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The Reelocene Epoch: Digital Mimesis and the Erasure of Cultural Idiom in Kashmir

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Abstract: ***This study presents the concept of the Reelocene epoch, characterised by excessive consumption of short-form videos, or reels, on popular platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, with a primary focus on Kashmir. The research examines how local youth, observed in educational settings, are captivated by visual media without recognising its infectious influence on local culture and identity formation. This Reelocene commodifies culture, ruptures the localised value system, and incorporates alien cultural elements that render vulgarity and obscenity aesthetically pleasing. The study uses the conceptual frameworks of cultural capital (Bourdieu) and hyperreality (Baudrillard). The research also examines the capacity of reels to engage teenagers effectively while standardising their use as a factor in cultural exclusion and inclusion. The preference for the influencer or celebrity's verbal expressions, style, and tastes, regarded as culturally superior, contrasts sharply with the local cultural norms, perceived as inferior, and is examined in detail through the observed behaviour of participating students. The study ultimately argues that Reelocene not only endangers culture but also supplants it with its own norms, language, and regulations, posing a threat to the local context.***

Keywords: ***Digital Colonialism, Cultural Homogenisation, Algorithmic Culture, Short-Form Video, Koshur, Hyperreality, Identity Performance, Linguistic Erasure, Social Media Ethnography.***

Nomenclature:
CCCS: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies

I. INTRODUCTION

The college classroom in Kashmir has been like a miniature version of society as a whole, a place where tradition and modernity, local and global, can communicate in quiet dialogue. But on a regular Monday morning, this cultural dialogue turned into something shocking and eye-opening. When I walked in, I could hear students talking excitedly, but the language was extraordinary. The words and phrases "fuck off," "shit," "God damn it," and "slut" were used so casually that it was clear that their meanings and cultural origins were completely foreign. This was the unpolished, uncensored language of global digital platforms, not the polished English of academic discourse.

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when asked, the students clearly didn't understand: some didn't know what they meant but thought these words "carried some emotions"; others couldn't find their Koshur substitutes; and many said that this was an unintentional learning experience, a cognitive permeation brought on by their heavy use of short-form video content on Instagram and Snapchat. This vignette is not merely a story about how slang invades a culture; it is also an examination of a significant cultural shift. It is a perfect example of what anthropologist Arjun Appadurai calls the global "mediascape," where digital media capabilities "produce and distribute information… [and] images of the world" (1996, p. 35), quickly shaping what we want and how we think [1].

This paper proposes a prevalent unconscious pattern of mimesis, evident in students' language, that directly borrows from this mediascape. The theories of French sociologist Gabriel Tarde (1903), who maintained that imitation was the cornerstone of society, and of French-American scholar René Girard, who described "mimetic desire" as the process by which people model their desires on others, serve as the starting point for the idea in question [2]. Today's "model" isn't just your neighbour or a movie star; it's a global social media celebrity and micro-influencer who shines right into your palm.

Thus, the main argument of this paper is: While the unintentional imitation and adoption of global digital celebrities and values provide Kashmiri youth with a means of social identity and belonging in an increasingly globalised environment, it also serves as a powerful tool for cultural homogenisation, posing a major existential threat to the survival of the native Kashmiri language, customs, social values, and cultural identity.

This modelling and imitation extend beyond language to encompass social behaviour, attire, style, and body language, resulting in a hybridised identity that is markedly different from its local context. This strong, interconnected cultural-linguistic paradigm, according to the linguist Robert Phillipson (1992), marginalises and displaces the local. This is not a straightforward case of cross-cultural exchange, but rather a hegemonic process that could result in what Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) has effectively characterised as linguistic genocide in other contexts. Thus, the classroom scene serves as a frontline in the covert fight to preserve culture. The paper will be formatted as follows to flesh out this argument. A literature review will first situate the study within previous research on youth subcultures, globalisation, linguistic imperialism, and mimesis.

The quantitative ethnographic technique for participant observation in a college setting will be outlined in the Methodology section. Specific instances of imitation in language, style, and behaviours will be discussed in the primary

Analysis and Findings section, along with a comparison to regional customs. Drawing on theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu on cultural capital and Zygmunt Bauman on liquid modernity, the Discussion component will synthesise these findings and examine the paradox whereby mimesis enables erasure while also fostering belonging. The conclusion will consider the broader ramifications of this cultural change for Kashmiri identity, as well as potential directions for promoting critical digital literacy.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Although the pattern of young people embracing foreign cultural practices is not new, the scope, velocity, and character of this transformation in the age of the internet offer a distinct paradigm. The sociolinguistics of imperialism, youth subcultural studies, mimetic theory, and globalisation theory are the four overlapping fields of academic literature. This paper attempts to situate the observed behavioural changes among Kashmiri youth at the intersection of these fields.

A. Globalisation, Mediascapes, and the Imagination

Arjun Appadurai's groundbreaking work on the many facets of the global cultural economy provides a fundamental framework for understanding this artistic exchange. According to Appadurai (1996), the international landscape is disjunctive and influenced by several "-scapes," such as financescapes, technoscapes, ethnoscapes, and—most importantly for the objectives of this study—mediascapes and ideoscapes. The "distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information" and the "images of the world created by these media" are referred to as mediascapes (p. 35). The desires of individuals and groups located far from the media's origin are significantly shaped by these narrated "scripts" and imaginary worlds. The primary sources of this mediascape for Kashmiri youth are Facebook, Instagram Reels, and TikTok. These platforms provide a carefully chosen, captivating, and never-ending stream of images, lifestyles, and beliefs that serve as the foundation for the creation of their own identities. The active creation of an "imagined self" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 3) founded on globally circulating signs, which frequently conflict with the local "lifeworld", is what this is, and not just the media consumption.

B. The Social Laws of Imitation and Mimetic Desire

The theory of mimesis provides insight into the psychological process that underlies the appropriation of these mediascapes. The ideal point to begin with is the work of early sociologist Gabriel Tarde (1903), who proposed that imitation is the foundation of society. According to Tarde's "laws of imitation," people imitate well-known figures and models, and these imitations trickle down from higher to lower social classes [3]. René Girard (1965) significantly broadened this framework with his idea of "mimetic desire." Girard argues that human desire is not innate or autonomous but is mimetic; we desire objects because we are 模 仿 (mó fǎng) the desires of a model (the "mediator"). In the contemporary context, the "model" or "mediator" is no longer a local figure of authority but a digital celebrity and influencer. The desire for a particular style of clothing, a specific slang term, or a confident attitude is generated by the observed desire of these online figures and their massive follower base. This mimesis is often unconscious, which explains why students might use phrases without knowing their semantics, simply mimicking (模仿, mó fǎng) the emotional resonance they observe in performance.

C. From Subcultural Resistance to Post-Subcultural Individuality

The Birmingham School's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) traditionally analysed youth styles as forms of "symbolic resistance" against dominant hegemony (e.g., Hebdige, 1979) [4]. Styles were read as coded challenges to class-based oppression. However, the observed emulation in Kashmir aligns more with post-subcultural theory than with this resistance model. Scholars like David Muggleton (2003) argue that in late modernity, youth identities are no longer formed through coherent, class-based subcultures but through fluid, individualistic, and consumption-based "neo-tribes" [5]. Style becomes a personalised project of the self, a bricolage of globally available symbols accessed through media and consumer culture. The Kashmiri student's adoption of a K-pop aesthetic or LA-based influencer slang is not a resistance to a local class structure but a curated performance of a chosen, globalised identity. It reflects what Muggleton and Weinzierl (2003) identify as a shift from the "subcultural" to the "clubcultural," in which identity is performative, fluid, and centred on leisure and consumption rather than on opposition.

D. Linguistic Imperialism and Digital Hegemony

Finally, the erosion of the native language must be analysed through the lens of linguistic power dynamics. Robert Phillipson's (1992) concept of "linguistic imperialism" describes how the global dominance of English asserts and maintains unequal cultural and power relations between core English-speaking nations and peripheral non-English-speaking ones [6]. Although Phillipson focused on formal education and policymaking, his framework is highly applicable to the digital sphere. A particular variation of informal English, typically Americanized, is the language that wields worldwide influence on social media. The multinational tech companies' algorithms and computations, which promote and recognise content in this favoured dialect, are the means by which this digital linguistic imperialism functions rather than the policies of the state. This can result in linguistic genocide, which is the deliberate erasure of a community's mother tongue, as Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) repeatedly points out in her work [7]. The prevailing mediascape strongly inhibits the expressive potential of the indigenous language, disrupting intergenerational linguistic transmission. This is where Kashmiri youth struggle to translate the sentiments of global digital slang into Kashmiri.

III. GAP IN THE LITERATURE AND THIS STUDY'S CONTRIBUTION

Even though these theories offer a strong framework for explanation, little research has been conducted to apply them to the unique sociocultural setting of post-conflict

Kashmir, especially regarding the influence of short-form video content on the behavioural patterns of young learners in educational institutions. The purpose of this study is to close this gap by combining these theoretical frameworks to examine how unintentional digital mimesis is changing the language, manners, and identity of Kashmiri students. According to the study, it represents a new and effective form of cultural hegemony that operates through tempting, targeted channels on worldwide digital platforms.

IV. METHODOLOGY

To examine trends in cultural imitation and their effects on Kashmiri youth, this study uses a qualitative ethnographic method. With an emphasis on the unintentional appropriation of language, style, and habits from global social media outlets, the methodology aims to document students' complex daily interactions and behaviour patterns.

A. Research Design: Ethnographic Participant-Observation

Participant observation, a fundamental component of ethnographic research (Spradley, 1980), is the primary methodological technique [8]. This method was chosen for its ability to provide rich, contextually integrated data on non-verbal cues, linguistic changes, and nuances of social behaviour that would be challenging to capture using surveys or interviews alone. As a college lecturer, I held a special "insider-outsider" role: an outsider critically examining the student body's informal interactions and an insider with legal access to the student body. This dual role enabled naturalistic observation in real-world environments—classrooms, hallways, and common areas—where conduct was less likely to be performative for a researcher perceived as an outsider.

B. Research Setting and Sample

Over 24 months, from March 2023 to March 2025, the study was conducted at an academic college and an institute of technical education in Jammu and Kashmir. Male and female undergraduate students from various engineering, arts, and science programs, aged 18-22, constituted the participant group. The study centred on female students, despite its broad observations, because initial results indicated that the demands and patterns of digital mimesis were more severe and complex in this group, often requiring a more deliberate choice of language and appearance. Participation was clearly connected to the academic environment, as there were no formal invitations, guaranteeing that observed behaviours were unintentional, arbitrary, and spontaneous.

C. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using a blended approach to enhance triangulation and accuracy. During and after lectures, the observer took notes on the use of standard English slang phrases and expressions in peer conversation, including "damn," "shit," "fed up," and expletives, known as "lexical borrowing." Paralinguistic elements found during data collection include tone shifts, emotional noises (such as higher gasps or particular laughter patterns), and digital-content-inspired accents. Standard social media signals, such as posture, hand gestures (e.g., "peace sign"), finger hearts, and hair flips, are quickly absorbed. The students, using these platforms, were also found to be adhering to global microtrends in clothing, accessories, haircuts, and makeup (e.g., extravagant designs, the "clean girl aesthetic"). During the interactional observation process, students participated in informal discussions to better understand their behaviour. Important questions included:

i. "Where did you first hear that phrase?"
ii. "What does that word mean to you?"
iii. "Can you think of a way to say that in Koshur or Urdu?"
iv. "Which celebrities or influencers do you admire the most?" These arguments helped separate purposeful imitation from unconscious mimesis, the topic of this study.
v. Concurrent assessment of source material was done to contextualise observed behaviours on digital platforms. Engaging with popular Instagram Reels, TikTok, and Snapchat content helped identify patterns, issues, and creator brands and personalities within the student cohort during the research period.

D. Data Analysis

Field notes, recorded talks, and other data were analysed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006) [9]. This procedure involved:

i. A thorough review of previously learnt material. For the initial codes, it was necessary to identify relevant data points (e.g., "code: use of foreign verbal slang," "code: translation challenges," or "code: mention of a specific influencer").
ii. Themes were identified by grouping codes into bigger categories, such as "The Performed Body," "Linguistic Displacement," and "The International vs Regional Aspirational Divide."
iii. Analysed and reshaped topics to reflect statistics and effectively communicate a story.
iv. Utilising Girard's mimetic desire and Appadurai's mediascapes to address the identified topics from the literature study. Educational institutions were not directly discussed because identifiable information (names and course names) was removed from the notes and analysis. Security and anonymity were strictly protected. Given the sensitive circumstances in Kashmir, all data were securely maintained to protect participants' privacy.

E. Limitations

The limitations of this study are acknowledged. The findings are not intended to apply to all Kashmiri teenagers, as they are based on data from only two institutions. However, ethnographic engagement provides significant analytical transportation (Yin, 2003) [10], allowing a complete understanding of a novel social phenomenon that is likely common in similar urban and rural instructional settings across the region. The researcher's role as an educator naturally affects observation dynamics, which is considered throughout the study.

V. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS: THE ANATOMY OF DIGITAL MIMESIS

This study's ethnographic aspect shows that Kashmiri youth engage in a complex process of cultural modelling and imitation. The study found a significant shift in language, behaviour, and gesture, indicating cultural displacement, as examined through media studies and theories of mimetic desire.

A. Lexical Displacement and the Unconscious Mimetic Loop

The most noticeable change is linguistic usage. An ongoing linguistic conflict between Koshur, Urdu, and modernised digital English characterises student communication, with the latter two increasingly dominating informal peer contacts.

Adopted Codes exhibit shallowness: Appadurai's (1996) mediascape theory posits that the language of digital platforms is a potent "script" for self-expression. But this reception is primarily superficial. Urdu was a "poor translation" of Kashmiri concepts rather than an authentic one. A foreign speech pattern was created via unusual tonal expressions, stress patterns, and grammatical structures. Phillipson (1992) was concerned about linguistic imperialism, in which a preferred language displaces and damages the expression of a native tongue.

i. *Semantic Void and Emotional Mimesis:* Girard's (1965) theory of mimetic desire is best illustrated by the usage of English vulgarities and expressions such as "shit," "fuck off," "literally," and "vow." Students confirmed they often used these terms without understanding their meanings, attributing them only to a vague sense of “emotion.” Their desire to use these words is not born of a need to describe a specific feeling in their own linguistic repertoire, but of 模仿 (mó fǎng) the emotional intensity they see performed by their digital models. The word is desired because the model uses it, creating a mimetic loop where the signifier is adopted while the signified remains hollow or radically altered.

ii. *The Performance of Identity:* The case of “Hanan,” name changed, who aspires to emulate “Dwayne and Bumstead” and identifies as a “Jymaholic,” illustrates Muggleton’s (2003) post-subcultural identity. His language is a bricolage of globalised signs used to construct a chosen identity centred on fitness and consumerism. This performance is for a globalised in-group that understands this jargon, creating a new form of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984) that is valued within the college “atmosphere,” as the top student noted [11]. However, this capital is based on a "disownment of the local," which seriously compromises intergenerational dialogue and cultural continuity.

B. The Performed Body: Gestural and Behavioural Appropriation

Beyond language, this consumption affects students' posture, gestures, and public image. Close observation revealed precise micro-gestures, including a smile outline, a gasp, tooth exposure, and a hair flip. These digitally trained emotional acts are not unplanned outbursts of amazement or joy. One can practise and display globalised fundamental cultural norms using one's body. Adopting fashion sense, such as hairstyles and branded athleisure, is a crucial aspect of body performance. Tarde's (1903) law, which states that famous people inspire imitation, supports this. The "sense of competition" the top-performing student mentioned was the drive to acquire this new symbolic capital, namely, innovation and globality. The student's self-importance or intended expressiveness seems artificial and strange in the Kashmiri context, further isolating them from their own milieu.

C. The Existential Threat: Cultural Dislocation and the Loss of Substratum

The analysis shows that these changes threaten the community's distinctive cultural existence.

i. *Cultural Substratum Erosion:* The local phrases and gestures that the Reelocene eliminates are more concerning than the new ones implanted in their place. Students' inability to understand academic English concepts while mastering real jargon indicates a broken link between language and content. The extensive cultural relationship to Koshur—including perspectives, history, and transmitted knowledge—is shrinking. This deterioration, which Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) calls linguistic disorientation, is evident in their failure to translate foreign inflammatory sentiments into their mother tongue.

ii. *The Simulated Public Sphere:* Mimesis, albeit rare at home, is prevalent in campus settings. It implies an identity gap. The house preserves traditional culture, but the college, mediated by technological advancements, test’s global identity. Bauman's (2000) liquid modernity, which holds that identity is context-dependent and fluid, is reflected in this segregation, creating a fractured self: a Kashmiri at home and a global digital citizen among peers. [12].

iii. *Negative Evaluation and Insufficient Primary Awareness:* Two instances of defensive tactics in the students' answers are Hanan's laughter and the female student's prolonged "Nooo, noouuv Waayy." They exhibit an intuitive understanding of the critique but hesitate to engage with it critically because their adopted identity and social capital are in jeopardy. Their inability to critically recognise the cultural trade-offs they are making accelerates the process of unintended cultural deterioration, thereby increasing the threat, as it is often presented as a harmless global connection or personal preference.

In the end, the results demonstrate a group of youths engaged in self-construction as part of a digital mimesis project. This fosters community and identity, yet the analysis reveals that it homogenises cultures. It subtly replaces indigenous languages, erodes nonverbal cultural codes, and destroys Kashmiri cultural identity.

VI. DISCUSSION: THE SPECTACLE OF THE SELF AND THE ERASURE OF PLACE IN THE RELOCENE EPOCH

The ethnographic outcomes of This study suggests that substantial cultural and personal transformations occur

within the liminal space of the Kashmiri classroom, rather than merely offering exclusive observations of evolving youth trends. This change can be seen as a local example of a global trend: the rise of the "reel," or short-form video, as an explosive cultural medium that marked the start of what could be identified as the Reelocene Epoch. Reel culture's unconscious mimesis creates a generation of "ventriloquist selves" who perform a globally discernible, placeless identity at the direct forfeiture of their local, embodied cultural specificity. This is described as a new and dominant form of digital hegemony that operates through seduction and the illusion of belonging.

A. The Reel as the New Culture Industry: Standardising Affect and Eroding Critique

A powerful example of the reel's role as the indicative constituent of the 21st-century culture industry is the closely observed behaviour, where students struggle with the semantic and analytical requirements of their academic curriculum and use phrases like "shit" and "god damn it" with algorithmic accuracy (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2002) [13]. But compared to previous versions, this contemporary version is more widespread and sneakier. It now regulates the very instruments of the self —including affect, gesture, language, and desire —rather than merely cultural products for passive consumption. For what Walter Benjamin foresaw as the "mechanical reproduction" of experience —here applied to the realm of human emotion (Benjamin, 1936) — the reel functions as a digital assembly line [14]. The inflated pupil dilation, a finely calibrated flash of teeth, and "Fordist" laughter are examples of manufactured performance units that are obtained and modelled rather than impulsive, culturally-inflected expressions. This process methodically replaces natural, culturally specific expressions of emotion with a homogenised, broad spectacle of emotion, colonising not only attention spans but also the body itself. The result is a passive proficiency in spectacle at the expense of analytical depth, an impairment of the critical faculties required to question the media and the world it represents.

B. The Asymmetry of Distinction: Bourdieu, Bhabha, and the Performance of Digital Capital

Bourdieu's (1984) theory of distinction is sharply modernised by the stark dynamic observed, and this is where the obscenity of the "real bourgeoisie" is coded as "cosmopolitanism," while Kashmiri youth's imitation of it is viewed as hollow, unnatural, and imposed. Acquiring social and cultural capital now requires proficiency in the viral codes of digital spectacle rather than just understanding fine art or subtle manners. The student's self-importance and boastfulness reveal their success in digital capital. A fundamental imbalance exists in this economy. The original Girardian (1965) "model"—the influencer—has "digital native capital." Their performance is authentic. Kashmiri imitators are consistently late and dishonest. According to Homi Bhabha (1994), colonial imitation creates a subject that is "almost the same, but not quite," capturing this tension. [15]. The student is continually caught up in the act of "linguistic tourism," which only serves to emphasise their peripheral position within a global cultural hierarchy. The model encourages students to imitate, but they are never able to inhabit the centre of the culture they imitate fully. Their imitation is evidence of their subordination and dependency rather than a claim to authority.

C. The Hyperreal and the Death of the Signified: Semiotics of the Reel

The analysis of the celebrity influencer, whose sartorial choices are more articulate than her expressions and for whom the “how obliterates the what” is a direct application of Barthesian (1972) semiotics [16]. This also shows how Baudrillard's (1994) understanding of modern society, increasingly controlled by signs and symbols disconnected from the semblance of reality, is highly relevant [17]. Within the Reelocene, the signifier is paramount, floating free from any stable signified. A word like “ouch” ceases to signify pain primarily and becomes a pure performance. This signifier points only to other signifiers within the closed system of reel culture, to a desired identity of cool, ironic detachment or streaming-service-inspired melodrama. This creates the “semantic void” identified in the findings: students employ words whose meanings are absent or irrelevant; the emotion is not felt but performed; the language is not communicative but decorative. This is the ultimate triumph of Debord’s (1994) society of the spectacle: communication is replaced by a circular reference of signs that point only to other signs, severing language and gesture from lived experience and local context [18]. The "real" world of cultural nuance and historical substance appears dull and ineffective in comparison to the hyperreal, which is more captivating and easier to consume.

D. The Existential Trade: Performing Belonging and the Eradication of Place

The phenomenon's most significant effect is the breakdown of the cultural foundation, which is the extensive, generation-to-generation transfer of values, spoken language, and embodied practices. This is an existential trade-off rather than just a style shift. Even as theorists like Zadie Smith rightly endorse linguistic multiplicity as a form of richness and confidence, the void of loss from replacing the native accent or dialect with an irrelevant foreign lexicon cannot be easily filled [19]. The involuntary, aspirational mimesis fuelled by reel culture is something else entirely —a Faustian bargain in which young people sell their native languages and expressions for a sense of belonging in a global, digital 'carnival' (Bakhtin, 1984) [20]. This funfair is a community without responsibilities, a place without a place, and a culture without a history. The rejection of the local, the incapacity to translate fundamental feelings into Koshur, embarrassment towards native styles, and the substitution of borrowed cadences for deeply original cultural codes are the price of this admission. The outcome is a type of cultural schizophrenia: a Kashmiri self in the home and a global digital citizen in the college and online worlds, never wholly occupying either world and constantly practising a part for a play they were never chosen for. The quiet but terrible result of this performative life is that the more one performs, the less one is; the more one imitates, the less one inhabits.

This study's documentation of involuntary digital mimesis goes far beyond a mere aesthetic change. It is a strong hegemonic force that uses the

spectacle's individualised, addictive channels. It creates an unforgiving new system of distinction that prioritises a globalised nowhere over a localised somewhere, makes feelings the same for everyone, and makes people want things. The great tragedy is that this is an algorithmically curated, unconscious erosion rather than a conscious, agentic abandonment; it is a happy, compensated and thus pernicious sacrifice of a rich cultural legacy for the meaningless calories of the spectacle of life itself. A generation has become proficient in the language of superficiality as a result of the reel's endless democratisation and diffusion of nonsense, leaving them intrigued, slightly queasy yet enthralled and on the verge of discarding the texture of their own place in the world and the tone of their own distinctive voice.

VII. CONCLUSION: THE REELOCENE'S DOUBLE BIND AND THE IMPERATIVE FOR CRITICAL LITERACY

This study contends that Kashmiri youth's unconscious imitation of global digital celebrity culture is a powerful and complex sociological phenomenon that extends beyond simple generational preferences. Instead, it is a hallmark of the Reelocene Epoch, defined by the dominance of short-form video as the primary medium for expressing social capital, identity, and desire. The present study has used an ethnographic lens to show how the reel operates as a new, hyper-effective culture industry that embeds itself in global mediascapes (Appadurai, 1996) and standardises affect, behaviour, and language through mechanisms of mimetic desire (Girard, 1965). According to the research findings, the generation is skilled at projecting a globally recognisable identity, but at a disastrous cost: the gradual deterioration of the local cultural foundation, which creates a divide between the performed self and the placeless self.

The analysis highlights a significant dilemma. On the one hand, this digital mimesis gives Kashmiri youth a sense of inclusion in a glamorous, global society, offering them a new form of cultural capital valued by their peer networks and a toolkit for constructing identity (Bourdieu, 1984). Nonetheless, it serves as a form of soft hegemony (Gramsci, 1971), a strong and tempting force that encourages involvement in one's own cultural marginalisation [21]. Bhabha (1994) notes that the outcome is a simulation that never becomes proficient and permanently defines the performer as an outsider to the centre they mimic. The reel's hyperreal (Baudrillard, 1994) performance separates signifiers from signifieds, creating a semantic wasteland in which words are meaningless and actions are impotent. This causes cultural and linguistic dislocation (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

The consequences of this study go beyond academia. According to Muggleton (2000), algorithms profit by removing diversity and homogenising expression, which contributes to the digital age's cultural identity crisis [22]. Critical digital literacy must be promoted rather than dismissed; dismissing digital media or global connections is pointless. Education must use these pedagogical tools to study the political economy of digital platforms, spectacle, and mimetic desire. Young people must be encouraged to be critical consumers and conscientious producers of digital information to participate in global flows while protecting their local cultural heritage. This crucial connection may shape various local cultures worldwide and Kashmir's rich cultural character. Instead of exclusion and inclusion, choose purposeful, nuanced negotiation or involuntary deletion. Reels foster creativity, involvement, and family. This study shows it detracts. During the Reelocene's continuous upheaval, location, history, and tradition must be allowed to shout again so that the self does not erase the soul.

DECLARATION STATEMENT

I must verify the accuracy of the following information as the article's author. Some of the references cited are older, noted explicitly as [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8], [9], [10], [11], [12], [13], [14], [15], [16], [17], [18], [19], [20], [21] and [22]. However, these works remain significant for the current study, as they are pioneering in their fields.

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- **Funding Support:** This article has not been funded by any organizations or agencies. This independence ensures that the research is conducted with objectivity and without any external influence
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- **Author's Contributions:** The authorship of this article is contributed solely.

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