their natural human state. However, Emilia Perroni, like Hill (91) finds a mask paradoxical as it does not conceal or veil a personality rather it is identical with it and reveals a person (213). She challenges the notion of a sense of detachment or temporariness attached with a mask by contending, "The mask is the character itself, and not a covering" (213). These words seem pertinent to the characters of Felicity, Tristan and Bill because all of them, intentionally or unintentionally, use their literal and metaphorical masks to dissimulate their personal identities but, with the passage of time, their masks become sutured with their characters, partially or completely, instead of remaining merely covering devices. Perroni's statement underscores the transformative power of masks suggesting that they possess the capacity to shape and define not only external appearance but also the internal essence and identity of the wearer. In a literal context, when an actor dons a mask on stage, the mask itself may represent a specific character or archetype within

the narrative. However, Perroni's statement goes beyond this surface interpretation. The significance of the masks extends into the psychological and metaphysical realms. As actors play different characters, their masks become an extension of their identities influencing their emotions, movements, and even their thoughts. In this process, the mask ceases to be a mere external accessory and metamorphoses into a conduit through which the character's traits, motivations, and experiences are channelled. In the case of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill, their respective masks—whether literal or metaphorical—serve as mechanisms for defining and redefining their complex identities within their societies. As per the statement of Perroni, the masks of these characters are not just superficial coverings but tools through which they negotiate their roles, relationships, and self-perception. With the passage of time, the boundaries between their inner selves and the personas they adopt become increasingly indistinct leading to a suturing between the character and the mask. Therefore, Felicity becomes almost an Efican despite her Voorstandish roots, Tristan feels restless when he is separated from the mask of Bruder Mouse and Bill prolongs his stay in Voorstand for twenty years despite keeping himself connected with his Efican roots.

In the light of the above discussion, it can be stated that the exploration of Carey's employment of the metaphor of mask in the novel holds profound significance as it functions as a symbol of transformation and the symbiosis of multiple identities for Bill, Felicity, and Tristan. For each of them, their masks function as crucial instruments for adaptation, concealing their inner struggles and allowing them to assume different roles in society. In each case, the mask represents a delicate balance between embracing and concealing different aspects of their identities, demonstrating the complexities and challenges of their sutured identities.

In a nutshell, the study of Carey's use of the metaphor of mask enhances our understanding of the phenomenon of the suturing of identities. The characters in Carey's work traverse through their theatrical and real worlds by donning various masks that correspond to different social roles or expectations. This underscores the performative nature of identity where the characters adjust their external appearances and behaviours to stay attuned with their socio-cultural traditions. The act of constructing a sutured identity becomes a conscious or unconscious process of selecting and wearing masks that enables the selected characters of *TULTS* to handle and manage their relationships and environments effectively. The exploration of Carey's use of the mask metaphor captures the fluidity, tension, transformation, and vulnerability inherent

in the process of suturing of identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill that enriches our understanding of how these characters negotiate their identities and construct their sutured identities consciously or unconsciously within their respective societies.

In the context of the above-mentioned discussion regarding the significance of the masks of the characters and their relationship with their sutured identities, Makarychev and Yatsyk, befittingly talk about the interiorisatoin of an outside identity and the phenomenon of suturing by asserting:

> 'The suture' characterizes dispersed, fragmented, and existentially insecure identities, which borrow significant meanings (concepts, ideas) from the outside to interiorize them and thus stabilize their identities. In other words, the notion of suture describes how spatial and temporal ruptures can be used to reinforce one's own identities and self-conceptions (8).

It can be stated that the attempts of Tristan, Felicity and Bill at forging freshly stitched identities for themselves can also be an outcome of their conscious or unconscious desires for stabilising their identities in different cultural and societal backgrounds.

4.3 An Instrument for Survival, Disguise and Camouflage

In the intricate world of *TULTS*, the mask emerges as an enigmatic instrument that carries the power of survival, disguise, and camouflage. Whether on the theatrical stage or the grand theatre of life itself, the mask serves as a shield, guarding secrets and intentions while shrouding the selected characters of *TULTS* in an enigmatic aura. We discern that beyond its tangible form, the mask transcends mere adornment to become a potent tool for Tristan, Felicity and Bill who appear to seek refuge within its artful facade. It allows them to adapt to their surroundings and steer their ships of existence through challenging circumstances and treacherous waters concealing their identities, intentions and plans especially during their interaction with their *others*. The masks of the characters operate as more than a deceptive facade; they serve as strategic safeguards against existential threats helping the characters deal with the challenges and vulnerabilities of their identities. The characters use their masks not solely for concealing their identities but also for creating a space for themselves where they can wield agency, negotiate their identities, and encounter the forces that marginalise or undermine them. By adopting different personas, they reclaim a measure of control over their lives and destinies, thereby ensuring their survival against the odds they face. The significance of the masks of these characters can be understood through the

contention of Green, in his famous book, "The 48 Laws of Power" in which he writes, "Recreate yourself by forging a new identity, one that commands attention and never bores the audience. Be the master of your own image rather than letting others define it for you" (qtd. in Ringo 48).

Tristan's mask of Bruder Mouse empowers him to transcend his corporeal deformity and provides him with the confidence to face the world. Felicity strategically employs masks in the Feu Follet Collective to challenge Voorstand's cultural invasion and resist societal expectations using political satire and irony to camouflage her intentions and protect the troupe from scrutiny. For Bill, both literal and metaphorical masks become shields to protect his personal interest while stumbling through the conflicting influences of Efica and Voorstand. Thus, the mask emerges not only as a physical artifact but also as a metaphorical drapery where the threads of survival, disguise, and camouflage intricately weave to reveal the profound complexities of sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill.

One important reason for wearing different masks by the selected characters is their conscious or unconscious desire for stitching operational identities for themselves for their survival in different settings. Since Felicity knows that she and all the characters of the Feu Follet and their performances are closely monitored by Voorstand Intelligence Agency, she is compelled to camouflage her intentions using different artistic devices. We notice that Bill and Tristan also adopt the strategy of simulation, dissimulation and camouflage in Voorstand for hiding their real intentions and pretending to be different people by stitching new identities for themselves. The significance of these masks can be understood through the assertions of Robert Brechon. According to Eldredge, Robert Brechon believes that "… the face is obscene. More naked than the naked body because the expression and the eyes betray the soul. Man is caught in the trap of his own face, but at the same time he wears it like a mask of the image that he thinks he is" (6). Through these words, the profound nature of the human face is disclosed. The face — with its myriad expressions and revealing eyes — becomes a paradoxical instrument both obscenely naked and dexterously masked. It exposes the essence of one's soul, yet simultaneously conceals it with the simulated image one wishes to project. The face becomes a trap, ensnaring individuals within the confines of their own identity while also acting as a mask that they wear to present

themselves to the world. The complexity of the human face mirrors the intricacies of a sutured identity in which authenticity and disguise intertwine.

Masks, being tools for disguise and pretension, sometimes are likely to arouse feelings of deception and mistrust. According to Emilia Perroni the Hebrew word for mask, that is, *masekha* is linked with the word *masakh* that means "curtain". The other words for mask such as *maschera* in Italian and masque in French language have been derived from an Arabic word, that is, *mashara* that means deceit, buffoonery, commerce (213). The word *mascara* which means "make up" also has a similar etymology. According to her, all the connotations of these words refer to deceit, concealment or disguise which are condemned by any society as far as its principal ethical and moral values are concerned. She further believes that a mask signifies an alternative reality which is not necessarily a decent one (213). In this regard, Tseelon writes about the significance of masks by contending, "The origin of masks can be traced back to the Greek and Roman civilisations where the mask was used "as identification of character not as a deception or disguise" (4). However, in the Middle Ages, St. Augustine presents his religious views on masked identities and criticises the use of masks considering it antithetical to a genuine human identity. Since then, it signifies "disingenuity, artifice and pretence" (Tseelon 4).

The arguments presented by Perroni and Tseelon about the use of mask are, undoubtedly, remarkable but their insistence of the fact that masks are used only for concealment and disguise with an intention of deceit seems problematic and somewhat flawed as, sometimes, wearing a mask becomes a necessary evil as it helps an individual to survive— that is the basic human instinct — in the most precarious situations. In *TULTS,* the selected characters use it as a conscious or unconscious strategic tool for camouflage for their economic betterment and socio-cultural survival in the proximity and presence of a hostile cultural and political opponent. Their masks can be perceived as important ploys for restoring some social and psychological equilibrium for them. In this regard, Rudolph H. Moos is right in claiming:

> Similar to people's need for physiological homeostasis is their requirement for a sense of social and psychological equilibrium. People generally have certain characteristic patterns of behavior. When they encounter something which upsets their usual balance, they employ habitual problem-solving mechanisms until the balance is restored (7).

Moos' words highlight the innate human tendency to seek social and psychological equilibrium akin to the concept of physiological homeostasis. Just as our bodies strive to maintain a stable internal environment, our minds also gravitate towards a state of balance and familiarity in the face of disruptions. Therefore, when faced with situations that challenge or disrupt their familiar patterns, Tristan, Felicity and Bill instinctively engage in problem-solving mechanisms to restore their sense of balance by choosing and wearing their masks. They keep on stitching different identities and using different disguises for achieving their different ambitions related to their social, economic and political ends.

Since the characters in the novel wear different masks as they play different roles in their theatrical lives and real lives, we notice that they represent different narratives and personal stories which keep on overlapping. It shows a lack of coherence and consistency in their identities and ideologies. It also shows their mental haziness. They not only carry different psychological but also social identities. We notice that the masks help Felicity become Ophelia, Nora, Hedda Gabler, Kroon Princess and so on depending on the requirements of her theatrical roles. As far as Tristan is concerned, he wears a literal mask in the novel in order to conceal his physical deformity and unsightly appearance from the audience whereas Bill wears different masks to achieve his economic goals in Efica and Voorstand. Hence, the masks worn by Tristan, Felicity, and Bill in *TULTS* are not mere disguises, but intricate threads stitched into the fabric of their identities that, as a matter of fact, play a critical role in the construction of their sutured identities.

By virtue of their masks, Tristan, Felicity and Bill route through the complex symbiosis between societal expectations and personal desires forging identities that are an intricate blend of their past and present identities. These masks serve as bridges that connect their multifaceted selves, embodying the intricate process of suturing identities as they strive to manage the tension between the known and the unknown, the familiar and the foreign and ultimately emerge as resilient and empowered individuals despite the socio-cultural and psychological implications of their sutured identities. The suturing of the masks with the identities of these characters can be perceived through the words of Alison Pullen who argues, "The mask does not just protect and conceal the face but over time takes the shape of the face. The natural features of the face die and give way, dissolving into the permanence of the mask. We become, we live, our masks" (79). Margarita Kefalaki writes in this context, "A mask can be seen like the

chase to reveal, to try and to experience a different identity. Through play, we are able to take a role, to interpret, to become someone/something else (4). She also asserts, "Changing our appearance, with the help of a mask, gives us more choices to explore our different identities. In this way, we can discover or rediscover ourselves and examine our social and personal identities" (4).

The masks become a means of survival enabling the selected characters of *TULTS* to navigate a world where social norms, economic opportunities, and political power dynamics are in flux. Suturing identities becomes a strategy for these characters to maintain a semblance of equilibrium and coherence, even as their various roles and disguises intersect and overlap. This multifunctional aspect of suturing adds depth to their character development and underscores the nuanced relationship between external presentation and internal authenticity. Since the cultural clash and the political struggle between the Eficans and the Voorstanders serve as the most dominant themes of the novel, by donning the mask and outfit of a popular figure of the Voorstandish Sirkus, Tristan assumes a different identity and performs a different role that is incongruous to his and his mother's political struggle. Initially, the mask is only used to veneer his facial and physical deformities but, later, it becomes a tool of escapism, survival and — to some extent — a metaphor for performing a role that is in opposition to his social and political ideology. Subsequently, the mask represents the suturing between two opposing cultures, narratives and political ideologies.

Tristan's profound sense of marginalisation is underscored by his physical deformities which thrust him into a complex identity conundrum. This predicament is exacerbated by the excruciating ordeals he endures as an outcast, even within a society that extols physical flawlessness in its pursuit of the glorification of its theatre. Moreover, the intricate suturing inherent in Tristan's roles—both as an observer and a participant—further intensifies his identity turmoil. This dyad culminates in a profound fragmentation within his sense of self, necessitating a deliberate or spontaneous process of mending. Consequently, we discern a continuous, albeit possibly involuntary, endeavour to interweave disparate fragments of Tristan's identity — a survivalist tactic essential for his existence and success in both Efica and Voorstand. He occupies the paradoxical positions of insider and outsider, spectator and performer, hero and victim, human and commodity, deformed being and iconic symbol. His masks provide him with a sutured identity stitching these disparate and opposing elements together to facilitate his socio-cultural interaction with the people of Efica and Voorstand.

In case of Felicity, her masks represent her divided loyalties which are reflected through her sutured identity that carries the elements of her Voorstandish origin and her Efican identity. She is a Voorstandish by birth but has embraced Efican culture through her involvement in the Feu Follet Collective. This dyad leads to a complex sewing of different cultural elements into her identity. Felicity's endeavour to create an "Efican national style in drama" (Carey 41) exemplifies her attempts to integrate her Voorstandish background with her Efican identity. This integration is a manifestation of her sutured identity where she consciously or unconsciously fuses her heritage and experiences.

Felicity's mask of a theatrical manager further blurs the lines between her various identities. She wears the mask of a creative and bold leader managing the Feu Follet Collective while also negotiating her Voorstandish origins. As a theatrical figure, Felicity deals with literal and figurative masks that actors wear during performances. However, the idea of masks extends beyond the stage to symbolise the various roles individuals assume in their everyday lives. Felicity's adoption of different cultural elements and roles can be seen as a form of masking her inner turmoil. She cloaks her inner conflict between her Voorstandish heritage and her embrace of Efican culture. This conflict is hidden behind the persona she presents to the world. Moreover, Felicity's resistance against Voorstand's intrusion in Efica insinuates her desire to challenge the masks of power and control. Her refusal to comply with the dominant narrative of cultural assimilation highlights her attempt to remove the masks that suppress and subvert her identity.

Felicity's sutured identity represents cultural hybridity that refers to a fusion of diverse elements that form her sense of self. She embodies the challenges and opportunities relating to living at the crossroads of multiple cultural influences and histories. Her journey involves the negotiation of authenticity within her sutured identity. She contends with questions of what it means to be authentic to both her Voorstandish roots and her adopted Efican routes. Her resistance to cultural assimilation echoes a broader critique of the pressure to conform to dominant cultures. Her refusal to abandon her roots exemplifies the challenges faced by individuals trying to maintain their authenticity in the face of external expectations.

As a theatrical figure, Felicity utilises the masks of art and performance to express and explore her sutured identity. The masks she wears on stage become a means of conveying the capriciousness of identity and the fluidity of self. Felicity's sutured

identity in connection with the theme of masks serves as a lens through which we can examine the intricacies of identity construction, cultural assimilation, and the interplay between one's heritage and adopted cultural elements. Thus, Felicity's masked sutured identity acts as a multifaceted tool of survival. It serves as a critical instrument of camouflage urging her to sail across the socio-political paradigms of Efica and Voorstand by strategically adapting to the expectations of both societies. Her sutured identity becomes her survival strategy, enabling her to resist the cultural imposition of Voorstanders while embedding herself in Efican culture.

Bill's masks of a circus performer and an actor in both Efica and Voorstand function as strategic tools of suturing that help him camouflage, disguise, and ensure his survival in the conflicting worlds of Efica and Voorstand. His Efican and Voorstandish masks provide him with a cover that conceals his true intentions and affiliations. In Voorstand, Bill's identity as a performer in Saarlim Sirkus continues this pattern of disguise and camouflage. Owing to his acting experiences in Efica, he is skilled in assuming various personas and roles, a skill that aligns well with his sutured identity. He becomes adept at playing the part of a loyal Voorstander. His theatrical experiences serve as his armour helping him to attune himself with the societal and cultural norms of Voorstand while protecting his allegiance to Efica at the same time. His survival hinges on his ability to maintain his dyad identities and navigate the spaces between them. His masks of malleability not only aid his survival but also position him strategically enabling him to thrive amidst the challenges posed by his sutured identity and the conflicting demands of both nations. His masks and sutured identity also serve as tools for camouflage and as protective shields both in Efica and Voorstand. Bill's oscillation between his Efican and Voorstandish identities validates Burns' viewpoint — discussed in the literature review — of social self's being "a performed character, a part learned" (53).

Bill's sutured identity as a means of camouflage is also evident through his shifting loyalties and temporary attachments with Efica and Voorstand. His temporary attachments impact his decision-making that is vivid during his arguments with Felicity. When Felicity tries to convince him to stay connected with his Efican roots by saying, "You're the one who hates the Saarlim Sirkus" (Carey 49). His reply reveals the element of agency in his conscious efforts of stitching his identity in accordance with his surroundings. He says, "Sweets, I hate it here, not there. In Saarlim, the Saarlim Sirkus is just the Saarlim Sirkus. I don't hate it in Saarlim" (Carey 49). The integration

of masks into Bill's identity serves as a pertinent example of Bhabha's concept of mimicry and hybridity as strategies of camouflage (discussed in the literature review) where his sutured identity disrupts the binary distinctions between local and foreign, self and other.

In the light of the discussion in this section, it can be concluded that the intricate relationship between masks and sutured identities in the lives of Tristan, Bill, and Felicity unveils a profound narrative of camouflage, disguise, and survival. In a world where societal expectations, political conflicts, and cultural clashes reign, these characters strive hard to strike a delicate balance between their multiple selves leaving the reader of the novel and the audience in the theatre or circus muddled whether the characters are wearing some masks to create a façade or the masks have become an inseparable parts of their sutured identities. Their masks, whether theatrical roles, cultural allegiances, or strategic affiliations, become tools that allow them to conceal themselves, embrace new identities and ensure a secure existence for themselves to cope with the existential, socio-cultural and ideological challenges surrounding them.

4.4 Interplay of Masks and Sutured Identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill

Tristan, Bill, and Felicity in *TULTS* experience the symbiotic relationship between their masks and sutured identities that brings to the forefront the complex, shifting and arbitrary nature of their sutured identities. The masks they wear, both literal and metaphorical, serve as critical instruments that help them construct and present their multifaceted sutured identities, voluntarily or involuntarily, to the people around them. This interplay sheds light on how external roles, societal expectations, and personal desires shape their sense of self leading to the stitching together of diverse influences into an attempt to seek a cohesive identity.

Tristan epitomises the concept of a sutured identity as he moves between two distinct cultures, Efica and Voorstand. He wears masks of cultural adaptation both in Efica and Voorstand. The tension between these masks reflects his internal struggle to reconcile his dual heritage showcasing how external perceptions and expectations contribute to the complex nature of his sutured identity. His role as an actor further adds layers to his sutured identity. On stage, he enacts different characters mirroring his real-life experience of embracing diverse roles. This process illuminates his sutured identity where he consciously or unconsciously weaves together his various personas to stitch a unified self.

The comic guise of the mytho-religious Disneyesque character within the Voorstand Sirkus acts as a transformative escape for Tristan, a refuge from his inherent deformity, and a promise of attaining a semblance of social and psychological equilibrium. As the novel unfurls, Tristan's disfigurement becomes concealed beneath the facade of the robotic Bruder Mouse costume, and his previously unintelligible speech is empowered by a voice modulator. This gradual metamorphosis signifies a profound evolution — his transition from a visually unpleasing figure to a celebrated icon — enabled by his willingness to flex and adapt his identity. This malleability urges him to recalibrate, reimagine and reconstruct his cultural identity to align with his coveted desires and harmonise with the expectations of those around him. This conscious or unconscious shift introduces a remarkable paradox within his character. The narrative's inception finds Tristan closely calibrated with an Efican identity and culture positioned in stark opposition to Voorstand and its socio-political narrative. However, his subsequent actions cast him as an enthusiastic participant in Voorstand's socio-cultural landscape. This discordance unveils both fragmentation and the subsequent suturing of Tristan's identity bringing to the surface the symbiotic relationship between his personal aspirations and social pressures.

The interplay between Bill's masks and his sutured identity reveals a multi-layered psychological survival strategy deeply embedded within his character. Bill's journey, as he transitions from a circus performer to an actor in Efica and then a performer in Saarlim Sirkus in Voorstand, is not merely a shift in profession but an intricate process of suturing, adjustment and assimilation. His experiences as a circus performer and an actor serve as metaphorical masks supporting him to both perform and hide behind the artifice of the world of the circus and theatre. These masks become temporary shields for his personal insecurities and the harsh realities of his marginalisation, liminality and alienation in Voorstand. His move into the world of acting enables him to experience a new kind of masking — a performative one. He must embody characters on stage, showcasing his chameleon-like ability to suture diverse fragments of his identities by virtue of his theatrical and socio-cultural masks.

Felicity's masks and sutured identity manifest through her roles as an actress, lover, manager, mother and a social activist. As an actress, she embodies different characters on stage demonstrating her ability to act and perform different roles in her personal life. Her romantic mask, worn in her relationships with Vincent, Bill and Wally alternatively conceals her uncertainties and secret involvements highlighting the tension between

genuine emotions and performed behaviours. Her journey unveils how the masks she wears become integral components for the construction of her sutured identity, stressing upon the internal conflict between true emotions and societal expectations.

Felicity's evolution in the novel reflects the symbiosis between her masks and her sutured identity as her character's evolution is characterised by the masks — both literal and metaphorical — she dons which contribute to the conscious or unconscious suturing of her identity. As she moves from her Voorstandish roots to embrace the Efican culture, her adoption of circus skills into her theatre represents a fusion of identities. Her engagement with the Feu Follet Collective becomes a metaphorical mask muddling the shades of her original identity and her adopted one. This suturing continues as she becomes a symbol of resistance against Voorstand's dominance masking her own origins to protect the Efican culture. Her journey reveals that the process of the construction of a sutured identity is not a linear assimilation but rather a dynamic negotiation that blurs boundaries and necessitates the conscious wielding of masks to travel through the labyrinthine terrain of cultural belonging and personal autonomy.

In conclusion, the interplay of masks and sutured identity in the characters of Tristan, Bill, and Felicity reveals the process of the construction of a sutured identity. Their adaptation to cultural contexts, performances of roles and routing of personal desires contribute to the knotty weaving of various influences in their conscious or unconscious attempts to obtain a stable sutured identity. The masks they wear reflect the complex negotiation between internal emotions and external expectations ultimately revealing the multifaceted and shifting nature of a sutured identity.

4.5 Character Development and Arcs of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill

The character development and arcs of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill in *TULTS* are intertwined with their use of masks and the evolution of their sutured identities. As they experience the challenges of reconciling external expectations, personal desires, and cultural influences, their masks serve as symbols of their multifaceted selves contributing to the construction of their sutured identities that reveal their character developing arcs, personal growth and transformation.

Tristan's character development revolves around his struggle to reconcile his Efican heritage with Voorstand's culture. The study of Carey's use of different cultural, theatrical and metaphorical masks edifies us about the complex process of Tristan's

sutured identity. Initially, he embraces a Voorstand mask out of necessity but as the novel progresses, his attachment to it becomes increasingly complicated. His sutured identity keeps on strengthening as he confronts his dual heritage and seeks his authentic self. His different masks illuminate the conflicts within him, as well as his eventual acceptance of his complexity. His arc culminates in a deeper understanding of his identity, where he stitches together his various roles into a cohesive self that incorporates both Efican and Voorstandish elements.

At the beginning of the novel, Tristan is depicted as an outcast due to his facial and physical deformities. This status of being an outsider even within his own society shapes his worldview and self-perception, giving him the bitter taste of marginalisation, and ridicule that leads him to a sense of alienation from his own society. The introduction of Bruder Mouse in Tristan's painful existence functions as a turning point as regards the development of his character. Its mask represents a conscious or unconscious attempt on Tristan's part to escape his deformed self and stitch a new identity for himself. It introduces Tristan to the idea of performing various roles and the potential to change his narrative. We can find a "patently dramatic" element — as asserted by Smith in the literature review (53) — in Tristan's social roles that construct his sutured identity by virtue of his performance on the stage of the world.

Tristan's acceptance of Bruder Mouse's mask represents his initial step toward embracing the concept of masking and adopting alternative identities. He realises that wearing a mask provides him with a sense of empowerment and agency allowing him to project a different version of himself to the world. In this context, his decision to leave Efica and pursue an acting career in Voorstand marks a pivotal point in his arc. This transition reflects his desire to escape his outcast status. However, the move also leads him to confront the challenges of assimilation and negotiating a sutured identity. The convergence of Tristan's Efican and Voorstandish masks culminates in his complex reconciliation of his dual heritage, transcending superficial dichotomies to weave together a tapestry of authenticity. Ultimately, Tristan's evolution showcases how his masks of simulation and dissimulation are sutured together to construct his sutured identity that facilitates his journey through different personal, socio-cultural and ideological challenges of his existence.

Felicity's character arc in the novel enlightens us how her theatrical, social and political masks create her sutured identity. Her introduction as a performer with Voorstandish roots signifies the complexity of her cultural affiliations, a complexity that is further

highlighted by her establishment of the Feu Follet Collective in Efica. The use of masks within her theatrical productions serves as both a literal and metaphorical representation of her complicated identity. As she seeks to invent an "Efican national style in drama" (Carey 41), Felicity's incorporation of circus skills into the dramatic enactments in the Feu Follet manifests her conscious or unconscious attempts to suture her Voorstandish heritage with her Efican identity. The dual loyalties she maintains — her resistance to Voorstand's intrusion, and her simultaneous embodiment of an Efican advocate and a Voorstandish ally — highlight her intricate struggle. Her transition from one identity to another represents a significant shift unearthing her sutured identity's evolution in response to the socio-political dynamics of Efica and Voorstand. Thus, Felicity's arc is evident by the masks she wears revealing not only the facade of her performances but also the resilience with which she navigates the complexities of her heritage and the transformation of her selfhood. However, the tragic death of Felicity demonstrates her incapability to keep her "public face" and "the true self" separate as asserted by Smith (53). Her commitment of "an irrevocable act in the mask", that is, her miscalculation to "become the other" instead of "only play at being the other" brings about her tragic demise highlighting the social and political threats associated with a sutured identity according to Smith (53) discussed in chapter two.

As far as Bill is concerned, his character development in the novel is profoundly sutured with the motifs of masks and sutured identity depicting a compelling evolution triggered by the necessity of survival and ambition. His journey from a circus performer and actor in Efica to a performer in Voorstand underscores his flexible nature, evident in his fluid navigation between diverse roles and personas. His conscious or unconscious choice to embrace a Voorstandish identity, even if temporarily, uncovers his understanding of the utilisation of masks by Carey as tools of survival and personal evolution. His initial reluctance to be identified as a Voorstander gives way to a pragmatic acceptance of this identity exemplifying his pragmatic response to the socio-political circumstances he encounters. His sutured identity emerges as a result of his complex attachments and shifting loyalties as he raises a toast to both his Efican heritage and his newfound Voorstandish role. His journey reflects the dichotomous role of his masks as they conceal his inner conflicts while expediting his social mobility. Bill's arc testifies the intricate symbiotic relationship between masks, suturing and the continuous negotiation of personal choices and decisions in the face of shifting socio-political landscapes.

4.6 Process of Suturing of Identity: Integration of Masks

The dynamic interplay between masks and the intricate web of sutured identities — as epitomised by the journeys of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill — unfolds as a nuanced exploration of how individuals strive to handle the challenges related to process of the suturing of identities. As we traverse through the realms of their character arcs and the insights gleaned from their struggles, adaptations, and transformations, we uncover a mosaic of human experiences that reverberate with the universal quest for belonging, self-discovery, and survival. This journey delves into the realm of cultural assimilation, the malleability of individual selves, and the compelling influence of societal constructs, all of which are intricately stitched into the very fabric of their identities. Through their stories, we discern how masks — often seen as mere disguises — evolve into instruments of empowerment and survival, conduits through which the complexity of sutured identities finds its expression. These masks become a means to integrate the dual heritage of Tristan ultimately culminating in a dynamic sutured identity that embraces both Efican and Voorstandish elements. Bill's integration of masks is a masterful interplay between his circus performer identity and his role as an actor offering him camouflage and survival in the diverse cultural landscapes of Efica and Voorstand in the pursuit of his personal economic ambitions. Felicity's journey involves a layered integration of masks, as she navigates the delicate balance between her Voorstandish roots and her connection with Efica.

Throughout his physical and metaphorical journey of life, Tristan switches between different roles because of his passionate adherence to his identity as a performer. His theatrical experiences are instrumental in the construction of his sutured identity as he juggles with different masks in Efica and Voorstand. We discern that, in Voorstand, he consciously or unconsciously tries to suture his Efican upbringing in accordance with the demands of the society and theatrical world of Voorstand. His conflicting and split identity that he tries to suture consciously or unconsciously represents the complex nature of a sutured identity that is a blend of internal as well as external conflicts and aspirations.

Tristan's return to Efica at the end of the novel signifies his disillusionment with his Voorstandish identity. It represents a greater acceptance of his sutured identity and an acknowledgment of his roots. His journey highlights that identity is not fixed rather it is a construction that evolves through interactions, experiences, and choices. His

adoption of various roles illustrates that individuals can hold contradictory aspects within themselves. His initial rejection and subsequent acceptance of the mask reflect the pressure to conform to established norms. His internal struggle and eventual recognition of his otherness highlight the ongoing search for authenticity within a sutured identity. His journey prompts readers to question whether true authenticity can be achieved or if it is a constant negotiation.

The complexities associated with the integration of the masks used in the novel have been very appropriately explained by Reni who believes that Tristan's identity is complicated because of his imprisonment with his desire to wear the mask to "continue being the mouse and not be himself" (26). At the end of the novel, Tristan decides to return to his roots but a question arises here if he is the same Tristan that he has been before leaving for Voorstand. It seems that he will not be able to have a coherent and stable Efican identity as he will not be able to eliminate the elements of Voorstandish identity in his character. The mask seems to have become an integral part of his sutured identity.

4.7 The Symbolism of the Masks

The mask in *TULTS* is the central motif and symbol that intricately stitches together the intricacies of the characters' sutured identities. As discussed earlier, Tristan, Bill, and Felicity don masks—both literal and metaphorical—that serve as agents for personal transformation, societal adjustments, and the negotiation of their internal conflicts. These masks, while providing a veneer of protection and empowerment, also reveal the challenges that stem from the fusion of opposing cultural affiliations. Tristan's literal mask of Bruder Mouse becomes a potent symbol of his journey towards exploring new vistas of his existence. Initially an agent for escapism, this mask enables Tristan to transcend his physical deformities and societal limitations. The social mask of Bruder Mouse brings notable changes to Tristan's life. Smith contends in this regard:

> Such a social mask allows the masker to enjoy privacy, freedom, and the pleasure of masking itself. Thus, Nietzche writes in *Beyond Good and Evil*: "the spirit enjoys the multiplicity and craftiness of its masks, it also enjoys the feeling of security behind them" (127).

Subsequently, Smith argues, "This security affords the masker a control over others, too, because the masker's true nature remains a mystery" (127). We notice that the theatrical and metaphorical masks of Tristan provide him with much-needed freedom,

privacy and security. It demonstrates the positive impacts of his sutured identity on his personal existence.

The transformation from an Efican "mutant" to the empowered Bruder Mouse encapsulates the fusion of Tristan's dual identity constructing a bridge between the disfigured child within and the admirable performer he becomes. The mask becomes a transformative catalyst urging him to cope with the challenges of his existence with a newfound courage. Nonetheless, this mask also captures the fragility of his identity embodying his internal disquietude as he strives to deal with the incongruities of his past and present. It demonstrates the contradictions and inconsistencies associated with his sutured identity.

Bill's relationship with masks, both literal and metaphorical, symbolises a tapestry of conflicting identities entangled by societal expectations and personal ambitions. As a performer in the Feu Follet, he adorns masks that depict various roles that demonstrate his compromises in fulfilling the demands of his cultural surroundings. Hence, beneath the performance lies a man burdened by the tension between his Voorstandish disguise and his Efian heritage. The Voorstandish mask acts as a facade of allegiance, concealing his Efian roots that yearn for authenticity. The juxtaposition of these masks symbolises the internal struggle between societal conformity and personal desires echoing the dichotomy of Bill's sutured identity. The disparate elements found in Bill's sutured identity can be illuminated through Smith's contention — mentioned in chapter two — that a mask can function either "as a shield or disguise protecting the identity of the masker" (12). We notice that Bill, especially in Voorstand, uses his masks to shield his Efican identity and disguise himself as a Voorstander. It demonstrates his adroit handling of his masks that reveals the challenges associated with his sutured identity.

Felicity's metaphorical masks reveal a dynamic character embroiled in a struggle to reconcile her conflicting cultural affiliations. Her role as a performer in the Feu Follet enables her to adopt different personas that represent different fragments of her identity. Felicity's masks, like Nora's submissiveness, Hedda Gabler's yearning for autonomy and Ophelia's vulnerability, symbolise the multiple and diverse facets of her character. Nora, the protagonist in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879), is initially depicted as a submissive and obedient wife conforming to the societal expectations of her time. However, it is observed that Nora becomes a paragon of resistance against the patriarchal system rampant in her society and stands up for her rights — denied to her by her husband — as a wife and mother. In Felicity's character too, we discern the

elements of resistance against the social and political system. Like Nora, she also behaves like a strong and protective mother to her child. We also find some elements of Hedda Gabler — the protagonist of Hedda Gabler (1891) by Ibsen. We can find a parallel between the disturbed romantic lives of both Hedda and Felicity. We can also find some elements of suturing between the characters of Hedda and Felicity as regards their desires for autonomy, emancipation and control. We can also find traces of suturing between the characters of *Hamlet*'s Ophelia and Felicity as regards their vulnerability, internal conflicts and emotional turbulences. Thus, Felicity's theatrical experiences play a critical role in providing her with a sutured identity which is the combination of her socio-cultural and theatrical influences.

The conscious or unconscious suturing between Felicity's different roles empowers her, but it, concurrently, represents the tension between conformity and improvisation in her character. The real challenge for Felicity lies in the tactically sound management of her social, cultural and theatrical masks as each mask epitomises a significant element of her sutured identity. The masks Felicity wears also become sources of discomfort and guilt symbolising the sacrifices she makes to uphold appearances and conform to societal expectations. The internal tension resulting from her sutured identity is palpable and it shapes her actions and decisions throughout the novel. Felicity's journey highlights the complexity of sutured identities and the toll they can take on an individual's sense of self. The masks she wears — while serving as a means of adaptation and survival also become a barrier to authentic self-expression and connection with others. We ascertain that despite her best efforts and her ample experience of directing and enacting stage performances, she, unfortunately, fails to stitch the fragmented elements of her Voorstandish and Efican identities seamlessly that bring about her tragic murder by the Voorstand Intelligence Agency. It demonstrates that managing a sutured identity is not so easy a task as it appears to be. Smith stresses that the masker must remain in control (126), however, we discern that Felicity has to suffer because she loses that critical control required for the effective management of a sutured identity.

She grapples with the interplay between her authentic self and the roles she performs. While the masks she wears afford her various opportunities and advantages, they also create a sense of fragmentation within her identity. She struggles to reconcile her personal desires and aspirations with the expectations of others and the roles she assumes. Furthermore, the use of masks allows Felicity to distance herself from her

past and her true emotions, making it difficult for her to forge genuine connections and find a stable sense of self. The masks she wears reflect the primary concern of this research bringing to our notice how performance and identity intertwine leading to the profound exploration of sutured identities and the complexities of human relationships. The significance of Felicity's relationship with her masks lies in the poignant exploration of identity, belonging and the struggle to reconcile conflicting aspects of oneself in a world that demands conformity.

The masks of the selected characters function as both shields and catalysts. They provide them with a temporary escape from societal constraints while also embodying the underlying fractures within their identities. These masks are like stitches, attempting to hold together the intricate tapestry of their experiences. However, as they seek refuge in these disguises, they also contend with the realisation that these masks cannot entirely conceal their internal struggles and complexities because of the impermanent and vulnerable nature of themselves.

Traces of multi-dimensionality can be found in Carey's ingenious use of the mask of Bruder Mouse that represents the suturing between Tristan's personal desires and internal conflicts. It helps Tristan escape the constant anguish of his physical deformity and experience an ecstatic sense of empowerment and transformation. Thus, the mask ceases to be a mere theatrical or entertainment prop; it signifies Tristan's ardent desire to lead a life free from the demonising social pressures because of his unique physical characteristics.

The mask of Bruder Mouse in the novel serves as a multi-dimensional symbol that reflects the intricate layers of Tristan's sutured identity. It is not merely a physical prop but a metaphorical representation of his internal struggles, his desires, and his attempts at reconciling the conflicting facets of his existence. Initially, the mask provides Tristan with an escape from the limitations of his physical deformities and societal expectations. When Tristan dons the mask, he transforms into Bruder Mouse — a charismatic performer who captivates audiences. This transformation reflects his conscious desire to shed his insecurities and find empowerment through a different identity. The mask symbolises his aspirations and is a symbol of his longing for a life unburdened by his deformities.

The mask of Bruder Mouse brings to the foreground Tristan's quest for a coherent identity that may alleviate the agonies experienced by Tristan because of his physical malformation. With the passage of time, we discern that the mask, in the words of

Kennedy, not only hides but transforms (376) Tristan's character by hiding his physical limitations and providing him with much sought-after feelings of acceptance in Voorstand. The complicated and profound symbolic significance of the mask can be seen in the suturing between Tristan's inner struggles and public manifestations. However, we discern that despite temporarily suturing his emotional and physical vulnerabilities and his facade of a confident performer, the mask of Bruder Mouse fails to heal and hide the emotional scars of Tristan.

At the end of the novel, we discern that Tristan's intoxication with the mask of Bruder Mouse makes him forgetful of the lurking danger. It demonstrates the issues and threats associated with his sutured identity. Despite experiencing a sense of fleeting euphoria, Tristan fails to disassociate himself completely from the challenges enveloping his existence. It demonstrates the fragility of masks and the unreliability of the sutures because they can come off and the wounds may open up again. Thus, the sutured identity of Tristan, despite providing him with moments of relief and rejoice, does not guarantee a permanent success or respite for him.

The use of masks in Felicity's character in *TULTS* illuminates her sutured identity in a way that reveals the challenges of her personal struggles, her cultural affiliations and her yearning for agency and legitimacy. Through the symbolic representation of masks, Carey delves into the intricate layers of Felicity's identity, showcasing how her conscious and unconscious attempts at suturing her identities shape her actions, decisions, and relationships. Felicity's use of masks in the Feu Follet Collective symbolises her conscious or unconscious choice to highlight the cultural values of Efica and criticise and condemn those of Voorstand especially its intervention in everyday life of the Eficans. Her deliberate ploy of suturing between the Efican theatre and Voorstandish circus symbolises how her sutured identity emerges from her negotiation between her Efican ancestry and the Voorstandish world she has come from.

Despite her skilled performances, Felicity's internal turmoil remains evident. She is weighed down by the tension between her Voorstandish roots and her Efican routes. The symbolic masks she wears to adapt and perform become sources of conflict representing her struggle to reconcile her personal identity with the roles she assumes. Her sutured identity, in this sense, becomes a mosaic of her conscious efforts to bridge the gap between her cultural surroundings and her former Voorstandish identity. Her involvement in Efican politics signifies her desire to break free from the legacy of her Voorstandish roots revealing her conscious effort at suturing expelling all the difference

to stitch a neat Efican identity. In this context, Laclau regards "every identity as differential" that suggests that there should be "a constant attempt to suture identity by expelling difference" and believes that "identity always carries the inherent possibility for dislocation" (qtd. in Nymalm 63). We can also find out the traces of the "attempt to suture identity by expelling difference" and the "inherent possibility for dislocation" in Felicity's character when we are informed, "She lost the pale political beauty of the Kroon Princess. She began to rebuild herself from the outside in, to define herself by her movements, to make her body a mould for her emotions" (Carey 192).

Felicity's pivotal moment of prioritising her Efican routes over her Voorstandish ancestry symbolises a profound shift in her sutured identity. Her gift of the Bruder Mouse mask to Tristan acts as a powerful symbol of both maternal care and internal conflict. This duality manifests her ongoing struggle between her two identities. On one hand, she defiantly resists Voorstand's influence on the Efican affairs, yet on the other hand, her attachment to her Voorstandish origins surfaces through her gift. While the mask becomes a protective shield for Tristan shielding him from the world's judgments, it also functions as a symbol for Felicity's own hidden vulnerabilities. Her gesture projects the suturing between her divided loyalties and symbolises the tension between her expression of strength while grappling with her inner turmoil.

Felicity's tragic death symbolises the perilous nature of a sutured identity perceived as a betrayal against one's indigenous cultural roots underscoring the gravity of challenges accompanying the fusion of diverse identities. When individuals develop sutured identities that incorporate aspects from different cultures or experiences, it can lead to suspicions that they are abandoning or rejecting their own cultural roots. It engenders the feelings of betrayal in the people of the indigenous culture of the individual. Felicity's death brings to the forefront the strength of social forces against an individual that becomes one of the most critical factors for the problematic and perilous nature of a sutured identity that is evident in Felicity's character.

Bill's sutured identity is a complex collage of masks, fused together to bring to the foreground the intricate suturing between his personal aspirations and societal expectations. From his role as an actor and a horse-rider in the Feu Follet to the enigmatic allure of his Voorstandish disguise, Bill's masks symbolise the fragmented self he presents to the world. Each mask symbolises a facet of his identity facilitating him to play various roles with finesse and flair. Nevertheless, beneath the veneer of his performances, we find a man struggling to reconcile the divergent fragments of his

being. The masks become both his shield and his burden offering him a refuge from his past while also entangling him in a web of deceit and self-denial.

The device of masks in shaping Bill's character and sutured identity emerges as a captivating symbol that delves into the depths of his internal struggles and cultural affiliations. As a skilled performer in the Feu Follet and Saarlim Sirkus, Bill employs countless masks, skillfully concealing and embodying different roles. However, beyond the theatrical facade of his Voorstandish identity lies a profound connection to his Efican roots symbolising the layers of complexity in his sutured identity. When he meets Tristan in Voorstand, this connection resurfaces prompting a profound exploration of his sense of belonging and personal history. The metaphorical masks that Bill wears symbolise his multifaceted nature revealing the interplay of contradictions and revelations that shape his journey towards a sutured identity.

The mask serves as a shield concealing Bill's true emotions and vulnerabilities as he handles and manages the demands of his profession. In doing so, Bill's sutured identity becomes entangled with his role as a performer blurring the lines between his authentic self and the character he portrays. Beyond the circus ring, Bill also wears metaphorical masks in his daily life. These masks symbolise the societal expectations imposed on him as a member of Voorstand, the nation he resides in and a citizen of Efica from where he belongs. As a member of Voorstandish circus, he must conform to the cultural norms and values of the nation presenting himself as a loyal and patriotic individual. However, beneath this mask of allegiance lies a yearning for something more — a desire to break free from the constraints of his Voorstandish identity that is evident during his behaviour at the dinner hosted by him in honour of Mrs Peggy Kram. The dinner party hosted by Bill encapsulates the nuances and challenges of his sutured identity where his actions and words oscillate between the expectations of Voorstand and his inner desires.

The discomfort of wearing a Voorstandish mask by Bill manifests in his interactions with Tristan. While Tristan's mask of Bruder Mouse represents his optimism and empowerment, Bill remains hesitant and conflicted, torn between the allure of authenticity and the comfort of conformity. Throughout the novel, Bill's masks become symbolic of his internal conflict and the fragmentation of his identity. As he contemplates his desires and aspirations, he confronts the incongruities within his sutured identity. The masks he wears represent his attempt to find a sense of belonging and purpose, but they also obscure his path to self-discovery. In the climactic moments

of the novel, as Bill hosts a dinner party and Tristan's life is threatened, the weight of his sutured identity becomes palpable. This moment of reckoning epitomises the complex struggle within Bill's sutured identity, as he must choose between the safety of his Voorstandish facade and the authenticity of his Efican self with all its vulnerabilities and consequences. He faces a critical decision — to continue wearing his Voorstandish mask that has kept him safe and accepted, or to shed it and embrace the identity of his deformed child and its consequent embarrassment. This practical and emotional predicament of Bill symbolises the internal struggle that defines the challenges and outcomes of his sutured identity very appropriately.

To conclude the discussion in this section, in *TULTS* the symbolism of the mask functions as a polygonal lens through which the obscure and labyrinthine nature of sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill are examined. The mask serves as a symbol for the fluid and transformative nature of identity reflecting the characters' constant negotiations between their original cultural roots and the foreign influences they encounter. Tristan, Felicity and Bill utilise masks to handle the intricacies of their sutured identities suggesting how these identities are stitched together through a process of modification and deliberation. The mask signifies both disguise and revelation portraying the attempts of the characters to camouflage themselves while simultaneously revealing their inner struggles and aspirations. Through their journeys, we witness the paradoxical nature of sutured identities that offer both opportunities and internal conflicts. Eventually, the symbolism of the mask emphasises the ever-evolving and capricious nature of sutured identities reflecting the perpetual suturing between tradition and innovation, belonging and unbelonging and the intricate interplay of personal agency and external expectations.

Just as a mask can transform a face, the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill are shaped by their encounters, experiences, and choices leaving us to contemplate the profound intricacies of human existence and the compelling stories that emerge from the fusion of diverse cultural threads. Carey's use of masks to bring to the foreground the process of the suturing of identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill can be summed up through the words of Wendy Doniger who argues, "We assume that masquerades lie, and often they do, at least on the surface. But often masquerades tell a deeper truth..." (qtd. in Lawler 103).

4.8 Psychological Implications of the Interconnection between Masks and Sutured Identities

The analysis of the masks and the sutured identities of the characters, while providing us with very useful insights, brings forth the psychological implications of the contradictions and inconsistencies attached to them that can be understood through the contention of Martin et al. who assert:

> Identities are created not in a smooth, orderly process but in spurts. Certain events provide insights into who we are, but these are framed by long periods during which we may not think much about ourselves or our identities. Thus, we may sometimes, feel that we know exactly who we are and our place in the world and at other times we may be rather confused" (46).

This intricate interconnection between masks and sutured identities creates a psychological landscape fraught with tension, ambiguity, and growth, ultimately unscrambling the complicated ways in which these characters strive their best to navigate their inner worlds while grappling with the external pressures of cultural, societal, and personal expectations. In this context, Holland et al. argue, "... We conceive persons as composites of many, often contradictory, self-understandings and identities" (Holland et al. 8).

The analysis of the sutured identities of the selected characters of *TULTS* leads us to claim that their sutured identities are not only an outcome of their psychological restlessness and discomfiture, but they also have some far-reaching psychological implications on their lives. We observe the elements of anxiety, impatience, dissatisfaction, dilemma, frustration, melancholy, ambivalence, shame and guilt in the selected characters at various points during the study of the *TULTS*. These psychological issues play a decisive role in granting them sutured identities. However, we observe that these sutured identities have their own psychological repercussions. Besides, the masks the characters wear bring to the forefront their inner conflicts, aspirations, and psychological fragility, as they strive to route through the complex terrain of suturing.

Owing to the interplay between the Efican and Voorstandish identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill, at times, they seem victims of social and psychological bewilderment.

In order to understand this bewilderment, we must be aware of what Domenic Marbaniang writes regarding the issue of bewilderment. He asserts:

> Bewilderment may be considered to be the metaphysical turbulent emotion that arises out of the paradox of the rational sense of unity and the empirical sense of plurality. Bewilderment is confoundedness. Reason is unified, experience is plurified (213).

He further states, "One is neither bewildered by the rationality of unity nor by the empiricality of plurality but by the disharmony between them. One is baffled by the possibility of the contradictory juxtaposition of the both" (214). Marbaniang's notion of bewilderment captures the profound emotional turbulence arising from the paradoxical coexistence of a rational yearning for unity and an empirical experience of plurality that forms the basis of the struggles of the selected characters in *TULTS* as far as the study of the process of the suturing of their identities is concerned.

Tristan, Felicity and Bill consciously or unconsciously attempt at suturing their multiple identities. However, they experience the underlying incompatibility between their personal desires and the challenges lurking in their paths because of the diverse cultural backgrounds of their personal identities and their adopted identities. The notion of "bewilderment" appropriately demonstrates this underlying incompatibility that becomes a critical barrier in their journeys towards attaining uncomplicated, unproblematic and pacifying sutured identities that may ward off the feelings of perplexity and disorientation in them in their shifting socio-cultural surroundings.

Owing to his bewilderment, Tristan is found standing on the edges of the "fault lines" between his Efican and Voorstandish identities. Though such an in-betweenness is painful, Tristan learns to think beyond the categorical narratives of the discourses of both countries. Sometimes, he is caught in the quandary of positioning himself as an Efican or a Voorstander or a blend of both. His bewildered and baffled identity can be termed as "unhomely". The conflicting social, economic, political and psychological forces push Tristan towards thinking at or beyond the limit of his cultural and national discourse. His identity experiences a space of contestation as well as transculturation as he undergoes the experience of cultural displacement. In this context, Snodgrass appropriately sums up Tristan's choices and decision regarding his use of the masks and his strategic suturing of identities by saying that, "Limitations become Tristan's impetus to greater achievement (37).

Tristan's life unfolds with him wearing various masks — the mask of deformity in Efica and the mask of normalcy in Voorstand. These masks initially cause internal conflict leaving him feeling fragmented and torn between identities. His sutured identity process involves integrating these distinct facets leading to the emergence of a more harmonised and more flexible self that encompasses both his deformity and his aspirations. The mask and costume of Bruder Mouse provide him with some feelings of security and mitigate his anxiety and apprehension in Voorstand to some extent. C. L. Ten asserts in this context, "For although individuals are anchored in particular attachments and commitments, they can still detach themselves from each attachment and commitment, review it, and revise or reject it" (qtd. in Kukathas 12). Thus, suturing becomes a tool for overcoming the feelings of paranoia and alienation for Tristan. His decision of wearing the mask in Voorstand reflects his acceptance for reviewing and revising his attachment with his Efican culture and traditions and suturing it in accordance with the Voorstandish norms in order to feel secure there. Thus, it can be stated that in the case of Tristan, suturing appears to be an instrument for the psychological manacling of his multiple subject-positions to align his personal and communal discourse with that of his altered social environment.

Tristan's mask of Bruder Mouse becomes significant for him because we are told that in Voorstand, Tristan considers himself insecure like a turtle without a shell. This imagery encapsulates his feelings of being exposed in an unfamiliar environment where he lacks the familiar cultural armour that would shield him from his personal and socio-cultural vulnerabilities and insecurities. He shares his insecurities and apprehensions with us by saying, "I was three foot six, powerless beneath the big empty sky of Voorstand" (Carey 283). Subsequently, we observe a longing for home and return to the roots in Tristan when he says, "It [Voorstand] was the fabled city, but I would have given anything to be back inside the mouldy safety of the Ducrow Circus School" (Carey 293). The perception of vulnerability stems from Tristan's dislocated sense of "home and the world" as articulated by Bhabha. He experiences "estranging sense of the relocation of home and the world — the unhomeliness — that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations" (9). However, we recognise that the mask of Bruder Mouse provides him some semblance of security and protection as Debbie Ford believes that masks are "shells of protection" (qtd. in Chanson).

Bhabha's concept of "unhomeliness" refers to the disorienting experience of living between cultures where the familiar markers of home and belonging are disrupted. Said

also believes in the disorienting experiences of the dislocated and exiled people. He states, “Exile, the state of separation from one’s home, disorients the continuation of a relatively stable performance of identity, especially cultural identity” (qtd. in Chrysochou 75). This dislocation and experience of exile trigger an existential crisis for Tristan, manifesting in his insecurity and a longing for a protective shell—a metaphorical mask that can shield him from the uncertainties of his cross-cultural existence. The mask of Bruder Mouse and Tristan’s attempts at suturing his identity with it serve this psychological need providing Tristan with a sense of protection and a means to construct an alternative identity. It insinuates how Tristan’s adoption of the mask is not merely a theatrical act but a strategic response to his psychological state. Thus, the mask becomes a coping mechanism that helps him reconcile his sutured identity providing him with a refuge from his feelings of vulnerability while allowing him to negotiate the complexities of his dual cultural affiliations.

As discussed in the above-mentioned paragraph that Tristan’s mask provides him with the feelings of security and mitigates his anxiety, he also experiences a sense of distress and guilt because of going against the wishes of his mother by connecting himself with the mask of Bruder Mouse. It is evident when he says, “If there was anything to spoil my reverie, it was the knowledge that my mother had given me that mask against her own heartfelt principles. I believed that she loathed Bruder Mouse” (Carey 185). Therefore, we can find a sense of discomfort consuming Tristan when he comes across his mother “I heard the sound of her heels cross the cobbles of the foyer, I lost my courage and removed the mask” (Carey 185). Thus, on one hand, the mask becomes a tool for him to escape his physical deformity and embrace an alternate persona, offering him a sense of empowerment. On the other hand, it represents a tension between his aspirations and his mother’s deep-seated beliefs, eliciting feelings of distress and guilt within him. The discomfort Tristan experiences when encountering his mother underscores the internal struggle he faces. His act of removing the mask in her presence reflects not only his inability to maintain the facade but also a deeper psychological need to confront his true feelings and the conflict inherent in his sutured identity. This dichotomy between security and distress and empowerment and guilt mirrors the intricate psychological journey of Tristan as he strives to manage the contradictory forces shaping his identity.

As far as Felicity is concerned, her journey embodies the challenges of a sutured identity as her masks of a defiant artist and a conflicted heritage reveal her struggles to

suture her Voorstandish roots and her Efican allegiances. These masks protect her self-worth, yet they also represent the tension between her artistic ambitions and cultural belonging. As she fuses these identities, she confronts her inner conflicts, shaping her sense of self-worth and artistic authenticity. On the other hand, Bill's masks reflect his coping strategies and his quest for acceptance. The mask of detachment from his native country shields him from the harsh treatment in Voorstand while his mask of Voorstandish identity conceals his emotional and patriotic attachment to Efica. These masks enable him to acclimatise himself in accordance with the foreign environments, yet they also distance him from his genuine emotions. His conscious or unconscious attempts at suturing involve reconciling these coping mechanisms with his true feelings, leading to a critical configuration of his identity. The psychological conundrum experienced by Bill because of this suturing is obvious during his vacillation for entering Saarlim Sirkus. On one hand, he is willing to manifest his strong consonance and sense of unison with his community and its discourse but, on the other hand, he is eyeing at the economic benefits of settling in Voorstand.

For Tristan, Felicity, and Bill, the process of sutured identities signifies the integration of their "shadow selves". The term "shadow selves" draws upon the concept introduced by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, referring to the unconscious, often hidden aspects of an individual's personality that are suppressed or denied due to societal norms or personal fears. These hidden elements might encompass repressed desires, unresolved conflicts, or aspects that are considered socially unacceptable. According to Jung, "the shadow self is an essential aspect of the human psyche, and ignoring it can lead to psychological problems. In his view, the shadow self is the unconscious aspect of ourselves that we do not identify with or do not want to be associated with" (qtd. in Rijo ch. 2). Quoting Jung, later on, Sergio Rijo states, "Jung believed that the shadow self is a necessary component of our psyche, and by embracing it, we can access untapped potential. He believed that our shadow self contains the qualities that we don't like about ourselves or that society deems unacceptable" (ch. 2).

The analysis of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill reveals that integrating their shadow selves is a pivotal psychological process for personal survival and growth in changing socio-cultural, political and ideological surroundings. The integration of their shadow selves implies that their journey involves acknowledging, reconciling, and embracing the suppressed or hidden elements of their identities. These are facets they might have kept concealed due to the pressures of conforming to societal expectations,

cultural norms, or personal fears. Tristan's deformity, Felicity's artistic desires conflicting with her Voorstandish cultural roots, and Bill's detachment from his indigenous cultural roots masking his true emotions represent their shadow aspects. The process of sutured identities, wherein they consciously or unconsciously stitch together their diverse identities, signifies their endeavours to address these hidden aspects. By doing so, they move beyond mere surface-level adaptation or conformity and venture into a deeper exploration of their authentic selves.

During the dinner party near the end of the novel, the nature of the sutured identity of Bill comes to the foreground. The literal and metaphorical masks that he wears highlight the dichotomy between his inner turmoil and the facade he presents to the world. This episode reveals the complexities of his conscious and unconscious efforts at suturing his identities to maintain social harmony. Bill's gradual acceptance of his Efican heritage and his choice to leave Voorstand and return to Efica at the end of the novel reflect his evolution beyond the masks he wears. As he sheds the Voorstandish mask, he embraces a more authentic version of himself. This transformation is symbolic of his conscious decision to stop suturing his identities and to confront his inner conflicts head-on.

Bill's psychological predicament because of the pain and scars of his sutured identity comes to the foreground when he experiences the agony of discrimination in Voorstand that results in a crisis of identity. When he realises that his sincere attempts at integration into a new socio-cultural environment fail to yield the desired outcomes, he starts considering himself a scapegoat or an *other*. In this context, David Howarth et al. state, "Social identities... involve the drawing of boundaries between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' and require the constitution of 'others' or 'scapegoats' (55). We discern that despite spending as many as twenty long years in Saarlim, Bill fails to be acknowledged by the Voorstanders because, despite his best efforts, he fails to suture his immigrant status with that of the mainstream people. Bic Ngo believes in this context, "The identity and cultures of immigrants and that of mainstream society are viewed to be in conflict" (7). Therefore, he remains an *other*, an outsider or a scapegoat for the Voorstanders despite stitching a new identity for himself.

Bill's unparalleled torment can be discovered through the narration of Tristan in the following words, "… he was very depressed, you could see it in his slumped shoulders as he came back from the door — was not the loss of a possible employer but his own lack of authenticity, that he should have allowed himself to be placed in this position

where their opinion of him would matter" (Carey 364). The motive behind Bill's reversion to his indigenous culture and identity at the end of the novel is succinctly expressed by Pramod K. Nayar who asserts, "When the adopted culture fails to see beyond the ethnic identity of the diasporic/exilic individual, then this individual has no choice but to retrieve his/her indigenous identity" (205). Nayar's assertion unfurls a critical inquiry into Bhabha's concept of hybridity in foreign contexts revealing a significant conflict between legal citizenship and the yearning for cultural citizenship within a community (205). He emphasises that the discriminatory treatment experienced by diasporic or exilic individuals forces them to return to their indigenous cultural roots and embrace their ethnicity.

Nayar's viewpoints indicate that a sutured identity is not merely an individual enterprise, rather it requires social sanction and validation. For instance, if an Asian residing in Britain is perceived only as an Asian rather than an Asian British, it calls into questions the creation of a multifaceted and hyphenated identity (Nayar 205). Thus, Nayar insinuates that the roots of individuals retain profound significance even in the foreign socio-cultural settings when they are treated as *others* or experience the agony of marginalisation and liminality notwithstanding their unwavering efforts to embrace foreign cultures. These viewpoints of Nayar explicitly reveal the psychological dilemmas experienced by Bill in Voorstand because of his sutured identity. Margaret Wetherell and Chandra Talpade Mohanty believe in this regard, "In increasingly multicultural contexts, identity obtains its meaning primarily from the identity of the other with whom the self is contrasted. People only know who they are by knowing who they are not" (71). Bill, subsequently, experiences an epiphany that helps him take his final decision at the end of the novel that, further, reveals the nature and intricacies of his sutured identity.

In short, Bill's interaction with masks in *TULTS* is a layered exploration of his sutured identity. The masks he wears, both literal and metaphorical, serve as powerful symbols of his conscious and unconscious attempts to reconcile his dual cultural affiliations and personal desires. Bill's journey is one of transformation, marked by the gradual shedding of masks and the pursuit of authenticity—a testament to the intricate complexities of sutured identities in a world that demands conformity while urging self-discovery.

Tristan grapples with a deep-seated psychological conflict stemming from his physical deformity. It makes him experience feelings of anxiety and distress and a constant fear

of rejection by his own people and his *others* despite his manifestation of a mask of normalcy. Felicity, too, grapples with an acute sense of frustration and disappointment for being considered a Voorstander by the Eficans despite her passionate attachment with the Efican culture and discourse. This frustration in Felicity can be perceived when she laments, "I don't know what we are. Or maybe it's just me still a Voorstander after all" (Carey 117). Felicity's frustration and disappointment reveal a significant dissonance between how she perceives herself and how others perceive her. This divergence highlights the psychological challenge of maintaining an authentic sense of self in the face of societal categorisations. This incongruence leads to a crisis of identity in Felicity as she is confounded to decipher whether she truly belongs to either cultural group or if she is merely an outsider in both. Felicity's predicament can be expressed in the words of Couture et al. who assert, "One becomes aware of the boundaries around one's identity when the particularity of that identity is challenged, destroyed or ignored by others" (Couture et al. 44). Tristan also remarks at one point in the novel, "So no matter what her critique of Voorstandish hegemony, my maman obviously held more complex feelings for Bruder Mouse than she had ever admitted to the collective" (Carey 185). Subsequently, Tristan becomes very sceptic about her connection with her Voorstandish roots, "Indeed, it is obvious to me now, she was a creature of her culture. No matter that she denounced your country's intrusion into Efican soil, she was a Voorstander" (Carey 185).

Tristan's observations about Felicity's complex feelings for Bruder Mouse and his realisation that she was still deeply connected to her Voorstandish roots underscore the internal conflict that characterises Felicity's psychological state. This inner conflict arises from the tension between her conscious efforts to adopt a defiant identity and the unconscious pull of her cultural heritage. Felicity's psychological predicament is evident through the words of Tristan that highlight the dichotomy of her sutured identity. Tristan remarks in this regard, "The maman loved Efica but she was born in Voorstand" (Carey 222). It draws our attention to the fact that no matter how much transformation of identity one experiences and exhibits through one's sutured identity, one finds it hard to disassociate oneself from one's own culture and place of birth.

In Felicity's case, the complex equation of her sutured identity empowers as well as marginalises her in Efica simultaneously. Felicity's conflict is further exacerbated by the fear of being labelled a traitor causing her emotional distress and guilt. Her complex

psychological state affects her relationships and artistic authenticity leaving her torn between her roles. Thus, Felicity's sutured identity is a psychological landscape marked by defensive mechanisms, isolation, conflicting desires, frustration, identity discrepancies, and complex inner conflicts.

The analytical study of Felicity's character foregrounds the challenges involved with the perception of her identity and establishes that her identity is fluid and in a state of flux, and, in the words of Laclau, holds the "inherent possibility for dislocation" (qtd. in Nymalm 63). Like Tristan, she decides to adopt a new identity that runs counter to her inherent identity. On one hand, it characterises her clear-headedness, courage and complete transformation but, on the other hand, it also suggests that she lacks the ability of handling multiple identities simultaneously. Her inability to coexist with diversified socio-political narratives makes her unacceptable for the people of her own origin. Her inability to manage her sutured identity becomes the cause of her assassination. Her assassination can be interpreted as a symbolic act that underscores the danger of challenging societal norms and questioning dominant narratives. Her murder reflects the potential consequences of defying societal expectations and seeking to redefine one's identity. It also highlights the risks associated with embracing a sutured identity that challenges the binary divisions between cultural affiliations. Her story serves as a cautionary tale about the complexities of identity negotiation in a world marked by conflicting narratives and power struggles.

In all three cases, Tristan, Felicity and Bill's psychological predicaments stem from the discrepancy between their indigenous identities and the personas they present to the world. This incongruity between inner emotions, external appearance and societal expectations creates tension, anxiety, and emotional strain. As they strive to confront these predicaments, their journeys toward self-acceptance, authenticity, and growth become central to the study of their masks and sutured identities. The shifts and oscillations attached with their sutured identities reflect the unpredictability and impermanence associated with them. In this regard, Ritchie Robertson draws our attention to the words of Heraclitus, a famous Greek philosopher, who says, "... you cannot swim in the same river twice" (116). Vishal Mangalwadi also writes in this context about Buddha's doctrine of *impermanence* that "There is nothing stable and permanent in the universe. You can't swim in the same river twice because the river

changes every moment, as does a human being. You are not the same "thing" that you were a moment ago" (6).

In a nutshell, the theatrical, social and cultural masks Tristan, Felicity, and Bill wear reveal their psychological predicaments. They provide them with both refuge and restraint as they route through a world of conflicting cultural allegiances and personal aspirations. The masks, while shielding them from vulnerability, also become veils concealing the authenticity they seek. Their psychological journeys — filled with turmoil, self-questioning, and moments of profound clarity, serve as a mirror to the intricacies of the human psyche. It is within these clashes between internal yearnings and external expectations that their metamorphoses unfold offering a unique insight into the transformative power of the ebb and flow of their sutured identities. Suturing helps them overcome their feelings of alienation and isolation, at least temporarily, and leads them to make such decisions as can prioritse their well-being and self-expression rejecting the demands and expectations of others. Suturing also helps them get some relief, though for the time being, from their physical, socio-political and psychological anguish and discomfiture.

4.9 Masks and the Decentring of the Selves

The symbiotic relationship between masks and the sutured identities of Tristan, Bill, and Felicity in the novel reflects the decentring of their identities and selves in several significant ways. The masks of Tristan, Felicity and Bill play a crucial role in the process of the decentring of their identities and their subsequent conscious or unconscious attempts at suturing them. Their theatrical and metaphorical masks lead them to a fragmentation between their public and private selves, while their sutured identities emerge from the conscious or unconscious suturing between their cultural influences and personal desires. The characters' use of masks and their experiences with sutured identities illustrate how these processes contribute to the decentring of their identities as they are not easily categorised or confined. Moreover, we notice that their masks while protecting them from social criticism and disapproval bring about an acute sense of *otherness* or alienation in them that reveals the unforeseen outcomes associated with a sutured identity.

Tristan, Bill, and Felicity experience varying degrees of alienation due to the interplay between their masked personas, sutured identities, and the environments they navigate.

Their masks and sutured identities involve an interplay between external expectations and internal experiences. These masks are influenced by societal demands while their sutured identities are shaped by their personal histories and cultural interactions. This interplay contributes to their decentred identities as they are found constantly striving consciously or unconsciously to negotiate between their external performances and internal complexities.

In a nutshell, the relationship between masks and sutured identities in the novel reflects the decentring of Tristan, Bill, and Felicity's identities and selves by highlighting the complexity, fluidity, and multiplicity inherent in their experiences. It demonstrates that the characters' struggle for coherence and belonging propels them to become unwitting victims of their own decentred identities. As they grapple with the pull of divergent cultural allegiances, their masks become both shields against social judgment and the catalysts for their decentred selves. Their journeys underscore the intricacies and unpredictability linked with a sutured identity amidst the cacophony of conflicting influences.

4.10 Socio-Political Discourse, Masks and Sutured Identities

Since discourses encompass more than mere words, they encompass a wide array of practices, norms, values, and ideologies that work together to shape the perceptions of the characters and the world around them. This framing underscores that the identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill are not formed in isolation but are deeply intertwined with the discourses prevalent in their native and foreign cultural settings. These discourses define the limits and possibilities of who they are and the actions they can undertake within the frameworks of the discourses of their shifting cultural contexts. Since suturing of identity encapsulates the notion of forming one's identity by aligning with a specific subject position that is constructed by a particular discourse, we can observe that the process of the suturing of identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill is dynamic and vibrant. It suggests that their sutured identities have been shaped by the unavoidable influence of Efican and Voorstandish discourses that they internalise and that control their lives. The analysis of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill from the lens of socio-cultural or political discourse validates Chrysochou's contention regarding the connection between identity and discourse mentioned in chapter two that identity continues to remain in a flux because of the influence of different discourses that have shaped it (74).

The use of masks in *TULTS* serves as a potent metaphor that intricately weaves together the socio-political discourse of Efica and Voorstand with the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill. Masks, in this context, signify much more than physical disguises; they represent the multifaceted layers of identity, the negotiation of power dynamics, and the complexities of cultural assimilation and resistance. The masks worn by the characters reflect the broader socio-political landscape of Efica and Voorstand. These two nations represent contrasting ideologies and power structures, each striving for dominance. Voorstand's dominance is symbolised by its imposition of cultural norms that require Tristan to wear a mask to hide his physical deformity. This mirrors the attempt of Voorstand to enforce conformity and control highlighting the socio-political subjugation inherent in its dominance. In contrast, the Feu Follet Collective's mask-making tradition reflects the Eficans' resistance against the cultural imperialism of Voorstand. The masks crafted by Felicity and her troupe are a form of artistic defiance against homogenisation emphasising the importance of preserving the unique identities of the Eficans amidst external pressures of superiority and supremacy by Voorstand through its circus and economic attractions.

Tristan, Felicity and Bill attach themselves to different subject positions based on various situations and contexts reflecting the dynamic nature of their sutured identities. The attachments formed between their sutured identities and discourses are not necessarily seamless. We observe some gaps and contradictions that emerge between their identities and the discourses that push or pull them towards the process of suturing. This insight underscores the inherent challenges of navigating the tensions and inconsistencies that arise when these characters consciously or unconsciously attempt to fit into specific subject positions dictated by their societal discourses and cultural settings. The concept of masks finds a connection here since masks can be seen as both symbolic and literal representations of the subject positions constructed by discourses. Just as these characters attach themselves to particular roles or identities constructed by discourses, their masks serve as external symbols of those roles. Masks are the tools these characters use to align their external appearance with the subject positions they seek to adopt or the discourses they want to embody. The process of suturing the identities of these characters is influenced by a continuous interplay between discursive practices and individual experiences. This dynamic process highlights that their identities are not fixed entities but rather a result of the ongoing negotiation and alignment with the discourses that shape their understanding of themselves. Thus, their

identities are constructed by discourses while masks serve as external expressions of these identities creating a complex and nuanced connection between their sutured selves and their external manifestation.

Tristan's sutured identity is emblematic of the symbiosis between discourses and his quest for a coherent identity. His mask of Bruder Mouse, worn in Voorstand, symbolises his attempt to align with the subject position constructed by the Voorstandish discourse. This mask serves as a tool to bridge the gap between his Efican identity and his connection with the cultural norms and values of Voorstand. His identity sutured through this mask signifies his dynamic negotiation with the discourse that surrounds him. The metaphor of suturing aligns with his conscious choice to join elements of his identity to specific subject positions. The recognition that he considers himself insecure like a turtle without a shell when he enters Voorstand reflects his sense of unhomeliness in Voorstand mirroring the gaps and contradictions between his inner self and the role he adopts.

Felicity's journey also mirrors the connection between her sutured identity, her masks of an actor, director and radical politician and her shifting attachments to the Efican and Voorstandish discourses. Her defiant mask represents her response to societal pressures that implies her strategic alignment with an alternative subject position. The tension between her artistic aspirations and cultural roots embodies the complexities of aligning with discourses that suture the fragmented elements of her identity and reshape it. Her emotional struggles highlight the challenges of simultaneously engaging with multiple discourses and attaching herself to different subject positions. Her distress on being "still a Voorstander after all" (Carey 117) as discussed earlier in this chapter, stresses upon the challenges connected with her traversing through the boundaries around her identity and blurring them consciously or unconsciously for the construction of her sutured identity under the influence of opposing and competing external discourses.

Bill's sutured identity emerges through his attachment to both the Voorstandish and Efican discourses. The gaps and contradictions in his identity reflect the challenges of reconciling his true feelings with the roles he embodies. Bill's connection with the Efican discourse represents his attachment with his cultural heritage and his origins. It encompasses his roots, traditions, and connections to his homeland. The Voorstandish discourse, on the other hand, represents the dominant culture in the land where Bill resides. It dictates the socio-cultural norms, expectations, and values prevalent in

Voorstand. These norms often clash with Bill's Efican identity causing serious tension within him. Bill's sutured identity emerges because of his attempt to reconcile the conflicting discourses of Efica and Voorstand. He is torn between his Efican legacy and his life in Voorstand. His sutured identity is his conscious effort to blend both aspects of his identity which is evident in his masks of detachment and nationalism. He embodies the Voorstandish discourse through his detachment and suppression of his Efican emotions while also embracing Efican nationalism when needed, that is, evident in his final decision of returning to Efica with Tristan.

The masks of Tristan, Felicity and Bill and the sutured identities they adopt are products of continuous negotiation and alignment with competing and conflicting discourses. The struggles of these characters with their identities — depicted through their emotional turmoil — exemplify the challenges of maintaining coherence amid the contradictory and opposing nature of the prevalent discourses. The contradictions in their shifting identities can be understood through the words of Sandya Hewamanne who argues, "As people encounter multiple cultural discourses, they are confronted with numerous contradictory but possible identities that they could choose to adopt at any given time" (14). During our analysis of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill, we discern that both the cultural and adopted identities of these characters overlap that represents the shifts and oscillations between their plural identities making the perception of their sutured identity very complex and ambiguous. The contradictory and inconsistent identities of these characters, which appear to be sutured at some places and get unsutured again, seem an outcome of the influence of opposing cultural and socio-political discourses of the Eficans and the Voorstanders.

The masks in the novel become a visual representation of the characters' negotiation between cultural assimilation and resistance. Tristan's mask signifies his assimilation into the societal and cultural norms of Voorstand while Felicity's masks symbolises her resistance to losing her Efican identity. The act of wearing masks in their respective contexts serves as a performative act of defiance or conformity reflecting the complex interactions of the characters with their cultures. The interplay of masks and cultural assimilation is also evident in Bill's story. His adoption of Voorstandish clothing, everyday phraseology and manners underscores his attempt to assimilate into Voorstand society. However, the emotional toll of this assimilation becomes apparent through the cracks in his mask, revealing the struggle of reconciling his identity with his loyalty to Efica. Tristan's words bring to light how Bill attempts at stitching for

himself a Voorstandish identity, "My father was a colonist, an islander, an Efican. He was, by definition, not a Voorstander. When he spoke his lines in Saarlim, he would need to abandon his soft, self-doubting Efican patois — *Shapo, moami, mo-chou, cambruce*[9] " (Carey 51). Thus, Bill modifies his behaviour and his conversational repertoire to absorb himself in the culture of Voorstand. Consequently, we witness that like other characters, he is also ready to make compromises even in the selection of his daily phraseology in Voorstand to appease the locals in order to achieve his personal ambitions.

To wrap up the discussion in this section, it can be inferred that the interplay between masks and sutured identities in the lives of Tristan, Bill, and Felicity serves as a compelling embodiment of their shifting and fluctuating attachments with the competing Efican and Voorstandish discourses. The theatrical and metaphorical masks of these characters are not mere disguises; they reflect their conscious or unconscious alignment with specific discourses. These competing discourses shape their sutured identities pulling them into a constant negotiation between past and present, heritage and adaptation. In this intricate scenario, the masks symbolise their desire for acceptance, their yearning for authenticity, and their endeavour to exist within the confines of two worlds. The characters' relationships with their masks refer to their internal struggles and external challenges echoing the broader societal tensions between the forces of cultural preservation and assimilation ultimately underscoring the nuanced psychological terrain of sutured identities amidst competing discourses.

4.11 Conclusion of the Chapter

In *TULTS,* masks reveal themselves as more than just physical adornments; they emerge as complex instruments of survival, disguise, and self-preservation that reveal the process of the suturing of identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill. Tristan, Felicity, and Bill employ masks in their relentless struggle to consciously or unconsciously stitch the incongruent and opposing discourses, value systems and means of entertainment of Efica and Voorstand together. These masks represent their profound psychological turmoil while also bringing to our attention the broader societal dynamics at play. As tools of camouflage and disguise, the masks worn by the characters bring to the forefront their sutured identities that necessitate the art of flexibility, adaptation and

[9] These are commonly used expressions of Efican language.

compromise from them. The literal and metaphorical masks of Tristan, Felicity and Bill, bring to our notice the remarks of Finney discussed in chapter two regarding "switches from one consciousness to another, changes from one plotline to another" (131). We notice that the masks of these characters reveal the shifts in the consciousness of these characters that is a hallmark of their sutured identities as well in which they follow variable plotlines and experience vacillations in their consciousness. Furthermore, the use of the theatrical, social and cultural masks by these characters brings to the surface their conscious or unconscious attempts to knit together "the inside and the outside together and the resultant scar" as contested by Salter (734) in chapter two.

The masks of Tristan, Felicity and Bill enable them to sail through unfamiliar and rough waters of existence in different cultural settings surviving the tumultuous waves of societal expectations while struggling to chase their personal dreams. Beneath the literal surfaces of these masks, there lies a web of symbolism that reveals how a sutured identity transcends the socio-cultural, political and ideological frontiers. These masks epitomise the internal predicaments, dichotomies, inconsistencies and contradictions that characterise the characters' sutured identities. They simultaneously represent the intricate symbiosis between authenticity and conformity revealing how the characters wrestle with their unique subject positions formed by their shifting attachments to Efican and Voorstandish discourses. The psychological implications of these masks are profound ranging from anxiety, sense of loss, guilt and alienation to resilience, empowerment, epiphany and self-discovery.

As the characters grapple with their identity dilemmas because of experiencing the phenomenon of suturing, their masks amplify the psychological dissonance between the public personas they project and the inner worlds they inhabit. The masks they wear bear witness to the burdens of their choices and the demands of the society they seek to harmonise with. We discern that the masks and sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill are not isolated elements but rather integral components of the Efican and Voorstandish discourses. The process of suturing of identities of these characters by virtue of their migrations unpacked through their masks by Carey can be understood by the contention of Wild-Wood discussed in the literature review that their migrations provide them with "a new set of life experiences that, in dialogue with the old set of experiences, negotiate an altered identity" (1). It also brings to our minds the contention of Mehta mentioned in the literature review that migration serves as a "reincarnation in a new place" and provides these characters with a rich opportunity "to redefine

themselves" (82). The conflicting discourses of Efica and Voorstand exert a gravitational pull, shaping and reshaping the contours of the characters' lives and influencing their choices. Their masks serve as the instruments of suturing for them connecting their personal experiences with the broader cultural narratives that mould their destinies and shape their identities.

The sum and the substance of the discussion in this chapter is that the masks in *TULTS* serve as potent instruments of survival, disguise and personal revelation. They embody the multifaceted layers of a sutured identity that Tristan, Felicity, and Bill grapple with as they strive to steer their ships through the currents of Efican and Voorstandish discourses. Through the symbolism, psychological implications, and intricate connections to the characters' sutured identities, these masks become profound conduits for exploring and unearthing the complex interrelationship between self, society and the transformative power of sutured identities.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Mask of Bruder Mouse

5.1 Introduction

The profound significance of the mask of Bruder Mouse cannot be overemphasised as it emerges as the linchpin regarding the study of Tristan's odyssey towards a sutured identity intricately interweaving themes of cultural dichotomy, self-exploration and the process and challenges of personal transformation resulted by a sutured identity. The mask serves both as an agent of widening the ruptures found in Tristan's identity and as an instrument of empowerment and emancipation for him aiding him to reconcile the ruptured facets of his identity caused by his mixed and obscure parentage, his disfigurement and the challenges of handling the personal predicaments and socio-cultural pressures. The transformative power of the mask reflects the broader theme of human resistance and ingenuity in the face of adversity. The study of Tristan's conscious or unconscious attachment to the mask of Bruder Mouse enhances our understanding of the process of the suturing of Tristan's identity.

In the kaleidoscopic world of *TULTS,* the enigmatic mask of Bruder Mouse functions not only as a protective shield but also as a transformative catalyst for Tristan despite its several psychological implications. Born with physical deformities that made him an outcast in his native Efica, Tristan finds empowerment and much needed solace in the surreal identity of the Bruder Mouse. By accepting the persona of the limping, bow-legged Bruder Mouse, Tristan consciously or unconsciously gets submerged in the performance going beyond the confines of his previous pathetic self. The mask transcends the limitations of a theatrical prop as it triggers the process of suturing in Tristan epitomising a synthesis of his past and present. It functions as a beacon guiding him through the labyrinth of the process of the suturing of his identity. Tristan's growing affiliation with the mask notably stitches together the elements of his deformed and empowered personas, as well as his dual Efican and Voorstandish subjectivities. This connection steers him towards a transformative journey, muddling the demarcations between reality and performance owing to the triggering of the process of the suturing of the multiple fragments of his identity. The mask, with its grinning facade and hidden imperfections, reflects Tristan's odyssey of reconciling his own scars and strengths voluntarily or involuntarily.

The Bruder Mouse mask epitomises the essence of sutured identities — the fusion of seemingly irreconcilable fragments to create a unified narrative. Through its disguise, Tristan not only navigates his outer reality but also embraces his inner conflicts, ultimately finding legitimacy and social sanctioning amid his fluctuating diverse affiliations. Thus, the mask represents the intricate artistry of stitching together the diverse patches of Tristan's identity weaving a narrative of emancipation, transformation and the relentless pursuit of a sutured identity.

Tristan's conscious or unconscious acceptance and management of the mask of Bruder Mouse underscores the suturing between his personal scars and strengths. His physical malformation, cultural shifts and psychological scars are amalgamated into his identity converting them into sources of empowerment as well as embarrassment. The mask of Bruder Mouse hides Tristan's physical deformities and conceals his insecurities. It suggests how Tristan's sutured identity serves as a shield against external judgments and socio-cultural pressures, letting him have a place and a voice in both Efican and Voorstandish cultural locales. Thus, the concept of sutured identities as the combination of apparently incompatible fragments reverberates with the depiction of the mask as a representation of unity among diverse affiliations. Just as the mask combines various elements into a coherent image, Tristan's sutured identity blends his Efican and Voorstandish sides into a complex whole. Moreover, the use of the metaphor of the mask by Carey suggests a deliberate concealment which, eventually, leaves visible scars. It is a quality lacking in Hall's metaphor of suturing.

5.2 The Offer of the Mask

Tristan is offered a mask of Bruder Mouse from a member of the Feu Follet and Wally's girlfriend, Roxanna, to conceal his facial deformities. It becomes a turning point for Tristan, bringing for him hope and optimism to his painful life despite expanding the ruptures existing in his identity. Tristan's acceptance of the mask can be interpreted by his conscious or unconscious desire for attaining a coherent identity in his chaotic existence. In this regard, Hewamanne believes, "The sense of a coherent, unified identity is a fantasy, and the only reason for its existence is humans' capacity to construct a coherent identity narrative for themselves" (15). Tristan yearns for an identity that is not fractured by his deformities or his competing cultural backgrounds. The mask represents this aspiration offering him the chance to present himself to the world in a way that aligns with the socio-cultural challenges lying ahead of him.

Hewamanne's assertion that a coherent identity is a constructed narrative underscores the idea that identity is not an innate, fixed entity but rather a story we tell ourselves and others. Tristan's choice to don the mask can be interpreted as his conscious or unconscious attempt to stitch a fresh identity narrative for himself blending the elements of his past and present identities. This conscious or unconscious act of suturing reveals his desire to transcend the chaos and turmoil he faces in the quest for, at least, a semblance of coherence and unity in a world that is not only indifferent but also callous for a physically incapacitated person like him.

Bruder Mouse — an integral part of the national mythology of Voorstand and its Sirkus — is a huge mouse who fights against The Hairy Man — an evil character that represents the forces of disorder and evil in the Sirkus. The choice of Bruder Mouse's identity as Tristan's mask is significant as it parallels Tristan's personal journey. Both characters are conspicuous by virtue of their physical deformities that are pivotal to their identities. However, both of them rise above their limitations to become figures of strength and courage. This analogy between their experiences becomes a potent tool for Tristan's suturing process aiding him to connect with the Voorstandish values of triumphing over adversity and embracing a newfound sense of belonging. Just as the heroic status of Bruder Mouse disregards his deformity, Tristan's mask also represents a complex intertwining of his physical appearance and internal aspirations.

As Tristan wears the mask, it brings about visible positive changes in him despite sparking severe internal turmoil. While it allows him to conceal his physical deformity and manage his identity, it represents the narrative of his opponents and creates conflict within his community, especially for his mother, as it embodies the cultural invasion of Voorstand in Efica. It reflects the inherent tension of suturing — the need to align with dominant narratives while also grappling with the emotional and psychological dissonance that can arise from such alignment. Tristan's adoption of Bruder Mouse persona underlines the intricate process of suturing wherein he strategically engages with the discourses of Voorstand's national mythology to construct a more cohesive and acceptable identity.

5.3 The Mask: A Complex Phenomenon of Codevelopment

The mask of Bruder Mouse takes on a profound significance in the study of the sutured identity of Tristan as it offers a lens through which the complexities of his personal evolution and the nuanced negotiation of his multifaceted identity come under the

scrutiny. As Tristan steers his boat of identity through the tumultuous waters of cultural dichotomy, socio-cultural pressures and his personal ambitions, the mask develops into a representation that encapsulates his identity crisis and the interlaced threads of his being. It functions as a tool for liberation, resolution and the complicated suturing of his fractured identity.

As the novel unfolds, we observe that the mask itself undergoes a metamorphosis. The metamorphosis of the mask in *TULTS* reveals the evolution of Tristan's sutured identity. What initially symbolises emancipation, delight and relief for Tristan evolves into a double-edged sword characterising the tensions of assimilation including the loss of genuineness and the latent jeopardies of yielding to external pressures. This evolution of the mask brings to the surface the intricacies of identity negotiations suggesting how people are frequently compelled to make compromises with reference to maintaining the balance between embracing the disparate elements of their sutured selves and conforming to societal norms. The symbolism of the mask deepens as it becomes a metaphor for Tristan's changing relationships — his jubilation at accepting it, his mother's initial denunciation and the subsequent acceptance, its endorsement by the Voorstanders and his eventual aversion. The mask of Bruder Mouse becomes the most significant theme and symbol in the novel encapsulating the multi-layered exploration of the process of the sutured identity of Tristan, his transformation and, by and large, the human capacity to resist, adapt, evolve and coexist amidst the massive challenges of social practices and cultural influences. In this regard, Holland et al. write, "Identity is one way of naming the dense interconnections between the intimate and public venues of social practice" (270). They further say, "We move toward a different metaphor, that of codevelopment" (270). Holland et al.'s assertion that identity emerges from the interplay between personal and social contexts resonates with the significance of the mask of Bruder Mouse in Tristan's sutured identity. The mask becomes a palpable representation of his navigation between the intimate aspects of his self and the external pressures of his social, communal and cultural expectations. Moreover, the use of the metaphor of the Bruder Mouse mask by Carey exposes the transformative power of the sutured identity of Tristan since the mask not only conceals but also contributes to his evolving self as he undertakes the journey of cultural harmony, codevelopment and coexistence with the people of a conflicting socio-cultural and political narrative.

5.4 The Mask as a Bridge and a Transformative Medium

The study of the mask of Bruder Mouse brings to the foreground the construction and suturing of Tristan's identity that allows him to assume different personas to adapt himself in accordance with changing circumstances. In this regard, Perroni's contention becomes pertinent as she claims, "The mask enables people to undergo metamorphosis" (214). In this process of metamorphosis, Tristan explores different aspects of his identity and delves into the uncharted territory of self-expression. Just as a caterpillar experiences a radical conversion within its cocoon to come out as a butterfly, so does Tristan experience a metamorphosis of the self after wearing the mask. Just as the cocoon of a caterpillar screens its transformative journey, the mask acts as a smokescreen for Tristan's internal shifts. By virtue of this metaphor, we get the cognisance of the ephemeral and multifaceted nature of Tristan's sutured identity. The symbolic duplexity of the mask — projecting one self of Tristan while concealing another — reflects the interplay of projected and concealed aspects of Tristan's identity. Just as the journey of a caterpillar culminates in the emergence of a beautiful butterfly, so does Tristan's journey steered by the mask culminate in a self-reconfigured identity stitched together with pristine liberation and authenticity.

The mask of Bruder Mouse becomes a bridge between Tristan's Voorstandish upbringing and his Efican roots — a transformative medium that enables him to pass through the chasm between these two worlds especially during his interaction with his *others*. It can be explained in the words of Couture et al. who discuss the fluctuating nature of human identity in a changed social set-up by stating, "Individual and collective identities are always in flux, their revisions, reconstructions, and even reinventions the result of the dialectical tensions of intercourse with others" (15). Couture et al.'s observation that individual and collective identities are in constant flux aligns with the significance of Bruder Mouse mask in Tristan's process of suturing identity. Just as Couture et al. suggest, Tristan's identity is subject to dynamic changes inspired by his interactions with his *others*. The mask of Bruder Mouse becomes a physical manifestation of these changes as it figuratively stands for the process of harmonising the diverse fragments that constitute Tristan's sutured identity. Much like how Couture et al. argue that identity is a result of interplay with others, the mask symbolises the interplay of these fragmented elements within Tristan's transforming his broken identity into a unified whole. Ashcroft, however, believes, "Tristan

represents the deformity of cultural ambivalence that comes from the curious mix of attraction and repulsion Efica has for its neocolonial dominator" (Gaile 210). The juxtaposition of Tristan's attraction and repulsion for Voorstand becomes a critical factor for his kaleidoscopic loyalties that create some serious openings in his identity that are strategically or involuntarily sutured by him with the passage of time.

Couture et al.'s perspective highlights the adaptability and fluidity of identity emphasising that Tristan's sutured identity is a result of continuing interactions and negotiations with his *others* in Efica and Voorstand. On the other hand, Ashcroft's insight brings to the foreground the symbiotic relationship between the conflicting allegiances and emotions that construct Tristan's sutured identity. It offers a lens through which we can understand how Tristan's sutured identity emerges from a web of emotions, cultural complexities and historical dynamics. Thus, Couture et al.'s perspective focuses on the dynamic interplay of Tristan's identity with external factors whereas Ashcroft's viewpoint stresses the internal struggles and ambivalences that contribute to Tristan's sutured identity. These viewpoints complement each other by providing a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of Tristan's identity. The Bruder Mouse mask, in this context, serves as a visual representation of these interplays acting as a transformative medium that encapsulates both the external interactions shaping Tristan's identity and the internal ambivalences that influence his allegiances and loyalties. As we route through the investigation of Tristan's self, the mask takes on an unpredictable significance as it evolves from a tool of emancipation to a reflection of internal conflicts and external pressures. This evolution of the mask mirrors the complexities inherent in identity negotiations, where the quest for authenticity often collides with societal expectations. Beyond its physical form, the mask reveals the psychological odyssey of Tristan towards a sutured identity where fragments of his being are sewn together consciously or unconsciously in pursuit of harmony.

The interplay of opposing perspectives from scholars like Couture et al. and Bill Ashcroft enhances our understanding of Tristan's sutured identity, explicating the dynamic interaction between his identity and external forces as well as the internal conflicts that shape his allegiances. Eventually, the mask of Bruder Mouse stands as a testament to the intricate journey of Tristan's sutured identity weaving together the threads of cultural duplexity, personal growth, and the perpetual search for authenticity in a world laden with challenges and influences.

To sum up, the mask of Bruder Mouse functions as a bridge and a transformative medium that facilitates Tristan's movement across the chasm between his Voorstandish sojourn and his Efican ancestry. It captures the essence of his dynamic identity as he traverses through and strives to handle the challenges of his interactions with his *others* in both countries. Tristan's sutured identity emerges by virtue of the dialectical tensions between his Efican roots and Voorstandish routes. The mask, in this tension, demonstrates a palpable manifestation of these fluctuating dynamics. It not only functions as a medium to harmonise the fragmented facets of Tristan's identity but it also epitomises his attempt for his transformative pilgrimage from brokenness to wholeness.

5.5 Factors behind Tristan's Acceptance of the Mask

As we analyse Tristan's connection with the mask of Bruder Mouse, we come to know that certain factors such as his physical disability, his quest for a stable identity, his pragmatic and rational approach and his desire for confidence and optimism play a critical role in it. Let us analyse these factors in relation to Tristan's mask of Bruder Mouse and the process of the suturing of his identity.

5.5.1 Tristan's Physical Disfigurement

As discussed earlier in this study, Tristan is a unique child who is born with some serious physical handicaps that include his twisted arms and legs, facial deformities and issues with his lips and voice. Therefore, his first appearance on the stage makes the audience almost shudder with fear and discomfort. Even Bill feels disgusted when he looks at his son so closely for the first time. The lack of empathy on the part of the people plays a crucial role in Tristan's decision to accept the mask of Bruder Mouse that epitomises his agency in adopting a sutured identity. However, this choice is not altogether autonomous; there is an element of constraint and coercion in it because of the memories of the bad behaviour of the people with him. Moreover, Tristan's experiences at the theatre provide him with a rich opportunity to be cast in a series of roles that urge him to experiment with wearing different masks enabling him to dissimulate his facial deformity and assume a different one.

By embracing the mask of a deformed mythological figure of Voorstand, Tristan not only calibrates himself with Voorstand's celebrated ideals but also confronts his own

internal conflicts. The adoption of Bruder Mouse's identity is a testament to the power of narratives in shaping identity and Tristan's journey exemplifies the complexities of using masks to suture together varied aspects of oneself within a cultural context.

Tristan's journey of suturing is one marked by the desire for acceptance and the simultaneous fear of exposure. The mask becomes a critical instrument of suturing his insecurities and aspirations, offering him a means to venture into the world with a new guise. This transformation reveals the intricate process of suturing, as he strategically attunes his identity with the norms of Voorstand while concealing his Efican background and his physical deformities. The mask aids him to assert control over his own story stitching together the fragments of his identity that were previously marked by dissonance and confusion. He employs it not only as a form of camouflage and disguise but as a mechanism for the conscious and strategic suturing of his fragmented selves, ultimately shaping his path toward empowerment and social validation.

Tristan's physical malformation creates a compelling link between his internal commotion and external presentation. Through the mask, he consciously or unconsciously attempts at suturing the gap between his insecurities and ambitions, using it both as a shield to handle his physical differences and a strategic instrument to attune his fractured identity with the ideals of Voorstand consciously. In essence, Tristan's unsightly appearance and physical malformations serve as defining factors that propel his reliance on and engagement with the mask of Bruder Mouse. It indicates that his physical uniqueness becomes an integral thread in stitching a sutured identity for him.

5.5.2 Tristan's Rationalism and Pragmatism

The adoption of the mask of Bruder Mouse by Tristan in *TULTS* reveals his rational and pragmatic approach in the process of attaining a sutured identity for himself. As he strives to handle the challenges of the varying and conflicting cultural dynamics, his personal ambitions and socio-cultural norms and mores, his pragmatic choice to embrace the mask becomes a testimony to his tactical understanding of these challenges associated with his identity negotiations. By embracing the mask, Tristan rationally and pragmatically strives to suture the existing gap between his identity conundrums, internal turmoil and external challenges. It provides him with an opportunity for concealment as well as empowerment. His rational, pragmatic and calculated moves throughout the novel typify how he acts as an agent of stitching together the complex

facets of his identity utilising the mask as a tool to walk on the slack rope between personal autonomy and social sanctioning.

Tristan's donning the mask of Bruder Mouse in Voorstand suggests that he is rational and pragmatic enough to realise the precariousness of his Efican identity that would have been as disgusting for the Voorstanders as his deformed physical structure. While quoting Lisa Meyer, Gaile writes in this regard, "At a crucial point in the novel Tristan's life is saved by the fact that he dons the costume of Bruder Mouse, a Voorstand cultural icon and an important bearer of Voorstandish religious mythology" (286). In this context, Meyer asks a very important question regarding Tristan's strategy of wearing the mask and costume of Bruder Mouse, "Is this a symbolic way of saying that in order for a citizen of a colonized country to survive, he has to assimilate the dominant culture to a certain extent" (Gaile 286)? Apparently, Tristan is shrewd enough to perceive that he cannot adjust himself in Voorstand carrying the heavy baggage of his Efican identity. Therefore, he tactfully camouflages his identity behind the mask of an iconic Voorstandish cultural representation. Hence, it is apparent that he makes a measured attempt at stitching his identity in accordance with the Voorstandish culture to assimilate himself in it.

Meyer's perspectives on Tristan's adoption of the Bruder Mouse mask highlight the intricate layers of his sutured identity and his pragmatic approach to survival within the complex dynamics of Voorstand. Her observation underlines the strategic significance of the mask in Tristan's life, as it not only provides him with a form of disguise but also calibrates him with a prominent Voorstandish cultural symbol. This calibration allows Tristan to adapt himself in accordance with the cultural traditions and values of Voorstand while also utilising the mask as a tool for suturing and hiding his Efican affiliation to stay away from any potential negative consequences. This decision reflects Tristan's rationality and adaptability as he attempts to stitch the gap between his dual cultural affiliations. Meyer's question probes deeper into the symbolic implications of Tristan's adoption of the mask. Tristan's choice reveals the necessity of adapting to the dominant culture as a means of survival even if it involves masking or disregarding one's indigenous cultural identity. This connects to the broader theme of sutured identity where Tristan's conscious or unconscious decision to assimilate aspects of the Voorstandish culture by wearing the mask and stitching a new identity for himself signifies his attempt to bridge his fragmented identity and experience a sense of wholeness. In this context, Diana Ventura rightfully states, "Wholeness lives within

and behind brokenness" (104). We observe that Tristan's sutured identity is an outcome of the brokenness and the blend of his Efican and Voorstandish identities. Thus, we notice continual suturing and dehiscence between Tristan's Efican and Voorstandish identities after his acceptance of the mask. It brings to light Tristan's pragmatic recognition that complete resistance might be detrimental and that weaving elements of the dominant culture into his identity could lead to a more harmonious existence.

Ventura's statement encapsulates Tristan's journey towards a sutured identity. The recognition that wholeness exists within brokenness implies that Tristan's sutured identity affected by the Efican and Voorstandish influences is not a state of discord but rather a fusion of diverse elements. His identity, after donning the mask, embodies this very notion. In other words, his sutured identity emerges from the fusion of his Efican and Voorstandish selves developing into an intriguing medley. The continual suturing and dehiscence of the diverse elements of Tristan's identity fittingly depict the ebb and flow of his identity negotiation. Hence, the construction of his sutured identity is not a static construct, but a dynamic process marked by periods of stitching together and moments of fragmentation.

Initially, Tristan grapples with his mother's political ideology, which resists Voorstand's oppressive and hegemonic control over Efica. However, the mask eventually offers him a fresh sutured identity transforming his life in the process. We are told that Roxanna purchases a papier-mâché mask of Bruder Mouse for Tristan and asks him to put on this to cover his face. At first, Tristan is reluctant to accept and wear the mask, but later three adults coerce him to put it on his face to hide his facial deformities. The acquisition and the imposition of the mask of Bruder Mouse on Tristan hold profound symbolic significance intertwining themes of destiny, agency, and the fluid nature of identity. Initially, hesitant to accept the mask due to his mother's political ideology and resistance against Voorstand's control, Tristan's reluctance echoes his feelings of being a product of an unnatural alliance between his three fathers. In the beginning of the novel, he narrates to us that his three fathers' "alliance with [his] maman was unnatural or perverse, and they were separately and jointly responsible for [his] peculiar condition" (Carey 15). The parallel of three people involved in his conception and three people imposing the mask alludes to the concept of Trinity suggesting a predetermined aspect to his sutured identity beyond his control. Just as the Trinity embodies unity within diversity, Tristan's identity is a composite of these

diverse influences that together shape his sense of self. It implies that his fragmented and sutured identity is a vulnerable part of a divine scheme of human existence. However, as the narrative unfolds, Tristan's agency, freedom and his pragmatic outlook come to the forefront, revealing his active role in shaping his identity whether broken or sutured. It demonstrates that a sutured identity is always in "a profound process of redefinition" (Bhabha 7) as discussed in chapter two. We can also observe that the sutured identity of Tristan creates a new pathway for his future defying "the eternity of the moment" in the words of Heinen Müller mentioned in the literature review (qtd. in Kalb 15). This underscores the relational, contextual, and fluid nature of his identity highlighting the complex interplay between external influences and his internal choices in painting the canvas of his life.

Soon after accepting the mask, Tristan tries to tear it off to avoid the displeasure of his mother. It represents his ambivalent feelings for the mask which are an inevitable component of a sutured identity. This ambivalence from Tristan indirectly signifies his dissatisfaction and rejection of the cultural imperialism and hegemony of Voorstand. However, when he sees himself in a mirror with the mask of Bruder Mouse, he forgets his cultural ideology or the existing rivalry between the Eficans and the Voorstanders and feels happy, as he cannot see the snot dripping from his nose and tears on his cheeks (163). He becomes elated with the transformation in his appearance which has been his Achilles' heel. The mask of Bruder Mouse casts a spell on Tristan and serves as the puff of a sweet breeze in his suffocating, smothering and asphyxiating existence. Perroni describes the magical powers of a mask in these words:

> The magical power of the mask is inexplicable. It is astonishing to note how body language changes the moment one wears a mask. Anyone who has put on a mask will testify to the rapid and strange effect of that act: you disappear, and a new figure appears immediately, wild, liberated, different, or even the opposite of you" (214).

This contention of Perroni indicates that the moment a mask adorns one's face, a remarkable metamorphosis starts happening. Body language and demeanor undergo a remarkable shift as if the mask has some magical powers over the wearer. Perroni's words highlight how the mask serves as a powerful tool not only in concealing Tristan's ugly appearance from others but also shielding him from facing his own reflection.

Thus, Tristan's rational and pragmatic choice reveals the healing process of his sutured identity as he begins to mend and reconcile with different fragments of his self.

Tristan's incremental attachment to the mask indicates his self-centric approach towards life where his aspirations and personal desires take precedence over familial connections and cultural ideologies. When faced with the tears of his mother that unambiguously express her emotional pain, Tristan seems detached and indifferent as if he were experiencing a sense of bitter triumph in his newly-acquired identity. "When I saw the famous cheekbones wet with tears, I showed none of the compassion I feel for her now. She was suffering and I was bitterly, triumphantly, angrily, happy" (Carey 170). It reminds us of Valsiner's views — discussed earlier in chapter four — that a mask is "a distancing device" (166). We can clearly notice a gulf being created between the mother and the son by virtue of the mask. The mask of Bruder Mouse represents the growing gulf and conflict in their relationship where his pursuit of personal happiness clashes with his mother's political ideology and resistance against Voorstand. Thus, as the mask empowers Tristan, it also constructs a metaphorical wall between him and his mother, indicating the discord between their conflicting ideologies and stressing the tension between personal growth and cultural fidelity as far as Tristan's journey towards a sutured identity is concerned.

The pragmatic and rational approach of Tristan can be seen in his pursuit of his economic ambitions after his mother's death. For doing this, he disregards her ideals and principles and admits that his economic aspirations play a decisive role in his departure from some of the social and moral standards of his mother. He confesses, "Following my maman's death, I sought wealth in a way that would have upset her dreadfully, but life is never simple and I remained loyal to some of her ideals while I betrayed others" (Carey 233). This decision reveals the slippery nature of his sutured identity as he deliberately weaves together his various loyalties and ambitions in the pursuit of the creation of a cohesive whole. Tristan's words indicate that, for him, loyalty to certain principles of his mother must be sutured with his personal needs to adapt and make pragmatic choices to handle the challenges of his sutured identity. It typifies how his rational thinking contributes to the ongoing process of constructing and maintaining his sutured identity while pursuing his personal aspirations. It reveals how a sutured identity necessitates a conscious selection and rejection of various communal, familial and personal elements on the part of an individual. Tristan's

strategic selection and incorporation of different fragments from different cultural landscapes bring to our notice his art of cherry-picking in the construction of his sutured identity that reveals that, at times, he becomes the agent of the construction of his sutured identity. Borrowing the words of Said, it represents Tristan's "spiritual detachment and generosity necessary for true vision" (*Orientalism* 259) — discussed in chapter two — as he ventures to leave his cultural home in an attempt to explore new vistas of his life.

As the novel progresses, Tristan's nurse, Jacqui, asks him if he wants a mask of Bruder Mouse when he decides to visit Voorstand with Wally to meet Bill twelve years after his mother's death. He refuses to do so. However, later, he succumbs to the temptation of getting a mask in order to feel secure in Voorstand and conceal his physical ugliness. In spite of his conscious and unconscious ideological dissonance with the Voorstanders, he wears Bruder Mouse's mask once again. However, he also realises that it is not attuned with his personal identity as he believes, "I was who I was" (Carey 284). He expresses his repulsion and disenchantment for his new identity by saying, "I hated that Mouse. I hated its face. I hated what it stood for in my life, my history, that I was ever fool enough to hide behind its face" (Carey 288). Nevertheless, he persists on suturing his personal identity with that of the mask of Bruder Mouse to feel protected and comfortable in Voorstand during his interaction with others.

Tristan's rejection of the mask in Voorstand and his subsequent acceptance of it reiterates his ambivalence for his sutured identity and his reluctance to compromise his personal identity for gaining social validation. His acceptance of the mask of Bruder Mouse verifies his pragmatic and rational approach in dealing with the challenges of ambivalence relating the construction of his sutured identity. With the prospects of the practical benefits of the mask, he deliberately regulates his aspirations with the celebrated ideals of Voorstand while consciously camouflaging his Efican background and his emotional attachment to it. This pragmatic and rational decision motivated by his economic ambitions and a desire for acceptance reveals the contradictory and inconsistent nature of his strategically crafted sutured identity.

5.5.3 Quest for a Stable and Aesthetically Beautiful Identity

The mask of Bruder Mouse brings some positive changes to Tristan's life. Just as a mosaic converts broken pieces into an aesthetically beautiful harmonious whole, the mask of Bruder Mouse organises the disparate elements of Tristan's life into an

aesthetically beautiful persona. This process of suturing between his "being" and "becoming" can be understood through the contention of Marceline Desbordes-Valmore and Oliver Wendell Holmes who believe in the significant role of stiches and suturing in our lives. While the former believes, "We must make our lives as we sew, stitch by stitch" (qtd in Dingle 63), the latter talks about the usefulness of stitches by stating, "Take your needle my child, and work at your pattern; it will come out a rose by and by. Life is like that — one stitch at a time taken patiently and the pattern will come out all right like the embroidery" (qtd in Klickman 101). The views of Desbordes-Valmore and Holmes illuminate the notion of a sutured identity as an incremental, deliberate creation, stitched together with patience and care. The mask of Bruder Mouse, in this context, becomes a material embodiment of these metaphorical stitches, reflecting Tristan's conscious or unconscious weaving of his divergent influences into a unified self.

Desbordes-Valmore's assertion implies Tristan's active role in constructing his sutured identity. In this context, the process of stitching represents Tristan's deliberate effort to weave the disparate threads of his contrasting Efican and Voorstandish identities together, his physical deformities and social pressures. As one stitch at a time contributes to the creation of a beautiful aesthetic pattern and a larger fabric, the small steps of Tristan towards integrating the dichotomous elements of his identity culminate into a more unified self. Holmes' comparison of life, on the other hand, to a pattern that develops through patient stitching reverberates with the journey of Tristan's suturing of his identity. The metaphor of embroidery underscores the intentional, incremental and meticulous nature of stitching required for the productive execution of a sutured identity.

Just as patience is required for embroidery, Tristan's pilgrimage towards a stable and more harmonious identity involves the careful arrangement of his various elements. Each stitch that he makes represents a conscious choice he makes to reconcile his conflicting aspects. The mask of Bruder Mouse, in this context, can be seen as a material representation of these metaphorical stitches. It seems, at times, that Tristan, like a professional embroiderer, weaves together the threads of his Efican and Voorstandish influences, his physical abnormalities and the expectations of those he interacts with. The mask becomes a transformative medium that condenses his efforts to assimilate the disparate elements of his life and present an aesthetically harmonious persona to the world through the process of suturing these disparate elements.

Desbordes-Valmore's and Holmes' insights emphasise the agency with which Tristan crafts and handles his sutured identity. Thus, a sutured identity promises an aesthetically beautiful and reassuring identity for Tristan. His donning the mask that provides him with an optimism for giving some attractiveness to his otherwise disorganised and asymmetrical existence symbolises his quest for pattern and beauty in his life.

5.5.4 Quest for Confidence, Optimism and Transformation

The mask of Bruder Mouse signifies Tristan's quest for confidence and optimism in his otherwise painful existence. It allows him to create a facade and distance himself from his social and psychological worries and nightmares. Perroni's words emphasise how the mask helps Tristan reject his past inhibitions and find a new sense of self. The visible change in Tristan's character after the mask is stitched with his personality can be understood through the words of Perroni who discusses the utility of a mask by citing the French theatre director, Jean-Louis Barrault who remarks about a mask:

> What happens to the actor who puts on a mask? He is cut off from the outer world. The night he deliberately enters allows him first to reject everything that hampered him. Then, by an effort of concentration, to reach a void, a state of unbeing. From this moment forward, he will be able to come back to life and to behave in a new and truly dramatic way (214).

Barrault's profound insight into the transformative potential of a mask aligns strongly with Tristan's process of suturing identities in *TULTS*. When Tristan dons the mask of Bruder Mouse, he enters a state of detachment — like an actor — from the outer world. The mask turns into a symbolic obstacle that protects him from the biases and whimsical judgements of society allowing him to reject the constraints imposed on him by his physical disability and malformations. As a matter of fact, Tristan's connection with the mask of Bruder Mouse leads to a sense of liberation and accomplishment. Accepting and wearing the mask allows him to come to terms with his appearance and gain acceptance from others.

In Voorstand, the mask offers Tristan the freedom to move without fear of arrest and it enhances his circus performances granting him the confidence and freedom of a skilled acrobat. As a result, the mask becomes a powerful tool in liberating Tristan from his personal complexes, which have been demonising and devastating for his identity.

Tristan's transformation is not merely external; it confirms Tristan's inner liberation from the chains of his personal agony. The mask — as Barrault's metaphor insinuates — generates a temporary abyss from which Tristan emerges robust, redefined and fortified with the conviction to challenge socio-cultural constraints. In short, the vibrant relationship between Perroni's observation, Barrault's metaphor and Tristan's transformative connection with the mask indicates the insightful link between masks and sutured identities presenting a poignant chronicle of self-actualisation and evolution in the face of hardships.

As discussed earlier, the mask of Bruder Mouse serves as a means for Tristan to reconstruct and stitch together a more self-assured and more coherent identity. It also offers him an opportunity to reconcile his Efican and Voorstandish identities seeking relief in his life. However, the mask also raises questions about his loyalty to his native roots and personal identity creating psychological cracks in his already fractured sense of self. By wearing the mask, Tristan can avoid ridicule and hatred from others, while concealing his vulnerabilities and insecurities. This highlights the significance of appearances not only in the world of theatre but also in the outside world where people often fail to see beyond surface identities.

5.6 Psychological Significance of the Mask

As far as the utility of a sutured identity regarding addressing the psychological wounds of individuals is concerned, Richard Young argues that the significance of suturing lies in its ability to help the mending process and closing the psychological wounds and rejuvenating the individuals whose spirits have been rent by turmoil and terror (109). Young's perspective on the utility of a sutured identity offers a profound insight into the psychological healing process for individuals who have endured turmoil and trauma. In this context, the concept of suturing takes on a therapeutic role analogous to that of a skilled surgeon delicately mending the physical wounds that have left their spirits torn and frayed. The act of suturing, thus, signifies the binding together of fragmented aspects of their identities helping to close the painful emotional gaps and create a sense of wholeness once more. A sutured identity acts as a curative mechanism aiding individuals in their journey toward rejuvenation and restoration. Through this process of mending, individuals can find solace, strength, and the resilience needed to overcome the adversities that have left them emotionally wounded.

The immediate psychological and aesthetic relief for Tristan alleviates the torment of his previous turmoil and terror. The promising comfort in his sutured identity indicates that his personal satisfaction and aesthetic pleasure outweigh his connection to cultural and national ideology. This self-centric and pragmatic aspect of his identity becomes evident as he disregards the Efican socio-cultural and political narrative, his family values and his national identity. Tristan seems willing to defy his social and cultural conventions and hail the opportunities offered by his sutured self.

Tristan's acceptance of the mask and his first visit to the Sirkus with Wally make him feel that all his fears that have been haunting him persistently have vanished all of a sudden. It gives him confidence to go in public and avoid the inhospitable glares of the people. However, beneath this surface of pristine strength, the cracks in Tristan's sutured identity begin to resurface. Guilt and conflict emerge as he grapples with the tension between his acceptance of the mask and his loyalty to his mother's ideology that vehemently opposes Voorstand and its influences. His inner conflict is evident when he questions himself, "Was I so shallow in my emotions, so forgetful, that this 'horror made of cardboard' could erase the disgusted faces in which I had seen the effect of my own beastly face" (Carey 165)? Such psychological conflicts make him realise that he has multiple identities that are sutured but the pain of the stitches continues to hurt him physically, emotionally and ideologically. Thus, the act of wearing the mask becomes both an escape from his past torments and a painful reminder of the stitches that bind his various identities together, but the sutures fail to hold his psychological wounds together. It reminds us of Salter's remarks regarding the incomplete success of suturing discussed in chapter two, that "stitches in a wound may lead to healing but also leave a trace of their own through the scar" (Salter 735).

At the end of the Sirkus, Tristan, who has removed the mask while watching the circus, tells us that when the lights are on, "I pulled my Mouse mask back on" (Carey 168). It demonstrates that he is unable to accept the horrors of his original identity when the lights are on. Thus, we find an element of escapism from the torment of Tristan's existence in his sutured identity. Moreover, when Tristan says that he himself pulls the mask back on his face, it refers to his agency in suturing his previous and new identity because he wants to stay away from the psychological anguish of his deformed and unsightly appearance.

Tristan's act of putting the Mouse mask back on when the lights are on serves as a powerful symbol of his internal struggle and the complexities of his sutured identity. The lights represent the public gaze and communal expectations that make Tristan feel the pressure to conform to the ideals and values of his community. In this context, he finds solace in the persona of Bruder Mouse that grants him self-confidence and guards him from the condemnatory eyes of others. The act of pulling the mask back on himself refers to Tristan's agency and his conscious decision to embrace the sutured identity as a means of protection — an instrument to separate himself from his tormenting original appearance. However, this act of escapism also discloses the deeper emotional turmoil within himself. Despite the empowering nature of the mask, Tristan remains unable to fully accept it and integrate his original identity into his sutured persona. The constant need to switch between masks — the Mouse mask and his indigenous communal identity— brings to the foreground the ongoing tension between the disparate facets of his sutured identity. It showcases the delicate balance he must maintain to handle his sutured identity to achieve his desired outcomes.

When Tristan comes to know that his mother is coming to the theatre to take him back with her to Vincent's house, he tears the mask apart so that she does not know his attachment — pragmatic or emotional — to the mask of a popular figure of their rival country. Hence, he tears the mask apart very easily albeit unwillingly. He says, "It was only papier-mâché. It was sickeningly easy to destroy" (Carey 170). Felicity comes and takes him along with her. He sits in the car still holding the pieces of the mask in his hands. "My beautiful Mouse mask now littered the shining malodorous back seat like poor grey petals" (Carey 170). It demonstrates that the mask has left its indelible impressions on Tristan and now his complete separation from it is beyond the shadows of any possibility. Tearing the mask apart before his mother's appearance reflects Tristan's conscious attempt to dissolve the external link between himself and the Voorstandish representation. This cannot be seen merely as an act of detachment as it signifies his deliberate choice to unstitch himself from the mask in his identity construction. His admission that tearing the mask is "sickeningly easy" suggests the emotional turbulence implicit in his decision — a struggle between his loyalty to the ideals of his mother and the attractions promised by the mask. The fragments of the torn mask symbolise the remnants of his conflicted identity. Tristan's physical separation from the mask epitomises his attempt to relinquish the external veneer despite its promises of relief and enfranchisement for him. The remnants of the mask

scattered in the back seat depicted as “poor grey petals”, suggest an air of melancholy and beauty implying the residual effect the mask has left on the process of suturing of his identity despite its destruction. This residual effect implies the element of nostalgia and a severe communal restriction associated with a sutured identity that does not let an individual stay fully satisfied and enjoy the benefits of a sutured identity.

Confronted with Tristan’s stubbornness and his unwavering desire to pursue a career as an actor, Felicity finally relents and assures him that he can be an actor, promising to teach him the necessary skills. She assures him, “You can be an actor” (Carey 170). She also pledges to fix his mask, acknowledging its importance for him, “Maman is going to fix your mask” (Carey 171). However, she tells him that it is going to be hard for him to become an actor. Subsequently, Felicity paints a new mask for Tristan. When Tristan dons it, he considers himself “a fairy, something from another level of existence, pixie, elf, homunculus” (Carey 173). Tristan’s excitement can be noticed in his words, “My scars she turned into lightning bolts” (Carey 173) that overtly highlight Tristan’s optimism associated with the process of suturing. By painting a new mask for Tristan, Felicity not only manifests her acceptance of his chosen path willy-nilly but also actively engages herself in his journey of sutured identity. This act reinforces the theme of empowerment by means of the mask since Tristan’s scars are figuratively converted into lightning bolts. It represents the initiation of Tristan’s metamorphosis from psychological vulnerability to potency because of the beginning of the process of suturing.

Felicity’s warning to Tristan about the challenges of acting and the pain it may bring reflects the ongoing struggle associated with suturing identities. She enlightens him about the jeopardies and challenges associated with acting. She tells him that it will hurt him. She further says, “You’ll be frightened that you’ll break yourself in half, but that is what you’ll have to do” (Carey 173). The afore-mentioned use of the words like “my scars” by Tristan and “you’ll break yourself in half” by Felicity refers to the process of suturing of identities that brings with it the continuous pain or presence of scars as mentioned by Salter (735) and it fails to sew up the broken parts of identities appropriately. They may be sutured but an ongoing feeling of brokenness always remains there as Felicity’s warning to Tristan indicates. It also suggests that while the process of suturing may create a new persona and offer a sense of fulfillment, it does not erase the underlying complexities and vulnerabilities that remain. Subsequently, she kisses him and tells him, “You’re an actor. This theatre is for you” (Carey 175).

The use of the word “theatre” here symbolises the world as an arena where Tristan is supposed to perform from now onwards and handle his sutured fragments as he would handle different masks on the stage of the Feu Follet.

As the novel progresses, Felicity sends Tristan a solid mask of Bruder Mouse made of porcelain or wood having a little red sticker representing Voorstandish symbols of the phases of the moon in yellow (Carey 179). Tristan further informs us, “There was no elastic to hold it on, but a series of complicated straps and fasteners like the back of roller-hockey pads” (Carey 180). This mask with complex straps and fasteners signifies the deepening connection between Tristan and his desired persona. As he becomes more engrossed in the character of Bruder Mouse, the complexity of his sutured identity intensifies. The absence of elastic to hold the mask on suggests that the process of sutured identity is not easily reversible and as one delves deeper into the persona, returning to the former identity becomes increasingly challenging and intricate. It brings into contention Mohsin Hamid’s words who claims “... it is not always possible to restore one’s boundaries after they have been blurred” (196). The widening of the ruptures in Tristan’s identity due to his growing attachment with the mask can also be explained by Hamid’s assertion, “... we cannot reconstitute ourselves as the autonomous beings we previously imagined ourselves to be. Something of us is now outside, and something of the outside is now within us” (196).

The evolution from the fragile papier-mâché mask to the solid Bruder Mouse mask parallels Tristan’s increasing immersion in the process of the suturing of his identity. The Voorstandish symbols of moon phases on the mask represent Tristan’s growing connection with the cultural symbols and mythos of Voorstand. This progression highlights that the process of Tristan’s sutured identity is not a linear one; rather it is more profound and intertwines with the disparate elements of his adopted identity. The complex straps and fasteners symbolise the complicated symbiosis between his Efican and Voorstandish influences and how they are integrated to his sense of self. As the physical structure of the mask becomes more and more intricate and solid, so does Tristan’s internal conversion that suggests the non-linear and tortuous nature of the process of his sutured identity.

In the course of time, Tristan’s fascination for his new mask keeps on mounting. We discern that he becomes more attached and connected with it. As he spends more time wearing the mask and embodying the persona of Bruder Mouse, he finds himself drawn to exploring this new aspect of his identity. The mask becomes a gateway for him to

explore the depths of his new self, shedding light on the transformative power of performance and the sense of liberation it brings. He tells us, "It was easy for me to slip away to examine that subject which now interested me the most — my new self" (Carey 184). However, Tristan's fascination for and connection with the Feu Follet Collective remains as strong as before. The conflict between the two conflicting worlds of Efica and Voorstand mirrors the internal conflict within Tristan's sutured identity. He tells us, "The doctrinaire actors of the Feu Follet would have died to see wicked Bruder Mouse invade their sawdust ring… but they were not there. I was. It was my theatre" (Carey 184). Thus, Tristan's sutured identity transforms Bruder Mouse from an outsider and rival to an insider and friend for him though others may have different feelings for the object that represents the national, cultural and political discourse of the opponents. Bruder Mouse sutures the two incompatible worlds for Tristan uniting them in a unique way. Tristan's remarks "It was my theatre" reveal his deep-seated connection with his past and his cultural roots despite the temptations of a life of attraction promised by the mask of Bruder Mouse. It implies that he strives hard to handle his new and old identities like a juggler and consciously or unconsciously adopts the one in consonance with the need of the occasion. It is evident when he says, "I removed my mask to eat a hearty lunch of herring. After lunch I strapped it on again" (Carey 184). The removal and the resumption of the mask epitomise the process of shifting from one identity to another and Tristan's selection of a particular facet of his sutured identity at a particular moment.

The impact of Felicity's death on Tristan's sutured identity serves as a powerful reminder of the inescapable intertwining of personal and political realities and the enduring consequences of such entanglements. The subsequent act of cutting and smashing the mask reveals the failure of the stitches to hold together for Tristan that is represented through his desire to shed the false identity it represented. This act signifies his realisation of the limitations of the mask in providing him with a sustainable sense of psychological relief and emotional tranquility. It also symbolises his growing anger and resentment towards Voorstand's influence and the role it played in shaping his life's trajectory, eventually culminating in his mother's tragic fate. By dismantling the mask, Tristan metaphorically renounces the artificial facade that it had provided him with uncovering the emotional turmoil and resentment hidden beneath. Felicity's murder gives birth to the feelings of betrayal and an acute sense of guilt in him because of his alignment and interest with the iconic figure of the Voorstanders who are

responsible for his mother's death. Thus, the process of suturing which involves weaving different aspects of one's identity together is not so straightforward as adopting an external facade because of its profound psychological repercussions.

In Voorstand, we can find a dichotomy between Tristan's roots and his personal experiences that affect his identity to a significant level. In his essay, "Identity: Brought About or Brought Along? Narrative as a Privileged Site for Researching Intercultural Identities" Michael Baynham discusses the dichotomy between the "identity-brought-along" and the "identity-brought-about" and argues, "I believe the solution to this dilemma is to historicize our understanding of identity work, while paradoxically maintaining an emphasis on its performativity" (Dervin and Risager 69). As we go through *TULTS*, we notice that suturing between the elements of historicisation and performativity of Tristan's identity provide us better understanding of how his "identity-brought along" and "identity brought about" get sutured and influence each other.

In a nutshell, the Bruder Mouse mask serves as a potent psychological symbol in *TULTS* for the study of Tristan's sutured identity. It captures the intertwined layers of his psyche and epitomises his identity conundrum, personal aspirations and the challenges related to cultural integration. The transformative power of the mask is evident as it becomes a medium for the conscious stitching together of disparate fragments of Tristan's identity. Thus, the mask serves as a lens through which the complex process of Tristan's sutured identity can be understood in an appropriate manner. Initially, embraced as a pragmatic tool to hide his physical deformities, it evolves into a transformative medium interlacing his evolving self with cultural dynamics. The mask embodies the psychological journey of stitching together the diverse elements of Tristan's identity highlighting how his sutured identity is a fluid blend of personal agency, external influences, and the intricate art of integration.

5.7 Love-Hate Relationship between Tristan and the Mask

The ambivalent relationship between Tristan and his mask is a complex interplay of affection and animosity that brings to the foreground the complex nature of his sutured identity. From serving as a shield against the censuring and judgmental gazes of society to a psychological and ideological burden on his personal identity, the mask represents both a sanctuary and struggle of Tristan in his quest for constructing a stable and cohesive identity for himself.

Tristan's observation about Felicity's election campaign speech reveals the paradox and inconsistency in their sutured identities. While Felicity vehemently denounces Voorstand and its policies, she is oblivious to the fact that her own son now wears the mask of the rival country. This paradox vividly signifies the complexity and ambivalence of their sutured identities. Tristan watches a video of his mother's election campaign after wearing the new mask of Bruder Mouse in which she enthusiastically sneers at the anti-Efican policies of Voorstand and the characters of their Sirkus that correspond to their socio-political discourse. Tristan, here, makes a pertinent comment about the paradox and inconsistency associated with Felicity's sutured identity by declaring, "No one who watched the speech would have believed that she had dressed her own son in the visage of the enemy, and that the son now sat, not listening to a word his mother said, dreaming his own flickering dreams" (Carey 180). These lines reveal the ambivalence in their sutured identities that is evident as their words and actions contradict themselves. The love-hate relationship in their sutured identities is evident as they embrace and resist aspects of their new personas. Felicity, as a radical socio-political activist, passionately advocates for Efican rights and condemns Voorstand but her action of dressing her son as Bruder Mouse, a symbol of Voorstand, contradicts her socio-political stance. Similarly, Tristan, in his role as Bruder Mouse, is seemingly detached from his mother's words and is lost in his own dreams, representing a dichotomy between his public persona and his personal desires. This kind of ambivalence is one of the hallmarks of a sutured identity. The ambivalence in Tristan and Felicity's sutured identities exemplifies the theme of duality and conflict that runs throughout the novel. Their sutured identities are not monolithic but multifaceted, revealing the complexity of navigating through the challenges and contradictions of a sutured identity.

The mask of Bruder Mouse brings several positive changes in Tristan's personality but Felicity's murder makes him develop feelings of strong hatred against it as it stands for Voorstand, its secret agents and all the products related to its culture and hegemony. He expresses his hatred against the interference of Voorstand in his life by cutting and smashing the mask of Bruder Mouse as discussed earlier in this chapter. When he beholds the hanging corpse of his mother with a rope, he expresses his severe hatred for the mask by saying, "I could not reach her but I cut my mask off my face with a box-cutter. I could not reach her, but I smashed Bruder Mouse with a brick" (Carey 223). He, further, gives vent to his pent-up antagonism against the intervention of the

Voorstanders — who are the representatives of colonising forces — in their private life by grinding the mask. “I ground the mask, pulped the wood, paint. My real face was snot, tears, drool. I brought it into the lights of the vid camera and screamed at them” (Carey 223). The act of slashing and smashing of the mask with watery eyes illustrates the excruciating anguish that epitomises Tristan’s attempts at unstitching his Bruder Mouse identity. His hatred for the mask brings to the foreground his deep-rooted anger and resentment towards Voorstand’s interference in his life and his mother’s tragic fate. Cutting and smashing the mask become acts of defiance and the rejection of the false identity it once provided him. These acts challenge his belief in the transformative power of the mask and raise questions about the authenticity and sustainability of sutured identities.

Tristan’s disgust for the mask of Bruder Mouse persists even in Voorstand twelve years after his mother’s murder, when Jacqui, his nurse, asks him if he wants a souvenir, that is, the mask of Bruder Mouse. He scornfully declines to get it though, later on, he accepts the offer. Thus, the mask represents Tristan’s journey from physical deformities and brokenness to his attempts at constructing a sutured identity in Efica to his emotional and psychological deformities and brokenness to another attempt at the suturing between his Efican and Voorstandish identities in Voorstand. This journey denotes that the process of the suturing of identities has several impediments, milestones and new destinations. However, the journey goes on and the shifts and oscillations in it are its part and parcel. Tristan’s love-hate relationship with the mask of Bruder Mouse enlightens us that the journey towards a sutured identity involves grappling with past traumas, embracing fresh challenges and handling the tensions between different cultural, national and personal identities.

Through the love-hate relationship between Tristan and the mask of Bruder Mouse, Carey presents before us the complexities, contradictions and inconsistencies associated with a sutured identity. It highlights Tristan’s journey of embracing and resisting external influences simultaneously. The mask reveals both the optimistic and problematic dimensions of Tristan’s sutured identity that carries the elements of agency as well as control concurrently. The ambivalence associated with Tristan’s sutured identity reveals an element of illusoriness with a sutured identity that it can be a solution to the social, political and psychological issues of an individual whereas the analysis of Tristan’s identity brings to the forefront that his sutured identity, sometimes, is not the solution of a problem rather it becomes a cause of contention for him.

5.8 A New and Sophisticated Mask

Jacqui, as Tristan prolongs his stay in Voorstand, provides him with a new and sophisticated mask of Bruder Mouse that represents another crucial milestone in the sutured identity of Tristan. On this occasion, she stitches the Simi of Bruder Mouse to Tristan's body with a needle and thread. The use of the specific words like needle and thread overtly refers to the process of suturing of Tristan's identity that begins with the papier-mâché mask and then reaches a more solid wooden or plastic mask gifted to him by his mother and, eventually, it is metaphorically stitched with a needle and thread to his personal identity and becomes an inseparable part of it. Just as a needle and thread physically bring two pieces of fabric together to form a cohesive whole, the mask of Bruder Mouse becomes intricately woven into Tristan's sense of self transforming his former identity into a new and profound persona. This suturing is so pronounced that it completely transforms Tristan's former identity. Tristan's remark here is germane to our discussion about the suturing of identities. He says, "When I stood, I was already my new character" (Carey 314). It accentuates the seamless integration of the mask into his identity. At this point, the process of suturing seems so complete that Tristan no longer sees himself as a separate entity from Bruder Mouse; he becomes one with the character.

Tristan's transformation becomes more conspicuous when Jacqui holds his hand and he feels that he is no longer an ugly and deformed creature. He finds himself sutured with the character and identity of Bruder Mouse. He remarks, "She grasped my hand — not mine exactly, but the gloved hand of the limping bow-legged Mouse, which looked like a creation of the laser board, twisted, exaggerated, but rolling, lurching, both comic and benign" (Carey 315). These words overtly highlight the sutured identity of Tristan as he identifies himself with the image of Bruder Mouse that gives him a profound sense of accomplishment and relief because of the suturing between his former and new identities. The imagery of the "limping bow-legged Mouse" reinforces the sutured identity of Tristan as he perceives himself not just in appearance but also in mannerisms and behaviour akin to the character he has adopted. The description of the "limping bow-legged Mouse" captures not only a physical attribute but also conveys a sense of imperfection and divergence from the norm. This physical aspect implies Tristan's own perception of himself as someone who stands at the intersection of two cultures embodying both Efican and Voorstandish elements. The metaphor of "limping"

suggests a sense of imbalance indicating the challenges he faces in trying to suture the distinct aspects of his identity into a coherent whole.

The new Simi of Bruder Mouse makes Tristan more confident and self-assured than ever before. He does not worry about his personal appearance, so he feels more confident displaying his personal talent and skills to Jacqui. He surprises Jacqui with his tumbling, rolling and holding his hands across his mouth in a giggle (Carey 317). The applause and admiration he receives from Jacqui and others serve as a source of heartening validation making him feel loved and appreciated — a stark contrast to the previous perception of himself as a pathetic creature. He expresses his sense of achievement in these words, "The pathetic creature who had skulked inside the Feu Follet was now the object of these people's love" (Carey 317).

Tristan gets more applause from the people with his skills of cascading and criss-crossing oranges in the air that his admirers start banging at the door to see him when he returns to his hotel. It seems surreal and ecstatic for him. Jacqui also feels that he is amazing (Carey 318). However, Tristan has some issues with the Simi of Bruder Mouse, as his "head could not turn easily" and his "eye-holes were poorly placed" and his "vision was limited" (Carey 319). The physical limitations of the mask, such as restricted head movement and limited vision, can be interpreted as metaphors for the constraints that Tristan faces in embracing the role of Bruder Mouse. The "head could not turn easily" can be seen as symbolic of the difficulty he encounters in fully immersing himself in the character's persona. It reflects his struggle to maintain a balance between his Efican heritage and the Voorstandish identity suggesting that he cannot easily shift between these roles without facing challenges related to suturing. The fact that the mask's "eye-holes were poorly placed" and his limited vision are symbolic of his compromised ability to perceive and understand his surroundings clearly. This limitation parallels his struggle to comprehend the complexities of his sutured identity. It reflects the internal conflicts he experiences in trying to reconcile his multiple affiliations and how this struggle obstructs his ability to perceive his world and his personal identity with clarity. The physical discomfort caused by the restrictions of the mask echoes the emotional discomfort that Tristan must cope with as he attempts to embody Bruder Mouse. The issues with his sutured identities can be understood through Mehta's assertion mentioned in chapter two that "this construction of new identities is never very easy, nor is the transition from old to new ones smooth" (53).

Despite the issues with the new Simi, Tristan feels ecstatic that is discernible in the fact that when Jacqui asks him if she can unstitch him, he shakes his head (Carey 320). Tristan's refusal in this regard reveals his acceptance of his sutured identity with its inherent flaws and contradictions. He acknowledges that his identity, like the mask, is a fusion of both pain and promises. Thus, Tristan's sutured identity is a complex amalgamation of his desires for self-expression and the inherent challenges that come with adopting a new persona. The constant ambivalence he experiences reflects the multifaceted nature of his identity where he grapples with both the joys and difficulties of embracing the transformative power of the mask.

Another evidence of Tristan's immersion in his newfound identity comes to the forefront when Wally gives him a bath and unstitches the Simi of Bruder Mouse, Tristan says, "I wanted to stay inside the suit until I got into the bath, but I was lifted out before I could protest" (Carey 330). Tristan's desire to stay inside the Simi of Bruder Mouse even during his bath highlights his growing attachment and immersion in his newfound identity. The mask becomes a source of relief and escape for him amidst his painful life. It represents a haven where he can temporarily escape from the scars of his past and embrace a more empowered version of himself. Nevertheless, he shares with us, "When he lowered me into the water, delicate pink clouds rose from my lacerated skin. He ran his hands over me, searching out my injuries" (Carey 330). The metaphor of "delicate pink clouds" rising from his lacerated skin during the bath alludes to the emotional and physical wounds of Tristan — both from his past experiences and the challenges of his sutured identity. It implies that the process of suturing identities involves enduring and addressing some physical as well emotional wounds which can be both painful and healing simultaneously. Tristan's lacerated skin and injuries also mirror the ongoing emotional, psychological, and social issues that arise because of his sutured identity. Despite the promises of joy and empowerment associated with his new persona, he has to confront the complexities and contradictions inherent in his fusion of identities. It implies that once the process of suturing begins, getting back to one's untainted indigenous identity becomes virtually impossible because even if the stitches are removed, they leave their scars on the body and mind of the individual. Thus, once the conscious or unconscious process of suturing starts, it is almost impossible to reverse it.

The promises and pleasures associated with Tristan's sutured identity can be found in his words when he expresses his joy after some time, "I found myself levitated into the

Saarlim sky" (Carey 333). This sense of levitation represents the feeling of liberation and transcendence he experiences through his sutured identity. It allows him to rise above the limitations and constraints of his former self, offering him moments of pure joy and freedom. The sense of levitation symbolises the weightlessness and euphoria Tristan experiences as he moves beyond his physical and emotional scars. It represents a departure from his former self and a flight into a realm of new possibilities and opportunities. In this state of elevation, Tristan is unburdened by the insecurities and doubts that once plagued him allowing him to fully embody the character of Bruder Mouse and bask in the pleasures of his sutured identity.

5.9 Tristan's Encounter with Bill

Tristan's encounter with Bill at the water Sirkus in Voorstand fills him with immense joy described by him as a surge of happiness and a sense of wholeness, causing him to momentarily forget about Jacqui and Wally (Carey 343). However, their interaction is hindered by the mask of Bruder Mouse leaving Bill uncertain if Tristan has truly forgiven him for deserting him in the past, as the mask conceals Tristan's eyes and mouth making genuine communication difficult. This situation brings to the forefront how a sutured identity, sometimes, can create distance between individuals and their loved ones. It also underscores how masks can bring confusion by obscuring or distorting reality, potentially harming sincere relationships. Bill asks Tristan, later on, "We have to sit down without our masks" (Carey 351). This sentence is pregnant with layers of meanings. Bill's call for sitting down without masks implies that shedding pretensions is obligatory for a meaningful, authentic and sincere interaction. It also suggests that masks — literal and/or metaphorical — can lead to misrepresentation or misunderstanding of reality and genuine emotions. In this context, Daniel Fitousi et al. believe, "Normal processing of faces is essential for social perception and interaction" (1). Afterwards, they assert, "Faces are important sources of expression and extraction of valuable information about ourselves and others. Therefore, acting in a world in which faces are partially occluded poses serious challenges to normal human performance in many scenarios" (2).

Another significant moment arises when Bill expresses his dissatisfaction with Tristan's donning the mask of Bruder Mouse stating, "Tristan, I don't know who you are in there" (Carey 359). This reaction, coupled with Wally's and the painful memory of Tristan's deceased mother's disapproval of the mask triggers an intense turmoil

within Tristan leaving him wrestling with a sense of guilt. Bill's inability to recognise Tristan behind the mask highlights the potential loss of authenticity and the sense of disconnection that can occur when individuals adopt sutured identities.

Tristan's disappointment at Bill's remark highlights the contrast between how he perceives his own sutured identity and how others, including Bill, view it. To Tristan, his sutured identity represents a journey of growth, learning, and transformation. It has enabled him to acquire remarkable skills and talents that were unforeseen by others. However, despite his personal achievements and inner solace, Tristan's sutured identity faces disapprobation and refusal from those around him. He expresses his distress saying:

> He did not know, because he had not been there. He did not know that I had hidden in the darkness of the Feu Follet for eleven years, that I had worked each day on all the tricks he taught me and then lost interest in, that I could do things no doctor could ever have predicted, that I could juggle, tumble, stand on one hand" (Carey 359).

These poignant words shed light on how Tristan's sutured identity has metamorphosed him endowing him with incredible skills. However, this mosaic of identity fails to win a nod of approval from his own people. It unveils the social stigma accompanying such a sutured identity as it defiantly defies established norms and cultural conventions of a nation. While it may bestow inner solace upon the individuals, it is met with disgust from the people of their own nation and community. Ironically, Bill expresses his displeasure for Tristan's mask while adorning himself with a metaphorical Voorstandish mask. It denotes that a sutured identity is a tapestry viewed through different prisms by individuals and communities. It also suggests that sometimes it is easier for some individuals to notice the scars of others' sutured identities and criticise them, but it is difficult for them to find their own scars within themselves. It implies that individuals may judge and denounce others based on surface appearances without fully understanding the depth and complexity of their own experiences. The contrasting perceptions of Tristan's identity by different individuals underscore the subjectivity of identity and the importance of empathy and self-reflection in understanding and accepting the journey and challenges of suturing of others.

We notice that Tristan's sutured identity keeps evolving and changing its shapes. It can be discerned upon his return from the enchanting Water Sirkus with Wally and Jacqui when Jacqui deftly adorns Tristan's Mouse Suit with a two-pin vocal patch, akin to the

ones worn by the performers in the Water Sirkus. The mystical transformation that follows leaves Tristan in ecstatic disbelief since his stuttering voice is converted into a normal human voice. By now, we have come to know that his life is under threat because all his movements have been monitored by Voorstand Intelligence Agency. However, the weight of the threats of an impending assassination dissipates, overshadowed by the ecstatic experience of a fresh and evolved sutured identity. The addition of the two-pin vocal patch to his Mouse Suit marks yet another transformation in his identity allowing him to shed the limitation of his stuttering voice and greet this metamorphosis that fills him with ecstatic disbelief. The new sophisticated mask of Tristan contributes to his feelings of reincarnation so much so that even Wally is unable to recognise him and tells him sarcastically and disappointedly, "You're another person" (Carey 392). It serves as a critical reminder for Tristan that he cannot appease the people of his own land and culture by hiding behind a fake identity. It highlights the social challenges and barriers associated with a sutured identity.

In stark contrast to Tristan, Bill finds himself caught amidst the complexities of social obligations since he is obliged to host a dinner party that he had been planning for three months in honour of an influential figure of Saarlim, Mrs Peggy Kram. We recognise that Bill is in search of new opportunities as his contract with his former employers has been terminated. The juxtaposition of Tristan's elation and Bill's uncertain future highlights the vagaries associated with the trajectory of their sutured identities. It suggests that, like a human being, a sutured identity has its own whims and mood swings. Thus, uncertainty becomes a certainty for a sutured identity that makes it arbitrary and unpredictable leading individuals to experience both triumphs and tribulations.

Tristan's experience during the dinner party hosted by Bill exemplifies the complex interplay of emotions and challenges associated with his sutured identity. As he takes on the role of Bruder Mouse to entertain the guests, he finds himself both exhilarated and anxious. The guests' attempts to decipher his identity add to the tension as Tristan fears that revealing his true self would expose his physical deformities. He compares this situation to "walking on the slack rope" highlighting the delicate balancing act he must perform to maintain his sutured identity and conceal his vulnerabilities. To divert attention from the subject of unmasking, he leaps into the lap of Peggy Kram, showcasing his ability to navigate social interactions with humour. Her applause for his act momentarily boosts his confidence verifying his sutured identity as a source of

social success. However, this triumph is short-lived when Tristan beholds the signs of embarrassment and loss of shine on his father's face. It discloses that while a sutured identity can bring personal satisfaction and social triumph for an individual, it can also create rifts and uncertainties in relationships. Like walking on a slack rope, Tristan's sutured identity requires constant adjustment and adaptation to maintain the balance between his personal ambitions and his familial obligations.

5.10 Tristan's Return to His Roots

As the novel races towards its climax, the true intentions of Gabe Manzini and Wendell Deveau, envoys of the Voorstand Intelligence Agency, regarding the murder of Tristan unfurl dramatically. Jacqui and Wally are steadfastly determined to save him against all odds. Nevertheless, Tristan's recent achievement at the dinner leaves him intoxicated with his sutured identity causing him to disregard the imminent threat to his life. The extent of his subsumption in his sutured identity is conspicuous in his words when he says, "I should have listened to them, but I was like a drunk around a bottle. My death hung over me, and I would not see it" (Carey 387). Thus, we notice that notwithstanding several positive experiences of life because of the mask, Tristan's sutured identity that functions as a means of resurrection for him also puts his life into serious jeopardy. It demonstrates the scope of his sutured identity from a rejuvenating antidote to a deadly venom. Thus, Tristan's fondness for his Bruder Mouse identity captivates him to such an extent that he becomes oblivious to the grave perils surrounding him as if he had become a slave to his own metamorphosis. The multidimensionality of Tristan's sutured identity emphasises the contrasting effects it exerts on his existence whereas the metaphor of intoxication represents the allure of his transformed identity and his consequent blindness to the impending danger.

Interestingly, despite the positive experiences that his mask of Bruder Mouse grants him, Tristan remains plagued by his internal disquietude. He finds himself stranded within the stifling confines of the suit feeling suffocated as he laments, "… it was stinking and steamy inside the suit" (Carey 390) and, subsequently, he complains, "… I was imprisoned by the Mouse" (Carey 390). Notably, even Wally, who shares a deep bond with Tristan, expresses discomfort with the transformed voice emanating from the mask. As discussed earlier, the clarity and fluidity of speech do not appease Wally, as he remarks, "I hate the voice. You're like another person" (Carey 392). This disapproval from Wally serves as a poignant reminder that Tristan's sutured identity

does not necessarily resonate with those closest to him. Moreover, despite Tristan's compelling portrayal of Bruder Mouse, he cannot fully conceal the seams of his sutured identity. Clive Baarder, a prominent figure within the Saarlim Sirkus, alludes to the apparent incongruities suggesting that the Bruder Mouse they witness is not the genuine article that symbolises how Tristan's sutured identity is perceived by his *others*. It reflects the difficulty in fully concealing one's true self and the complexities of maintaining a constructed identity that might not resonate with everyone. The visibility of stitches signifies the inescapable duality of Tristan's identity that is emblematic of the inherent tension between his two contesting cultural affiliations. It also suggests that despite offering some solutions to the individuals, suturing fails to address several issues related to their identity and overall existence.

During a meeting at Peggy Kram's residence, an ominous sound is heard that is promptly recognised by Jacqui as that of a silenced Glock. The worst fears of Jacqui and Tristan materialise as they learn that Wally takes a bullet meant for Tristan during his encounter with Wendell Deveau and dies. Overwhelmed by an acute sense of guilt, Tristan feels shattered, considering himself responsible for Wally's tragic demise. Already haunted by the ghost of his mother's murder, Tristan feels devastated by the burden of Wally's death that reignites the flames of his vehement aversion to the mask. The heaviness of guilt renders the mask suffocating and unbearable for Tristan as his conscience is deeply troubled by its grinning facade and floppy ears. Wally's taking the bullet meant for Tristan serves as a powerful symbol of loyalty, sacrifice, and love. It exemplifies the consequences that Tristan's sutured identity brings not only to himself but also to those who care for him. Tristan's guilt and emotional turmoil after Wally's death add another layer of symbolism to his sutured identity. His sense of responsibility for the tragedies that befall those close to him reflects the moral dilemmas and internal conundrum associated with his sutured identity. It exposes the price he pays for suturing for himself the existing gap between two opposing cultural affiliations.

Because of the moral and emotional turbulence, Tristan futilely attempts to rid himself of the mask to be free from its asphyxiating prison. Jacqui comes to assist him as she realises the gravity of the moment and tears off the mask unveiling Tristan's literally and metaphorically disfigured identity leaving Peggy stunned in disbelief. "She placed her hands on either side of my Bruder head and dug her nails into the slit she had so diligently sewn up. And then she ripped, ripped my Mouse-head apart like it was orange peel. She tore the head off like a prawn" (Carey 411). The way Jacqui removes the

mask symbolises the insignificance and infirmity of the mask in comparison with the real shape of Tristan despite its deformity and ugliness. The imagery reveals the ultimate fragility and hollowness of his sutured identity and how it fails to capture the depth of his character and experiences. The transformation in the symbolism of the mask signifies Tristan's growing aversion to the artificial persona it represented.

5.11 Conclusion of the Chapter

As the novel draws to a close, we find Tristan once more enveloped within the Mouse suit but this time its purpose transcends mere economic or entertainment motives. Instead, it serves as a crucial instrument of camouflage, as Jacqui, Bill, and Tristan unite to escape Voorstand seeking refuge back in Efica. This transformative decision signifies a turning point in Tristan's and Bill's lives, as they leave behind the world that had suffocated and destabilised their identities and embark on a new journey toward self-discovery and liberation. The return of Bill and Tristan to Efica can be explained in the significance of home and belonging in the words of Mable Joshua-Amadi — discussed earlier in this study — who believes, "You need a firm sense of identity as a foundation to your being. With this identity comes a sense of purpose that gives your life direction and meaning. Without it you become confused and perplexed with life, drift along purposelessly and will ultimately waste your life" (28).

The notion of "In my end is my beginning" (Brown 150) aptly resonates with Tristan and Bill's transformative journey as T.S. Eliot's timeless line from "Four Quartets" suggests. Thus, the conclusion of one chapter in the lives of Tristan and Bill serves as the genesis of another presenting them with the opportunity to redefine themselves beyond the constraints of their sutured identities. This moment marks the inception of an extraordinary odyssey wherein Tristan and Bill's true potential and inner strength will manifest unshackled by the limiting constructs that previously confined them.

The notion of seeking refuge in Efica not only represents a physical escape but also a metaphorical return to their roots, their true selves, and their cultural identity. Tristan reaffirms his attachment to the roots of his identity by addressing the Voorstanders and endorsing the viewpoint of the essentialists by saying, "But you are who you are, and we who we are" (Carey 412). It disputes Hall's exaggerated emphasis on the routes of an individual because Tristan's words and actions at the end of the novel celebrate the power and clout of his cultural roots.

Tristan's return symbolises his growing quest for self-discovery and his attempt at liberation from the confines of his sutured identities. The use of the Mouse suit as a means of camouflage emphasises the theme of masks and disguises that has been prevalent throughout the novel. However, in this context, the mask serves a different purpose enabling Tristan to route through a dangerous and oppressive world while concealing his indigenous Efican identity. It reflects his resilience and adaptability allowing him to protect himself while still preserving the essence of his personal identity.

Schwartzman's statement about the metaphor of suturing, which describes the process of creatively recrafting personal and collective identity after extreme disruption, is highly relevant to Tristan's sutured identity. According to Schwartzman, "The metaphor of suturing describes an ongoing, often provisional, process of creatively recrafting personal and collective identity after extreme disruption" (np). Tristan's journey is marked by the ongoing and provisional nature of identity reconstruction as he navigates his dual cultural affiliations. His efforts to adapt and align his identity with both Efican and Voorstandish narratives reflect the creative and adaptive process of identity formation. The "extreme disruption" in his life including cultural displacement and conflicting allegiances serves as the catalyst for his exploration of identity and his conscious attempts to suture together his fragmented sense of self. In this way, Schwartzman's statement aptly characterises Tristan's complex journey of reconciling his sutured identity in the face of significant disruptions.

Tristan's journey towards Voorstand and his return to his Efican roots signifies that from the papier-mâché mask that offered him a new identity in the enchanting world of Efica to the Simi of Bruder Mouse that granted him liberation and confidence, his masks reveal his evolving self. The masks bring to the foreground his yearning to transcend the limitations of his former identity and embrace a new self, but it is not without the stitches and scars of internal conflicts and paradoxes. Tristan's ongoing journey of embracing and renouncing these masks symbolises the continuous challenges for his existence. On one hand, he finds relief in his sutured identity but on the other hand, he experiences an acute identity conundrum when he is found yearning for authenticity beneath the layers of camouflage. From the initial papier-mâché smoke screen that introduced him to a new identity in Efica to the empowering Simi of Bruder Mouse, his masks epitomise the reflections of his evolving essence. They represent his aspirations to break the fetters of his former self and adopt a more promising and more

enchanting identity. However, he realises at the end of the novel that a fake sutured identity can only provide him with temporary relief while his inner battles and identity conundrums keep going on. The return of Tristan to his cultural roots suggests that despite its social, cultural and economic benefits, a sutured identity carries with itself the seeds of its destruction. Thus, if it is not handled properly and sensibly, it is bound to invite problems for individuals. The success of a sutured identity depends on its tactful, sensible and strategic management by individuals.

CHAPTER SIX

6.1 Conclusion of the Study

The primary purpose of this study — undertaken for the investigation of Hall's concept of the suturing of identities — has been to explore the process of suturing identities by analysing the characters of *TULTS* in terms of their connection with theatre and their use of physical and metaphorical masks in their theatrical and real lives. Through the lenses of masks employed by Tristan, Felicity and Bill, their performances and the significance of theatre in their decisions and choices, this research embarks on its final journey of investigation that has remarkably enriched our understanding of the profound implications of the process of the suturing of their identities. This journey not only reveals their agency in terms of their decisions and choices, but it also brings to the forefront their limitations due to social, cultural, discursive and structural control. Through the analysis carried out in this research, it is evident that in the grand theatre of life where identities are both scripted, structured, stitched and carved out, the masks they wear often reveal as much as they conceal as far as the process of the suturing of identities is concerned. The insights and analysis in the previous chapters explain the process of the suturing of identities, the promises and threats associated with it and its socio-cultural, economic and psychological implications for the characters. This chapter concludes the discussion in this study by providing us the final outcomes of the analysis and interpretation of the metaphors of theatre and theatrical, social and metaphorical masks especially the mask of Bruder Mouse employed by Carey that reveal the process of the suturing of identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill in *TULTS.*

In the preceding chapters, the discussion and analysis has highlighted the intricate symbiotic relationship between personal identities and social influences, authenticity and adaptation, and the transformative power and psychological challenges of theatrical masks of Tristan, Felicity and Bill. By virtue of this study, suturing comes to the foreground as a profound undertaking by these characters revealing its socio-cultural, political and psychological implications. The process of suturing revolves around their decisions and limitations as regards the conscious or unconscious act of stitching together the fragmented and frayed threads of their identities meticulously in a bid to achieve their social, cultural, political and economic ambitions especially in foreign lands. In this context, the discussion in the preceding chapters validates the definition of suturing provided by the researcher in the first chapter.

Tristan's physical deformity marks him as an outsider even within his own cultural surroundings, and he must contend with the prejudices and stereotypes that are imposed upon him by his *others* in Efica and Voorstand. His deformities bring to the foreground the social, cultural, moral and psychological deformities of the people around him as well. People's attitude in Tristan's own country is very pejorative and discomforting for him. Vincent, one of the suspects of being his father, does not reconcile with Tristan's appearance because of his high aesthetic standards. Some children are afraid of looking at Tristan that is obvious when a child calls him a mutant. Even Felicity seems to "act" as a mother sometimes using her theatrical skills. It demonstrates how her experiences at the stage help her use her theatrical skills in "performing" the role of a mother that brings to the foreground a critical suturing between her identity as an actress and her role as a mother. It presents before us how the facets of her professional, social, familial and emotional lives are sutured together consciously or unconsciously.

This research unearths that the process of suturing identities involves a dynamic interaction between an individual's cultural heritage, societal and cultural backdrop, personal experiences and the negotiation of subject positions within a broader discourse. It can be understood through the contention of Oshana discussed in the literature review of this study where she claims, "Our identities are the repository for much of what we absorb in the world and are the filter through which our lived experience is processed and interpreted" (2). It discloses that a sutured identity is not a static or stable entity rather it is a fluid and evolving construction that is impacted by a range of internal and external factors. The act of suturing involves threading these distinct elements together in a bid to stitch a coherent and integrated identity to overcome the psychological implications related to marginalisation, otherness and alienation during individuals' interactions especially with their *others*. However, this study enlightens us that suturing — despite its several socio-cultural, political and economic benefits — provides only a temporary relief to individuals. It discloses that, sometimes, instead of providing a solution to Tristan, Felicity and Bill, suturing becomes a serious problem for them that implies that, at times, instead of becoming an antidote for them, it acts as a poison for them that is manifest in the tragic death of Felicity and the discriminatory treatment meted out to Bill and Tristan in Voorstand.

The process of suturing identities has its own challenges and repercussions because of its pain and promises. Internal conflicts between disparate cultural, social and personal

elements can arise causing individuals to come across several contradictions and tensions. The resolution of these conflicts requires a blend of flexibility, adaptability, spirit of coexistence and codevelopment and readiness to make socio-cultural and ideological compromises. The process of the suturing of identities results in a multi-faceted and integrated sense of self that reflects dynamic engagement of the individuals with the world around them.

Constructing a sutured identity is an undertaking that questions, defies and blurs the boundaries of a singular cultural narrative transcending the constraints of culture and discourse. This universal human enterprise goes beyond the diasporic narrative and touches the very core of human existence. With reference to discourse and sutured identities, Chrysochou's argument mentioned in chapter two becomes critical when he says, "... identity remains in flux, transitioning between, among, and outside the discourses that have produced it" (74). Sandel and D'Ambrosio's contention discussed in chapter two also becomes relevant in this regard that the changes in our attitudes towards different discourse are methodical. They articulate their arguments in the following words: "Changes in our roles and relationships do not simply happen to us; they typically reflect, and contribute to, revisions in the narratives by which we seek to make sense of our lives" (275). As regards the importance of discourse, the definition of suturing provided in the first chapter of this study enlightens us that suturing challenges the very notion of cultural specificity by virtue of varied reasons such as personal ambitions, the need to overcome the issues of marginalisation or alienation or the quest for acceptance within divergent cultural spheres.

Suturing is more than a mending process; it is a profound conscious or unconscious undertaking by the selected characters of *TULTS* for constructing a coherent and resilient identity. It is a metamorphic journey in the quest for unity from fragmentation. The fragments — owing to the elements of diverse cultural origins, expectations, ambitions and experiences may not be homogenous —, however, as they intertwine, they craft a new piece of embroidery which can be complex as well as aesthetically beautiful. This study further divulges that suturing is an outward as well as an inward journey as it attempts to stitch and heal the wounds of an incoherent and ruptured social, cultural, ideological and emotional life. Each stitch promises unity amidst diversity and a constant hope of recovery traversing through the labyrinthine corridors of identity with the optimism of a semblance of relief.

The ethnocultural fragmentations of the identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill urge them to constitute alternative and unconventional identities by suturing the culturally pluralistic elements of their identities in their own ways. However, this suturing fails to grant them stable and self-satisfying identities because it disorients them to suture the conflicting discourses of the Efican and the Voorstandish identities. Their identity conundrums can be understood through the words of Chrysochou, "[The] struggle between subjectivity and discourse is made even more apparent in the exiled subject, whose hyphenation results from the conflicting discourses and locations and whose oppositions are often in hostile agreement (75).

Owing to the kaleidoscope of personal, cultural and social nuances and fragments that construct a sutured identity, there is always a likelihood that the seams can come apart if proper management is not done. In such a situation, the process of suturing comes to our view as a profound act of joining and stitching together the splintered fragments so meticulously that the flaws are hardly conspicuous for the people. Otherwise, the visibility of stitches of a sutured identity can hinder the desired results such as social legitimacy and a nod of approval from the *others* especially in a foreign country.

The responses of the characters to their sutured identities reflect their negotiation of social, economic, and psychological challenges. Felicity and Bill, for instance, traverse through the challenges and pressures of social acceptance and economic growth that compel them to make conscious compromises as regards the narrative and ideologies of their indigenous identities. These compromises often come at the cost of their identity conundrums as delineated through Felicity's mental struggles and Bill's feelings of regrets at Felicity's death, deserting his son and wasting twenty years of his life in Voorstand against the principles and mores of his native Efican culture. These identity conundrums reveal their internal turbulences which represent the persistent pursuit of harmony, pattern and balances by these characters amidst their cultural conflicts, social pressures and challenges that accompany the suturing of their identities. The investigation of their sutured identities establishes the complexities of their efforts to embrace new social networks and the dilemmas they encounter.

While sutured identities grant Tristan, Felicity and Bill the freedom to reconstruct, reconfigure and realign their selves challenging the essentialist concepts of identity, they also place them in situations marked by cultural clashes and dissonance. Ironically, their desperate desires for belonging — that cause their sutured identities — stand juxtaposed with their inability to fully immerse themselves either in the Efican or in the

Voorstandish community. It reveals the issues of marginalisation and alienation that continue to haunt the diaspora despite their attempts at stitching for themselves fresh identities in accordance with their surroundings. It is obvious in Bill's realisation that he remains an outsider in Voorstand despite his best efforts and Felicity also laments that she remains a Voorstander for the Eficans despite her honest efforts to promote Efican culture and criticise the policies of intervention by Voorstand.

Suturing — a mechanism both of empowerment and vulnerability — empowers the selected characters of *TULTS* to engage empathetically with others and appreciate cultural diversity while concurrently presenting challenges that unsettle their sense of self and their place in the world. The sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill facilitate connections and provide them with pathways to understanding enabling them to move from the periphery and engage actively with the natives of foreign cultures. As they grapple with their sutured identities, they engage in a continuous process of exploration and adaptation striving to form meaningful connections while navigating the complexities of their multifaceted selves.

The sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill highlight the general attributes of such identities as well as bring to the foreground the unique struggles of these characters in dealing with incongruent cultural elements. These characters, throughout the novel, find themselves concurrently linked with and detached from different cultures, bringing to our notice the complexities of belonging and alienation. The analysis of the sutured identities of these characters in terms of their use of masks and theatrical performances demonstrates that the process of suturing, while offering them moments of empowerment and social legitimacy, also shoves them to the borderlines of identity ensuing into their experiences of disorientation, identity conundrums and an obscure sense of belonging. The examination of these sutured identities makes it evident that these characters break away from static, neat and stable identities embodying the complexity and richness of human diversity.

The sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill, at times, emerge as deliberate apparatuses of confrontation and defiance against their marginalisation, a quest for new affiliations — forced or willful — and a pursuit for social acceptance in foreign lands. In their intentional or unintentional efforts to counter the agony of marginalisation and alienation, these characters make compromises and strive hard to suture themselves in accordance with their social settings and cultural ways consciously or unconsciously. However, they continue to live on the periphery that gives them an experience of

liminality, confusion, estrangement and disorientation — the very feelings they want to escape and overcome. The predicament of these characters regarding their attempts to stitch new identities for their survival and convenience can be summed up in the words of Germaine Greer who writes in the preface of *The Pain of Unbelonging: Alienation and Identity in Australasian Literature*, "The true pain of unbelonging is felt by those who have no homeland and no diaspora, who do not belong where they are, and don't belong anywhere else either" (x). This statement befittingly clarifies the predicaments of Tristan, Felicity and Bill who are caught between disparate and conflicting cultural worlds where their identities are fragmented, and their sense of belonging is constantly negotiated. Despite their conscious or unconscious efforts to appease their *others*, they fail to find validation and acceptance from them because they fail to recognise and understand the complexities of their identities and the challenges associated with them. The issues related to social sanctioning of a sutured identity can be understood through the contention of La Barbera mentioned earlier in this study. She rightly asserts, "Belonging emerges from a complex process of appropriation and (re)interpretation of social boundaries that depends on whether those who are on the other side of the boundary may accept or reject the minority group" (4).

The sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill serve not only as means of adaptation but also as sources of identity dilemmas. On one hand, these sutured identities allow these characters to adjust themselves in accordance with their environments grabbing moments of solace and personal, social and psychological relief that is analogous to that of an individual whose lacerated skin is sutured. However, on the other hand, their sutured identities shove them into corridors of uncertainty where they have to contend with their internal conflicts stemming from the collision between diverse cultural, discursive and ideological elements. This provides us with meaningful insights into the causes and outcomes of their conscious or unconscious decisions concerning the construction of their sutured identities exposing an element of plasticity and mutability in their identities throughout our analysis in this research.

6.2 Theatre, Performances, and Sutured Identities of the Characters

Carey, in *TULTS*, portrays the theatrical setting in such a remarkable manner as it helps us as the most significant metaphor for unearthing the process of sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill. The Feu Follet Collective becomes the world in a microcosm where these characters confront, adapt, and perform different roles to entertain their

audience. It provides them an opportunity to switch "from one consciousness to another" and change themselves "from one plotline to another" in the words of Finney (131) discussed earlier in this study, revealing the intricate suturing of their personal and societal influences.

The use of the metaphor of theatre by Carey helps us interpret and understand the dramatic nature of a sutured identity disclosing how individuals continuously stitch for themselves their sutured identities incorporating disparate elements of their personal as well as theatrical experiences to cope with the fluctuating demands of their socio-cultural, communal and ideological contexts. Furthermore, the vivid imagery of the stage such as costumes, masks, and scripts enable them to experiment with different, contradictory and conflicting facets of themselves. It apprises us of the ongoing suturing between their personal ambitions and the societal constraints imposed on them.

Acting and constructing a sutured identity have an evidently strong connection as both processes involve the deliberate assumption, amalgamation and fusion of multiple roles, personas and aspects of the actor's personal identity. Like the actors who perform characters incongruent to their own personalities, individuals with sutured identities also sail across several socio-cultural, ideological and personal dimensions in a bid to reconcile disparate elements of their identities. As acting in its essence is the art of stepping into someone else's shoes which inherently involves undertaking the journey of construction and deconstruction of identities, individuals with sutured identities frequently find themselves straddling different cultural backgrounds, social norms, or/and personal experiences. In both contexts, the process is not restricted to superficial or blind mimicry rather it calls for strategic adjustments between "the art of experiencing" and "the art of representation" — in the words of Stanislavsky mentioned earlier in this study — and deliberate compromises for its successful progression.

Actors strive to convey genuine emotions and experiences through their performances on the stage of a theatre, on the other hand, individuals with sutured identities seek to authentically express themselves within the various roles they are obliged to play on the metaphorical stage of the world during their interaction with their *others*. The parallel lies in the delicate balance between authenticity and adaptation —how much of the "self" is retained and how much is adjusted and compromised to fit in the role or the socio-cultural context. Furthermore, both acting and constructing a sutured identity involve a degree of introspection and self-awareness. Actors often are found in the process of suturing their personal experiences and emotions with their enacted personas

to enhance the impacts of their performances to win the applause of the audience. Similarly, individuals with sutured identities are constantly found in stitching their own backgrounds and experiences with their new cultural or social environments to win a nod of approval from their *others*. In both cases, however, there is a performative aspect to the process. Actors perform on the stage to entertain an audience while individuals with sutured identities perform their roles within the contexts of their daily lives to fulfill the expectations of the people around them. This performance, at times, leads to an internal dissonance — a sense of belonging to multiple identities concurrently and, quite the opposite, not entirely belonging to an exclusive identity. On the whole, the connection between acting and constructing a sutured identity lies in the nuanced symbiosis between reality and assumption, the deliberate integration of diverse elements and the complex interplay between different roles and facets of the self.

A symbiotic relationship between the sutured identities of Tristan, Bill, and Felicity and their acting careers can be traced throughout this study. The theatrical experiences of these characters play an important role in providing them with a rich opportunity to explore, negotiate, and redefine their identities. Tristan's acting journey plays a significant role in suturing his Efican heritage with the Voorstandish culture. By suturing himself with Bruder Mouse, he stitches a fresh and singular identity for himself that reduces his constant agony of a sense of inferiority complex because of his distorted figure and grants him a semblance of normalcy. Tristan consciously or unconsciously stitches together the contrasting elements found in his personal identity and that of Bruder Mouse. It underscores the internal negotiation between his two identities that gives birth to his sutured identity.

For Bill, his acting experiences in The Feu Follet theatre assist him to explore and perform different facets of his identity in Efica. His Voorstandish performances, on the other hand, symbolise his conscious or unconscious attempts to assimilate into the Voorstandish society. As he slips into these disparate roles, he experiences a temporary alignment with the expectations of the Voorstanders following a policy of appeasement which impacts his real-life sutured identity. His acting career becomes a mirror of his ongoing struggle between his Efican roots and his ambitions within Voorstand highlighting the challenges and complexities of his sutured identity whereas Felicity's acting career serves as a critical instrument for her resistance against cultural assimilation and her commitment to her Efican identity. Through her roles, she challenges societal norms and questions the status quo. Her performances become a

form of activism as she uses theatre to express her socio-political ideals and critique the dominant culture of Voorstand. Her acting empowers her to weave her sutured identity combining her artistic aspirations with her cultural heritage and showcasing her continuous suturing between authenticity and adaptation voluntarily or involuntarily.

The discussion in the preceding chapters reveals that in the vibrant process of suturing the identities of the selected characters of *TULTS* for this research, the theatre emerges as an arena that serves as a catalyst for their sutured identities. Here, characters become more than performers and actors as they enact the human drama of stitching and unstitching. Like the performers engaged in the act of wearing masks and taking on different personas, Tristan, Felicity and Bill engage themselves in the intricate process of negotiating their own multifaceted selves. The theatre, as both stage and metaphor, gets the spotlight for this study as it is where the profound, the complex, and the universal merge inviting us to witness the drama on the transformative power of sutured identities.

The theatre can be seen as a laboratory for Tristan, Felicity and Bill where they explore and experiment with the process of their sutured identities, the intersections of their cultural backgrounds and their present circumstances. Their performances at the theatre become acts of stitching together the fragments of their identities highlighting the fluid and malleable nature of their identities as they strive to seamlessly transpose and transport themselves between different roles and worlds. Furthermore, the theatre enables them to confront their inner conflicts and dilemmas in a controlled and creative environment. Through their enacted roles at the theatre, these characters express their inner tensions, desires, and struggles that often reveal more about themselves than they consciously intend. This process is analogous to the concept of sutured identities wherein these characters are found consciously or unconsciously integrating the different elements of their lives while dealing with the issues and challenges of the cultural dichotomies between Efica and Voorstand.

For Tristan, the theatre offers a significant opportunity to deal with the complicated issues related to his physical deformity and immerse himself in different roles. It empowers him to transcend the confines of his disfigured body and transform himself into another person at least fleetingly. Thus, the Feu Follet becomes a critical space for him where he can experiment with empowering identities wearing and discarding various masks and enacting different personas. This conscious or unconscious suturing

between his personal and assumed identity facilitates him to discover alternative facets of himself to cope with the challenges surrounding him.

Felicity's strong connection with the theatre assists her to channel her artistic ambitions and Efican identity simultaneously distancing herself from her Voorstandish roots. Through her roles as an actor and director, she expresses her resentment and disenchantment with her cultural heritage because of the socio-political intervention of Voorstand in the affairs of Efica. Thus, the theatre provides her with an opportunity to adhere to and disseminate her socio-political ideals with the people of Efica offering a creative outlet for her sutured identity. The theatre empowers her to resist cultural assimilation by showcasing her affiliation with her Efican identity and challenging the dominance of Voorstandish traditions.

Bill's engagement with the theatre underscores his strategy of simulation, dissimulation, adaptation and assimilation. By participating in Efican plays, he seeks to suture his circus career into the Feu Follet Collective utilising the theatre as a tool for assimilation and construction of his sutured identity. However, his theatrical career in Efica fails to stick him to his Efican roots as he yearns to join the Saarlim Sirkus in Voorstand for better economic prospects. His acting career and the use of different literal and metaphorical masks in the theatre of Feu Follet helps him perform the role of a Voorstander during his stay in Voorstand so much so that he adopts the language and mannerisms of the Voorstanders and continues to stay there for twenty years.

By and large, the Feu Follet theatre serves as a dynamic arena for the characters to negotiate their identities. It provides a space where they can experiment, express, construct and confront their sutured selves. The act of performance becomes a means of reconciling conflicting cultural elements for them accentuating the complexities of their journeys towards attaining sutured identities within the overarching narrative of the novel. The theatre becomes a transformative arena where Tristan, Felicity and Bill engage themselves with the construction of their sutured selves intentionally or unintentionally through the art of acting and performance.

The exploration of the metaphor of theatre by Carey brings to our attention the suturing between the theatre in the novel and the global theatre of the world turning Tristan, Felicity and Bill from stage performers to the performers on the stage of the world. It edifies us that the process of the suturing of identity is analogous to a theatrical performance in which characters play various characters wearing different masks. In all cases, acting provides a metaphorical and literal stage for Tristan, Felicity and Bill

to navigate their sutured identities. The roles they assume — whether it is Tristan as Bruder Mouse, Bill as a Voorstandish circus performer or Felicity as an actor and director — offer them spaces to explore their multifaceted selves in their own ways. The theatre becomes a realm where they can experiment with different personas and masks facilitating them to understand the interplay of their cultural origins and the influences of their adopted cultures in a befitting manner. Their acting careers not only mirror their sutured identities but also actively contribute to the ongoing construction and negotiation of these identities as they move through different cultural landscapes.

To conclude the discussion, in the tapestry of Carey's narrative, the theatre emerges not only as a stage but a critical instrument of metamorphosis wherein the characters of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill actively thread their sutured identities. Like skilled surgeons they strive consciously or unconsciously to stitch their personal, cultural, historical and ideological wounds in order to gain some moments of relief by joining together the lacerated parts of their identities. The spotlight of the theatre gets transformed into a blazing beacon illuminating their paths as they pass through the labyrinthine corridors between their cultural roots and the unfamiliar landscapes they traverse. Hence, in the theatrical world of the Feu Follet, these characters are found consciously or unconsciously engaged in the process of suturing their identities stitching together fragments of their selves into a unifying whole that transcends the confines of cultural specificity, thereby crafting narratives that challenge fixed notions of identity and celebrate the unpredictable, complex and ever-evolving montage of human existence.

The selected characters in *TULTS* do not simply act; rather they reconfigure, realign and redefine themselves transforming themselves into diverse personas and disguises as if stepping into a mosaic of masks. Just as the curtains of a theatre rise and fall, their sutured identities oscillate between disparate worlds. Each performance of them testifies their ongoing suturing between their authentic and adapted identities. The stage of the theatre transcends its physical dimensions converting itself into an allegorical threshold — a liminal realm where their identities, once ruptured, converge like multiple streams flowing into a river. Just as actors are performers of transformation, Tristan, Felicity and Bill, at times, become architects of their own identities harnessing the alchemy of the theatre to forge a unique alloy of selfhood. Eventually, the complex relationship between the theatre and the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill reveals a nuanced performance for us. Here, the spotlight of the theatre that represents self-discovery does not merely reveal the intricate nature of the process of suturing

identity rather it also embodies the essence of the ever-evolving journeys of the characters. It is similar to the act of stitching together various cultural threads for the creation of a new sutured montage that possesses beauty, pattern and empowerment yet remains inherently vulnerable and complicated due to the psychological issues involved into this process of identity suturing.

6.3 The Pain and Promises of Theatrical and Metaphorical Masks

The examination of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill's sutured identities in this research unknots a multifaceted dynamic at the intersection of personal self-discovery and the potent influences of society, authenticity, adaptation and the transformative potential concealed within theatrical masks. The discussion carried out in the preceding chapters regarding the individual odysseys of these characters brings to the foreground a rich collage of the interplay between their innate sense of self, the external pressures, social and communal commitments and attachments. Tristan's pragmatic acceptance of the Bruder Mouse mask testifies his strategic willingness to construct for himself a sutured identity that corresponds to his physical and economic ambitions even if it means diverging from the uncompromising principles and ideologies of his mother. His pragmatic choice demonstrates his capacity to strategically adapt to the socio-cultural norms of Voorstand while concealing his own complexities at the same time. However, his eventual abandonment of the mask of Bruder Mouse underscores his psychological issues, identity conundrum and his desire for a more genuine identity that confronts superficial socio-cultural facades.

The transformative potential of Felicity's theatrical and social masks reveals the nature of her sutured identity. Through her theatrical performances, she weaves the threads of her personal struggles into her performances employing the theatre as a dynamic platform to raise her voice against the intervention of Voorstand in the lives of the Eficans. The integration of Felicity's personal experiences into her theatrical representations reveals the symbiosis between her personal identity and her creative expressions. Her theatrical masks become the tools of her metamorphic sutured identity that leads her to stitching together disparate fragments of her theatrical, Voorstandish and Efican identities. This suturing empowers Felicity in Efica but it also causes various social and psychological issues for her and, most importantly, it becomes the cause of her tragic murder as her immersion into her Efican identity is not accepted by the Voorstanders. Her act of joining politics and running an election campaign against

Voorstand is perceived as an act of blatant betrayal against the narrative and ideology of Voorstand. It demonstrates the failure of Felicity's attempt at suturing her Efican and Voorstandish identities seamlessly as she is incapable of reconciling the irreconcilable elements of her origin and her adopted identity. The failure of a sutured identity to yield the desired results in the case of Felicity is evident in her tragic murder by the Voorstand Intelligence Agency. Her excessive inclination towards her Efican identity is seen as an indicator of perfidy by Voorstanders that results into her painful death.

Bill's use of theatre and masks in his performances brings about his sutured identity that demonstrates his internal conflicts highlighting the tension between conformity and authenticity. As he undertakes the process of conforming to the norms of Voorstand for twenty years and, subsequently, resolving to embrace his indigenous identity at the end of the novel, the masks metaphorically demonstrate his journey of sacrificing his strategic socio-cultural facades at the altar of embracing his genuine indigenous identity. The transformative impact of his masks becomes evident as they enable him to not only perform different roles during his stay in Voorstand but to undergo a personal metamorphosis also weaving the different layers of his identity into a cohesive whole. However, his reversion to his indigenous cultural roots reveals that his sutured identity brings about only temporary and partial relief for him.

Tristan's odyssey has been a collage of inconsistencies and contradictions aptly epitomised through his ambivalent relationship of love and hate with the mask of Bruder Mouse. This intricately ambivalent relationship mirrors the challenges of his sutured identity that reveals that the mask functions not only as an emancipating disguise for him but also as a suffocating veneer. His evolution from embracing the mask to shunning it as a representation of his cultural and political opponents highlights the fleeting nature of a sutured identity.

Felicity's connection with theatre and her use of theatrical masks become instruments through which she navigates her socio-cultural issues in Efica despite her Voorstandish background. Her creation of disparate masks and her performance of multiple characters represent her multifaceted identity stitching together distinct fragments of strength, vulnerability and her unflinching spirit to challenge the Voorstandish oppression. Her sutured identity reveals that identities, like masks, can be created and shaped through personal choices converting adversity into empowerment. However, there is an element of fragility and impermanence associated with a sutured identity analogous to that of a theatrical mask.

The mask of Bruder Mouse continues to emerge as a symbol of Tristan's metamorphosis encapsulating various aspects of his sutured identities. It discloses that sutured identities are not static rather they are dynamic and evolving. Just as a mask can be donned and discarded, the journey of a sutured identity is also characterised by its shifting and unpredictable nature. However, the removal of a theatrical mask is easier than denouncing a sutured identity as the stitches of a sutured identity leave their marks some of which become permanent scars. The mask of Bruder Mouse, a constant companion throughout our analysis, is not merely a theatrical prop but a profound metaphor for the continuous stitching together of the conflicting elements.

As Tristan, Felicity, and Bill's stories intertwine, we are reminded that our lives are a continuous performance, a performance of identities stitched together on the stage of the world that involves donning and discarding of several masks as per the requirements of our socio-cultural and ideological performances in pursuit of some pattern and harmony in our existence. The theatrical, physical and metaphorical masks of Tristan, Felicity and Bill, like the interwoven threads of a colourful drapery, are interlaced with the fabric of their social, cultural, theatrical, personal and psychological experiences. This interlacing reflects the multidimensional nature of their identities, which are a fusion of various roles, cultural affiliations, and personal histories. In other words, these masks, analogous to the pages of a complex novel, reveal different chapters of their socio-cultural, economic and ideological journeys during the process of the suturing of their identities.

Through a concerted exploration of the masks and their symbiotic relationship with sutured identities, this study apprises us that the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill emerge as strategic and, at times, involuntary, responses to the intricate mélange of their multiple social and cultural elements. This mélange often gives rise to an internal turbulence as they strive to manage the conflicting elements of Efican and Voorstandish cultures. Their struggle to tackle these disparities brings about their sutured identities that offer them a semblance of control and coherence especially when they interact with their *others*. However, this process also unearths a sense of disorientation and an underlying sense of unbelonging within them. Evidently, the sutured identities of these characters are not deprived of challenges. It demonstrates that the suturing of identities is an ongoing process that calls for resuturing if the sutured elements are parted again.

The literal and metaphorical masks Tristan, Felicity and Bill wear in their performances bring to our attention their conscious or unconscious attempts to manage their dichotomous cultural heritage while they strive to handle the complicated challenges of their surroundings. Just as actors take on different roles in theatres, these characters adopt masks as instruments of survival concealing certain aspects of themselves while projecting images that suture their identities with the societal expectations. However, the underlying suffering of unbelonging persists since they continue to strive in the quest for a place where their multifaceted and conflicting identities can truly synchronise. Their masks help them synchronise their conflicting identities, granting them temporary respite and deepening their internal conflicts simultaneously.

As they route through the settings of their chosen masks and sutured identities, Tristan, Felicity and Bill experience not only physical relocations but also profound psychological dislocations. Their journeys are not uniform as their varied responses to these psychological dislocations are profoundly configured by the unstable points of identification, ruptures, discontinuities, and the temporary and unstable attachments that mark their narratives. This dynamic interplay between identity suturing and psychological transformation is palpable in the contrasting trajectories of the characters. Bill and Felicity, for instance, emerge from their experiences with a renewed sense of self-confidence and material growth having embraced the cultures of their newfound lands. These adaptations become fountains of empowerment for them allowing them to navigate their lives with increased agency. On the other hand, Tristan's adoption of the persona of the rival culture triggers a complex array of emotions — alienation, marginalisation, unbelonging, guilt, infidelity and otherness — insinuating how the act of adopting a foreign cultural identity causes severe psychological implications including a disconcerting internal discord highlighting the unreliable and unpredictable nature of suturing.

The masks worn by Tristan, Bill, and Felicity serve as instruments of disguise, camouflage and survival. Like a chameleon's blending itself into its surroundings through its inherent ability of changing colours, these characters utilise their masks in their idiosyncratic ways to blend themselves in accordance with the diverse cultural landscapes they trudge through. The masks bring to the surface their conscious or unconscious efforts to assimilate into foreign environments while protecting the elements of their personal identities from potential harm or discrimination. In Voorstand where Tristan assumes the identity of Bruder Mouse, it helps him conceal

his Efican origins granting him a valuable opportunity to stitch himself with the dominant culture instead of standing on the periphery and watching the proceedings as a marginalised outcast.

As a masquerade can concurrently liberate and confine, the literal and metaphorical masks worn by the selected characters of *TULTS* offer them an ephemeral sense of emancipation while tangling them within a web of emotional intricacy. The masks, effectively, provide the characters with a shield of emotional protection enabling them to engage with their surroundings and interact with their *others* without divulging the turbulence of their inner identity struggle. Nevertheless, paradoxically, this concealment intensifies their internal turmoil resulting in a further fragmentation of their already complex identities. Felicity's internal psychological strife vividly demonstrates the toll of her dual existence while Bill's masked feelings of culpability and Tristan's continual negotiation of identities underline the profound influence of their sutured identities engendered by the masks they wear.

Tristan's adoption of a mask of normalcy serves as a vivid embodiment of his sutured identity. Born with a physical deformity, he employs a literal mask to dissimulate his distorted form attuning himself with the conventions and traditions of Voorstand. This physical mask of Bruder Mouse becomes a poignant metaphor for his overarching identity struggle. By embracing this mask, Tristan seeks to harmonise himself with the conflicting ideology of the Voorstanders exposing the intricate interplay between his Efican ancestry and his aspirations of integration, recognition and acceptance. Thus, the mask of Bruder Mouse employed as a shield against his physical disparity functions as a powerful demonstration of the complexity of his sutured identity — a dynamic negotiation between his deeply ingrained Efican legacy and the role he feels compelled to assume within the societal norms of Voorstand.

In Felicity's case, her masks represent her resistance against the pressures of cultural assimilation and her commitment to preserving her consciously adopted Efican identity. Through her roles as an actor, director, and radical politician, she dons a spectrum of masks each corresponding to a distinct feature of her multifaceted identity. These masks epitomise her constant endeavour to interlace diverse personas into a coherent whole symbolising her negotiation between the various dimensions of herself. Her masks act as channels through which we observe her ongoing efforts to synchronise her artistic aspirations with the socio-cultural expectations emanating from both Efica and Voorstand. In this intricate symbiosis between her indigenous identity and the need for

adaptation, her masks function as the tangible demonstration of her unswerving resolution to uphold her socio-political ideals even at the cost of defying her original Voorstandish roots. Thus, amidst the nuanced interplay of her Voorstandish origin and the cultural expectations of the Eficans, Felicity's collage of masks stands as a powerful testimony to her unwavering dedication in weaving the diverse threads of her multifaceted sutured identity into a harmonious pattern. However, owing to her efforts to connect herself completely with her Efican mask, she is looked upon as a traitor by the agents of Voorstand that get her murdered highlighting the enormity of a socio-cultural and ideological threat lurking behind a sutured identity.

Bill's masks of his Efican and Voorstandish identities offer a window into the intricacies of his sutured identity. His adoption of Voorstandish attire, language, and mannerisms showcases his attempt to assimilate into the fabric of Voorstand. However, within the facade of this assimilation lies his concealed turmoil and his persistent loyalty to Efica. The emotional challenges of this assimilation surface through the ruptures in his Voorstandish mask revealing his inner conflict. His masks exemplify his ongoing juggling between his Efican background and his pragmatic desires to seamlessly integrate himself into Voorstand highlighting the inherent contradictions existing within his sutured identity.

In essence, the masks donned by Tristan, Felicity, and Bill serve as profound symbols that mirror the intricate process of negotiating their sutured identities. These masks, whether physical or metaphorical, are tools of adaptation, defiance, and survival. They enable the characters to exist within the intricate intersection of Efican and Voorstandish discourses. They provide these characters with a mantle of emotional safeguard allowing them to interact with their *others* dissimulating their inner instability and identity conundrum.

The masks of Tristan, Felicity and Bill not only dissimulate certain aspects of their identities, but they also contribute to the process of suturing of their identities by decentring their selves. Just as a map without a fixed point of reference becomes disorienting, these characters find themselves bewildered in the interstitial space between their indigenous and adopted cultures. Their masks intensify this disorientation by accentuating their status as outsiders and challenging their authenticity. The decentring of the identities of these characters by virtue of the process of suturing is a two-fold process — while they deliberately strive to adhere to foreign mores, they also deal with the dissonance emerging from their distancing themselves from their

indigenous cultural roots. The psychological implications embedded in these masks reveal the paradoxes of their existence whereas the decentering experienced by them mirrors the ongoing tug between their original and adopted cultural identities. As they wear these masks, they exemplify an emblematic tightrope traversing through the precarious path between belonging and unbelonging, authenticity and adaptation and fragmentation and cohesion.

To sum up, the exploration of sutured identities in *TUTLS* intertwines with the symbolic significance of masks worn by Tristan, Felicity, and Bill. The sutured identities of these characters formed through a complex symbiosis of their Efican and Voorstandish backgrounds brings to the foreground the process of negotiating multiple cultural layers. The masks they wear and embrace, whether physical or metaphorical, represent both adjustment and resistance to their surroundings. These masks, despite offering them moments of empowerment, cause their identity conundrums, internal conflicts, anxieties, and sense of guilt. The journeys of these characters portray the complexities of identity suturing in a world shaped by diverse cultural landscapes, shedding light on the universal struggles of belonging, adaptation and construction of sutured identities to handle the challenges of marginalisation, alienation and otherness.

6.4 The Final Word

In Carey's *TULTS*, the interplay of masks, theatre, and sutured identities weaves a narrative revealing the challenges and complications of human existence. The study of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity, and Bill brings to our notice the complexities of their cultural affiliations and personal traumas. It invites us to explore a world where masks serve as both protective shields and symbolic mirrors of their evolving selves. The theatrical journeys of these characters reveal the performative aspects of their sutured identities as they grapple with maintaining a delicate balance between authenticity and assimilation. The identity conundrums of Tristan, Felicity and Bill as regards their sutured identity can be understood through Ralph Harper's views on the suturing between "bitterness and sweetness, the lost and the found, the far and the near, the new and the familiar, absence and presence" (qtd in Mah 42).

The analysis of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill through Carey's artistic use of the metaphors of theatre and masks in this research reveals that a sutured identity emerges out of some ruptures but, ironically, it has its own ruptures too. The sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill have been caused by some ruptures that

bring about incremental life transitions, adjustments in their belief systems, experiences of transcultural contacts, existential crises, and cultural clashes. Such challenging experiences make it difficult for them to reconcile the dichotomy between their internal selves and external realities. Internal commotion, self-reflection, introspection and external factors coupled with their opportunities and threats related to their literal and metaphorical masks and their theatrical experiences enable the characters to emerge with renewed, negotiated and sutured selves, develop more integrated selves and work through the challenges of their lives. However, as sometimes the edges of the wounds get separated and the patient experiences wound dehiscence after a surgery, the sutured elements of these characters' personal, cultural and ideological identities are also vulnerable to breaking and ripping apart when these sutured elements fail to withstand the social, cultural or emotional pressure because of personal conflicts, societal demands or/and cultural dissonance.

The strains and tugs in the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill fail to stitch their disparate elements together permanently that indicates the impending threat of dehiscence, disruption and dissonance in their sutured identities. However, the sutured identities of these characters reveal that just like the skin of a patient cannot get back to its original condition after being stitched, an identity after undergoing the process of suturing cannot be the same as before. However, it still promises some security and optimism to individuals. In this regard, Coline Covington rightfully asserts, "The people caught in the rupture are in a state of transition and, no matter how painful this may be and no matter how difficult it may be to adapt, there is nevertheless a new world to which they will belong" (90). She further contends as regards the benefits of a sutured identity caused by the ruptures of an individual by stating, "The mental in-between state of alienation or exile rests on the knowledge or belief that there is a place of arrival and a harbor of relative safety, in other words, even if it is not a familiar one" (90-91). However, we have noticed that the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill despite promising for them "a harbor of relative safety" and creating an opportunity for them for a transcultural dialogue that leaves indelible footprints on their existence, produce ambivalent feelings of attraction and repulsion as they fail to stay away permanently from tormenting experiences of marginalisation, liminality, alienation and unbelonging. The suturing of identities helps these marginalised, alienated or/and liminal characters to create and desire for a more cohesive whole through the process of social inclusion. However, we notice that suturing, notwithstanding its power to push the characters to

cross the threshold and enter a new space, does not eliminate their feelings of remaining in a liminal space in a foreign country. These characters create a third space for themselves because of their sutured identities in order to get rid of the feelings of claustrophobia and asphyxia regarding their cultural identities.

Since social fabric demands social compatibility among the members of a society and is enriched by its diversity, this social compatibility is only possible if we leave some openings, that is, some room for flexibility and adaptability in our otherwise sequestered and cloistered social, political and religious ideologies to allow the process of suturing to take place. If these ideologies remain completely insulated and isolated, there will be no possibility for accommodating, accepting or even tolerating a dissimilar or conflicting socio-political or religious narrative. Therefore, if ruptures in identity of a person shake his/her identity, they also pave ways for a contingent and functionally stable sutured identity. However, a sutured identity — that seems a voluntary or involuntary response to address a ruptured identity — does not guarantee a stable and coherent identity, as discussed earlier, as it is not free from its own ruptures and fragmentations because of its unstable and fluctuating nature.

Despite the autonomy that the characters enjoy in the construction of their sutured identities in *TULTS*, at times, they seem to be controlled by their cultural and national narrative, leaving them with limited choices. In some cases, we find an element of social stigma or the fear of ostracisation in the characters because of their deviation or disassociation from their collective consciousness reflected through their communal and national discourse. For instance, Felicity has to pay a heavy price for straying from the collective national discourse of Voorstand when she becomes an ardent advocate of the Efican cultural and national narrative. Bill also has to face raised eyebrows and a sense of distress because of the reactions of the Eficans including those very close to him such as Tristan, Wally and Felicity when he visits Efica after spending some time in Voorstand. Thus, the sutured identities of the characters reflect both agency and control, empowerment and limitation and celebration and tension simultaneously.

The analysis of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill informs us that blind conformism to any communal, historical, or/and political narrative causes cultural stagnation and curbs the chances of personal growth for individuals and their settlement in a multi-ethnic and multicultural society with a possibility of a transcultural dialogue. Suturing opens for them a door to witness and celebrate the value of cultural diversity and helps them go out and chase their dreams and aspirations. It is a unique blend of

the indigenous and the host cultures, that produces transgressive and fleeting identities. These identities disrupt and decentre their notions of identity and challenge the concept of monism associated with ethnic and geographical boundaries that represent a parochial approach regarding their identity constructions.

The study of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill through the lens of theatre and masks prompts us to muse on the profound question of how we stitch together the multiple fragments of our identities in a world where self-discovery and personal ambitions meet the theatre of socio-cultural pressures. In this context, the process of suturing emerges as a profound act of darning, a conscious or unconscious undertaking to mend the fragmented threads, stitching together a cohesive tapestry that reflects the complexities of human existence. The metaphoric sutures related to the identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill transcend cultural contexts, geographical terrains and diasporic narratives as they strive to unite the divergent components of their identities. The theatre emerges as an arena where the essence of a sutured identity becomes palpable. In this arena the characters engage in a transformative process like the performers on a stage suturing and unsuturing the threads of their selves. The theatrical, physical and metaphorical masks of these characters, which conceal as well as reveal, function as gateways to explore the profundities of their cultural dichotomies allowing them to traverse through the precarious bridge between their personal ambitions and social legitimacy from disparate cultural landscapes.

With reference to the given definition of suturing in the first chapter, the theatre functions as a sanctuary for Tristan, Felicity and Bill facilitating them to consciously or unconsciously engage themselves in the complicated process of darning and stitching their fragmented identities. The experiences of their theatrical performances become metaphoric sutures tying together the contradictory elements of their identities and challenging the rigidity of cultural specificity. Just as sutures provide relief — temporary or permanent — to a wounded body, the theatrical endeavours and their memories offer partial respite to Tristan, Felicity and Bill in their incoherent ruptured lives granting them moments of coherence and empowerment albeit for a short span of time.

The masks the characters wear on the stage of the Feu Follet theatre and the theatre of the world serve as tangible representations of the process of suturing concealing and revealing layers of identity like the threads of a suture that hold split parts together. By virtue of their experiences at the theatre and wearing diversified masks, these characters

navigate the labyrinthine corridors of their identities in a bid to stitch the ruptures caused by the agonising experiences of alienation, marginalisation or the dreams of pursuing their personal ambitions. Tristan, Felicity, and Bill embody the profound intricacies of identity suturing, displaying the capacity of individuals to adapt, assimilate, and overcome while remaining connected to the essence of their being. The theatre becomes more than just a physical space as it is converted into a metaphor for the broader stage of life itself, where identity performance is a continuous act motivated by the desire for cohesion, recognition, social applause and socio-cultural legitimacy. Suturing, as defined earlier, comes to life in the journey of these characters wherein the conscious or unconscious stitching of identity fragments not only represents their personal struggles but also indicates a profound reflection of the shared human quest for wholeness and belonging in a world that is inherently diverse and beautifully complex.

The attachment of Tristan and Bill to their cultural roots within the context of their sutured identities is rooted in a profound recognition and celebration of their cultural heritage, communal belonging and ancestral ties. Their cultural roots, like the sturdy roots of a tree, function as a source of grounding and belonging offering them stability amidst the turbulence of their sutured identities. Much like the branches of a tree extending outward to embrace the world, these characters find that their cultural connections help them traverse through the vast and diverse landscapes of their multifaceted identities. As they navigate the unfamiliar territories of contrasting cultures, their roots acting as a compass steer them through the intricate maze of identity negotiations. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that despite experiencing moments of inconsistency and rupture in their connection with their cultural roots, Tristan and Bill, unlike Felicity, stay connected with their cultural roots. This highlights an essential truth that no matter how tall a tree may grow, it cannot abandon its roots without consequences. Such abandonment often leads to withering, or, in some cases, the tree being felled to serve the interests of powerful entities. This poignant concept finds tragic resonance in Felicity's tragic fate in the novel where her permanent departure from her Voorstandish roots and her commitment to the Efican culture and politics — taken for acts of treachery against her cultural roots — result in her brutal murder at the hands of those bound by cultural legacies.

The analysis of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill brings to the foreground that their sutured identities, like a complicated puzzle, comprise a montage

of conflicting fragments that recurrently converge and diverge refusing to settle into a definitive form. Hall does not inform us that despite the therapeutic and constructive effects of sutured identities in the lives of people, suturing is not a panacea for their identity-related issues. At times, it appears that rather than resolving these issues, suturing itself becomes a part of the problem because of its psychological ramifications. The key to reaping the benefits of a sutured identity lies in making the right decisions at the right time. Individuals who can effectively navigate and manage their sutured identities can lead fulfilling lives in both their native cultural milieu and foreign lands, avoiding the pitfalls of unwarranted adherence, parochial attachment, and blind conformity to specific socio-cultural and political ideologies.

Carving out a sutured identity is an act of power, negotiation and submission to the power of conflicting values for Tristan, Felicity and Bill endowing them with the means to traverse through multifaceted intercultural dynamics. Their sutured identities steer them to decontextualisation and defamiliarisation of their decisions, assisting them to unchain themselves from claustrophobic cultural fetters and reconnoitre new opportunities for themselves. Hence, this study not only uncovers the intricate nuances of the sutured identities of the characters in *TULTS* but it also underlines the broader consequences of such identities which has never been done before. It reveals the interconnected nature of personal legitimacy, social influences and the transformative power of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill revealed to us through Carey's brilliant use of the metaphors of theatre and the literal, theatrical and metaphorical masks and performances of these characters.

While Tristan, Felicity and Bill reap certain social, cultural, and economic rewards by virtue of their sutured identities, it becomes evident that this advantageous facade is not a perpetual state. We witness a distinct disruption in the otherwise seamless progression of Tristan's and Bill's sutured identities when they opt to return to their Efican roots, a choice driven by the discriminatory treatment they encounter in Voorstand, which thwarts their aspirations of permanent settlement there. Consequently, their endeavours to assimilate into Voorstand culture do not yield the desired outcomes, ultimately leading them back to their cultural origins. This cyclical process of reversion echoes Nayar's perspective, wherein he asserts, "When the adopted culture fails to see beyond the ethnic identity of the diasporic/exilic individual, then this individual has no choice but to retrieve his/her indigenous identity" (205). Intriguingly, the sutured identities of the selected characters of *TULTS* embody a paradoxical blend of fragmentation and an

innate, perhaps unconscious, longing for unity. Simultaneously, they experience a duplexity of inclusion and exclusion, belonging and otherness, and harmony and dissonance within the tapestry of their sutured identities. These identities present a double-edged sword; they offer liberation by enabling the characters to embrace multiple facets of their selves, yet simultaneously impose barriers in the form of societal expectations and the constraints set forth by their native cultures and traditions. The identities of the characters, as intricately sutured as they may be, testify to the complex interplay of freedom and restriction and individuality and conformity that characterises their ever-evolving narratives.

The discussion on the sutured identities of the characters of *TULTS* in this study can be concluded appropriately through the words of Mohsin Hamid in his popular novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) in which he suggests, "... it is not always possible to restore one's boundaries after they have been blurred" (196). Hamid further writes, "... we cannot reconstitute ourselves as the autonomous beings we previously imagined ourselves to be. Something of us is now outside, and something of the outside is now within us" (196). We notice the blurring and suturing of the elements of 'outside' and 'inside' in the identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill. We also notice that the conflicts between these dichotomous elements remain unresolved in their identities, and we cannot say with any conviction whether their identities are sutured or remain unsutured even after the process of suturing. However, we notice that even if they are sutured temporarily, they provide them at least temporary relief especially in the foreign territories.

To sum up, this study offers useful insights for academia, researchers and students of literature and will urge them to reflect more profoundly on the interplay between their personal narratives and the socio-cultural contexts. It will be helpful in inviting future research undertakings for exploring the valuable role of literary texts in challenging the existing notions of identity and bringing to the foreground the multiple applications of the process of suturing in different and complex socio-cultural, economic and political environments. The analysis of the sutured identities of Tristan, Felicity and Bill will serve as valuable reminders for the readers and researchers of the fluid and evolving nature of human identities especially in the context of the existing debates on the issues of diversity and inclusion in today's globalised world. Consequently, this study will act as a driving force for fresh insights as regards the process, uses and implications of a sutured identity.

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