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Women Writing Survival, Men Scripting Hope: Gendered Approaches to Suicide Prevention in Literature

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Abstract

This Paper examines the gendered dimensions of suicide prevention narratives in contemporary literature, revealing distinct patterns in how male and female authors construct pathways from suicidal ideation to survival. Through comparative analysis of works by female authors Toews, Wang, and Kandasamy alongside male-authored texts by Vann, Quick, and Pinto, the researcher identifies gender-specific narrative strategies that challenge the perceived inevitability of suicide. Female-authored narratives predominantly employ relational frameworks, embodied experience, and non-linear temporalities, while male-authored texts frequently utilize redemptive arcs, externalized action, and reconstructed masculinities. The inclusion of Indian perspectives through Kandasamy and Pinto provides crucial cross-cultural dimensions, exploring how gender, cultural expectations, and family systems influence suicidal ideation within South Asian contexts. These gendered approaches reflect broader patterns in how distress is expressed across gender lines within both Western and South Asian frameworks. The analysis demonstrates literature's unique contribution to suicide prevention discourse through its capacity to provide diverse models that acknowledge gender-specific experiences of despair and recovery, contributing to both literary studies and mental health fields by informing more nuanced approaches to suicide prevention.

Keywords: contemporary narratives; cross-cultural perspectives; gender studies; mental health representation; narrative strategies