

## Self-Identity and Forgiveness in Olga Grushin's *The Charmed Wife*

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**Abstract:** *A Piece of art known as literature includes a well-known poem or prose written by many well-known writers and poets. Diasporic literature refers to a body of literary works that explores the experiences, challenges and identity of individuals or communities who have been displaced from their original homeland and now live in various parts of the world. Russian literature explores deep topics like the theory of existent human nature, religion, and social justice. This paper deals with 'Self-Identity and Forgiveness in Olga Grushin's The Charmed Wife'. Fantasy literature frequently uses inventive features and original universes to attract readers still. The mysterious and paranormal are common in many of the magical stories set in these realms. Olga Grushin is a Russian-American author born in Moscow, Russia on July 4, 1971. Her works translated into sixteen other languages. She starts writing in English. The work conveys the message between fantasy and reality. It is based on self-identity, forgiveness, marriage, and magic. The tale highlights how both external and internal forces may influence perceptions of reality by using reality as a metaphor for the complexity of the human experience.*

**Keywords:** Diasporic Literature, Fantasy Literature, Russian Literature, Self-Identity

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### Introduction

Literature is any kind of written or spoken communication. Literature can be expressed vocally or in written form. Literature serves as a medium for recording, maintaining, and transmitting information as well as pleasure. It may serve a political, social, psychological, or spiritual purpose. It enables one to travel back in time and acquire knowledge about earthly existence from those who came before us. It is a written record of man's spirit including his thoughts, emotions, and desires. It expresses the essence of life in words of both truth and beauty. Any event that takes place in a society can be documented in writing and literature can teach us all about it. It is any creative work that makes use of ideas.

### Diaspora

Diasporic literature refers to a body of literary works that explores the experiences, challenges and identity of individuals or communities who have been displaced from their original homeland and now live in various parts of the world. The term "diaspora" generally refers to the dispersion or migration of people from their ancestral or cultural homeland to different regions.

### Russian Literature

Russian literature is a collection of writing that is written in Russian. This vast literary culture which includes a wide range of genres, styles and themes acts as a mirror reflecting the political, historical, and cultural landscape of the country. The development of religious works and epics like *The Lay of Igor's Campaign* during the medieval period is viewed as the genesis of Russian literature. The Russian literary tradition reached its peak in the Nineteenth Century. It is also referred to as the Golden Age. Russian literature explores deep topics like the theory of existent human nature, religion, and social justice. Russian literature is a great source of insights and reflection on the human condition because of its in-depth examination of social worries and personal experiences. Russian literature has become well-known around the world for several reasons. World literature has been deeply influenced by the great narratives, deeper character development and disturbing issues of great writers such as Fyodor Dostoevsky, Alexander Pushkin, and Leo Tolstoy.

Fantasy and Literature depend on an understanding of storytelling. Through the use of characters, story, setting and theme, the author attracts readers. Fantasy literature frequently uses inventive features and original universes to attract readers still. The mysterious and paranormal are common in many of the magical stories set in these realms. Many of these are composed of solar systems and within them, there are

an enormous number of magical and supernatural creatures. Fantasy Literature is often written for readers of all ages. It allows authors to create intricate and immersive worlds where they can explore themes, characters and ideas that may not be possible. Science fiction and horror are two distinct subgenres of speculative writings that differ from fantasy by the lack of scientific or horrific themes. Oral traditions became the foundation for fantasy literature and theatre. Dreams and imagination ultimately create fantasy. The role of fantasy literature is to encourage readers to see themselves in other positions and circumstances and explore alternatives without taking any risks. Fantasy literature is composed in an imaginary world that frequently but not always includes real-world places, events, and characters. In many of these made-up realms, magic, the paranormal and the supernatural beings are common. Fantasy novels can be written for consumers of all ages. It frequently takes place in other worlds or alternative worlds that are inhabited of fantastical creatures and frequently follow the laws of magic. The protagonist is typically called upon to finish a task or to save the plant.

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Olga Grushin is a Russian-American author born on July 4, 1971, in Moscow, Russia. Her writing was translated into sixteen other languages and she writes in English. She now lives outside Washington, DC with her two children. The notable works of Olga Grushin are *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*, *The Line*, *Forty Rooms*, and *The Charmed Wife*.

### ***The Charmed Wife***

In the tale *The Charmed Wife*, Self-identity plays a major role. Self-identity refers to the set of attributes, beliefs, values, and experiences that make an individual unique and distinguishable from others. It is the understanding one has about oneself as an independent being with distinct personal qualities, goals, beliefs, and perspectives on the world. Cinderella is the protagonist of the tale. She navigates her newfound wealth and status as the wife of Prince Roland while fighting her earlier traumas and societal expectations, creating a complex and nuanced self-identity. Her difficult history has influenced the way she views herself. She suffered neglect by her stepsisters and stepmother while growing up in poverty. Cinderella's psyche is deeply scarred by this tragic history and she battles poor self-worth and feelings of inadequacy. She had to learn how to fend for herself from an early age. Cinderella's prior hardships have also made her fiercely independent and self-reliant. Cinderella's character provides a first clue to the world about who she is. It represents her background as a mistreated and poor woman. She was married off at an early age to a violent husband who treated her like a servant. Her unexpected position and fortune came with many new limits and expectations. She struggles to make sense of her new life and her previous experiences. Even though she is expected to be a wealthy bride. She thinks that she does not deserve her newfound wealth and privilege, which causes her to suffer with emotions of guilt and shame. Cinderella and Roland have a complex relationship since she finds him attractive and repulsive in the same way.

### **Forgiveness in *The Charmed Wife***

The idea of forgiveness is particularly prominent in the protagonist Cinderella's relationship with her husband Roland. As their marriage encounters difficulties, disappointments, forgiveness becomes critical in managing their marital troubles. Throughout the tale her journey to forgiveness entails confronting her vulnerabilities, accepting Roland's flaws, and eventually choosing to let go of past wounds to repair their relationship. Forgiveness is sometimes portrayed to overcome betrayal and hurt. Cinderella is betrayed not only in her marriage but also in her interaction with other people, including her stepmother and stepsister. She tackles the sorrow and hurt and goes through the forgiving, transforms into a healing process. She also exceeds feelings of bitterness and anger. Cinderella's journey to forgiveness encompasses not only reconciling with Roland, but also recovering her autonomy and self-worth.

The main character of this story is a young woman who marries a prince but has many challenges along the way. The protagonist regains mental stability, restores connections and finds inner peace by accepting redemption. The writer highlights the value of forgiveness to overcome hardship, emotional scars in relationships, through the experiences of the character. The concept encourages readers to consider their own lives, admit their flaws, ask for forgiveness and make- an effort to improve themselves. She overcomes awful situations with a harsh stepfamily and finds redemption. She also realizes that she can change her life's course and carries overtones of redemption. "And I want him dead now. Do we really have to dole out the hairs one by one, or can I drop the whole bunch in at once and just be done with it?" (CW 31).

The writer's depiction of reclamation in *The Charmed Wife* goes beyond the protagonist's development on a personal level and includes her disregard of traditional fairy tale conventions. The tale takes place in an alternate universe where people can travel between the actual world and fairy tales through dreams. Cinderella is a seamstress in a tiny village at the start of the tale, leading a life that is boring and unfulfilling. "But I need you, I need you now, I'm under a spell, you have to fix me, he won't love me if you don't!" she wailed (CW 70). She thinks Prince Roland is her true love and she dreams of him. She gets captivated by Roland's brains and kindness when they first meet and they start dating. When Cinderella accepts Roland's proposal, she becomes the princess of Roland's kingdom after their beautiful ceremony. Her new life takes over her at first, but she rapidly comes to adjust and enjoy her new position. "I wasn't like that all! I was young, and I was in love, and I tried to make you happy, I tried so hard, I did my best, I wanted to be a good wife to you, it was you-you-you who..." (CW 251). Even in the face of difficulties, Cinderella comes to trust Roland and believes in the strength of love. In addition, she learns to be comfortable in her skin and to accept her identity rather than trusting other people.

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### **Magic in *The Charmed Wife***

Magic in the tale is not a mere trick or illusion but a genuine supernatural force. It adds a sense of wonder and enchantment to the story, making it more captivating and engaging the reader. The use of magic in the tale helps to reveal the characters' inner worlds and motivations. It can be seen as a metaphor for human relationships. The magic ties to the tension between tradition and creativity. It suggests that there is value in both the old and the new and that finding a balance between the two is key to personal growth and fulfillment. The writer explores the term magic in a metaphorical sense to describe the transformative power of love and the mysterious unexplainable aspects of human relationships. She also realizes that true magic cannot be created through material possessions alone. But magic can be created through a deeper understanding and connection with oneself and others. In the fantasy tale, magic is complex and multifaceted. "And a smidgen of your blood. No need to get all pale and wide-eyed, duckie, it'll be but a little prick, I'm sure you know all about those, most princes sport them... There, all over now" (CW 16).

The tale moves into a darker and more intricate plot. It examines the events that occur after Cinderella and the prince get married. After thirteen years of marriage, Cinderella is unhappy and turns to a witch who provides love potions for guidance. Cinderella uses magic as a potent tool for self-discovery and empowerment. It enables her to navigate all aspects of her world and find joy and agency in hardship. The protagonist's unexpected union with a successful businessman and the resulting move to a luxurious home. She undergoes a magical transformation in this event, moving from a life of poverty and sorrow to one of luxury and fortune. "Just throw these into the cauldron, one after another, and when the last half goes in, spit after it. Spit with feeling, mind. And then-pooof! -you're a widow" (CW 26).

### **Conclusion**

Cinderella ignores the expectations of her family and society by choosing to travel, demonstrating her growing confidence and assertiveness. It allows her to live her own life and pursue her objectives. Cinderella decides to dissolve her marriage marks a significant turning point in her personal growth. It also gives her the ability to escape the toxic environment that formerly defined her life.

### **Reference**

Gushin, Olga. *The Charmed Wife*. Hodder & Stoughton Publication, 2021.

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