

**A CULTURAL MARXIST STUDY OF  
EVOLVING SOCIAL STRUCTURES OF  
EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT IN  
OSEMAN'S *SOLITAIRE* AND *RADIO SILENCE***

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Education and Entertainment in Oseman's *Solitaire* and *Radio  
Silence***

By

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## ABSTRACT

**Title: A Cultural Marxist Study of Evolving Social Structures of Entertainment and education In Oseman's *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence***

This study engages in a comprehensive examination of the evolving social structures within the realms of entertainment and education in Alice Oseman's *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*, employing a Cultural Marxist framework. Drawing on the works of prominent theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu, Paulo Freire, and Stuart Hall, the research delves into the intricate interplay between cultural elements, power dynamics, and societal structures as portrayed in Oseman's selected novels. The investigation begins by analysing the impact of class structures, drawing inspiration from Adonis and Pollard's exploration of Britain's purported classlessness. Insights from Louis Althusser's theory of Ideological State Apparatuses provide a theoretical foundation for understanding how education and media contribute to the perpetuation of social ideologies. The examination extends to the portrayal of gender roles, leveraging the works of Judith Butler and the critical intersectionality studies of Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall. Utilizing a diverse set of references, including studies on video games by Anderson and Dill, and critical analyses of digital media in political campaigns by Bimber, the study explores the role of contemporary media in shaping and reinforcing societal norms. Additionally, references such as Burgess and Green's work on YouTube and Buckingham's insights into children's learning in the digital age offer perspectives on the influence of new media on cultural practices. The study further investigates the intersection of technology, education, and social justice, referencing scholars like Cole, Kellner, and Deterding. By exploring the historical dimensions of education through Bowles and Gintis and the critical lens of globalization in education by Cole, the research unravelled the difficulties of cultural reproduction and resistance within educational systems. Through a

meticulous analysis of the provided references, this study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on the socio-cultural implications of evolving educational and entertainment structures. It underscores the importance of a Cultural Marxist lens in understanding the dynamics of power, ideology, and resistance within the contemporary cultural landscape, as exemplified through Oseman's literary works.

**Keywords:** *Cultural Marxism, Social Structure, Education, Entertainment*

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## **DEDICATION**

To my father Tahir Farooq and my mother Ruqiya Tahir who have taught me to be unique, determined, consistent and self-assured.

# CHAPTER 1

## 1.INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Chapter Overview

The research background, context, and relevance are provided in this introductory chapter. The chapter explains the study's main goals and aims, emphasising the use of a Cultural Marxist framework to analyse the changing social structures of entertainment and education in Alice Oseman's *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*. The chapter ends with a summary of the thesis framework.

### 1.2 Research Background

In the 21st century, we live in a rapid changing world in which the fields of entertainment and education have experienced nothing short of a revolutionary shift. This seismic upheaval is inextricably tied to the widespread impact of digital technology, which have permeated every part of our lives, leaving no area of our society unaffected. As these digital tendrils spread, the once-clear lines dividing entertainment and education have become increasingly porous, tying together a difficult tapestry of cultural and social connections (Buckingham 23).

This fusion of entertainment and education, informally known as "edutainment," represents greater socioeconomic shifts taking place in the modern day. It represents a paradigm change in which information dissemination, fun activities, and socialisation are no more distinct entities but rather interconnected aspects of our everyday lives (Hotham & Parikka 4). Classic silos that normally compartmentalised our experiences have broken, resulting in a new socio-cultural environment in which the lines between study and pleasure are blurred.

Education, which was normally limited by the boundaries of classic classrooms and established educational institutions, has now broken free. The development of online courses, interactive educational applications, and a wealth of instructional information on platforms such as YouTube has established knowledge acquisition. Individuals now have the freedom to create their own educational paths, free of the constraints of classic

educational institutions (Selwyn 2). This democratisation of education not only changes how we learn, but it also calls into question classic hierarchies of information transmission.

Simultaneously, the entertainment sector has evolved into a multidimensional entity, owing to the spread of digital media outlets. These platforms provide an astounding range of material, from classic forms of entertainment such as films and television shows to the minutiae of everyday life shared by social media stars. In our digital age, entertainment has moved beyond its conventional bounds, infiltrating every nook and crevice of our lives (Choudry & Mejias 56). It is no longer restricted to the silver screen or the cinema, but has become a constant companion, affecting our views, ideals, and goals.

Alice Oseman's novels *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* provide a contemporary lens through which we can explore the intricate relationship between entertainment and education, particularly in the context of advanced technology. By situating these works within the theoretical framework of Raymond Williams' Base and Superstructure, this research has unravelled how technological advancements have historically influenced and reshaped these two domains. This approach not only sheds light on the evolution of entertainment and education but also highlights the dynamic interplay between technological change and cultural practices.

Historically, education and entertainment have undergone significant transformations, often influenced by technological advancements. The printing press revolutionized the accessibility of books, democratizing education and reshaping entertainment through the proliferation of literature. The advent of radio and television further blurred the lines between educational content and entertainment, introducing new modes of learning and leisure activities. In recent decades, the internet and digital technologies have accelerated these changes, creating new platforms for educational and entertainment content that are more interactive and personalized than ever before.

Alice Oseman's literary works, notably her novels *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* serve as devastating reflections of this changing environment in the middle of this enormous shift. Oseman's stories have a tremendous impact on young adult readers, a population that is grappling with the complicated difficulty of modern life. Her characters traverse a world rife with identity, mental health, and social dynamics (Oseman). Furthermore, these

individuals must deal with the enormous effects of the digital era on their education, self-perception, and goals. Oseman's works act as literary mirrors, reflecting the lives and problems of a generation caught up in societal transition.

Cultural Marxism emerges as a relevant and enlightening theoretical framework for investigation among the shifting sands of developing social formations. This conceptual framework, based on Karl Marx's ideas and further extended by intellectuals such as Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse, examines the role of culture, media, and ideology in defining societal norms and power relations (Hall). It contends that prevailing ideologies frequently serve the interests of the ruling class, preserving social hierarchies and exacerbating inequality (Storey).

Cultural Marxism invites us to embark on a journey of critical examination, prompting us to dissect the cultural products and institutions that bolster these prevailing ideologies. When applied to the domains of entertainment and education, this framework offers a unique vantage point from which to scrutinize the intersections between media representations, educational structures, and popular culture. It invites us to question how these elements interact, either challenging or reinforcing the existing social orders that underpin our society (Kellner).

By adopting a Cultural Marxist perspective, this study explored the concealed power dynamics and class struggles that lie beneath the surface of the evolving social structures portrayed in Alice Oseman's novels. It serves as a scholarly exploration of how these works provide a lens through which I can examine the broader societal implications of education, entertainment, and their intricate interplay in the contemporary digital age. In doing so, this research unravelled to shed light on the ways in which Oseman's characters negotiate and resist these evolving structures, offering insights into the potential for cultural transformation and resistance in our ever-changing world. The once-distinct domains of entertainment and education have experienced a fundamental upheaval in the middle of the 21st -century digital revolution, upsetting existing borders and standards. While the blurring of these boundaries is symbolic of modern cultural transformations, it has prompted a slew of serious issues about the repercussions of this convergence on people and society as a whole. The central issue of this research is the necessity to completely

comprehend and critically analyse the emerging social structures in the realms of entertainment and education, as demonstrated by Alice Oseman's books *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*. As the digital age reshapes how we learn and enjoy ourselves, it is critical to investigate how these changes affect individuals' perceptions, beliefs, and socio-cultural experiences. One aspect of this problem is the blending of entertainment and education, often known as "edutainment." This convergence has blurred the borders between these realms, raising concerns about the implications for information transfer, cultural value formation, and societal norm reinforcement. As education becomes more integrated into entertainment platforms and vice versa, it is critical to examine how these changes affect people's access to knowledge, engagement with educational content, and construction of worldviews. Furthermore, the issue involves the impact of this changing terrain on individuals' identities, self-perceptions, and goals, particularly young adults. As the digital age transforms how young people interact with educational and entertainment media, there is an urgent need to investigate how these changes influence their sense of self, social dynamics, and future goals. Given their connection with a youthful and varied readership coping with these challenges, Alice Oseman's novels provide a great literary framework for exploring these themes. This research adopts Cultural Marxism as an analytical framework to examine these varied difficulties. Cultural Marxism, rooted in the critical theories of Karl Marx and subsequently developed by scholars such as Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse, offers a lens through which to examine how dominant ideologies, often serving the interests of the ruling class, shape and perpetuate social hierarchies and inequalities (Hall; Storey). Applying this framework, the research seeks to uncover hidden power dynamics and class struggles within the evolving social structures depicted in Oseman's novels. Given the profound societal implications of the convergence of entertainment and education in the digital age, there exists a significant gap in scholarly inquiry. Existing literature has explored aspects of digital media, education, and culture separately but often fails to comprehensively examine their intricate intersections. Moreover, while Alice Oseman's works have garnered critical and popular acclaim, there is a paucity of research that systematically employs a Cultural Marxist framework to analyse the evolving social structures within her narratives.

The concept of base and superstructure in cultural Marxism finds its roots in the seminal works of Karl Marx, a prominent figure in the field of social theory. Marx's original formulation emphasized the one-way relationship between the economic base and the ideological superstructure, where the base shapes and determines the superstructure. However, over time, scholars such as Raymond Williams and others have contributed to the evolution of this concept, expanding its scope to include cultural aspects, agency, and the difficulty of human experience. This research unravelled the historical development of the concept of base and superstructure, with a particular focus on the selected works of Alice Oseman where we see technology as base of contemporary neo-liberal order and it is shaping many superstructures like entertainment and education.

Raymond Williams' concept of base and superstructure has been a fundamental theory in the field of cultural studies since its introduction in the mid-twentieth century. The theory posits that a society's economic base - its material conditions, means of production, and relations of production - is the foundation upon which its superstructure - its culture, politics, and ideology - is built. Williams argues that the relationship between the base and superstructure is not a one-way street, but rather a mutually reinforcing and dynamic interaction. This theory has had a significant impact on various disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies, as it offers a framework through which to analyse the difficult interplay between material conditions and cultural practices in shaping societies. In this thesis, I will examine the application and relevance of Williams' concept of base and superstructure in contemporary society, with a particular focus on its implications for understanding cultural production and consumption in the age of technology.

The works of Karl Marx had a significant impact on early Cultural Studies. For example, Raymond Williams claimed in one of his first works, *Culture & Society: 1780-1950*, that he is 'engaged in Marxist theory since socialism and communism are presently significant' (Williams 1958: 284). Williams argued and worked on a 'Marxist theory of culture' that recognises 'diversity and complexity', takes account of continuity within change, allows 'for chance and certain limited autonomies', but takes 'the facts of the economic system and its resulting social relations as the guiding string onto which a culture is woven, and by which a culture is to be understood' (Williams 1958: 269). 17 years later,



Williams verified his deep commitment to Marxist thought: he argued that he has 'no real hesitation' to define himself as a historical materialist, if this position means demanding 'the destruction of capitalist society', 'the need to supersede' capitalist society, and 'to go beyond' it's that a socialist society' is established (Williams 1975: 72). He remarked that Marxism that broadens its scope to encompass all of culture is 'a movement to which I find myself joining and am delighted to belong' (Williams 1975: 76).

Edward P. Thompson advocated for a Marxism that emphasised human experience and culture. He defended such Marxism politically against Stalinism (Thompson 1957), intellectually on the left against Althusserian structuralism (Thompson 1978) and against the right-wing responses to Marx headed by philosophers like Leszek Kolakowski (Thompson 1973). Thompson stated that this type of Marxist thought was apparent in Marx's 'writings on alienation, commodity fetishism, and reification; and, second, in his idea of man, in history, perpetually creating over his own nature' (Thompson 1973: 165). Thompson's political and theoretical interventions are based on socialist humanism, a position that is "humanist because it places real men and women at the centre of socialist theory and aspiration, instead of the resounding abstractions - the Party, Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism, the Two Camps, the Vanguard of the Working-Class - so dear to Stalinism." It is socialist because it reaffirms the revolutionary perspectives of Communism, trust in the revolutionary potentialities not just of the Human Race or the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, but of actual men and women. (Thompson 1957:109).

In the 1990s, a debate emerged between Cultural Studies and Critical Political Economy, culminating in an interaction between Nicholas Garnham (1995a, b) and Lawrence Grossberg (1995). Table 1 summarises the key points of criticism. Garnham (1995a: 64) summarises the criticism of Cultural Studies by saying that it refuses 'to think via the implications of its own claim that the forms of subordination and their related cultural practices - to which cultural studies gives analytical priority - are grounded within a capitalist mode of production'.

Raymond Williams' concept of base and superstructure provides a useful framework to understand the role of technology in shaping the superstructure of entertainment and education in present-day society. Technology, in this context, can be

understood as the economic base upon which the superstructure of entertainment and education is built. In other words, the development and evolution of technology - including digital technologies, the internet, and social media platforms - have had a profound impact on how we learn and consume entertainment.

The superstructure of education has been profoundly influenced by technology, with online learning platforms and digital classrooms becoming increasingly prevalent in recent years. The proliferation of technology in education has created new opportunities for students and educators to engage with learning, but it has also raised questions about the impact of technology on the quality of education and the nature of pedagogy. By examining the relationship between technology and education through Williams' base and superstructure framework, I can gain a deeper understanding of how technological advancements have reshaped the way I learn and teach.

Similarly, technology has also transformed the superstructure of entertainment in contemporary society. With the rise of streaming services and social media platforms, entertainment has become increasingly personalized, and the line between producer and consumer has blurred. The base of technology has allowed for the creation of new forms of entertainment, as well as new ways of accessing and consuming media. However, the impact of technology on the entertainment sector has also raised questions about the nature of cultural production and the role of media in shaping our values and beliefs.

This research explores the pivotal role of technology in shaping contemporary economic structures within the domains of entertainment and education, as exemplified in Alice Oseman's novels, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*. The profound impact of technology on education is evident through the advent of online learning platforms, digital textbooks, and virtual classrooms, which have revolutionized classic teaching methods. Oseman's characters navigate these technological advancements, utilizing online forums, video tutorials, and digital resources to pursue their educational endeavours. This portrayal aligns with scholarly research highlighting the transformative effects of technology on education, emphasizing its role in enhancing accessibility, expanding opportunities, and transforming the organization and delivery of knowledge (Smith, 48). Furthermore, technology has reshaped the entertainment sector, providing platforms for content creation, distribution,

and consumption. Oseman's characters actively engage with digital media, streaming services, and social media platforms, reflecting the contemporary reality of an interconnected and digitized entertainment experience. Scholarly source recognizes the economic impact of technology on the entertainment sector, acknowledging the emergence of new economic models, changes in revenue streams, and the influence of technology companies in shaping the entertainment ecosystem (Jenkins). By examining the evolving social structures of entertainment and education in Oseman's novels, this research demonstrates that technology plays a central role in shaping the contemporary economic landscape, presenting both opportunities and challenges for individuals and industries alike.

The relationship between a neoliberal economy and technology is difficult. While technology can serve as a catalyst for economic development and the dissemination of neoliberal policies, it can also amplify existing inequalities and raise ethical concerns. Understanding this relationship requires analysing the interplay between technological advancements, economic systems, and their societal implications.

Alice Oseman's *Solitaire* is a compelling example of how technology, as the economic base, shapes the superstructure of entertainment in contemporary society. The novel is set in a high school and follows the story of a teenager named Tori Spring, who is navigating the challenges of growing up in a digital world. Through the character of Tori, Oseman explores the impact of technology on the nature of entertainment, particularly in the realm of online gaming and social media.

One way in which *Solitaire* represents technology as Williams' base is through its depiction of the online game that gives the novel its title. *Solitaire*, in the novel, is a game that has evolved from its original form to become an immersive, online experience with a dedicated community of players. This evolution of the game is a clear example of how technology has transformed the base of entertainment, creating new forms of play that were previously impossible.

Furthermore, the novel explores the relationship between technology and the superstructure of entertainment through its depiction of social media platforms. Throughout the novel, characters use social media to communicate, connect, and express

themselves, highlighting the ways in which technology has reshaped the nature of interpersonal relationships and self-expression. Oseman also explores the darker side of social media, including cyberbullying and the pressures of maintaining a curated online persona, reflecting on the impact of technology on mental health and well-being.

To sum up, *Solitaire* by Alice Oseman serves as a compelling example of how technology can be understood as the economic base that shapes the superstructure of entertainment in contemporary society. Through its depiction of online gaming and social media platforms, the novel explores the difficult and evolving relationship between technology and the nature of entertainment, highlighting both its potential and its pitfalls.

Alice Oseman's *Radio Silence* is a young adult novel that explores themes of identity, friendship, and the impact of technology on modern society. The novel portrays the ways in which technology has evolved and shaped the superstructure of education.

Raymond Williams, a British cultural critic, argued that the base of society - its economic and material structures - influences the superstructure of society, including its culture and ideology. In *Radio Silence* technology is represented as the base that drives the evolution of the superstructure of education. The novel's protagonist, Frances, is a high-achieving student who is focused on her academic future. She is also a fan of a popular podcast called "University City," which explores the experiences of students at a prestigious university. Through her interactions with the podcast's creator, Aled, Frances discovers that the podcast is not just a source of entertainment, but a way for Aled to cope with his own struggles with mental health and his complicated relationship with his family.

Aled's use of technology - specifically, the podcast - becomes a way for him to subvert the classic structures of education and create his own space for self-expression and creativity. As Frances becomes more involved in the podcast and Aled's life, she begins to question the value of classic academic success and the ways in which technology can be used to create alternative forms of education. Through the character of Aled *Radio Silence* portrays technology as a tool that can be used to challenge and reshape the superstructure of education. Aled's podcast represents a new form of education that is not bound by classic academic structures, but instead allows for creative expression and community building. Frances's journey in the novel ultimately leads her to question the rigid expectations placed

on students and to embrace the possibilities of technology as a means of shaping new forms of education and self-expression.

By applying Williams' base and superstructure framework to the role of technology in entertainment and education, I can gain a deeper understanding of how technological advancements in Alice Oseman's works have reshaped these industries, as well as the broader cultural implications of these changes.

### **1.3 Thesis Statement**

Through a nuanced analysis of Alice Oseman's novels *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* within the theoretical framework of Base and Superstructure by Raymond Williams, this research study argues that the portrayal of entertainment and education in these works reflects a significant evolution due to the impact of advanced technology.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

- To analyse the evolving base of technology, including digital media and communication technologies and their impact on the superstructures of entertainment and education, as depicted in Alice Oseman's novels *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*.
- To explore the agency of characters in Alice Oseman's novels, specifically their contestation, resistance, or conformity to dominant ideologies and cultural practices related to technology, education, and entertainment as presented in the novels.
- To examine the intersection of historical and social contexts, including factors such as class, race, gender, and sexuality, with the evolving base of technology in Alice Oseman's novels.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- 1 How does the evolving base of technology, including digital media and communication technologies shape the superstructures of entertainment and education in Alice Oseman's selected novels, and how are these changes mediated by cultural practices and ideologies?
- 2 In what ways, the characters in Alice Oseman's novels contest, resist, or conform to dominant ideologies and cultural practices related to technology, education, and

entertainment as represented in the novels, and how does this agency influence the evolving base and superstructure dynamics in the novels?

- 3 How do historical and social contexts, including class, race, gender, and sexuality, intersect with the evolving base of technology and its impact on the superstructures of entertainment and education in Alice Oseman's novels?

## 1.6 Significance of the Research

In today's society, understanding the changing social systems of entertainment and education is critical. Our views, values, and identities are shaped by the media we consume, the education we acquire, and the cultural narratives we participate with (Fuchs, 2). As a result, determining the ideological underpinnings that impact individuals and communities requires rigorous research of how these areas interact.

Furthermore, with a youthful and varied readership, Alice Oseman's novels give a unique prism through which to evaluate these concerns. Because of Oseman's ability to capture the zeitgeist of modern young culture, her writings are useful texts for exploration, as they resonate with the very demographic witnessing the transforming consequences of the digital era and altering educational paradigms (O'Donnell,32).

This study, therefore, holds the potential to contribute to broader discussions surrounding cultural change, education reform, and media representation in the modern age. By analysing Oseman's novels through a Cultural Marxist lens, I aim to offer critical insights into the evolving social structures of entertainment and education and their implications for contemporary society.

By addressing the identified research gap, the research can contribute to the existing literature by providing a novel and nuanced perspective on Oseman's works. It can add to the limited body of research that specifically examines the portrayal of changes in entertainment and education due to technology in Oseman's novels, thus filling a gap in the current scholarly discourse. The research can bridge the fields of literature and technology by exploring how Oseman's fictional works depict the impact of technology on entertainment and education. It can provide valuable insights into how technology is represented in young adult literature and contribute to the interdisciplinary understanding of the dynamic relationship between literature, technology, and society. Oseman's novels

are known for their portrayal of relevant societal issues, and technology is a significant force shaping the lives of young people today. By analysing Oseman's works through the lens of base and superstructure, this research can shed light on how these changes in technology are represented in the fictional world and how they impact entertainment and education, reflecting broader contemporary societal changes. Research findings can have practical implications for entertainment and education practices, particularly for young adults. By understanding how technology is portrayed in Oseman's novels and its impact on entertainment and education, this research can provide insights for educators, policymakers, and practitioners in shaping educational and entertainment practices that align with the evolving technological landscape. The research can contribute to the field of literary criticism by offering a fresh perspective on the analysis of Alice Oseman's works. By using the framework of base and superstructure, it can provide a unique lens to interpret the representation of technology, entertainment, and education in Oseman's novels, enriching the scholarly discourse on her literary works.

By examining the evolution of the structure of entertainment and education in relation to the development of new modes of technology has significant research significance as it informs our understanding of the transformative effects of technology, helps identify opportunities and challenges, informs practice, addresses societal implications, and prepares individuals and institutions for future developments.

## **1.7 Study Rationale**

The study of emerging social structures in entertainment and education, particularly as impacted by technical advances, cultural practices, and ideologies, is critical in the modern period as the 21st century has seen an extraordinary digital upheaval, reshaping the pillars of entertainment and education. The ubiquitous impact of digital media and communication technology has resulted in a confluence of these historically different realms, which is sometimes referred to as "edutainment." This convergence reflects wider societal changes in which information transmission, fun activities, and socialisation are inextricably linked. It is crucial to explore how this convergence affects how people connect with and comprehend these critical parts of modern life.

Despite the tremendous influence of these changes on society, there is a significant gap in academic literature that examines how expanding technology underpinnings alter the superstructures of entertainment and education within literary tales. As a mirror of society and culture, literature plays an important role in highlighting the subtle ways in which individuals manage these changes. *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* by Alice Oseman are good examples of fiction that explores the junction of technology, education, and entertainment. Oseman's works give a chance to bridge this gap by providing difficult tales that depict the contemporary lived experiences of young adults dealing with these changes.

Cultural practices and beliefs are critical in mitigating the effects of technology on entertainment and education. Individuals' views, attitudes, and behaviours are shaped by cultural aspects, which influence their involvement with digital media as well as their conceptions of entertainment and education. A thorough investigation must dive into how cultural practices and ideas both reflect and affect the growing technological foundation and superstructures within these domains.

Literary characters' agency within narratives provides a unique prism through which to investigate contestation, resistance, or conformance to prevailing ideologies and cultural practices. The actions and decisions of the characters represent the choices people make when navigating the changing world of entertainment and education in the digital era. Understanding character agency in this context can help us understand how people impact and are influenced by these dynamic social systems.

Furthermore, the convergence of historical and social factors, such as class, racism, gender, and sexuality, complicates the growing foundation of technology and its influence on entertainment and education. Various contextual components are important determinants in shaping people's experiences and perceptions in various domains. Exploring how these elements interact with technology in literary tales might provide a more nuanced understanding of the larger societal ramifications of these advances.

This study aims to make major contributions on several fronts. It seeks to add to the current body of knowledge by providing a comprehensive examination of the changing societal systems of entertainment and education as shown in Oseman's books. This research contributes to the discourse on cultural change and resistance by employing a Cultural



Marxist framework to provide a fresh viewpoint on the power dynamics and class conflicts inherent in these domains. This research also has practical consequences for educators, politicians, and cultural critics since it provides insights into the possibility for reform, equity, and social change in entertainment and education.

Finally, the study's justification stems from the urgent necessity to investigate the dynamic interplay between technology, culture, and societal institutions in the worlds of entertainment and education. This study aims to provide insight on the subtle links between growing technology bases and superstructures, character agency, and environmental effects by analysing Alice Oseman's works. In doing so, it hopes to contribute to a better understanding of modern societal shifts, with consequences for intellectual debate as well as practical applications in entertainment and education.

## 1.8 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on the evolution of social institutions in the realms of entertainment and education as shown in Alice Oseman's books *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*. The major emphasis is on the impact of the growing technological foundation, which includes digital media and communication technologies, on the superstructures of education and amusement inside these literary works.

This research spans the modern age, especially the 21st century, during which considerable technical breakthroughs and cultural upheavals have resulted in the confluence of entertainment and education.

The geographical scope of the study is not limited to a single geographical location. It recognises the universality of concerns concerning the influence of technology on entertainment and education, as well as the themes discussed in Oseman's novels, which are important across many cultural and geographical settings.

Alice Oseman's books *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* serve as key literary references for study. These books are extensively investigated to see how technology, cultural practices, and ideologies intertwine inside the narratives, influencing the lives of the characters as well as the changing societal systems of entertainment and education.

The technical scope involves a look at several types of technology, such as digital media, social media, communication technologies, and digital platforms. These technologies are investigated in relation to how they shape entertainment and education, as well as how they are mediated by cultural practices and ideas.

The study acknowledges that cultural practices and ideas about technology, education, and entertainment differ amongst people and groups. It tries to examine both dominant and subversive cultural practices and ideas shown in the novels, as well as how they effect the characters' agency within changing social systems.

Character agency in novels is a major focus of this research. It investigates how characters challenge, reject, or comply to prevailing beliefs and cultural practices in technology, education, and entertainment. The research also investigates how character agency affects the dynamics of the emerging technological base and superstructures in the tales.

The research takes an intersectional approach, looking at how historical and social conditions, such as class, race, gender, and sexuality, connect with the changing technological basis. It analyses the intricate links between these contextual components and their impact on education and enjoyment as described in the novels.

While providing an in-depth analysis of the topics in the books *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* and their significance to the larger cultural environment, it is critical to recognise the limits. The results may not be immediately applicable to all literary works or real-world scenarios. The study is restricted to the literary sources and themes under consideration. In summary, the scope of this study includes a thorough examination of Alice Oseman's books' depictions of emerging societal structures in the fields of entertainment and education. It explores the effect of technology, cultural practices, ideologies, character agency, and contextual elements, while acknowledging the modern attention on these literary works.

## **1.9 Research Plan**

This research is divided into five chapters. The first chapter gives direction to the research, and it attempts to introduce Raymond Williams's ideas about Base and Superstructure in cultural Marxism. It goes on to make an argument for analyzing the selected novels through the lens of Raymond Williams's concept of Base and

Superstructures. It includes introduction, thesis statement, research questions, and delimitation. Collectively, all this gives direction to this research.

Cultural Marxism is a broad lens through which to examine literature because it involves overlapping ideas from various fields such as anthropology, sociology, economics, and literature. As a result, it must be thoroughly investigated and reflected in the literature review, which is the second chapter of this research plan. The information obtained from various secondary sources related to this research is discussed in Chapter 2 to bridge the gaps between different ideas.

The research methodology used for this study is discussed in Chapter 3, which also provides guidance for a methodology that would be most effective in tracing the cultural Marxist perspective within the novel. The textual analysis of *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* is in Chapter 4. The novels' text is examined to determine whether the information provided by Alice Osman corresponds to the actual information for this area and to evaluate the extent to which social evolution is manifested through these works. The final chapter of this research plan, Chapter 5, summarizes the findings of the textual analysis and the findings of this study. It presents the author's underlying facts through the concept of base and superstructure of Raymond Williams.

### **1.10 Delimitation**

The study is limited to the analysis of Alice Oseman's *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* which has been examined through the lens of Raymond Williams' interpretation of Marxist concepts of Base and Superstructures to understand the social evolution in sectors like entertainment and education.

## Chapter 2

### 2.LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is critical to this study because it provides a thorough analysis of current scholarship, ideas, and research that are relevant to the themes and topics under consideration. It serves two functions: it provides background and informs our understanding of Alice Oseman's books *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*

One of the key goals of the literature review is to offer context for our research. It situates our research within a larger academic conversation on the intersection of technology, education, entertainment, culture, and character agency in literary tales. I get a historical, theoretical, and empirical framework for our research topics and technique by reviewing past work in these areas. This contextualization is critical for comprehending the changing dynamics of entertainment and education shown in Oseman's works.

The literature review acts as a repository of knowledge that informs our interpretation of the books. It introduces us to pertinent theoretical frameworks, techniques, and analytical approaches used in earlier literature studies of technology-mediated entertainment and education. This foundation of knowledge allows us to perform a comprehensive and nuanced examination of the books, allowing us to better understand how technology, culture, and ideology intertwine within the tales.

In essence, the literature evaluation serves as the conceptual foundation for our research. It deepens our knowledge of the difficult interactions between technology, culture, education, and entertainment, while also establishing our study as an important contribution to the continuing scholarly discourse. I have looked at the historical development of technology in entertainment and education, the convergence of these domains, the influence of cultural practices and ideologies, character agency in literature, and the role of intersectionality in shaping technology's impact in the following sections of this chapter. This investigation lays the framework for a thorough examination of Alice Oseman's works in the light of these topics.

## 2.1 Technology in Entertainment and Education

The evolution of entertainment and education in the 21st century is inextricably tied to the expanding technological foundation. This section dives into the evolution of technology in education throughout history, the rise of digital media, and the tremendous influence of digital technology on both entertainment and education. It emphasises the critical role that technology has had in defining the present landscape of various fields.

Technology integration in education is not a new occurrence. Throughout history, technical advancements have played an important role in transforming the way information is transmitted and gained. Technology has consistently influenced pedagogy, from Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the printing press in the 15th century, which revolutionised the dissemination of written information (Eisenstein 6), to the introduction of the blackboard in the 19th century, which transformed classroom instruction (Smith 7).

The mid-twentieth century witnessed the emergence of educational television, highlighted by programmes such as "Sesame Street," which attempted to make learning more entertaining and accessible (Anderson & Dill 12). This was an early merger of teaching and entertainment, laying the basis for the blurred lines seen in modern "edutainment."

The late-twentieth-century digital revolution ushered in a new era of education. Personal computers and the internet's spread broadened access to information and learning possibilities outside the constraints of classic schools (Selwyn 45). Online courses, educational applications, and free educational materials have established education by allowing students to personalise their learning experiences (Dabbagh & Kitsantas 5).

Digital media not only increased access but also changed educational techniques. Blended learning, which blends conventional classroom education with online components, has grown in popularity (Garrison & Kanuka 64). Furthermore, technology like Learning Management Systems (LMS) have transformed how instructional information is organised and provided (Rovai 9).

Simultaneously, digital technology altered the entertainment sector. The internet and streaming platforms delivered entertainment material straight to customers' screens, causing old distribution mechanisms to crumble (Jenkins 8). This digitization of

entertainment enabled unprecedented interaction, allowing viewers to interact with material, join online groups, and even co-create content (Burgess & Green 98).

Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram have emerged as effective tools for content creators to reach worldwide audiences, blurring the distinction between creators and consumers (Burgess & Green 87). Reality TV programmes, video game live streams, and influencer culture are examples of how digital technology has broadened entertainment options and enabled viewers to actively participate in content consumption (Couldry & Mejias19).

To summarise, the historical development of technology in education and the introduction of digital media have reshaped the manner in which knowledge and entertainment are acquired and consumed. These innovations established the groundwork for the convergence of entertainment and education, reflecting the present era's difficult interaction of technology, culture, and societal systems.

## **2.2 Convergence of Entertainment and Education**

The fusion of entertainment and education, dubbed "edutainment," marks a fundamental shift in how people interact with information, learning, and fun. This section defines edutainment and includes instances of its application in various media types.

The phrase "edutainment" is a combination of the word's "education" and "entertainment," indicating the merging of these normally different areas. Edutainment refers to information and events that attempt to educate while entertaining the audience. It blurs the lines between learning and fun, acknowledging that participation and enjoyment may improve learning (Steinkuehler & Duncan 6).

Edutainment aims to improve the attractiveness, accessibility, and engagement of educational information by including aspects of entertainment such as narrative, interactivity, and multimedia. This strategy uses entertainment's intrinsic appeal to stimulate curiosity, motivation, and active engagement in learning (Gee 8).

Edutainment takes many forms in the media, appealing to a wide range of consumers and learning purposes. Edutainment on television has a long history, with programmes like "Sesame Street" pioneering the category. To engage young viewers in

learning experiences, these programmes blend fascinating tales, colourful characters, and instructional information (Anderson & Dill). Video games have evolved as an effective edutainment medium. "Minecraft" and "Kerbal Space Programme" games, for example, inspire players to explore, problem-solve, and learn while immersed in dynamic digital settings (Steinkuehler & Duncan). Mobile applications provide a diverse range of edutainment alternatives for students of all ages. Language-learning applications, arithmetic games, and interactive scientific simulations are all intended to make learning fun and easy (Prensky). Edutainment websites and internet platforms provide a multitude of materials. Khan Academy, for example, combines video courses with gamified components to engage kids in math and science instruction (Khan Academy 20). Serious games go beyond sheer amusement to provide particular instructional aims. They are used to transmit vital information and skills in domains such as healthcare training, disaster preparedness, and military education (Deterding et al.11). Emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) show enormous potential for immersive edutainment experiences. These technologies immerse students in virtual worlds where they may tour historical locations, perform scientific experiments, and simulate complicated scenarios (Tao & Liu20). In each of these examples, edutainment leverages the engaging qualities of entertainment to facilitate learning. It recognizes that effective education need not be divorced from enjoyment and entertainment, aligning with the broader societal shift toward more holistic and engaging educational experiences.

### **2.3 Cultural Practices and Ideologies in Entertainment and Education**

This section digs into the tangled web of cultural practices, ideologies, and the realms of technology-mediated entertainment and education. It investigates how cultural practices impact technology usage, investigates the ideological underpinnings of media representations and content, and evaluates the function of media in sustaining or challenging cultural norms and values.

Cultural practices have a significant impact on how technology is accepted and used in educational and entertainment settings. These practices include a society's conventions, traditions, and habits, which influence people's attitudes and behaviours towards technology (Selwyn14).

Cultural practices impact how students approach digital learning tools in school. Cultures that value communal learning, for example, may encourage collaborative online activities, whereas cultures that value individual accomplishment may emphasise personalised online learning experiences (Kim et al. 15). Acceptance of online educational platforms and digital pedagogies can also be influenced by cultural views towards authority and hierarchy (Selwyn 14).

Similarly, cultural practices influence entertainment tastes and digital media involvement. Cultural norms can influence the sorts of material consumed, the platforms used, and the ways in which people participate in online communities (Couldry & Mejias19). The development and consumption of digital entertainment is influenced by cultural preferences for storytelling techniques, humour, and aesthetics (Burgess & Green 8).

Media images and content are frequently infused with underlying ideologies that reflect and sustain society values and power systems. These beliefs can be subtle but powerful in technology-mediated entertainment and education (Hall17).

Ideological statements regarding knowledge, authority, and social hierarchies may be conveyed through educational curriculum. By presenting historical narratives, viewpoints, and marginalised voices in different ways, digital instructional resources may either reinforce or challenge current power relations (Storey, 2018). The selection of whose tales are presented and how they are depicted has the potential to reinforce or break ideological norms (Kellner 20).

Ideologies are ingrained in storylines, characters, and themes in entertainment. Stereotypes, prejudices, and cultural norms can be reinforced through media portrayals, altering viewers' perceptions and attitudes (Hartmann & Husband 74). Conversely, entertainment media can also challenge dominant ideologies by presenting alternative narratives and perspectives (Couldry & Mejias 29). As a powerful cultural force, the media has a critical role in either preserving or opposing dominant cultural norms and values. Media can function as a channel for the spread and negotiation of cultural ideas and practices in technology-mediated entertainment and education (Buckingham19).



Digital media in education may enhance or challenge cultural norms linked to gender, race, and socioeconomic position. Online educational information, for example, may either repeat prejudices or encourage inclusive and varied portrayals (Selwyn14). Educational media may either stimulate critical thinking and reflection on cultural practices or reinforce compliance to existing standards (Kellner 28).

Media material in entertainment may be a location of cultural conflict and negotiation. It has the potential to undermine hegemonic ideas by exposing alternative perspectives and fostering social change (Couldry & Mejias, 2). On the other hand, technology may be a weapon for cultural homogeneity, since multinational media corporations spread standardised information aligned with prevailing cultural norms (Huhtamo & Parikka 21).

A review by Buckingham and Willet (2013) examines the changing landscapes of media and its educational impacts on youth. They argue that the integration of digital media into daily life has reshaped both formal and informal education, making learning more interactive and accessible. This transformation aligns with Oseman's portrayal of education in her novels, where characters often navigate digital platforms to augment their learning experiences.

From a cultural studies viewpoint, Kellner (1995) emphasizes the role of media in shaping youth identity and culture. This framework can be applied to understand how Oseman's characters in "Solitaire" and "Radio Silence" use entertainment as a means of self-expression and community building. The novels reflect a broader cultural shift where digital media becomes a crucial part of youth culture, influencing their educational journeys and social interactions.

Research by Livingstone and Sefton-Green (2016) explores the implications of media-rich environments on youth development. They highlight that the omnipresence of media provides both opportunities and challenges for young people. In Oseman's work, the characters' engagement with media highlights the complexities of growing up in a digital age, where entertainment and education are increasingly intertwined. This mirrors the real-world scenario where media literacy becomes essential for navigating contemporary societal landscapes

## 2.4 Character Agency and Resistance in Literature

This section examines the role of character agency in literature, particularly in the context of technology-mediated entertainment and education. It investigates how character agency functions as a narrative element, examines characters in literary works who reject or submit to dominant ideas, and evaluates the larger implications of character agency in depicting societal development and evolution.

Character agency is a key narrative aspect in literature that encompasses characters' ability to make decisions, conduct acts, and influence the plot (Smith 68). Authors portray ideas, conflicts, and the human experience via the agency of characters. Character agency becomes a critical lens through which to study emerging social systems in technology-mediated entertainment and education narratives.

Authors frequently utilise characters to explore the influence of technology on entertainment and education. These characters traverse the digital age's intricacies, making decisions that show their agency in reaction to technical breakthroughs and societal transformations. Buckingham argues that character agency may disclose how individuals adapt, resist, or comply to the shifting dynamics of entertainment and education in the digital era.

Characters in literature are commonly used to represent ideological perspectives in society. They may adhere to or challenge dominant notions, allowing readers to gain insight into the power dynamics and cultural norms at work (Storey 218).

Characters that challenge conventional views are frequently used as change agents and societal critics. They question established conventions, challenge the status quo, and, in certain situations, drive transformation (Kellner18). These characters are social disruptors, shining attention on the contradictions between conventional and developing cultural practices in technology-mediated entertainment and education.

Characters who subscribe to prevailing views, on the other hand, may symbolise the majority or those who benefit from the current system. Their actions and decisions can underscore the entrenched nature of certain societal norms and the challenges faced by those who seek change (Couldry & Mejias 209).

In literature, character agency is a potent instrument for depicting society development and transition. Characters' narratives can give varied perspectives on emerging social systems when they exercise agency in response to technical and cultural advances (Hartmann & Husband<sup>74</sup>).

Characters that oppose established views might be viewed as social development agents. Their efforts and successes demonstrate the possibility of change in the face of opposition. Their stories highlight the significance of individual agency in questioning and modifying society conventions, giving readers a sense of agency in their own lives (Gee 3).

Characters who subscribe to established views, on the other hand, might highlight the limits and complications of societal transformation. Their stories show the difficulties that people confront when attempting to balance their agency with societal and institutional forces. Their stories act as cautionary tales or mirrors for readers to reflect on their own responsibilities in upholding or questioning prevailing conventions (Anderson & Dill 2).

Finally, character agency is an important narrative element in literature, providing a window into the changing social systems of technology-mediated entertainment and education. Characters that oppose or subscribe to dominant beliefs are required to show the difficult processes of societal change and transition in the digital era.

## **2.5 Intersectionality and Technology**

This section delves into the tangled web between technology and intersectionality in the contexts of entertainment and education. It investigates how historical and social contexts intersect with technology, investigates the impact of technology on various dimensions of identity, such as class, race, gender, and sexuality, and emphasises the importance of intersectionality as a framework for understanding difficult societal dynamics.

Technology does not exist in a vacuum, but is inextricably linked to historical and social situations. These environments influence technology development, acceptance, and use (Selwyn<sup>14</sup>). Understanding this connection is crucial for understanding how social systems in entertainment and education are changing.

The course of scientific progress is influenced by historical settings. For example, colonialism and imperialism have had long-lasting repercussions on global technological distribution and access (Bimber20). Inequalities in education and infrastructure, for example, continue to limit technology's access and effect (Gurumurthy & Madon17).

Social settings also influence how people interact with technology. Cultural norms, economic situations, and social hierarchies all determine who gains and who gets marginalised by technology (Couldry & Mejias 209). Social factors like digital literacy, access to technology, and economic resources shape individuals' interactions with technology in the realms of entertainment and education (Buckingham 29).

Technology has far-reaching ramifications for several aspects of identity, such as class, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. These identities connect in various ways with technology, resulting in both possibilities and difficulties (Crenshaw 98). Class differences in entertainment and education can be exacerbated or alleviated by technology. Lower-income people may have limited access to educational materials and digital media platforms, reinforcing inequities (Selwyn204). Online learning and content production, on the other hand, can provide economic prospects and social mobility to marginalised communities (Gurumurthy & Madon17). As evidenced by biases in algorithms and unequal access to digital resources (Noble218), technology can perpetuate racial inequality. It may also provide marginalised voices a forum to confront racial stereotypes and fight for social justice (Burgess & Green 8). Gender norms can be reinforced or challenged through technology-mediated entertainment and education. Video games, for example, have been chastised for propagating gender stereotypes (Beasley & Standley 2), but online communities have encouraged women to participate in gaming and content production (Kafai & Burke 24). Technology has created new opportunities for LGBTQ+ visibility and community development (Losh12). It has, however, been a site for harassment and discrimination against LGBTQ+ people (Marwick & Caplan18).

Kimberlé Crenshaw's notion of intersectionality provides a useful framework for analysing the intricate interaction of different identities and power systems in the context of technology-mediated entertainment and education. It acknowledges that people are

subject to overlapping systems of oppression and privilege, and that these intersections impact their lived experiences (Crenshaw).

Intersectionality enables a more nuanced examination of how technology impacts individuals differently depending on their intersecting identities (Cho et al. 73). For example, the intersections of racism, transphobia, and gender identity may impact a Black transgender woman's experience with technology.

Researchers may more effectively explore how technology both sustains and disrupts current social inequalities by using intersectionality as a lens. It contributes to the understanding of how people navigate and negotiate their identities in technology-mediated situations, offering insight on the changing social structures in entertainment and education. In conclusion, the interaction of technology with historical and social circumstances, as well as its influence on many dimensions of identity, is a rich and diverse subject of research. Understanding the connections of entertainment and education in the digital era is critical for understanding the shifting dynamics of entertainment and education.

## **2.6 Raymond Williams and Cultural Materialism**

Raymond Williams, a prominent British cultural theorist and writer, has made significant contributions to the field of cultural studies through his concept of Cultural Materialism. This theoretical framework has been widely discussed and debated in scholarly literature, with scholars examining its key ideas, applications, and implications. This literature review provides an overview of existing research on Raymond Williams and Cultural Materialism, highlighting key insights and debates in the field.

Williams' concept of Cultural Materialism centers on the relationship between culture, society, and material conditions. According to Williams, culture is not an abstract or autonomous entity, but is rooted in the material realities of social and economic life (Williams 65). Williams argued that culture is shaped by the social, economic, and political conditions of a society, and it reflects the power dynamics, class struggles, and historical changes of a given time and place. Cultural Materialism, as a theoretical framework, seeks to analyse how culture is produced, circulated, and consumed within specific social and historical contexts.

One of the key areas of research on Williams' Cultural Materialism is its application to literature and literary studies. Scholars have explored how Cultural Materialism can offer new insights into the analysis of literary texts. For example, in his seminal work "Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society," Williams examines the changing meanings of words over time and how they reflect shifts in social and cultural contexts (Williams 76). This approach has been influential in literary studies, as scholars have used Cultural Materialism to analyse how literature reflects and responds to social, political, and economic changes.

Moreover, Williams' emphasis on the relationship between culture and society has also led to discussions on the role of ideology in shaping cultural production and consumption. Scholars have examined how Cultural Materialism can shed light on how ideology operates in culture, how it is disseminated through media, and how it influences individuals and groups in society. For example, in his work "Marxism and Literature," Williams explores how literature can serve as a site of ideological contestation, where dominant and resistant ideologies are negotiated and contested (Williams). This perspective has been influential in understanding how cultural artifacts, such as literature, are not neutral, but are imbued with ideological meanings and functions.

However, there have been debates and criticisms of Cultural Materialism as well. Some scholars have argued that Williams' framework neglects the agency and creativity of individuals in the production and consumption of culture. They contend that Cultural Materialism can be deterministic and reductionist, reducing culture to mere reflections of material conditions (Fowler 6). Others have argued that Cultural Materialism lacks a coherent methodology and is overly broad, making it difficult to apply consistently in empirical research (Barker 76). Despite these criticisms, Cultural Materialism continues to be a significant and influential framework in cultural studies, providing a foundation for analyzing the difficult relationship between culture, society, and material conditions.

In conclusion, Raymond Williams' concept of Cultural Materialism has been a significant and influential theoretical framework in cultural studies. Scholars have explored its applications in various areas, including literature, media, and ideology, while also engaging in debates and criticisms. Williams' emphasis on the relationship between culture

and material conditions has provided insights into how culture is shaped and how it shapes society. However, further research is needed to refine and expand upon the ideas of Cultural Materialism and its applications in diverse cultural contexts.

## **2.7 Cultural Marxist Perspective**

In recent years, there has been a growing interest among scholars in understanding cultural shifts and the underlying reasons behind them. The exploration of dualistic concepts such as society/space, nature/culture, and structure/agency from the perspective of rural studies has gained traction (Clope). Within literary circles, there is an ongoing debate regarding the drivers of cultural change in human societies, as discussed by Racheal Fest in her article. Fest presents two arguments to explain the cultural shift.

First, Fest argues that the non-unifying vision of leftists, who view the world as distorted and broken, has contributed to the cultural shift. The conception of hyper-reality and the absence of absolute truth have led to societal chaos and a lack of order (Woolley). This perspective posits that the current state of the world is a result of the fragmented ideologies and perspectives propagated by the leftists.

On the other hand, Fest also includes the viewpoint of leftists who argue that the critical, historical, and imaginative thought processes of human beings are responsible for the present evolutionary stage of society. According to this perspective, society cannot remain stagnant and is always in transition due to the constant evolution of ideas and perspectives (Fest). This suggests that the dynamic nature of human thought processes contributes to the ongoing cultural shift.

Quinn Slobodian's scholarly work also delves into the concept of cultural turn, where he draws parallels between conservative rightists and post-Marxist leftists. Slobodian views the development of human society as an evolutionary process, wherein human perspectives are shaped by culture that adapts over time through social learning and selective evolutionary processes. This adaptive attitude of humans towards culture creates contrast between different cultures and societies.

Friedrich Hayek's ideas on collective knowledge and practices are also significant in understanding cultural evolution. Hayek argues that market rules possess a social intelligence that surpasses human reason, and the self-regulation of the market is essential

for the operation of cultural evolution. Hayek's concept of "rules" as enabling individuals to freely pursue their interests and engage in exchanges is central to his theory of cultural evolution.

Social institutions, such as entertainment and education, play a critical role in shaping society and have undergone significant changes throughout history. Understanding the evolution of these institutions is crucial in comprehending the dynamics of cultural, social, and economic transformations. This literature review provides an overview of existing research on the evolution of social institutions, with a prime focus on entertainment and education, and highlights key insights and debates in the field.

The evolution of entertainment as a social institution has been extensively examined in scholarly literature. Historically, entertainment has served as a means of socialization, community building, and cultural expression (Dant 5). For example, in his work *The Forms of Capital*, Pierre Bourdieu discusses how entertainment practices, such as theater, music, and sports, can function as a form of cultural capital, shaping social hierarchies and identities (Bourdieu 186).

The advent of new technologies, such as television, cinema, and the internet, has revolutionized the landscape of entertainment, transforming how it is produced, consumed, and experienced (Hesmondhalgh 3). The rise of digital media platforms and social media has disrupted classic modes of entertainment, blurring the boundaries between producers and consumers, and creating new forms of participatory culture (Jenkins 26).

Furthermore, the evolution of entertainment has been influenced by broader societal changes, such as globalization, cultural diversity, and shifting values. For instance, the increasing diversity in society has led to a demand for more inclusive and representative entertainment content, challenging classic norms and narratives (Gray 210). Moreover, the rapid globalization of media and entertainment industries has led to the spread of transnational cultural products, influencing local entertainment practices and fostering cross-cultural exchanges (Miller 21).

In parallel, the evolution of education as a social institution has also been a subject of extensive research. Education has evolved from classic modes of instruction, such as apprenticeships and religious teachings, to formalized systems of schooling (Dale 86). The



emergence of public education systems in the 19th century has played a crucial role in shaping modern societies, as education became more accessible and compulsory (Tyack 8).

The evolution of education has been impacted by various factors, including technological advancements, changing societal needs, and educational philosophies. For example, the integration of technology in education, such as the use of computers, internet, and e-learning platforms, has transformed how education is delivered, making it more accessible, flexible, and interactive (Selwyn 21). Additionally, the changing needs of society, such as the demand for specialized skills and lifelong learning, have influenced the evolution of education, with a focus on vocational education, professional development, and lifelong learning (Field 26).

Moreover, the evolution of education has been shaped by different educational philosophies and pedagogical approaches. For instance, progressive educational theories, such as constructivism and experiential learning, have influenced the shift towards learner-centered and participatory approaches in education (Dewey 87). Similarly, critical pedagogy has emphasized the importance of education as a tool for social change and empowerment, challenging classic hierarchical models of education (Freire 56).

However, there are debates and challenges associated with the evolution of entertainment and education as social institutions. Scholars have discussed issues such as the digital divide, access disparities, and the commodification of entertainment and education, raising questions about equity, inclusion, and ethical implications (Couldry 2012; Giroux 2011). Moreover, debates around the role of entertainment and education in perpetuating or challenging social inequalities, cultural norms, and power dynamics continue to be topics of scholarly inquiry.

## **2.8 Raymond Williams' Concepts and Fictional Works**

Raymond Williams, a renowned cultural critic and Marxist theorist, has made significant contributions to the field of literary and cultural studies. His concepts and ideas have been widely applied to the analysis of fictional works, shedding light on the ways in which literature reflects and shapes society, culture, and politics.

Scholars have used this concept to analyze how fictional works capture the prevailing emotions, values, and sensibilities of a specific time and place, and how they reflect social and cultural changes. In her article "What Is a Western? Structures of Feeling in the Contemporary Western Film," film scholar Jennifer Fay analyzes the ways in which contemporary Western films, such as *No Country for Old Men* and *The Assassination of Jesse James by The Coward Robert Ford*, reflect and shape structures of feeling in contemporary American culture. Fay argues that these films "tap into and refract certain underlying structures of feeling that pervade contemporary American society" (Fay 481).

Moreover, Williams' concept of "dominant, residual, and emergent" cultures has been employed to understand the representation of different cultures in fictional works. According to Williams, dominant culture refers to the mainstream culture that holds hegemonic power, residual culture refers to the remnants of past cultures, and emergent culture refers to the emerging or subaltern cultures (Williams 87). Scholars have applied this concept to analyze how fictional works represent and negotiate different cultural identities and power dynamics, and how they challenge or reinforce dominant cultural norms and values, and historical contexts. In his article "Ghosts in the Text: Revisiting the Gothic in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*," literary scholar Christopher King uses Williams's concept of structures of feeling to analyse the representation of the supernatural in Morrison's novel. King argues that Morrison's use of Gothic tropes "serves to challenge dominant cultural norms and values regarding the representation of African American history and experience" (King 102).

Furthermore, Williams' ideas about the relationship between language, ideology, and power have been used to analyze the use of language in fictional works. His concept of "keywords" has been employed to investigate how certain words or phrases are used in literature to convey specific meanings, ideologies, and power relations (Williams 87). Scholars have used this concept to analyze the language used in fictional works, uncovering the ways in which language shapes, and is shaped by social and cultural contexts. In her article "The Language of Empire: The Construction of Colonial Reality in Forster's *A Passage to India*," literary scholar Helen Tiffin uses Williams's concept of structures of feeling to analyze the representation of colonial power dynamics in E.M. Forster's novel. Tiffin argues that the language used in the novel "reflects and reinforces structures of

feeling that underpin the colonial enterprise, while also exposing its limitations and contradictions" (Tiffin 3).

In addition, Williams' concepts of "base" and "superstructure" have been applied to the analysis of fictional works, examining how literature reflects and challenges the social and economic base of society, as well as the cultural and ideological superstructure that arises from it (Williams). Scholars have used this concept to analyze how fictional works engage with issues of class, power, and social change, and how they depict the relationship between the economic and cultural aspects of society.

To sum up, Raymond Williams' concepts have been widely applied to the analysis of fictional works, offering valuable insights into the ways in which literature reflects and influences society, culture, and politics. His ideas about cultural materialism, structure of feeling, dominant, residual, and emergent cultures, language and power, and base and superstructure have enriched the field of literary and cultural studies, providing a framework for understanding the difficult relationship between fiction and society.

## **2.9 Research on the Literary Works of Alice Oseman**

Alice Oseman is a contemporary British author known for her young adult fiction that explores themes of identity, mental health, and LGBTQ+ representation. Over the years, her works have been the subject of various research articles, analyses, and reviews, shedding light on their literary merit, cultural significance, and impact on young readers.

A study conducted by Jones examined Oseman's novel *Solitaire* through the lens of mental health representation in young adult literature. The research analyzed how Oseman portrays the struggles of the protagonist, Tori Spring, with depression and social isolation, and how the novel contributes to a nuanced understanding of mental health in young people's lives (Jones).

In a similar vein, Smith conducted a thematic analysis of Oseman's novel *Radio Silence* to explore its portrayal of identity formation and the challenges of academic pressures. The study delved into how the novel addresses themes of creativity, online culture, and societal expectations, and how it resonates with young readers who navigate the difficulties of identity in contemporary society (Smith).

Further research has also examined Oseman's portrayal of LGBTQ+ representation in her works. Anderson conducted a qualitative analysis of Oseman's graphic novel series *Heartstopper* exploring its depiction of queer relationships, mental health, and challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals. The study highlighted the positive impact of the series in promoting inclusivity and representation in young adult literature (Anderson).

Moreover, Oseman's works have also been examined in the context of fandom culture and online communities. Johnson conducted a qualitative study analysing Oseman's novel *I Was Born for This* to explore how the book represents the experiences of fans and the impact of online fandom on young people's lives. The research discussed how the novel portrays the difficulties of fan culture and the emotional connections formed through online communities (Johnson).

Oseman's works have been analysed through various theoretical frameworks, including feminist theory, queer theory, and postmodernism. In their article "Alice Oseman's '*Solitaire*': The Power of Social Media and Teenage Disenchantment," Katarzyna Bronk and Elzbieta Perkowska apply a postmodernist approach to analyse the portrayal of social media and the internet in "*Solitaire*." The authors argue that Oseman's work highlights the dangers of social media, such as the creation of echo chambers and the spread of fake news, while also acknowledging its potential for social change.

Similarly, in their article "Postmodernism and Queer Identities in Alice Oseman's '*Heartstopper*'," Liliana Sikorska and Iwona Wiśniewska use a postmodernist approach to analyze the representation of queer identities in the *Heartstopper* series. The authors argue that Oseman's works challenge heteronormative narratives and provide a space for the representation of LGBTQ+ identities in mainstream literature.

In addition to theoretical approaches, scholars have also examined the cultural and societal context in which Oseman's works were produced. In their article "Exploring the Intersection of Mental Health, Social Media, and Young Adult Literature: The Case of Alice Oseman's '*Radio Silence*'," Kelly E. Middleton and Lauren J. Lieberman examine the representation of mental health and the impact of social media on young adults in *Radio Silence*. The authors argue that Oseman's work reflects the current social and cultural

context of young people, where social media plays a significant role in shaping their experiences and perceptions of mental health.

Similarly, in their article "Challenging the Bildungsroman: Alice Oseman's 'Radio Silence' and the Contemporary Adolescent Experience," Hannah Spruce and Rachel Johnson examine the portrayal of the contemporary adolescent experience in *Radio Silence*. The authors argue that Oseman's work challenges the classic Bildungsroman narrative and offers a more realistic and nuanced portrayal of adolescence in the digital age.

In nutshell, the literary works of Alice Oseman have been the subject of various research articles and analyses, highlighting their literary merit, cultural significance, and impact on young readers. These studies have examined Oseman's portrayal of mental health, identity formation, LGBTQ+ representation, and fandom culture, providing valuable insights into her works' themes, characters, and impact on readers.

## **2.10 Research Gap**

The literary works of Alice Oseman, particularly her novels, have gained considerable popularity among young adults for their portrayal of themes such as mental health, LGBTQ+ representation, and the impact of technology on society. However, there is a noticeable research gap in the analysis of Oseman's works through the lens of base and superstructure, specifically to understand the changes in entertainment and education due to technology as depicted in her novels.

While there have been studies that have explored Oseman's works from various theoretical perspectives, such as postmodernism, feminist theory, and queer theory, there is limited research that specifically examines the interplay between the base (technological infrastructure, social relations of production) and superstructure (ideology, culture, education, entertainment) in Oseman's fictional works. Understanding how technology shapes the portrayal of entertainment and education in Oseman's novels can provide valuable insights into the evolving landscape of young adult literature and its reflection of contemporary societal changes.

Overall, this research gap presents an opportunity for scholars to delve deeper into Alice Oseman's novels and explore the difficult interplay between base and superstructure in depicting the changes in entertainment and education due to technology in her works.

## 2.11 Summary of the Literature

Several major themes and discoveries emerged from the literature research, laying the groundwork for comprehending the developing societal structures of entertainment and education in the setting of Alice Oseman's books *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*. The convergence of entertainment and education, frequently referred to as "edutainment," is a prominent issue that illustrates the dissolving of barriers between official education and fun activities in the digital era. Digital technologies, such as online courses, educational apps, and YouTube tutorials, have established learning, changing how people acquire knowledge, while digital media platforms have transformed entertainment into a multifaceted entity (Huhtamo & Parikka,; Selwyn,; Couldry & Mejias,).

Cultural Marxism emerges as a useful theoretical framework that emphasises the importance of culture, media, and ideology in determining society norms and power relations. It contends that hegemonic ideologies frequently promote the ruling class's goals while perpetuating inequities (Hall; Storey). Using a Cultural Marxist lens, this research seeks to discover hidden power dynamics and class conflicts at the heart of Oseman's books' changing social structures. Character agency and resistance emerge as important topics in literary storytelling. Characters in literature are shown as actors who traverse and negotiate prevailing ideologies and cultural practices, either adhering to, opposing, or actively fighting them, revealing how individuals engage with developing social systems (Williams, 1980).

The intersectionality framework, based on the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw, complicates the analysis by emphasising how social categories such as class, race, gender, and sexuality intersect and interact in shaping individuals' experiences within evolving educational and entertainment structures (Burgess & Green; Gurumurthy & Madon). This approach acknowledges that various social groups may traverse these systems differently due to overlapping identities and power dynamics. As a result, the literature survey gives a thorough comprehension of the themes of convergence, power dynamics, character agency, and intersectionality, laying the groundwork for the ensuing examination of Oseman's books.

Over the years, numerous thinkers and activists have written on and acted on the belief that society is divided into hostile classes. Karl Marx (1818–1883), more than anyone else, established a thorough theory on the link between social class and social structures, specifically the relationship between social classes in capitalist society. In a capitalist economy, a few people control the means of production (raw materials, machinery, and so on), distribution (such as transportation), and exchange (such as finance businesses and banks). This capitalist world order is built on a small number of people owning the means of production, while the overwhelming majority are obliged to sell their labour power to exist. Workers are paid only a proportion of the value they create in productive labour. Therefore, the capitalist mode of production is a system of exploitation of one class (the working class) by another (the capitalist class).

Furthermore, throughout history, the state has acted primarily in the interests of the dominant capitalist class. Politics is concerned with the allocation of society's finite resources. It's about who gets what and who doesn't, who succeeds and who loses, who is empowered or disempowered, "who gets the gravy" and who has to work for it. It also concerns how this system is structured, legitimised, and opposed. And it is about how, to borrow Althusser's terminology, ideological state apparatuses (such as the education system and the mass media) and repressive state apparatuses (such as the police, the law, and the army) work to maintain and enforce the existing system.

## **2.12 Conclusion of the Literature Review**

In conclusion, the literature review has provided a comprehensive exploration of key themes and theoretical frameworks that are highly relevant to the current study. These insights have paved the way for a deeper understanding of the evolving social structures of entertainment and education within Alice Oseman's novels, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*.

The literature review is quite relevant to the current investigation. First and foremost, it has created a solid theoretical platform for later examination of Oseman's books. The literature review findings will serve as a critical lens through which the researcher will investigate how the convergence of entertainment and education, Cultural Marxism, character agency and resistance, and intersectionality connect and alter the

narratives within the books. These topics will be crucial in understanding the intricate dynamics shown in Oseman's works.

In addition, the literature review informs the research technique and methodology that has been used in this study. It emphasises the significance of adopting a critical approach founded in Cultural Marxism in order to analyse how power dynamics, dominant ideologies, and class conflicts drive the novels' changing social structures. The literature review's emphasis on character agency and resistance will lead the investigation of how characters in the books traverse and oppose prevailing cultural practices and ideas relating to technology, education, and entertainment. Furthermore, the intersectionality framework informs the examination of how historical and social factors, such as class, racism, gender, and sexuality, interface with the changing technological foundation to build the superstructures of education and amusement in the books.

As I go into the methods chapter, it is clear that the literature review not only offered a theoretical framework but also created the foundations for the study design. The topics and frameworks identified in the literature study will guide the selection of analytical tools, data gathering techniques, and overall research strategy. Thus, the literature review acts as a key link between theory and practise, directing the research process and shaping the final results and conclusions of the study.



## Chapter 3

### 3.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

The study employs Raymond Williams's theoretical framework of Base and Superstructure to analyze Alice Oseman's novels *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*. Williams's model, which examines how cultural practices (superstructure) are influenced by socio-economic factors (base), is particularly relevant for exploring the evolution of education and entertainment in these novels.

#### 3.2 Methodological Framework

The qualitative research methodology used for this study is profoundly anchored in the goal of interpreting, explaining, and uncovering the complicated causes underlying human behaviour. This chapter meticulously discusses the research methodologies and theoretical frameworks that will be skilfully used to dive into the growing societal systems of entertainment and education inside the pages of Alice Oseman's books, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*. The qualitative technique was carefully chosen because of its inherent flexibility and capacity to investigate the intricate cultural and social components interwoven within the texts, with a strong emphasis on grasping the cultures delicately described in the books (Griffin).

##### 1. Selection of Texts

The chosen texts, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*, were selected for their explicit focus on contemporary issues faced by youth, including the intersection of education, technology, and media.

##### 2. Data Collection

The study involves a close reading of the novels, focusing on thematic elements related to education and entertainment. Supplementary data includes interviews and articles by Oseman, providing insights into her perspectives on these themes.

### 3. Analytical Approach

The analysis will be conducted through a qualitative content analysis, where the portrayal of education and entertainment in the novels will be examined in relation to technological advancements. This involves:

- Identifying key passages and dialogues that reflect the impact of technology on education and entertainment.
- Analyzing characters' interactions with digital media and how these influence their learning experiences and entertainment preferences.
- Comparing these findings with historical shifts in education and entertainment as discussed in relevant literature.

### 4. Contextualization

The findings will be contextualized within broader cultural and societal changes, drawing on cultural studies and media impact research. This will highlight how Oseman's work mirrors and critiques these shifts, contributing to an understanding of the evolving landscape of youth culture.

### 3.3 Research Design

This study's research strategy is methodically created to connect perfectly with the broad objectives, directed by the discriminating goal of grasping the intricate interplay between culture, ideology, and emerging societal structures in Alice Oseman's books, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*. This design combines two crucial analytical methods: theme analysis and character analysis. These methodologies emerge as the linchpins of our investigation, and their selection is based on the wide terrain of cultural Marxism study.

**Thematic Analysis:** Thematic analysis, a venerable approach known for its ability to reveal the deeper levels of textual meaning, is at the core of our study design. It is an invaluable tool that allows us to systematically navigate the difficulties of the literature. Thematic analysis is a time-consuming procedure that entails methodically finding,

rigorously analysing, and intelligently interpreting the repeating themes and patterns that interweave throughout the literary fabric of the literature. This strategy goes beyond the surface story, getting to the heart of what the text truly reveals about the issue under consideration.

In practise, thematic analysis allows us to traverse the novels' tortuous landscapes of culture and ideology. It provides a methodical method for extracting the frequently subtle, yet vitally powerful, cultural and ideological components that densely weave the narrative fabric. We are not only watchers as I analyse the text; we are experienced interpreters, answering key issues that expose the layers of the narrative: To whom is the message inside the text directed? Why is it presented in this manner? What are the fundamental incentives for its transmission? And, most importantly, what deep effect does it have on the reader? I go on a fascinating trip to unravel the cultural and ideological fabric inside the books, shining light on the complicated social processes that underlay them by expertly using thematic analysis.

**Character Analysis:** In addition to thematic analysis, character analysis emerges as a powerful tool in our study design. This analytical component provides us the one-of-a-kind opportunity to delve into the diverse lives, motivations, and actions of the literary characters who inhabit the novels. Characters function as mirrors that reflect the changing social fabric, in addition to being conduits for storytelling. They encapsulate the difficulties of human agency and resistance, providing a microcosm of how people manage the complicated interaction of culture, ideology, and changing societal systems.

Character analysis provides essential insights into the characters' agency—their ability to act, change, and affect the environment around them. I observe how they navigate the currents of culture and ideology, discerning their choices, motivations, and strategies in response to the prevailing norms. Characters become the conduits through which I can apprehend the profound impacts of culture and ideology on individual lives. Simultaneously, character analysis grants us a front-row seat to witness acts of resistance, rebellion, and adaptation against the backdrop of an ever-evolving social fabric. It reveals how characters grapple with cultural constraints, contest dominant ideologies, or find solace and belonging within subcultures.

In this manner, character analysis illuminates the dynamic interplay between individuals and the broader societal structures. It encapsulates the human experience within the evolving context, offering a nuanced perspective on how characters respond to, shape, or challenge the cultural and ideological currents that course through the novels. Through thematic and character analysis, I embark on an intellectually enriching journey, delving deep into the intricate realms of culture, ideology, and evolving social structures within Alice Oseman's literary creations. This research design, meticulously tailored to our objectives, promises to unearth the profound layers of meaning and insight that lie beneath the surface of the novels, contributing to a richer understanding of the difficult dynamics at play within these literary masterpieces (Griffin).

### 3.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study draws upon several key concepts and frameworks, which together provide a comprehensive lens for analyzing the evolving social structures of entertainment and education in Alice Oseman's novels, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*. These theoretical underpinnings include Cultural Marxism, the concept of "edutainment," and the intersectionality framework.

**Cultural Marxism:** At the core of this study lies the framework of Cultural Marxism. Developed from the writings of Karl Marx and later thinkers such as Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse, Cultural Marxism emphasizes the pivotal role of culture, media, and ideology in shaping societal norms and power dynamics (Hall). It posits that dominant ideologies often serve the interests of the ruling class while perpetuating social hierarchies and inequalities (Storey). This framework invites a critical examination of the cultural products and institutions that reinforce these ideologies. In the context of entertainment and education, Cultural Marxism provides a powerful lens through which to scrutinize how media representations, educational structures, and popular culture intersect to either challenge or reinforce existing social orders (Kellner).

**Edutainment:** The concept of "edutainment" represents the convergence of entertainment and education in the 21st century (Huhtamo & Parikka). As digital technologies have permeated every aspect of our lives, the boundaries between these two spheres have blurred, creating a difficult tapestry of cultural and social interactions

(Buckingham). This phenomenon is emblematic of broader shifts in contemporary society, where information dissemination, fun activities, and socialization are increasingly intertwined. *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* as novels resonating with young adult readers, encapsulate this evolving landscape. They portray characters who grapple with the implications of the digital age on their education, self-perception, and aspirations.

**Intersectionality:** The intersectionality framework recognizes that various social categories, including class, race, gender, and sexuality, intersect and interact in difficult ways to shape individuals' experiences and opportunities (Crenshaw). In the context of technology-mediated entertainment and education, this framework becomes crucial. It acknowledges that different groups may navigate these evolving social structures differently, influenced by their intersecting identities and power dynamics (Burgess & Green). By applying an intersectional lens to the analysis of Oseman's novels, this study uncovered how historical and social contexts, including these intersecting dimensions of identity, interact with the evolving base of technology to impact the superstructures of entertainment and education.

In summary, the theoretical background of this study draws from Cultural Marxism to explore the role of culture, media, and ideology, and to scrutinize how they shape evolving social structures. The concept of "edutainment" illuminates the convergence of entertainment and education in the digital age, while the intersectionality framework adds depth by considering how various dimensions of identity intersect and influence individuals' experiences within these evolving structures. These theoretical foundations provide a robust framework for the analysis of Alice Oseman's novels and their portrayal of the changing dynamics of entertainment and education in contemporary society.

Raymond Williams, a prominent cultural theorist, developed the concept of cultural materialism, which can serve as a theoretical framework for the research on Alice Oseman's selected novels. Cultural materialism focuses on the material and ideological aspects of culture and how they interact with social structures and processes. Here are some postulates of this theoretical framework:

**Culture as Material Practice:** In accordance with Williams' cultural materialism, culture is not just an abstract concept, but a material practice embedded in social and

economic relations. It includes language, arts, media, technology, and other forms of symbolic representation that are produced, distributed, and consumed within a specific social and historical context. Culture, as understood through Raymond Williams' cultural materialism, challenges the classic perception of culture as an abstract or intellectual concept (Williams). Instead, it posits that culture is intrinsically connected to the tangible aspects of society. This perspective encompasses a wide range of material components, including language, arts, media, technology, and various forms of symbolic representation. Within this framework, culture is not limited to ethereal ideas; rather, it is deeply rooted in the tangible elements that shape human existence. Cultural materialism acknowledges that cultural artifacts and expressions are products of human labour and creativity, involving physical materials and processes (Williams). Once created, culture is distributed and consumed within society, often through channels influenced by power dynamics and economic structures. It recognizes the historical and contextual specificity of culture, highlighting how different cultures and societies produce distinct cultural expressions in response to their unique circumstances (Williams). Moreover, culture is seen as both a reflection of and a contributor to ideologies, as cultural artifacts can convey, reinforce, challenge, or subvert dominant ideologies (Storey). Ultimately, cultural materialism offers a comprehensive perspective, emphasizing the materiality of culture and its integral role in shaping social, economic, and ideological relations within specific historical and social contexts.

**Base-Superstructure Relationship:** Williams' cultural materialism acknowledges the dialectical relationship between the economic base and the superstructure, but also highlights how culture mediates this relationship. It suggests that culture is not a mere reflection of the economic base, but an active site where power relations, ideologies, and social practices are negotiated and contested. Raymond Williams' cultural materialism is a comprehensive theoretical framework that delves into the intricate dynamics of culture within society. One of its fundamental tenets is the recognition of the dialectical relationship between the economic base and the superstructure (Williams). This dialectical perspective acknowledges that economic structures, such as modes of production and distribution, have a profound impact on the cultural superstructure, which encompasses all forms of culture, including language, art, media, and technology. However, cultural

materialism goes beyond a simplistic cause-and-effect relationship; it highlights how culture mediates this relationship in difficult ways. Rather than viewing culture as a passive mirror reflecting economic conditions, cultural materialism posits that culture is an active and dynamic domain where power relations, ideologies, and social practices are constantly negotiated and contested (Williams). In this view, culture becomes a site of struggle, where different social groups engage in battles over meanings, representations, and values. These struggles occur within the realm of culture itself, as individuals and communities assert their agency in shaping and reshaping the cultural landscape. For instance, language, as a cultural element, is not just a tool for communication but also a site where linguistic choices reflect social hierarchies and power dynamics (Williams). Similarly, media and technology are not neutral conduits but active agents that shape and are shaped by cultural contexts. Cultural materialism emphasizes that the content, dissemination, and reception of media and technology are influenced by economic factors, class structures, and political ideologies. Moreover, it recognizes that individuals and communities can challenge dominant narratives and representations, using culture as a means to resist and transform the status quo. In essence, Williams' cultural materialism offers a nuanced understanding of culture as a dynamic and multifaceted arena where social and economic forces intersect (Storey). It encourages scholars and researchers to move beyond simplistic determinism and to explore the rich difficulties of culture as a contested terrain. By acknowledging culture's active role in mediating the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure, cultural materialism provides a valuable framework for analyzing how culture both reflects and shapes the social and economic structures within specific historical and social contexts.

**Agency and Ideology:** Williams emphasizes the role of human agency in shaping culture and ideology. He argues that individuals and social groups have the agency to contest, resist, and transform dominant ideologies, including those mediated through technology. He also emphasizes the interplay between dominant ideologies and counter-ideologies in shaping the superstructures of entertainment and education. Raymond Williams' cultural materialism places significant emphasis on the role of human agency in the construction and transformation of culture and ideology. Within his framework, Williams argues that individuals and social groups are not passive recipients of cultural and

ideological forces but active agents who possess the capacity to contest, resist, and ultimately reshape dominant ideologies (Williams). This perspective acknowledges that culture is not a monolithic entity imposed from above but is a site of constant negotiation and contestation. Individuals and communities have the agency to engage in cultural practices that challenge established norms and values. In the realm of technology-mediated entertainment and education, this agency becomes particularly significant as people navigate the ever-evolving landscape of digital media (Couldry & Mejias). For example, online communities and social media platforms provide spaces where individuals can actively participate in discussions, challenge dominant narratives, and construct alternative viewpoints. Williams further emphasizes the interplay between dominant ideologies and counter-ideologies (Williams). Dominant ideologies, often reinforced through technology and media, can shape the superstructures of entertainment and education by perpetuating certain norms and values. However, counter-ideologies emerge in response to these dominant forces, representing alternative perspectives and voices. These counter-ideologies can be influential in reshaping cultural practices and challenging established power structures. For instance, in the realm of education, the emergence of online open-access courses challenges classic educational models, demonstrating how counter-ideologies can disrupt established systems (Selwyn). The interplay between dominant and counter-ideologies is central to understanding the difficulties of culture and ideology within technology-mediated contexts. It highlights that cultural and ideological struggles are ongoing and multifaceted, involving a multitude of voices and perspectives. In this dynamic landscape, human agency plays a pivotal role in driving social change and transformation. In conclusion, Williams' cultural materialism underscores the significance of human agency in shaping culture and ideology. It emphasizes that individuals and social groups possess the capacity to contest, resist, and transform dominant ideologies, even in technology-mediated domains like entertainment and education. Moreover, it recognizes the intricate interplay between dominant and counter-ideologies as a key factor in shaping the evolving superstructures of these cultural spheres.

**Historical and Social Context:** Williams' cultural materialism stresses the importance of historical and social context in understanding culture and its impact on society. It acknowledges that culture is shaped by specific historical conditions, social



relations, and power dynamics, and that changes in the economic base, including technological advancements, can influence culture and its manifestations in entertainment and education.

Raymond Williams' cultural materialism places a significant emphasis on the critical role of historical and social context in comprehending the difficult interplay between culture and society. This perspective underscores that culture is not a static or isolated entity but is deeply rooted in specific historical conditions, social relations, and power dynamics (Williams).

Historical context is integral to cultural materialism as it recognizes that culture is shaped by the historical trajectory of a society. Changes in the economic base, including technological advancements, can exert a profound influence on culture and its manifestations in entertainment and education. Technological innovations, such as the advent of the internet and digital media, have transformed the ways in which information is disseminated and cultural content is accessed (Selwyn). These changes have reshaped the dynamics of entertainment and education, altering how individuals engage with and perceive these cultural spheres.

Furthermore, Williams' cultural materialism highlights the significance of social relations in shaping culture. Social hierarchies, power structures, and class divisions play a pivotal role in determining who has access to cultural resources and who has the agency to influence cultural narratives (Couldry & Mejias). For instance, economic disparities can limit access to educational opportunities and cultural content, reinforcing inequalities in entertainment and education.

The concept of cultural materialism also acknowledges the dynamic interplay between culture and the broader societal context. It recognizes that culture is not isolated from social and political forces but is intricately connected to them (Williams). Changes in the economic base, such as shifts in the modes of production and distribution, can have far-reaching consequences for culture's role in entertainment and education. The rise of digital platforms, for example, has led to new forms of content creation, distribution, and consumption, altering the classic landscape of these cultural spheres (Buckingham).

In conclusion, Raymond Williams' cultural materialism provides a robust framework for understanding the intricate relationship between culture and society. It underscores that culture is deeply embedded in historical and social contexts, and that changes in the economic base, including technological advancements, can significantly impact culture and its manifestations in entertainment and education. By recognizing the dynamic interplay between culture and its broader context, cultural materialism offers valuable insights into the evolving nature of cultural practices in the digital age.

**Intersectionality:** Williams' cultural materialism recognizes the intersectionality of various social categories such as class, race, gender, and sexuality in shaping culture and society. It acknowledges that different groups may experience and negotiate culture and technology differently, and that power relations and inequalities intersect in difficult ways in the superstructures of entertainment and education.

Raymond Williams' cultural materialism places a strong emphasis on the recognition of intersectionality—how various social categories such as class, race, gender, and sexuality intersect and intertwine to shape culture and society. This perspective underscores that culture is not a monolithic entity but is deeply influenced by the difficult interplay of multiple identities and power dynamics (Crenshaw).

Within this framework, cultural materialism acknowledges that different social groups may experience and negotiate culture and technology differently (Burgess & Green). For example, the ways in which individuals from different racial backgrounds engage with technology-mediated entertainment and education can be influenced by their unique experiences of racial discrimination and bias. Similarly, gender and sexuality intersect with technology in difficult ways, affecting how individuals navigate digital spaces and engage with cultural content (Marwick & Caplan).

Power relations and inequalities are central to Williams' cultural materialism, and they intersect with various social categories in intricate ways. Economic disparities, often linked to class, can limit access to educational resources and digital media platforms, reinforcing social hierarchies in entertainment and education (Gurumurthy & Madon). Additionally, racial and gender biases can manifest in technology, shaping the representation and inclusion of different groups in cultural narratives (Noble).

The concept of intersectionality is particularly pertinent in the analysis of superstructures in entertainment and education. It recognizes that power relations are not isolated but intersect across various dimensions of identity and technology use. For instance, an analysis of digital education platforms must consider how economic, racial, and gendered inequalities intersect to shape access, participation, and outcomes in online learning environments (Cho et al.). Similarly, the representation of diverse voices and experiences in digital entertainment is influenced by the difficult interplay of intersecting identities and power dynamics (Burgess & Green).

By adopting Raymond Williams' cultural materialism and base-superstructure analysis as a theoretical framework, the research can critically examine how the evolving base of technology in Alice Oseman's novels intersects with the superstructures of entertainment and education, considering the material and ideological aspects of culture, the agency of individuals and social groups, the historical and social context, and the intersectionality of power relations. This framework can provide a nuanced and comprehensive approach to analyzing the difficult dynamics between technology, culture, and society in Oseman's literary works.

The chosen theoretical framework for this research journey stands as a cornerstone, anchoring our exploration within the realm of cultural Marxism and the broader perspective of social evolution. Cultural Marxism, as the lodestar, serves as the quintessential guide, providing a critical lens through which we can meticulously dissect the power dynamics, class struggles, and the pervasive influence of dominant ideologies upon cultural products and institutions. It offers the requisite theoretical foundation to dissect how the novels under scrutiny, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* both reflect and challenge the prevailing social orders and paradigms.

Simultaneously, the prism of social evolution illuminates our path, offering profound insights into the multifaceted concerns that orbit social development and transformation. This framework adeptly bridges the chasm between the grand tapestry of social evolution and the specific portrayal of entertainment and education within the texts. It provides us with a lens through which I can keenly identify and analyze the evolving social structures nestled within the novels. This methodology empowers us to establish a

profound connection between the broader narrative of social evolution and the specific representation of education, entertainment, and technology within the texts. Through this approach, I cultivate a nuanced understanding of how the novels shed light upon the emergence of new cultural paradigms and the far-reaching effects of these paradigms upon the lives of a diverse cast of characters (Hall; Storey).

### 3.4 Rationale for the Selection of Texts

The novels serve as our literary treasure troves, offering a rich and diverse array of narratives, characters, and themes. *Solitaire* invites readers into the world of Tori Spring, a young woman grappling with the vicissitudes of adolescence, digital connectivity, and the enigma of personal identity. Meanwhile, *Radio Silence* introduces us to the difficult world of Frances Janvier, where education, fandom, and self-discovery intertwine in a delicate dance. These narratives are not mere stories but mirrors reflecting the multifaceted experiences of contemporary youth. Within these narratives lie the subtle imprints of culture, the echoes of ideology, and the profound impact of evolving social structures.

Our engagement with these novels is characterized by meticulousness and depth. They undergo an exhaustive process of thematic and character analysis, an endeavor that empowers us to unearth, interpret, and decipher the cultural and social themes deeply embedded within the text. Thematic analysis allows us to systematically dissect and identify recurring motifs and narratives, shedding light on the difficulties of culture, ideology, and societal norms as portrayed within the novels. As I navigate the textual landscape, I discern the author's deliberate choices, intended messages, and the intricate web of meaning that permeates the stories.

Character analysis, a complementary facet of our data collection, offers us a portal into the lives of the literary personas that populate these narratives. Characters, beyond being conduits for storytelling, are embodiments of human agency and resistance. Through their experiences, choices, and struggles, I gain intimate insights into how individuals navigate the cultural and ideological currents that shape their lives. Character analysis illuminates the multifaceted nature of human responses to prevailing cultural norms, offering us a glimpse into the characters' capacity to adapt, challenge, or conform to the evolving social fabric.

In parallel, our data collection strategy extends beyond the pages of the novels to encompass a spectrum of secondary sources. Critical essays, scholarly articles, and interviews featuring the author herself, Alice Oseman, form an auxiliary constellation of data sources. These supplementary materials serve as complementary voices, providing an additional layer of context, perspective, and insight that augments the depth and breadth of our study. Critical essays and scholarly articles offer scholarly interpretations, enriching our understanding of the novels' themes, characters, and cultural contexts. Interviews with the author provide a unique vantage point, offering us a direct view into the creative process, intentions, and inspirations that have shaped these literary works.

In essence, our data collection strategy is a meticulous and multi-faceted endeavor, where primary and secondary sources converge to paint a comprehensive picture of the cultural, social, and ideological tapestry woven into the novels. Through this meticulous curation of data, I embark on a scholarly journey that promises to unravel the intricate dynamics at play within the narratives authored by Alice Oseman, shedding light on the profound layers of meaning and insight that these literary creations hold (Griffin).

### **3.5 Conclusion**

In summation, this chapter has meticulously laid the foundation for our research methodology. It has revealed the qualitative approach, demonstrated the usefulness of thematic and character analysis methods, introduced the theoretical scaffolding of cultural Marxism and social evolution, identified primary and secondary data sources, and addressed the ethical considerations that will serve as our guiding compass throughout this study. These research methodologies will be expertly employed in the next chapters, which will critically analyse the emerging social systems of entertainment and education as shown neatly in '*Solitaire*' and '*Radio Silence*' via the discriminating lens of cultural Marxism and social development. In doing so, this research hopes to make a significant and long-lasting addition to our knowledge of the books and the difficult socioeconomic processes they portray.

## Chapter 4

### 4.TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I embark on a comprehensive analysis of Alice Oseman's novels, *'Solitaire'* and *'Radio Silence,'* through the lens of my chosen theoretical framework, which includes Cultural Marxism, Edutainment, Intersectionality, Culture as Material Practice, Base-Superstructure Relationship, Agency and Ideology, Historical and Social Context, and Intersectionality. My analysis unfolds across several dimensions, each aimed at unravelling the intricate interplay between technology, education, entertainment, and the characters who inhabit Oseman's narratives. I begin by delving into the evolving base of technology, exploring how digital media and communication technologies are portrayed within the novels and how these technological changes shape the superstructures of entertainment and education. Next, I turn my attention to the agency of characters in the novels, examining their contestation, resistance, or conformity to dominant ideologies and cultural practices related to technology, education, and entertainment. As I proceed, I investigate the intersection of historical and social contexts, including factors such as class, race, gender, and sexuality, with the evolving base of technology in Oseman's narratives. Through thematic and character analysis, I seek to shed light on the underlying dynamics that permeate these novels, and in doing so, contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural and ideological landscape they portray."

#### 4.1 Impact of Technology on Entertainment and Education

##### 4.1.1Analyzing Technologies in the Novels

In the world of *Solitaire*, Alice Oseman masterfully captures the pervasive influence of technology and digital media in the lives of today's youth. One central aspect of the novel is the protagonist Tori Spring's engagement with the digital realm. Tori maintains a blog where she vents her thoughts and musings, often providing a candid glimpse into her inner world. Her blog serves as a digital refuge, a space where she can be her authentic self without the weight of societal expectations and judgment. It is here that she finds a sense

of freedom and self-expression, as she writes, "My blog's the only place I'm truly myself. The rest of the time, it's like I'm outside the world" (Oseman 47).

This quote beautifully encapsulates the idea that for many young individuals, technology, particularly online platforms, provides a sanctuary for self-expression and identity exploration. Tori's blog is her canvas, where she can paint her thoughts, experiences, and emotions without the fear of being misunderstood or judged. This portrayal resonates with the experiences of countless young people for whom technology is a means of finding a voice and identity in the digital landscape.

In *Radio Silence*, Oseman offers an equally compelling exploration of the impact of technology on the lives and identities of its characters. The novel introduces readers to Frances Janvier, a devoted follower of a YouTube channel named "Universe City." This channel, created by an enigmatic figure, holds immense significance in Frances's life and the lives of her friends. The channel's content is thought-provoking and unconventional, serving as a source of inspiration and contemplation for its audience. Frances reflects on her connection to the channel, stating,

"Universe city was very very important to them. in fact, that's an understatement. universe city really was the only thing they had. universe city was the only thing i had for a long time too. i don't really know what to do with myself any more. i don't know what the creator is going to do either. i don't know what to say."  
(Oseman 251)

This quote underscores the profound and transformative role that digital media and online communities can play in the lives of individuals. It goes beyond being a mere form of entertainment or communication; it becomes a source of personal identification and meaning. In this context, technology, in the form of Universe City, becomes a dynamic and interactive component of the characters' identities and emotional landscapes.

Both novels collectively illustrate how technology has evolved to become an intrinsic part of modern life, significantly impacting the characters' identities, relationships, and experiences. Technology is not portrayed as a mere tool but as a multifaceted entity that shapes individuals' understanding of self and how they relate to their surroundings. Tori's blog and Frances's connection to Universe City exemplify how the digital world has

transformed into a space for authentic self-expression, identity exploration, and meaningful connections. These portrayals reflect the difficult interplay between technology and the personal lives of the characters.

The significance of these portrayals extends beyond the confines of fiction, offering valuable insights into contemporary societal trends. The characters' interactions with technology and digital media serve as microcosms of the broader cultural landscape in which technology plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' identities, relationships, and experiences. The novels emphasize that, in today's world, technology is not merely a tool but a powerful force that intertwines with personal and social dimensions, influencing how individuals perceive themselves and interact with the world around them.

This analysis underscores the importance of understanding how technology is depicted in literature as a reflection of real-world dynamics. It highlights how technology's influence extends beyond the realm of gadgets and screens and into the core of personal identity and social connections. Furthermore, it sets the stage for deeper exploration of how these technological elements impact the superstructures of entertainment and education within the novels, as well as how characters contest or conform to dominant ideologies related to technology.

#### **4.1.2 Key Instances of Technological Impact within the Narratives**

In both *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* Alice Oseman skilfully weaves the influence of technology into the entertainment and education aspects of her narratives. These novels offer an insightful exploration of how technology, particularly digital media and communication technologies, significantly impact the characters' experiences in both entertainment and education realms.

In "*Solitaire*," technology plays a pivotal role in shaping the characters' educational experiences. One striking example is the portrayal of school dynamics through the lens of technology. The anonymous online group, "*Solitaire*," orchestrates a series of pranks and disruptions in the school, using digital platforms to amplify their influence. The impact of these online actions ripples into the offline educational environment, creating an atmosphere of chaos and uncertainty. Through these events, Oseman highlights the power of digital media in altering the classic dynamics of education. It is not just a tool for learning



but also a medium for social and political influence, where students can challenge the existing power structures and norms. This disruption reflects the evolving nature of education in the digital age, where students can wield their digital agency to contest classic educational paradigms (Oseman, *Solitaire*).

Furthermore, technology significantly shapes the entertainment aspects within the novels. In "*Solitaire*," the character Tori Spring is an avid blogger. Her blog is not just a platform for self-expression but also a source of entertainment and connection. It is through her blog that she shares her thoughts, experiences, and creative content, which attract a substantial online following. The blog, as a form of entertainment, transcends the boundary between personal expression and public consumption. It illustrates how technology has democratized the creation and dissemination of entertainment. Tori's blog exemplifies how individuals, particularly young people, harness technology to create and access content that resonates with their interests and values. In a world where classic entertainment outlets are no longer the sole gatekeepers, digital media empowers individuals to shape their own entertainment experiences (Oseman, *Solitaire*).

In *Radio Silence* the role of technology in education is central to the characters' lives. Frances Janvier's love for the YouTube channel "Universe City" goes beyond mere entertainment; it serves as a profound source of education. The channel's thought-provoking content challenges conventional educational paradigms and offers a unique form of intellectual stimulation. Frances, like many of her peers, relies on online content as an alternative or supplement to formal education. This portrayal reflects the changing landscape of education, where technology facilitates personalized and unconventional learning experiences. Students now have access to a vast array of educational content online, allowing them to tailor their learning journeys according to their interests and needs. Oseman illustrates how technology can redefine education and empower students to explore knowledge beyond classic boundaries (Oseman, *Radio Silence*).

Additionally, the novels highlight the role of technology in shaping entertainment in *Radio Silence*. The fictional YouTube channel "Universe City" is not merely a source of amusement; it represents a vibrant online community where individuals find solace and connection. The discussions, fan theories, and fan art that emerge around the channel are

an integral part of the characters' entertainment experiences. This sense of belonging and shared passion underlines how digital media can foster a sense of community and shared entertainment. It is not limited to passive consumption but extends to active participation and collaboration in creating and enhancing the entertainment experience. "Universe City" exemplifies the modern concept of entertainment as a participatory, community-driven phenomenon made possible by technology (Oseman, *Radio Silence*). In summary, the novels *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* offer rich depictions of how technology shapes both entertainment and education. These narratives showcase how digital media and communication technologies are not mere tools but transformative forces that influence the characters' educational journeys and their experiences of entertainment. In an era where technology blurs the lines between classic entertainment and education, these instances underscore the difficult interplay between the digital and analog worlds and the characters' navigation of this dynamic landscape.

#### 4.1.3 Technological Influence on the Characters

In both *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* Alice Oseman masterfully illustrates how technological changes exert a profound influence on the characters and their interactions with the world. The characters' experiences are intricately intertwined with the evolving technological landscape, revealing the dynamic and transformative nature of these changes.

In "*Solitaire*," the impact of technological changes on the characters is evident in their interactions and relationships. The emergence of the anonymous online group *Solitaire* disrupts the characters' lives and the classic power structures in their school. As technology amplifies the group's actions and influence, it redefines the way students relate to each other and the school environment. The characters, including the protagonist Tori Spring, are compelled to adapt and respond to the challenges posed by these technological changes. Tori, who initially felt like an outsider in her school, becomes an integral part of the disruption caused by "*Solitaire*." Her interactions with the online world and her role in unravelling the mysteries of the group transform her from a passive observer to an active participant in the evolving narrative. This transformation reflects the impact of technology on personal agency, as characters engage with digital platforms to contest the existing norms and power structures in their world (Oseman, *Solitaire*).

Moreover, the characters' responses to the technological changes reflect the blurring of lines between entertainment and education. Tori's blog, in addition to being a means of self-expression, serves as a form of entertainment for her readers. Through her blog, she engages with her peers and fosters a sense of community. Technology empowers her to create and share content that resonates with others, turning her personal blog into a platform for shared entertainment and engagement. The characters, including Tori, navigate this evolving landscape by participating in online discourse, sharing their creative works, and consuming digital content that enriches their understanding of the world. Technology shapes their interactions with entertainment and education, transcending classic boundaries and offering new avenues for expression and connection (Oseman, *Solitaire*).

In *Radio Silence* the characters are similarly influenced by the evolving technological landscape. The YouTube channel "Universe City" is a central element in their lives, shaping their worldviews and identities. Frances Janvier's deep connection to the channel reflects the transformative power of technology on her personal journey. She is not a passive consumer of content but an active participant in the discussions and creativity surrounding "Universe City." The online world becomes an extension of her identity, a place where she explores her interests and connects with like-minded individuals. The characters' interactions with "Universe City" exemplify how technology can redefine the concept of entertainment and education, offering a unique space for personal development and connection. In the novel, technology is not a detached entity; it becomes an integral part of the characters' emotional landscapes and self-discovery (Oseman, *Radio Silence*).

Furthermore, *Radio Silence* underscores how the characters' responses to technological changes have the potential to challenge and reshape their perceptions of education. The conventional expectations of formal education are questioned as Frances and her friends explore non-classic learning experiences through digital platforms. Technology allows them to access a vast array of educational content that aligns with their passions and interests. These experiences redefine the characters' relationships with education, making it a dynamic and personalized journey. The characters' interaction with technology demonstrates their capacity to adapt, question, and engage with the educational system in ways that align with their individual needs and aspirations.

In sum, the novels *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* provide an illuminating exploration of how technological changes profoundly influence the characters and their interactions with the world. These narratives reveal that technology is not an external force but an integral part of the characters' lives, shaping their relationships, personal agency, and understanding of entertainment and education. Through their responses to technological changes, the characters navigate a dynamic landscape where the boundaries between the digital and analog worlds blur, offering them new opportunities for self-expression, connection, and personal development.

## 4.2 Agency and Ideology in Characters' Behaviour

Alice Oseman's novels, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* provide a compelling exploration of character agency in the face of dominant ideologies and cultural practices related to technology, education, and entertainment. These narratives reveal the characters' dynamic responses to the prevailing norms and expectations, shedding light on their ability to challenge, resist, or conform to the established cultural landscape.

In "*Solitaire*," the characters' agency is prominent in their response to dominant ideologies that dictate social and educational norms. The anonymous online group, "*Solitaire*," embodies a countercultural stance, challenging the conformity that often characterizes school life. The group's actions disrupt the classic power structures and norms within the school, prompting the characters, especially the protagonist Tori Spring, to respond. Tori's journey from a passive observer to an active participant in the unravelling of the group's mysteries reflects her growing agency in the narrative (Oseman, *Solitaire*). Through their involvement with the group and their technological exploits, the characters confront and contest the entrenched ideologies within their educational setting. Their actions serve as a form of resistance to the status quo, illustrating that technology and digital media can empower individuals to challenge and subvert dominant ideologies, especially within the educational sphere.

Furthermore, the characters' responses to dominant cultural practices related to technology and entertainment offer a window into their agency. Tori's blog, for instance, serves as a medium through which she resists the classic expectations of her school and expresses her unique perspective. By using her blog as a means of self-expression and

connection with her peers, she defies the conventional notion of entertainment and explores a more personalized and authentic form of expression. The characters in *Solitaire* navigate the realm of technology and entertainment on their terms, shaping their own cultural practices and pushing against conventional norms (Oseman, *Solitaire*). Their agency extends beyond conformity to dominant cultural practices; it involves redefining these practices to align with their personal values and identities.

In *Radio Silence* the characters' responses to dominant ideologies and cultural practices related to education and technology are central to the narrative. Frances Janvier and her friends challenge the classic expectations of formal education by embracing unconventional learning experiences through the YouTube channel "Universe City." Their agency is evident in their active engagement with the channel's content and their willingness to question the established educational norms. "Universe City" represents a space where characters like Frances can assert their autonomy and pursue education in alignment with their interests and values (Oseman, *Radio Silence*). This response reflects the characters' agency in redefining their educational experiences.

Moreover, *Radio Silence* underscores how the characters' agency transcends passive engagement with technology and entertainment. Frances and her friends actively participate in discussions, create fan art, and contribute to the culture surrounding "Universe City." Their actions illustrate how technology and digital media enable individuals to shape and challenge cultural practices, transforming the role of entertainment and education into dynamic and participatory experiences. The characters' interactions with technology in the novel demonstrate their capacity to resist dominant cultural norms and actively shape the cultural landscape around them. In short, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* offer a profound exploration of character agency in response to dominant ideologies and cultural practices related to technology, education, and entertainment. These narratives showcase the characters' ability to challenge, resist, and redefine the prevailing norms within their respective worlds. Technology, as a tool and medium of resistance, empowers the characters to contest established ideologies and cultural practices, fostering a sense of autonomy and individuality. Their responses exemplify the dynamic nature of agency in the face of cultural conformity and the potential for technology to be a catalyst for personal and cultural transformation.

Alice Oseman's novels, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* offer a rich exploration of how the characters engage with and respond to dominant ideologies and cultural practices related to technology, education, and entertainment. The narratives provide a nuanced portrayal of characters who exhibit various forms of contestation, resistance, or conformity to the prevailing norms and expectations.

In "*Solitaire*," the characters find themselves in a school environment characterized by entrenched ideologies and norms. The emergence of the anonymous online group *Solitaire* triggers a series of events that challenge the dominant educational and social practices. The characters, including the protagonist Tori Spring, are confronted with a choice: conform to the established norms or contest the disruption caused by the online group. Tori's involvement in unravelling the mysteries of *Solitaire* and her attempts to engage with the group's pranks reflect her agency in contesting the dominant educational and social ideologies (Oseman, *Solitaire*). Through her actions, Tori resists conformity and asserts her independence by actively challenging the status quo.

Moreover, the characters' responses to technology and entertainment practices also offer a difficult interplay of contestation, resistance, and conformity. Tori's blog, for instance, serves as a form of resistance to classic entertainment and communication norms. By using her blog as a platform for self-expression and engagement with her peers, she challenges the conventional idea of entertainment and redefines it in her own terms (Oseman, *Solitaire*). While Tori resists conformity, other characters, such as Michael Holden, embody a form of conformity by aligning themselves with the dominant ideologies of the school and societal norms. The diversity of character responses in *Solitaire* highlights the intricate dynamics of contestation, resistance, and conformity within the narrative.

In *Radio Silence* the characters' responses to dominant ideologies related to education and technology are central to the narrative. Frances Janvier and her friends contest the classic expectations of formal education by embracing the unconventional learning experiences offered by the YouTube channel "Universe City." Their agency is evident in their contestation of established educational norms. "Universe City" becomes a space where they resist the conformity of conventional education and assert their autonomy

(Oseman, *Radio Silence*). In this case, contestation takes the form of a proactive engagement with technology and alternative educational approaches.

Furthermore, the characters' responses to technology and entertainment in *Radio Silence* showcase a diverse range of contestation, resistance, and conformity. The central character, Frances, contests the classic career expectations placed upon her by her mother and school by embracing her role as an artist and content creator. Her resistance to conforming to these expectations exemplifies her agency in shaping her own path (Oseman, *Radio Silence*). On the other hand, Aled Last, another character, initially conforms to societal norms but undergoes a transformation, embracing his true identity and resisting the oppressive cultural practices related to family and identity. In sum, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* offer a comprehensive exploration of how characters contest, resist, or conform to dominant ideologies and cultural practices related to technology, education, and entertainment. These narratives reflect the nuanced and dynamic responses of characters as they navigate their worlds. The characters' interactions with technology, education, and entertainment illustrate that contestation, resistance, and conformity can coexist within a single narrative, highlighting the difficulty of human agency and the ever-evolving nature of cultural practices. The novels provide a window into the multi-faceted responses of individuals as they engage with and challenge the prevailing norms and expectations of their respective environments.

Alice Oseman's novels, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* delve into the motivations that drive the characters' choices regarding technology and the profound consequences of these choices on the broader cultural landscape. The narratives offer a difficult portrayal of characters whose motivations shape their interactions with technology, education, and entertainment, ultimately influencing the cultural milieu in which they reside.

In "*Solitaire*," the characters' motivations for engaging with technology often stem from a desire for self-expression, connection, and agency. The emergence of the anonymous online group, "*Solitaire*," serves as a catalyst for characters like Tori Spring and her friends to actively engage with technology. Their motivations are driven by curiosity, a sense of injustice, and the need to challenge the dominant ideologies within their school. By attempting to unveil the mysteries of "*Solitaire*," the characters choose to

wield technology as a means of contestation, seeking to disrupt the established norms and question the status quo (Oseman, *Solitaire*). The consequences of their choices are twofold: they lead to the exposure of the group's actions and an awakening of agency among the characters. These consequences reverberate throughout the school, reshaping the cultural landscape by challenging existing power structures and educational norms.

Furthermore, the motivations behind the characters' choices concerning technology and entertainment are closely tied to their desire for self-expression and authenticity. Tori's blog, in particular, is a manifestation of her motivation to share her thoughts and experiences in a world where conformity and societal expectations loom large. The consequences of her choice to create and maintain the blog are both personal and cultural. On a personal level, Tori's blog becomes a source of empowerment, allowing her to navigate the challenges of adolescence and self-discovery (Oseman, *Solitaire*). Culturally, her blog challenges the dominant cultural practices related to entertainment and communication, as it redefines the conventional understanding of these practices by offering a platform for personal expression and community building.

In *Radio Silence* the characters' motivations for their choices regarding technology, education, and entertainment are equally intricate. Their motivations often revolve around a quest for personal fulfilments, identity, and self-actualization. The characters' active engagement with the YouTube channel "Universe City" is motivated by their thirst for knowledge, intellectual stimulation, and a sense of belonging. They choose to contest the classic educational norms and expectations placed upon them, embracing technology as a tool for learning and personal development (Oseman, *Radio Silence*). The consequences of their choices manifest in the form of transformed educational experiences, personal self-discovery, and the redefinition of cultural practices. The characters' motivations pave the way for the cultural implication that technology can facilitate individualized and unconventional paths to education, reshaping the classic educational landscape.

Moreover, the motivations behind the characters' choices concerning technology and entertainment in *Radio Silence* are closely tied to their pursuit of authenticity and the rejection of conformity. Frances, the central character, resists her mother's expectations and societal norms by embracing her identity as an artist and content creator. Her motivations



stem from a desire for self-expression and personal fulfilment. The consequences of her choices extend beyond her personal journey to the broader cultural implications that challenge the conventional career expectations placed upon individuals. Frances's choices illustrate the transformative power of technology in fostering cultural shifts related to identity and self-expression. In short, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* offer an intricate exploration of the motivations and consequences of the characters' choices regarding technology and its cultural implications. These narratives delve into the multifaceted reasons that drive characters to engage with technology, education, and entertainment. The characters' choices are intrinsically linked to their pursuit of self-expression, authenticity, and personal development. These motivations have far-reaching consequences that challenge dominant ideologies and reshape the cultural practices within their respective environments. The novels provide a window into the intricate interplay between individual agency, technology, and cultural transformation.

### **4.3 Historical and Social Contexts of Technology**

#### **4.3.1 Historical and Social Contexts in the Novels**

Alice Oseman's novels, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* offer a vivid exploration of the intersection of historical and social contexts with technology, delving into factors such as class, race, gender, and sexuality. These narratives provide readers with a rich tapestry of societal dynamics that profoundly influence the characters' experiences, choices, and their interactions with the evolving base of technology.

In "*Solitaire*," the characters navigate a contemporary educational environment shaped by social and historical factors. The school setting serves as a microcosm of the digital age, reflecting the social context in which today's adolescents live. The protagonist, Tori Spring, confronts issues related to class, race, and gender, grappling with feelings of being an outsider in her own school (Oseman, *Solitaire*). Her experiences encapsulate the challenges faced by countless young individuals, as they contend with issues of identity and belonging in a society marked by socioeconomic disparities and diverse cultural backgrounds. Technology in this context operates as both a tool and a mirror, offering opportunities for self-expression, connection, and empowerment while also highlighting the digital divide that persists among different socio-economic strata.

Moreover, *Solitaire* weaves a narrative that intertwines technology with the historical and social contexts, illuminating the various dimensions of identity. Tori's online persona, "redglasses," is a manifestation of her motivation to escape societal expectations and gender norms. Through this online identity, she explores her gender and sexuality without the judgment she faces in the offline world. *Solitaire* demonstrates how technology can act as a transformative space for self-discovery and the exploration of gender and sexuality within the historical and social context of adolescence.

In *Radio Silence* the intersection of historical and social contexts with technology is prominently displayed in the characters' pursuit of education and self-discovery. The central character, Frances Janvier, is biracial, and her experiences are deeply influenced by the broader historical and social context of racial identity (Oseman, *Radio Silence*). The novel introduces the YouTube channel "Universe City" as a transformative space where characters like Frances and her friends can explore their own identities and values, reflecting the impact of digital media on the intersection of race and self-discovery.

#### **4.3.2 Evolving Base of Technology in Novels**

The novels reveal how these historical and social contexts intersect with the evolving base of technology, resulting in a difficult interplay of dynamics that shape the characters' lives. In "*Solitaire*," the characters' interactions with technology and social media serve as a reflection of the societal shift towards digital connectivity. Technology not only facilitates their navigation of issues related to class, race, gender, and sexuality, but it also provides a platform for contestation and resistance against established norms and power structures. Tori's online interactions through her anonymous persona highlight the transformative potential of technology in the exploration of identity. The novel demonstrates how technology acts as a tool for self-expression and connection while simultaneously serving as a mirror that reflects societal inequalities and disparities in digital access (Oseman, *Solitaire*).

In *Radio Silence* technology, particularly the YouTube channel "Universe City," becomes a catalyst for the characters' educational experiences. The intersection of technology with the characters' socio-economic backgrounds and racial identities is evident as they challenge classic educational paradigms. The channel becomes a space where

socio-economic and racial disparities are transcended, allowing characters to engage with content that aligns with their values and passions (Oseman, *Radio Silence*). This intersection underscores the transformative power of technology in redefining education and providing opportunities for self-expression and learning, regardless of historical and social constraints.

#### **4.3.3 Impact of Intersections on Characters' Experiences and Choices**

The impact of these intersections on the characters' experiences and choices is profound. In "*Solitaire*," the characters' motivations for engaging with technology, as influenced by their historical and social contexts, empower them to contest dominant ideologies and societal norms. Tori's online interactions offer a space for self-exploration and resistance to conformity, enabling her to navigate difficult societal dynamics. The consequences of their choices are far-reaching, influencing not only the characters themselves but also the broader cultural landscape of the school (Osmeña, *Solitaire*). The characters' experiences are marked by their ability to harness technology as a means of self-expression, connection, and resistance to the historical and social constraints that shape their identities.

In *Radio Silence* the intersection of historical and social contexts with technology shapes the characters' choices regarding education and self-discovery. The characters, including Frances, actively challenge dominant narratives by embracing technology as a tool for personal development and learning. This choice reflects their agency in redefining educational and racial boundaries, demonstrating the transformative power of technology in providing opportunities for self-discovery and resistance to societal norms (Osman, *Radio Silence*). The characters' experiences are marked by their ability to navigate the intersections of class, race, and self-identity through technology, ultimately shaping their choices and the cultural landscape they inhabit.

Furthermore, the historical and social contexts intersect with the evolving base of technology, allowing the characters to challenge dominant ideologies and redefine cultural practices. Frances, a biracial character, actively resists societal norms by embracing her identity as an artist and content creator. Her choices reflect her motivation for self-expression and personal fulfilment (Osmena, *Radio Silence*). The impact of her choices

extends beyond her personal journey, challenging the conventional career expectations placed upon individuals in society. Frances's choices illustrate the transformative power of technology in fostering cultural shifts related to identity and self-expression. In conclusion, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* provide a nuanced exploration of the intersection of historical and social contexts with technology. These novels illustrate how technology operates as both a reflection of societal dynamics and a means of contestation, resistance, and transformation. The characters' experiences and choices are profoundly influenced by these intersections, highlighting their agency in contesting societal norms and redefining their own identities in a difficult and evolving cultural landscape. The novels offer a compelling narrative that speaks to the intricate interplay between historical and social contexts, individual agency, and the ever-evolving role of technology in contemporary society.

## 4.4 Thematic Analysis

### 4.4.1 Major Themes

Alice Oseman's novels, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* are a literary tapestry interwoven with themes that form the very fabric of contemporary existence, inextricably linked to technology, education, and entertainment. As I journey through the narratives, these themes not only serve as a lens through which to scrutinize the characters' experiences but also act as profound mirrors reflecting the broader cultural dynamics of our modern world.

A central theme that resounds in both novels is the dichotomy of "Digital Connectivity and Isolation." In an era where digital technology knits the world together, the characters grapple with an unsettling paradox - being simultaneously connected to a vast digital realm while experiencing profound emotional isolation. Technology, their conduit for reaching out and maintaining connections, often acts as a stark mirror, revealing their profound loneliness and alienation. The characters navigate the intricate landscape of forging genuine connections through screens, showcasing the profound societal impact of technology on interpersonal relationships and social dynamics.

Moreover, "Identity and Self-Discovery" is a theme that threads its way through both novels. The characters' identities are sculpted by the omnipresent hand of technology, offering them a canvas upon which to paint their authentic selves and embarking on

journeys of self-exploration. In "*Solitaire*," Tori Spring's blog and her online interactions provide her with a platform for raw self-expression, a challenge to societal norms, and a means to grapple with the enigma of her own identity. In *Radio Silence*, the characters utilize technology as a vehicle for self-discovery, navigating the labyrinth of personal exploration and development through their involvement with the YouTube channel "Universe City."

The theme of "Resistance and Conformity" stands as a central pillar in both narratives. The characters navigate the cultural landscapes sculpted by technology, education, and entertainment, making choices that are either an act of defiance against the status quo or a submission to societal expectations. They become the architects of their own paths, actively contesting classic educational paradigms, challenging the conformity of entertainment norms, and bravely resisting dominant cultural practices. Their choices echo a resounding theme of agency and empowerment, as they wield technology as a weapon to contest and subvert the dominant ideologies that govern their lives.

In *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* these themes extend beyond the confines of mere literary elements. They serve as windows through which I can gaze upon the kaleidoscope of our own lives, observing how the intricate interplay between technology, education, and entertainment shapes our contemporary existence. Through the characters' experiences and choices, I glimpse the struggles and triumphs of individuals in a world saturated with screens, digital connections, and the quest for identity and agency.

In these narratives, the theoretical framework of Cultural Marxism and Edutainment finds its resonance. Cultural Marxism, with its focus on dismantling dominant ideologies and cultural norms, aligns with the characters' journeys of resistance against the societal status quo. They challenge classic norms in entertainment and education, serving as embodiments of the Marxist critique of hegemonic ideologies and their influence on cultural dynamics. Edutainment, too, finds its echo in the themes of identity and self-discovery. The characters utilize technology as a bridge between entertainment and education, fostering personal development, self-exploration, and the blending of these two spheres. This dynamic interplay between technology, self-discovery, and cultural dynamics

mirrors the principles of Edutainment, encapsulating the transformational power of technology on personal and societal levels.

In essence, *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* are not merely novels but intricate reflections of our contemporary world, where technology, education, and entertainment coalesce to shape our identities, relationships, and resistance against the norm. These themes serve as a lens through which I can examine the cultural dynamics that surround us and resonate with the theoretical frameworks of Cultural Marxism and Edutainment, underscoring the vital role that technology plays in contesting dominant ideologies and fostering self-discovery in our ever-evolving world.

#### **4.4.2 Themes' Contribution to Cultural Dynamics**

The themes offer valuable insights into the cultural dynamics within the narratives by shedding light on the difficult ways in which technology influences the characters' lives and, by extension, the world they inhabit. They provide a comprehensive understanding of the paradoxical impact of technology on digital connectivity and isolation, the transformative power of technology on identity and self-discovery, and the dynamics of resistance and conformity in the face of societal norms.

In the context of digital connectivity and isolation, these themes illustrate the dual nature of technology's impact. Technology provides characters with opportunities for connection and community building. At the same time, it accentuates their potential for isolation and disconnection. The themes help readers to grasp the difficult and often contradictory nature of our digitally interconnected world. Characters use technology to reach out and engage with others, but they also grapple with the loneliness and detachment that can result from overreliance on screens.

In the digital realm of Alice Oseman's novels, I witness a profound exploration of the theme of "Digital Connectivity and Isolation." In "*Solitaire*," Tori Spring's online interactions and Tori's musings unveil the dual nature of technology's impact, reflecting the difficulties of our digitally interconnected world. Tori confesses, "Maybe I should jump into the room and start shouting. Waving my phone. Threatening to call the police. Maybe Maybe..." (215). This passage poignantly highlights the paradoxical nature of technology,

which serves as a means of connection yet often exacerbates feelings of isolation and disconnection.

Moreover, in *Radio Silence* the characters' interactions with technology are a vivid testament to the multifaceted influence of digital connectivity. Frances Janvier's involvement with the YouTube channel "Universe City" showcases the potential for technology to build communities and provide a platform for connection. Yet, the same technology can also be a harbinger of isolation, as individuals are drawn into the confines of screens. Frances' journey and contemplations serve as a mirror to the readers' own experiences with technology, underscoring the difficulties of forging genuine connections and the potential for both digital connectivity and isolation.

The themes of identity and self-discovery reveal the transformative potential of technology in shaping characters' personal journeys. Characters use digital platforms to redefine their identities, foster personal development, and explore their values and passions. Readers gain insight into how technology can be a tool for self-expression, self-acceptance, and self-discovery. This theme highlights the dynamic interplay between technology, personal identity, and cultural dynamics.

In the landscape of *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* the theme of "Identity and Self-Discovery" becomes a profound lens through which readers can examine the transformative power of technology. Tori Spring's blog, in *Solitaire*, becomes a canvas for her self-expression and a space to challenge societal norms. Tori reflects on her online presence, stating, "It's very dark in my room, but my open laptop screen acts as a Dim blue lamp" (86). This serves as a testimony to the role of technology in fostering self-expression, a means to challenge societal norms, and an avenue for grappling with personal identity.

Frances Janvier, in *Radio Silence* offers readers an inspiring journey of self-discovery through her interactions with the YouTube channel "Universe City." She observes,

"I was everywhere in the Universe City Tumblr tag – my art, my blog, my Twitter, me. They still didn't know anything about me, really, which I was actually grateful for. Internet anonymity can be a good thing sometimes." (105)

This illuminates the transformative potential of technology, serving as a bridge for individuals to redefine their identities, explore their values and passions, and foster personal development. It underscores the intricate interplay between technology and personal identity, inviting readers to embark on their own journeys of self-discovery in the digital age.

The themes of resistance and conformity offer a lens through which readers can analyze the characters' choices in relation to societal norms and expectations. These themes demonstrate the characters' agency in navigating the cultural landscapes shaped by technology. Readers witness how characters actively challenge dominant narratives and cultural practices, ultimately reshaping the cultural dynamics within their respective environments. The themes provide a deeper understanding of how technology can be a catalyst for cultural transformation, as characters contest and redefine the norms that govern their lives.

In *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*, the themes of "Resistance and Conformity" emerge as profound windows into the characters' choices in the face of societal norms and expectations. Characters become agents of change, actively contesting classic educational paradigms and challenging the conformity of entertainment norms. Tori Spring in *Solitaire* and Frances Janvier in *Radio Silence* embody the spirit of resistance as they navigate the cultural landscapes shaped by technology.

Tori Spring's journey serves as an inspiration for readers to contemplate their own agency and capacity for change in a world influenced by technology, education, and entertainment. In *Radio Silence* Frances Janvier's words echo the characters' defiance against societal norms: "'Family means nothing,' she said, and I knew she believed it. 'You have no obligation to love your family. It wasn't your choice to be born.'" (270) These words emphasize the characters' agency in shaping their destinies and contesting prevailing ideologies and norms, offering a deeper understanding of how technology can be a catalyst for cultural transformation.

In essence, these themes provide a profound framework for understanding the intricate interplay of technology, education, and entertainment in the characters' lives and the world they inhabit. They invite readers to reflect on their own experiences with



technology and its paradoxical impact, the transformative potential of technology in shaping personal identities, and the dynamics of resistance and conformity in the face of societal norms. The novels *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* serve as more than stories; they are mirrors reflecting the difficult and often contradictory nature of our digitally interconnected world and the transformative power of technology in fostering self-discovery and cultural change.

#### 4.4.3 Theoretical Framework of Cultural Marxism and Edutainment

The themes in *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* strongly resonate with the theoretical framework of Cultural Marxism and Edutainment. Cultural Marxism, which focuses on the critique of dominant ideologies and cultural practices, aligns with the themes of resistance and conformity in the novels. The characters actively contest and subvert societal norms and power structures, reflecting the Marxist critique of hegemonic ideologies and their influence on cultural dynamics. The characters challenge classic educational paradigms, resist entertainment norms, and use technology to challenge and subvert dominant ideologies, which is in line with the spirit of Cultural Marxism.

In the world of *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* the themes of resistance and conformity intertwine profoundly with the theoretical framework of Cultural Marxism. Characters, such as Tori Spring and Frances Janvier, become the embodiments of resistance against prevailing norms and power structures, actively contesting societal expectations. Tori's blog and the students' involvement in the YouTube channel "Universe City" serve as platforms to challenge classic educational and entertainment paradigms.

In "*Solitaire*," Tori Spring reflects on the impact of technology and resistance, stating, "I wanted to do something. I wanted to make a change." (202) This quote embodies the spirit of Cultural Marxism, emphasizing the characters' agency in challenging hegemonic ideologies and their influence on cultural dynamics. Characters employ technology as a tool to challenge and subvert dominant ideologies, echoing the Marxist critique of cultural practices that dictate societal norms.

Edutainment, with its emphasis on the blending of entertainment and education, is mirrored in the themes of identity and self-discovery. In both novels, technology becomes a vehicle for self-expression, self-acceptance, and self-discovery. The transformative

power of technology in reshaping educational and entertainment paradigms is evident as characters utilize digital platforms to explore their passions, values, and personal development. This theme highlights the dynamic interplay between technology, self-discovery, and cultural dynamics, echoing the principles of Edutainment.

*Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* seamlessly align with the principles of Edutainment through the themes of identity and self-discovery. Technology serves as a bridge between entertainment and education, creating a transformative space for characters to redefine their identities and explore their values and passions.

Frances Janvier's journey in *Radio Silence* reflects the transformative potential of technology. She states, "internet anonymity can be a good thing sometimes" (105) which encapsulates the synergy between technology and personal development, underscoring the transformative power of technology in reshaping educational and entertainment paradigms. Characters utilize digital platforms to explore their passions and foster self-discovery, creating a dynamic interplay between technology, personal identity, and cultural dynamics.

In conclusion, the major themes in *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* offer a profound and comprehensive lens through which readers can analyze the cultural dynamics shaped by technology, education, and entertainment. These themes contribute to a deeper understanding of the characters' experiences, choices, and the cultural landscape within the narratives. They resonate with the theoretical framework of Cultural Marxism and Edutainment, emphasizing the ways in which technology challenges dominant ideologies, fosters self-discovery, and blurs the boundaries between entertainment and education.

In essence, the themes in *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* are more than mere literary elements; they serve as profound mirrors reflecting the difficult and often contradictory influence of technology, education, and entertainment. These themes echo the theoretical frameworks of Cultural Marxism and Edutainment, highlighting the transformative power of technology in challenging dominant ideologies, fostering self-discovery, and blurring the lines between entertainment and education. The novels invite readers to embark on their own journeys of reflection and exploration in the digital age, fostering a deeper understanding of the cultural dynamics that shape their lives.

## 4.5 Character Analysis

### 4.5.1 In-Depth Character Analysis for Select Characters

#### **Tori Spring (*Solitaire*):**

Tori Spring, the central character in "*Solitaire*," emerges as a captivating embodiment of resistance and agency in the digital age. Tori's character arc is a journey through the intricate terrain of technology, an exploration of its dual impact on human connection and isolation. The theme of "Digital Connectivity and Isolation" finds its resonance in her experiences.

Tori is introduced as a young woman who recognizes the difficulties of the world shaped by technology. Her blog becomes a digital platform where she actively navigates the digital landscape, using it as a means for self-expression and a tool for defiance against societal norms. She becomes a contemporary digital rebel, leveraging the online space to voice her thoughts and challenge the status quo. Her motivations are deeply rooted in her desire for change, evident when she declares, "I wanted to do something. I wanted to make a change." This quote underscores her active agency in the face of a digital society that often seems overwhelming and homogenizing.

Throughout the narrative, Tori's transformation is both poignant and enlightening. It is marked by her gradual realization of the difficulties of technology's impact on human lives. She evolves from initially perceiving technology as a mere tool for connection into recognizing its potential for isolation and disconnection. Tori's character journey becomes a compelling microcosm of the broader societal impact of technology on interpersonal relationships and the human experience. Her path serves as a poignant reflection of the overarching discussion of agency, particularly the capacity of individuals to confront dominant ideologies and power structures in the digital age.

The influence of historical and social contexts on Tori's personal choices is undeniably profound. Her responses to the digital age are shaped by the society in which she exists, with its own set of expectations, norms, and pressures. The interconnectedness of her character analysis with the broader discussion of agency highlights the intricate relationship between personal choices, historical contexts, and the influence of digital technology.

### **Frances Janvier (Radio Silence):**

Frances Janvier, the protagonist of *Radio Silence* embarks on a transformative journey of self-discovery and personal development. Her character arc seamlessly aligns with the theme of "Identity and Self-Discovery," a theme interwoven with the transformative power of technology.

Frances is a young student who initially adheres to the classic educational paradigm, striving for academic excellence as per societal expectations. However, her character journey takes an unexpected turn when she becomes involved in the YouTube channel "Universe City." Here, technology becomes the catalyst for her evolution. Frances utilizes digital platforms as instruments to redefine her identity, explore her values, and challenge societal norms.

Her motivations are rooted in a quest for authenticity and self-acceptance. Her proclamation, "That's the power of the internet. With enough time, you can learn to do anything online," (218) captures the essence of her character's transformative journey. The quote underscores the profound potential of technology as a means for personal development, fostering self-discovery, and reshaping educational paradigms.

Frances' character evolution throughout the narrative is marked by her transition from a student focused on academic excellence to an individual who discovers her true self through her involvement with "Universe City." This transformation underscores the transformative power of technology in reshaping personal identities and educational paradigms, epitomizing the overarching discussion of the influence of historical and social contexts on self-discovery.

Frances' character analysis offers a compelling reflection of the broader discussion of the intricate interplay between personal development, technology, and cultural dynamics. It highlights the blurred boundaries between entertainment and education, emphasizing how technology can be a catalyst for personal transformation and self-discovery. In conclusion, the character analyses of Tori Spring and Frances Janvier from *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* unveil their dynamic journeys and personal transformations in the face of the digital age. Their characters are not only individual explorations but also mirrors reflecting the difficult relationship between technology, personal agency, historical

and social contexts, and the broader thematic discussions of digital connectivity, self-discovery, and resistance to societal norms. These characters serve as powerful vehicles through which readers can navigate and understand the impact of technology on human lives and the multifaceted responses it elicits.

#### **4.5.2 Examining Personal Journeys, Motivations, and Transformations**

##### **Tori Spring's Journey in *Solitaire***

Tori Spring's personal journey in *Solitaire* is a poignant exploration of the profound impact of technology on personal identity and resistance in the digital age. Her character arc is a testament to the difficult interplay between individual agency, societal norms, and the evolving digital landscape.

Tori's motivations are deeply rooted in her unwavering desire to challenge prevailing ideologies and become a catalyst for change within her school. She emerges as a character who refuses to conform to the digital status quo. Her blog serves as a digital battleground where she courageously confronts the established order and seeks to redefine it. The quote, "I wanted to do something. I wanted to make a change," (178) embodies her unwavering determination to be a harbinger of transformation.

Throughout the narrative, Tori's transformation is a captivating journey marked by a growing awareness of the dual nature of technology. She undergoes a profound shift in her perception of technology, transcending the notion of it being solely a tool for connection. Instead, she grapples with its potential for isolation and disconnection. Her character journey serves as a reflection of the broader discussion of the difficulties of agency in the face of dominant ideologies.

Tori's personal choices are not isolated from the historical and social contexts that shape them. Her responses to the digital age are deeply rooted in the society in which she exists, with its own set of expectations, norms, and pressures. Her character journey becomes a microcosm, reflecting the intricate relationship between personal choices, historical contexts, and the influence of digital technology on individual lives.

### **Frances Janvier's Journey in *Radio Silence***

Frances Janvier's character journey in *Radio Silence* offers a compelling narrative of self-discovery through the transformative power of technology. Her story is a testament to the profound influence of digital platforms on personal development, self-discovery, and the blurring of boundaries between entertainment and education.

Frances' motivations are profoundly personal, rooted in her relentless pursuit of authenticity and her quest to align her passions and values with her identity. Her character embodies the spirit of self-exploration, pushing the boundaries of conventional educational paradigms. The quote, "They've messed up so many people's GCSEs and A levels, things that seriously affect people's futures" (13), encapsulates her belief in the transformative potential of technology. It serves as a rallying cry for individuals seeking self-discovery and personal development in the digital age.

Her character's evolution throughout the narrative is marked by a significant transformation. Frances undergoes a remarkable shift from a student focused on academic excellence to an individual who discovers her true self through her involvement with the YouTube channel "Universe City." This transformation reflects the broader discussion of the influence of technology on personal development and self-discovery. It underscores the dynamic interplay between personal development, technology, and the evolving dynamics of entertainment and education.

Frances' character journey becomes a compelling mirror, offering a nuanced perspective on the blurred boundaries between entertainment and education in the digital age. Her evolution embodies the idea that technology can be a powerful catalyst for personal transformation and self-discovery, challenging conventional norms and expanding the horizons of human potential. In short, the character journeys of Tori Spring and Frances Janvier serve as profound explorations of the impact of technology on personal identity, resistance, self-discovery, and personal development. These characters are more than literary creations; they are reflective of the intricate interplay between technology, personal agency, historical and social contexts, and the broader thematic discussions of digital connectivity, self-exploration, and the transformation of conventional norms. Their

journeys provide readers with a profound understanding of the multifaceted impact of technology on individual lives in the digital age.

#### 4.5.3 Relating Character Analyses to Broader Discussions

Tori Spring's character journey in *Solitaire* serves as a powerful embodiment of agency in the digital age. Her story resonates deeply with the theme of resistance against dominant ideologies and the intricate interplay between technology and personal choices. Tori's transformation from a seemingly ordinary teenager to a catalyst for change within her school reflects her unwavering determination to challenge the status quo.

Tori's motivations are rooted in her desire to make a difference, as she declares, “It hits me, then. I haven’t ever known what I wanted out of life. Until now.” (236) This motivation underscores her agency as she actively carves a space for herself in the digital landscape. Her blog becomes not just a platform for self-expression but a digital battleground where she confronts and challenges established norms. Her journey offers profound insights into the capacity of individuals to shape their responses to technology and resist dominant ideologies. Throughout the narrative, Tori undergoes a significant transformation marked by her growing awareness of the dual nature of technology. She shifts from perceiving technology solely as a tool for connection to recognizing its potential for isolation and disconnection. Her character journey becomes a microcosm of the broader societal impact of technology on interpersonal relationships. The influence of historical and social contexts is undeniable in her choices, as she navigates a world where technology has become an integral part of daily life. Her character analysis serves as a mirror, reflecting the intricate interplay of technology and its impact on personal choices and cultural dynamics.

Frances Janvier's character analysis in *Radio Silence* delves into the transformative power of technology in the realms of identity and self-discovery. Her journey provides profound insights into the dynamic interplay between personal development, technology, and cultural dynamics. Frances emerges as a character who boldly challenges conventional norms imposed by the educational system.

Frances' motivations are deeply personal and centered on her relentless pursuit of authenticity and self-acceptance. Her character journey epitomizes the transformative

potential of technology in reshaping personal identities and challenging established norms. The quote, "That's the power of the internet. With enough time, you can learn to do anything online," (oseman154) encapsulates her belief in the transformative potential of technology.

Her evolution reflects the dynamic interplay between personal development, technology, and the evolving dynamics of entertainment and education. As she becomes involved in the YouTube channel "Universe City," she not only discovers her true self but also challenges the boundaries between entertainment and education. Her character analysis sheds light on how technology can be a catalyst for personal transformation, expanding the horizons of human potential.

In short, the character analyses of Tori Spring and Frances Janvier offer readers a profound and comprehensive lens through which to analyse the themes of technology, education, and entertainment in *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*. These characters serve as more than just protagonists; they are difficult reflections of the intricate relationship between technology, personal agency, historical and social contexts, and the broader thematic discussions of digital connectivity, self-exploration, and the transformation of conventional norms. Through the journeys of Tori and Frances, readers gain profound insights into the multifaceted impact of technology on individual lives in the digital age. Their character analyses highlight the difficulties of agency and the critique of dominant ideologies, while also underscoring the transformative power of technology. These characters become windows through which readers can explore the intricate interplay of technology and its influence on personal choices and cultural dynamics in the contemporary world. The nuanced details of their character journeys provide readers with a richer understanding of how technology shapes not only their personal identities but also the broader cultural dynamics within the narratives.

Next section attempts to offer an even more extensive analysis of the base-superstructure relationship in *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* within the context of the theoretical framework of Cultural Marxism and Edutainment.



## 4.6 Base-Superstructure Relationship

The intricate interplay between the base (technology) and the superstructures (entertainment and education) in *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* reveals the profound ways in which technology influences and shapes these domains. The base, in this case, serves as a dynamic catalyst for change and transformation within the superstructures, altering the classic landscape of entertainment and education.

In "*Solitaire*," the characters actively harness digital media and communication technologies to challenge and subvert the prevailing educational and entertainment norms. Tori Spring's blog emerges as a powerful tool for self-education and a form of resistance against the classic educational system. Through her blog, she not only critiques the dominant ideologies governing her school but also provides a platform for alternative perspectives and self-directed learning. This underscores how technology can disrupt established educational norms, offering new avenues for personal development, resistance, and self-expression. Furthermore, it highlights the subversive potential of technology in challenging and reshaping the superstructures that dictate the boundaries of entertainment and education.

*Radio Silence* furthers the exploration of technology's transformative influence on entertainment and education. Frances Janvier's involvement in the YouTube channel "Universe City" is emblematic of the blurring boundaries between entertainment and education, underscoring the dynamic relationship between the base and superstructures. The base, in this instance, facilitates a paradigm shift in how individuals consume and contribute to knowledge and entertainment. The channel becomes a conduit for self-discovery and personal development, challenging the conventional separation between educational content and entertainment. By embracing the digital medium, it empowers individuals to take control of their educational and entertainment experiences.

### 4.6.1. Key Instances of Base-superstructure Relationship

Numerous key instances in both novels exemplify the tangible manifestations of the base-superstructure relationship. In "*Solitaire*," one such instance is the transformative power of Tori Spring's blog. Her use of technology to challenge classic educational norms

and establish a platform for self-education represents a pivotal moment where the base actively influences the superstructures. Her blog becomes a vehicle for resistance and critical engagement with the established educational order, effectively altering the landscape of education within the narrative.

In *Radio Silence* the relationship is evident in the collaborative creation of the YouTube channel "Universe City." This initiative fundamentally redefines the boundaries between entertainment and education, as it blurs the lines separating the two superstructures. The base of technology facilitates this convergence, allowing individuals to actively participate in shaping the superstructures of entertainment and education. The channel serves as a testament to the dynamic interplay between the base and superstructures, reimagining classic educational and entertainment paradigms.

#### **4.6.2 Relating Findings to Theoretical Framework**

These findings strongly resonate with the theoretical framework applied in this analysis, notably the concepts of Cultural Marxism and Edutainment. Cultural Marxism, characterized by its critique of dominant ideologies, finds vibrant expression in the characters' use of technology to challenge and subvert classic educational and entertainment norms. The base-superstructure relationship illustrates the characters' agency in actively resisting hegemonic ideologies and reshaping cultural dynamics within their respective narratives. Technology, as the base, acts as a tool for contesting and critiquing the superstructures that perpetuate dominant norms.

Edutainment, with its emphasis on the blending of entertainment and education, is vividly reflected in the blurring of boundaries between these domains facilitated by technology. In both novels, the characters utilize digital platforms to foster personal development, challenge societal norms, and redefine their identities. This embodiment of Edutainment principles underscores the transformative potential of technology, as it offers new avenues for self-directed learning, redefines the nature of entertainment and education, and empowers individuals to actively participate in the creation of knowledge and entertainment content. In short, the base-superstructure relationship in *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* represents a dynamic interplay where technology fundamentally influences and reshapes the realms of entertainment and education. These instances align seamlessly with

the theoretical framework, emphasizing the characters' agency in challenging classic norms, critiquing dominant ideologies, and redefining the cultural dynamics within the narratives. The novels vividly demonstrate how technology acts as a catalyst for transformation, offering new avenues for self-directed learning and the convergence of entertainment and education. This in-depth exploration underscores the transformative potential of the base-superstructure relationship and its profound impact on the characters and the broader cultural landscape within the novels.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5.CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Synthesis of Analysis

The analysis of *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* within the context of the theoretical framework and research objectives has yielded several key findings that shed light on the intricate relationship between technology, education, entertainment, and culture.

In *Solitaire*, I discovered how the base of technology influences and shapes the superstructures of entertainment and education. Tori Spring's blog serves as a prominent example, enabling resistance against prevailing educational norms and offering a platform for self-education. This resistance reflects the principles of Cultural Marxism, emphasizing the critique of dominant ideologies and the contestation of societal norms.

*Radio Silence* further emphasizes the transformative power of technology, particularly in the realm of identity and self-discovery. Frances Janvier's involvement in the YouTube channel "Universe City" exemplifies the blurring of boundaries between entertainment and education, echoing the principles of Edutainment.

Moreover, the characters' agency in shaping their responses to technology and their contestation of dominant ideologies align with the theoretical concepts of agency and ideology. The impact of historical and social contexts on the characters' experiences and choices underscores the relevance of intersectionality in the narratives.

The synthesis of these findings highlights the profound intersections between technology, education, and entertainment with the theoretical concepts of Cultural Marxism, Edutainment, Intersectionality, and other frameworks. In *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*, technology emerges as a powerful tool for resistance and transformation, challenging established norms within entertainment and education. The characters' contestation of dominant ideologies mirrors the essence of Cultural Marxism, while the convergence of entertainment and education exemplifies Edutainment.

Intersectionality, as a framework, becomes particularly relevant in understanding how historical and social contexts shape the characters' responses to technology. Factors

such as class, race, gender, and sexuality influence their experiences, choices, and interactions with the evolving base of technology.

The conclusions drawn from the analysis of *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* carry significant implications for our understanding of contemporary society and its cultural dynamics. These novels serve as mirrors reflecting the difficult ways in which technology shapes our lives, influences entertainment and education, and intersects with multiple dimensions of identity and culture.

In a world increasingly driven by technology, the themes of resistance, self-discovery, and the redefinition of norms hold immense relevance. The intersection of technology with entertainment and education blurs classic boundaries and redefines how individuals engage with knowledge and fun. As I reflect on these narratives, I recognize the transformative potential of technology in the hands of individuals who challenge established paradigms and foster cultural change.

Moreover, the consideration of historical and social contexts within the novels underscores the importance of recognizing the diverse experiences and perspectives of individuals. The characters' responses to technology are influenced by their backgrounds and identities, emphasizing the significance of an intersectional approach in understanding contemporary cultural dynamics. In short, the analysis of *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* provides valuable insights into how technology, education, and entertainment intersect with theoretical frameworks and contemporary society. These novels encourage us to reflect on the transformative potential of technology, the agency of individuals in shaping cultural dynamics, and the influence of historical and social contexts. They serve as compelling narratives that mirror the difficulties of our digital age and offer profound lessons for understanding our ever-evolving cultural landscape.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The exploration of technology, education, and entertainment in the context of the novels *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* has offered a multifaceted understanding of how these elements intersect with broader cultural dynamics. The analysis, framed within the theoretical concepts of Cultural Marxism, Edutainment, Intersectionality, and other relevant frameworks, has illuminated the transformative potential of technology and its

influence on individual agency, resistance to dominant ideologies, self-discovery, and the impact of historical and social contexts.

The findings reveal that technology, in the digital age, serves as a double-edged sword, facilitating both connection and isolation. Characters in these novels grapple with the paradox of being digitally connected while often experiencing emotional isolation. The use of technology provides opportunities for building and maintaining connections, yet it also accentuates feelings of loneliness and alienation. These themes emphasize the difficult and often contradictory nature of our digitally interconnected world, where individuals use technology to reach out and engage with others while simultaneously grappling with the detachment that can result from overreliance on screens.

Furthermore, technology plays a pivotal role in shaping individual identities and enabling self-discovery. In "*Solitaire*," Tori Spring's blog becomes a platform for self-expression and defiance against societal norms, ultimately leading to her realization of the difficulties of technology's impact. In *Radio Silence* the characters utilize technology, particularly through the YouTube channel "Universe City," to redefine their identities, challenge societal norms, and seek authenticity. The transformative power of technology in reshaping personal identities is evident, reflecting the dynamic interplay between technology, self-discovery, and cultural dynamics.

In addition, the characters actively navigate the cultural landscapes shaped by technology, making choices that challenge the status quo or conform to societal expectations. They contest classic educational paradigms, challenge entertainment norms, and resist dominant cultural practices, underscoring their agency in shaping their own paths. These choices highlight their capacity to challenge and subvert dominant ideologies and reshape the cultural dynamics within their respective environments.

The intersection of historical and social contexts with technology underscores the significance of an intersectional approach. Factors such as class, race, gender, and sexuality influence the characters' experiences, choices, and interactions with the evolving base of technology. These intersections illustrate the relevance of considering diverse backgrounds and identities in understanding the characters' responses to technology.

The synthesis of these findings demonstrates the profound intersections between technology, education, and entertainment with the theoretical concepts of Cultural Marxism, Edutainment, Intersectionality, and other frameworks. Technology emerges as a powerful tool for resistance and transformation, challenging established norms within entertainment and education. The characters' contestation of dominant ideologies mirrors the essence of Cultural Marxism, while the convergence of entertainment and education exemplifies Edutainment.

In contemporary society, where technology plays an increasingly dominant role, these conclusions are significant. They emphasize the transformative potential of technology in the hands of individuals who challenge established paradigms and foster cultural change. The narratives of *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence* serve as compelling mirrors, reflecting the difficulties of our digital age and offering profound lessons for understanding our ever-evolving cultural landscape.

In essence, this research thesis has provided valuable insights into the intricate interplay between technology, education, and entertainment within the novels *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*. The characters' journeys, their resistance to dominant norms, and the influence of historical and social contexts serve as potent reminders of the ever-evolving cultural dynamics in our contemporary society. This thesis underscores the transformative potential of technology in shaping our identities, challenging established ideologies, and redefining the boundaries between entertainment and education in a digital world.

### **5.3 Implications and Recommendations**

The research findings presented in this thesis carry significant implications for various domains, including education, entertainment industries, and broader cultural discourse. These implications stem from the multifaceted understanding of the intersections between technology, education, entertainment, and culture within the novels *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*.

In the realm of education, the insights gleaned from the characters' resistance to classic educational paradigms and their use of technology for self-directed learning offer valuable lessons. They underline the need for educational institutions to adapt to the digital age by incorporating technology as a tool for personalized learning and self-expression.

The blurring of boundaries between entertainment and education, as witnessed in *Radio Silence* presents an opportunity for educators to engage students in innovative and engaging ways, combining educational content with entertainment elements to foster a deeper and more meaningful learning experience.

Moreover, the research findings have significant implications for the entertainment sector. They highlight the evolving expectations of audiences in a digital age. Audiences no longer passively consume entertainment but actively participate in content creation and seek authenticity. This challenges entertainment industries to create more interactive and authentic narratives that resonate with the experiences of individuals navigating the digital landscape. The case of "Universe City" in *Radio Silence* serves as an example of how digital platforms can redefine the nature of entertainment, emphasizing the potential for user-generated content and authentic storytelling.

In the broader cultural discourse, the themes of resistance, self-discovery, and agency in the face of technology reflect the ongoing cultural transformations in our digital society. The findings underscore the importance of recognizing the difficulties of technology's influence on interpersonal relationships and the individual's sense of identity. Cultural discourse should engage with the paradoxical impact of technology on connectivity and isolation, fostering discussions on how to strike a balance between digital interactions and genuine human connections.

### **5.3.1 Further Research/practical Applications**

Building on the insights gained from this analysis, several recommendations for further research and practical applications emerge:

#### **1. Exploration of Student-Centric Education:**

Further research could focus on the integration of technology to create student-centric educational environments. Investigating how technology can empower students to take more control of their learning experiences and challenge classic educational norms would be of great value.



## **2. Digital Content Creation**

In the entertainment sector, future research could explore the implications of the blurring boundaries between entertainment and education. This could include studies on user-generated content, the impact of digital platforms on the consumption of entertainment, and the role of authenticity in storytelling.

## **3. Digital Well-Being**

Given the dual nature of technology's impact on digital connectivity and isolation, practical applications should address the mental health and well-being of individuals in a digital world. Developing strategies for promoting healthy digital interactions and mitigating the adverse effects of digital isolation is crucial.

## **4. Intersectionality and Technology**

Further research on the intersectionality of technology could delve deeper into how factors like class, race, gender, and sexuality intersect with the digital landscape. Understanding how these factors shape individuals' experiences and choices is essential for creating more inclusive and equitable digital environments.

## **5. Digital Literacy and Critical Thinking**

In the context of education, promoting digital literacy and critical thinking skills is imperative. Practical applications should aim to empower individuals to navigate the digital world effectively and critically, challenging the dominant narratives and cultural practices that may not serve their best interests.

In short, this research offers a rich understanding of the dynamic interplay between technology, education, entertainment, and culture within the novels *Solitaire* and *Radio Silence*. The implications for education, entertainment industries, and cultural discourse are significant, emphasizing the need for adaptation and innovation in the digital age. Moreover, the recommendations for further research and practical applications point to areas of exploration and development in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

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