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CONTENTS

Girija and Nimisha as Breakaway Rebels from the Norm: A Study of the Inter Relationship between Woman and Kitchen

***Usha Sadasivan* 04**

A New Historicist Reading of Jeffrey Archer's *Kane and Abel*

***Bincy Sebastian* 10**

Surviving One's Own Home: *The Good Girls* and the Reality of Women's Lives in Contemporary India

***Aiswarya R.* 18**

Glimpse of the Margins: A Reading of Bava Chelladurai's *Pachai Irulan*

***Divya Lekshmi M. S.* 22**

Poetic Attempts to Subvert the Ideology of History

***Maria George* 24**

The Divine Motherhood: Exploring Mariology in Malayalam Literature

***Karthika S. B.* 29**

The Voice of the Voiceless : Study on Asura by Anand Neelakantan

***M. Jhansi Rani & P. Priya* 39**

Kappiri Muthappan: Transmogrification of the Slave as Deity

***Jasmine Gonsalvez* 44**

Loose Continuities: Embodiment and Dispersal of Self in Shilo Shiv Suleman's Art

***Kalyani Rajendran* 50**

Educational Odyssey: Unravelling Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*

***Arunima Suresh* 61**

Garnering Hope: Economic Migration and Resilience in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*

Alan Ben D'cruz 71

Being Vegetarian is Going Green: An Ecofeminist Reading of Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*

Vineetha Mohan & Reethi P. 79

Redefining the Regional Space in Literature

S. Jayanthi 93

The chronotopic Interplay in Advertising Narratives

Merin Jose 99

Class and Caste Politics in Regional Narratives: Portrayal of Shades of Villain with Special Reference to *Onnayum Attukuttiyum* and *Mahabharatha*

Jiya Jose 106

Reading Ideology and False Consciousness in Abdoel Moeis' *Never the Twain*

Sreelekshmy B. 128

Exploring the Trauma in Life Narrative: A Study on *Blasphemy: A Memoir*

Nada Rajan 134

Girija and Nimisha as Breakaway Rebels from the Norm: A Study of the Inter Relationship between Woman and Kitchen

Usha Sadasivan

‘A woman’s place is in the kitchen. The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach. A woman who can’t cook is as useless as a man who can’t fix things. There is no spectacle on earth more appealing than that of a beautiful *woman* in the act of *cooking* dinner for someone she loves . Cooking comes naturally to women.’ These are some of the oft heard and condescending comments on the role of women in the kitchen. Has twentyone centuries of human history made any difference to the position of women? Not really. Even in the twenty first century, we still find women supposedly ‘ruling’ over the kitchen, or queening over the kitchen. Against the backdrop of this sly and systematic back staging of women, this article has made an attempt to bring to the limelight the atrocities permeated subtly against women in the guise of allowing her to rule over the kitchen. The researcher has taken up two characters for study for this purpose. One is Girija, from the popular Tamil novel by Rajam Krishnan ‘*Suzhalil Mithakkum Deepangal*’, translated into English as *Lamps in the Whirlpool* by Uma Narayanan and Prema Seetharam . The other character that is being analysed in the article is Nimisha , the protagonist in the contemporary Malayalam film *The Great Indian Kitchen*, written by Jeo Baby.

In the portrayal of Girija , we see the usual docile housewife putting up with the daily grind of cooking, cleaning, folding , ironing and the endless and interminable household chores. She is the quintessential ‘pathini’ (virtuous woman) to be found in every traditional household with no individuality but only a commonality of features. *Lamps in the Whirlpool* is a story of the dilemma the modern Indian woman faces – who she should be: a dutiful wife and mother, an obedient daughter-in-law or a woman with a life of dignity. The story is set in Delhi of the 1980s and Girija, the educated housewife, is forced to acknowledge the loveless emptiness of her life, burdened by the archaic Brahminical custom of *madi*. For seventeen years, she has meekly accepted exploitation by orthodox matriarchy and typical patriarchy, until a visit to Haridwar and the river Ganges opens her eyes to the choice she must make – between servitude to family or an unfettered life and loss of access to her children. This story is considered the first feminist novel in Tamil. The author, Rajam Krishnan, was the first Tamil woman to receive the Sahitya Akademi Award. Krishnan set a trend for women-centric novels in contemporary fiction in Tamil and deftly exposed the brittle bricks on which the much-glorified

institution of family stands and how fragile the bonds of marriage can be. The story, thus, serves as beacon for the new woman, independent, self-reliant and strong, cutting across regions and class.

The film, *The Great Indian Kitchen* offers a beautiful similarity in the symbolic exposition of the ‘woman as doormat’ format. The protagonist Nimisha an ‘educated’ woman is ‘viewed’ (*pennu kaanal*) by the groom, married off and given the honour of mopping, cooking and cleaning of left overs. To top it all, the kitchen sink leaks. The sight of the clogged kitchen sink every day, nauseates the woman’s sensibilities till she can take it no more. Both the women characters, Girija and Nimisha, finally decide to break the shackles that hold them down and in their emancipation we see some light at the end of the tunnel. In the end of the film though, when Nimisha leaves in disgust, she is immediately replaced by another woman who starts her regime of endless cooking, and mopping and cleaning up the leftovers. The vicious and manmade cycle of continues with no end in sight.

The author, Rajam Krishnan’s feminist treatment of this story about a housewife’s self-respect is especially impressive for its lucid language. The writer details the housework from cooking, folding, ironing to packing and the incessant chores behind the “taken for granted” spick and span house. Rajam Krishnan examines the golden cage of patriarchy that binds women within the house. The reference to jewels, clothes, material wealth, in exchange for life-long servitude is the crux she wishes women would come forward and break. Girija hopes that her daughter will break away from this tyranny.

The author, Rajam Krishnan, serves as the voice representing the positive choices that women need to imbibe. Her characters have long served as extensions towards breaking woman stereotypes. As a dutiful daughter-in-law, an obedient wife and a tireless mother of three, Girija is described by her routine in an orthodox Brahmin household. In spite of her education and work as an inspiring teacher, the story reveals Girija to be reduced to being a household appliance, on a perennial auto-work mode. The novel follows her monotonous housework that gets criticised and belittled at every instance by her mother-in-law.

Though set in the 1980s, the universality of the novel lies in the way it portrays the ritualistic existence of women in the upper caste community and their suffering after marriage. The hypocrisy in the value system that raises a girl, educates her, and even let her work (earn towards wedding expenses) within the strict moral policing of society has not changed much.

The middle class mores that dictate urban Indian households, have not really vanished but simply evolved. While earlier, women studied more 'basic' courses, nowadays, engineer brides have become pre-requisites for marriage proposals.

In the contemporary Indian Literary scenario, Indian women writers in English who reflect the truth of Indian reality. They bear numerous responsibilities in the world of literature. They have excelled the global literary standards set by the post-colonial and postmodern writers men and women like Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Vikram Chandra, Sashi Tharoor and Arundhati Roy etc. These have become the colossal central socio literary figures with the substantial bodies of work drawing the global attention. They also have become the only negotiators to mediate the core social and cultural problems of India and other colonized nations. All their major works have enjoyed immense academic attention across the globe and which have invited and produced a great amount of literary criticism especially on *feminism*. In their anthology of women's writing in India in the 19th century and 20th century, Susie J. Tharu and K. Lalitha credit Rajam Krishnan with having set a new trend in Tamil literature keeping in view the extensive research that Krishnan did in evaluating social conditions as background for her writing. Both the works the researcher has analysed are concerned with emphasizing the moral particularity of a particular population bounded by territory. The regionalism is obvious here as some of the typical situations discussed, are to be found only on this side of the sub-continent.

The movie opens with a montage where Nimisha Sajayan is seen happily dancing while snacks are being prepared in a kitchen. She is soon viewed and married off to a school teacher from a very good family. Kitchen plays an integral role in the movie where the women juggle between multiple things to keep the house in order and the men comfortable. Any discomfort caused, no matter the reason, the women are meant to be apologetic. As the new bride becomes a wife, her life becomes a routine that is taken for granted. Every time the movie shifts the camera on a female character, we see her in the kitchen or attending to the men in the house. While the women toil and break their backs in the kitchen, the men are lazing around, scrolling through videos on Whatsapp and leaving behind food waste on the dining table for the women to clean. The film's most beautiful but haunting shots take place in the kitchen. However, Nimisha's character, who has a totally different upbringing from the house she has been married to, finds it very claustrophobic. The Great Indian Kitchen comes as an eye-opener, at a time when many women are still judged for their cooking skills than any

other capabilities. It not only talks about the new-gen women who question such unsung slavery but is also a tribute to the women who have been silently putting up with it inside every home for centuries.

Almost all the scenes take place in the kitchen. This is to drive home the point that we have normalised the vision of woman in kitchen as a normal every day occurrence. Women being in the kitchen is no big deal. The repeated scenes set in the kitchen seem to be calculated, to tire out the viewer and give a sense of the sheer drudgery that most women go through, day in and day out, twenty four by seven, three sixty five days of the year.

Meah opines that the kitchen was transformed from a space of production to a space of consumption, with the evolution of modern kitchen design in the twentieth century, the kitchen becoming an ideological battle ground. Mass housing projects during the inter-war period, favoured standardised, modernist kitchen spaces. By scientifically arranging space within the kitchen to make it more productive, daily life and behaviour also changed. Functionalist designers of the 1930s saw the repetitive and productive model of factory assembly lines as the ideal method for both easing the housewife's work and making it more efficient. By reducing the housewife's need to move around the kitchen, making everything within reaching distance, the routinisation of her work meant cooking was less of a pleasure and more of a practical task. Kitchens have become spaces where numerous practices and elements are structured and held together, making it both material and symbolic. The personalisation, and sometimes feminisation, of the kitchen space has altered the ways in which kitchens are experienced and consumed. The kitchen was mostly at the rear of the house, out of public view; gendered labour concealed from the rest of society. Erving Goffman's (1959) in *The Presentation of self in everyday life*, explains how our identities are performed sometimes less explicitly, hidden from others, in what is called by him as the 'back stage'. The kitchen became the symbolic heart of domesticity and the women that produced this sense of domesticity are often marginalised. This woman can be called by any name, it can be Girija or Nimisha.

Rajam's heroine Girija will not break down against societal battering. She would rather rebuild her life outside. No doubt it will be an arduous task and filled with unsurmountable hurdles, and perhaps Girija and her like who assert their individuality are but lamps in the whirlpool of a caste- and custom-ridden society. But as long as there is life, there is hope. Aptly and symbolically, Rajam has used the word *mithakkum* (floats) in her title, which is a

positive statement. Ratna, Girija, and their ilk do not symbolize the helplessness of the lamps in the whirlpool but rather the purposeful “floating” of the lamps against all odds. Upon a superficial reading of the novel, Girija might seem to be more a type than a character: the frustrated woman caught in the angst of middle-age with a husband who is the very image of male egoism, a woman who feels trapped because her unmarried daughters may need her presence in the home. Definitely, the house is typical of India’s urban middle class, which is controlled by a patriarchal system that considers “female independent self-hood” as unnecessary and unhealthy. The other stereotypes Samu, the mother-in-law, and Roja mami representing a social truth but now and then a Girija will be born, to break the shackles of oppressive society rules.

Rajam Krishnan’s does not advertise the western idea of feminism which is seen in her portrayal of the character of Runo from a rich family. Neglected by her drunken father, she takes to drugs and eventually commits suicide. Rajam then presents the catalytic agent of the novel, Ratna. Here is Rajam’s ideal, the “new woman”: well educated, full of self-control, mincing no words, ready to help and to engage herself in purposeful action. The author, Rajam Krishna’s feminist treatment of this story about a housewife’s self-respect is especially impressive for its lucid language. Rajam Krishnan examines the golden cage of patriarchy that binds women within the house. The reference to jewels, clothes, material wealth, in exchange for life-long servitude is the norm . By the end of this work, Girija transformed, pines for her daughter’s freedom from this cycle of patriarchy. This reflects the author’s hopes for a real transformation of values within society. Rajam speaks through the voice of Ratna :

What a disgrace! They treat you like a worm and make you work like a machine.

Harmony is achieved only when all the noted are in perfect accord. A single note, however melodious, does not create harmony.

Although the novel deals with the Brahminical milieu and its orthodoxy it also evokes the image of the Indian woman and her plight caught up in obligations towards her family. Rajam Krishnan is pained to see that the majority of the Indian women have no sense of self at all. They lose their identity after the marriage. Education does not give any rationale of their life. They become sacrificial goats in the ritual of running the family. In the movie, Nimisha goes back to her old life by her own choice. She is empowering herself and is firm in her

stance. But it is saddening to see that the male members of her family do not change even an iota. Her position is soon filled by another willing and eligible woman candidate.

In both the stories , we see strong women characters . Their place of awakening is the kitchen. Kitchen is an important segment of the house, and is the source of health and wellbeing of the people of the house. In both stories , the position of the kitchen is at the back of the house. While keen attention is given to the construction of other segments of the house, the kitchen remains neglected. This negligence signifies the status of women in a household- not to be seen or heard. The women appear like shadows, their heads covered, their deep coloured skirts melting in to the darkness of the room , only the sounds of their work is heard continuously. The walls of the kitchen define the boundaries and politics of patriarchal tyranny. The novel and the film portray the ritualistic existence of women and their harsh experiences in the kitchen . The hypocrisy in the value system that raises a girl, educates her, and even lets her work within the strict moral policing of society has not changed much. The middle class mores that dictate urban Indian households, have not really vanished but simply evolved. Girijas' and Nimishas' may come and go, but the great Indian kitchen will go on forever !

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A New Historicist Reading of Jeffrey Archer's *Kane and Abel*

Bincy Sebastian

The end of the twentieth century witnessed the strong wave of postmodern critical practices according to which the emerging trends in literature and the cultural realm can be analysed. The peculiarities of this age produced multifaceted theoretical approaches in which New Historicism deserves special attention. In the words of Peter Barry, New Historicism is a method based on the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts, usually of the same historical period. That is to say, new historicism refuses (at least ostensibly) to 'privilege' the literary text: instead of a literary 'foreground' and a historical 'background', it envisages and practices a mode of study in which literary and non-literary texts are given equal weight and constantly inform and interrogate each other (172).

It was the publication of the American critic Stephan Greenblatt's work, *Renaissance Self Fashioning from More to Shakespeare*, in 1980, that heralded new historicism in the literary circles. Since then it has been proved most useful in understanding the relationship between history and literature and in revealing the ideological and political interests operating through texts. It was the Marxist and Cultural theories which recognised that literature can be used to construct and reinforce conservative and humanist ideology. Gramsci, Althusser and Raymond Williams all came to the conclusion that power operates in society according to a hegemonic logic that penetrates deep into social and cultural codes and conventions. Most of these Marxist thinkers such as Althusser, Benjamin and Lukacs have had a wide-ranging influence on new historicism and it presents literary texts as a space where power relations are made visible. Moreover, it is important to recognise that for new historicists the nature of power may remain the same but the form that it takes does not. Borrowing from Foucault, new historicists often seek to identify what forms power takes as it changes from one period to another. Paul Hamilton refer to this as, "the repetition of power through different epistemes" (162). Since Popular culture is the main cultural expression of the contemporary period, through a New Historicist reading, this paper attempts to analyse the operation of the above mentioned in a Popular fiction called *Kane and Abel* written by Jeffrey Archer.

As a bestselling writer, Archer's works enjoy readership all around the world. He has published 23 novels and the first book of his latest series, titled as William Warwick Series was published in 2019. Among all his works *Kane and Abel* proved to be his best-selling

work. Published in 1979, *Kane and Abel* was a global phenomenon when it was first released, selling over one million copies in its first week of sale, and it has captivated readers worldwide ever since by being published in 132 countries and selling over 32 million copies. Undoubtedly *Kane and Abel* is one of the most popular books of the twentieth century. Set in the backdrop of the two World Wars and the Cold War period, *Kane and Abel* unravels the story of the lives and rivalry of Baron Abel Rosnovski (Wladek Koskiewicz), a Polish man and William Lowell Kane, an American.

By setting the story between the period of 1906-1967, *Kane and Abel* is rich with historical references presented in the background of Kane and Abel's chase for their ambition and revenge. For instance, the death of William's father Richard in the Titanic disaster (55), Poland under the rule of Stalinist Russia, the elections of Calvin Coolidge (14) Herbert Hoover (245), John F Kennedy (499) and F D Roosevelt (503), the Wall Street collapse (243) and the Great Depression (338) are narrated in this manner. Archer does not confine the historical details to major political events, the writer brings in references of the arrival of the Ford Model T (49), and indicates the impact that it had on the automobile industry of the twentieth century. Similarly, the fashion, the taste of music, the lifestyle and interests of the elitist people in the US are portrayed by mentioning about Shreve, Crump & Low (74)- one of the oldest purveyor of luxury goods in North America, the references about Mozart (79), Sinatra (386) and Casals (434), projecting their influence on the European music of that time, and the Plaza Hotel (272) in US and the Ritz hotel (239) in UK as the favourite choices of the Kane family. Also, the novel contains references to several famous books and the popular fiction of the 1940s, for example, the reference to *Gone with the Wind* as America's new bestseller (336). Other authors cited are the literary giants like Kafka (284), Fitzgerald (284), Mark Twain (405) and Dr Johnson (421).

Through the portrayal of the characters and the nations, Archer deftly interweaves fact with fiction thereby fictionalising history and historicizing fiction. Beyond indicating the dates and figures of historical events, Archer enmeshes history into his narrative by presenting the lives of people, their cultural and psychological formations and the socio-political temperament during that period which makes the work ideal for a new historicist reading. In the work *Prophecies of the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture*, the American critic Louis Montrose, defines New historicism as a combined interest in "the textuality of history, the historicity of texts" (588). Through William and his family, Archer presents the highbrow

elitist society in America during that time, their taste and their culture. William's mother Anne was a Cabot and she married into Lowell family. When William was born, he is viewed as the heir of a millionaire to carry on this elitist tradition which is evident as one of Anne's friends sends her a card which says,

Here's to the city of Boston,
Land of the bean and the cod,
Where Cabots, talk only to Lowells,
And Lowells talk only to God (4).

Whereas, through Abel who was born into the bloodshed, poverty and political turmoil of Poland, Archer presents the history of Poland, the hardships and cruelties of the war as experienced by a Polish common man and his responses to it. Unlike the most common historical documents and war narratives that are told from an English man's perspective, what makes the war narration in *Kane and Abel* different is this very aspect, as it presents the two World Wars seen through the eyes of a Pole. Through the incidents of Russian and German imprisonment, the times when Abel spend in the Russian labour camp (91), the story presents the hardships and the personal loses that Abel suffers which represents the helpless state of Poland at the beginning of the Twentieth century. The novel presents the historic pride of the Poles and how the Baron passes this nationalistic spirit to the young Abel's mind as he learns the history of Poland intertwined with his family history from the Baron. The Baron "would tell the boys stories of Polish history" (41), about the national hero, Tadeusz Kosciuszko as "A great patriot and hero", "The very symbol of our struggle for independence" (41) and that his "great-great-great-grandfather fought with Kosciuszko" and later with "Dabrowski's legions for the mighty Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte!" (41) The Baron paints the picture of Poland during the First World War when he says that,

Our national spirit has not been broken in one hundred and fifty years of oppression" he replied. It may be that the fate of Poland is in the balance, but we are powerless to influence history. We are at the mercy of the three mighty empires that surround us, and therefore must await our fate (43)

However, literary texts do not just make sense of the world when examined in historical context, they also serve a particular function in persuading people of a particular view. Because

texts are understood as participating in the production of ideology and culture, the new historicists insist that there is no division between text and context, or between literature and politics. History undergoes textual interpretations, and the way history is narrated and the representations of Poland, America, and Britain in *Kane and Abel* by an English writer is problematic when it is read using the theoretical dispositions of New Historicism. As New Historicism opens a complex dialogue between history and the text and according to them, history always supports the dominant groups and trends in a society. They view all literary texts as products and functional components of all social, political and cultural formations and as the vehicle of politics. Greenblatt says, in his introduction to *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*: ‘the written word is self-consciously embedded in specific communities, life situations and structures of power’ (7), it examines “Social presence to the world of the literary text and the social presence of the world in the literary text”.

In *Kane and Abel*, the presentation of America and Britain seems to undermine other nationalities. Despite being a Pole, Abel’s allegiance always lies with America and Britain. Archer celebrates capitalism and attempts to affirm the power of America as a capitalistic nation in the world. Capitalism is a system in which goods and services, down to the most basic necessities of life, are produced for profitable exchange, where even human labour-power is a commodity for sale in the market, and where all economic actors are dependent on the market (Wood 2). In the novel, William’s image as a privileged, affluent millionaire leading a luxurious life right from his birth, stands for America as a capitalistic nation. William’s grandmother, Mrs. Kane is described as “Wealth, position and prestige she could always come to terms with. Love was all very well, but it rarely proved to be a lasting commodity” (24). Whereas Abel had to survive and make his tough journey through the wars, the continents, and nations to reach the New World which offers him a new life. The novel’s showcase of the achievement of the American Dream by Abel is another important aspect to be considered. James Truslow Adams defines the American Dream as, “life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement” regardless of social class or circumstances of birth. The novel presents that it was because Abel, a penniless immigrant, reached in America, that he was able to climb the ladder of success from being a waiter in a hotel to the owner of an international hotel empire. Abel considers that he “was lucky enough to reach the safety of these (American) shores” and he says about America that, “This is the only country on earth where you can arrive with nothing and make something of

yourself through hard work, regardless of your background” (390). By showing the protagonist as achieving the American Dream, the novel concretizes and supports the economic ideology of capitalism adopted by America. Another important instance that justifies capitalism is the debate on the motion “Socialism or Capitalism for America’s Future” in Harvard where William and his friend Matthew Lester speaks for capitalism (223-226).

New Historicism understands the stories of the past as society’s way of constructing a narrative that unconsciously fits its interests as it is usually a procession of stories favourable to the victor. The fact that Archer is a British writer has influenced his sensibility and imagination is very well reflected in *Kane and Abel*. He has narrated and fashioned the novel in accordance with a European imagination as it transfers a hegemonic discourse through the representation of Britain and the English language. For instance, William, an American, describes Britain as, “it’s a nation of people to whom we owe our entire heritage” and that “if Hitler puts so much as a foot on British soil, America will enter war the same day, whatever our Ambassador in London says” (375). On the other hand, for Abel, Britain presents the image of a saviour as the British embassy rescues him from Turkey. Abel’s affiliation with the British embassy is repeated in several instances in the novel (516).

Similarly, the novel affirms and re-establishes the prominence of English. When the British Embassy rescues Abel in Turkey, he understands the value of his “fumbling English” (164). Abel’s realization of the role that English plays in one’s development and financial advancement and his efforts to learn the language establishes the significance of English over the other languages in the world. The inability to speak English fluently is represented as a mark of indignity. As Abel and his Polish immigrant friends, Zaphia and Jerzy, reach the American shores, Zaphia mocks at Jerzy telling that,

‘You’re too Polish, Jerzy. You can’t even speak nice English like Wladek’ to which Jerzy replies as ‘I’ll learn’, said Jerzy confidently, ‘and I’ll start by making my name American. From today I shall be George Novak. Then I’ll have no trouble at all. Everyone in the United States will think I’m American’ (181)

Hence, language is presented as an important tool in the construction of cultural and political histories, identity formation and Othering in the novel.

Thus, the new historicist reading of this novel illustrates how a text strengthens the existing ideology. It shows how literary text which comes under the Ideological State Apparatus,

as Althusser calls it, contributes to the process of reproducing the relations of production. Both Roland Barthes and Louis Althusser argues that literature represents myths and imaginary versions of real social relationships which constitute ideology. In *Kane and Abel*, ideology is infused with war and history. Since *Kane and Abel* is a popular fiction and in turn part of the Culture Industry, the discussion would not be complete without having a glance at how history is employed by the writer for the commercial success of this book.

Archer is considered as the number one bestseller in fiction, short stories, and non-fiction and has published in 97 countries and more than 33 languages and is firmly established, with international sales passing 275 million copies. In the case of *Kane and Abel*, even after celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2019, the novel continues its dream run, selling 2,50,000 copies a year. Therefore, Archer's works are important "cultural commodities" and they are as Adorno in his *Culture Industry Reconsidered* says "governed by the principle of their realization as value, and not by their own specific content and harmonious formation". The products of Cultural Industry become the media operandi of ideologies that favour the existing status quo and it is through these products that the dominant group exercises their power on the masses. According to Adorno, "The culture industry fuses the old and familiar into a new quality. In all its branches, products which are tailored for consumption by masses, and which to a great extent determine the nature of that consumption, are manufactured more or less according to plan". In *Kane and Abel*, Archer fashions history as well as his characters as per this plan. By bringing in the biblical allusion of the brothers Kane and Abel in the title and the heroes of the novel, Archer brilliantly caters to his readers, particularly in India and America. As he tells in one of his interviews that, the Americans do love Kane more. Well, of course, they do! Kane's born in Boston, he's a snooty individual, he comes from a snooty family and he's got everything. And of course, the Indians love Abel. I think in India it's the aspirational part of the story, the Indians are very ambitious and hardworking, and I think that's what appeals to them (Archer).

Through the plights and hardships that Abel suffers during the World Wars and his rags to riches story, appeals to the Indian readers and easily enables them to identify with Abel, as India is a developing nation and that the majority of readers belong to the middle class. Whereas to serve the interests of American readers, the writer presents the image of William and his family. The readers in this process of identification fail to notice the hegemonic control that the text exerts over the reader's sensibility and identity. The identification of the Indians with the

text creates “obvious” facts and the reader thinks that he/she is reading the text as an individual. However, instead of promoting individual thought, ideology prevents the reader from understanding the subjectification and the legitimation of the social conditions that are presented realistically. John Storey defines ideology as “a certain masking, distortion, or concealment” (3). The profit motive is thus a decisive influence in shaping the narratives and the way history is presented in *Kane and Abel* cannot be read as factual or objective. As H. Aram Veesser, the author of *The New Historicism* says that there is “no discourse, imaginative or archival, gives access to unchanging truths nor expresses inalterable human nature” (125).

Considering the fact that popular fiction is read by people in huge numbers, the impact and the influence that it can have on people’s minds cannot be ignored. Which precisely calls for the study of popular fiction in the literary circle. Through a New Historicist reading of *Kane and Abel*, this paper throws light on the historicity embedded in popular fiction, the hegemonic control and ideological operations concealed in the narratives and how history is employed by the popular fiction to serve its profit motives.

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Surviving One's Own Home: *The Good Girls* and the Reality of Women's Lives in Contemporary India

Aiswarya R.

India has long been patriarchal and caste-ridden society, and violence against women is therefore a normalized part of its social fabric. In recent years, reported cases of honour killing have been on the rise (“Love”), with families wishing to protect themselves from public shame when their daughters dared to marry without their parents’ approval, marry outside their caste, engage in premarital sex, or other non-socially sanctioned behavior. In such communities, honour is connected to notions of purity and dignity, with “the regulation of women’s sexuality and their conformity with social norms and traditions” (Gill 2), where their adherence to honour codes is prioritised above their happiness or autonomy. The victims of honour-based violence are usually young women, and the perpetrators tend to be the men in their families, who take pride in being able to exert control over their female relatives (3). Notions of toxic masculinity, as opposed to the notion of “good girls” who are silent and obedient, are an intricate part of cultures that tolerate rape and other forms of violence towards women. Thus, the number of honour killings in a society and their acceptance or apathy to such practices is a direct indication of the pervasiveness of patriarchal power therein.

Sonia Faleiro’s book begins as an extensive investigation into the 2014 Budaun gang rape allegations when two teenage girls went missing and were found hanging from a tree, but the ensuing chapters present an incisive indictment of Indian society – including the law, lawmakers, police, investigative agencies, the judiciary, politicians, and notions of caste politics - especially the people’s apathy to cases of gender violence, ranging from infanticide to murder. In a chapter titled “The Worst Place in the World”, the author maps out the vicious circle that perpetuates such crimes:

Although the police appeared to find it difficult to distinguish between real kidnappings and attempts to protect honour, there was no doubt that crimes against women were ubiquitous. And that a failure to investigate such crimes emboldened others to commit similar ones, allowing the cycle to continue. The more such crimes occurred the less likely they were to interest the media, which meant that politicians and the police had less incentive to do their job (Faleiro 153).

Further, she also throws light on the complicity of law and order officials in burying such cases if it signalled negative consequences for their reputation. Political tactics of saying “boys will be boys” (161) or citing Hindu religious texts and the influence of Western values in urban areas as reasons for such violence becomes ironic since the nation’s epics have instances aplenty of sanctioned misogyny (Brown 240–41, 244–45). Examples include Surpanakha’s mutilation by Lakshmana for her sexual transgression and Sita being abducted after crossing the lakshman rekha in *The Ramayana*, and Draupadi being disrobed in court in *The Mahabharata*, to *The Manusmriti*, a well-known quote from which states that women do not deserve independence: they must instead be looked after by their father, husband, and sons in different stages of their lives (254). Accordingly, when women step out of the spaces traditionally designated to them, they are often punished for their transgression – the economist Sendhil Mullainathan calls these practices “hidden taxes” (Mullainathan).

The pervasiveness of patriarchal attitudes is illustrated in the villagers’ reactions to the ongoing investigation in Katra village: “These men said ‘girls shouldn’t use phones’ and ‘good girls don’t talk to boys’ and that those who did brought dishonor to the village. ‘If they had been my girls,’ said one man in a boastful voice, ‘I would have shot them dead.’” (Faleiro 211). In the Budaun incident, the girls’ parents were as much complicit in derailing and misleading the investigation as the accused, since they wished to keep their honour intact by twisting the facts, fabricating falsehoods, and hiding incriminating evidence. The book’s subtitle, *An Ordinary Killing*, thus gains added significance – the victims were from impoverished backgrounds and did not interest national media houses who had to sift through daily events and choose what to highlight and what to ignore. It was only because of the family’s persistent public protests, insistence on political intervention, and subsequent amplification by the media that the incident gained national attention.

It took a high-profile case like the Delhi Nirbhaya rape for the nation to wake up to the horrors of violence faced by women as part of their day-to-day reality. The incident led to widespread public protests and even some policy change in reviving fast-track courts for resolving sexual offences. To the Shakyas family in Budaun, however, it brought another important revelation – that only public demonstrations could incite politicians to act on the common man’s behalf - and this realization would prove significant when their daughters were subjected to what seemed like a similar fate only two years later. This was especially true in a place like Uttar Pradesh where people voted for their favourite politicians based on their caste, despite

which things remained unchanged. Victim-blaming was expectedly part of the responses to the Nirbhaya incident, as with any such instance – accusing women of bringing it upon themselves by going out at night, wearing certain clothes, travelling with a male companion, and the list goes on. Despite the awareness it brought among the people, cultural attitudes that normalize rape culture still prevail a decade later. International media reports regularly feature India as one of the most unsafe places for women, more so than in war-torn nations like Syria and Afghanistan (Faleiro 283). In a 2013 op-ed article for *The New York Times*, Faleiro stated that the Delhi gang rape was notable not because of its brutality, but the fact that the event had elicited a response in the first place.

The Good Girls is a comprehensive study of sexual violence against women in India. The author states that the four year-long research process that culminated in the book taught her that a woman's first challenge was surviving her own home (287). As much as the book is about women's lives in modern India, it also focuses on how their poverty further undermines any possibility of them venturing out beyond the limits ascribed to them, or of achieving their dreams. The COVID-19 lockdown only increased the burden inflicted on women – it led to more hours of caregiving, disproportionate loss of jobs (Mazumdar), and despair about the future. Faleiro's work is thus timely: it is a wake-up call telling us that it is high time that we scrutinize the social mores and traditional values that make both private and public spaces unsafe for women, vote responsibly, and hold ourselves and our leaders accountable for the well-being and upliftment of women.

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A Glimpse of the Margins: A Reading of Bava Chelladurai's 'Pachai Irulan'

Divya Lekshmi M. S.

Bava Chelladurai is a renowned Tamil writer who resides in the hilly region of Thiruvannamali. *Ruins of the Night* is translated into English by Janagivenkatraman. Bava Chelladurai in his short story collection *Ruins of the Night* throws light upon the life of the indigenous community of Irula.

Irula are a Dravidian ethnic group inhabiting the mountainous range of Nilgiris. Bava's short stories are closely aligned with nature and through his narrative strategy readers get familiarized with his village culture and tradition. Bava acquired firsthand knowledge of the life of the Irulas during his childhood. He says, "My dearest friendships were with the children of the tribal folk. ... Despite the urban milieu I live in now, the memories of my childhood wanderings among the rocks and forests, half nude as my friends were, are still fresh in my mind".

The story of 'Pachai Irulan' begins with the description of the laborious ways through which the biggest thief Pachai Irulan is captured. Those who undertook this daring and risky task "were pale with the fear of death" (63). Pachai Irulan is a strong and able thief, who has his own ways of avoiding capture. He possesses unique tactics to save himself from thrashing.

Literally the villagers are scared of him.

"The villagers hid in their homes fearfully when the news reached them.

Even the goat pens were silent, causing the shepherds to fear that the animals had died mysteriously, until they saw the restless shifting of the goats' eyes.

... Only the Zamindar's sons remained unafraid. They had been conditioned by their circumstances and privileged upbringing to be unafraid of anyone or anything. Living as they did, in a palace within a fort that encompassed hillocks, with a whole colony of Parayas to act as their slaves and guards, and a village that awaited their father's nod for everything, they could not feel fear. Although they had heard fearsome stories about Pachai Irulan's nocturnal exploits, they looked on him only as a subject of amusement now" (64).

Pachai Irulan is wild and violent and people slink away from him for they knew that "if he so much as growled, tigers would flee the scene because the ferocity of wild animals was curled up within him" (65).

Bava admires Pachai and acclaims him as the strongest thief. Even another Irula person-Kattaya Irulan seems to be afraid of Pachai. “Kattaya Irulan’s hands trembled as he struggled to untie Pachai Irulan. His gaze never rose from the base of the tree. It was as if his eyes bored through the earth to see the roots. He did not want to see Pachaya Irulan’s thighs at the base of the tree” (65).

The way Pachai Irulan has been carried in a cage by the Zamindar’s slaves is described in a pompous manner as a ‘parade’. In the daylight, Pachai curiously watched the streets and houses for he never seen before except at night. “He thought of the countless times he had visited the village at night, grabbing the goats from their pens, twisting their necks even as he lifted them; removing the roof tiles and jumping noiselessly into the houses to thief jewellery; the many times he had plundered the Zamin granary. He thought of all this and then he thought of the Kottangal Hill, in the caves of which he stashed away his booty” (67).

As the story recedes, the captivated thief outsmarts the securities in charge and escapes to the hills. Thus Bava paints the picture of the smartest thief ‘Pachai Irulan’ in *Ruins of the Night*. In spite of being born and brought up in a better social environment, Bava cherishes the memorable experiences he had with the marginalised. The society should change the attitude towards caste and colour. We should be able to treat everyone equally and give respect to all.

Through this change in attitude, we could make our life better and worth living.

“I have tried to greedily re-possess the landscape of my childhood with the help of language, as if I alone have the right to wander the length and breadth of it” (Chelladurai).

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Poetic Attempts to Subvert the Ideology of History

Maria George

Dalit refers to those who have been broken; ground down by those above them in a deliberate way. There is also clearly an inherent denial of karmas and justified caste hierarchy to the word itself. Dalit is today common across most Indian languages, meaning poor and oppressed people. The term is supposed to have been used first by Jotirao Phule in his attempt to work for *dalituthan*. He occupied himself with the upliftment of the exploited sections of society. While Dr. Ambedkar did not popularize the word Dalit, his philosophy has remained a key source in its emergence and popularity. Marathi literary figures and neo-Buddhists began to use the word in their writings and contributed to the literary initiatives in replacing *Harijan* (man of God) and *achchuta* (untouchable) with Dalit, in the 1970s. It has today emerged as a political category that the Dalits in legal parlance are called Scheduled Castes (SCs), and are identified as such by the President of India under Article 341 of the Constitution. They are provided with special “protection” in Article 15 that the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them. But this constitutional identity has become exclusivity when the Dalits were converted to another religion. The conversion in religion saw no conversion in status except that they were denied the constitutional identity. This dejectedness has long since become a matter of revolt. Even when the severity is diminishing the Dalits have a long way to go before the community can take things for granted.

Poykayil Appachan alias Poykayil Kumara Guru Devan, the Dalit activist, poet and Christian preacher has essayed the predicament of the Dalit community. His attempts have brought the attention to a conscious denial of a historical identification for the Dalit community. Poykayil Appachan, founder of the socio-religious movement Prathyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha (God’s Church of Visible Salvation) has expressed their agony in many of his talks. He was successful in convincing the majority of his brethren to abandon Christianity and embrace PRDS. He reasoned that the Bible accounted for only Jewish history and hence Indian caste system could not be broken with it. He sings, “No, not a single letter is seen, on my race. So many histories are seen, on so many races”. The exclamation is over the forgotten or consciously suppressed history of Dalits. He says that there was no one on this earth to write the history of his race. Dalit has been the group who has lived in Kerala since the ancient times but they have become demons. Their history is consciously demonized to falsify the

truths for the truth would reveal the true demons in history. Appachan wails, “How can God who shaped everything allow this to happen on earth today?” This rallying cry has found an answering call in the poems of Raghavan Atholi, an early name associated with the Dalit movement in Malayalam poetry.

Raghavan Atholi is a Dalit poet, novelist and sculptor. Of his 174 works, 134 are works of poetry, 13 are novels and the rest are short stories and children’s literature. In spite of all the artistic charisma in this man, one who visits him will find him living with his wife and three children in a fragile structure made of flex banners and wood. Under the flex roof, he sits on a flattened piece of wood and writes in faint light. It is quite heart rending to see that in this big world there is no one to take care of him yet he has no qualms. The poet is quoted in “Cast Away in the World of Creativity”.

Had I been consoled by anyone I wouldn’t have got an opportunity to write like this and make sculptures. I have written as much as I can, but they have not reached the people for whom I wrote. I was born in an oppressed community and I have no words to express the bitter phases I have had to go through. It is that frustration and agony that made me a writer and it is for that oppressed group of people I write (Shankar 4).

He carries within him the voice of his community. The poet who suffers from deteriorating eyesight lives through the power of his voice. His poems can be taken as ways of telling the history of a group who were once denied representation. He makes an exegesis of the pitiful lineage that his community is forced to forge. This is not like the subaltern retelling of history by an elite community. Instead, here people who are scarred with experience try to retell an account of their own lives. There is no mediatory work involved here. Thus there is neither any loss of the actual colour nor any adding of extra colour. Bear life as such becomes the matter of historicizing. Writing a history on their own is a further attempt to subvert the ideology of history.

Raghavan Atholi’s poetic sharpeners come with names quite ordinary and local yet quite allegorical. Two of his short poems are “Texts” and “Kandathi”. Raghavan’s fierce expressions and torrid images help remake the shattered pieces of the history of Dalits. The poem “Kandathi” throbs with the story of his clan through the particularized figure of the poet’s own mother.

Before the garbage heap in the street
A hungry woman waits.
Turning her back
On the parting day's sullen face.
Clutching at her sinking wages,
A bundle of fodder
Wrenched out of the earth.

The deprived woman who halts before the garbage of history is the poet's imagination of the plight of his community. History looks like a heap of trash for those who are denied a historical voice. They turn their backs upon the legitimized part of history that is represented as day by the poet. Day is the part that is lighted and the ideology of history has always been to legitimize the lighted. The poet's attempt is not to light the darkness of his community but to reveal the darkness as such so that the truth does not get distorted. To present history in all its darkness is a challenging task to subvert the "order" of history. To have a vision in darkness is the daring task that the poet wants to perform. To get acquainted in the dark is to have a continued endurance within the darkened circle. Thus the poet shows that the true history of his people can be written only after having experienced the Dalitness. The history talks about

Generations that staggered and fell,
Sons who never came back,
Clans that vanished in the wild,
Treacherous pathways that turned into quicksand,
Full barns,
Empty hovels,
A goddess shrunk into an old crone.

Raghavan Atholi calls this old crone his flesh and blood, his mother and extensively the women of his community who bear seeds in their wombs to give birth painfully to the painful history of the bereaved. The woman waits "For a handful of rice untainted with blood, for a piece of land untainted with greed". The prolonged wait of the Dalit caste for an era of equality

is well reflected in the words of the poet. He says, “I have not enjoyed even a fraction of my life, but I will enjoy on a day when my dream is fulfilled. A day when inequality will not exist, discrimination will not snatch away anyone’s right and all will live in harmony”. (Shankar 4)

Raghavan Atholi’s poem “Vellai” demands the exposition of the historical truth. He makes the voice of Vellai demand silence from the ruling classes. The poet uses quite derogatory terms to address the ruling class category and makes another attempt to distort the legitimized language of historicizing. He calls them “stinking rotten thambras”. The historicizing narrative in Atholi’s poem demands answers from the readers. He wants them to answer how is it ever possible to produce something out of the meager two cents of land that they have got from this “stinking rotten thambras”! Vellai pronounces the truth even when he becomes the burning fire. To tell the truth is a daring call for Dalits but they want to unveil the truth of their lives. Atholi wishes the birth of many such vellais so that his caste can make a history of its own. Unless these vellais are born the community would face extinction, the fear that grips S. Joseph as he reflects in his poem, “On the College Wall”.

S. Joseph, a poet in the post modern era portrays no sylvan paradise but a fallen world of simmering exploitation. He has published a lot of poems on life-supporting matters of contemporary relevance. His collections are Karutha Kallu, Meenkaran, Identity Card, and Vellam Ethra Lalitham. His poem, “On the College Wall” exposes the fear of extinction in the face of a denied past. The poet sees a newspaper cutting on extinct fish on the college wall and a sudden thought pops up in his mind,

Will my race also become such a news tomorrow?

Extinctions have become an inevitable truth on the planet

Some animals are already in the protected list

Even the tiger

As I toddle everyday

When I turn the corner

I weep remembering my race

Facing the threat of extinction.

This threat makes the poet take up his pen to jot down the same fear. Historicizing the fear opens up a path for recognition. The ideology of history makes a tampered list of extinct and the defense provided supports only the select few. The poet's conspicuous dragging of the direction to his community is an attempt to subvert the historical stance of sustaining only the mainstream.

The explicative verses of the Dalit poets expose their attempts to subvert the ideology of history. History has always been the property of the elite. It is taken to follow a chronology, hierarchical status and prose style. Poykayil Appachan has ignited the way of subversion quite explicitly. Atholi's verses do not follow an order and effluent style. Matters of hierarchical importance are the least cared for. They make a history of the people who have had no access to an ordered way of life. Yet they make blots of what has happened through the ages. S. Joseph opens up a path of his own that unveils the bare truth. The contained history finds an exposure through these poems that people wonder of the birth of a new category. But this birth is not something new; instead it was until then stifled to hhhffoblivion. Thus Dalit poets make use of the genre of poetry to subvert the ideology of the genre of historical writing.

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The Divine Motherhood: Exploring Mariology in Malayalam Literature

Karthika S. B.

This research aims to examine the manifestation and representation of Mariology in Malayalam literature. Mariology, the theological study of the Virgin Mary, holds a significant place in Christian traditions, and its influence on literature is worth exploring. This study will delve into the themes, symbols, and narrative techniques employed by the authors to portray Mary and her significance within the cultural and religious context of Malayalam literature. By analyzing the literary works in light of Mariological doctrines and beliefs, this research seeks to shed light on the interplay between religious devotion, literary expression, and the exploration of themes related to femininity, motherhood, and spirituality. Through a close examination of the Malayalam literary texts, this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the ways in which Mariology enriches the thematic layers of Malayalam literature, offering insights into the unique cultural and literary dynamics of the region.

Mariology, Malayalam literature, religious devotion, femininity, motherhood, spirituality.

The Bible holds a distinguished status as a valuable literary work, exerting a considerable influence on world literature over the course of history. As a collection of religious texts revered by Christians, it encompasses profound cultural and historical significance. From a literary perspective, the Bible covers a broad range of genres, including historical narratives, poetry, wisdom literature, prophecy, and apocalyptic literature. Its pages unfold a rich tapestry of narrative techniques, vibrant imagery, potent metaphors, and profound moral and ethical teachings. The Bible's narratives, such as the accounts of Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, Moses, David and Goliath, and the life of Jesus Christ, have emerged as iconic tales that have captivated the imagination of readers for centuries.

The Bible's extensive translation into various languages has facilitated its accessibility to a wide global audience. Consequently, its stories, themes, and teachings have permeated diverse cultures, significantly shaped the trajectory of their literary output, and exerted a discernible influence on authors hailing from heterogeneous backgrounds. Beyond its literary influence, the Bible has played a fundamental role in shaping worldviews, ethics, and moral frameworks. It has served as a wellspring of inspiration for religious, philosophical, and political movements, and its teachings have left an indelible mark on legal systems, governance structures, and societal values across numerous civilizations.

The Bible's esteemed stature as a valuable literary work is predicated upon its diverse range of genres, compelling narrative techniques, and profound moral guidance. Its far-reaching influence on world literature is incontrovertible, as evidenced by its role as a wellspring of inspiration for countless authors and its significant impact on literary traditions across diverse cultures. Moreover, its influence extends beyond the realm of literature, permeating worldviews, ethics, and social structures throughout the annals of human history. The language and style employed in the Bible have profoundly influenced numerous authors and poets throughout the ages. Many literary works, whether religious or secular in nature, draw inspiration from biblical themes, characters, and symbolism. Particularly noteworthy is the Bible's enduring impact on English literature, with myriad allusions and references permeating the works of luminaries such as William Shakespeare, John Milton, John Bunyan, and countless others.

Christology and Mariology are theological disciplines that derive from Biblical texts and pertain to the study of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary in Christian theology. Christology, derived from the Greek words "Christos" and "logos," explores the nature, personhood, and role of Jesus Christ within Christian belief. The Bible, particularly the New Testament, serves as the primary source for Christological study, presenting Jesus as the central figure of Christianity. The New Testament affirms Jesus' divinity, identifying him as the Son of God and the second person of the Trinity. Christological inquiry often delves into the theological implications of the "hypostatic union," the simultaneous and inseparable existence of Jesus as fully divine and fully human. The writings of the New Testament, such as the Gospel of John and the Pauline Epistles, provide theological insights into Jesus' divine nature, his redemptive mission, and his salvific significance.

Mariology, on the other hand, focuses on the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, within Christian theology. While the biblical accounts offer limited information about Mary, she occupies a significant place in Christian tradition and devotion. The Gospels of Luke and Matthew, in particular, portray Mary as the chosen vessel through whom Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Within certain Christian traditions, notably Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity, Mariology has developed as a distinct theological discipline. It encompasses doctrines and beliefs concerning Mary's immaculate conception, which asserts her preservation from original sin; her perpetual virginity, affirming that she remained a virgin before, during, and after Jesus' birth; and her assumption into heaven, positing her bodily assumption at the end of her earthly life.

While the foundations of Christology and Mariology lie in Biblical texts, their interpretations and theological developments have evolved over time within different Christian denominations and theological frameworks. Diverse theological writings, deliberations of church councils, and historical contexts have contributed to the formation of various understandings and expressions of Christology and Mariology among different Christian traditions. Christology and Mariology have enhanced the thematic layers of world literature by providing rich theological concepts and symbolic frameworks that writers have drawn upon for inspiration and exploration. The theological understanding of Jesus Christ's nature, divinity, and redemptive mission has had a profound impact on world literature. The idea of Jesus as the Son of God and the savior of humanity has inspired authors to delve into themes of sacrifice, salvation, and the human-divine relationship. The concept of the "hypostatic union" - the simultaneous existence of Jesus as fully divine and fully human - offers a complex portrayal of the human experience, the nature of suffering, and the possibility of transcendence. Writers have used Christological motifs and archetypes to explore themes of redemption, self-sacrifice, moral integrity, and the power of love.

Like Christology, the veneration of the Virgin Mary and the theological doctrines associated with her have also enriched the thematic layers of world literature. Mary's portrayal as a model of purity, compassion, and faith has inspired writers to explore themes of motherhood, femininity, devotion, and the interplay between human agency and divine grace. The belief in Mary's immaculate conception and her role as the mother of God has provided a symbolic foundation for exploring themes of divine favor, human virtue, and the potential for spiritual transformation. By incorporating Christological and Mariological themes and symbols into their works, authors have added depth, complexity, and resonance to their storytelling. These theological concepts offer universal themes that resonate across cultures and time periods, allowing writers to engage with profound existential questions, moral dilemmas, and the nature of the human condition. Christological and Mariological motifs have been interwoven into various literary genres, including novels, plays, poetry, and even non-fiction works. They have influenced narrative structures, character development, and the exploration of moral and ethical dilemmas. The use of these theological concepts in literature also reflects the enduring influence of religious traditions and the ongoing dialogue between faith, reason, and artistic expression. Christology and Mariology have enhanced the thematic layers of world literature by providing powerful symbolic frameworks, theological depth, and universal themes that resonate with

readers across cultures. These concepts have expanded the scope of literary exploration, offering writers a rich tapestry of ideas and symbols to delve into profound questions about human existence, morality, and the search for meaning.

Mariology comprises a wide range of scholarly investigations into various aspects of Mary's significance, including her salvific role, her virtues, her intercessory function, and her relationship to Jesus Christ and the Church. Within the framework of Christian theology, Mary occupies a unique position as the chosen vessel through whom the Incarnation of Jesus, the Son of God, occurred. She is accorded special reverence as the Theotokos, underscoring her role as the one who bore God in human form. The key aspects of Mary's presence in the Biblical narrative: Annunciation [The story of the Annunciation is found in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:26-38). The angel Gabriel visits Mary and informs her that she will conceive a child through the Holy Spirit and give birth to the Son of God, whom she is to name Jesus], Virgin Birth [According to the Gospel accounts, Mary conceived Jesus while still a virgin through the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-38). This miraculous conception underscores Jesus' divine nature], Visitation [Following the Annunciation, Mary visits her relative, Elizabeth, who is also miraculously pregnant with John the Baptist. This encounter is known as the Visitation (Luke 1:39-56). Mary's visit leads to the exclamation of Elizabeth, proclaiming Mary as the "mother of my Lord."], Nativity [The birth of Jesus takes place in Bethlehem, where Mary and Joseph find no room in the inn and must take refuge in a stable. Jesus is laid in a manger, and angels announce his birth to shepherds nearby (Luke 2:1-20).], Presentation in the Temple [According to Jewish custom, Mary and Joseph present Jesus in the temple when he is 40 days old. There, they encounter Simeon and Anna, two devout individuals who recognize the child as the Messiah (Luke 2:22-38).], Flight into Egypt [To protect Jesus from King Herod's attempt to kill him, an angel appears to Joseph in a dream, instructing him to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15). They stay in Egypt until Herod's death, after which they return to Nazareth], Jesus' Ministry [While Mary's direct involvement is less prominent during Jesus' public ministry, she is present at significant moments, such as the wedding at Cana, where Jesus performs his first miracle of turning water into wine (John 2:1-11), Crucifixion and Resurrection [Mary is depicted at the foot of the cross during Jesus' crucifixion, as mentioned in the Gospel of John (John 19:25-27). She is also present among the disciples and women who witness Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:14)].

Mary's role in the Bible emphasizes her faith, obedience, and unique position as the mother of Jesus. Her significance extends beyond the biblical narrative and plays a central role in Christian traditions and devotion. Mariology encompasses her perpetual virginity, which implies her abstention from sexual relations before, during, and after the birth of Jesus; her Immaculate Conception, which posits her freedom from original sin from the moment of her conception; and her Assumption into heaven, body and soul, upon the completion of her earthly existence. The devotion to Mary is an integral component of numerous Christian denominations, particularly Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. Catholic Marian devotions encompass a diverse array of practices, such as the recitation of the Rosary, the veneration of Mary under different titles (e.g., Our Lady of Guadalupe or Our Lady of Lourdes), and the consecration of oneself to Mary's care and intercession. Marian apparitions, accounts of purported appearances of Mary to individuals or groups, hold a significant place in Mariology. Well-known instances include the apparitions at Lourdes in France and Fatima in Portugal, which have attracted substantial numbers of pilgrims. It should be noted that perspectives on Mary and the degree of devotion to her may vary across different Christian traditions. While she is highly esteemed in Catholicism and Orthodoxy, Protestant traditions typically emphasize the unique role of Jesus and exhibit a more cautious approach to Marian veneration. Mariology constitutes a scholarly domain that examines the theological import of Mary and her enduring influence within the context of Christian faith and praxis. It encompasses a broad range of inquiries into her significance and functions within the Christian narrative.

Mariology has been a subject of exploration and inspiration in various works of literature throughout history. Authors and poets have engaged with Mary's character, virtues, and symbolic significance, incorporating her into their narratives and poems in diverse ways. *La Pietà*, carved by Michelangelo during the Italian Renaissance, is a powerful sculpture in the Roman Catholic tradition. It portrays Jesus and Mary in a sorrowful scene at Mount Golgotha, representing the "Sixth Sorrow" of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Other notable literary examples are *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri: In this epic poem, Mary plays a significant role in Dante's journey through the afterlife. She is depicted as a compassionate and intercessory figure, guiding Dante through heaven and serving as a symbol of divine grace.

The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer: Chaucer's collection of stories includes *The Second Nun's Tale*, which centers around the life of Saint Cecilia and features Mary as a prominent figure. Mary is portrayed as a compassionate and merciful intercessor, aiding

Cecilia in her trials. *Paradise Lost* by John Milton: Although not the main focus of the poem, Mary is mentioned in Milton's epic work. She appears as the mother of Jesus, embodying virtues such as purity and obedience. Her role is especially emphasized in Book XII, where she mourns the death of her son.

The Virgin Mary's Visit to Elizabeth by Friedrich von Spee: This poetic work depicts the meeting between Mary and her relative Elizabeth, as narrated in the Gospel of Luke. It explores the emotions and thoughts of the two women, reflecting on the significance of their meeting. *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce: Mary is referenced in this semi-autobiographical novel, particularly in relation to the protagonist's struggles with Catholicism and his conflicted feelings towards religious devotion. *The Testament of Mary* by Colm Tóibín: This contemporary novel presents a fictionalized account of Mary's perspective on her son's life, crucifixion, and subsequent events. It delves into Mary's grief, doubt, and complex emotions as she reflects on her role and experiences. These examples demonstrate how Mary has been a source of inspiration for authors, allowing them to explore themes of faith, spirituality, motherhood, and devotion. Her portrayal in literature often reflects different theological perspectives and cultural contexts, contributing to the broader understanding and interpretation of Mariology roles in the divine plan.

Malayalam literature has also been influenced from the life of Mary. Mary, also known as the Virgin Mary or Mary, the mother of Jesus, holds a significant role in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament. K P Kesava Menon's *Sreeyeshudevan* is considered a seminal text in Malayalam literature, as it is deeply influenced by Biblical themes and narratives. The author draws inspiration from the Bible to explore various aspects of spirituality, faith, and morality within the context of Malayalam culture and society. This work serves as a significant contribution to the rich literary tradition of Malayalam. In addition to *Sreeyeshudevan*, several other notable works in Malayalam literature also delve into Christology, which is the theological study of the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. For instance, Vallathol's *Magdalanamariyam*, Kainikkara Kumarapillai's *Kalvariye Kalpapaadapam*, Pravithanam Devasya's *Sreeyesuvijayam*, K P Appan's *Bible Velichathinte Kavacham*, and Ani Thayyil's *Biblele Shreekal* are examples of works that explore Christological themes within the Malayalam literary context.

The western literary world has produced an extensive range of literary texts throughout history. These works span various genres, including novels, plays, poetry, and philosophical

writings. Within this vast collection of literature, the themes of love, tolerance, and spirituality associated with the Virgin Mary hold particular significance. Mary, as a symbol of divine love, compassion, and motherhood, serves as an example for humanity to embrace these virtues. Through the discipline of Mariology, individuals aim to derive guidance and inspiration from Mary's character and virtues, striving to embody the principles of love, tolerance, and spirituality in their own lives. K P Kesava Menon's *Sreeyeshudevan* and other works mentioned contribute to Malayalam literature's exploration of biblical themes, while the broader Western literary world has produced countless texts that celebrate the love, tolerance, and spirituality associated with the Virgin Mary. Mariology serves as a discipline to deepen the understanding and application of these virtues, encouraging individuals to draw inspiration from Mary's example.

Puthenpana, a devotional poem authored by Arnos Pathiri in the Malayalam language, holds significant prominence in the realm of Malayalam literature as a cherished work of religious devotion. Comprised of multiple *padams* (cantos), *Puthenpana* delves into various facets of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary. The 12th *Padam* specifically centers around the theme of Divine Motherhood, delving into the veneration and adoration of Mary. Within the 12th *Padam*, Arnos Pathiri meticulously explores Mary's exalted status as the mother of Jesus and her spiritual role as the mother figure for all believers. The poet accentuates her integral part in the divine plan of redemption and emphasizes her virtues, compassion, and intercessory abilities. The *Padam* effectively captures Mary's tender love, maternal care, and unwavering faith through eloquent verses. Arnos Pathiri adeptly employs poetic imagery, metaphors, and religious symbolism to elucidate Mary's significance within the context of Mariology. The composition utilizes evocative language, employing traditional poetic devices such as alliteration, repetition, and rhythmic patterns to enhance the devotional experience. The verses evoke intense emotions and spiritual fervor, expressing the poet's personal devotion and the wider devotion of the Christian community towards Mary.

Puthenpana's language exhibits richness and lyricism, upholding established poetic forms and techniques. The poem invites readers to contemplate the mysteries of the divine, find solace in Mary's intercession, and deepen their faith through its devotional expression. *Puthenpana*, particularly the 12th *Padam*, has been cherished by successive generations of Malayalam-speaking Christians as a source of spiritual inspiration and a means of expressing profound devotion to the Virgin Mary. It continues to be recited and sung in religious gatherings, specifically during Marian festivals and devotional events in Kerala. Arnos Pathiri's *Puthenpana*

12th *Padam* stands as a testament to the enduring influence of Mariology within the religious and literary traditions of Kerala. It exemplifies the deep reverence and theological contemplation surrounding Mary's persona, underscoring her role as the spiritual mother and advocate for believers.

In the opening lines, we glimpse into the profound anguish endured by Mother Mary as she witnesses the agonies faced by her beloved Son:

When the immaculate sorrows of the Mother's heart,
Resound in the minds touched by goodness,
To express all the grief or to console humankind,
Words alone cannot suffice, nor can intellect conquer.
Like an ocean in a jar, it cannot be contained,
To describe the pain that befell the Mother,
For the sake of redeeming all human flaws,
When the Lord, Messiah, breathed his last breath.
Looking at the complete involvement of the whole world,
Filled with all the sorrows, Mother gazed upon her Son,
Her heart shattered like a broken shell,
Her mind wandered aimlessly,
Tears flowed ceaselessly from her eyes,
What words can convey such grief?

Mother Mary, revered worldwide as the embodiment of motherhood, innocence, and a pure soul, holds a special place in the hearts of countless believers. Her maternal love, unwavering faith, and profound devotion have made her an icon of compassion and strength. Within the realm of literature, Arnos Pathiri's *Puthenpana* emerges as a poignant expression that captures the lamentations of the Mother's soul for her beloved Son. Through the evocative language and imagery of *Puthenpana*, Pathiri enables readers to connect with the universal themes of love, sacrifice, and the inherent human longing for solace and redemption. The poem becomes a conduit for empathizing with the anguish and devotion of Mother Mary, as

she stands as a symbol of hope and strength amidst profound adversity. It is a testament to the enduring legacy of Mother Mary as a source of inspiration, comfort, and unwavering faith. Through the poetic verses of Arnos Pathiri, *Puthenpana* becomes a timeless expression of the profound bond between a mother and child, inviting readers to reflect on the universal themes of love, sacrifice, and the triumph of the human spirit.

Mary, the figure of the Virgin Mary within Christian tradition, has often been seen as a significant representative of theological feminism. While the theological interpretation and veneration of Mary can vary across different Christian denominations and cultural contexts, there are several ways in which Mary's portrayal and significance align with feminist theological perspectives. Mary is the symbol of empowerment, liberation and justice, incarnation and embodiment, communal solidarity, intercessor and advocate.

K.P. Appan, the renowned Malayalam critic, is widely regarded as a genius who masterfully encapsulated the essence of the Bible in his literary works. Two notable texts that showcase his profound engagement with biblical themes are *Bible Velichathinte Kavacham* (*The Armor of Bible's Light*) and *Madhuras Ninte Jeevitham* (*The Sweetness of Your Life*). Through extensive years of reading and studying the Bible, K.P. Appan delves into its narratives, symbolism, and theological underpinnings, offering insightful interpretations and reflections. *Bible Velichathinte Kavacham* serves as a metaphorical armor of light that illuminates the depths of biblical wisdom, exploring its teachings, moral values, and spiritual significance. Appan's analysis encompasses various aspects of the Bible, including its historical context, literary styles, and overarching themes, providing readers with a deeper understanding of its transformative power. In *Madhuras Ninte Jeevitham*, K.P. Appan focuses specifically on the figure of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Drawing from centuries of theological interpretations and devotional practices centered around Mary, Appan delves into her significance and explores her as a "shadow of grace." The text delves into Mary's multifaceted role within Christian tradition, highlighting her as a symbol of purity, compassion, and unwavering faith. Appan's reflections on Mary shed light on her enduring influence and the ways in which her story continues to inspire and resonate with believers. Maryam belongs to the context of salvation history. She serves as the pristine conduit in the sacred engagement for the safeguarding of humanity.

In his novel *Ammakanya* published in 2004, P. Mohanan explores the portrayal of Virgin Mary by drawing connections between the worship of the Mother Goddess in our culture and the veneration of Mary within Christian tradition. The novel delves into the cultural and religious landscape of Kerala, highlighting the interplay between indigenous beliefs and the influence of Christianity. P. Mohanan's portrayal of Virgin Mary reflects a blending of cultural elements, drawing on the rich traditions of the Mother Goddess worship that have been part of Kerala's cultural heritage. By linking Mary to the Mother Goddess, Mohanan emphasizes the continuity and interconnectedness of religious and cultural practices, bridging the gap between indigenous traditions and the Christian faith. By interweaving these cultural threads, Mohanan not only explores the significance of Mary within Christian theology but also highlights the ways in which local cultural practices and beliefs shape the understanding and veneration of Mary in Kerala. This portrayal serves to foster a deeper sense of cultural identity and resonates with readers who are familiar with the cultural context in which the novel is set. Through his exploration of the links between the worship of the Mother Goddess and the veneration of Mary, P. Mohanan aims to engage readers in a dialogue about the dynamic relationship between culture, religion, and spirituality. His novel invites readers to contemplate the universal themes of motherhood, divine femininity, and the role of women in religious traditions. *Hridayathil Oru Val* by George Onakkur, is a magnificent work that falls under the genre of Mariology in Malayalam literature. This book beautifully portrays the life of Jesus Christ from the unique perspective of Mary.

Mary acts as a powerful foil of the divine and resolute faith in women set against the frailty in Eve. While Eve had the path of men's fall from heaven to the hither world, Mary brought through her, hope for the heavens.

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The Voice of The Voiceless : Study on *Asura* by Anand Neelakantan

M. Jhansi Rani & P. Priya

Myth has always been a challenge for the writers irrespective of the times. It is a difficult task for them whether it is to create a new one or to just retell the old tales. During the creation of the new tale the writer wants to bring the effect of visualisation whereas in the re-telling of the present myth the author has the freedom to question and rethink through different perspectives. During the contemporary period the writers urge to question was the beginning of the ideology for re telling the myth started to evolve.

M. H. Abrams defined myth as, “If the protagonist is a man rather than a supernatural being, the story is usually not called myth but legend. If the story concerns supernatural beings but is not a part of a systematic mythology, it is usually classified as a folktale”. Famous psychoanalytic Freud acclaimed myth “to be the great primordial truth, the precipitate of the unconscious”. Therefore myth in literature is consciously used by the writer and the writer’s mind is instinctively prejudiced by ancient tales.

Since Myths hold hold history, faiths and age old traditions they are very complex stories which cannot be explained in terms of denotation. Indian mythology is unquestionably a important fragment of Indian culture. Myth is often attached to folklores and histories in order to shape belief of the common people. The rich tradition of the West is being preserved by using myth and folklores in their mythical works. The modern age writers started using folklores and myths largely in their works. In India, myths and folklores have their own heritage. Indian writers have an inborn knowledge of myth and have refined it in every form. Indian English literature is enhanced with stories drawn from Vedas, Upanishad, Ramayana and Mahabharata. Indian mythology is usually passed through our ancestors from generation to generation by the word of mouth in the form of stories. The presence of myth and folklore is obviously evident in every Indian regional literature.

For thousands of years, I have been vilified and my death is celebrated year after year in every corner of India. Why? Was it because I challenged the Gods for the sake of my daughter? Was it because I freed a race from the yoke of caste-based Deva rule? You have heard the victor’s tale, the Ramayana. Now hear the Ravanayana, for I am Ravana, the Asura, and my story is the tale of the vanquished.

Asura: Tale of Vanquished, brings out a new perspective of the Ramayana. It is a tale about an individual who refuses to be God rather choose to remain as a common man. He is portrayed as a simple human who wishes to lead a life that everyone wishes to live. He likes to question the orthodoxy of people around him. He was also shown as selfish and greedy. The story revolves around two minor characters namely Ravana and Bhadra a civilian. It helps us escalate the problems faced by the common people. It is always interesting to know the epics from the provocative and minor characters like Ravana and Bhadra.

Nobody knows exactly what happened during those times. It is like an eye opener especially when it deals with caste inequality in those times. The life of the asuras was made terrible by the Devas which is considered as the root cause for all evils events that continued.

Neelakantan is undoubtedly a strong supporter of the idea of there being two sides to every story. This novel is all about the story of Ravana depicted in a different perspective. The character of Ravana is foreshadowed as the saviour of his race as they strongly believed him, for he would bring in a great change to all lives after so many years of domineering rule under Deva kings. Ravana was also admired by his people for his daring movement in all walks of his life towards the upliftment of his race.

In this novel Ravana, is described as the first son of a Brahmin and a tribal woman. He is portrayed as passionate, arrogant and brilliant. The three brothers namely Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Vibhishana leave Lanka in search of fortune.

The next day, we would be leaving this island. I had heard that there are great nations to the north. I would travel across the length and breadth of India. I wanted to climb the snow clad mountains of the Himalayas, swim against the dangerous currents of the Ganga raging in her full monsoon fury. I dreamed of passing through the thick forests of the Vindhya and Sahyas and seeing the monkey men and the kingdom of the Yakshas and Kinnaras. I dreamed of being in the music-filled world of the Gandharvas. Oh, what a world to conquer! What a life to enjoy! One day Ravana would rule the world. From the mighty Himalayas to Lanka, nay, from Lanka to the Himalayas; I would rule the world; with justice, peace and prosperity for all. (16)

They had learnt under Brahma, the specialization in arts, crafts and music under the protection of Mahabali, who was once the powerful king of the Asuras but now hiding in the jungles in Central India.

I bowed to the great soul before me and said, “Great King, we are seekers of fortune. We are from the Pearl island of Lanka in the southern seas.” I tasted mud in my mouth when I said this, but I couldn’t escape from my roots. Even our address was borrowed. “We are the sons of Kaikesi and half-brothers of Kubera. I am Ravana, and these are my siblings, Kumbakarna and Vibhishana.” (26)

In his last lesson Mahabali tries to instil values of self control and sacrifice in Ravana who ridicules and declares his penchant for the base emotions which make a MAN rather than the higher values which make a GOD. Ravana then returns to Lanka with high plans of returning the Asura empire and civilisation to its past glory.

The novel not only tells about the life of Ravana but also the lives of the ordinary Asuras who were struggling to live a normal and peaceful life. The second protagonist, Bhadra’s character is also been depicted in a different way given a new dimension in the story. Although the book is not named after Bhadra, he is one of the main protagonists of the story. He is described as a sword of rage and revenge against the plundering defeaters who proclaim themselves Gods and seek not only to conquer lands and loyalties but destroy an entire people and their culture.

I had been fighting this fool’s war for the last few years. I fought under Mahabali for six years, then tried to form my own group and failed. Then I fought under Sumali... My nose is not hooked and my lips do not draw a determined, straight line. I do not have high cheek bones or a cleft chin. I had another name earlier in my life, but now I am known only as Bhadra. (39)

Throughout the novel, Bhadra is motivated primarily by rage and the desire to survive. He is highly aware of his position in the social pyramid and he, like every other Asura in the novel, wishes to live a happy, peaceful life. We also see Bhadra and Ravana struggle to understand their Asura identities, which raises further questions about how culture influences a person’s sense of self. The novel also delves into a cultural and historical legacy championed by the Asuras that is barely addressed in the mainstream Ramayana. The Brahminical Deva hierarchy is vastly different from Asura society, a hierarchy that automatically places Asuras at the bottom. The book explores the topics that are still socially applicable today, such as the expurgation of an individual.

Ravana the Asura king and Bhadra the commoner make a difficult team as they create the Asura kingdom in Central and South India with their Golden capital in Sri Lanka. Then comes Sita, the nemesis of the mighty Asura empire, who is summoned by Ravana himself. Ravana believes Sita is his long-lost daughter, whom he brought back to protect from the barbaric Deva civilization, which is ruled by men. Ravana's acts in battle are eerily similar to those of many other powerful kings who believed they were unstoppable. Rama's tactics resemble those of a guerrilla warfare commander leading his troops. Rama's inconsistent standards are a recurring subject – he is not afraid to strike from behind or employ deception while portraying himself as the personification of Dharma. To prove himself a righteous king, he repeatedly plays into the hands of Brahmins.

While soldiers consider the actions of the opposing army to be repulsive and in violation of the established norms of combat, battle has its own set of horrors, which have not altered throughout time. So the last stronghold of the great Asura empire falls, and the victor inherits the treasures of war, including history and culture. Despite his success, Rama suffers personal loss. When a citizen of his kingdom questioned about accepting Sita as his wife and queen after spending so much time in Lanka, Rama decides to banish Sita from his side, despite the fact that she had undergone a fire test to prove her chastity in front of the triumphant soldiers in Lanka. Even after Ram and Sita are reunited after twelve years thanks to the valour of his twin sons Luv and Kush, Ram demands that Sita undergo a test of fire to confirm her limpidness. Sita enters the Earth, exhausted by her husband's continuous requests that she prove her goodness. While Ram comes to Ayodhya with his sons to establish a righteous government, However, he is never happy and at last gives up his life by entering the river Sarayu.

In this novel we are able to personify two conflicting cultures in Ram and Ravana, While both societies maintained a social hierarchy based on economic position, the vedic society pioneered the concept of birth being related to a man's job. As a result, successive generations have remained in the same socioeconomic class. Rama demanded Sita to prove her chastity and exiled pregnant Sita from his side, whereas Ravana had the bravery to accept Mandodari as his wife and queen even after she was gangraped by the Vanara soldiers. One society was concerned with fulfilling one's duty, while the other was frivolous.

Caste clearly has a big role to play in Asura, both in the novel and in its creation. The author's evaluation of caste is so apparent that towards the end of the novel a Brahmanical way of life was established by Rama when he conquers Lanka.

As the narrative progresses, we witness how beliefs of ritualism and cleanliness harm not only the disadvantaged but also members of the upper classes. Many of the actions and historiographies depicted in the novel are based on Dalit traditions and folklore outside of the scripts provinces. Because these legends are the cultural history of millions of downtrodden outcasts in South India, the novel moves beyond the realm of pure fiction. The novel questions popular perceptions of Indian mythology and delves into the plethora of stories that are brushed under the rug in favour of a single 'factual' interpretation. As the saying goes Histories are written by winners, whether the Ramayana is based on true events, it is undeniable that it was inspired by them.

To sum up, folklore and mythology have a long association with literature and they can be found directly or indirectly in Indian novels, poetry and nonfiction. The majority of Indian English novels and plays are myth-based. As though myth is the answer to all of the writers questions, they chose myth as their source of inspiration when they want to deliver a message or articulate a deep philosophy of life. Myths and legends appear to provide a new level of appeal to these works by Indian authors, connecting them to an era of ancient Indian ceremonies, customs and beliefs.

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Kappiri Muthappan: Transmogrification of the Slave as Deity

Jasmine Gonsalvez

Myth and History can be regarded as different methods of perceiving the past. When history chronicles the past events, myths are traditional stories that are passed through generations as embedded natural phenomena formulating moral or cultural sentiments of a particular society or community. Every society follows a different and unique mythical tradition along with customary practices and it can't be generalized. Irrespective of its unrealistic elements, myths are treated as real with its fantastic events devoid of proof. The word myth comes from the Greek word 'mythos' which means 'word'. It is assumed that they are simply stories with no factual basis and thus, the study of myth in individual societies or of human culture as a whole, describes the cultural parameters of a given age.

The etymology of *Kappiri* evolves from the Arabic word *kafir* which means non-believer and they used the term to refer African slaves who were non-Islamic followers. The myth of Kappiri Muthappan and the African connection reveals the little known story of slave trade that took place during the hey days of Portuguese settlement along the coast of Kerala.

The Malayala Manorama Sunday supplement replenishes the myths and folklore associated with the city of Kochi and its surroundings and it details the four myths that were widespread along the coastal belt of Kochi. The Myth of Pappanji, Kappiri Muthappan, Kapithan Cade and Chinna Thambi Annavi, being the four popular myths, are linked to the arrival and departure of European powers in the land. Among these the Myth of Kappiri Muthappan is confined to the coastal stretch of Kochi where the European colonizers, especially the Portuguese established their forts and settlements. The Portuguese arrived as spice traders gradually settled and flourished in Kerala, amassing wealth and power. During their frequent trips to India they brought slaves from Africa as laborers of plantations and as servants in their household. The African Slave trade later gave rise to the formation of a mythical character called 'Kappiri Muthappan'. When the British East India company defeated the Dutch supremacy which in turn diminished the prospect of Portugueses' re-entry to India, witnessed the birth of the *kappiri* cult. The Portuguese, unable to withstand the Dutch onslaught, left the Kerala coast in haste without taking their accumulated wealth to Portugal. Since they could not transport their valuables, they hid them in deep pits and murdered and buried the African slaves with the treasure to safeguard their treasure. The shrewd Portuguese men marked

those burial areas with hidden treasures in 'red' colour in the map and submitted it to the then Portuguese king, which is still preserved in the Lisbon Museum.

The emergence of Kappiri Muthappan, a 'slave' turning into a venerated hero, who assumed as a 'diety' in certain places in Kochi, especially Manghattumukku in Mattancherry illustrates the influence of myth in Kochin culture. One such story is that of Ambrose Srank and his accomplice Mammad who ventured a treasure hunt to meet his financial crises to marry off his four sisters. Vasu Mesthiri, an astrologer on a piece of cloth jotted down eight places from Mattancherry to Andhakaranazhi to help Ambrose Srank and team. They planned to dig the eight places in one single night to grab the treasures, but after digging the fourth pit in Maruvakkadu it so happened that Mammed's thumb was hurt with Ambrose's spade. So Mammed went in search of medicinal herbs to tend to his wounds. The hearsay detailed a red light appearing in the sea and a big shark rose from the waves and seated on top of the shark was a cigar smoking 'Kappiri Muthappan'. When Mammed returned he witnessed a half dug pit with Ambroses' spade and his dress. Mammed fainted witnessing the traumatic shock and later when he woke up, he was on a palm mattress at his own home. He saw his mother and he noticed his cycle leaning against the Mango tree in the compound, which was momentarily incomprehensible.

On the other hand, the myth detailed the experience of Ambrose Maestri, who was lying in front of Kappiri Wall, drunk and undressed. The mythical version suggests him lying in the 'Kappiri thara', and he screamed 'Kappiri Muthappa, I don't want your wealth'. The bitter and traumatic experience forced him give up his plan to extort the hidden riches of the Portuguese masters that was safeguarded by their African slaves who were buried alive in the deep pits along with the treasures. This incident reinforces the local belief in *Kappiri* and its associated practices and he was nicknamed as 'treasure madman' and his four sisters were ashamed of this label. After this incident no trace of Ambrose Maestri was found and a rumour about his life in Goa was widespread, which led Mammed to visit Goa in search of him. Later Mammed went missing and no one could trace either Ambrose or Mammed. Another interesting part of the story occurs after two years of Ambroses' disappearance. One day, early in the morning when Ambroses' sister came out of the house to sweep the courtyard, she tumbled over a wooden box and hearing the sound, the sisters came out of the house. The wooden box was heavy to lift, yet they managed to carry the box inside without alerting the neighbours. The news spread that the box was placed by Kappiri Muthappan for the marriage of the

sisters, which was conducted elegantly. The local belief was that the box was full of riches and it was given by Kappiri Muthappan and stopped circulating this version only after Ambrose's family denied it by sourcing the money to grocery business. Thus kappiri Muthappan, *Kappiri Thara* and *Kappiri* wall turn out as manifestations of this local myth. It does not have any inclination to any particular religion but it claims its own way of paying respect and offerings to appease this humble and humane deity.

Renowned historian K L Bernard in *History of Fort Cochin* delineates at length the history behind Kappiri Muthappan. As stated by the historian, "In 1663, Portuguese, who had treasures made niches in their thick walls, tied up Kaffirs in them, placed their treasures beneath tied-up slaves and made them promise that the treasures would be kept safe till their descendants came to claim them. The niches were then plastered up with mortar" (12). Thus Kappiri Muthappan, who was once a slave was transformed into an object of worship and veneration giving a subverted version of master-slave dicotomy. The stigma that was associated with caste- class hierarchy slowly vanished, and a dignified status was accorded to the marginalized African slaves. People offer cigars, fried fish, chicken and toddy to Kappiri Muthappan and even light candles to fulfill their wishes.

The presence of Dutch forces was a threat to the Portuguese settlers in Mahe and Kochi. A Sreedhara Menon, in *A Survey of Kerala History* documented the Dutch attack as, "the attack lasted for eight days and nights. On the 9th day, January 6, 1663, Cochin fell to the Dutch "(207). The Dutch gradually drove away the Portuguese and took control of the entire area. But they were not in a position to transport gold and silver to the Portuguese land since they contrived a brutish plan to protect their treasures. They hoped their descendants would treasure-hunt the wealth in the future, but it was not materialised under the powerful Dutch forces, who denied Portuguese return.

Literature is a reflection of society and literary works represent the spirit of age. The myth of Kappiri Muthappan is beautifully portrayed in Ponkkara Rafi's novel *Ora Pro Nobis* Published in 1981. The story of the African slave who volunteers to be murdered to protect his masters treasure forms the central episode of this novel. The African slave, known as *Kappiri* promised that he would keep safe custody of his master's treasure until his masters legitimate heir claims it. The story slowly narrates the tussle between *kappiri* successors to use the treasure which was objected by ancestor *Kappiris* and the kept the place as a secret

from younger generations. The belief that unlawful claimants of the treasure would incur the wrath and a curse will befall on them is reiterated in *Ora Pro Nobis*.

The protagonist, Chattakaran or Vella Ambroses' ancestors were all Kappiris. The sacrifice of Ambrose's grandfather as Kappiri took place in thirteenth January 1663. The ritual in connection with this myth is carried out with great preparation. On the day of sacrifice, the members of Aswaeres family observe fasting and prayer and a grand lunch is arranged where master and slave sit together for the last supper. This is reminiscent of the last supper Jesus Christ had with his disciples. Ambrose's grandfather, wearing white dress, would wash every one's feet and would kiss their feet, paralleling Biblical stories. After supper, a small prayer is followed by litany of Mother Mary. Widow Isabella, wife of late Achakko Knight from Portugal garland him with a gold rosary and say; "Most lovable son everything is entrusted with you. Let Jesus Christ give you enough strength! From today onwards, you are the guardian angel of Aswaeres family" and to this Ambrose replies, "praise be to Jesus Christ! praise be to Jesus Christ!" (Rafi 16). After this Ambrose Appooppan was accompanied by a selected group of people and was taken to a secret place. There in the deep gorges treasures are dumped and Ambrose Appooppan was murdered and interred with the treasure. They believed that the slain Ambrose would turn into a ghost/spirit who would safeguard the treasures. From that day onwards, every year, on the day he was murdered all the family members of Ambrose Appooppan commemorate the incident, the whole day fasting and lighting thirty three candles since Ambrose Appooppan was murdered at the age of thirty three.

The second chapter in *Ora pro nobis* describes in detail the construction of Kappiri Muthappan myth and the last moments of the slain slave is observed ceremonially. The slave's consent is paramount in this ritual and he willingly offers himself to be murdered. This incident happened prior to Portuguese mass migration from Cochin. The brutish sacrifice of Appooppan or elder Ambrose at the age of thirty three is reminiscent of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ at the age of thirty three. Though it is incongruous to compare both the sacrifices, the writer has brought in the image of redeemers who were sacrificed for the sake of others.

Chinna Ambrose, grandson of Ambrose Appooppan and the new generation Vella Ambrose were all vowed to keep the secrecy of the hidden treasures up until the seventh generation, when the rightful owners of the treasure will come to claim it. This is recorded in their family history and the novel in its climax portrayed the death of Chinna Ambrose reciting the litany with its response 'Ora pro nobis'. He leaves the world with a heavy heart as his

eldest son Michael attempts to kill him for hiding the secret of hidden treasures. The Vella Ambrose continues the litany after the death of his grandfather symbolically represents the fact that a new generation from their family is ready to carry over the secrecy of the treasures and would serve as custodians of this ancestral wealth.

Maya, by George Thundiparambil is another novel that portrays the 500 year long history of the *Kappiri* narrated to a girl named Maya belonging to a new generation of Kochites. The narrative and the narration is from the perspective of the *Kappiri* wherein the *Kappiri* is ordained as the protective spirit and at times emerges from the background to adorn his role in the narrative. The plot blends history, memory and imagination and it ends with Kappiri attaining his salvation, shedding light on his own story. A protecting spirit, a benevolent ghost and a confidante are combined into the myth of Kappiri Muthappan. This spirit is sans religion, caste, or creed as devotees who offer him oblations belong to different religious faiths. So the kappiri myth calls for a trans- religious connotation though it is practiced with less fanfare.

The historical part sketches the transatlantic slave trafficking and the Dutch supremacy over the Portuguese, leading to the ousting of Portuguese from the kerala coast. At present the memory of gruesome murder has waned and the locale people no longer associate *kappiri* myth as something obnoxious or ghastly. Time and tide helped Kochites reincarnate the incidents as part of the cultural moorings. Kappiri has become a historical remnant occupying artistic, literary and historic space. The protecting deity with no specific religious paraphernalia makes *kappiri* a naive simpleton occupying a niche in the cultural milieu of kochi. The Kappiri Muthappan myth is a subversion of the conventional practices of the dominant class. The '*kappiri thara*' with a black stone like structure is erected near the corners or compound walls near the roadside.

The Anglo Indians, the descendants of Portuguese, speak volumes about this *Kappiri*. Some of the members of the earlier generation Anglo-Indians have said to have seen Cigar smoking Kappiri at night. He appears as a man clad in white dress - either wearing a coat and suit or a mundu and shirt. An interesting story of Kappiri Muthappan which is common among the Anglo Indians is that while preparing Puttu if the steam doesn't come properly through the vent, it is believed that Kappiri Muthappan is sitting on top of the lid. So they offer him puttu and kadala curry and in no time steam gushes out and the puttu is properly cooked.

The cultural history of Kochi is drenched in stories of the arrival and departure of European colonizers. *Ora pro nobis* seeks to fulfil the lacuna that arose between subsequent generations and it describes memory passing down to its generations by owning and sharing them. This is told from the fourth generation descendants of Kappiri Muthappan who have no direct experience of life with them. The complex myth of Kappiri Muthappan is celebrated in *Ora pro Nobis* and the narratives acquaints the oral myth of Kappiri Muthappan to the modern readers.

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Loose Continuities: Embodiment and Dispersal of Self in Shilo Shiv Suleman's Art

Kalyani Rajendran

As the digital exists as a simultaneous functional space, the way concepts of time and memory are imagined on *Instagram* is interesting given the options you may avail as you present your life to your followers. Between the regular posts that appear on your followers timeline and be retained as a digital archive on your profile and the “stories” available for twenty-four hours and then disappear to an archive accessible only to the user unless they chose to share it, a form of digital diary keeping emerges. Both these options engage the conceptualization of time online as synchronous with lived time, hinting at immersion that goes beyond performance. As Michele Zappavigna, in “Social Media Photography” argues that “one way in which social media has influenced camera phone photography is through affording the expression of a form of visual co-presence arising out of the temporal nature of social streaming technologies⁶, inflected by the portability of mobile media”. (2)

The visual co-presence “materialized” in timeline culture produces and re-presents subjectivities, where the subjects themselves hold a significant amount of power over the production and reception of their personae, and is usually a product of the informed navigation of the digital spaces. The visual co-presence is decided by the relationships between the viewer and the object represented, in this case, mediated by the “*Instagram* culture of content production and circulation, hierarchies within the platform, as well as the different kinds of viewing personae one adopts. Thus complicated by the simultaneous positioning as the generator and evaluator of content, the users internalize and employ personal modes of reading the semantics of *Instagram* content. The recognition of the degrees of the involvement and subject orientation—a system of contact, in other words—is further augmented by “captions”, which perform semiotic work of sharing personal experience, achieved through subjectification: as Zappavigna points out, *Instagram* affords a number of semiotic modes to the user, such as visual and written modalities, as well as imposing a number of semiotic constraints on the dimensions of the image and the length of the caption (3).

Tangentially, the reverse chronology of an *Instagram* page's layout creates a circle of narratives isolated in time emerging from thematically connected images as you scroll is nevertheless imagined to be continuous. The unfolding of impressions as one scrolls down an *Instagram* profile presented in reverse chronology emulates that of a personal encounter. As

in, the meeting precedes the excavation of personal history, and therefore, opinion formation follows the same basic format as that at a social encounter. The product of a view-point photography where you have as many eyes as your feed provides and the spectacles of self-presentation and free expression sum up largely the mechanism of personal *Instagram*.

The aggravated social divides online, influenced and influencing users and their networks, create and enforce dichotomies that pit the structural interests of the privileged and the other against each other. The polarization—which may not be dismissed as reduced and tending towards binaries, but instead as addressing an individual in simultaneous and multiple ways—is also an indicator of the heavy politicization of civic discourse and spaces: social and digital. It also renders the proposed neutrality of cyberspace impossible, as social community has partially (or quite significantly) relocated to digital space and is functional within it, adapting to its fluidity and fragmentation while “uploading” a set of social mores and norms and with it: notions of vulgarity and moderation and visibility.

As one carries one’s own prejudices and responses to the digital space that they inhabit, so do humanity’s capacity for disruption and cultivated violence. In a space in which your presence is disembodied and is available only through (self) conscious exhibition, the resistance to gendered violence expresses itself through conceptual and operational retaliations. A feedback loop materializes thus, moving between social prejudices and digital neutrality, where lived values are argued. A significant point of interest in the effort to formulate the concepts to theorize social media in its fluent glory, or specifically *Instagram* in the interest of the proposed paper, is art and its relationship with the artist as it evolves on digital platforms. The physical involvement in the virtual world of engagements and interaction redefines what it means to move, exist and express in digital spaces. As a functioning extension of lived reality, how does it fracture and fractal as it connects billions of experiential universes? What does that mean for the physical in the virtual space? How does the body move? How does viewing change? Here, where meaning and intention swing between action and audience as though it were a pendulum of interpreted meaning available for the virtually present, where is presence, motion, and reading? Where does the negotiation between states and spaces of being begin? Where does it end?

The answer possibly lies in the narrative coherence (or lack thereof) of our engagement with online personhood. Narratives are how we process the world around us, arranging reality into sequential, coherent streams. Influencing the way we imagine and articulate narratives

would be to influence the materiality of experiential reality itself and the response to such an attempt at influencing the dominant paradigms and their narrative is rarely generous. There is very little that is true on social media, and the way we encounter the artifice of it all directs the scope of the pendular motion.

What this paper proposes is an examination of certain sets of orders of operation. The endeavour is to identify and isolate social tendencies that have infiltrated the simultaneous, synchronous digital space and how multiplicities operate on a platform designed for motivated self-presentation. The materiality of the female body here is evident through its loss and what language mediates and oversimplifies thought and limits it to lingual, translatable notions, is presented as a comprehensive hyper-textual assemblage. The taming of the Sacred Feminine occurs in conjunction with the desexualization of the same—a reduction into something inaccessible to living women. The unattainable standards of virtue as illustrated in the scripture and the inevitability of sin at every attempt at reorganizing oneself at certain failure just maybe a popular theme on *Instagram*.

To begin with, *Instagram* user @radioshead takes the disruption further in her work. In “Apollo and Daphne by Bernini” posted on 3 May, 2019; Daphne’s torso has been replaced by part of a photograph depicting a woman with marks on her body from undergarments (Fig. 1). The second photograph is firstly a reference to the restrictive sexualization of the female body, and related to the feminist renouncement of brassieres. The imprint of the clothing itself is a visible evidence of this restriction, a theme already present in the myth, as is presented in the description. Daphne’s rejection of male intrusion resulted in the loss of her body, compounded by the latter image and the context of its presentation. The materiality of the female body here is evident through its loss and what language mediates and oversimplifies thought and limits it to lingual, translatable notions, is presented as a comprehensive hypertextual assemblage.



Fig. 1. Radioshead. *Instagram*.

Another of @radioshead's work titled "my first viral piece", referring to a previously shared viral post, presents Leonardo Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* (1503), whose face is partially replaced by that of a model with a lollipop provocatively placed in her mouth (Fig. 2). The contrast aside, the reaction that the text engenders is key to examining the intervention of masculine gaze at the site of female presentation. *Instagram* user jo_hn9707 finds it quite outrageous that the classic piety of *Mona Lisa* has been violated by the juxtaposition of a lollipop-loving woman, and expresses it in an argument in the comments section.



Fig. 2. Radioshead. *Instagram*.

I had collected the pictures in 2018 as I found it interesting, but the picture and account has since disappeared from the platform. The work itself has been used (unaffiliated to the creator) on t-shirts, posters, phone cases etc., independently entering lived social spaces. The discussion, as may be seen, enters the territory of conceptual, at which point, the artist withdraws from the discussion. In this case, what is it that provoked this strong reaction, where does the root of a resistance to this juxtaposition lie, and how is it dispersed? What may be immediately noticeable, once one gets past the lollipop, is that the mysterious smile *Mona Lisa* is famous for has been replaced by the offending item. Indeed, the collage may even be read as the unveiling of *Mona Lisa*'s mystery, the unearthing of female desire. The "mysterious and conservative" *Mona Lisa* has been demystified by her descent into the ordinary through this juxtaposition. The reaction of the user jo_hn9707 thus becomes a reaction to this demystification of patriarchal ideals pertaining to femininity, and therefore his rejection of the work itself as not true art.

Solah shringar is the sixteen steps of adornment that precedes a wedding ceremony: the sixteen steps that ‘raise’ the subject to womanhood, or even goddesshood as she is associated with the goddess Lakshmi, of beauty and wealth prior to matrimony. It also marks an almost violent end to girlhood. The woman’s body is the site of adornment and solah shringar is an action of binding that’s given cohesion and order through the process itself. Rationalized as tradition and not disregarding the economics of the concept, solah shringar is the point where feminine is bound and unified, the multiplicities of self is streamlined to form and perform the roles of a wife and mother, and it’s supposed transformative imagery is disruptive of the psychological continuity of the subject and selfhood.

An immensely different treatment and reclamation of adornment is available in the self presentation of Shilo Shiv Suleman, a contemporary Indian artist and activist, as she redesigns and re-presents adornment as part armour, part embellishment. An examination of her treatment of goddess Sati’s legend through art exemplifies my point in Figs. 3 and 4. Here, fragmentation is literal (through an invocation of Sati’s legend) and in social practice. Suleman present’s Sati’s body in pieces in the aftermath of violence, as well as unified in being worn. Sati of legend exists then as both the disparate concepts unified in the moment of violence as well as the concept wholly healed and reanimated. In Suleman’s words, the wearable pieces and through ritualistic performance, there is a healing of fragmentation, a return to self. But does a singular self exist even before being violently rendered? How could the assumption of a unified self be not violent, especially in the context of solah shringar and similar presumptions? In reading Suleman’s work independent of the platform and in conjunction with other ‘personal’ posts by the artist, I will attempt a clarification of some fundamental questions relating to digital spaces, and the unconscious anticipation of a unified social subject in imagining a digital media presence.

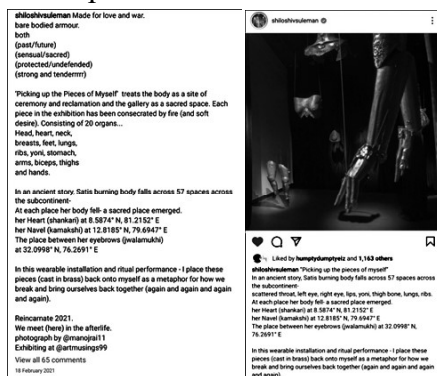


Fig. 3. Shilo Shiv Suleman. “Picking up the pieces of myself”.



Fig 4: Shilo Shiv Suleman. “Made for love and war. bare bodied armour.”



Fig. 5. Shilo Shiv Suleman. “Picking up the pieces of myself”.

Suleman uses symbols associated primarily with goddesshood in portraiture to diffuse the male gaze and to explore “decolonial female sexuality of South Asia, reclaiming fertility rites of the Far East”. The figure below was originally posted on *Instagram* 9th February,

2019 (Fig 7) and the content in quotes is part of the caption, acting as the point of contact. Fig. 8 is a photograph of Suleman wearing the fertility belt, posted on 12 February, 2019, and in it, the symbol changes from holding to held. In figs. 7 and 8, the photographs has the artist carrying/wearing a fertility belt of own design, mehndi is here painted as though it were war paint. The intricacy of design typically associated with the traditional mehndi practice has been rejected in favour of a solid mass of colour which stays a point of disconnect in terms of expectations and cultural baggage, as though the acknowledgment of fragmentations has already begun. In being worn, the belt itself is a drawing together of sexuality, a system of pointing, much like *solah shringar*. In being carried, it becomes a shield. (Fig. 6, 7)



Fig. 6. Shilo Shiv Suleman. “I was born in the congo.”



Fig. 7. Shilo Shiv Suleman. “There was once a beautiful goddess.

In the case of *Instagrammed* practices, community re-formation is a significant side-effect of the intrusion and later adaptation of the digital into the social. The changes are not limited to the processes of reformation, but also of the ways in which the digital’s anticipated

influences were discussed on and offline. It may seem as though the initial excitement over a democratic, user oriented space gave way to disillusionment as “digital spaces and technologies, rather than becoming transformative hosts for new forms of global community, has closely replicated long standing social networks and formations” Briggs states (5). But this critique of the digital as a reproduction of existing systems do not recognize the tendency to more than imitate, that the involved, invasive ways in which the digital intrudes on the personal, the communal, and the commercial influences patterns and networks, while prioritizing those fluent in its operations. The digital space’s influence on communication was a reconfiguration/reformation of conventions surrounding interpersonal communication and enforced patterns and new norms to linguistic and temporal (in terms of instantaneity, accessibility, and retainability) aspects of communication, where there was a rush to participate and assume sections of the digital space in practice.

Here, Suleman’s attempt at goddesshood stays public and robust.

One may claim that any attempt at drawing comparisons is also an attempt at unification and thus becomes a site of violence. The fragmentation that is part of Suleman’s style then becomes a countering of the anticipated imposition of unity. The presentation of the self as a process of becoming or even an acknowledgment of disassociation thus becomes the antithetical concept to violence of such kind. The following and final piece is a wood and mirror ‘temple’ built to Beauty, with the caption stating “I come from beauty, I return to beauty. I come from beauty, I return to beauty. I come from beauty, I return to beauty. (hymn for the deathless)” published on *Instagram* on 15 March, 2019 (Fig. 9). Where is immortality, if not in the dual feminine? The cyclicity of the chant may be drawn from similar themes: from spring to spring, from warm to cold, from self to expression. The immortality possible through infinite cycles of life-death and similar binaries is part of several philosophies, particularly of cultures from the east and far-east parts of the world. What Suleman accomplishes in this piece is the materialization of this cyclicity through dispersal, automatically negating what mortality may be inherent in materiality. The birds and flowers of paradise spread through the temple, turning towards the exposed and ornamented ribcage and liberating the lungs. The kneeling woman does not seem to be doing so in supplication, but as though she were at the beginning of liberation, already folded into its space. This definitely locates fragmentation as a consequence of dispersal and is portrayed to be the transmitter of ecstatic, definite assurance of immortality, as opposed to fragmentation treated as a consequence of trauma.

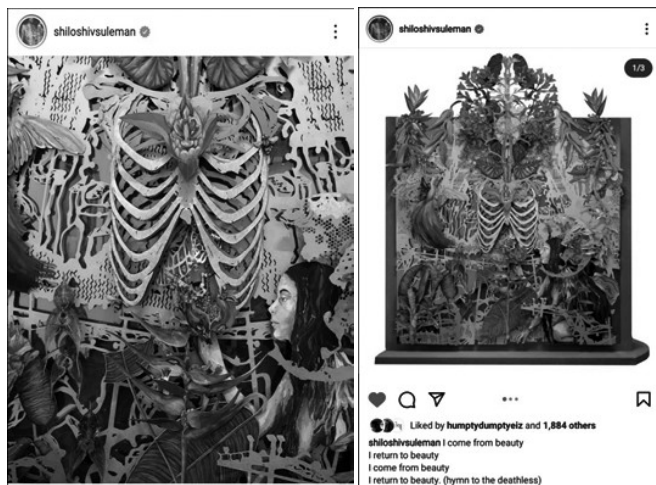


Fig. 8. Shilo Shiv Suleman. “I come from beauty, I return to beauty”

Suleman’s work is an opportunity to examine cultivated and interactive subjectivities as is the norm on *Instagram*, as well as confront the fragmentation and the possibilities of reformulation in digital environments. Primarily interested in installations and illustrations, the artist attempts to reimagine womanhood before its culturally established violation, visible in the fractured and reabsorbant lines that characterize her work. Lotus flowers, loose hair, and a visual visit to the period before modesty was factored into the images of goddesses: Suleman brings into frame the strength and sensuality available to a woman; body hair, breasts, and calloused palms together. The observance of ritualistic and artistic practices that typify Suleman’s *Instagram* content and the circulation of concepts within strong tie circles (for example, those who are present in posts as ‘tagged’ bodies) and the lesser influence on the weaker circle¹ (the followers) make available the space to imagine goddesshood for oneself. What is common to the artists mentioned in this paper is that through collage art or performance, their work traces a history of gaze and works to confuse/disrupt it. The ideals of Mona Lisa and the goddess Lakshmi are re-negotiated through an unveiling of female desire that goes undocumented in classical, idealized renditions of femininity.

Self-subjectification of this kind also faces responses similar to the argument over Mona Lisa’s integrity. A large fraction of the responses are the visible evidence of the male gaze piercing straight through semiotics and is transfixed by the image, and are largely ignored. Goddesshood as practiced and performed—also humanized—by the artist, or similar alternative

practices of imagining power, also simultaneously anticipate reversals in gaze. Mehndi, when stripped of its cultural baggage, becomes points of separation and continuity. Adornment is re-presented as part armour, part embellishment. Shringar returns to being a bhava and not a conclusive state of being. In putting the flesh back on the sacred feminine, in piecing together Sati's body, there is a return, but also unavoidable is the spaces left behind. The female body stays a site of violence, which stays unchanging in possible processes of fragmentation/liberation and unification/healing. The processes do not return the self to a unified being in an act of assurance and self presentation, and complicates the mourning of impossible sustainable states.

In systems that have internalized fragmentation as both a mechanism to cope with the violence of embodiment as well as dispersal, the scope of social media in supporting this tendency towards functional multiplicity of self is immense. Interestingly, immersion in this traversable world bubble is not a retreat from social as is imagined, the digital functions as a functional extension of the social. The sense of loss that permeates lived experience as a consequence of apparent fragmentation, an inability to reimagine what came before, becomes embodied in Suleman's work and in being "voiced" becomes tangible. Its presence, presentation and circulation on *Instagram* allows for further fragmentation. Its engagement with violence itself varies still, depending on whether it is employed by the artist in an attempt at assimilation while maintaining diffusion, as a response to the violence female bodies embody, or sometimes, (in returning) like honey, drowns even the impression of violence. But such a conclusion would be an immense romanticization and a serious dismissal of the system of operations. The rhetoric of mourning as a response to the fragmentation and the violence embodied in being a female body, through disruption, dispersal and dismissal, may yet become a rhetoric of feminine power.

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Figure 4: Shilo Shiv Suleman. "Made for love and war. bare bodied armour." *Instagram*. <https://www.Instagram.com/p/CLb0BoDhuJd/>

Figure 5: Shilo Shiv Suleman. "Picking up the pieces of myself". *Instagram*. <https://www.Instagram.com/p/CKG5PFdBcDr/>

Figure 6: Shilo Shiv Suleman. "I was born in the congo." *Instagram*. <https://www.Instagram.com/p/BtqX56uFmTX/>

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Educational Odyssey : Unravelling Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*

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The present study is to explore the symbiotic relationship between education and migration in Jhumpa Lahiri's novel, *The Namesake*. Through the lens of the protagonist, Gogol Ganguli, the narrative delves into the intricate process of cultural adaptation and identity formation. The paper examines how Gogol's educational experiences serve as a pivotal force in his journey of self-discovery. Additionally, it investigates the impact of migration on the characters' sense of identity, emphasizing the challenges and transformations that arise when navigating the intersections of Indian and American cultures. The role of literature is highlighted as a key element in Gogol's assimilation, providing insights into the human condition and fostering a deeper understanding of cultural complexities. Ultimately, the paper aims to unravel the nuanced interplay between education, migration, and identity in *The Namesake*, offering readers a glimpse into the rich tapestry of cultural exploration depicted in Lahiri's masterful storytelling.

The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri intricately weaves a narrative that delves into the complexities of identity, migration, and the pursuit of education. The novel follows the life of Gogol Ganguli, born to Bengali parents in the United States, and explores the challenges he faces in navigating his dual cultural identity. The novel spins gold out of the straw of ordinary lives. The rampant migrations and migratory lives in the contemporary world have led to the consideration of many aspects of these lives in many academic areas and fields, and naturally it has become a contemporary major motif for literature. Making its own way through diverse considerations like politics and economy, sociology, identity and subjectivity, language, gender and sexuality, literary studies pay attention to the multitude of these experiences.

People began to move to places of advancement so that their life will be socially and economically uplifted and this practice has gained importance to migration. It takes place at such a large rate that it has become a movement thereby leading to the emergence of migration literature. Writings based on migration theory focus on the experience of people moving to places and the displacement, alienation and cultural identity they come across as they sail through the new place. The impact of migration on the personal lives of writers are often reflected in their writings. This novel definitely has an autobiographical link as Lahiri's experience of growing up as a child of immigrants resembles that of her protagonist, Gogol in the novel.

The economic impact and cultural shifts come along with migration. The field of migration theory in literature doesn't have a single founder, but scholars like Salman Rushdie, Edward Said, and Homi K. Bhabha have significantly contributed to the exploration of migration, displacement, and cultural hybridity in literary works. Rushdie, for instance, is known for his novel *Midnight's Children*, which addresses the postcolonial experiences of migration and identity. Edward Said, in his work *Reflections on Exile*, discusses the psychological and cultural dimensions of displacement, while Homi K. Bhabha's concept of "third space" explores the in-between spaces that emerge from migration and cultural encounters. These scholars have played pivotal roles in shaping the discourse around migration in literature. Migration literature offers a global perspective connecting readers to universal themes while highlighting the uniqueness of each migration experience which serves as a historical documentation of different waves of migration.

Education emerges as a significant theme in the novel, serving as a bridge between Gogol's Bengali heritage and his American upbringing. Gogol's academic pursuits become a means for him to connect with both worlds, reflecting the broader idea that education can act as a powerful tool for integration in diasporic communities. Through Gogol's experiences, Lahiri highlights the transformative potential of education in shaping one's identity and fostering a sense of belonging.

As the narrative unfolds, the protagonists navigate the complexities of identity, cultural adaptation, and the pursuit of knowledge, shedding light on the transformative impact of education within the context of migration. Lahiri weaves a rich tapestry that explores the challenges and opportunities presented by the intersection of these two powerful forces, inviting readers to reflect on the universal themes of self-discovery and belonging in the face of geographical and intellectual exploration.

The characters' migration to the United States opens up new educational opportunities, exposing them to a different academic landscape. This can be seen through Gogol's pursuit of higher education, reflecting the idea of the American Dream and the promise of a diverse educational experience. The different instances in the novel prove this fact. Gogol's decision to attend Yale University reflects the novel's exploration of educational opportunities in the U.S. Yale represents an elite institution that provides Gogol with a high-quality education and exposes him to diverse academic experiences. Ashoke, Gogol's father, is a university professor in the U.S. His career exemplifies the educational opportunities available to immigrants, as he

is engaged in academic research and teaching, showcasing the professional and intellectual avenues that migration can offer. Ashoke's pursuit of the American Dream, which often includes the promise of upward mobility and improved professional opportunities, is a recurring theme. His migration symbolizes the potential for achieving career success and personal fulfillment in the U.S.

Gogol's relationship with Maxine exposes him to a different social and intellectual milieu. Maxine's family background and lifestyle introduce Gogol to a world of cultural and educational affluence that he might not have experienced in the same way if he had stayed in India. Gogol pursues a degree in architecture, a field he might not have explored in the same way had he remained in India. This choice reflects the diverse educational opportunities available in the U.S., where individuals can explore and specialize in a wide range of disciplines. Gogol's time in the U.S. provides him with networking opportunities that contribute to his professional growth. His interactions within the American cultural and academic spheres open doors to various career paths, reflecting the idea that migration can expand one's professional horizons.

The novel portrays the American system of liberal arts education, where students have the flexibility to explore various subjects before choosing a major. This contrasts with more rigid educational systems in some other parts of the world and demonstrates the openness and variety within the U.S. academic landscape. Gogol's experiences in American classrooms highlight the cultural diversity within the educational environment. Interactions with students from various backgrounds contribute to his broadened worldview and understanding of different perspectives, enriching his educational journey. The novel portrays how migration can provide avenues for specialization and expertise that might not be as readily accessible in the characters' home country. The novel suggests that the characters bring a certain cultural capital with them to the U.S., which can be an asset in professional settings. The diversity of their experiences and perspectives enhances their ability to navigate and succeed in different career environments.

The characters face challenges in adapting to the American educational system, reflecting the cultural differences in teaching styles, expectations, and classroom dynamics. This adaptation process becomes a significant aspect of their educational journey. One early instance in the novel is Gogol's experience in school where his name becomes a source of confusion and ridicule. The American classmates struggle to understand and pronounce his name, highlighting the cultural differences and the challenge of assimilating into a new educational environment. As Gogol progresses through the American educational system, he becomes

increasingly uncomfortable with his name. This discomfort is reflective of the cultural clash he faces within the classroom setting, where his name stands out as different from the norm. Gogol's dating experiences, particularly with Maxine, involve exposure to a lifestyle and social norms that are different from his Indian background. These instances not only affect his personal life but also reflect the broader cultural adjustments he must make within the American educational and social context.

The clash between Gogol's parents' expectations and the values emphasized in the American educational system is evident. While his parents prioritize a stable career, Gogol is drawn to a more creative and individualistic path in architecture. This reflects the tension between traditional expectations and the freedom allowed by the American educational system. Gogol pursues graduate studies in architecture, he experiences a sense of disconnect and dissatisfaction. The American academic approach, with its emphasis on individuality and creativity, contrasts with the more structured and tradition-bound education he might have encountered in India, contributing to his internal struggle. The novel suggests that the American educational system sometimes lacks the cultural context that Gogol's parents had back in India. For example, Gogol's parents, who were both academics in India, might find it challenging to fully comprehend and engage with the American academic landscape, highlighting the cultural gap.

These instances in *The Namesake* portray the characters' challenges in adapting to the American educational system, emphasizing the cultural differences in teaching styles, expectations, and classroom dynamics. The novel explores how these challenges contribute to the characters' overall journey of self-discovery and integration.

This challenge may impact their academic performance and ability to navigate the job market, adding a layer of complexity to their migration experience. Gogol's name and its pronunciation created a major instance of language barrier when he struggles to communicate effectively with teachers and peers. This not only impacts his educational experience but also contributes to feelings of alienation within the academic environment. When Gogol enters Yale University, he encounters a more diverse linguistic landscape. His interactions with students from various cultural backgrounds highlight the complexities of language differences and the effort required to bridge communication gaps in an academic setting. The novel portrays how immigrant parents, like Gogol's, may face challenges in fully engaging with their children's

education due to language barriers. This limitation may affect their ability to support their children academically and navigate the intricacies of the U.S. educational system.

Gogol's sister, Sonia, also grapples with language barriers in her school experiences. The novel suggests that linguistic challenges can impact the academic performance and social integration of immigrant children in the U.S. educational system. Instances where characters, especially immigrants like Ashoke and Ashima, participate in job interviews or navigate professional settings demonstrate the hurdles posed by language differences. Effective communication becomes crucial for career advancement, and language barriers can hinder opportunities for professional growth. The novel explores how language is not only a tool for communication but also a carrier of cultural nuances. Characters may struggle to convey or understand subtle cultural references, leading to potential misunderstandings in both educational and professional contexts. Moushumi's multilingual identity reflects the complexities of language in her experiences. Her proficiency in multiple languages highlights the fluidity and adaptability required to navigate educational and professional opportunities in a multicultural environment. The novel itself becomes a symbolic representation of language as characters transition between Bengali and English. This linguistic shift mirrors the broader challenges immigrants face in adapting to a new language for educational and professional purposes.

The characters may find that their cultural background and experiences provide them with a unique perspective and set of skills that can enhance their academic and professional pursuits in the United States. This cultural capital can be a valuable asset in a diverse environment. Gogol's architectural designs, influenced by his cultural background, provide a unique perspective in the U.S. His Bengali heritage contributes to the distinctiveness of his work, showcasing how his cultural experiences enhance his creative abilities in the field of architecture.

The novel depicts instances where Bengali traditions and practices permeate the characters' everyday lives in the U.S. This cultural foundation becomes a source of strength and resilience, influencing the characters' outlook on education, work, and interpersonal relationships. The characters face the dilemma of maintaining their native language as a cultural anchor while adapting to an English-dominated environment. The choice of language in familial interactions becomes symbolic of the ongoing battle to preserve cultural identity amid the pressures of assimilation.

Instances where characters display cultural sensitivity and understanding in relationships highlight the importance of their cultural background. This awareness becomes an asset in navigating diverse social circles, contributing to their personal and professional growth. The novel portrays Bengali celebrations and traditions, such as Durga Puja and other cultural events. These experiences provide the characters with a unique cultural lens through which they view the world, impacting their interactions in academic and professional settings. The characters' ability to navigate multicultural social circles, including interactions with fellow immigrants and Americans, becomes a strength. This networking reflects the advantages of having a diverse cultural background in building connections that can enhance academic and professional opportunities. The characters' engagement with Bengali literature and its influence on their worldview highlights the intellectual richness of their cultural background. This cultural capital becomes a source of inspiration in academic pursuits and shapes their understanding of literature in the U.S.

The characters use food as a means of preserving their cultural identity. The preparation and consumption of Bengali dishes become rituals that connect them to their heritage, offering a tangible link to their cultural roots in the face of assimilative pressures. The characters' clothing choices, influenced by their Bengali background, become cultural signifiers that resist complete assimilation. The persistence of traditional attire in certain contexts reflects the characters' commitment to maintaining a visible connection to their cultural identity. The older generation, particularly Ashoke and Ashima, plays a crucial role in attempting to preserve cultural identity. Their adherence to traditional practices and values becomes a source of guidance for the younger characters, emphasizing the importance of cultural continuity. The characters navigate the challenge of bilingualism as a means of preserving their cultural identity. The use of Bengali in specific contexts becomes a tool for expressing cultural nuances and maintaining a distinct cultural identity within an English-dominated society.

Instances of intermarriage, such as Gogol's marriage to Moushumi, showcase the complexities of cultural preservation. The characters grapple with the fusion of cultural backgrounds, raising questions about how to maintain distinct identities in a multicultural environment. Gogol's journey reflects a constant tension between assimilation and the preservation of cultural identity. His choices, including the adoption of a more Americanized lifestyle and distancing from traditional practices, illustrate the internal struggle faced by individuals navigating a new cultural landscape. The novel depicts generational differences in

how characters adapt to cultural assimilation. The older generation may be more steadfast in preserving traditional practices, while the younger generation may experiment with a blend of cultural influences, highlighting the ongoing negotiation of cultural identity within the family. In *The Namesake*, the characters grapple with the challenge of preserving their cultural identity in the face of assimilation, highlighting the multifaceted nature of the immigrant experience and the ongoing tension between adapting to a new culture and maintaining a connection to one's roots.

The pursuit of academic excellence may take on new significance or be redefined based on the opportunities and challenges they encounter in the U.S. Gogol's educational journey symbolizes a blend of traditional expectations and the evolving outlook shaped by migration. His parents initially envision a stable and secure career path, while Gogol navigates the American educational system, exploring liberal arts and eventually pursuing a career in architecture. The novel portrays generational differences in expectations regarding career paths. While the older generation may prioritize stability and conventional professions, the younger generation, influenced by the American environment, may seek more individualistic and creative avenues in their educational and professional pursuits. Instances where Gogol's educational choices clash with his parents' expectations illustrate the shifting landscape of aspirations after migration. The clash reflects the tension between preserving cultural values and adapting to a new educational environment.

Gogol's exploration of identity through his educational choices suggests a shift from the traditional emphasis on career stability to a more personal and introspective approach. Education becomes a tool for self-discovery and expression in the American context. Moushumi's academic and personal choices after migration demonstrate a departure from the path her parents might have envisioned. Her exploration of diverse educational and relationship experiences highlights the influence of the U.S. environment on shaping individual aspirations. The novel portrays instances where characters integrate their cultural values with the American educational system. While adapting to new opportunities, they find ways to maintain a connection to their roots, creating a unique blend of educational experiences. The characters' shift in educational priorities after migration reflects a broader theme of adaptation and assimilation. While still valuing education, the focus may expand beyond conventional career paths, incorporating elements of personal fulfillment, creativity, and a more individualistic approach.

The pursuit of education and professional opportunities in the U.S. affects the characters' relationships, both within their family and with others. The demands of academia and career goals can shape interpersonal dynamics and contribute to the overall narrative of migration and identity. The pursuit of education and professional opportunities in the U.S. introduces a dynamic shift in family relationships. The characters, particularly Gogol, navigate the balance between personal aspirations and familial expectations, contributing to a redefinition of traditional family dynamics. The pursuit of education and career paths in the U.S. often leads to generational conflicts within the family. The differing values and expectations regarding educational choices create tension, reflecting the broader theme of intergenerational dynamics influenced by cultural shifts.

The characters' romantic relationships, especially those involving individuals from different cultural backgrounds, become a lens through which the impact of cultural adaptation is explored. Navigating relationships in the U.S. context adds layers of complexity, reflecting the influence of education and professional opportunities on personal connections. Gogol's relationships with Maxine and later with Moushumi highlight the interplay between personal choices, cultural identity, and the pursuit of education and career opportunities. These relationships are shaped by Gogol's evolving understanding of self and his place within the cultural landscape of the U.S.

The pursuit of education and career goals may lead to sacrifices in personal relationships. Characters may experience strains in friendships, romantic partnerships, or familial connections as they prioritize their professional pursuits, illustrating the impact of individual ambitions on interpersonal bonds.

Marriages within the novel, such as Gogol's and Moushumi's, exemplify how cultural clashes influenced by education and professional choices can strain relationships. The characters grapple with balancing individual identities, career aspirations, and cultural expectations within the context of marriage. Gogol's journey, particularly his relationship with his parents, undergoes significant changes as he pursues education and professional opportunities. The initial conflict over career choices and naming evolves into a deeper understanding of familial bonds and the complexities of identity in a multicultural setting. Characters' friendships reflect the impact of cultural diversity stemming from educational environments. The interactions within diverse social circles contribute to the characters' personal growth and influence their perspectives on relationships and community in the U.S. The novel explores how personal and professional

relationships intersect. Characters navigate workplace dynamics, friendships, and romantic relationships, emphasizing the interconnectedness of various aspects of their lives influenced by education and career pursuits.

In *The Namesake*, Gogol's educational journey is intricately woven into the fabric of his dual cultural identity, presenting a nuanced exploration of the challenges and personal growth that often accompany the experiences of first-generation immigrants in an educational context. The novel explores the intersections of education and migration. Through Gogol's journey, readers are invited to contemplate the complexities of identity formation, the challenges of cultural integration and the transformative power of education in bridging the gap between two worlds. Towards the end of the novel, Gogol finds a more integrated sense of self. His journey reflects the process of reconciling his dual cultural identity, embracing both his Bengali heritage and his American experiences. This reconciliation influences his perspective on education, career, and life in a way that transcends the challenges he faced as a first-generation immigrant.

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Garnering Hope: Economic Migration and Resilience in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*

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John Steinbeck's seminal work, *The Grapes of Wrath*, stands as a touching exploration of the human spirit amidst social upheaval. Set against the backdrop of the Great Depression, the novel follows the Joad family's migration from Dust Bowl-ravaged Oklahoma to the promise of California's fertile lands. This paper presentation dives into the thematic richness and symbolic depth of Steinbeck's masterpiece, examining its central theme of migration and its in-depth factors. This paper explores how Steinbeck illustrates the plight of the migrant workers, whose dreams of prosperity in California are shattered by ruthless landowners and a system that values profit over humanity. Through the Joad family's journey, we witness the resilience of the human spirit in the face of relentless hardship, as they strive to preserve their dignity and sense of belonging amidst a landscape of despair even when they are forced to migrate to another place due to their state of helplessness. Drawing on critical analysis and scholarly insights, this paper aims to illuminate the enduring relevance of *The Grapes of Wrath* as a powerful meditation on the human condition in connection with the migration and how different life's get transformed. As we navigate the complexities of our own socio-political landscape, Steinbeck's masterpiece serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring struggle for justice, compassion, and the pursuit of a better tomorrow.

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck is a powerful exploration of migration, particularly the westward migration of the Joad family during the Dust Bowl era of the 1930s. Migration is a central theme in the novel, and it is explored in several ways. When we dive further into the theme of migration, we can see how different types of migration act in accordance in the novel.

In the case of Physical Migration, the Joad family, like many others during the Dust Bowl, migrates from their drought-stricken farm in Oklahoma to California in search of work and a better life. Their journey westward is fraught with hardships, mirroring the experiences of thousands of families who undertook similar migrations during the Great Depression. Examining the Economic Migration we can see that the Joads, along with many other families, migrate to California in the hope of finding jobs and escaping poverty. However, upon arrival, they encounter exploitation, low wages, and harsh working conditions. Steinbeck highlights

the economic desperation that drives people to migrate and the economic inequalities they face upon arrival. When we inspect on Social Migration the Joads' migration exposes them to different social environments and challenges their beliefs and values. They encounter hostility and prejudice from both locals and other migrants, as well as solidarity and camaraderie within migrant communities. Through their journey, the Joads experience a social awakening, realizing the injustices and hardships faced by marginalized communities. When we further enquire into migration, Emotional Migration also triggers emotional upheaval for the Joad family. Leaving behind their home and community, they grapple with feelings of loss, displacement, and nostalgia. Their journey tests their resilience, bonds, and sense of identity as they navigate unfamiliar territories and confront adversity. Looking into Spiritual Migration, Steinbeck explores themes of spirituality and transcendence through the Joads' migration. Despite their hardships, the family finds moments of grace and connection with nature and humanity. Their journey becomes a quest for dignity, survival, and ultimately, a search for a sense of belonging and purpose.

By exploring migration through various lenses—physical, economic, social, emotional, and spiritual—Steinbeck offers a nuanced portrayal of the human experience during a tumultuous period in American history. *The Grapes of Wrath* remains a timeless classic that continues to resonate with readers, shedding light on the enduring struggles and aspirations of migrant communities.

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, economic migration is a predominant theme that underscores the struggles and motivations of the characters as they journey from Oklahoma to California in search of economic opportunity. Here's how economic migration is depicted in the novel:

Forced Migration Due to Economic Hardship: The economic downturn of the Great Depression, compounded by the devastation of the Dust Bowl, forces the Joad family and thousands of other sharecroppers off their land. Unable to sustain themselves economically, they are compelled to migrate westward in search of jobs and a better life. The Joad family, like many other sharecroppers in Oklahoma, is forced off their land due to economic hardship exacerbated by the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. Unable to sustain themselves economically, they are compelled to abandon their home and seek opportunities elsewhere. With few prospects for employment in Oklahoma, the Joads undertake a journey westward to California in search of jobs and a better life. Their migration is driven by the dire economic

circumstances they face, as well as the promise of work in California's agricultural industry. Upon reaching California, the Joads encounter the harsh reality of migrant labor, where they are subjected to exploitation and abuse by wealthy landowners and agricultural corporations. Wages are low, working conditions are deplorable, and the migrants are treated as disposable commodities in the pursuit of profit. Despite their efforts to find work, the Joads and other migrant families find themselves trapped in a cycle of poverty and displacement. They move from one place to another in search of employment, only to face eviction, discrimination, and hardship at every turn. The novel exposes the systemic injustice and discrimination faced by migrant workers, who are treated as second-class citizens and denied basic rights and protections. From exploitative labor practices to racist attitudes and policies, the migrants encounter numerous barriers to economic and social mobility. Despite the challenges they face, the migrants demonstrate remarkable resilience and solidarity in the face of adversity. They organize protests, strikes, and other forms of collective action to demand fair wages, decent working conditions, and respect for their dignity as human beings. Generally speaking, forced migration due to economic hardship in *The Grapes of Wrath* serves as a powerful commentary on the injustices of the capitalist system and the human cost of unchecked greed and exploitation. Through the experiences of the Joad family and other migrant workers, John Steinbeck illuminates the harsh realities of poverty, displacement, and systemic inequality during one of the most turbulent periods in American history.

The Promise of Employment in California: California represents a beacon of hope for the Joad family and other migrants, touted as a land of abundant work and prosperity. Driven by the promise of jobs in the agricultural industry, they undertake the arduous journey to California in the hopes of securing employment and improving their economic circumstances. From the outset of their journey, California is portrayed as a land of abundant work and prosperity, where jobs are plentiful and opportunities abound. The Joad family, like many others, are drawn to California by the promise of employment in the agricultural industry, which they hope will offer them a chance to escape poverty and rebuild their lives. Along the road to California, the Joads encounter other migrants who share stories of high wages and good living conditions in the West. These rumors fuel their hopes and expectations, spurring them onward in their journey despite the challenges and uncertainties they face along the way. As they approach California, the Joads encounter flyers and advertisements distributed by California landowners, promising work and prosperity to migrant workers. These flyers paint

a rosy picture of California as a land of opportunity, enticing the migrants with promises of high wages and a better life. However, upon reaching California, the Joads soon discover that the reality of migrant life is far from the idyllic vision they had been promised. They encounter exploitation, poverty wages, and deplorable living conditions in the agricultural fields and migrant camps, where they are subjected to systemic abuse and oppression by wealthy landowners and corporations. The promise of employment in California ultimately proves to be illusory for the Joad family and many other migrants. Instead of finding the prosperity they had hoped for, they are confronted with the harsh realities of economic exploitation and social injustice, leaving them disillusioned and disheartened by the broken promises of the American Dream. Altogether, the promise of employment in California serves as a powerful symbol of hope and aspiration for the Joad family and other migrant workers in *The Grapes of Wrath*. However, it also highlights the stark contrast between the myth of the American Dream and the harsh realities of poverty, exploitation, and inequality faced by those who seek a better life in the land of opportunity.

Exploitation of Migrant Labor: Upon reaching California, the migrants discover that the reality of economic migration is far from the idyllic vision they had been promised. Instead, they encounter exploitation and oppression at the hands of wealthy landowners and agricultural corporations who profit from cheap migrant labor. Wages are low, working conditions are harsh, and the migrants are subjected to systemic exploitation and abuse. Migrant workers in California are subjected to abysmally low wages and deplorable working conditions. They toil long hours under the scorching sun for meager pay, often earning barely enough to survive. The Joad family and other migrants find themselves trapped in a cycle of poverty, unable to escape the economic hardships they face. The novel exposes the systemic exploitation of migrant laborers by powerful landowners and corporations who profit from their cheap labor. These entities manipulate the labor market to keep wages low and maintain control over the migrant workforce, exploiting their vulnerability and desperation for economic survival. Migrant workers are often forced to patronize company-owned stores and services, where prices are inflated and wages are deducted to pay off debts. This system of debt peonage traps workers in a cycle of indebtedness, making it nearly impossible for them to escape poverty and improve their living conditions. Landowners and their hired enforcers use violence and intimidation to suppress dissent and maintain control over the migrant labor force. Migrant workers who speak out against exploitation or organize for better working conditions are met with threats,

harassment, and physical violence, effectively silencing opposition and perpetuating the cycle of exploitation. Migrant laborers are often treated as mere commodities, valued only for their ability to work and generate profit for their employers. They are denied basic rights and dignity, subjected to harsh treatment and discriminatory practices that reinforce their status as second-class citizens in the eyes of those who wield power. Despite the challenges they face, migrant workers demonstrate remarkable resilience and solidarity in the face of exploitation. They organize protests, strikes, and other forms of collective action to demand fair wages, decent working conditions, and respect for their humanity. Overall, the exploitation of migrant labor in *The Grapes of Wrath* serves as a powerful indictment of the injustices of the capitalist system and the human cost of unchecked greed and exploitation. Through the experiences of the Joad family and other migrant workers, Steinbeck sheds light on the harsh realities of poverty, exploitation, and systemic inequality during one of the most turbulent periods in American history.

Competition and Conflict: The influx of migrants to California creates intense competition for jobs, exacerbating economic tensions and conflicts between migrant workers and local residents. The migrants face hostility and resentment from those who view them as outsiders and threats to their livelihoods, further complicating their struggle for economic survival. Migrant workers flood into California in search of employment, leading to intense competition for jobs in the agricultural industry. This competition exacerbates tensions between migrants and locals, as both groups vie for limited opportunities in a depressed economy. The Joad family and other migrant workers face constant struggles for survival as they compete for scarce resources, including food, shelter, and work. The harsh conditions of the migrant camps and the exploitative practices of wealthy landowners intensify the competition for basic necessities, leading to conflict and resentment among the workers. Local residents in California view the influx of migrants with suspicion and hostility, fearing that they will take away jobs and strain already scarce resources. This animosity towards migrants contributes to social tension and conflict between the two groups, as locals resent the presence of outsiders in their communities. Conflict between migrant workers and landowners often escalates into violence and intimidation. Landowners and their hired enforcers use force to suppress dissent and maintain control over the migrant labor force, while migrant workers engage in acts of resistance and solidarity to challenge the oppressive status quo. Migrant workers from different backgrounds sometimes compete against each other for jobs, perpetuating divisions and undermining solidarity among

the oppressed. In response to exploitation and mistreatment, migrant workers organize strikes, protests, and other forms of collective action to demand fair wages, decent working conditions, and respect for their rights. These actions often lead to confrontations with authorities and landowners, highlighting the inherent conflicts between labor and capital. Overall, competition and conflict in *The Grapes of Wrath* reflect the social and economic tensions of the Great Depression era, as different groups of people vie for survival and opportunity in a society marked by inequality and injustice. Through his portrayal of these conflicts, Steinbeck offers a powerful critique of the capitalist system and the human cost of exploitation and oppression.

Poverty and Destitution: Despite their efforts to find work, many migrants are unable to escape poverty and destitution. The economic disparities between the wealthy landowners and the migrant workers are starkly evident, with the migrants living in squalid conditions in migrant camps while the landowners profit from their labor. The Joad family, like many others, faces extreme material deprivation as a result of economic hardship and displacement. They are forced off their land in Oklahoma and must sell or abandon their belongings in order to undertake the journey to California. Throughout the novel, they struggle to find enough food, shelter, and other basic necessities to survive. The living conditions endured by the Joad family and other migrant workers are often deplorable. They live in makeshift camps, shantytowns, or overcrowded migrant housing provided by landowners, where sanitation is poor, privacy is nonexistent, and safety is compromised. These conditions contribute to the physical and psychological toll of poverty and destitution. Migrant workers in California are subjected to exploitative labor practices that exacerbate their poverty and destitution. They receive low wages for backbreaking work in the fields, often earning barely enough to cover their basic needs. Many are forced to patronize company-owned stores and services, where prices are inflated and wages are deducted to pay off debts, trapping them in a cycle of indebtedness and poverty. Poverty and destitution take a toll on the health and well-being of the characters in the novel. They suffer from malnutrition, exhaustion, and exposure to the elements, as well as from the psychological strain of living in constant uncertainty and insecurity. Access to healthcare is limited or nonexistent, leaving them vulnerable to illness, injury, and other hardships. Poverty and destitution strip the characters of their dignity and agency, robbing them of their sense of self-worth and autonomy. They are forced to rely on charity, handouts, and the goodwill of others to survive, eroding their sense of pride and self-respect. The constant struggle for survival leaves them feeling powerless and disenfranchised in a society that values

wealth and privilege. Inclusively, poverty and destitution in *The Grapes of Wrath* serve as a powerful indictment of the economic inequality and social injustice of the Great Depression era. Through his portrayal of the Joad family and other migrant workers, Steinbeck sheds light on the human cost of poverty and the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

The Illusion of the American Dream: Through the lens of economic migration, Steinbeck interrogates the myth of the American Dream and the notion of upward mobility. The Joad family's journey to California exposes the harsh realities of economic inequality and the inherent injustices of a capitalist society that exploits the labor of the poor for the benefit of the wealthy. The American Dream is often associated with the promise of prosperity, opportunity, and upward mobility. Many characters in the novel, including the Joad family, are lured by the belief that hard work and determination will lead to a better life for themselves and their families. They see California as a land of opportunity where they can escape poverty and achieve the American Dream. However, upon reaching California, the Joads and other migrant workers quickly discover that the reality of the American Dream is far from the idealized vision they had been promised. Instead of finding prosperity and opportunity, they encounter exploitation, poverty wages, and deplorable living conditions in the agricultural fields and migrant camps. The American Dream is revealed to be an illusion, perpetuated by those who benefit from the exploitation of the working class. Another aspect of the American Dream is the myth of self-sufficiency and individual success. This myth suggests that anyone can achieve success through hard work and determination, regardless of their background or circumstances. However, the novel challenges this notion by highlighting the systemic barriers and injustices that prevent the Joad family and other migrant workers from achieving economic security and social mobility. *The Grapes of Wrath* exposes the economic inequality and social injustice that underlie the American Dream. The wealthy landowners and corporations profit from the labor of the migrant workers, perpetuating a system of exploitation and oppression that undermines the ideals of equality and opportunity upon which the American Dream is purportedly based. Despite the disillusionment and hardship they face, the characters in the novel demonstrate remarkable resilience and solidarity in the face of adversity. Overall, *The Grapes of Wrath* offers a powerful critique of the illusion of the American Dream and the systemic injustices that perpetuate poverty and exploitation in American society. Through the experiences of the Joad family and other migrant workers, Steinbeck exposes the gap between

the promise of the American Dream and the harsh realities of economic inequality and social injustice during the Great Depression era.

In conclusion, economic migration in *The Grapes of Wrath* serves as a potent commentary on the inequities of the American economic system and the human cost of unchecked capitalism. Steinbeck's portrayal of the Joad family's struggle for economic survival highlights the enduring relevance of economic migration as a theme in contemporary society. *The Grapes of Wrath* stands as a timeless testament to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity. Through the journey of the Joad family and their fellow migrants, Steinbeck paints a vivid portrait of a nation grappling with the fallout of economic hardship and social injustice. As we've explored throughout this paper, the novel's themes of migration, dignity, community, and the quest for a better life resonate deeply with readers across generations.

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Being Vegetarian is Going Green: An Ecofeminist Reading of Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*

Vineetha Mohan & Reethi P.

Modern Korean literatures are mainly in the form of short novels. And they are widely read and translated to other languages. From the beginning of the 20th century, the women voices were given importance in the literary field, including poetry and autobiographies. After the liberation from Japan in 1945, Korea soon found itself divided into North and South. The literature of that time was influenced by the Korean War. The Korean War led to the development of literature centered on the wounds and chaos of the war. Much of the post war literature of South Korea deals with the daily lives of ordinary people and their struggles with national pain. The collapse of the traditional Korean value system is another common theme of the time.

Han Kang is a popular writer of South Korea. She was born as the daughter of novelist Han Seung-won on November 27, 1970 in Gwangju. At the age of ten, she moved to Seoul. She was graduated in Korean Literature at Yonsei University. She had won Man Booker International prize for fiction in 2016 for *The Vegetarian*.

The Vegetarian, was translated into English by Deborah Smith. The paper attempts an Ecofeminist reading of Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*. Han Kang had brought in varied elements of nature which influences the life of a person. She takes the central character, Yeong-hye, close to nature. Nature is perceived from anthropocentric view from earlier days, similarly Yeong-Hye's character and life is narrated in the perspective of her family members. The family represents the patriarchal society and Yeong-hye is the marginalized. In the novel, there is a fine movement of the main character, Yeong-hye from artificiality to the reality. The role of nature in human life is undeniable; however, humans often perceive it merely as a resource to be exploited rather than an integral part of their existence.

Han Kang had used this neglect of the nature in her character Yeong-hye. The novel is divided into three chapters, first narrated by her husband, second her brother-in-law and third her elder sister In-hye respectively. Yeong-hye's husband fails to understand her, her brother-in-law gives a partial attention to Yeong-hye's words, whereas In-hye understands her sister. This is a movement from neglect to attention. Throughout the novel Han Kang is telling about the story of a lady trying to get back to nature or to become a part of nature.

Even though male and female together make the nature, there is an invisible distance between the two. Yeong-hye is trying to remove this distance and to stand close to the nature.

Qualitative research is done on this topic, thus accumulating perspectives of knowledge in ecofeminism. The theories of ecocriticism, feminism and ecofeminism are taken for analysis. The project is undergoing a deep analysis of the character Yeong-hye. The character who converts to vegetarian because of some bloody dreams, represents the retort of nature. The character, while narrated by the husband is a normal lady. But the dreams lead her to madness. The rejection of social norms is often considered as madness. The social norms are defined by the patriarchal society – so Yeong-hye when rejects eating meat and wearing bra, questions the society.

Ecocriticism or green criticism is a new interdisciplinary field emerged in literary and cultural studies. Green studies refer to the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. It began in USA in late 1980s and in UK in 1990s. The three major exponents of ecocriticism were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller and Henry David Thoreau, who belonged to the transcendentalist group. Ecocriticism is the dropping out of modern life and seeking to renew the self by a return to nature. It investigates how nature is used literally or metaphorically in certain literary or aesthetic works. When many critical movements tried to achieve a social and political justice, ecocritics were looking for the ultimate survival of human life. Eco critics share different theoretical perspective but their ultimate aim is to show the relation between human and nature.

Religious texts and philosophical doctrines often prioritize human interests, positioning humans as distinct from and superior to nature. Consequently, humans feel entitled to exploit natural resources and animal species for their own gain. This idea is grounded in the Bible, in which God gave man “dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the earth” (Genesis 1. 26).

In recent times, Deep Ecology has emerged as a counter movement to anthropocentrism, aiming to address the exploitation of nature. Deep Ecology, also known as ecocentrism, advocates for replacing anthropocentric views with the idea of equality between humans and nature. It emphasizes that nature holds significance, value, and even moral and political rights that are equal to those of human beings. A significant aspect of ecocriticism is the examination of how attitudes towards the environment vary based on a writer’s race, ethnicity, social

class, and gender. Eco critics highlight the importance of both nature and women, conducting thorough analyses of how both entities are subject to exploitation. Ecofeminists see the domination of women as stemming from the same ideologies that bring about the domination of the environment. Patriarchal systems, where men own and control the land, are seen as responsible for the oppression of women and destruction of the natural environment. Ecofeminists argue that those in power, predominantly men, exploit land for personal gain, leading to the degradation of both nature and women's rights. This perspective, while widely accepted in ecofeminist literature, lacks concrete evidence and relies more on anecdotal evidence.

Han Kang's book *The Vegetarian*, tells the story of a dutiful Korean wife Yeong-hye. While reading the story in the light of ecofeminism, it is easy to learn that there is a deep bond between the central character Yeong-hye and the nature. The novel says the story of Yeong-hye's try to return to nature. But this try is obstructed by her family, or which could be called as the patriarchal society. Her path to transformation involved adopting a vegetarian lifestyle. Her decision to become a vegetarian stemmed from a series of vivid, unsettling dreams filled with blood imagery that haunted her. One night, overwhelmed by these dreams, she resolved to eliminate meat entirely from her diet and disposed of all the stored meat in her refrigerator.

Yeong-hye's husband Mr. Cheong was shocked at her action. Till then she haven't acted anything against the will of her family. Or it is for the first time she is doing something for herself. Yeong-hye says that, "I'd always thought of her as completely unremarkable in every day" (3). She was like a lifeless machine till that day. He defines her character as passive:

She was a woman of few words. It was rare for her to demand anything of me, and however late I was in getting home she never took it upon herself to kick up a fuss. Even when our days off happened to coincide, it wouldn't occur to her to suggest we go out somewhere together. While I idled the afternoon away, TV remote in hand, she would shut herself up in her room... only in mealtimes would she open the door and silently emerge to prepare the food. (4)

Mr. Cheong was not attracted to her when he first saw her. Both were passive and had no dreams of how their partner should be. But Cheong finds her as a way to cover up his inferiority complex. And though it is a custom to get married they did so. Their complete mechanistic family life was shaken with her decision. In Korea, where vegetarianism was not

a common practice, her decision was something unusual. The reason for her change was the haunting bloody dreams she had.

Her love for reading reflected her intellectual curiosity and depth. Reading often serves as an escape from the chaos of daily life, offering a gateway to happiness and immersion in a different world. Yeong-hye found solace in books, often retreating to her room with them rather than spending time with her husband, only emerging to prepare meals. One aspect that set her apart was her dislike for wearing a bra, which caused tension when her husband insisted, she wore one to maintain appearances, despite her discomfort and disregard for potential health issues. Cheong says that even in the summer she refuses to wear one and if she is forced to do so, she unhooks it barely a minute after leaving the house. She says that “she couldn’t stand wearing a bra because the way it squeezed her breasts”. She feels that the use of bra is constricting. This could be related to the Burning of the Bra in 1960’s.

When Yeong-hye had the dream, she gives up all non vegetarian food. She was not furious during her act of trashing all meat, eggs, milk etc from the refrigerator, but rather she was calm and silent. When her husband sees her standing in the messy kitchen, he gets angry and asks for the reason for her act. Even then she calmly answers that “I had a dream” (10).

Yeong-hye provided another reason for her vegetarianism: a commitment to Buddhist principles of non-violence towards animals. This belief stemmed from a traumatic childhood experience where her father brutally killed a dog that had bitten her, leaving a lasting impact on her psyche. This incident likely contributed to the recurring bloody dreams she experienced. Despite being married for five years, Yeong-hye and Cheong’s relationship lacked fulfillment, with their focus primarily on achieving economic stability before considering starting a family. Only after reaching this milestone did Yeong-hye embrace vegetarianism, suggesting a desire for personal growth and perhaps a deeper meaning in her life beyond their strained marriage. After she turned to vegetarian, Cheong tried to make love with her, but she refused him saying that “Your body smells of meat” (17). She felt that his sweat smelled of meat. Those words were disgusting. He was trying to cope up with all the changes she made in the food style. If he wanted to have meat, he ate it from the restaurants. But when he heard that she had also give up with him, he finds it hard to be with her.

Cheong attempted to sway Yeong-hye’s decision regarding vegetarianism, but she remained steadfast in her choice, calmly continuing her role as a wife while preparing delicious

vegetable-based meals. However, her commitment to vegetarianism took a toll on her physical appearance, causing her to lose weight and abandon cosmetics, reflecting her disdain for artificiality and alignment with ecofeminist ideals of embracing nature. During a party with Cheong, Yeong-hye's refusal to wear makeup and bra indicated her indifference towards societal beauty standards. Cheong's discomfort at her bare appearance further underscored the tension in their relationship. At the party, when served non-vegetarian dishes, Yeong-hye boldly announced her vegetarianism by rejecting the meat placed on her plate, signaling a significant shift in her lifestyle and beliefs.

Everyone becomes alert of her different behavior. Cheong's Boss teases her by saying that a few Koreans adopt this vegetarianism because they claim that "...eating meat is bad" (23). And Boss's wife adds to her husband's words that "it isn't possible to live without eating meat" (23). This shows the traditional attitude of Korean people in having meat with the meal.

They ask her why she stopped having meat. She gives her usual answer "I had a dream" (24). Cheong preemptively ends any discussion about Yeong-hye's choices to avoid potential criticism and labeling her as unstable by society. Yeong-hye symbolizes feminist advocates challenging societal norms through her actions. Cheong, frustrated with Yeong-hye's transformation, confides in his mother-in-law and seeks help from his sister-in-law. Despite their efforts, Yeong-hye remains resolute, prompting Cheong to turn to his father-in-law for assistance. When traditional interventions fail, Yeong-hye's father takes on the role of family authority and invites them for a family gathering, offering hope for resolution in Cheong's mind.

Yeong-hye's longing for freedom was accelerated day by day. She soon found it hard to wear clothes. She used to sit at home bare chest. Cheong asked her the reason for this and she says "Because it's hot" (32). But the climate was too cold and cool breeze was entering their apartment through the balcony. The climate did not affect Yeong-hye physically, but mentally, she felt intense heat from her recurring bloody dreams and dissatisfaction with her life. She yearned for freedom from these tormenting thoughts. During the family get-together, Yeong-hye opted for rice and kimchi instead of meat, maintaining a silent demeanor throughout the event. While everyone else enjoyed the gathering, Cheong eagerly anticipated discussing his wife's situation, with his mother initiating the conversation. Despite efforts to please her with favorite dishes, Yeong-hye remained committed to her vegetarian choices. "... , my wife

sat quietly eating rice and kimchi. Those were the only things she touched. Mayonnaise contained egg, so that was another thing off the menu for her” (34).

Her mother made several attempts to persuade Yeong-hye to eat meat, even offering her favorite dish, sweet and sour pork, but Yeong-hye remained unmoved by her mother’s pleas. Her sister also urged her to eat meat, but Yeong-hye responded with silence, embodying the calm and serene demeanor of a Buddhist priest. Just as religions like Hinduism and Buddhism advocate for the protection of nature, Yeong-hye’s vegetarianism reflects a similar ethos of protecting the environment. Her choice to remain silent and calm in the face of pressure mirrors the resilience and tolerance of nature, despite human actions that harm it for personal gain. When her mother forces her to have meat, she calmly utters, “I won’t eat it” (37). It arouses rage in her father. Furiously he asked her to eat meat. Father, the strongest person of the family, tried to make her eat by advising her. Her refusal leads to a chaotic situation on the table. He told her once to eat it and brought food near her mouth. But she pushed away the chopsticks and said, “Father, I don’t eat meat” (38). This particular incident shows the violence of society against woman and nature.

Her act was a matter of disobedience. The disobedience is defined by patriarchal society which was questioned by Yeong-hye. It made the scene of making her eat, to the matter of disobedience. When she refused to eat, everyone began to tell her to obey his words. It is clear from the words of Yeong-ho that, now the issue had changed to obedience. He says: “Do you have to make such a thing about in front of Father?” (39). Father beats her with all his strength so that they could see the blood under her whitened cheeks. Her father pushes meat into her mouth. When he failed, he asked the support of his Cheong and Yeong-ho to hold her hands. When he failed again, she beats her once again so that she opened her mouth while crying. Her cry was as of an animal. Even when she cried, her father was fully concentrated at his work. He pushed in a piece of pork into her mouth. She spat out the meat and cried more powerfully. Cheong had never seen his wife in such an emotion. She was crying aloud, at the same time she gains all her strength and made others to take off their hands from her. She tried to run out of the room, but suddenly the second thought made her stand there. But she was no calmer and more silent. She took the fruit knife from the table and cut her wrist. Everyone was shocked at her action. Blood flowed like a “red ribbon out of her wrist” (41).

The male characters always cared about the looks of the lady, rather than her bad health. Her husband, cheong says that, “She grew thinner by the day, so that her cheekbones

had really become indecently prominent. Without make-up, her complexion resembled that of a hospital patient” (15). Cheong says about her looks. He says that she looks like a hospital patient, he is not cared about she becoming a patient without proper food. Her mother says, “... Human beings need nutrients ...” (36). But her father just forces her to have meat and her brother asks her at least to pretend as if she is eating just as a part of obeying their father.

Mr. Cheong was the person who is mostly affected by her changing attitude. When she adopts vegetarianism, she even stopped preparing meat at home. She hated its smell too. When Mother-in-law calls him, he says “... she’s even imposed this ridiculous diet on me – I can’t remember the last time I tasted meat in this house” (27). He was more concerned with the vegetarian diet that was forced on him. But this vegetarianism hadn’t affected his diet. When he asks her whether she is going to follow this vegetarian diet forever, she gives a methodological answer “... you usually only eat breakfast at home. And I suppose you often have meat with your lunch and dinner, so it’s not as if you’ll die if you go without meat just for one meal” (13).

Yeong- hye disobey her husband first. It was forgiven by the family thinking that they could change her. But when she disobeys her father, they lost all the faith to change. In a patriarchal society, men act violently. “Etymologically, patriarchy refers to a system of rule by older men in their position as heads of households” (Lisa S. Price, 25). Cheong’s inferiority complex and lack of good relation with Yeong- hye would have stopped him from showing his authority. But even he too thinks that her father, who was a military man, could simply solve the problem. This shows the authoritative power of men over women in the family.

She thinks twice before she cuts herself. She thinks of whether to leave the room or to stay there. Until the moment she changed to vegetarian, she was obedient. But once she stood away from the usual way, it shocked the entire males in her family. Her action was feministic. From the moment she decided to live for herself, she was actually running out from the reality, as if she thought of running out of the room. She would have run out to end up the scene, but she no more does it, she stood there and cuts herself.

Yeong- hye decides to face the patriarchal society, rather than running away from them. The Buddhistic aspect of getting power through meditation is reflected in hye’s life. Her silence is Buddhism and when she cuts herself, she showed her strength. Strength gained through silence.

Han Kang skillfully gives an account of Yeong-hye's earlier experiences, which would have caused her change. It was her childhood that impacted deeply in her mind. Her silence was also the result of these experiences.

The introduction of In-hye's husband, a passive artist without a steady income, contrasts with In-hye's role as the primary breadwinner through her cosmetics shop. The family's reaction to Yeong-hye's suicide attempt is harsh, with her mother fainting upon witnessing it and subsequently being restricted from visiting the hospital. This reflects the patriarchal society's view of women's supposed fragility and the elevated, yet powerless, role assigned to mothers.

In an attempt to sway Yeong-hye back to eating meat, her mother visits her in the hospital with a meat-based concoction disguised as medicinal juice. Yeong-hye's firm resolve is evident as she initially drinks it but later vomits upon realizing its contents, reaffirming her commitment to her vegetarianism even in the face of familial pressure. While her father gave her meat her brother told her "it would be simple enough just to pretend" (39). She didn't obey him, even to calm her father. But she drinks it to make her mother happy. She loves not only her mother, but also the Mother Nature. As her thoughts, Han Kang says another reason for Yeong-hye's vegetarianism. She felt a lump in her chest. She thinks that it is because of the meat she ate. "Because of the meat. The lives of the animals I ate have lodged there. Blood and flesh, all those butchered bodies are scattered in every nook and cranny" (49).

Her decision to stop eating meat is also because of her caring for the animals. She no more wants any animal to be killed. This shows her want to stand close to nature, to protect it. As ecofeminists intention is to stop the nature's exploitation, Yeong-hye is trying to stop the destruction of the nature even killing animals for food. In the present society animals are butchered in large quantity for food.

Koreans eat all meats. Yeong-hye herself had eaten the meat of a dog. This shows that they don't care about the lives of the animals. Therefore her decision to stop eating the meat is contrary to the Korean culture. She stands against her culture as the feminists and ecofeminists stood against the existing cultural ideologies. Yeong-hye's hospitalization leads to a series of events where her brother-in-law becomes increasingly fascinated with her, particularly after witnessing her suicide attempt and discovering her unblemished Mongolian mark. He is inspired to create a film featuring Yeong-hye adorned with painted flowers, symbolizing her connection to nature and her passive acceptance of his artistic vision.

The film portrays Yeong-hye as a blossoming flower, symbolizing her increasing comfort with her body and the artistic process. Despite not fitting conventional beauty standards, her unique features, like the Mongolian mark, captivate her brother-in-law. During filming, Yeong-hye and her partner J engage in a simulated lovemaking scene, focusing on the painted flowers rather than physical appearance. The brother-in-law's artistic vision prioritizes nature's aesthetic beauty, blurring human, animal, and plant forms, both fascinating and unsettling him. Ultimately, the film delves into themes of exploitation and nature's silent response to human actions, mirroring Yeong-hye's passive acceptance of floral adornments and her brother-in-law's artistic exploration of natural beauty. The patriarchal society does not permit freedom for woman to initiate sex. The sex is usually represented as a need of man. Here the novelist is breaking such connections of patriarchal thought. Yeong-hye's sexual desire is not the physical level of simple sex. It is her love towards the beautiful flowers which keeps her away from scary dreams and the love making becomes natural.

Yeong-hye's vibrant attitude tempts her brother-in-law. He wanted to film the merging of the nature through the love making of a couple painted with flowers. But though J runs off from the studio, he was unable to complete his work. The temptation of brother-in-law made him ask her to have sex with him. But she refuses saying that, "It wasn't him, it was the flowers..." (106).

He needed her badly, so with the help of his ex-lover P paints flowers on his body. And goes to her apartment and makes love. More than making love, it was a rape. When he entered the room it was all dark and they both couldn't clearly see each other. But his urge forces him on her even without her permission. Here also she resembles the nature. Even when he rapes, she keeps silent. The man exploits woman.

After the rape she asked him to switch on the light to see the painting on his body. The imagination of the flowers is what kept her silent. She loved the flowers on his body. He shot their love making too. Even after the shooting, they had sex. But finally "... she gnashed her teeth, screamed rough and shrill, spat out a panting "stop" and then, at the end, she cried again. And then everything grew quiet" (114). This could be related to the big stop that the nature would utter when the exploitation becomes unbearable.

The indifferent and seemingly erratic behavior of Yeong-hye led to her divorce from her husband, who perceived her as becoming mentally unstable. Her brother-in-law, aware of her

condition, takes advantage of her vulnerability for his own desires. The following day, In-hye visits Yeong-hye's apartment and discovers the truth about her relationship with her brother-in-law through footage captured by her husband's camera. Despite this revelation, Yeong-hye remains calm, unfazed by her sister's knowledge of the situation. Instead, she calmly moves to the balcony, standing naked and embracing the natural elements like the air and wind. She stood there as if "she wanted to make love to the sunlight, to the wind." (118). The act of lovemaking between Yeong-hye and her brother-in-law becomes a symbolic union with nature, transcending societal norms and expectations. Despite the initial silence, which reflects the patriarchal demand for women's submission, Yeong-hye later acknowledges and enjoys the experience, finding solace in the scent of the paint used to depict flowers on her brother-in-law's body, a sensation she had grown fond of since the earlier artistic sessions.

Yeong-hye's sister, In-hye, reacts furiously upon learning of her husband's inappropriate actions towards her mentally ill sister. J, witnessing Yeong-hye's vibrant nature during their encounter, flees the scene, while the brother-in-law, fearing societal repercussions, tries to escape but is apprehended by hospital attendants and later imprisoned.

In the final chapter, narrated by In-hye, Yeong-hye escapes from the psychiatric hospital and is found in the woods, a place she has always felt drawn to as it represents her desire to merge with nature. This act of escape brings her happiness, as it helps her avoid the haunting dreams that have troubled her. In-hye's experience of living independently has made her resilient, especially in the face of her husband's neglect of family matters, strengthening her resolve and autonomy.

Before In-hye has started to the hospital she hears her sister's voice: "Look, sister, I'm doing a handstand; leaves are growing out of my body, roots are sprouting out of my hands... they delve down into the earth. Endlessly, endlessly... yes, I spread my legs because I wanted flowers to bloom from my crotch; I spread them wide..." (127).

In-hye's anger towards her husband, not her sister, upon learning of the affair, highlights the strong bond and understanding between the sisters. When In-hye comes along with Yeong-hye to admit her in the hospital, the huge trees in the courtyard had attracted her. She says, "... there are big trees here" (143). In another visit Yeong-hye says "sister... all the trees of the world are like brothers and sisters" (144). She was getting more and more closer with the nature. During the last visit, In-hye saw "Her sister was upside down and balancing on her

hands, her face flushed almost puce.” (146). When she was called by her sister, she woke up as she was in a happy dream. Yeong-hye was deeply attached to the trees when she is in the asylum. From the day on which she came to asylum she was keenly observing the trees. When In-hye comes, she gladly tells her that she found the secret of the trees.

They actually stand with both arms in the earth. This search was because; she too wanted to be a tree. She imagines of herself: “I was in a dream, and I was standing on my head ... leaves were growing from my body, roots were sprouting from my hands ... so I dug down into the earth. On and on ... I wanted flowers to bloom from my crotch so I spread my legs; I spread them wide... (148).

Yeong-hye’s act of spreading her legs can be interpreted in two ways. First, she does so in the asylum, envisioning flowers blooming from her crotch, symbolizing a connection with nature after her sexual encounter with her brother-in-law. Second, while standing on the balcony, she spreads her legs to embrace the sunlight and air, seeking an intimate connection with the natural elements. These actions reflect her desire for harmony and completeness with nature, embodying ecofeminist ideals of unity between women, men, and the environment.

In-hye’s greater concern than Yeong-hye’s merging with nature is the fact that Yeong-hye has stopped eating. She says that, “I need water to my body. I don’t need this kind of food, sister. I need water” (148), like a plant. When Yeong-hye stopped having food, her health was worsened. But she was healthy at her mind. She was happier than ever. She was injected food, and she asks why they compel her to have food. In-hye visited her with many fruits, but Yeong refused it by saying that all she needs is water and sunlight. Yeong-hye was completely changed into a tree which lives through photosynthesis. Doctors say that if this continues there is no chance to survive. As a last attempt they decide to insert food pipe in Yeong’s nose. But the attempt fails and she dies. The final section is narrated by In-hye and no other family members are there in this section. The reason for this is not clear. But their absence reveals their affection towards Yeong-hye. The mother was not permitted to go to the hospital. But the men in the family are not bothered about her. Thus proving that the patriarchal society does not entertain a woman who follows her dream and questions they practices. Yeong-ho’s wife is contrary to mother’s character. She raises her voice to say “your father went too far, you know. How can he hit his daughter in front of her husband?” (43). She is the only woman who raises her voice. In the final section we see two main characters, Yeong-hye and In-hye, who lived different lives. In-hye who came out of her

dreams is now able to be strong, but Yeong-hye, who is fallen in the dream, is at the brink of her life. But she is accepting this situation.

When everyone is afraid of the death, she calmly asks “why, is it such a bad thing to die?” (157). When she identifies with nature she is not afraid of anything else. She moves around freely and happily. She was least bothered about what others would think of her. She was free to remove her dress even in the public so that she feels free while doing this. Nature too is not afraid of anything. But at certain points she gets angry which is called as the natural disaster.

Yeong-hye is the feminist revolutionary symbol and her family is the patriarchal symbol. The men in the family compel her to return back to the pattern while women support her silently. In the novel, Yeong-hye is the nature. She is kept subordinate in the family. She is the youngest daughter of her parents, but was not given much care by her father. He used to beat her in her childhood and continued his authority over her till she attempts to suicide.

Yeong-hye's father is a typical patriarchal dominating authority. When she was nine he brutally killed a dog which bit her. This was watched silently by Yeong-hye but she was greatly influenced by the incident. His action of killing could not be considered as a result of his love for his daughter, rather he does so to continue the traditional custom of eating the dog to get healing. He was following the traditional norms, to make himself a typical patriarchal authority.

Later on, as the novel ends, In-hye apologizes for not stopping her father from beating her in the childhood. As an elder sister, she would be able to protect Yeong-hye, but her fear for the father stopped her from doing so. And it led to the total destruction of Yeong-hye. All these elements make Yeong-hye more close to nature. Nature too is exploited to its maximum while everyone keeps silent. After the total destruction, human beings get aware of the pathetic situation to protect nature

In-hye when found that Yeong-hye had reached at the end point of normalcy and is stepping to insanity, she tries to get her back. Yeong-hye was fed-up with her mechanical life, this was because of the lack of love in her family. She used to immerse herself in the magical world of books, and this showed her the perfect place to make herself safe, which is the nature. As ecocritics say, she wants to get back to the nature to regain the lost simplicity and happiness.

Cheong and Yeong-hye didn't have a happy life. They won't even speak to each other. She immerses herself in books and other household works and her husband lives another busy life. When she lived a machine life, Cheong was happy with it. But when she took a decision for herself, it shattered the entire family, similar to nature. Nature's silence is the reason for its exploitation. And at particular points when it becomes sure that it couldn't go on like this, it reacts. Men call it as natural disaster, or say that nature is angry. When nature, the mother gets angry, men couldn't bare it. This is what seen in Yeong-hye's suicidal attempt. She doesn't run away and try to die, rather she strongly stood in front of her whole family. This is feministic, to meet the patriarchy face to face and fights against it. Before and after it she is calm and silent. Nature too is calm and silent before and after the natural disasters.

Yeong-hye considers herself as a nature, when she is painted by her brother-in-law, she says that she loved those flowers drawn on her body and she doesn't allow it to come off her body. She wants to make love with the nature and she sees the nature in J and brother-

in-law when painted with flowers. She loves the flowers and has sex with them. Finally, she considers herself as a tree in which roots come from her hands, leaves from her legs and flowers from her crotch. She spreads her legs to become a part of nature and this makes her an ecofeminist.

Yeong-hye's decision is penance, atonement for taking the lives of animals and perhaps also for her father's gruesome killing of a dog that had attacked her in childhood. In any case, she is tormented: "The lives of the animals I ate have all logged there ... their lives still stick stubbornly to my insides" (49). In the final section of the novel, which focuses on the older sister In-hye, we realize that what Yeong-hye really wants is to become a plant or a tree herself - and the title of the novel assumes a new depth and meaning.

Han Kang raises bigger issues in *The Vegetarian*, like childhood abuse, the damage caused by loveless unions, the patriarchy that victimizes both men and women, and finally the question of whether women have claim to their own bodies.

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Redefining the Regional Space in Literature

S. Jayanthi

Regionalism refers to the contents that concentrate on specific, unique features of a certain region. It deals with the dialect, customs, tradition, topography, history, and characteristics of that place. Language and Culture are inseparable from one another. However, with the diverse linguistic peculiarities in India, the regional literature depicts the peculiar nuances or the local culture. It also rises above the local, to reflect something that is national in level. Regional Literature in fact, contributes in preserving and protecting the national identity. It reflects the national consciousness and the national culture at large. India has always been a linguistically diverse community. Even during the ancient times there was no language which was spoken by everybody.

Sanskrit was the language of the upper caste and Prakrit and Ardha Magadhi were commonly spoken by the masses. During the Mughal rule Persian took the place of Sanskrit as the court language, while Urdu and ‘Hindustani’ were the languages of the common masses in North India. While in the southern part of India Dravidian languages flourished. Literatures in various Indian regional languages, was rooted deep in their diverse linguistic peculiarities. At the same time it belonged to the Indian culture because they reflected the national Indian style.

This national style has evolved on the basis of a cultural community that developed in the course of time. It is the cultural community which makes the Indians, despite regional limitations and variety of faiths and languages, regard themselves as a single integrated whole. It is the concept of a single national entity that forms the part and parcel of the national integration. It is nothing but the spirit of close Knit connectivity between diverse cultural and linguistic communities.

Among the South Indian languages, Tamil is the oldest; it has also a remarkable tradition of patriotism and nationalist consciousness. Subramanya Bharati, the rebel poet, sang ‘Gandhi Panchakam’. His patriotic poems inspired thousands of people during the independence struggle and gave eloquent expression to personal freedom, national liberty and the fundamental equality for all human beings.

Several Tamil writers have used the backdrop of other cities and provinces for their novels and stories. There are many translations in Tamil of other Indian writers such as Tagore,

Sharat Chandra, Premchand, Khandekar etc. Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist authors have contributed to the language of Tamil as much as to the other three Dravidian languages. In Malayalam, the tradition of Swati Thirunal, who composed songs in Sanskrit as well as in Hindi, and the 'Mani-Pravala' genre are great national assets which still continue to integrate all languages, communities, and castes.

The nationalist trend in Telugu Literature is best reflected in Gurazada Apparao's famous line "Deshmante matti kadoy Desh mante manushu loy", the country is not mere land, it is the people. This tradition has been carried forward by progressive poets like Shri, Desharathi, C.Narayana Reddy and by others. The Literature of the fourth southern Indian regional language, Kannada, has also contributed such diverse traditions as Jain, Lingayat. Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and Christian. In modern Kannada Literature the nationalist trend occurs in the works of V.K.Gokak, R.S.Mugali, and Malwad, they seem to have dwelled deeply in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. This study proposes to discuss Kalki's Ponniiyin Selvan translated by C.V.Karthik Narayanan.

Ponniyin Selvan brings the background of Tamil language and the cultural history of the Tamil culture. It deals in detail about the history of Tamil people. The translated work in fact brings the same literary sensibility that Kalki wanted to bring to his readers. Major events in the novel are found to be historical, but the characterization, plot and purpose seems to make the story more interesting. Ponniiyin Selvan, by Kalki R. Krishnamurthy is found to be a classic as minute information and style of writing had made this work a magnum opus. It had educated the people to understand and live the life according to the demand of the time. The English translated work of Kalki is taken for discussion to reflect the Tamil culture and how the culture has to be revived through literature is the need of the time to preserve the regional tradition.

The novel opens with the month of Aadi as the auspicious time among the people of Tamil Nadu. Though many do not hold weddings during this month, the temples in the villages are found to celebrate it with fireworks. In Thanjavur Aadi Perukku, which falls on the eighteenth day of the Aadi month is found to be the time for sowing seeds, so that harvest is done on time. It denotes the start of the season of prosperity with waters of river Kaveri (Cauvery) rising during that time. It is beautifully expressed in the lines:

Through its seventy-four canals, the water from the lake irrigated a large area.

Ploughing and planting were in progress in fields spread out as far as the eye could see, all fed by the water of Veeranam. The farmers at their ploughs and the women planting seedlings were singing happily (Part I 2).

The description of the place during the festive season makes one feel the beauty of it and understand the culture of the people. The tradition and culture is well expressed when one visualises the way in which the vendors are selling their products. They are jack-fruit, banana, sugar-cane and various other edibles. Others sold flowers such as lotus buds for worship of the Gods as well as blooms to decorate the braids of women. Mounds of tender coconuts, myrrh, candy, jaggery, betel leaves, pressed rice and puffed grain were on display for sale. Fun-games and other amusements were in progress here and there. Astrologers, expert palm readers, soothsayers and magicians who cured 6 poison-bites and there was no death, all these descriptions express the regional aspect of life.

The arrival of the king is described in the order of the clans when Vandiyathevan narrates it to Kandamaran as to how he watched among the crowd in the roadside. The procession going along Veeranarayanapuram for Lord Pazhuvor. He described the retinue that went past, “the elephant, the horses, the palanquin, and the heralds”(Part I 26). It shows the honours sent to receive him and there by depicting the culture in detail.

The story starts with the glorification of the Chozhas and the fury of the river. Needless to say, nature which is of great help to increase the fertility of the Chozha country, at times “create alarming situations” (Part V 94) too. At another instance Vanathi and Poonkuzhali who are caught in Ponni’s furious whirlpool, finally get rescued by Ponniyin Selvar who never gets scared or worried of river. The writer creates the motherly feeling of the river when Ponni care for Arulmozhivarmar which is even more than his own mother would have done for him. Which is noted: “Wouldn’t Mother Kaveri, who had saved him from drowning when he was a child, continue to protect him now?” (Part V 103). It is of no doubt that Kalki’s Ponniyin Selvan is a picture portrayal of Ponni, who nourish her children at one moment and at times breaking her banks and destroy all livelihoods. None the less, the author never fails to record his love for Ponni through Arulmozhivarman and Vanathi’s conversation:

Prince! They say Mother Kaveri saved you once when you were a child.

I know how deeply you love this river, the Ponni. But it’s frightening to think of the misery it’s brought the people and animals in the country.

Sometimes I'm even tempted to call Mother Kaveri cruel. Vanathi!

Don't find fault with Mother Kaveri. She has such deep affection for our

Chozha country. When that affection brims over, she breaks her banks and overflows. People who do not realise that blame her... (Part V 13).

The height of reverence for the river Kaveri is reached when Ponniyin Selvar comments on his love for the earth maiden who flourishes on the banks of five rivers: "Could there be any other place in this world as fertile and beautiful as this? What good fortune it is to be crowned Emperor of such a country!" (Part V 244).

All these clearly depict that Ponniyin Selvan is a loving ode to the river Ponni with its elegance and splendour. The novel passes through the beauty of the forests, lakes and waterfalls as river Ponni flows with its splendour. The first-wave of Ecocriticism in the U.S. celebrated primarily non-fiction nature writing, such as that of Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Mary Austin, Edward Abbey, Wendell Berry and Annie Dillard, "reflecting the legacy of American Transcendentalism. Peter Barry is quite clear that most of what is called 'nature writing' concerns the two middle ones – 'the scenic sublime' and 'the country side'.

When the scene shifts, we find princesses on dainty boats. The author takes the opportunity to dwell at length on how a Cauvery in spate can transform into sparkling rivulets. It is in one such rivulet — the Arasalaaru — that we first meet the heroine Kundavai and her dear friend Vaanathi sailing. They are listening to musicians sing the praise of the Cauvery and other rivers. They musically recite a verse from the *Silappadikaaram* which hails the river.

In the story, the river appears to be a young bride. She emerges from her source at Kudagu (Coorg) and flows southward, enriching the land along her course. As she enters the Tamil territory with her two outstretched arms (Cauvery and Kollidam), her foster mother (Tamil land) begins to adorn her. She is draped in saris of myriad hues of green. She wears exotic floral jewellery and rare perfumes. As she moves along an emerald tree-lined course, her eagerness to rush into the arms of her ocean lover overcomes her. One pair of hands is not enough for the embrace. So, more and more arms spring along her sides as tributaries. This passionate imagery (eloquent and vivid in the Tamil original) gives way to real and historic facts as the story unravels.

The writer talks about Cauvery as a spring board from which he leaps into history and legend. Arulmozhi Varman, who becomes the famous Raja Raja Chozhan, almost drowns in the river as a child. The young boy is aboard the royal boat and while the elders are not looking, tries to 'rescue' a bunch of Kadamba flowers that is caught in a swirl. In the process, he falls into the river.

As the people were shocked and could plunge into action, the child is rescued and held aloft by a beautiful woman. Arulmozhi's father Sundara Chozan swims towards the child and the moment the prince shifts to his hands, the woman disappears. The people are convinced that it was Kaveri Amman, who saved their darling prince. The queen orders a puja to be performed on the day of the incident every year. Arulmozhi becomes Ponniiyin Selvan — the child of Ponni.

The story then revolves around Vandiyathevan, a charming, brave and a brilliant young man who sets out to the Chola land to deliver a message to the King and the Princess from the Crown Prince Aditya Karikalan. The story shuttles between Vandiyathevan's travels in Chola country and the young Prince Arulmozhi Varman's travels in Sri Lanka. The narrative deals with attempts by his sister Kundavai to bring back Arulmozhi (as Raja Raja was called before his crowning) to establish political peace in a land seemingly getting beset with unrest and signs of civil war, plotted by vassals and petty chieftains.

Parantaka Chola was succeeded by his second son Gandaraditya as the first son Rajaditya had died in a battle. At the time of Gandaraditya's death, his son Maduranthaka was a two-year-old child and hence Gandaraditya's brother Arinjaya ascended the throne. After Arinjaya's death, his son Parantaka II (Sundara Chola) was crowned. He had two sons, Aditya Karikalan and daughter Kundavai and the younger son Arulmozhi Varman, the later known Rajaraja.

Arulmozhi Varman realizes that his father had spent some time in an island near Lanka and had been with a girl born deaf and dumb. He meets her and realizes from her drawing that she and his father have had two children. Who are those children and do they have the right to the throne? Later one day in Thirupurambayam forest Vandiyathevan sees Nandhini and the Pandya conspirators place a small boy on a throne and take a vow in front of him. Who is this boy and what right does he have to the throne? Is the doubt arises in the minds of the readers.

Arulmozhivarman is caught in a cyclone on his way back from Lanka and he is found missing. Rumour spreads that he is dead, but he survives and stays at Choodamani Viharam, a Buddhist monastery. Then slowly the dispersed family starts assembling. The conspirators meanwhile choose one day in which both the king and his sons to be assassinated.

The modern Indian literature in the twelve regional languages is thus trying to break the narrow walls of provincialism and linguistic chauvinism. It is well on its way to bind and integrate the people as well as to make bridges and break barricades between the far-flung cultures of India.

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The Chronotopic Interplay in Advertising Narratives

Merin Jose

A crucial sign of the postmodern can be found in the emergence of a digital culture attached to capitalism, and the immense power and wealth of global market. This is recognized as a culture of surfaces, signs and images, an intensely superficial and spatially extended world. Superficiality is etched into the ubiquitous screen of the television and computer, where sounds, images and texts are remixed and recycled daily. Geographically and historically diverse content is flattened to a grotesque simultaneity of seemingly important and uniform phenomena on the screen.

Chronotope is a term taken over by Mikhail Bakhtin from 1920s' science to describe the manner in which literature represents time and space. In different kinds of writing there are differing chronotopes, with which changing historical conceptions of time and space are realised. Thus, the ancient Greek novel is dominated by "adventure time", in which the adventures of hero and heroine occur but which has no developmental impact upon their characters; like the space in which their adventures happen, it is effectively empty. In other words, a chronotope is a literary time-space. It is a unit of analysis for studying texts according to the ratio and nature of the temporal and spatial categories represented. The distinctiveness of this concept as opposed to most other uses of time and space in literary analysis lies in the fact that neither category is privileged here; they are interdependent. Bakhtin claims that imagination is at the heart of the concept of the chronotope. In this regard chronotopes bear multifarious possibilities at the level of application. It may be possible to decipher chronotopes in everything that is imaginative; even in the everyday life composed of performances of varying types, a chronotopic analysis seems feasible. Bakhtin always lacked an authoritative manner of elucidation in the case of chronotopes. A proliferation of studies and a wide range of scope in this disciplinary area are always attributed to this fact. The scholars have deciphered different types of chronotopes including Marxist chronotope, Reader response chronotope and Formalist chronotope in the analysis of different literary works. The concept of chronotope has been used to throw more light on such diverse areas as narratology, film studies and the field of education. However, there have been scant studies of this sort in relation to the world of advertisements. Based on the Bakhtinian analysis of the novels and the later studies carried out in the field, it is possible to decode a play of the temporal and spatial axes in the

advertisements too. Chronotope is a term that brings together not just two concepts, but four: a time, plus its value; and a space plus its value. It describes something that has always been inherent in experience. Any narrative text is not always itself; it is a composite of what the author has produced at one given time and in one given place. Hence, it is necessary to analyse the spatial and temporal axis and its complex, interconnected unfolding within a narrative to interpret the complete significance of the work. The same is true with advertising narratives; in them too, chronotopes occur as a result of the intrinsic relationship between the four elements mentioned above. In other words, there exists certain advertising chronotopes which are at play within the advertising narratives. In order to have a proper view of this play, one needs to fathom the intra-textual world of the advertisements. Advertising chronotopes can be seen in the intra-textual as well as extra-textual worlds of advertising. Both of them yield insights about the role and significance of the advertising chronotopes in the advertising narratives. The ambient advertisements – ads which are embedded in public spaces – manipulate the chronotopes of the public space to their advantage as they use these places as the medium for their campaigns. In such cases, the advertising chronotopes establish interconnections with the world outside the text of the ads thereby creating an extra-textual world of advertising. In television ads too, the extra-textual world becomes significant in the case of culture specific ads. The advertisers choose those characters and contexts to which the viewers can relate; thereby the chronotopes of the intra-textual world of the ad create links with those of the extra-textual or the world of the viewers. The intra-textual chronotopes have artistic and representative power in a narrative. They serve as one of the possible strategic tools for the advertising practitioners to reinforce the influence of advertising message.

Thus, a large variety of chronotopes can be identified based on Bakhtin's discussion about the same in the essay "Forms of Time and of Chronotopes in the Novel" (FTC). Through the categorisation of the chronotopes Bakhtin intended to bring about generic divisions in the history of the novel. He was of the opinion that each genre had a specific major chronotope or in other words, the major chronotope of the work decided its genre. This very concept has been applied to many other fields other than novels, like narratology, reader response theory, film studies etc. and this paper proposes the application of the same in yet another area – the advertisements.

The present analysis hence, explores the chronotopes of advertisements and their functions in the advertising narratives. Some of the popular contemporary television ads like

those of Gluco Vita, Volkswagen, Bajaj Pulsar, Aashirvaad multigrain atta, Dettol, Oreo, Diarmilk silk and Axe are taken for a detailed exploration. In each of the Gluco Vita ad, a boy is shown to be in a crisis. In one such ad a school boy sees a dog standing near a bench on the road side. The boy observes the dog, sitting on another bench. He feels that the dog is chained to the bench and begins irritating and poking it. The dog gets infuriated and jumps towards the boy and starts chasing him; startled at the sudden realization that the dog has not been chained, the boy begins to run. But the boy seems weak and gets exhausted fast while the dog reaches quite near him. At this point where the dog is about bite the boy, he takes out a packet of Gluco Vita from his pocket and eats one Gluco Vita ball. Suddenly, the boy gets energised and turns out to be more powerful; he runs faster and escapes from the dog. Even the dog has been surprised to see the speed of the boy. In this advertisement, one can see the creation of a crisis point in the middle part of the narrative and it is at this moment that the product is introduced. According to the Bhaktinian proposal this crisis point created by a congnial movement of the spatiotemporal axes indicates the presence of the chronotope of threshold. A crisis followed by a life changing resolution forms the significant feature of this type of chronotope. The same kind of spatiotemporal relations can be deciphered in another ad of the Gluco Vita series too. In the ad a group of small boys are enacting a play on the stage in front of an audience. As a part of the play scene, four boys, acting as King's servants, carry the King on their shoulders to the throne. But on their way to the throne, one of the boys gets exhausted completely. He is unable to carry the king anymore and is about to fall disturbing the balance of the rest of the boys. At this point of crisis, the very product is introduced; the boy eats a Glucovita ball and is abruptly recovered from fatigue. At the end, all the four boys carry the King together and make him sit on the throne thereby leading to a successful completion of the play. The spatial and temporal planes related to the stage performance of the initial part get transformed into a crisis point in the middle part of this narrative also. It is then followed by a resolution resulting in the use of the chronotope of threshold.

A similar commingling of space and time matrices takes place in Volkswagen Polo ad. In this ad, a baby turtle is the one in trouble. A kite catches it and takes it home to eat; but on the way the kite loses its control and the baby turtle falls down. It so happens that the turtle falls on a young man's Volkswagen Polo car. The sound from the car alerts the man; he discovers a baby turtle that has fallen from the clutches of a kite as the source of the sound. The kite has been hovering around the place; seeing it, the man understands the situation of

the turtle and decides to save it. He takes it into the car and drives along, while the kite still follows them. The car outpaces the kite and saves the turtle; the turtle is taken to its own abode, the sea, safely. This narrative also serves as an instance for the creation of a crisis point followed by a solution, thereby resulting in the chronotope of threshold. The chronotope of road can also be cited in the same ad as there is a journey on road in which the young man and the turtle crosses a variety of spatial and temporal axes in their Polo. It is also possible to decipher chronotope of mountain, chronotope of beach and chronotope of river in the same ad. These chronotopes are present as random places which the characters cross on their way. The Bajaj Pulsar ad taken for analysis utilises the space of a road from beginning to end. In the ad there is a continuous journey on road without a halt. The biker rides through highways as well as inroads. Despite having no halt, the bike never breaks down, nor the biker gets fatigued. Moreover, there are a number of random encounters with different persons during the journey, including the village gatekeepers, vendors and also a group of artistic performers. Bakhtinian road chronotope has the same attributes; according to Bakhtin a road is a place of accidental meetings and no one makes a home there. Thus, the Bajaj Pulsar commercial offers an apt instance for the chronotope of road or the motivic chronotope with the motif of meeting. Bakhtin in his *FTC* also brings forth the concept of idyllic chronotopes which depict the pastoral or the ideal. There are different idyllic chronotopes identified by Bakhtin himself; family idyll and love idyll are two of them. The ads of Aashirvaad multigrain atta form typical instances for the play of the family idyll. An ideal family space with father, mother and kids is shown in the ad sharing the family time around a dining table. Hence the spatiotemporal axes through their interconnectedness create the family idyll. Though the dominant chronotope is idyllic, each character in the ad is shown as an admixture of a number of chronotopes at the same time. In order to show the multitasking nature of the characters the advertiser has brought in a rather complex interrelated set of spatial and temporal axes, forming minor chronotopes. There are a number of ads that use parent-child relationship, especially mother-child relationship leading to the dominance of the family idyll chronotope. The latest series of ads for Dettol renders instances for the same. Along with the family idyll, the ad also uses a musical format and the quality of the product is underlined through the lyrics and the actions of the characters. All the ads in this particular series use the same tune of music, the premises of a house as setting and focus on a mother-child relationship. The concept of an ideal mother who is always caring and loving is portrayed in these ads and Dettol is presented as an inevitable tool of

every mother to avoid infections. However, the ads gain its complete semantic significance only when it is read in relation to the chronotopic dimensions of a family.

Oreo ad series form yet another set of narratives with the family idyllic chronotope as the major one. The events in almost all the ads unfold in the spatial and temporal matrix of a family. Brother leaving for job abroad, father's birthday celebration, sister's birthday etc. are some of the occasions shot in these ads. They show how Oreo brings sweetness to various relationships. In one of the ads, a conversation between a brother and sister is shown in the dining room of their house. The brother is going abroad and his costume indicates that he is going to join the Navy. The sister appears sad and says that she will miss her brother. But brother takes out a packet of Oreo and starts saying that he is creamy and chocolaty like the Oreo biscuit while she is like its cover. A typical brother-sister fight ensues and the ad ends with that. However, the commercial is able to put across its implications only because it portrays the family space and time. In the different ads of Diary Milk Silk series, the presence of love idyll is rather obvious. In most cases, a young boy and a young girl are shown together, sharing the same space. One of them will be having a Diary Milk Silk with him/her. The ad usually ends with the sharing of Diary Milk between the two characters indicating love. In one such ad the background is a bed room filled with balloons. A handsome young man is busy blowing balloons and a beautiful young girl is tying them up. After a while both seem bored; the girl, instead of tying up the balloon lets the air out and throws the balloons away. The boy then plays a trick to get rid of their boredom; he blows into Diary Milk Silk creating bubbles in it and gives that to the girl. The girl eats it and this returns their lost spirit and the love idyll is in play. There is another ad for the same product in which the love idyll is created within the spatial dimensions of a library. A young boy and girl are sitting in the library; the girl is reading while the boy is busy eating Diary Milk Silk. Despite the temptation that she has, the girl rejects the offer from the boy; but later she finds it difficult to resist it and she asks the boy for the chocolate, only to see that the packet is empty. However, the boy takes out a second packet and shares it with the girl. In this narrative, the library space gets charged with love leading to love idyll. In other words, the product in these ads brings in a novel play of the spatial and temporal axes which would have been quite different otherwise. Bakhtinian chronotopic concepts and the chronotopic principles put forth by later scholars have led to the formulation of many a new chronotopes and the Mythological chronotope is one such category. The Axe advertisement is a very good instance for this chronotopic category. In this

ad a set of angels fall down from the heaven; people nearby or more aptly the entire city is bewildered about this unnatural and unexpected event. The people watch the heavenly creatures anxiously while all the angels walk towards a young man who uses axe body spray. The angels destroy their halo when they see the man and the ad ends with the caption 'even the angels fall'. The myth of the fallen angel is alluded to in this ad. The presence of the mythical characters and the allusion to a myth renders a new space time configuration to the ad. At first the spatial and temporal axes of a city landscape is shown; but gradually, it gets charged with new time and space values, leading to the generation of a new chronotope, the mythological chronotope. The reference to the mythical characters like Mahabali and Santa Claus also renders the ads a mythical nature thereby leading to the mythological chronotope. Thus, the analysis of various advertisements manifests the fact that, as in the case of the novels and movies, it is possible to discern chronotopes in the advertising narratives also. In other words, the analysis confirms the presence and effective use of chronotopes in advertising. It is almost impossible to read through the deeper implications of the various advertisements without having a proper knowledge about the advertising chronotopes. Awareness about the types of chronotopes and the ways in which they are employed in the ads help the viewers to arrive at more insightful readings. A majority of the viewers take this interplay of time and space for granted. But time and space have their own respective values; and the interconnections of these four elements in the advertisements result in the creation of advertising chronotopes.

The paper, in brief, aims at establishing the fact that chronotopes - the spatiotemporal axes – are actively and effectively present in the advertising narratives. It is their interplay which results in the creation of meanings in the advertisements. One will not be able to catch up with the semantic and ideological significance of the advertising narratives without a proper understanding of the interplay of the time and space axes. Only a chronotopic analysis can throw light on the fact that, the advertisers, by making the spatiotemporal axes intersect in a specific manner, are manipulating the human psyche and implanting the ideology of capitalism or production and consumption in the minds of the viewers without their consent. Hence, the advertising chronotopes play a seminal role in the contemporary postmodern living conditions crowded with hyperreal texts, sounds and images.

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Caste and Class Politics in Regional Narratives: Portrayal of Shades of Villain with Special Reference to *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum* and *Mahabharata*

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A grey character is neither clearly “good” (white) nor bad (“black”). Of course, differentiation is good, but depending on how one does this differentiation most characters are still quite clearly written (and read) as “black” or “white.” The phrase ‘grey character’ originated from a popular saying which “things are not black or white.” When something is said to be in black and white, it is distinctly referring to a clear choice such as yes or no, left or right. When this is not clearly defined, then it is said to be in a grey area just because the colour grey is between black and white. So when a situation is not clear as black and white, it was then said to be various shades of grey. Vetrimaaran once said at a *Vada Chennai* press meet at the Koorgai Library, “I don’t find anything black and white; I find grey in every person, and that is what excites me.” George R. R. Martin echoes the same idea, saying, “I like grey characters, fantasy for too long has been focused on very stereotypical heroes and villains.”

Grey characters arguably presuppose the existence of black and white, at least in terms of theoretical absolutes. A grey character needs some kind of balance between his good deeds and character attributes and his bad deeds and character attributes. It is more about motivations and understandable reactions than just a tally of whether the character’s actions were good or bad. Black characters are bad because of badness and white characters are white because of goodness. Often there’s some kind of justification offered at the beginning for why these characters are good or bad. A grey shaded character is basically a person who does wicked or non-idealistic things sometimes, but they do realise their fault at the end or are also seen doing good things. Grey characters are basically characters that do evil or wicked or wrong things at times but either see the error of their ways or are also nice at times. The shade of grey varies in intensity in each of the characters, none of us is perfect, all of us have some shades of grey, and how deep the shade of grey is that determines how close we are to the colour of evil – black. The “greyness” of a character arises from what their intentions were.

Film is a visual story telling medium and Mysskin is a filmmaker who does justice to that. Mysskin’s films not only have stories but they have emotions and philosophies.

Mysskin's films were never easy candidates for spelling out a log line, because of his tendency to combine multiple emotions and philosophies into a complex bundle. Having said that, Mysskin's basic themes always revolve around man's primal urges. Because primal urges grab our attention by the neck. Survival, hunger, prurience, betrayal, absolution, conflicts of the psyche, protection of loved ones, fear of death etc. This presentation "Caste and Class Politics in Regional Narratives: Portrayal of Shades of Villain with Special Reference to *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum* and *Mahabharata*" explores the shades of villain through what I consider Mysskin's best work, *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum* and the shades of villain in *Mahabharata* and its politics of methods of character representation and influence of hegemonic ideologies and also white supremacy ideologies and its influence on society and our culture.

In this movie *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum*, each and every scene has a symbolic and metaphorical meaning. Only two scenes in the movie are shot during the day and the rest are at night. The film manages to capture the moods and inner conflict of the characters, beginning with the dark and ending with the light. The character arc changes from A to Z from dark to light. Mysskin has a way of blurring borders that divide the good from the bad. The film seems to suggest that not all bad people are bad by choice; many are so because they don't have another choice. He suggests that there is good hidden behind the dark veil of bad, as also there is a shade of grey behind every white layer. There are no absolutely good or bad people, just human beings who are pawns at the hand of destiny.

We live today between shades of grey. No longer is life black and white. No longer are people black and white. No longer are ideas black and white. No longer are ideals and causes black and white. No longer are religion, law, and justice black and white. It is all simply an eclectic mix of both black and white, simply put, shades of grey (Livwrviv).

Morally grey characters are the intermediate between villain and hero. They are neither wholly bad nor good, which is what makes them such interesting additions to a story. Morally grey characters keep readers on their toes and keep the story unpredictable. Classic examples of morally grey characters include: Veera from *Raavanam* (Vikram), KK from *Kadaram Kondan* (Vikram), Wolf/Edward from *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum* (Mysskin), Surya from *Thalapathi* (Rajinikanth) and Balram Halwai from *The White Tiger* (Adarsh Gourav). Each of these characters varies in their degree of "evilness," but each of them are explored at length, so the audience can understand them as the complex person that they are.

According to the perspective studies, in most of the protagonist based films, story is narrated from the perspectives of protagonist character. Similarly, antagonist genre films such as *Don* and *Raavan* narrate and showcase from the perspective of the villain. It is through these perspectives decides that the audience to like or dislike the protagonist and the antagonist characters. However, the movie *Onaayum Aattukuttiyum* is different in that manner, the villain impacts the audience to like it from the perspective of the Hero.

The many villainous characters and protagonists that we have often seen, read and known remain as villains and heroes because of the perspectives that we viewed the story. The greatest example of this is the *Mahabharata*. In *Mahabharata* The Pandavas seem to be the heroes and the Kauravas the villains because we see the story in the perspectives of Pandavas and the hegemonic theories that Lord Krishna sided with the Pandavas. If we see the perspectives of Kauravas, the Pandavas will be the villains and Kauravas will be the heroes. This is only because we all see the story from the perspective of Pandavas. In fact, the Pandavas took a family of six Nishadins, served them wine so they'd sleep in the house and then fled and burnt the house. Their bodies were found charred and it was believed that the Pandavas and Kunti were dead. but for them the bodies of the Nishadins were so killable, and they did not even find their guilt. They do not think it is a sin. And we also think it's not sin. Thinking so, it is clear that the Pandavas behaved worse than the Kauravas. So that it is because of these kinds of perspectives that one becomes the hero and villain for the most part. But the fact is that even today no one is ready to accept this because of these hegemonic ideologies. These theories make us blindly believe, no matter what the protagonist (white) does, will never go wrong, it will always be right.

Morally grey character is well developed and believable one. The thing about a morally grey character is that the reader and audience both love and hate them. They are not the hegemonic black and white characters. They are more closer to the reality.

Neo-Noir is actually a modern adaptation of the film noir genre with new upgraded themes in terms of content, visual elements, style or media. Hence, the name neo-noir, that's new noir. The real translation is the new black. Noir films were basically dark-themed films produced during the 1940s to the late 1950s. The major themes used in this genre were female Fatales, doomed heroes, or anti-heroes, and tough, cynical detectives.

To understand it better, these films revolved around a plot that's completely opposite to what conventional cinema offered. Basically, a film qualifies as a film noir genre, if the film contains these five elements; oneiric, strange, erotic, ambivalent, and cruel. The happy ending is what one would hardly find in this genre film. *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum*, *Aaranya Kaandam*, *Pudhupettai*, *Super Deluxe* are the best examples of such movies.

In movies, protagonist is represented in white and antagonist character in black. The psychology of colour meaning and symbolism says that, the meaning of white pervades our lives. It is the unblemished marker of purity. White is the symbol of truth.

White can be blinding to those accustomed to the dark, and it can illuminate the literal and figurative ills of society. White stands for purity, its simplicity untainted by any other hue. White stands for everything good and right, and we use it symbolically in opposition to black. White is the colour of certainty, of illumination, and of insight, and we associate it with knowledge and learning. White is inviolable, the colour that reveals the distasteful by comparison with its purity. And black represents evil, darkness, night, and despair. It is the colour used to convey certainty and authority, and when used in opposition with white, it's a symbol of the eternal struggle between day and night, good and evil, and right and wrong. Black is associated with mourning in much of the world. Black reveals wrong doing, and we characterize bad people as being black-hearted. Black is frightening, as it conceals, rather than illuminates.

According to this methods of representation of the film characters, the movies portray their characters as, the villain characters are black, it shows they are bad (evil) and the heroes are white, it shows they are good (pure). Most movies paint their antagonist characters completely in black and their protagonists in completely white. Giving white representing the protagonist and black representing the villain in this way shows that the protagonist should be completely good and they will not do anything wrong while the villain characters are an evil character and will not hesitate to do anything for his selfish gain. But it is not possible to say that all heroes are completely

good and all villain characters are completely evil characters. The greatest example of this is Ravana and Rama in the Ramayana. Except that Ravana is a demon (Asura), not even part of the story says he made a mistake. At the same time, the story does not say that Rama is a completely good character. Yet no one would dare to say that Rama is a shaded villain character. Therefore many consider Rama to be a completely good character and Ravana a

bad character. This is because of the supremacy ideologies that gods (Devas)

are heroes and demons (Asuras) are villains. Because of this, we consider many good characters to be bad and bad characters to be good. Gods (Devas) like Indra and demonic (Asuras) characters like Kumbhakarna and Mahabali had to become heroes and villains only with these supremacy ideologies.

Often many protagonists and villain characters do the same thing, but these kinds of supremacy ideologies make us think that whatever the heroes do is only right or that even if they do something wrong it is not a mistake. *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum* is a film that changes the traditional heroic notion that heroes should be completely good. This film shows that there is a positive and a negative side to the protagonist, as opposed to the idea that the protagonist should be completely good. It also shows that the villain character has both a bad side and a good side. This movie proves that there is a bad side and a good side in all human beings and that no one here is white or black.

Cinema is more than a story-telling medium. Every film is a reflection of the way the film maker understands and sees the world around him. It is an exploration of what the film maker feels as life's most imperative questions and what he deems as a moral act. Cinema could also be an impression of real life. An impression that makes reality and all its nuances make sense to the audience. But the best way to wield cinema is to use stories with personal drama and present them as a reflection of the reality. A fusion between the personal with the universal, and this is the perfect definition of Mysskin's cinema.

The best thing that can be said about Mysskin's works is that they leave a haunting impression with the audience. His films are a skewed, larger than life representation of our world, while simultaneously displaying the rawness of the human condition. Through his films he uses the motifs to do something not many film makers would dare to do, build a world. The motifs in Mysskin's cinema are a signature of his and are so unique that it essentially builds a world in only which his stories could happen. This world of his spawn stories of chilling proportion but still maintains an intimacy with the audience. What Mysskin tried to do in previous films, and perfected in *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum*, is build a surreal world. This kind of world building is seen in most fantasy stories where the rules, characters, and lore are explained as the story moves forward, and from this perspective, *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum* is indeed a fantasy fable. A dark, cynical fable that unfolds as a narration to a child and deals

with Mysskin's signature motif of morals and redemption. The fable is filled with characters that are exaggerated representations. We saw this in *Anjathe* with a Kuruvi flapping its wings like a sparrow, and in *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum* we see a wolf with a tail. The other characters get their traits from the respective animals they represent. Through this, the metaphor is a spelt out to the audience rather than being a subtle reference, it makes for an interesting and engaging narrative.

Mysskin's cinema maintains the intimacy in this stylized narrative by demanding an investment from the audience through techniques that emphasize suspense. Mysskin regulates the information given to the audience through his framing, guiding the audience's eyes to where he wants us to see. *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum* starts with a man running away from something, falling down and getting up to limp again, we then cut closer to see that he left behind a gun and a pool of blood. Mysskin immediately has us immersed in his world from the first scene. The story happens in a cynical and bleak world that has its own twisted dark humour. The atmosphere of Mysskin's works stands from the suspense and its dark themes. One way Mysskin maintains this is by introducing a constant sense of dread. The wolves hunt and the innocent goats are never safe. This constant sense of dread is also seen in the cinematography where the scene builds on the anticipation. The audience is rarely given a closure and are only given pieces of information as the scene progresses.

Mysskin's scenes have a methodical camera work with wide shots. The camera rarely moves, but when it does, it does so with a purpose that feels like the camera knows what is about to happen and is withholding that information from us. This kind of ominous camera work keeps the audience seated even through long scenes. The wide shot and the length of the scene manages to leave a lasting impression in our minds while the suspense keeps us questioning the motives of the characters. Mysskin also controls the information by cutting away from a scene just before the action begins. The lack of knowledge forces the audience to fill the gaps with their imagination, which can be even more terrifying than reality. His unique framing, shot composition, and the way he blocks the characters are excellent tool he utilizes to tell a suspenseful story. Mysskin's cinema is a journey into his mind, an exploration of a surreal world that questions our perspectives, keeps us in suspense, and even questions our vision of what is black and white, but the story has an ending rooted in a strong sense of morality. This ending may not reflect reality but it is what the audience needs to believe in. This is the most unrealistic and farfetched trait of his world.

Film is a type of visual story telling medium and Mysskin is a filmmaker who does justice to that. Mysskin's films not only have stories but they have emotions and philosophies. There is no need to say everything openly through conversation, the audience should see and understand the movie through the visuals themselves. It takes the audience deeper beyond the realities. The movie *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum* tells the story of events that took place one night. The film is driven by its story and neo-noir presentation style. Through this moderate dialogue presentation, the story goes through the depths of the audience's mental levels from beginning to end and transforms them into a character, in a way that these characters themselves understand, through colours and neo-noir narration. Colours and background music are very important in this film as the dialogues are only in the essentials steps.

Some of the visuals in the film conveys through dark humour and dark themes. The film goes through very few characters. From the beginning to the end of the film, all the characters are dressed in blue. In addition, blue, violet, 100 volt bulb lighting and black colours are reflected in many parts of the film. It refers to the changes in the characters' mental state and the feelings of fear, anger, grief, death, and resurrection. This gives more clarity to the story. The film begins in the dark and ends in the light. It shows the utterly obscure, dark, unrecognizable characters and situations are coming to light and reached recognizable. It also shows that what begins in the man named Wolf ends in the same Wolf. At the same time, the story also present differences in the mental state of the characters.

The problems caused by Chandru saving a man named Wolf end in Wolf's death. The plot of the movie is about the little lamb who goes with a wild wolf into a terrible forest and returns as a knowledgeable goat, a wolf itself. At the same time, the story proves that there is a lamb inside a wolf and a wolf inside a lamb. Chandru is seen turning into a Wolf in various parts of the film. At the beginning of the film, Chandru forgets everything and saves Wolf. But when Chandru is forced by the police to kill Wolf, when he repeatedly tries to kill Wolf, when Chandru goes into a stage where there is no other way to kill Wolf, and at some point hides the knife in his socks like Wolf, Chandru becomes the Wolf. In the climax scene of the movie, Mysskin is shot in a violet car parking. It gives the impression of a vast forest. And its violet colour indicates resurrection. Here the wolf dies but the revival of the wolf through the Chandru takes place.

Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum takes us through a metaphorical, philosophy packed 'jungle safari,' telling the story of an intense chase involving a medical student, deceptive criminals

and cops over a night. A paid killer struggling to redeem himself, tries to safeguard his foster family from his bloodthirsty employer, in the process dragging the cops and an unsuspecting youth into his endeavor. While in *Anjathe* and *Yudham Sei*, Mysskin portrayed animal instincts in characters, he models all of his characters and their traits around animals in *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum*. The film while touching upon the complex emotion of redemption, also debates about belief systems, mutual trust, the spectrum of ethics, and the endurance levels before reaching one's breaking point. Highly recommended for its surrealism and widely celebrated as one of the best among philosophical thrillers, *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum* which uses the thriller as a vehicle to lace concepts of humanity, faith and God.

The Characters: The similarity between the films *Anjathe*, *Yudham Sei* and *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum* doesn't end with the theme. In fact, it actually starts there and becomes the most obvious in the projection of the characters and their dramatic needs. On the surface, all the three films have their own set of characters, but dig deeper, the common factors seem too obvious to be ignored. Each film has a protagonist undergoing some sort of realization arc, an evil and cold-blooded antagonist and a grey character connecting both the protagonist and the antagonist, whose colour spectrum changes from black to white or from white to black during the course of the film.

The Whites: The protagonists of the trilogy are usually non-heroic, who have been reluctantly sucked into the big bad world of darkness and crime. The Whites live in an ordinary world till they receive the call to adventure by chance. They all hesitate to heed to the call for various reasons, and in fact initially refuse to be a part of the action.

Chandru in *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum* is the unwilling medical student who is pulled into a criminal's life by destiny, but initially reluctant to rise to the occasion. The Whites have to battle inner conflicts, while going through their mission. Chandru is again fighting feelings of guilt and terror as he is unwillingly made to suffer the consequences of his daring surgical procedure by the law force, who commissions him to assassinate a criminal. Once with the wolf, he has to explain his inaction to his conscience, over silently witnessing the criminal's seemingly hurtful actions. The Whites undergo significant mental/philosophical metamorphoses, midway through their journey. Chandru has had enough of being 'the hunted,' when he realizes that he needs to confront the hunter to uncover many ugly truths. He rises to the challenge and starts to blur the line between the two, when he decides to pursue his captor. The Whites usually end up doing heroic deeds after their transformation. Chandru, despite going through

a guilt trip over a shoot-out, goes behind the redemptional criminal to ensure the safety of the little girl, after knowing the truth. He seizes the moment and takes the biggest decision of his life, walking out with the kid.

The Blacks: The principle antagonists of the trilogy are all immoral and nefarious criminals, who indulge in shady business for their living. Thamba in *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum* plays the metaphorical evil bear of the jungle, a hard-core gangster, who kills his enemies with the help of paid killers. When one such paid killer (Wolf) tries to make amends for his sins, he doesn't stop at anything to make Wolf change his mind or get him killed. The Blacks are selfish and opportunistic people, who would go to any extent to save their faces. Thamba threatens to harm the wolf's adopted family if he doesn't remain loyal and return to work for him. The blacks have loyal sidekicks, and they don't hesitate to eliminate one of their own ilk in a problematic situation. Pichai (Thamba's spy in the police force) having fulfilled his purpose, is first left to bleed to death, but is then fatally shot by Thamba's main henchman, Yuva.

The Greys: Every film has a character in the grey spectrum, who is living on the edge, caught between the two extremes. They are either too good to be absolute evil, or too evil to be downright good, or someone who just wants to stop being evil or forced to stop being good. The films is essentially based on these characters and they double up as the unheralded protagonist almost always. In short, they make or break the film. The motives of the grey characters are kept cloak and dagger for most of the running time.

The intentions of the wolf come under the scanner, when he forces a student to accompany him on an overnight epic journey, through seemingly unrelated locations. The Greys in the film are all victim of fate. Wolf, having accidentally killed the young son of a blind couple in a confrontation, proceeds to safeguard the family from the clutches of his boss in an attempt at redemption. The Greys are all bundles of contradiction, and essentially misfits in places where they finally end up. Wolf, the man behind fourteen assassinations, struggles emotionally with the tender care of his foster family. His character's transformation reaches its pinnacle, when he collapses at the feet of the couple's daughter in the end.

The kind of character that would have evoked no sympathies in the hands of another director becomes the object of sympathy in the hands of Mysskin. He makes the audience look beyond the dark veneer of the paid killer. When the movie starts, the audience wants Wolf to be killed. But, in the end, when he almost shoots himself, the audience hopes that he

had lived. Mysskin knows the emotional buttons to be pressed to make a bad man look good. He blurs the line between good and bad.

It is not just *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum* that proves this. In his other movies too, he gives a touch of pathos to the death of almost each of his antagonists. Of course, there are characters that he completely paints in black – like Naren in *Mugamoodi*, or the gang of middle-aged perverts from *Yudham Sei*, or Prasanna in *Anjathe*, or Thamba in *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum*. But, a lot of his characters are in grey and their death is shown with as much emotion as the death of a protagonist. *Anjathe* is a classy example of this tendency of Mysskin. The way he shows Naren and Ajmal as the bad and the good, respectively, at the beginning, flips sides midway and then gives a poignant end to Ajmal's character, stretching the scene a second longer to let us see that he realized that he was wrong. That second changes our perception of the character, making us think that it was just a misunderstanding that led to him being what he was.

Cinema mostly doesn't care much about the background of its antagonists. When a bad guy dies, very few film makers dwell on the family he leaves behind. Mysskin is one among the few who does that. He recalls the corrupt police officer who is shot dead close to the climax of *Yudham Sei*. The camera stays on him for a second longer than it would in a normal Tamil movie, just to show us his mobile phone ringing; his daughter is calling. Mysskin takes that moment to show us the human being inside a criminal.

These are small things, but very unique. When we want to make something look whiter than it actually is, we can paint the surroundings black. The contrast gives us the desired effect. Cinema works this way to make its protagonist seem like a hero. Mysskin, one thinks, doesn't like using too much of black or white, he deals in grey. The closing scene of *Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum* is a good example – Wolf, the bad guy to start with, is lying dead with our sympathies, while the police men (the heroes to start with) are standing there, heads hanging (in shame, or relief, or a feeling of nothingness). Even the young man, who risked a lot to save a life at the start of the film, doesn't hesitate to shoot down a person by the end. Mysskin deals in such extremes with ease.

Most of his films can be boxed into these basic philosophies – about good not being altogether good, about bad not being altogether bad, about everyone having a bit of both in them. It just takes the right or wrong situation to bring out the good or bad in us. But, it is not

just these unique philosophies that are common to Mysskin films. There are some very interesting quirks as well. Dark seems to be his constant companion.

The shades of villains are not really heroes or villains but characters who are equal to the hero but remain villains. Most of these characters are characters who stand alongside the protagonist or perhaps have more qualities than the protagonist. It is often difficult to distinguish between such villains and protagonists. Examples of such films are *Raavanam*, *Kadaram Kondan*, *Onaayum Aattukuttiyum* and *The White Tiger*. This is due to the difference in perspectives on the way the story is viewed.

Films like *Thilakkam*, *Thattathin Marayathu* and *Varathan* are hero-centric films. In such films, the protagonist is introduced at the beginning of the film or in the scenes that follow and a clear picture of him, his surroundings and circumstances is given to the audience, thereby creating in the audience that this is the character that you must accept and like. Through this, the audience who sees this movie starts thinking from the side of the hero and thereby cultivates sympathy with the hero. Later on, the story then proceeds from the protagonist's perspective. At the same time, the character of the villain is shown in several parts in the very first half of the film and through this presentations make in the audience to reluctant to the villain characters. Such presentations create in the audience a sense of sympathy for the protagonist and reluctance for the villain, as well as a sense of who to side with and who should win. But in movies where the villain is the central character, the story goes from the villain's perspective. This creates a misunderstanding in the audience about who the hero and the villain are. Introducing the villain at the beginning of the story or in the next parts that follow, this presentation encourages the audience to think biased so that the audience can admit any mistake made by the villain.

But different by all of this, the shaded villain characters are the characters who are equal to the hero or of a higher quality than the protagonist. Here the story goes on creating a confrontation between the hero and the villain within the audience. In such films too, the story goes from the perspective of the shaded villain characters. In most of these movies the viewers often mistake shaded villain characters as protagonists. This is due to the changes of perspectives of the story is viewed.

The many villainous characters and protagonists that we have often seen, read and known remain as villains and heroes because of the perspectives that we viewed the story.

The greatest examples of this are the myths *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. In *Ramayana*, Rama becomes the hero and Ravana the villain. This is only because we all see the story from the perspective of Rama. In fact, if we had seen the story from

Ravana's perspective, Rama would have become the villain and Ravana the hero. In this way, the movie *Raavanam* presents a story that goes from Ravana's (Veera) perspective. In this, unlike the Ravana, who abducted Sita because of his love for Sita in the *Ramayana* as we know, Ravana kidnaps Sita in the anger to Lakshmana who cut off the nose of Ravana's sister Surpanakha. Later in the sequel, Ravana's mentality makes the audience to like Ravana and dislike Rama. Meanwhile, in Pulavar Kulanthai's *Ravana Kaviyam* and Kambar *Ramavataram*, Lakshmana is portrayed as the co-protagonist by cutting off the nose and breast of Shurpanakha (Kamavalli) as instructed by Rama. It simplifies on the movie *Raavanam*, Priya Mani (Vennila) plays Shurpanakha's role, John Vijay (Hemanth) who plays Lakshmana literally holding her nose and threatening to cut it off (*Raavanam* 1:17:31-2:08:14) and police custodial torture and brutal raped without

Rama's permission is portrayed as Lakshmana negative character (*Raavanam* 1:19:40-2:08:14). Similarly, in the passages where Sita sends Lakshmana to save Rama who is handing over Sita to Lakshmana, Sita is portrayed in a negative role in many of *Ramayana*. But in Kumaran Asan's "Chinthishtayaya Seetha," Sita is portrayed differently from Sita's perspective, so Sita is a very positive character here. Therefore,

most of these perspectives make one a hero, a villain and a shaded character. This is what we see in the *Mahabharata*. The Pandavas seem to be the heroes and the Kauravas the villains because we see the story in the perspectives of Pandavas. If we see the perspectives of Kauravas, the Pandavas will be the villains and Kauravas will be the heroes. So that it is because of these kinds of perspectives that one becomes the hero and villain for the most part.

But unlike all of this, the movie *Onaayum Aattukuttiyum*, the villain is liked from the protagonist perspective. Here the story is told in this way through neo noir narrative techniques. So this shaded villain character is close to the reality. In most of the protagonist antagonist characters are just like to be fictional characters, but the shaded villain characters are very much related to reality. As Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "Birthmark" unintentionally told that, this is an imperfect world and everyone here is imperfect. The shaded villain character is

a reminder of the idea that no one is perfect. We are all shaded villain characters. The biggest example of this is the Tamil movie *Vikram Vedha*. At the beginning of the story, Vikram (Madhavan) represents the hero by wearing a white shirt and Vedha (Vijay Sethupathi) the villain by wearing a black shirt (*Vikram Vedha*29:32-2:10:16). But halfway through the film, both plays the villain in a black dress. By the end of the movie, the two appear in grey shirts, proving that everyone is in grey (*Vikram Vedha*2:10:05-2:10:16). As B. Unnikrishnan's movie '*Villain*' says "there is a villain in a every hero and there is a hero in every villain" (*Villain*2:16:06-2:21:49), "Nothing is white nothing is black, everything is grey" (*Villain*1:54:05-2:21:49).

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Exploring the Influence of Instagram on Young Women: A Comprehensive Analysis

Geophine Georgie and Dr. Gils M. George

Perception of societal standards have changed along with the changes in the technology of social communication systems. The beginning of these apps is also the beginning for society to share their thoughts about the ideal beauty standards. Instagram is a multimedia application, which allows users to reveal a sliver of what their life is like. While Instagram tries to promote positivity, unrealistic life standards portrayed on social media, create negative implications for developing women and it can cause body dysmorphia, bullying and low self-esteem. The trust that the influencers get from their audience makes them more effective at marketing than traditional celebrities. Another significant reason for their effectiveness is the niche appeal and the specialization of their celebrity. Influencers appear to be the middle ground between a famous celebrity and a trustworthy acquaintance. The audience establishes a connection with the influencer, perceiving them as authentic individuals, which lends credibility to the endorsements they feature as part of marketing campaigns.

The term body image does not refer to how you actually look. Body image is defined as the mental picture one forms of one's body as a whole, including its physical characteristics and one's attitudes toward these characteristics. An image of something usually refers to a representation of the original thing. Body image therefore refers to a representation that you have of your physical appearance. All of us have a view of how we look and may evaluate this in a positive, negative, or even neutral way. However, individuals with a body image problem may have a particularly negative and sometimes biased view of one or more aspects of their appearance. This negative view can lead to a preoccupation with the area in question, and to high levels of worry and distress. Many people can have a poor body image, seeing their general physical appearance in a negative light. However, the term Body Dysmorphic Disorder, or BDD, is used to describe a particular and more specific type of body image problem. Body dysmorphic disorder (BDD), or body dysmorphia, is a mental health condition where a person spends a lot of time worrying about flaws in their appearance. These flaws are often unnoticeable to others.

People of any age can have BDD, but it's most common in teenagers and young adults. It affects both men and women. BDD is marked by an intense preoccupation with a perceived

flaw in one's physical appearance. Large amount of time may be spent checking their appearance in the mirror, comparing their appearance with others, and engaging in behaviors designed to try to hide or conceal the area of concern. However, even if this is pointed out to a person with BDD, they will continue to worry about that area of their body and often believe that others are thinking negatively of them because of it. It is important to recognize that BDD is not simple vanity or dissatisfaction with appearance. BDD is a distressing condition which is often associated with depression, social anxiety and feelings of shame. BDD often creates significant interference with day-to-day activities, as it can limit one's desire to leave the house, socialize, and participate in activities such as work or study. Fat shaming falls under this umbrella of bullying and is common even by influencers with a high platform. This has led to an increase of plastic surgery on minor things and constant use of editing apps to maintain a desired look. The findings of the current study showed that lower ratings of self-esteem and life satisfaction, increased media exposure to cosmetic surgery via television shows, time spent watching television and religiosity were all significant predictors of the likelihood of undergoing cosmetic surgery. It was expected that the greater sociocultural pressure on women to conform to societal ideals of attractiveness (shown by the prevalence of body image and eating disorders among women) would serve to normalize their pursuit of cosmetic surgery. Studies have also proved that there is a bias reaction towards attractive women, and discrimination against less attractive women, in several different domains of society.

Low self-esteem is another major issue that happens as a result of using the media-sharing app. Low self-esteem is when someone lacks confidence about who they are and what they can do. They often feel incompetent, unloved, or inadequate. People who struggle with low self-esteem are consistently afraid about making mistakes or letting other people down. Filters have been demonstrated to play a significant role in crafting an idyllic lifestyle and invoking self-esteem in the minds of young women. It can hide the truth of an image. A filter can change how someone looks by "beautifying" an image to a more appealing state. Filters can change skin tone and even morph the body and face. The slim, attractive, and sexualized professional models who shares images on Instagram were perceived as posting these pictures for motivation or inspiration. On the contrary, people from real life that also post sexualized pictures were regarded as doing it for attention, and thus less virtuous, altruistic, and intelligent. The difference between young professional female models and ordinary young women when posting sexualized pictures on Instagram lies primarily in the context and perceived

motivations behind their posts. Young professional female models may be more strategic in their use of sexualized imagery, potentially leveraging it as a means of enhancing their personal brand or gaining visibility in certain industries. In contrast, ordinary women might post such pictures for various reasons, including self-expression, seeking validation, or conforming to societal pressures.

Regardless of the intentions behind these posts, the impact on young women can be significant. Exposure to sexualized images, whether from influencers, models, or peers, can contribute to unrealistic beauty standards and foster feelings of inadequacy or body dissatisfaction. It may also perpetuate a culture where women's value is linked to their physical appearance and sexual desirability, rather than their talents, achievements, or character. This discrepancy in perception can elevate models and influencers, leading to increased upward social comparison and making them even more prominent when internalizing the ideal body type.

The more time we spend on Instagram the easier it is to self-objectify and compare with others. Self-objectification is a psychological process in which a person views themselves as a physical object first and a human being second. As a result, the person can be hypercritical of their body and parts of their body. With this said, influencers have the ability to hide behind angles, filters and editing. Individuals typically do not disclose in their captions the editing of a picture, the use of favorable angles to capture the best shot, or the process of taking numerous photos before selecting only one. It is easy to be deceived on Instagram resulting in young women questioning themselves as to why they don't have the same physical traits as most of the popular famous women do. Surveys have shown that exposure to media predicts self-hate, thin body ideals and results in eating disorders amongst young impressionable girls (Perloff, 2014). In the United States, as many as 10 in 100 young women suffer from an eating disorder. Two psychiatric eating disorders, anorexia nervosa and bulimia, are on the increase among teenage girls and young women. These two eating disorders also occur in boys, but less often.

These disorders are characterized by a preoccupation with food and a distortion of body image. Unfortunately, many teenagers hide these serious and sometimes fatal disorders from their families and friends.

The positive feedback in the comment sections of these Instagram's ideal women supports the fact that society still holds an unrealistic standard of what the perfect body is meant to look

like. Commenters do this by encouraging and praising young women who may look ill because of their eating disorder. Through looking into the effects of body dysmorphia it assists in supporting the idea that Instagram creates unrealistic standards on young women.

Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort. Bullying can take the form of physical contact, words, or more subtle actions. The bullied individual typically has trouble defending him or her and does nothing to “cause” the bullying. Cyberbullying is verbally threatening or harassing behavior conducted through such electronic technology as cell phones, email, social media, or text messaging. Bullying can be irreversible, traumatic and mentally scarring, resulting in a number of mental health issues. Cyber Bullies are the people that comment controversial and inflammatory things in order to get an emotional response. In an article about Instagram bullies, a parent comments saying, “bullies urged my daughter to kill herself,” (Thomson, 2020). With societal stereotypes, it is easy for people to bully others on their appearance, for example a woman with body hair is not accepted and deemed ‘ugly’ because it is not conventional. From evidence it shows that bullies post spiteful pictures and disclose personal secrets on anonymous accounts without being seen (Lorenz, 2018). They are anonymous because in today’s society it is “uncool” to be seen as mean and can result in dislike and loss of popularity. The intention to bully stems from the recurring idea that people become jealous of things they cannot attain. When viewing the effects of bullying caused by Instagram it restates the fact that Instagram can be impactful due to the imposition of unrealistic standards on young women.

Anxiety and depression mediate the role of low self-esteem. There are many causes of how low self-esteem can arise, Instagram and social media being a big contributor. The display of false self-presentation on Instagram creates self-criticism. Instagram models and influencers gain money from these experiences by editing their bodies to represent society’s standards of female beauty, which heightens their popularity on social media. Instagram models and influencers generate income through these endeavors by digitally altering their bodies to conform to societal ideals of female beauty, thereby enhancing their prominence on social media platforms. For example, the whole female members of the Kardashians have gone under plastic surgeries and have changed their total appearance. The influence of the Kardashian family, particularly figures like Kim Kardashian and her sisters, among young women on Instagram is considerable. With millions of followers, the Kardashians have built a brand centered around their glamorous lifestyles, fashion choices, and beauty standards. Their presence

on Instagram shapes trends in fashion, makeup, and body image, often promoting a highly curated and idealized version of femininity.

Many young women on Instagram look to the Kardashians as style icons and role models, emulating their fashion choices and beauty routines. The Kardashians' posts featuring luxury products, designer clothing, and glamorous vacations can create aspirational desires among their followers, driving consumer behavior and influencing purchasing decisions.

Moreover, the Kardashian family's openness about their personal lives, relationships, and struggles has led to a sense of relatability and authenticity for some followers. This transparency has fostered a sense of connection between the Kardashians and their audience, making their influence on young women even more potent.

However, it's essential to recognize that the Kardashian brand also faces criticism for promoting unrealistic beauty standards, materialism, and a culture of excess. Some argue that their emphasis on physical appearance and wealth can contribute to feelings of inadequacy and insecurity among young women who compare themselves to the Kardashian lifestyle.

Pop singers and their songs can exert a significant influence on young women through Instagram, sometimes with negative consequences. Here are some potential areas of concern regarding their impact:

Pop singers often promote a particular image of beauty and body ideals through their music videos, photoshoots, and public appearances on Instagram. This can contribute to unrealistic beauty standards and body dissatisfaction among young women who compare themselves to these images. Some of them may rely on overtly sexualized imagery and lyrics in their music and Instagram content to attract attention and maintain popularity. This can perpetuate harmful stereotypes about women's sexuality and reinforce the objectification of women as mere objects of desire. They often flaunt their wealth, luxury lifestyles, and expensive possessions on Instagram, which can lead to feelings of inadequacy and a desire for material possessions among young women who aspire to emulate their favorite celebrities.

Luxury cars, designer brands, and extravagant homes are not readily accessible. Despite working diligently and saving money, the average individual may still find themselves unable to attain their desired goals. Instagram makes people believe that these commodities are easily attainable. This can create fear of missing out and result in low self-esteem because not everyone is able to afford expensive material things. A common trend that is still circulating especially

now is fitspiration or “fitspo” whereby beauty influencers flaunt their fitness goals and outcomes by posting images of their bodies. A girl could be doing the same workout and eating the right food but still not achieving the same goals as that of a beauty influencer. This is because of the deception on Instagram and how it is easy to hide behind angles and filters. But not only this, people are built differently, with different body structures and different metabolisms.

There is evidence indicating that no measures can effectively mitigate body image dissatisfaction. An article by Tiggemann, Anderberg, and Brown (2020) suggests that including body-positive captions to pictures of female bodies does not have any effect on social comparison or body image. The picture itself is the only thing that has any effect on the body image of an Instagram user. It is logical to propose that when captions promoting body positivity, acceptance, and celebration of all body types accompany images of conventionally attractive thin women, they are perceived as insincere attempts at pandering and, at best, have minimal impact. However, the same captions could help women internalize a more positive beauty ideal when they are accompanied by larger, plus-size models.

It may be true that Instagram removed likes to lessen the impact of bullying and self-hate. The reality is that they are not the sole individuals who resort to reducing their popularity by means of likes. Another example for this is Facebook. Facebook removed the view of the number of likes as a way to better the quality of content users see and remove the aspect of popularity as it has shown to be linked with mental health consequences for teenagers (Leskin, 2019). In reality, despite the efforts made by these applications, existing mental health issues persist. This contradicts the notion of positivity that Instagram appears to promote. Arguably, the unpleasant truth is that the expectation of women on Instagram is not progressing in modern society. They still have to live by restrictive standards, which can be seen from body image issues, to bullying and low-self-esteem as a result of Instagram. The society is developing new and different codes of empowering the patriarchy. With the availability of mean comments and editing tools at the fingertips, it's easy to become engulfed in the Instagram world. Especially with societal norms and the insufficient push to normalize “normal” lives and “normal” bodies. Instagram has negatives but despite this, it will always stay mainstream regardless of whatever impact it has on one's life.

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Reading Ideology and False Consciousness in Abdoel Moeis' *Never the Twain*

Sreelekshmy B.

Abdoel Moeis' *Never the Twain*, one of the most popular works of Indonesian fiction first published in 1928 and translated to English in 2010, is the life journey of Hanafi, a Malay native who had a half-finished Dutch education. Hanafi as a half-baked 'Western' could not realise the exact meaning or purpose of education and viewed his people as downtrodden. He had been sent for Dutch education by his widowed mother who had little education. He was thus brought up in a Dutch way and couldn't identify himself with native Malay. Moreover, he could not complete his education due to financial shortage and compelled to join as a clerk. He had been received both by his community and by Dutch community with reverence in two different perspectives.

According to Karl Marx's theory of social class, a person's social class is determined by his or her position within the system of property relations that constitutes a given economic society. People also have subjective characteristics: thoughts, mental frameworks, and identities. These mental constructs give the person a cognitive framework in terms of which the person understands his or her role in the world and the forces that govern his or her life. One's mental constructs may correspond more or less well to the social reality they seek to represent.

Hanafi's perception of his own life and his position in the society was rooted in the education that he had received. He developed an affinity towards Western way of life and customs as he considered it as more liberal in outlook. His fascination for the Dutch life was intensified by his love for Corrie du Bussee, a Eurasian, who considered herself as superior to the natives because of her father's Dutch lineage. Both Hanafi and Corrie had a different mental construction of their positions in the society, a false consciousness, which did not correspond with the social reality.

'False consciousness' is a concept derived from Marxist theory of social class, even though he did not use the phrase. He paid extensive attention to the related concepts of ideology and commodity fetishism. The concept refers to the systematic misrepresentation of dominant social relations in the consciousness of subordinate classes. It is a way of thinking that prevents an individual from perceiving the true nature of their social or economic status, which is contrary to the class-consciousness, a key concept in Marxist conflict theory.

Class-consciousness is awareness of one's own social and economic rank, relative to others in society or in the context of the larger society. Hanafi failed to identify his position in both the Malay and the Dutch communities where as Corrie could not accept her mother's lineage as a native Malay. She hated to be part of the native community which is evident from her words to her father: "I don't feel that the natives deserve my respect . . . You know I don't like to mix with the natives." (17)

Hanafi looked down on the people of his own community with contempt and disrespect. He even didn't mind to talk to them. He considered himself "... to be outside that tradition, no longer bound by it." (25) His Western education made him think that he was no more part of Malay community but part of Dutch community, which is a false conception he developed about his status in a mixed society. He admired the Western way of living and his response to a marriage proposal of a native girl shows his perception of himself: "And as for my wife, what's the use of you sending me to school in Batavia if all this time you intended to marry me to a village girl? Who among them could be my equal when it comes to of the world?" (26)

Georg Lukacs was one of the first European philosophers to reflect seriously on Marx's philosophical ideas and he introduced the concept of 'false consciousness' into Marxist discourse. A more sociological treatment of class-consciousness was provided by Karl Mannheim in his attempt to formulate a sociology of knowledge in the 1930s. The sociology of knowledge attempts to provide a theoretical account of the relationship between knowledge systems and the social conditions within which they emerge. This provides a theoretical framework in terms of which to understand the workings of a system of ideology. Mannheim supports the idea that the social position of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat deeply influence the forms of knowledge that they embody. He further argues that in each case these forms of material bias lead to a systematic falsification of social reality.

In a class society, there is an inherent conflict of material interests between privileged and subordinate groups. Marx asserts that social mechanisms emerge in class society, which systematically creates distortions, errors, and blind spots in the consciousness of the underclass. If these consciousness-shaping mechanisms did not exist, then the underclass, always a majority, would quickly overthrow the system of their domination. Therefore, the institutions that shape the person's thoughts, ideas, and frameworks develop in such a way as to generate false consciousness and ideology. The incomplete Western education shaped the mental processes

of Hanafi whereas the Dutch and the Malay lineage brought about the conflict in the mind of Corrie.

There is an ideological colonisation can be seen in the character of Hanafi. After receiving Dutch education, brought up in a Dutch manner he began to live like a Dutch, and wished for a European status considering his people with contempt. Hanafi has a liberal humanist idea that we are essentially free and can remain free as long as we can think. This belief of Hanafi is explicit from the beginning conversation between Hanafi and Corrie stating their own views of life. Hanafi seems not afraid of public opinion unlike Corrie, who is always thinking of the society. Hanafi's reply to Corrie's question "but what would people think if I stopped by your house every day...?" gives a glimpse to his character. He replies: "What gives anyone the right to object to what another person does with his life?... My word, Corrie, if we had to ask people's opinion before doing anything - especially when it's no one else's concern - life would be unbearable "(1). But Corrie is concerned about society and it's laws: "... but you're a man and I'm a woman and society shade certain laws which, although unwritten, must be followed if we are to live at peace within a society that abides by those laws"(2). The novel's main concern is the conflict between the personal ideologies and social ideologies. All the characters are found to be following the laws of society except Hanafi. For him, laws vary from nation to nation and the talk of violating propriety is "very confusing, especially since it is not written down. "(2)

Examining the words of Corrie, "Do you have any idea just how fragile a woman's reputation is,...?"(3) and "Under the law I might be classified as European, but my mother was one hundred per cent native."(2), she seems thoughtful about her gender and her position in the society as a Dutch woman even though she is not a complete Dutch but with a native mother. Her uncertainty might have sprung from these factors. She is not willing to accept Hanafi's love since she is not convinced of how society accepts their relationship. She seeks advice from her father Mr. du Bussee, a French architect, who properly married a native women in church. Corrie wants to know "What... is the biggest challenge to a mixed marriage?"(13) His experiences make him tell her "... there are so many, and all of them caused by a universal human disease called 'racial pride'. For some reason people find fault in the mingling of races..." Mr. du Bussee again explains the difference in a Western man marrying a native woman and a native man marrying a Western woman. According to him, "...it's all caused by the same thing: racial pride. Europeans first came here with the

belief that it was their right to rule the native people. ... If his mistress bears him children then, according to the Western point of view, he has done a great service to the native people: he has improved their blood. But it's very different for a white woman to marry, and have children with, a native man. First of all, as a Westerner, she would be seen as degrading herself. People would say that she had thrown herself away to the natives. Legally, she would lose her European status. ... There is no provision in the law that permits a European man to give up his privileged status. (14)

was affected by her father's words and her own racial pride. She begins to think of her place in society as the wife of a native. She can accept Hanafi but not his other family members. She considers her European status is far superior to that of the natives. Her fear of society prevents her from falling in love with a native but she has a natural affection towards Hanafi. Her class consciousness made her to leave Hanafi and decided to continue her education in another city, Batavia.

On the other hand brought up in Dutch manner Hanafi could not endure the indigenous life and beliefs and even language: "when he spoke Malay, Hanafi used different dialects. With his mother it was the Riau dialect. And when he addressed those of lower standing, he used the Betawi dialect. It was as if he wanted to cut up his own mother tongue into separate pieces. For Hanafi, anyone who didn't speak Dutch was a nobody. And anything having to do with the Malay world was despicable." (21). He seems alienated from his own people and he considers Malay heritage is out-dated and Islam a superstition. His mother is the only native person who finds place in his heart. Hanafi finds it is difficult to mix with the native people. For him, "it's like oil and water." (22)

Hanafi lost all possible connections with Corrie since her father also left Solok without any information. Hanafi was doomed and bedridden. Hanafi's mother had the intention to marry her brother's daughter off to Hanafi. She presented the matter before Hanafi who had not completely regained his conscious and strength. In a state frenzy and twined to his uncle's kindness, who spent for his education, Hanafi gave his consent to marry Rapihah, a village girl with some formal schooling. However, he could not accept her as his wife even after she bore his child to birth. Gradually, Hanafi's friends and society began to overlook him for his ill treatment towards his wife.

Meanwhile, Hanafi had happened to visit Batavia and met Corrie after a long time. The repressed passion surfaced more intensely in their minds. Hanafi applied for a transfer to Batavia and for European identity. He became a Westerner by law and he wanted to have nothing more to do with the native people. Then he convinced her mother and Rapih's family for a divorce. He succeeded in getting everything he had desired. Even though Corrie was not sure about her relation with a native like Hanafi, she agreed to marry him.

Their marriage beckoned all sorts of trouble from the society they were living in. Both Hanafi and Corrie were excluded by the Dutch community and viewed them with contempt: "...although he had made every effort to be included in their social circles, he forever remained an outsider." (133) Corrie could not surpass the rules of the society and Hanafi failed to support her to adjust with situations, leading to their separation.

Hanafi was totally ruined, as he was unsolicited in the Dutch community and without any one by his side. He began to reminiscence his home village and his mother. His conversation with a Dutch colleague made Hanafi realise how he messed up with his relationships and life. His longing to reunite with Corrie intensified day by day and he tried to meet her but turned out to be futile. His experiences as the Malay native and with the acquired identity of the Dutch had taught him his place in a society which was neither modern nor traditional and neither Eastern nor Western.

Hanafi for the first in his life time thought of Rapih with compassion and his mother and son with sadness and his village with nostalgia. However, his mind lingered around the thoughts of Corrie. In a spur of moment, he set out to meet Corrie in Semarang where she had been working in an orphanage only to find her hospitalised in a serious condition affected by cholera. She bade farewell to Hanafi within a few hours after they had met forgiving all his faults and confessing her love for him. Hanafi returned to his village to meet his mother and his son and his first wife for the last time planning for a long journey.

Hanafi was received by his mother but not by Rapih's family. He met his son without revealing him his identity as his father. Failed to overcome the burden of his identity as a half-baked Western and the loss of Corrie, Hanafi attempted suicide by consuming poison. Having struggled for a few hours Hanafi's soul departed reciting the God and his prophet for the first time in his life time except for childhood.

In a broader canvas, the novel evidently describes Indonesia's sense of indecisiveness. Colonised by the Dutch for centuries, Indonesia could not decide which cultural directions it was supposed to take to build a national identity. While the European ways of life, may pave ways for the future of the independent nation in the international sphere, the beauty and originality of the local culture buries deep within the nation's soul. Choosing one over the other seems to be impossible for the nation just like how Hanafi has been torn between tradition and modernity.

Hanafi's predicament was sprouted out of the ideology he had formed from the Western education and from the mixed race society in which he was part of. He was uprooted from his tradition and couldn't be part of Western society even though he got Western education and followed their style of living. In Marxist usage, ideology is what causes to misrepresent the world to ourselves. Ideology makes us experience our life in a certain way and makes us believe that the way of seeing the world and ourselves is natural. In doing so, ideology distorts reality in one way or another and falsely presents what is artificial and contradictory as natural and harmonious. Succumbing to ideology means living in an illusory world and in Marxism, it has been described as false consciousness.

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Exploring the Trauma in Life Narrative: A Study on *Blasphemy: A Memoir*

Nada Rajan

A narrative is a spoken or written description of a connected story. We identify with our identity through the narratives in our culture. In a personal narrative, the element of fiction is abandoned and a true account of one's experiences is discussed. Thus, it becomes a document of one's life, memories and experiences. The rise of these narratives was not with the sole aim to let these voices be heard but there was often a testimonial nature to these writings where one could feel and experience the kind of emotions and there by trace back the humanitarian purpose which can be defined as the actual purpose of literature.

Life narrative as a genre exerted its impact in the 1980s. It focuses on the life experiences of the individual that spans his whole life. Listed one of the prominent genres of literature, it is also closely associated with human rights literature. Diaries, journals, testimonies, memoirs, letters, e-mail, vlogs, blogs, all belong to this genre. The genre offers an insight into the personal thinking and development of an individual as well. The ability to present firsthand experiences and to dissect the relationship between individuals in the society is another major aspect of life narrative. It also acts as a record of the events and serves to document it. Literature dealing with the issues of Holocaust, genocide, testimony, confession, gender, apartheid, all thrives due to this genre.

Intellectual history incorporates with social history in Life narrative. This genre may include fictional elements as well. The popularity of social media has created a great impact on the current trend of writing out one's life. It is not merely the aesthetic or the social sense of life that is continuously explored through the writings in social media, but it leads to an exposure of the social anxiety which overpower the minds of the current generation. Life narrative also gives a space and voice to those silenced communities and groups who were suppressed and classified as the Others. The marginal ones as they were known – people who were oppressed on the basis of their gender, colour, race, ethnicity. The oft thought limits up to which these people were expected to reveal their self was shattered and a new beginning and a new platform for their voice was being constructed effectively through the growth of this particular genre. It never limited itself to the representation of pain and trauma; but also served as a place where one can revive and learn to survive the trauma and the pain one went through.

A memoir stands for any nonfiction narrative based on the author's personal memories. Defined as a sub category of biography or autobiography, it analyses a particular life span or a period in one's life. It also demonstrates all the characteristic features of life writing as it is a sub-genre. Most often written in the first-person narrative, a memoir does not offer us an account of the entire life span of a person. The structure of a memoir is comparatively an unbound one when compared to that of an autobiography which presents the complete life span of an individual. Memoir becomes all the more interesting since it offers a personal perspective of the individual about a distinct experience in their life.

Prison narratives are not simply an account of what happens inside a prison system. They are often the unheard plea of the victims towards the harsh realities and experiences inside the closed system which we have formulated with a view of a disciplined and balanced society. It is through the narratives of such victims that we get a clear picture of how imbalanced our society and culture has turned out to be. Rather than the reformation of the inmate, most prisons focus on the eternal victimization of the inmate. Once a person has become part of the system, there is no way out of it.

The prisoners are never given a chance to be treated as human beings inside the system. The human rights and the religious freedom one is entitled to is never provided for them. Prison is intended to curb the basic rights of freedom and there is in a sense no justification of aggravating the suffering through physical and psychological means of torture. When the states gained the status of social organizations, it became inevitable to establish prisons as a means of guaranteeing social security. The prison system, initially introduced as a correctional facility to perform as a tool for establishing discipline through the form of punishment has undergone a drastic change over time. It has altered its disposition from being a disciplinary process to an embodiment of torture. The methods might have become more sophisticated, without exhibiting a trace of physical torture, but the psycho-traumatic impact is far too deep and intense.

Rather than tackling the 'crime' the purpose of modern prisons has turned out to be centres of detention. The process of being watched has led to a state of psychological manipulation and repressive behaviour, which often tend to offend any sort of reformation in the inmates. Though many Human Rights Associations from different parts of the world indulge themselves in discussing and thereby sharing concerns relating to prison management, and the crime and torture inflicted upon the inmates, no special policies or strategies have been implemented to ensure an effective criminal justice system.

The book *Blasphemy: A Memoir*, written by a French Journalist Anne Isabelle Tollet for an illiterate Pakistani Christian Woman reveals the plight of a poor woman, who is accused in the name of blasphemy and subjected to cruel injustice. The whole book is narrated through the first-person narrative. The narrative, in a raw nature reveals the plight of a Christian woman, Asia Noorin Bibi a 46-year-old woman and the protagonist of the narrative in a Muslim oriented land. To a Christian woman it is a very difficult task to led a normal life in Pakistan. Asia Noorin Bibi, a poor and illiterate woman, who was born and brought up in Ittanwalli, a small rural village in the Sheikhpura district of Punjab, Pakistan. She belongs to a small peasant family. Unlike the other families in Ittanwalli, her family considered girl child as a boon and gave a prominent place in their life. She got married at the age of twenty to a brick worker Ashiq Masilah and had five children. She worked hard for the well-being of her family. The incident that changed her life took place on 14 June, 2009 , a Sunday when she had gone to work in a near by field and drank water from the well. The action provoked the people there for they could not accept the fact that a non-Muslim had used the water from the well. They accused her of blasphemy and she was sent to jail.

To Asia, that Sunday was a dooms day when she went for fruit picking in the field which belonged to the Nadeems. Some women in the field greeted her with a smile. A woman gave her a yellow bowl, quite larger than what the others had. The lady asked her to fill her bowl in order to get her payment. It was a physically exhausting day in the scorching sun. The payment for a worker was 250 rupees per day. To a family whose survival depended upon daily wage, 250 rupees meant a lot and she needed those 250 rupees. As she was exhausted working, she walked over to the nearby well, and drank water not paying attention to the muttering sound among the workers. Suddenly Musarat shouted, ‘‘don’t drink the water, its haram! This Christian has dirtied the water in the well by drinking from our cup and dripping it back several times. Now the water is unclean and we can’t drink it! Because of her! (20). An argument started out with the crowd and by the time she went for picking the fruits a mob attacked her and compelled her to convert to Islam. When she refused to do so, the crowd acted violently. The police arrived and took her away in their van to the Sheikhpura prison. Her family was threatened and out of fear for their life her family was forced to leave the village for their own safety. A year later there was a trial, and Asia was found guilty and she was also condemned to death by hanging and a fine of 300,000 rupees was levied upon her.

Asia had to go through a miserable prison life. She was locked into a tiny cell with a roof that leaked all the time and a bucket drain hole toilet. It was cleaned once a week even after it overflowed and the place filled with the foul smell of her own excreta. In prison she was frequently visited by a bullying foul-mouthed guard Khalil, a man of cruelty and he was not ready to drop a single opportunity to harass Asia. He tortured her physically and mentally. No one was allowed to visit her except her husband and her lawyer and during the time of visit she was locked up in chain. Through the narrative of Asia, we get the picture of a prison filled with injustice and inequality. There were also other women in the prison besides Asia, who were accused of blasphemy and were subjected to brutality.

Through Asia, we learn that victims of rape were charged with adultery, and were punished because they failed to present the witness of their own rape before the law. According to the law of Pakistan, a raped victim should present at least four witnesses before the law. In solitary confinement Asia was not allowed to leave her cell and no one was allowed to communicate with her. She was watched over by a surveillance camera, in the name of her protection. In prison she is treated as an animal because, according to them she committed the supreme crime of Blasphemy. This book of life writing exposes the harsh realities that faced by the inmates of prison. It is the reflection of their unheard plea and sufferings. Life writing present harsh realities and experiences inside the closed system which we have formulated with a view of disciplined and blamed society. While the reading of such narratives provides an insight into our mind, through the light of these insights we can get a clear picture of an imbalanced and brutal society.

A narrative story can be defined as a report of connected events real or fantasy, written or spoken, still or moving image. In the case of personal narrative, it focuses on the feelings and experiences of a particular individual and also analyze how the experiences are transformed him as molded itself. Life writing is the documentation of one's own life and it also helps the individual to form an identity by integrating their life experiences into an internalized evolving story of the self, which provides the individual with a sense of unity and purpose in life.

Through the memoir we can understand the pathetic condition which Asia undergoes. Asia's physical state and health deteriorates day by day. Her black hair greyed and her once fleshy and elastic skin is wrinkled and black. Not only Asia but also all the women in the prison faces the same situations like Asia. They are witnessed to different types of atrocities and they fear to raise up their voice against this cruelty so, through this book Asia becomes the

representative of all these voiceless women to give them a voice. The narrative of Asia has shed light on Pakistan's blasphemy law which has seen thousands of innocent people sentenced to prison for reasons that have nothing to do with religious discrimination. It is vital to stress that most victims of the law are Muslims. The law against blasphemy is unjust. It is used to settle disputes between neighbours to get rid of a rival simply by making an oral accusation against them.

Asia's prison life forced her to realize certain important factors in life. She realizes the importance of education in her life. Women in villages, spent most of their life doing kitchen chores. They are merely treated as sexual object, which is used to satisfy the sexual desire of a man and an object, for giving birth to the next generation. Two political killings, the death of Governor and the Minister of Minorities who dedicate their life to Asia and the mysterious death of her prison companion, gave a new and unexplainable courage to Asia. The Over thinking of torture and agony in her life compelled her to commit suicide but Asia realizes the value of her life and she staunchly believes that suicide is not a solution for her problem and with courage she decided to face any problem which comes as an obstacle in her life. *Blasphemy: A Memoir* gives us the first-hand story of a poor, illiterate and loving mother of four children. Through her narrative, we can get almost a clear picture of the society which she lives. The society which she lives, gave prior importance to religion rather than humanity. For the sake of religion, they are willing to risk the life of others. Asia gave an example to this statement through the narrative. She is in prison because of the crime of blasphemy and no one is ready to support her for the sake of their religion and according to them converting to Muslim religion is the one solution for her and the other is the death.

Asia Bibi, after years of fighting was acquitted on 29 January 2019, and she was free to leave Pakistan where people demanded the judge who executed this decision needs to be executed. Asia also received death threats and she later joined her family at Canada which offered her shelter. Her family had already moved there and now she is at an unknown place in Canada. Asia's life writing probes into the notions of captivity in many ways. Life writing allows women to create their own discourse with in an oppressive space. This enables the abused ones to create their own space and find their voice and educate themselves against the atrocities they had to face. This work of life acts as a resistance to exploitation and power. On an individual level, writing can be transformative, especially when it is done in a space where creativity, self-expression, and literacy are typically not encouraged. This type of writing

derived itself from the struggle and as a representation of a subclass of people who no longer want to be labelled or marginalized as deviant.

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