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## **Healing through Diversity: The Role of Inter-Ethnic Bonds and Existentialism in Promoting Psychological Health in Paul Beatty's *Tuff***

**B. Preethi  
Dr. M. R. Chandran**

This research is an endeavour that demonstrates how inter-ethnic connections and existentialism cultivate psychological vitality among marginalised people in Paul Beatty's novel *Tuff*. In the modern era, harmonious relationship among people is a crucial component that develops empathy, understanding, and collaboration to bridge the gap between human values. Even today class differences, racial prejudice, caste, religion, and stereotypes act as a tendency to degrade the weaker members of society frequently. Every location features unique problems stemming from past tragedies and discrimination. Since colonialism elevated several ethnic groups to prominence in America, prejudices against them continue to persist. Ethnic groups battling issues of race, culture, identity, and institutionalised discrimination from oppressors strive to live on the outskirts of society but the development of a positive inter-ethnic bond provides continuous encouragement for one another. The study, by applying existentialist theory, examines how these inter-ethnic ties enhance psychological well-being by taking into account the experience, empathy, and camaraderie of those living in the periphery. The research investigation additionally demonstrates exactly how successful the ability to build emotional resilience is by fostering mutual understanding, respect, solidarity, compassion, tolerance, reconciliation, and empathy between ethnic groups that promote individual growth and group healing in the oppressed communities.

**Keywords:** Inter-Ethnic relationships, Existentialism, Psychological Well-being, Productivity, Healing

## **Introduction**

In the globalised world of today, interethnic relationships can foster and support empathy, unity, and cross-cultural understanding. Through the novel *Tuff*, Paul Beatty aims to comprehend the relationships between the marginalised communities and highlights the benefits of resistance and solidarity for psychological health. The study uses Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist paradigm to explain how the suppressed people from the peripheral area assert their identity, society, and compassion in the face of systemic oppression. This paper serves as a bigger discourse that strengthens psychological resilience among marginalised groups by relating existentialist concepts of freedom and responsibility to interethnic ties.

The research differs from previous assessments in that it emphasises the confluence of existentialist ideals and the role of various communal connection systems in healing from the trauma caused by the dominating group. Previous studies on Paul Beatty's *Tuff* focused on topics like racial identity, urban life, and marginalisation. There are insufficient research evaluations and examinations of *Tuff* via the prism of existentialist theory. This research article aims to address a scholarly gap by investigating how existentialist conceptions, particularly those of Jean-Paul Sartre, attempt to elucidate the psychological struggles and inner lives of disadvantaged characters in *Tuff*. By utilising the theoretical framework of existentialism, the study adds a new perspective to Beatty's work and provides meaningful arguments concerning the junction of existentialist and African-American literature.

### **Paul Beatty's *Tuff***

The absence of moral support from the family causes the protagonist, Winston Tuffy Foshay (Tuffy), to struggle greatly from his early years. His quest for self-identification to live a virtuous life causes him to experience multiple mental conflicts. Paul Beatty uses characters from a variety of racial, ethnic, and social backgrounds, and despite the tragedy they face, these possible relationships are

enhanced with productivity. The novel sheds light on the oppressed people's common experience and how they manage to survive in the hegemonic nation.

### **Inter-ethnic relationships: Key Ideas and Relevance in *Tuff***

In America as a result of colonialism, many individuals from all over the world are dragged and forced into slavery. Several immigrants created their ethnic groupings after the consequences of colonisation, keeping in mind their history, culture, language, and traditions. Despite their disparate cultural practices, the only hope for the dominant American society is for the ethnic communities to remain united. The ghetto's ethnic groups tend to establish their territories to maintain the power in their hands, as they are excluded from the resources provided by the dominant American government. They nurtured revolutionary ideas from birth, striving to overthrow the white regime in America by speaking up in marginalised communities. The positive relationships between African-Americans and other ethnic groups in the ghetto are discussed in the novel *Tuff*. Because it binds all of the cultural communities together like a chain to protect identity, provide mental support and promote psychological relaxation among marginalised individuals, this tight knot is more than just a straightforward formal friendship or relationship. *Tuff's* inter-ethnic harmony plays an important part in fostering resilience. According to Schalk (2018), Paul Beatty's characters vividly explore the main issue of collective solidarity, which aids oppressed people in preserving and sustaining their cultural identity to attain psychological recovery.

### **Existentialism: Key Ideas and Relevance in *Tuff***

Existentialism is a philosophical movement influenced by theorists including Jean-Paul Sartre, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and Albert Camus. For this study, Sartre's conception of existentialism, particularly the importance of human responsibility, radical freedom, and the need for self-definition, gives the best lens through which to examine Paul Beatty's *Tuff*. Other theorists, such as Kierkegaard, focus existentialism on religious faith, while Camus emphasises the absurdity of existence, but Sartre sees existentialism as the key factor that focuses on the individual's

ability to create meaning through choices and actions, even when living in oppressive or indifferent environments. In the novel *Tuff*, the disadvantaged characters understand that they must define themselves and their value in the face of institutional racial injustice and prejudice. Sartre's existentialism is pertinent to this novel, since it centres on the human agency that bears the weight of freedom. His theory provides an excellent foundation for examining how existentialist ideas strengthen and empower the claim of oppressed people who value their identity through psychological autonomy.

The marginalised ethnic minorities in America recognise their responsibility to improve their way of life and join together to increase their power. Despite external pressure from the dominating whites, these individuals are urged to assume responsibility for handling the burden to achieve their liberty and authority. People in this category experience systematic prejudice and oppression from all fundamental sources. The oppressed people are inspired and encouraged to respect their worth and reject the dominant group's externally imposed concepts of identity via the prism of Sartre's existentialism (Sartre, 2007). His focus on authenticity and self-definition provides a conceptual framework for the underprivileged groups to recover their psychological assets. They can realise that they possess the ability and freedom to mould and adjust their lives through existentialism. The protagonist and other characters in the novel, *Tuff* comprehends the predicament they are in and are motivated to stand up to the people in power. This fosters positive inter-ethnic connections and improves the mental health of those who are marginalised. The study uses Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism theory to examine the ideas of human freedom, individual responsibility, and the creation of meaning among those who are marginalised.

### **Psychological Vitality: Key Ideas and Relevance in *Tuff***

The optimistic sensation of contentment that sustains a person's mental energy is known as psychological vitality. Human recovery from trauma, stress, psychological issues, and challenges are aided by this state of well-being. The victim approaches the disputes with hopefulness and manages them effortlessly because they maintain

a positive outlook on life. Inter-ethnic connections within the ghetto frequently frame the emotional well-being of America's marginalised people. Paul Beatty draws attention to the challenges and accomplishments faced by many different ethnic communities in isolated areas. Trudel-Fitzgerald et al. (2019), claim that the excluded group experiences increased mental frustration and internal conflict as a result of their limited access to fundamental resources. This illustrates the structural injustices that affect the mental well-being of those who are less fortunate. This study explores the novel's character's existential self-awareness and close inter-ethnic ties, which allow him to psychologically develop and heal. To develop their mental and emotional fortitude, the characters yearn to embrace their freedom and stay away from difficult situations.

### **The Intersection of Existentialism and Inter-ethnic relationship that promotes psychological vitality in *Tuff***

The novel's protagonist Tuffy and the other characters endure a great deal of hardship as a result of the ghetto's social oppression and the breakup of family relationships. The main character lives in America's impoverished East Harlem district, whose residents are not allowed to use the same resources as the ruling group. The marginalised area's citizens endure severe financial difficulties. The protagonist spends most of his time on the streets with other people of different races, which help him to decompress. He experiences a crisis of identity at an early age and begins to doubt his existence. In any case, the protagonist is confident that he can survive in the marginalised area because of the other ethnic group's moral support on an economic, psychological, and sociological level.

Tuffy's father leaves his young son with his buddies and never gives any concern about his teeny son's health, safety, or love. Taking advantage of this, his father's friends start to bring women for sexual relations and even smoke and drink in front of the young lad. The African American friends of his father are unconcerned with Tuffy's mental and physical well-being, and they merely act gently in front of his father. As a result of growing up in this setting, the protagonist develops animosity and loses all faith in his coloured community. He

forms stronger, healthier ties with the other ethnic groups as a child, and they even show the protagonist the same affection and concern. He even finds it mentally pleasing to see a stranger from a different ethnic group. This is made clear even in the first chapter when Tuffy claims that he feels at ease when he sees Puerto Ricans while travelling on a bus. He says, “The Puerto Ricans reminded him of people he knew. They were more or less from around the way, more or less niggers, and more or less poor. The Puerto Ricans had faces he could say hello to” (Beatty, 2000, p.14). The protagonist feels at ease and even wants to greet the Puerto Ricans on the bus because of the mental excitement that is created by inter-ethnic connections. This pleases his thoughts as it shows the manifestation of love and happiness between them.

Noticing a picture of Inez Nomura in Tuffy’s wallet, Yolanda, Tuffy’s wife enquires about their relationship status. Tuffy describes that the photo of the woman in his purse is, “Ms. Nomura. She’s my unofficial guardian” (Beatty, 2000, p.42). This instance in the novel serves as an evidence to highlight the value of inter-ethnic relationships that foster emotional bonds. Tuffy even says about Inez as, “. . . She’s like my second mother” (Beatty, 2000, p.42). The fact that the protagonist views a different ethnic woman as his second mother demonstrates the loyalty of their connections. After the protagonist’s mother leaves the family, Inez provides him with unwavering support. It causes him to appreciate the genuine love and moral support that Inez Nomura gives him. The narrator is fulfilled by this sense of psychological well-being, which leads him to retain Inez’s picture in his pocket purse but not his family’s. Tuffy says, “Ms. Nomura like this life jacket, kept me afloat when times were hard” (Beatty, 2000, p.43). Tuffy thinks of Inez as a life jacket who helps him overcome the mental struggles he has faced since childhood. Their relationship demonstrates the genuine hues of psychological health that the people living in the ghetto appreciate and cherish. Even if the people in the dominant area are putting their courage and skills to face challenges, everyone needs emotional support to assist with keeping them going while they are lonely. The protagonist’s retention of the other ethnic

woman's image in his purse emphasises the emotional connections among the marginalised people, despite the parents' staying alive. It is important to recognise their togetherness since it is the finest approach to recognise the worth of every individual among the various ethnic groups.

The key elements of Existentialism and Inter-ethnic relationships are demonstrated by Inez Nomura's traits, which centre on fostering inter-ethnic connections that support the psychological well-being of oppressed individuals. She advocates for necessities and encourages those who are oppressed to gain power by taking responsibility for their actions. Inez Nomura, whose name alone suggests that she shares Peruvian and Japanese ancestry now lives alone in a least peripheral part of America because her parents fled the nation during the civil war. She is a university dropout with strong revolutionary ideas for the oppressed people's welfare. Inez discovers that her goal of aiding the underprivileged will not alter despite of her parents' opposition. Understanding the existentialist views, Stephen Priest in his 'Jean Paul Sartre: Basic Writings' argues that ". . . God does not exist and that it is necessary to draw the consequences of his absence right to the end" (Priest & Sartre, 2002, p. 31). Stephen Priest explains that in the absence of god- the universal power, man must make the things right. Likewise, the prevailing power in America is not interested in resolving the problems of the downtrodden multiethnic people. To improve their social status, members of peripheral groups band together and create inter-ethnic relationships, which brings them mental fulfilment. Inez accepts responsibility for improving the lives of underprivileged people by using existentialist perspectives to make the correct changes.

The marginalised population can realise that they will never be able to freely access essential assets and growth, and they begin speaking out against the systemic discrimination against them. Stephen Priest in his Jean Paul Sartre: *Basic Writings* explains "Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn (Priest & Sartre, 2002, p. 32). According to existentialists, Humans in this world will be left alone in the different realms of the

universe and will face conflicts of meaning and directions to identify themselves, if the existence of God is a question mark. People can expect to be forced to handle the duty of defining their lives and pathways on their own because of this unpleasant environment. So the suppressed individuals are fighting for the entire ethnic group in the ghetto to confront the harsh, dominant forces of America that deny them access to basic resources, rather than just their community. Giving up rebellious actions does not bring Inez happiness because she finds fulfilment in improving the lives of others who are excluded. Her unwavering assistance to the protagonist is recognised, and this supports the emotional fortitude of the inter-ethnic ties. Inez wants to stay and speak out against the injustices inflicted on the other ethnic citizens, despite her parents' advice to leave the revolutionary activities. When Inez arrives in New York, she discovers the psychological, social, political, and economic tragedies that superior white people inflict on the oppressed. Because they lack the authority and resources to express their opinions and motivations, the people living on the periphery are helpless and unable to speak up about their issues. They are caught between racial persecution that continues to plague them for ages and their identity. Inez strives to help those individuals overcome their mental traumas because she is interested in assisting them. As a result of her psychological ties to the ghetto, Inez can comprehend the social injustice that occurs there owing to her inter-ethnic relationships. The justice that ought to be served for the other ethnic groups brings her joy.

Inez Nomura is drawn to Malcolm X's groundbreaking speech insisting, ". . . Our Government" (Beatty, 2000, p.78) and wants to work with them. Despite being a member of the coloured community, Malcolm X's remarks attract women from other ethnic groups and demonstrate how the oppressed share the burden imposed by America's dominant population. Despite her unwavering support for him and her fervent adherence to Malcolm X's principles, Inez occasionally becomes perplexed by the shifting subject. Jean Paul Sartre in his *Existentialism is Humanism* says that "we must limit ourselves to reckoning only with those things that depend on our will,

or on the set of probabilities that enable action (Sartre, 2007, p. 35). Existentialists concentrate on matters that a person can control by letting go of circumstances that are out of their control. Sartre insists on concentrating on the activity that will have a favourable outcome. Recognising the discrimination that plagues those on the margins, Malcolm X assumes a positive role, which gives him authority and influence. He then begins to shift his focus to different topics that will help bring ethnic minority groups together to confront the difficult situation. Despite coming from a different ethnic group, Inez can appreciate and adhere to Malcolm X's goals and ambitions. When ethnic communities, are psychologically conscious of the dominance that disadvantaged the people in the peripheral areas, their ideals and goals grow more united.

Knowing the repercussions in America, Inez takes responsibility and hopes to collaborate with Malcolm X to achieve psychological vigour through her inter-ethnic interactions. Jean Paul Sartre in his *Existentialism is a Humanism* tells that "it is we ourselves, who decide who we are to be" (Sartre, 2007, p. 34). Inez is glad for demonstrating her total dedication to improving the lives of the ethnic people under Malcolm X's supervision, rather than feeling guilty or alone in America after leaving her parents. Since she is aware that the dominant authority will no longer overlook the concerns of the oppressed, Inez chooses to remain in the ghetto and works hard to improve the lives of its citizens. A major shock to the many ethnic groups is caused by the sudden and tragic death of Malcolm X, the renowned revolutionary. Inez, who is deeply impacted by him, experiences a profound depression as a result of the death of another ethnic man, demonstrating the genuine and fruitful relationship between them. She says, "Now that Malcolm had been shot, the secret was out: more than the spokesperson for black pride had been slain; Harlem itself was dead (Beatty, 2000, p. 80)". Inez believes that Harlem is dead and feels terrible about Malcolm X's passing. Inez instantly establishes a community centre where she can adhere to the motifs in remembrance and appreciation of his presence, as well as carry on Malcolm X's revolutionary foundation. In addition to exchanging

revolutionary ideas, inter-ethnic contacts also foster socio-psychological understandings that strengthen support for the ethnic group both internally and outside. In the meantime, Inez shows empathy for the underprivileged communities and helps her well-wishers there. Tuffy is drawn to this important attribute, which contributes to why he views Inez as his life jacket and second mother.

Moreover, Tuffy gets little financial assistance, so at first he works in respectable but low-paying positions that mirror the wider financial difficulties faced by underprivileged youth. He frequently participates in street fights because he fails to be even afraid of attempting it. Like a mother, Inez loves Tuffy dearly and worries about him when he gets involved in fights and other issues on the street. In addition to Tuffy, she worries about the other ghetto dwellers that run afoul of the law. Because Inez views all members of various ethnic groups as her brothers and sisters, she becomes extremely worried about the lives of those who are marginalised. Inez's affection for the other ethnic group demonstrates her commitment to and emotional bond with her fellow slum residents. The emotional bond that unites the people in peripheral places is just as important as the revolutionary ideas. By letting go of intra-racial conflict, Inez also hopes that all ethnic groups would grow to love and care for one another. The togetherness of the oppressed people, who bear an equal burden from the dominant white people, fosters the growth of psychological well-being in the American ghetto.

When Inez learns that Tuffy and his friends intend to commit a bank robbery, she becomes determined to protect youngsters from this unlawful behaviour. In light of the increasing economic hardships, Tuffy appeals to America's Big Brother program, which helps people who are experiencing mental trauma. Spencer, an African American man who switched to Judaism, visits Tuffy in the ghetto to offer encouragement and assistance. After converting to Judaism, Spencer comes back to support Tuffy. He comes back here to assist an African American man on the verge of identity crisis who lives in the ghetto. When Spencer initially arrives in Tuffy's neighbourhood, he discovers that Tuffy lacks in good relationship whatsoever with his family or

community. Meeting Spencer makes Tuffy uneasy at first, but he eventually comes to appreciate his loyalty and they start getting along well.

A Jewish man named Spencer intends to set up a meeting with Tuffy and ghetto dwellers to show the protagonist's interest in politics. Spencer's motivation for improving the protagonist is to show gratitude for strengthening the ties of subjugated individuals dealing with psychological issues. In accomplishing this, the novel once more emphasises the inter-ethnic ties between African Americans and Jews that support the psychological well-being of the marginalised. Jean Paul Sartre insists that "there is no human nature since there is no God to conceive of it. Man is not only that which he conceives himself to be, but that which he wills himself to be and since he conceives of himself only after he exists, just as he wills himself to be after being thrown into existence, man is nothing other than what he makes of himself" (Sartre, 2007, p. 22). Sartre contends that there are no predestined aspects of human existence in the absence of God. He argues that a person's identity is shaped by their choices, even though it is not predetermined at birth. Sartre insists that people should use their actions to define themselves and are responsible for guiding their lives within the world, which has no inherent value or purpose. Tuffy is now aware of his responsibility for his circumstances and aspires to establish a strong position of leadership that will enable him to fulfil his vision of promoting the mental stability of the oppressed people residing in the ghetto. Even though the protagonist struggles to identify the primary mental issues, he can articulate the social, political, economic, and psychological shortcomings that oppressed communities face. Additionally, Tuffy expresses his displeasure with the impostor politicians and even states that he wants to become a politician. On hearing the protagonist's interest in politics Inez ". . . was determined not to be too late to save Tuffy, like she was too late to save Malcolm" (Beatty, 2000, p. 146). As Inez continues to look for the next Malcolm X with the same revolutionary ideas and motivations among the underprivileged, she becomes even more shocked to learn of Tuffy's political involvement. Sartre defines the aspects of existentialism and

suggests that “I am a kind of nothingness because there is nothing that I am independently of myself constitution through those choices” (Priest & Sartre, 2001, p. 107). Because they lack a stable identity and struggle to comprehend the purpose of their life, the disadvantaged ethnic communities in the ghetto feel as though they are nothing. For those who lack authority in the dominant world, actively defining decisions and behaviours is essential. Tuffy decides to prove the value of his existence by considering that freedom of choice is the only way for the suppressed people to develop themselves.

Inez is ecstatic to learn that her close buddy wants to run for city council. According to Inez’s mindset, inter-ethnic connections are the key to this psychological well-being. Even though Tuffy is African American and not even Japanese American, Inez’s delight illustrates the regard, connection, and value that different ethnic groups in the underrepresented region have for one another. This further emphasises the thirst for a leader that all ethnic groups in the outlying areas desire. They all need a leader to help the voiceless, innocent people thrive politically, socially, and economically. The repressed people’s lack of authority prevents them from enjoying the privileges enjoyed by the city’s dominant white group. Tuffy and Inez are likewise dissatisfied with the surviving politicians because they do not exhibit the revolutionary motivations of well-known figures like Malcolm X. As a result, Tuffy wishes to get involved in politics, and even Inez, who knows Tuffy since young adulthood, is aware of his courage in opposing the powerful establishment by whites. Jean Paul Sartre insists that, “. . . When a man commits himself to anything, fully realising that he is not only choosing what he will be, but is thereby at the same time a legislator deciding for the whole of mankind—in such a moment a Man cannot escape from the sense of complete and profound responsibility” (Priest, 2001, p. 30). The individual making this choice is well aware that it will affect everyone who follows him. They create self-rules that improve the psychological health of those who are oppressed. Since they bear responsibility beyond the consequences, the individual’s choice will no longer be considered personal. Tuffy is well aware that his political choice is to strengthen the restraints in the ghetto. Additionally, Inez is aware that her assistance to Tuffy will

no longer be in vain because it will enable the excluded people to achieve their potential and achieve psychological well-being. Inez's current level of happiness can only be attributed to her faith and hope in Tuffy. This inter-connectivity offers a great platform for fostering stronger links nurtures psychological vitality across ethnic groups and facilitates the development of the capacity to challenge the dominant force, protect one's identity and self, and use resources and privileges.

When Tuffy decides to get involved in politics, understands that he is supposed to have sufficient financial stability. Inez recognising this issue says, "I'll pay fifteen thousand dollars if you run. Maybe a little more after I look into how much it costs for posters and things. It doesn't matter if you win or lose. It'll be like summer job" (Beatty, 2000, p.146). For Inez, the satisfaction of contributing to Tuffy's is truly joyful and she is well aware of the young Tuffy's naughty tendencies, yet nothing dissuades her from holding onto her optimism for the protagonist. Because Inez respects and values various ethnic groups, her mind is clear and pure enough to form bonds with them. From the protagonist's early years, Inez is always willing to assist him, and it is clear that she steps up to support the adult protagonist.

Tuffy transforms to become involved in politics, and he no longer engages in criminal activity. Only because of the other ethnic residents of the ghetto Tuffy's desire to pursue a respectable career in the Subjugated region now come true. In the mind-blowing happiness, and promises, "Tuffy looked back Inez and Spencer, who were busily noshing on a plate hot Empire state nachos, letting Winston have his moment" (Beatty, 2000, p.158). His inter-ethnic relationships now provide him with emotional fulfilment, and he now starts the city council administration process. Because of their fruitful relationship, Tuffy and Inez work together to promote the political principles of his party and plaster it everywhere to help the ghetto residents realise how important it is to vote for him. The poster draws the attention of many locals, who are curious about the young man's involvement in politics.

When a woman who speaks half Japanese and half English notices Tuffy's poster, she approaches him right away to enquire about its authenticity. The multicultural woman is ecstatic when Tuffy reveals

that the poster is an advertisement for running a city council, and she offers her volunteer assistance to the main character. She tells Tuffy, “I’m going to vote for you- I like a man who supports the community. You better not get in office and start fucking up” (Beatty, 2000, p.207). She even asks Tuffy to at least be loyal and honest, unlike other politicians who are phoney. This discussion also reveals the ghetto residents’ inter-ethnic expectations and their desire for a capable leader. Despite not being African American, the woman shared her expectations, support, and psychological fulfilment among the multiethnic groups.

Tuffy visits the prison to obtain additional signatures for his political purpose and finds innocent ethnic communities in America are subjected to several societal injustices by the dominant white authority. He learns of the police brutalities experienced by the voiceless and helpless people in the ghetto as he prepares to visit the jail to obtain signatures from the inmates. They appear quite pleased and supportive of Tuffy upon witnessing the young man’s involvement in politics. The prisoner gathered around Tuffy and tells, “Man, can you imagine if a nigger like you won?” (Beatty, 2000, p. 214). Because they have seen police brutality, the inmates seek a power that will improve their quality of life. Jean Paul Sartre in *Being and Doing* insists, “I am condemned to exist forever beyond my essence, beyond the causes and motives of my act. I am condemned to be free. This means that no limits to my freedom can be found except freedom itself” (Sartre, n.d., p. 439). Existentialism holds that individuals are in charge of their lives and ought not to allow others to prescribe their ways of living. They are granted the right to self-defence and to oppose any attempts to limit their rights. The freedom of the disadvantaged is suppressed by the freedom enjoyed by the dominating power. When these inmates witness the other young African-American man participate in politics to strengthen the power held by the underprivileged, their mental well-being blossoms. People from different cultural backgrounds are now able to connect and reach agreements of psychological satisfaction. Tuffy can see the joy in their eyes and he is greatly inspired by witnessing the inmates’ psychological fulfilment.

The protagonist is then led by Inez to attend the Japanese sport of sumo wrestling, where they can meet additional ethnic groups who are desperate to find a revolutionary leader in the peripheral areas since Tuffy wants more signatures from the ghetto dwellers. As Tuffy is interested, he joins the professional players' match and wins, which makes him very popular with the majority of the Japanese Americans present. Thus, the audience recognises that the protagonist is half African and half Japanese American by drawing comparisons between Tuffy and Rikishi. They say, "Then not only do you win the match, but you probably won a lot of votes today" (Beatty, 2000, p.239). Inez is overjoyed to watch these lovely moments and seeks Tuffy's mental happiness. Even in this game, Tuffy is introduced to a variety of ethnic groups in suppressed places, and they are thrilled to see a young African American guy participating in politics. The crowd steps forward to sign Tuffy's party's application, demonstrating their unwavering support for the African American youth's political success and tells Tuffy as, "Obviously, your first thoughts are for your people and community, and a proud man like yourself wouldn't abandon his mission for selfish reasons" (Beatty, 2000, p.240). This still demonstrates how the majority of ethnic communities in America want a leader who can achieve authority comparable to that of the dominant forces. Tuffy's participation in the wrestling demonstrates how the multiethnic group upholds its culture and traditions. Residents of the ghetto suffer greatly to get basic supplies, and their voices are silenced nevertheless, as a result of the frustration caused by false politicians in the marginalised areas. However, the people's inter-connectedness makes it possible to gladly help the young man.

After the election, Tuffy and his friends decide to watch a movie because they no longer believe their candidate will win. To look into the misconduct in the counting, however, Inez visits the election office. However, Tuffy ultimately wins the election, and Inez is ecstatic about Tuffy's victory. On hearing the victory, "Inez lightly stamped her feet, enjoying the tingle in her toes" (Beatty, 2000, p.307). Inez, another ethnic woman, backed Tuffy despite the lack of support from her parents, friends, and the dominant society. This demonstrates

the lovely inter-ethnic relationships in Harlem and these partnerships are more than just relationships that provide psychological well-being in a flourishing manner. Without the right education and financial and social support, Tuffy's existence as a subjugated man can be destroyed in unthinkable ways. However, the support and affection from inter-ethnic relationships significantly change his life. Even the novel ends with Inez saying, "Gambate, Winston Foshay, gambate" (Beatty, 2000, p.307). The Japanese word "gambate" is undoubtedly used near the end of the novel to acknowledge the inter-ethnic connections and their productivity and psychological well-being.

Through a number of illustrative cases, the story presents inter-ethnic relationships that are fruitful, content, and harmonious. These interactions in the ghettos of America are powerful connections that are prolific and fertile in the present times for the betterment of the marginalised people. Despite losing their historical connections and original links, these individuals maintain new associations in the American ghetto that give them hope for survival in the nation that dominates the world. To provide the next generation with resources on par with the dominant white culture, this ethnic group unites to form a thriving community. To receive mental support and heal their wounds, people in the world look for a friend with whom they can share their emotional feelings. However, many people are unable to receive significant mental help to recover from their mental trauma because of societal faults.

## **Conclusion**

This study uses existentialist theory, primarily based on Jean-Paul Sartre's concepts, to show the psychological well-being and inner conflicts of the peripheral characters. By exploring the existentialist point of view in the novel *Tuff*, the study adds a new viewpoint to current studies on Beatty's work, enriching broader discussions about the connection of existentialism and African-American literature. This paper expands on the application of existentialist principles to investigate how philosophy enriches the knowledge of modern literary depictions of marginalisation and identity.

Paul Beatty's *Tuff* delves deeply into existential perspectives, demonstrating how suppressed people struggle and survive as a result of institutional oppression by the dominant group.

Using Sartre's existentialist paradigm, this paper focuses on how disadvantaged characters such as Tuffy and Inez emphasise identity to establish their meanings and nurture psychological vitality in the face of harsh social, economic, and political constraints. Sartre's radical freedom and individual responsibility ideas are well-suited to understanding marginalised communities' conflicts. The novel emphasises that the ethnic people from the underprivileged area must constantly prove their worth to live and recover their existence against the dominating group that seeks to eliminate or reduce their identities. *Tuff* demonstrates that freedom is not only a personal pursuit but also a helpful community bond by combining existentialist concepts with interethnic solidarity. The novel's characters use their freedom of choice to strengthen ethnic relationships and heal the wounds of systemic oppression. Ultimately, *Tuff* emphasises the value of confronting existential issues and the restorative potential of diversity in the pursuit of individual and societal well-being.

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