St. Claret College

Bengaluru - 560013.

MODERN NARRATIVES IN

LITERATURE CINEMA CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Select Conference Papers of LUMOS English Conference - 2021

Modern Narratives in Literature, Cinema, Culture and Society

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Editors:

Mr. Thomas A. Mattappallil

Mr. Sachin Mundakkal

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Mr. Thomas A. Mattappallil

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Contact No: 080-23454755
Email: scc@claretcollege.edu.in
Website: https://www.claretcollege.edu.in

CONTENTS

Foreword
From the Editors' Desk
Acknowledgement

1. Cinema in Post Pandemic World:
   Technology as a Narrative Device In *C U Soon*
   Ms. Malavika Ajikumar **04**

2. Post Modernism in Iranian Cinema: A Study of Asghar Farhadi's Films
   Ms. Praveena Devarajakumar **12**

3. Echoes of Phallocentrism in Manjula Padmanabhan's *Lights Out*
   Ms. Nandini Anand Vyas **21**

4. A Journey from the Other to the Mother:
   A Close Reading of *What's A Lemon Squeezer Doing In My Vagina?*
   Ms. Sreeshma K. Venu **32**

5. Dream and Mystery: Reading *Rebecca* And *Mexican Gothic*
   Ms. Monica Seles Kujur **40**

6. Modern Narratives in Literature, Cinema, Culture and Society.
   Memes as a Relevant Political Tool in Today's Internet Age
   Ms. Joslin Mariam John and Sona Solgy **49**

7. The Struggle for Civil Rights: Equality and Racism as
   Depicted in Thomas Mullen's *Darktown*
   Ms. Jeslyn Maria Jose **61**

8. Sons and Lovers as Marxist Literature
   Ms. Priyanshu **73**

9. Deconstructing The Stereotypes in Identities:
   A Psycho Geographical Study of *Eat Pray Love*
   Ms. Camilla P. Tossy **80**

10. Storytelling through Art of Mehndi:
    A Study on the Art Practice in South India
    Ms. Humaira Mariyam B. **88**

11. Weeding Out the Real Villain Ego in *Kala:* A Raw Narrative
Ms. Apoorva Rajeev and Ms. Siya Abi **100**

12. A Theological Investigation of Martyrdom as the Design of God and Witness to God's Authority in T.S .Eliot's *Murder in The Cathedral*
Ms. Anu Vellapally **114**

13. Jojo Rabbit as Dark Comedy:
A Comic Perspective on Hitler's Nazi Germany
Ms. Anila Varghese **121**

14. Nonsense Narratives
Ms. Alia Amreen **129**

15. Sentient Computer and the Future of Humanity
Ms. Reshma W. Rodrigues **133**

16. The Absence of Memory: A Deconstructive Study of
Milan Kundera's Novel, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting.*
Ms. Zeenia Bhat **139**

17. A Study of Health, Healthcare and Well-being in *Broken Glass*
by Arthur Miller
Mr. Siddhu T. V. **148**

18. Absurd Narratives: Reflection on Samuel Beckett's
Waiting for Godot (1953)
Ms. Suparna Roy **157**

19. Bio Note of the Authors **168**

Foreword

There are countless number of stories to tell, and there are infinite ways to tell them. The narrative approaches very whether it is descriptive essay, a short story, or a novel, or narrating a story through a visual medium. A big innovation in recent times is visual story telling. The rise of visual storytelling allows us to 'show' than tell stories, and it calls forth greater creativity and connection. While imagery has always had a place in storytelling dating back to the days of cave paintings, the rise of techniques like infographics and digital animations have changed the way we 'show', tell and listen to stories.

And we also find that stories can create quicker impact like never before, both positively and negatively. We have seen that stories can spark social movements. Earlier, most social change movements used to take years, or even decades, to build. Today stories can spark activity across entire human systems in a matter of moments. We have seen the power of story sparking social movements like #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter. Stories told through platforms like Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Facebook have immense power.

Our digital age has also democratized story telling. The power of storytelling is in our hands today. In decades past, the voices that have dominated in the media and public consciousness have been limited to a privileged minority who have access to the resources, skills and platforms to share their stories and perspectives. Today we do not need a printing press, or a publisher, a gigantic camera, advanced technical skills or training and access to a broadcast media platform to share our stories with the masses. All that we need is a good story and a cell phone. We have so much agency and power. As a result of this, we begin to hear and see more diverse voices and narratives across a variety of different platforms than ever before, and that can only be a good thing. The best part is that stories can be owned and shared by those who are *living* them, rather than have someone else say stories *about* them.

The themes of papers in this publication cover a wide range of areas such as cinema, novels, short stories, poetry and absurd narratives etc. My heartiest congratulations to Mr. Thomas A. Mattapallil and Mr. Sachin Mundakkal and the Department of Humanities for meticulously organizing the student conference on the theme, *Modern Narratives in Literature, Cinema, Culture and Society* and for editing the papers for publication. Congratulations to the authors of these papers. I hope the readers will benefit from this effort.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Thennadiyil, CMF
Principal

Editors' Note

The late nineteenth century saw the birth of the Modern Narratives. Powered by scientific innovation, this narrative rejected the values and beliefs of the Victorians. All the old forms of art, from novelistic and poetic structures to characterisation and imagery, were discarded. Newer styles like the "stream of consciousness" and non-linear storylines were embraced. Themes like technology, war, sex and the unconscious mind began to be explored.

Modern narratives in literature and cinema serve the broad functions of being entertaining and achieving educational objective. They communicate moral, cultural and political perspectives. An example of this would be John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, which depicts families undergoing economic hardship, which is in stark contradiction to the idyllic representation of American life in other works of art.

Themes of loss, isolation and exile from society are also prominent, as illustrated by Ernest Hemingway's novels, wherein protagonists adopt nihilistic outlooks of the world because they have become so disenfranchised from the human community. Much of the modern narrative is also driven by the depiction of ideas. George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is one such novel, because it debates the idea of communism.

Modern Narratives in twenty first century describes the lifestyle, culture and society through literature, media and other forms or narration. These narratives provide space and freedom for us to criticise, think and be enlightened about certain literary concepts and constructions about the society. The narratives about literary works and creations lead to the development of diverse narratives and meanings. According to Roland Barthes, 'the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author' and this gives freedom to every reader to interpret and narrate facts, characters, people and society.

Mr. Thomas A. Mattappallil
Mr. Sachin Mundakkal

Acknowledgement

We, the editors, would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to all the contributors, for considering and trusting this platform for publishing their valuable work. We are extremely grateful to them for enriching this version with their ardour and keen interest in this subject. Without their support and the invaluable contributions made, this book would not have been possible.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Rev. Dr. Thomas V. Thennadiyil, Principal, St. Claret College, Rev. Fr. Abraham P.J, Vice-Principal, Mr. Triyogi Nath Pandey, Head of the Department, all faculty of the Department, and staff of the college for their magnificent level of help and guidance throughout the development of this book. The valuable suggestions and criticisms during the planning and development of this book have been unfailingly thoughtful and incisive. We would also like to acknowledge the role of the publisher, St. Claret College Publications, for undertaking this project.

Cinema in Post Pandemic World: Technology as a Narrative Device in *C U Soon*

Ms. Malavika Ajikumar
M. A. in English Literature
St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi

Abstract: The world has materially changed in the past one and a half years. The pandemic ridden life has lost all its grandeur and glory. Cinema and other arts have been hugely affected because of the enormous limitations of seclusion and social distancing that humans have been pushed into post the global pandemic. However, the world also witnessed the rise of innovative and artistically complex and amusing projects that sprung out of the constraints of the new world order. One such movie that expands human cognitive-creative horizons and can be recognised as a beginning of a new era of storytelling is the Malayalam movie *C U Soon* (2020) that released on an OTT platform at the peak of the first wave of Covid-19. The movie is a cinematic exploration of human lives through the eyes of technology; about lives that are surveyed, viewed and greatly dependent on the internet, technical devices and applications. The entire movie was shot and narrated through video calling apps, social media, applications and network interface databases. This paper aims to understand the scope and significance of technology in the movie as a narrative device and its implications on human sensibilities. A significant argument of the paper will be to decipher the role of a relatively new phenomenon of technological gaze in the film keeping in mind the current times of extensive dependence on technology in all domains of human engagement. Further enquiry would be made to understand the redefining of the 'philosophy of film' in the post pandemic era.
Keywords*: Cinema, Pandemic, Narrative* and *Technology*

Introduction

C U Soon movie directed by Mahesh C Narayan was released worldwide on Amazon Prime in September 2020. The movie was a creative experiment taking a cue from the social distancing and worldwide quarantining due to the coronavirus pandemic. It was shot and edited on iPhone, making use of various mobile and computer networking applications to tell the story. It was appreciated globally as one of the few daring and successful explorations of screen-based movies. The story is about two adults Jimmy Kurien and Anu Sebastian living in Dubai, who meet on an online dating platform and start

getting close. In less than a week, Jimmy proposes marriage to Anu on one of their video calling sessions which surprises Anu but almost shocks his mother, Susan who is in the USA. To make sure that he has chosen the right girl, Susan approaches her nephew Kevin who works as a cyber-security tracker. Under professional pressures and lack of interest in the matter, Kevin in a haste tracks Anu through her IP address and wifi router location and claims her legitimate. Further, the lovers' life takes a turn when Jimmy takes Anu to live with him after being hit by her father. While Jimmy tries to start their marriage application process, Anu mysteriously goes missing from his flat leading to shocking revelations about her life. Anu and Jimmy had not known each other too well and even in the limited time, Anu conceals her issues more than revealing them. The mystery about Anu's life that gradually unfolds through the course of the movie is its main narrative.

The revealing of the characters entirely happens through the display of their conversation with each other online. The idea of social media and appearance becomes a poignant aspect to look at. These days the identity, personality, background of people, etc. are represented by their social media accounts. More than truth or reality, appearances and made-up truth surface on the internet. The functionality of selective truth or fashioning oneself is a very dominant practice on these websites. According to a 2017 global online survey by B2B International and Kaspersky Lab, 57% of users admitted lying while creating an account on these sites to find better matches. Nevertheless, the popularity of many online dating apps remains unwavering. In the movie, Anu is able to maintain a certain identity because she met Jimmy through such a platform. Anu carefully evades Jimmy's queries about her life and manages to conceal her identity and her terrible circumstance of forced and illegal sexual labour, rather than revealing herself. It is only in the end, through Kevin's hacking of Anu's original Facebook account that we are told about how she had been illegally brought to Dubai in the pretense of a job as a domestic helper when in actuality she was bought as part of a sex trafficking racket.

Narrative Devices in Movies

The scope of the technology as a narrator is a relatively newer form of cinematic narrative device. However, alternative 'co-creative techniques' had been anticipated as earlier as in 1985 calling for a more complex and widened prospect of narrativity in films. The omnipresence of technology affecting human creativity when engaged with the dialogues on the exclusivity of the predominance of language-based narrative, reinvigorated this need to widen the scope of narration in movies:

The general proposition of a narrow definition of narrativity that there is no narrative without a narrator poses particular problems when applied to narration in feature films. Though almost all feature films abound in storytelling capacities and thus belong to a predominantly narrative medium, their specific mode of plurimedial presentation and their peculiar blending of temporal and spatial elements set them apart from forms of narrative that are principally language-based. The narratological inventory, when applied to cinema, is bound to incorporate and combine a large number of "co-creative" techniques "constructing the story world for specific effects" (Bordwell 1985: 12) and creating an overall meaning only in their totality. Instead of a single, language-based narrator, the concept of a more complex "visual" or "audio-visual narrative instance" was introduced (Deleyto 1996: 219; Kuhn 2009, 2011: 87ff.), mediating the paradigms of overtly cinematographic devices (elements relating to camera, editing, sound) and the mise en scène (arranging and composing the scene in front of the camera). (Kuhn & Schmidt, 2013)

The first five minutes of the movie do not have any audio conversation, it's almost like watching a silent movie. We get to know about the characters through their social media profile and what they type to each other. We as the audience are "shown" about the characters by way of an entry into the desktop of Jimmy who finds a match with Anu and starts talking to her online. The first human conversation that can be heard is after the prolonged display of chatting on screen for five minutes. It's interesting to note that the characters, as well as viewers, can only see or hear that which is under the purview of these technical devices.

The silences in movies have always been an intriguing element of storytelling. The mystery of human silences and its significance in terms of

what it is conveying through non-verbal mediums often elevates the quality of cinema. This movie also has its share of silences, but the difference here lies in the presence of a non-human mediator of the silences. Before we get an opportunity to see the characters dwelling on pauses of reflection or pain, the technological narrator takes a break. One such break happens in the initial part of the movie when Kevin, the IT expert cousin of Jimmy, shuts down his computer because his online activity was being monitored by his boss cum girlfriend. For almost a minute we see nothing but the apple logo and aesthetically pleasing electric animations that move smoothly, signifying,

a) A passage of time and b) the break that the narrator has taken.

It reinforces the authority of the present narrator which aims to reflect at this point that we can only see that which the technology can see. The moments of life that the characters live on the dependence of technology are only shown to us. This establishes the argument of the technological narrator in this movie which sheds light on the characters, their vulnerabilities, and their relationships with other characters (again mediated through technology). From eating to sleeping to traveling to work, all the major activities of human life throughout the day happens with an intricate association with technological devices in the movie. It does not seem to be a fictional representation for a majority of viewers as our present life is replicated on the screen to a great extent. The underlying notion is of the authority and control of technology as a narrator of human life, capable of monitoring as well as altering the lives of its dependents. It can be alternatively viewed as an alarming path for humans becoming Slaves of the Machine (Rawlin, 1998).

Implications of Technology on Human lives

Conversations on data privacy are very integral to the modern world, especially in the Indian context where the issues of privacy have been legally controversial. The trope of Big Brother or totalitarian supervision is a much-abhorred idea while being in regular practice in a concealed form. A recent news article on how the live streaming of several domestic use webcams is available on a dark website stirred social media unrest which again kindled the necessary question of ‘are we being watched now’? The whole movie was made possible because of the capability of technology to watch us. The storyteller here is not Kevin or Jimmy or Anu. In the world of this cinema,

humans no longer hold the supreme authority to be independent storytellers or viewers. Everything is mediated through the lens of technology.

The dependency on the Internet is very huge in the present age. While our worlds turned topsy turvy in very little time, nothing stopped for too long. The popular phrase "the show must go on" was literally achievable because of the ever-evolving technology that is adapting to the needs of the changing world. However, one is bound to ignore a very dangerous element here: the threat to the independence of the human thought process.

Studies on the effect of the Internet on cognition have pointed out the increased "possibility of the Internet ultimately negating or replacing the need for certain human memory systems" (Khadem et al, 1997). The thinking and decision-making skills are also a part of this which largely gets affected by what the online algorithm shows us. The character Kevin almost entirely lives in the virtual world. His social and professional interactions happen in the cyber world. His professional world conveniently melts with the personal world. Kevin's sense of understanding or judging people is largely dependent on web databases, i.e., social media accounts, IP addresses, data footprints, etc. The moral plot of the movie happens in the background of the technological perspective of Kevin. His belief system faces a reckoning attack when he stumbles upon the reality of life which starkly contrasts from his investigated virtual reality. It is through Kevin that the movie presents the hard truth: Virtual is not the reality. It can only be a "consensual hallucination" as William Gibson called it (Chalmers, 2017).

Anu's real life is the rupture that stands against Kevin's idea of the world. His virtual world collapses when she goes missing with no electronic trace. He hacks into her actual Facebook account and finds out the truth about her terribly exploitative life. There is a moment in the film when Kevin does absolutely nothing but stare at a blank desktop screen. That scene is a representation of the limitations of human as well as technological abilities. It is also a failure of human understanding that is stuck in the myopia of technology. This in a way is also the "social message" that the movie is trying to put across, that is, the presence of reality behind appearance; a reference to post-truth at the juncture of intervention between humans and technology.

The Technological Gaze

Gaze is an important element of intriguing study that cinema theories have time and again explored. This movie presents us with an opportunity to a novel realm of it; the technological gaze. The characters and how they behave, their actions, all of it is portrayed primarily mediated by technology. In that sense, the first gaze is of technology. It is only after that the human gaze comes in order. The ever-present technological gaze reminds us about the Orwellian surveillance where we are constantly under the premise of observational or critical scrutiny. Largely, it goes unnoticed but the movie tries to subtly remind us of the fact. Kevin's ability to gather any information about anyone through digital means is thus the reality of our world which has situated itself irrevocably within the codes and hyperlinks of the web.

The technological gaze replacing the omnipresent male gaze of the movie is interesting to study in relation to the human gaze. As referred to earlier, it is the technological devices that lay the first eye on human beings. One can think of it as playing the role of an intermediary between humans. However, these are not just restricted to being facilitators, these are also enablers in the sense that they make it possible for humans to view other humans. It is through a technological gaze that the human gaze is established and comes into play.

Jimmy and Anu see each other physically only when she is forced to move into his house. Until then, they were seeing each other through their electronic devices. Each of their perceptions about the other was formed, informed, and managed through the presence of the technological gaze. Anu is introduced into Kevin's life in a similar way. He sees and mistakes her identity through an account that matches her IP address and legitimizes her identity in his perception as well as Jimmy and his family's lives through the same.

In contrast to this, the human gaze without being dependent on the technological gaze leads to a conflicting path of discovery of reality. The first time Anu and Jimmy see each other through their bare eyes is when Anu is bruised and wounded by a man whom she allegedly calls her father. This leads to an enraged Jimmy taking Anu home. This incident leads to a splutter of legal as well as emotional problems in their lives.

Another incident of human interaction is of Jimmy and Anu's caretaker Sebastian. Without knowing the truth of him being the oppressor of Anu's, Jimmy approaches the man to reconcile issues between Anu and him. Anu is then forced to leave Jimmy's house and his life following the threat from Sebastian. The problem is not the gradual reclaiming of authority by the human gaze or human reality. The problems arose out of the contrast between virtual appearance and reality. Finally, after many tormenting incidents, Jimmy and Anu unite, forgetting the beginning based on falsehood. Ultimately, it is the reality of the characters that bind them firmly by the end of the movie conveyed through Kevin's technical abilities with a promise to 'C U Soon' once things are well settled.

Conclusion

The ubiquitous technological advancements in human lives have their own share of pros and cons. Its effects on cinema have rather been celebrated because of its versatility in elevating the impact of motion pictures. However, what is yet to be studied is how cinema, which has been evolving for more than 130 years now, would cope up with the new world order. The pandemic has shut down productions of films as well as theatre releases. There have been very few films like *C U Soon* which were shot entirely during the pandemic. The current releases across languages in OTT platforms are mostly cinemas shot during pre-pandemic times. However, the scope of cinema and arts has not ceased during this new age. Rather, its need has been revitalised with much more fervour. Cinema in the post-pandemic world has a dual implication of entertaining as well as presenting strong content on screen. The shift from theatre to OTT platforms has transformed the authority over viewership on the audience as they have more control over what they want to see. With the advent of OTT platforms, filmmakers have garnered a more liberating space for effective political and moral expression. It is now that cinema has rightly become a language as Alexander Astruc called it (Hansen 5), with a moralistic implication to address relevant contemporary issues while constantly adapting to the changing world. How and where this change in cinema will lead us to would have to be patiently waited for. *C U Soon* with its technological narrator and spotlighted human relations can be understood as the first chapter in this promising anthology of the new-age cinema.

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Post Modernism in Iranian Cinema: A Study of Asghar Farhadi's Films

Ms. Praveena Devarajan
M.A. in English
Sree Sankara College, Kalady

Abstract: Iranian cinematic universe consists of some of the world's best quality films from both artistic and aesthetic perspectives. After the revolution of 1979, Iran's films underwent remarkable transformation, mirroring the changes occurring in the culture and society of the country. Post-revolutionary Iranian cinema reflects ground-breaking changes both in themes, treatment as well as execution. By that time filmmakers had managed to save their art from the ideologies of the state. Directors like Abbas Kiarostami and Mohsen Makhmalbaf marked the beginning of the subversion of age-old notions and taboos prevailing in Iranian cinema. By then, cinema had become more or less a social critique. By the early 2000s, postmodernism had permeated into Iranian movies as an aesthetic ethos. Stimulation and fragility of reality, decentralisation of the subject, and pluralism which are considered as the conceptual framework of postmodern discourse became a distinguishing mark of Iranian cinema. This paper tries to analyse, characterise and study post-modernism in Iranian cinema, specifically the films of Asghar Farhadi, the two times Academy Award winner, who is considered as one of Iran's greatest directors. Farhadi offers an equally acute and perceptive gaze into the realities of contemporary domestic life in Iran, both from the margins of the working class and the relative comforts of the bourgeoisie. His cinema focuses on the human condition and delineates complicated and challenging familial/individual conflicts. Farhadi's notable works include, *About Elly* (2009), *A Separation* (2011), *The Past* (2013), and *The Salesman* (2016), could be analysed on postmodern grounds. All these films are deeply rooted in Iranian society and explore the complexities of everyday life in rather an exceptional style. The conflicts as well as the repercussions in the lives of the characters are so intense that they mirror the realities of contemporary modern society.

Key words - *Iranian cinema, Asghar Farhadi, Post modernism*

The Middle East undoubtedly is a region that consists of strict censorship rules. Iranian cinema from its very beginning was misused as a propaganda tool by the government. Cinematograph was essentially in the hands of the

royal family, and as a result of this, everyday life of the common man, working-class conflicts, and dilemmas of individuals never appeared as the subjects in any films. By the second half of the twentieth century, many Iranian filmmakers protested against the current ethos in cinema and brought about a new social, political, and aesthetic evolution in their films, paving way for the *Iranian New Wave*. But unfortunately, some of these films never succeeded in Iran as a result of censorship restrictions. The Islamic Revolution of the 1970s and the following Iran – Iraq war was a fundamental influence on the cinema of Iran. Films of the time can be distinguished into two groups. One was monetised and promoted by the government to represent the ideological and religious cinema and the other group was trying to address and portray the social realities in the country. The latter flourished over the late modern and early postmodern era of Iranian cinema.

The early 2000s characterises an evolution in artistic and aesthetic aspects of cinema. Directors like Majid Majidi, Bahram Beizai, Abbas Kiarostami, and Mohsen Makhmal baf marked the beginning of the changes that subverted the age-old notions lingering in the cinema of Iran. From HajirDarioush's *Serpent Skin* to Asghar Farhadi's *The Salesman*, Iranian cinema's conceptual framework necessarily underwent tremendous changes. They had a unique cinematic language that stands for the quintessence of everyday and the personal life of an individual and that too portrayed by blurring all the distinctions between a feature film and documentary, history and reality. Hamid Dabashi in his *Close-Up: Iranian Cinema, Past, Present, and Future* describes modern Iranian cinema and the phenomenon of national cinema as "a form of cultural modernity." These films sometimes seem to draw more from documentaries and poetry than conventional narrative sources.

Filmography of Asghar Farhadi

Post-revolutionary Iranian cinema heralded a new era of emotional simplicity and compositional immediacy in cinematography. Asghar Farhadi has won critical acclaim for his international films which centre on the conditions of human life as well as depict conflicting and intimate stories of domestic family issues and struggles. His well-praised films include *About Elly* that came out in 2009, *A Separation* in 2011, *The Past* in 2013, *and The Salesman* in 2016, and *Everybody knows* in the year 2018. He had won two Academy awards in the category of Best Foreign Film for his *A Separation* and *The Salesman* and is one of the few directors in the whole world to have won the category twice, thus marking himself as one of the finest filmmakers not only in Iran but also worldwide. *The Salesman* won *Cannes Film Festival Award*

for best screenplay among many other awards and accolades. His plays analyse challenging and contradicting ethical problems caused as a result of the class, gender, and religious divisions in modern Iranian society. But Farhadi's films rarely portrayed political issues directly as filmmakers like Jafar Panahi. He essentially avoided being a part of serious conflicts with the government of Iran. Nevertheless, he once went through a brief ban in 2010 as a result of a speech in which he made claims in favour of Jafar Panahi and Mohsen Makhmalbaf, two major filmmakers and critics of the Iranian government. Farhadi's films can be analysed by following the insights from Jean François Lyotard's take on postmodernism. This paper explores postmodernism in Iranian cinema with reference to Asghar Farhadi's *About Elly*, *The Past*, *A Separation,* and *The Salesman,* a body of work focussing on internal conflicts and contrasting cultural phenomena in urban family life and are marked by emotionally complex and intricate narrative structure.

Postmodern Cinema

Gonarkar and Dhage in their paper on *Postmodernism and Film* states that "Postmodernism as a stylistic grid has enriched film theory and its analysis by calling attention to a stylistic shift towards a media conscious cinema" (520). Some see postmodernism as a continuation of modernism, whereas some others like Lyotard states that both modernism and postmodernism exist by shattering the tradition. A modern writer's text and work are not in terms with the already established norms and rules and therefore they cannot be judged or analysed based on existing ideas and perspectives. The writer and the artist, according to Lyotard, are at work in the absence of rules to formulate new rules. Postmodernism in cinema is both defiance as well as a disagreement to go with the theories and notions of modernist films. It calls for a rebellion against the norms and ideas of modern theories and replaces the pre-established views with a new one. Postmodernism thus gives way to a fresh piece of work from all sections of arts as a deliberation from its existing essence and also works on eradication any differences as a whole. In cinema, postmodernism is an expression of arts and draws attention to the plot allowing the spectators to see different conclusions.

About Elly

Iranian cinematic masters like Kiarostami and Panahi became world-renowned for exploring political dissent through a radical bend of fiction and non-fiction storytelling and it was under their leadership the film movement knows as the *Iranian New Wave* became inextricable from real-life rebellions

of resistance. Farhadi at the same time extended and deviated from this tradition by telling stories that demand the audience to choose their sense of morality from among different perspectives rather than asking them to participate in resistance as witnesses. *About Elly* (2009) is one of Farhadi's brilliantly executed films. The characters, enthusiastic young men and women who were close friends since college find themselves in a compelling interpersonal drama that manages to be specifically Iranian and broadly universal. The film begins with eight adults and their children going for a weekend vacation at the beach. *Sepideh* (Golshifteh Farahani), her husband *Amir* (Mani Haghighi), and their young daughter; *Shohreh* (Merila Zarei) and her husband *Peyman* (Payman Maadi) and their two children including their son *Aarash*and then Nazy (Rana Azadivar) and her husband *Manoochehr* (Ahmad Mehranfar). *Sepideh* who planned the trip brings along her daughter's kindergarten teacher *Elly* (Taraneh Alidoosti) to introduce her to *Ahmad* (Shahab Hosseini) a young friend visiting from Germany who is also recently divorced.

They stay in a lonely beachfront villa. Elly is timid but lately feels interested in Ahmad. Ahmad seems so invested in Elly and is trying hard to make her comfortable with the group. She calls her ailing mother and lies to her, saying that she is with her colleagues and will be back in Tehran the very next day as planned. However, Sepideh doesn't want Elly to leave that soon and hides her luggage. Shohreh asks Elly to watch the children as Sepideh and Nazy leave for town. Later Nazy's son Aarash is found drowning in the sea and Elly is found nowhere. Arash is resuscitated, but the group is confused and anxious whether Elly has drowned or just left for Tehran. A complaint is filed and the group searches for Elly in the sea. But things were not as simple as they thought. They soon realise that Sepideh has been lying the whole time. She already knew that Elly was engaged to a man named *Alireza* (Saber Aber). Elly was not ready to marry Alireza and tells Sepideh about this, Sepidehis then persuaded that she should come on the trip with them to meet their divorced friend Ahmad. At first, Elly rejected the invitation as an engaged woman. But Sepideh kept pressurising her and she eventually accepts. After the unfortunate events, the group contacts Elly's family and Alireza arrives and attacks Ahmad when he came to know what happened. He then asks Sepideh, whether Elly has told her that she was engaged. Sepideh stubbornly argues to protect Elly's honour and wanted to tell him the truth but, others including her husband plead her not to tell the man that she persuaded his fiancé to come on a trip and tried to set her up with another man. Reluctantly she lies and tells him that Elly never told her that she was

engaged and accepted her invitation without any reluctance. In the climax, Alireza is shown as identifying Elly's body in a mortuary, sobbing.

Farhadi at the opening scenes throws us into the midst of these enthusiastic individuals, and thus foreground Elly's situation. It is only when we watch them unpack, we sort out who everyone is. Just before she disappears Elly is shown flying a kite with the kids. This scene is a manifestation of Farhadi's meticulous cinematic virtuosity. Rather than cutting back and forth from the kite to Elly in a conventional manner, he shows Elly aimlessly running back and forth, rushing and thus going in and out of the frame, indicating her trapped and desperate state of mind. The film also draws a parallel with Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni's L'Avventura(The Adventurer-1960). This notion of intertextuality is an important postmodern ethos. Both films focus on the mysterious disappearance and ambiguous facts of an enigmatic young woman. But Antonioni's film belongs to modernism whereas *About Elly* belongs to the paradigm of postmodernism. The notion of an author producing work from his perceptive vision mastered the idea of modern film. On the other hand, features like self-referential form, intertextuality, parody, and the recourse to various past forms, genres and style are the most commonly identified characteristics of postmodern cinema. Most of these features are found in *About Elly.* The blurring of the boundaries between high and low art styles, techniques, and texts is one of the significant characteristics that distinguish postmodern cinema from modernist and traditional narrative cinema.

A Separation

Farhadi's *A Separation* released in 2011 lingers around the same postmodern concerns, but its drama unravels with unmatchable naturalism that comes out of boundless frustration. Fascism in the Iranian ruling sect gives a major reflection of the conflict between personal interests and legal barriers, but the movie revolves around compelling family relationships and their interpersonal and entirely apolitical drama. The timid and unfriendly Nader, played by Payman Maadi refuses to leave Iran with his wife Simin (Leila Hatami), who is determined to find a better place where she can raise their adolescent daughter Termeh (Sarina Farhadi). Nader's ailing father suffers from Alzheimer's and he doesn't want to leave the dying man alone. All characters in *A Separation* have an excuse for their behaviour. Simin finally gives up the idea of convincing Nader and decides to get a divorce, but the court disagrees with it and refuses to grant her request. Then she leaves Nader and moves to her parent's house. Meanwhile, Nader hires a maid named

Razieh (Sareh Bayat) to take care of his sick father, and this leads to a series of unfortunate events. Nader accuses Razieh of stealing money from the house and neglecting his father's care and throws her out, then faces her husband Hojjat's (Shahab Hosseini) anger, when they return accusing that his wife was pregnant and Nader attacked her and she lost her child when he pushed her out of the door. The issue becomes worse and is taken as a case to the court. It turns out that if Nader already knew about Razieh's pregnancy, he is undoubtedly guilty, but it could also be Razieh or her husband playing a trick and manipulating others so that they could get some money for their poverty-stricken family. But the reality is that neither of them has given a fluid version of the events. Both Nader and Razieh have withheld information about the events in front of the judge as well as their partners. Thus, there is no apparent form of justice that could solve the problem. By the end of the film, we realise that Farhadi's real focus is the flawed state of any institutions of law to address the unstable and unsettling nature of human problems, yet another postmodern concern.

The Past

The Past (2013) is a complex drama that depicts a whole-hearted love for the lost past. The film shows us how man tries to justify his past with all its despair, disappointment, failure, and helplessness that was the result of false choices. *Marie* played by Berenice Bejo asks her ex-husband *Ahmad* played by Ali Mosaffa to come back to Paris from Tehran, for their long-delayed divorce. In the turn of events, Ahmad was forced to stay with Marie and her living in partner *Samir* (Tahir Rahim) in her small chaotic house, putting him right in the middle of her current difficulties. Marie tries to involve Ahmad in domestic issues and asks him to discover about her daughter *Lucie's* (Pauline Burlet) isolation, who is not happy with her mother's intended marriage. Throughout the film, Marie's decision to get married for the third time is questioned. The process of the film is that no characters make a decision based on reason, but it is all transitory feelings that guide them. The story and particular incidents have multiple narrations. To some extent, there is no truth in the film. All different narrations of a specific event could be true. The spectator can choose any of the narrations as the director has not intended to discover the truth. Every fact gets converted through the process of different narrations but none have superiority over the other as all of them are expressions of truth. Farhadi stresses how we are all restricted by our perspectives in our lives. The characters are juxtaposed with various cultures, though no culture is superior to the other. Marie is a French woman, who

married a Persian man and is about to get divorced, and intends to marry an Arab now. There is no disdain for culture in the film.

The Salesman

The Salesman (2016) is Farhadi's Academy Award-winning film that is a postmodern version of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. It shows the unfiltered reality of a fast-paced society, where both modernity and tradition meet in chaos. *Emad Etesami* (Shahab Hosseini) and *Rana Etesami* (Taraneh Alidoosti) is a married couple. They also are the part-time actors who play Miller's characters *Willy* and Lindain Death of the Salesman. The Etesamis had to move out of their damaged building under strange circumstances to a new apartment in Tehran. *Babak* (Babak Karimi) their friend and co-actor has found the place. He spoke with the former tenant of the apartment whose identity was hidden until the end of the film. She was supposed to return the keys as soon as possible but never shows up. Emad and Rana begin their lives at the new apartment and one night when Emad was away Rana was attacked by a stranger who intruded into their house. The family is disturbed and Rana is highly traumatised. Emad is highly disturbed and wants to find the intruder and have his revenge. One day he cunningly tracks him down and the attacker was an old man, who was a client of the former tenant who is then revealed to be a prostitute. Seeing Rana in the bathroom, he tries to molest her. Emad imprisons the culprit at their old place and calls his family threatening him that he will reveal everything to his old wife and daughter. But Rana persuades him not to disappoint the family with the news of the adulterous guilty old man and Emad reluctantly agrees. But he hit the man causing him a stroke. His death is not explicitly shown in the film, and thus the film stays open-ended. The last scene shows Emad and Rana wearing the weary face and make-up of Willy and Linda from the play and keeps staring into the mirror as if ruminating over the shadow of their inner conflicts.

The play within the play and the intertextuality of the film are primarily post-modern characteristics. It also exhibits a postmodern sense of exhaustion. The characters are desperate just like Willy Loman was. Another postmodern aspect of the film is in the visual elements. The lighting of the film draws serious attention as it is in contrast with Emad and Rana's life as well as the stage performance of Miller's play. While showing Etesami's real-life the lighting is natural at most parts, whereas during the play, It is dreary, dark, artificial, and gloomy. The shade of darkness increases as the movie proceeds which is symbolic of the grey dullness that has fallen on Emad and Rana's life.

Conclusion

Asghar Farhadi remains in the world of Iranian cinema an exceptional talent in contrast with the established notions of Iranian cinema of the post-Revolutionary times and effortlessly stands out of the critical categories that produced. The characters in his films reflect complex emotional intricacies and the narrative structures are novel with his unsurmountable skill and craft. Postmodernism is our condition today. The question of the hour is how we identify, confront and deal with this situation. The question can be asked in various areas including science, art, and knowledge. Farhadi's films have profound relations with the features of postmodernism. The three main elements of postmodernism namely man's inability to confront and recognize truth, emphasis on meta-narratives in understanding meanings, and rejection of totality by acknowledgment of *others* are all displayed in the premise of his works. The first characteristic of postmodernism means that man is unable to identify the truth. However, in this situation, their decision is not based on freedom and rationality but mainly on emotions, suppressed obsessions, and unconscious deprivations of life. The second characteristics are the focus on language because language replaces reason and gives meaning to everything. However, language in different contexts has different meanings. The third characteristic feature is the belief that the West is not the only superior culture, but marginalised and indigenous cultures are also important. Postmodernism deals with cultural diversity. Farhadi's films handle all these features with profundity and ease. In the relationships that he portrays in his cinema, people have the same role in different ways. A person can be both the oppressor and the oppressed. This is the condition that rules the relations in his cinema. This condition of Imperative Capitalism consolidates the family unit to grant the members privileges, but also at the same time collapses the unit. Thus, the fret and fevers of this life become never-ending perennial chaos. Farhadi captivated all these concerns in his cinema and thus embarked on a new path and heralded a new trend in the Iranian cinematic oeuvre.

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Echoes of Phallocentrism in Manjula Padmanabhan's *Lights Out*

Ms. Nandini Anand Vyas
M. A. in English
St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Ahmadabad, Gujarat

Abstract: Manjula Padmanabhan's one-act play *Lights Out* talks of repeated occurrence of rape and passive reactions of the neighbourhood. The theory I have applied here is Phallocentrism; it is a psychological theory derived from the role of "Phallus" in Sigmund Freud's Stages of Psychosexual development. It postulated the impact of the phallus on the human mind as the core element in organizing the structure of the society. At the core of my research is how the phallocentric characters escape their moral responsibilities through male-hegemonic manipulations and misinter-pretations; contemplated through the idea of 'docile femininity', phallic inferiority, castration anxiety, mania and hysteria. Along with this, I have analyzed Padmanabhan's theatrical art, audio visual and light and shadow effect. The circular dialogic structure of the play, moving from nothingness to nothingness, is evaluated adjacent to the symbolism of the 'window' as an orifice to the world inside out and the motif of the incessant 'screams' as an invisible, loud, frightening and nameless force that shapes the drama through the reactions of the characters. This paper unveils the middle class Indian patriarchal morality which does not have the strength to force the action to its climax or to resolve the questions that ring up again and again in the reader's mind - "Are these people alive, or not? Is there nothing in their hands?" "We who were living are now dying with a little patience" like T. S. Eliot's Prufrock. Thus, this paper sheds light on the phallocentric, voyeurist, sexist and exhibitionist mind set which is powerless to resolve the conundrum, reflecting on Padmanabhan's *Lights Out* as a bitter paradox on the postmodern, urban and educated, hypocrite phallocentric men as well as women.

Keywords: *Phallocentrism, Voyeurism, Exhibitionism, Genophobia, Hysteria and Victim blaming.*

Introduction

Manjula Padmanabhan as a writer, playwright, artist, and cartoonist, is awarded the prestigious Alexander S. Onassis Award for Theatre in 1997. Born and brought up in Europe and Southeast Asia, she returned to India as a teenager in the 1960s and started writing dramas on the postmodern socialistic themes during the 1980s. Her first one-act play *Lights Out* was published in 1984 and was first performed by the Sol Theatre Company at Prithvi Theatre, Bombay. *Lights Out* is based on a true story of repeated occurrence of rapes, silently witnessed by the neighbourhood for many days, an incident that took place in Santa Cruz, Mumbai in 1982. Padmanabhan focuses upon the inaction, silence, and passive reception of the neighbourhood and their socio-cultural mind set. *Lights Out* unfolds the darker side of the male chauvinistic society, the social apathy, and indifference towards women's devaluation and oppression through physical abuse and moral breakdown. Dr. Praggnaparamita Biswas says "Padmanabhan's dramaturgy always puts a question mark before her readers about the public sensitization of women-related adversities held frequently in our society" (Biswas 622).

In the 1890s Sigmund Freud introduced the psychosexual stages of development, in accordance with the theory of psychoanalysis. Freud suggested that in the pre-oedipal state, the 'phallic' stage, the center of psychosexual focus is shifted on the phallus. The mother's absence of phallus is assumed as castration by the male child while the female child develops castration anxiety as a physical defect, leading to the protective "Oedipus complex" in the former and defensive "Electra complex" in the latter. Ernest Jones initiated a debate on the core function of 'the phallic stage', arguing that "men analysts have been led to adopt an unduly phallocentric view" (Ruthven.54), coining the term "phallocentric" in 1927; introducing it as a psychological theory that the Phallus or the male sexual organ is the fundamental component in the organizing structure of the society. Later, it entered literary criticism, as literary critics like Jacques Lacan argued on the existence of phallus, as not a hypothetical object or a pathological organ, but rather "the signifier intended to designate as a whole the effects of the signified... this signifying function of the phallus" (Lacan 285).

In the international journal of Women's Studies, Stephanie E. Libbon writes how the earlier seeds of the literary phallocentric discourse have set their roots in the modern western sciences. While discussing a succinct antecedent

background of the human body, beginning from the ancient Greek 'single-sex model' to the modern 'binary-sex model', she explores Sandra Farganis' 'the phallocentric construction of sexuality' and the nineteenth-century idea of the pathological sex, which on one hand rejected the Galenic model and on the other hand provided medical evidences to prove women's inferiority to the male sex by demeaning them as beings merely capable of feeling emotions, incapable of producing any thoughts or productive labour. Here Stephanie quotes a 19th-century German surgeon Philip Franz Von Walther:

The masculine is something, in and of itself, purely positive in all its attributes…thus the original. The feminine is something purely negative, existing only in contrast to and through the masculine…It is not just a difference of genitalia, instead, the feminine is in every respect the inverted masculine, meant to serve under his authority (Libbon.84).

Thus, it can be seen how the phallocentric discourse as a narrative of the masculine superiority over the feminine sex, is deeply engraved on the human mind by the ancient literary forefathers of our cultures like Aristotle who wrote that "as regards the sexes, the male is by superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject"(Smith 467), in his critical treatise Politics and similarly Manu through his revered text Manusmriti encourages 'dowry', 'sati pratha' and 'wife beating', by demeaning woman's status to a mere mirror reflecting the man's superiority.

Phallocentric Narrative in the play *Lights Out*

The screams in the play can be analyzed as a significant theatrical device with a specific motif. Though invisible, loud, frightening, and nameless, screams take the shape of the drama through the reactions of the characters. To escape the horrors of painful screams, Leela's act of drawing curtains and shutting the windows, instead of filing a police complaint, seems like an act of killing time which is followed by her husband Bhaskar. Her attempt to overshadow the screams with the music shows her internal chaos and hollowness. And after a prolonged debate on action versus inaction between the couple, Leela reveals her real Self.

Leela: (Struggling in his half-embrace.) But their sounds come inside, inside my nice clean house, and I can't push them out! (Stops struggling.) If only they didn't make such a racket, I wouldn't mind so much! (Pause during

which Bhaskar rocks her gently.) Why do they have to do it here? Why can't they go somewhere else? (Lights Out 114).

Leela, who seems so traumatized and concerned with the screams at the onset of the play, satirically turns out to be a 'genophobic' woman, selfishly perturbed about her own momentary physical comforts.

In *Lights Out* Manjula Padmanabhan shades the real-life gender violence and societal responses through three striking scenes. Scene-I opens with Leela's anxiety about the unsettling screams in contrast to her maid Frieda's silent working, makes the reader anxious. In Postmodern Indian cities like Mumbai, the educated and economically sound middle class co-exists with the underlying and deprived labour class. Frieda, the maid is the exact opposite of the stereotypical gossipmonger. She has a robotic existence on the stage throughout the play; she enters and exists whenever called in by others. Nobody pays attention to what she feels and ironically she too remains indifferent and mute to the screams as well as to the Phallocentric debates. The voicelessness of Frieda signifies the underlying phallocentric discourse deeply imprinted on the female psyche, up to a point that she accepts her own subjugation and objectification as a 'Woman'. The powerlessness of Frieda's character embodies the plight of an urban marginalized woman whose silence allows the audience to wonder about her mute consent.

The phallocentric narrative depends on the belief that women are designed to function under masculine control; as males manipulate females to surrender themselves to their authority by convincing them of their physical and psychological inferiority. This can be seen in the succeeding scenes when Bhaskar and Mohan manipulate Leela as male chauvinists. Paradoxically, Leela's feeble mind is easily swayed away as she is convinced of a local exorcism, religious rituals, or prostitution as well.

Leela is frequently called 'hysterical' by Bhaskar and Mohan; resonating with the age-old saga of female mental weakness. The etymological roots of the word 'hysteria' are traced back to the Greek word 'hystera' connoting 'womb' or 'uterus'; reflecting the phallocentric notion of an emotional disorder or mental breakdown born out of a pathological female body and its dysfunction. And by exploiting Leela's gullible mindset, Bhaskar and Mohan convince her of her mental instability as they irrationally disregard her emotional concerns and nervous breakdowns to be mere bouts of hysteria.

Thus, the dogmatic masculine authority of the male characters can be seen as an undercurrent to Leela's hysterical behaviour and Frieda's stone-cold silence, throughout the play.

Voyeurism and Victim-Blaming as a part of the Phallocentric Discourse

The concept of Voyeurism is defined as a desire to observe other people engaged in sexual activity secretly and to gain gratification by watching someone in pain; this is prominently seen in Bhaskar and Mohan. Bhaskar stands for 'practical' middle-class man who avoids the idea of filling the police complaint as 'who has the time for all this'. His passivity to the repetitive crime shows his lack of social responsibility, as he eagerly waits for his companion Mohan to share his curiosity. And Mohan reciprocates this 'male gaze' to penetrate a woman's private space by saying "how often do we get a chance to see a rape, live". Both indulge in the tea-table discussions as an explanation of their innocence along with that of the rapists by 'victim blaming'. Sherry Hamby, a psychology professor and a founding member of APA's journal Psychology of Violence, marks that the 'just world hypothesis', a belief that people deserve what happens to them is the core motive behind the act of victim-blaming. This can be seen when Bhaskar and Mohan accuse the victim to be a whore.

Bhaskar: Whatever rights a woman has, they are lost the moment she becomes a whore. (140)

For Bhaskar and Mohan, only a decent woman can be raped, and if the woman is a whore then this abusive act cannot be termed as rape because whores are sex workers and they cannot be rapped. Thus, their duplicity as voyeurs makes it clear how the hypocritical patriarchal society has a hard time accepting the fact that the victim plays no role in his /her own victimization.

In scene-II with Mohan's entry on stage, a gruesome picture of what is going on in the neighbouring under-construction building is sketched through their sceptical discussions regarding the recurring incidents. In this stream of communication, Mohan expresses his voyeurist desires to see a rape, live. After the screaming starts, both comfortably make a drink for themselves and go to the window to see the 'live' rape scene. And in the process, they share curious glances at each other while talking about the brutal act in an

unguarded language which troubles and disgusts the readers. Mohan comments "After all, what's the harm in simply watching something?" (120).

As if commenting on the performance of the stage actors, the voyeurs talk about the rape scene with a tone of complete indifference and subjectivity. Thus, it can be concluded that for these voyeurist onlookers, this cruel act of rape is nothing but another stage performance to be watched, chewed, and get entertained. This becomes much clearer when Bhaskar says "Well, the assailants tear the clothes off the victim and then, perhaps in the general excitement, remove their own clothes as well" (126). Ironically, the modern urban world is not free from the phallocentric narrative of 'male space' where women are rarely allowed. And the social ethnicity of such a male-centric society is defiled by its unsympathetic ignorance of women's victimization, which can be seen throughout the play. As Mona Domosh marks,
"...behaviour on the streets of Victorian cities is governed by strict social codes for men and women.… For women, the implications often revolve around their sexuality. One of the most common terms for a prostitute, after all, is 'streetwalker'. " (Domosh 93-94).

Bhaskar and Mohan demean the horrid crime to amusement by calling it 'funny', 'local exorcism', 'religious ritual', 'sadomasochistic pleasures' and consensual 'prostitution'; by these verbal digressions, they outline their phallocentric male space where they have the authority to decide the course of the core thoughts. Thus, a serious issue like rape, an act of annihilation of a woman's identity and integrity by the phallus, is perceived as a mere tea-table discussion topic, to be manipulated and twisted according to their fantasies.

Exhibitionism as a Fraction of Phallocentrism

The Exhibitionists and the Voyeurs are like a provider and a consumer. The four rapists are the passive characters; though not seen, they overshadow the core narrative of the play. Every night they rape a new woman brutally on the roof of the under-construction site with lights turned on and force the neighbourhood apartments to watch the abusive act with their lights turned off; they throw stones at their windows if they close the windows or turn on the lights. Thus, unable to stop the evil, these timid men and women take refuge in imaginative digressions and absurd debates.

Bhaskar: The four men, the women, the nakedness, the screaming, the exhibitionism…

Mohan: It – could – still – be – religious (137).

In the beginning, Naina and Surinder's entry on the stage changes the mode of the ongoing conversation to an early realization of the serious situation which ultimately adds up to the digressive phallocentric discourse by the end. Initially, Naina and Surinder are able to identify the actual crisis but their inaction overshadows their aggression. Leela's school friend, Naina is shown as the last hope for Leela to come out of her hysterical situation. At the outset, Naina shows her readiness to call the police as she realizes the gravity of the situation:

Naina: Three men, holding down one woman, with her legs pulled apart, while the fourth thrusts his – organ – into her! What would you call that – a poetry reading? (139).

Naina dares to go to the 'window'; witnessing the brutal and inhumane act of four men raping a helpless woman along with physical violence, she gasps yet she recollects herself and firmly prompts everyone from inaction to action. Naina represents Lacan's idea of a woman thriving to wield the power of the Phallus, when in a raw masculine language, she describes the situation, at that moment she becomes Lacan's 'Phallic Woman'. Initially, she is the only one who recognizes this act of brutality as a gang rape but then she too falls prey to the castration complex, as she surrenders her individual opinion to the masculine manipulations of Bhaskar, Mohan, and Surinder.

Other Symbols and Metaphors

Symbolically, the continuous screams in the background can be seen as an age-old outcry of women to come out from patriarchal dominance, violence, and disidentification of the 'Self'. Unfortunately, these voices are also silenced, in Naina's case by her husband brutally. Her silence symbolizes the void of feminine identity in a male chauvinist world. Surinder, unlike Bhaskar and Mohan, wants to retaliate against the rapists; ironically like the others, he too, wants to maintain their hypocritical social integrity. Surinder is aggressive not because he is against evil but because the rapists have hurt his male ego and masculine pride by entering into his personal space. For

him, whether the rape victim lives or commits suicide is of the least concern and his verbal violence with Naina reflects his disregard of feminine dignity and 'hollow masculinity'.

Naina: Surinder, please! Now stop all this nonsense!

Surinder: (Turns on her suddenly and says with quiet malevolence.) Shut up – or I'll kick your teeth in! (Turning back.) We'll take these – (Naina subsides, embarrassed. Neither she nor the others notice that the sounds outside have ceased.) (146)

Absurdly, Naina, so keen on taking a firm step to stop this inhuman act of rape later, gets herself busy with a discussion on the vulnerability of rape and 'slut shaming'. The same is the case of Surinder; his entry on the stage is dynamic and he is ready to wipe them out with knives or 'acid bulbs', a gun or electrocute them. Satirically, their prolonged diverse discussions lead them to the ultimate escape. These fiery but time-killing discussions opened by Surinder remind us of T.S. Eliot's Prufrock:

There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet…
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea. (Eliot.4)

Theatrical Art Analysis

Theatrical Art and stagecraft of audio-visual means have been an advantage to Padmanabhan who uses the 'Window' as a vehicle of the light and shadow effect, symbolizing knowledge and denial of knowledge. Violet Oaklander marks it cleverly that on stage, windows play the vital role of a visual bridge between the inside and the outside world. The omnipresence of the rapists and the raped woman, though unseen, is constantly felt as vibrant characters on the stage throughout the play through the window.

The dialogic structure of the play can be described as circular; as in the initial inaction lies the ultimate inaction. Thus, Padmanabhan's *Lights Out* is a bitter paradox on the postmodern, urban, and educated hypocrite men as well as women. These prolonged discussions between the characters lead the reader

from a state of heightened hope to the abyss of hopelessness. This circularity of 'inaction' reminds us of the unconventional end of Samuel Beckett's absurdist existential drama *Waiting for Godot*:

Vladimir: Well, shall we go?
Estragon: Yes, let's go.
They do not move. (Beckett. 89)

Conclusion

In this way, Bhaskar, Mohan, and Surinder voice the phallocentric narrative as they are least affected by the rape; living in their own bubble of male chauvinism, their entire efforts are towards overpowering action into inaction through the distractions of absurd discussions with Leela and Naina. Tragically, urbanization, education, and financial privilege have failed to liberate women from phallic inferiority, castration anxiety, mania, and age-old psychological hysteria. Simone de Beauvoir, in *The Second Sex* states, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (Beauvoir.283) is apt to the female characters of *Lights Out*.

Lights Out postulates the insider-outsider polarity and raise a doubt on the urban spectatorship. Leela and Bhaskar seem typical 'middle class escapists' least interested in any sort of action against the unjust; they are the prototypes of urban impotent spectators. The play is composed of pairs of gender binary characters whose reactions are based on their 'andocentric' perceptions towards the assailment. Leela and Naina's perpetual suppression and willing subordination to men in every distinct phase of life have so staunchly acclimatized them socially as well as psychologically that they are unable to take any independent actions. Dr. Dashrath Gatt marks, the prevailing patriarchal system leaves no scope for a free-thinking woman; man is not only her master in social, material spheres, rather he controls the inner recesses of her mind. He decides what she should want, what she should feel and think; this predominating practice of male chauvinism in this play, subverting the very psyche of the feminine world; it reflects the position of women in society. (Gatt.272)

The critic Joan Riviere rightly points out that the women often act upon the phallic demand of docile 'femininity'. And their confirmation of the male chauvinistic and sexist gender model drags them towards Phallic-womanhood where women's age-old willing subjugation to the patriarchal

norms and conditions set the stage for Leela, Frieda, and Naina's acquiescence. The female characters of the play represent Freud's idea of a troubled unconscious mind, wounded and scarred by continuous emotional repressions and external oppressions. This is well reflected in Leela's character through the psychotic symptoms like repetitive gestures, disturbed tone, nervous tics, and signs of hysteria which can be compared to Lacan's idea of "the Symbolic" as a structured language of the unconscious.

The uncanny rationale of Bhaskar, Mohan, and Surinder labelling the rape victim as 'filthy', 'whore' or even 'indecent woman who cannot be raped' unmasks their phallocentric, antagonistic and insolent attitude towards women, and behind their inaction is seen their male egotistical rejection. The end reflects the phallocentric superiority and feminine inferiority; a narrative deeply rooted in the being and becoming of the male and female characters of the play. It makes the women vulnerable in all their four states – Leela as a meek housewife, Naina as an outspoken intellectual, Frieda as a marginalized submissive woman, and the unseen but rigorously felt raped victim as a prey to the phallus.

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A Journey from the Other to the Mother: A Close Reading of *What's a Lemon Squeezer Doing in My Vagina?*

Ms. Sreeshma K. Venu
M.A. in English Literature
University of Calicut

Abstract: The concept of 'the Other' is a multidimensional term which defines one's identity among others. It is a depiction of a person as different from one's own group. *What's a Lemon Squeezer Doing in My Vagina?* is a memoir in which the author traces her battles with infertility by adjusting to the indignities of medical procedures. Rohini S. Rajagopal portrays how she could not meet the expectations of society and thereby confining herself within the walls of otherness. The journey to motherhood is not a bed of roses, especially for her- she invested five long years of struggles and unparalleled determination. The threat of infertility questioned one's identity. It carves out the soul within them as they try hard to fit into the so called 'normalcy' of the society. Being a mother became the one and only goal in her life, all other achievements dismissed as futile. Cramped in a world of expectations and probing questions from the society, she lived with rejuvenating hopes. She adjusted herself to the disproportionate burden that the female has to face in assisted reproductive technology. Apart from these, the work includes modern narrative elements such as 'self othering', use of symbolism, flashbacks, epiphany, identity crisis and alienation. The paper aims to unravel the author's physical and emotional bruises in the context of the Other and her desperation to fit into the pregnancy club. It also aims to explore how the bumpy road to motherhood turned out to be an inevitable phase of her life and thereby breaking the notions of otherness and getting incorporated into the world of normalcy.

Keywords: *Determination, Identity, Infertility, Motherhood, Normalcy, the Other and Self Othering.*

The eminent poet Robert Browning wrote, "Motherhood: All love begins and ends here" (Lowe). Motherhood is considered the phase in which a woman attains perfection. Unfortunately, for some women, the path leading to this phase is covered with arduous huddles. What's a Lemon Squeezer Doing in My Vagina? by Rohini S. Rajagopal is a memoir published in 2021. Subtitled as 'A Memoir of Infertility', the book throws light on the struggles associated with infertility and the onerous road to motherhood. A memoir is a nonfiction

narrative based on a part of the author's personal life. The author, Rohini S. Rajagopal is an amateur writer and the memoir is her debut work. She was born into a middle-class family in the Indian state of Kerala and has a master's degree in English. She was settled in Bangalore when an encounter with infertility stopped her in her tracks and she quit her job to write the memoir. Though various books are written about infertility, Rohini's memoir is the shocking revelation of struggles and emotional roller coaster accompanied with the infertility treatment. The intriguing title raises one's curiosity, giving food for thought about the extent to which infertility treatment can go. The work is very much relevant in today's scenario where a pandemic has led to mushrooming pregnancy. "According to a report, India is expected to witness a big surge in the number of babies born between the months of March to December this year" ("Covid-19"). As this is the situation, addressing the issues related to infertility becomes the need of the hour. Indian culture is rooted in the belief that a woman becomes complete only when she attains the status of a mother. Motherhood is considered divine.

The memoir is centered on the narrator's desperate struggle to be a mother and the concept of Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART). The work also encompasses the modern narrative elements of Othering, alienation, identity crisis, flashbacks, symbolism, and epiphany. Even now, superstitions related to motherhood still exist. Rohini being surrounded by cultural expectations and superstitions is no exemption. Once her mother-in-law spotted a kite in the temple compound which meant that someone in the family was pregnant (Rajagopal 171). Immediately after her marriage, probings about 'good news' sprouted. Once she was ready to become a mother, she could not. Slowly, she slipped into self othering. Her reproductive system was perfectly normal and there was nothing wrong with her husband- yet it became necessary for her to take infertility treatment. She was determined. In her own words, "Pregnancy was an exclusive club and I wanted to break in". Being a mother is the dream of every woman. No matter how well-settled one is, life without a child is meaningless. As she puts it, "When you are denied something, your mind overestimates its value. I rejected all the gifts in life and dwelled on its single deficiency" (Rajagopal 12). Those who are not able to conceive are constructed as other. Rohini cannot possibly become a mother naturally- she required the aid of medical science to become one- that was the trigger of the self othering consciousness in her. She always questioned herself about her inability to become a mother nature and even considered getting pregnant by ART secondary to natural conception. In the prologue, she writes about her

embarrassment- that she conceived using IVF (in vitro fertilization), and lied to her relative who questioned her conception. She said that it happened 'naturally' and confessed- "It was the staunch belief in my own shame. The shame I felt towards myself, my body, and my reproductive system, which required a lengthy, convoluted and 'artificial' intervention to have something as seemingly simple and ubiquitous as a baby" (Rajagopal 10). She's convinced about her 'defectiveness'. Preoccupied with the notion of a normal conception, she was confining herself into self othering.

Self othering is an evident theme of the work. While Othering is considered as a kind of suppression, the sense of self othering is even more difficult to bear. "Much of the discussion about 'the self and the other' in contemporary continental philosophy has centered on the question of 'who comes first' " (Morin). Since Rohini was not able to achieve 'the first' or even a late pregnancy status she felt sick with apprehension. Constant pondering about what's wrong with her body began to consume her slowly. When the narrator reveals the burden of expectations on her, she also mentions that she's losing the grip on her mind. Every month she wept and wailed. "Women with infertility report elevated levels of anxiety and depression, so it is clear that infertility causes stress" (Rooney et al.) No wonder Rohini faced immense stress from the anticipation of a baby. She notes that each month she felt like she miscarried even though she was not pregnant. She was in a state of excitement, anticipation, and heart-breaking despair. “The category of other is as original as consciousness itself" (Beauvoir 26).

Self othering is very much visible throughout the work. She herself set her apart from other women who got pregnant within a few years of their marriage. When her friend cum nurse, Sini became pregnant, she felt a heavyweight in her chest- that 'Sini' was pregnant and 'she' was not (Rajagopal 135). The consciousness that she was the other started to sink in. Self othering was visible when the same thing happened with her brother's wife- Archana. Archana was pregnant and again, she was not. The author says, "To anyone who knew the rules of seniority, it should have been clear that I was supposed to get pregnant first" (Rajagopal 144). She was shattered. Again, Rohini noted the case of Dr. Sushama who was not pregnant when Rohini started coming to the clinic but had gone through pregnancy, childbirth, maternity leave and re-joined hospital, "while I had not budged an inch from my position in the fertility line" (Rajagopal 162).

While observing the modern trends in literature, much of the discussion takes place around the term 'Othering'. Emerging in the post-colonial context to

distinguish between the suppressed and the suppressor, the term began to be used in a universal context, and in literature. "Othering refers to the process whereby an individual or groups of people attribute negative characteristics to other individuals or groups of people that set them apart as representing that which is opposite to them" (Rohleder). Rohini had faced this distinction right from her relatives. Though indirectly, several times she was probed about pregnancy. When questions started to arise about the 'good news' after marriage, she started to get desperate. She is never comfortable when someone questions her personal matters and no matter how many times she hears the same question, each time she feels awkward and dispirited by it. Even her mother-in-law once asked her why she wasn't getting pregnant. The sting of those words began to hurt and gradually her life moved from normal to different from other women. Her mother too hinted at her longing for a grandchild. Naturally, Rohini felt burdened by the expectations (Rajagopal 11). Though infertility is a common issue in today's world, women continue to suffer from this menace. "Infertility affects millions of people of reproductive age worldwide- and has an impact on their families and communities. Estimates suggest that between 48 million couples and 186 million individuals live with infertility globally" ("Infertility"). After continuous treatments and miscarriages, her mother-in-law hinted that it happened because of Rohini's carelessness and negligence even though it didn't have anything to do with her carelessness. Without knowing the actual reasons, people tend to blame women. Here, it is neither Rohini's nor her husband's fault that she's not getting pregnant. But the blame is on the woman. The author hints at a biased accusation.

Apart from this, Othering is visible in other situations. "If I want to define myself, I first have to say, “I am a woman”; all other assertions will arise from this basic truth (Beauvoir 25). The role of a woman is predestined in our society- she's to have babies. And when this does not happen even the least known persons start to question and push her into the black hole of Otherness. One such situation Rohini faced was during the marriage function of her husband's cousin. A relative who doesn't even have a good rapport with her asked all of a sudden, whether Rohini was on treatment. Rohini went blank, uncomfortable with her questioning. She notes that the word 'treatment' from somebody else felt like she had a disease, even though she was normal. She realised there's nothing more significant than getting pregnant:

It dawned on me that I could achieve any level of professional success, social standing, or personal growth, but the defining yardstick that would be used to measure my worth would be whether I had children or not. If I continued to remain childless, I would be described by that caveat, 'But she has no children', inviting the 'oohs' and 'aahs' of sympathy and patronizing compassion. Perhaps inviting an additional comment, 'Enthu indayittu entha? Kuttikallu illa.' What's the use of anything she has? No children. Having no children nullified and overruled everything else, making the one with a child feel instantaneously superior (Rajagopal 185).

Many a time the narrator feels that she's being alienated in a culture where women are expected to become pregnant within a few years of the marriage. Alienation was not just in the case of not getting pregnant. Rohini felt alienated from her body itself. Several times she discovered that she had miscarried. The spot of blood made her pale. Her healthy body has not responded to her needs. It did not respond to the medications as it was expected to. She noted dismissively that for the first time her body proved to be a terrible letdown, ignoring her instructions when it comes to reproduction (Rajagopal 31). She felt that she was alienated both by society as well as by her body. All these took a toll on her, damaging her mental strength. The first step of ART that Rohini had to undergo was an IUI (intrauterine insemination). The procedure started with taking pills and a TVS (transvaginal ultrasound) scan. During an IUI, the doctor uses a speculum (the lemon squeezer in the title) in the vagina to pass the catheter into the uterus to inject the sperm. That was the first experience of insertion in her infertility journey.

Identity is a major element of the work. When it comes to recognizing herself as a woman, she fails. "The conclusion of othering is self-other distantiating and dehumanizes the other, but this does not necessarily have to take the form of an affirmation of self-superiority and other-inferiority" (Brons). She questions her own identity sometimes. There were several instances in which she felt insecure. Her identity lies in being pregnant, being able to conceive just like all normal women. "Identities define who somebody is in terms of a trait, which might be anything from, for instance, a physical feature of the body, a belief, a genealogy or a cultural preference" (During 145). Rohini's craving to be a mother is the result of her thought that being a mother is what makes her complete. In fact, it was not her own thoughts, but she wanted to fit into society's expectations. "For many adult females, accepting children at some fourth dimension in their lives was seen as integral to their female

identity, and their inability to achieve this desired state resulted in a serious threat to their estimation of themselves as a person and as a woman. Woman's capacity to produce, deliver and nurture a child was the very central part of her womanhood" (Sharona).

Rohini too believed so and she decided to take medical aid. Going to a fertility clinic was a difficult situation for Rohini as it meant admitting that they failed at something very natural and fundamental which other people did with ease. Being in an infertility treatment meant setting aside your shame and dignity. Many times, she revealed her half-naked self to the doctors and for scanning. Her identity and dignity faced several hardships from then on. Once she couldn't control herself and was required to urinate in a bedpan. "The social conditioning was so deep and ingrained, and the shame and stigma of treatment so heartfelt" (Rajagopal 194). Having an internal examination was also a blot for her as she found it difficult to admit to her mother in law who questioned about the same. Physical bruises are as significant as emotional ones. Enduring awkwardness and toils, her body faced the insertion of various instruments like speculum. She also went through hysteroscopy- in which a hysteroscope is inserted into the vagina to examine the insides of the womb. When the IUIs proved to be a failure, she underwent IVF and FET (frozen embryo transfer). There were days in which she was required to take fifteen pills a day.

Unflinching determination and desperation made Rohini go to the extent that she had to face four IUIs, two IVFs, a FET, and finally two miscarriages before moving on to a successful pregnancy. The very idea of being a mother was part of a culture. She just wanted to achieve that target- "I don't remember ever asking myself if I wanted to have children. It was taken for granted, like graduating from college" (Rajagopal 9). "In contemporary pronatalist societies, motherhood and childbearing are constructed as inevitable fulfilments of the female identity, resulting in the stigmatisation of women who do not conform to these feminine 'ideals'" (Wells). Despite all the odds, she was the epitome of determination. Her desperation gave her the courage to deal with the physical pain as well as undignified medical procedures. The memoir provides a series of her never-ending expectations and rejuvenated hopes after every failure. She kept choreographing different ways in which she would find out that she was pregnant, googled pregnancy symptoms and matched with her own, suggested IUI to her doctor, took 'am I pregnant' quizzes, committed herself exclusively to the treatments and sacrificed her jobs, etc. There were times in which she was shattered and even

buried her faith in medical sciences but she came back with rekindled hope every time. Finally, the epiphanic moment in which she realised that she was pregnant was the result of all her years of endurance, trauma, desperation, determination, and mental strength. She writes, "I had wholeheartedly bought into the myth of motherhood as the ultimate source of meaning and fulfilment… It was part of my template for an 'ideal' life and I didn't want to deviate from it" (Rajagopal 222).

To conclude, in a world where infertility treatments increase, the author's life provides revitalized hopes for those who undergo treatments. Infertility has become a common issue in this world. Many couples are struggling to become parents. Even though there are many works about infertility, Rohini's memoir is a first-hand experience of someone who has gone through all the hardships of infertility treatments. It opens out the anxieties and indignities of the treatment and gives an insight into the thoughts and struggles of a woman. Also, the memoir gives a ray of hope and support to all those who are undergoing treatment. Motherhood is bliss and the path to it may be convoluted. Battling with seven years of infertility, she has opened up a world of infertility treatments and the emotions a woman goes through. No woman deserves to be labelled as barren or impotent- infertility is not a crime, nor is it a choice. There is a long path from the other to motherhood. And the greatest effort is to hold on without losing hope. Infertility is no more an alien thing. Her message to the women out there is that "there is nothing wrong and there is nothing to be ashamed of" ("Conversation"). The book, which she subtitled 'A Memoir of Infertility', according to her "is a way of linking arms, it is a way for us to come together as a community" ("Conversation"). The book is a wake-up call for all the struggling women and provides an assurance that they are not alone and they are strong enough to overcome all the difficulties. After all, being a mother is a true blessing and infertility treatments help in becoming one.

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Dream and Mystery: Reading *Rebecca* and *Mexican Gothic*

Monica Seles Kujur
M. A. in English Literature
St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Bangalore

Abstract: This paper studies the use of the literary device 'dream world' in the novel Rebecca (1938), written by Daphne du Maurier. Mrs. De Winter from Rebecca is analyzed to understand the use of dreams and their psychological dimensions. The novel Mexican Gothic (2020), written by Silvia Moreno Garcia, is analyzed to establish how even the contemporary gothic genre relies on this literary device. In both the text, the main characters are dreaming and hallucinating. The plot ultimately leads these characters to overcome their big nightmare, fear, mystery, and unconscious desires. The paper uses Freud's theory of dreams to read the tension, unexpected events, insecurities, fear of ghosts carried over by the characters. Here, the author's use of the plot device 'dream world' becomes a window to the troubling psychological self of these characters. The clues and connotations provided by this fantasy, mysterious device decide the course of the novels. This leads the paper to look for the relation of the narrative to the sleep and active consciousness of the characters discussed, as it explains all the subsequent actions of the text. This observation on the positioning of the 'dream world' in the novels also occupies another focus in the paper. It is intriguing to see how the gothic genre repeatedly uses this literary device even in post-millennial literature.

Keywords: -*Dream World, Mystery, Gothic Genre and Unconscious*

Introduction

The paper chose two stories and read Rebecca by Daphne Du Maurier and Mexican Gothic by Silvia Moreno Garcia based on gothic Novels. Many of Daphne's novels have been adapted into a film, including Rebecca. The book was published in 1938 and Mexican Gothic in 2020 and had wholly been marked as creations. Rebecca and Mexican Gothic is mysterious suspense and action of dreams maintained through twists and incidents. Their dreams reveal Mrs. De Winters and Noemi's thoughts. They hear voices in their dreams. The objective is still a mystery in both novels, and the theory of dream in a gothic novel is fascinating. For what reason does the author include dreams?

Moreover, how far can the novels go? Dreaming is an exciting thing that conveys a strong sense of human emotion and mystery. Freud said that dreams represent our unconscious feelings. In a way that dreams are a way of understanding things hidden in our minds. According to Freud, he says that dreams have much meaning in our lives. We see in both novels that the hallucination happens in a mansion. With Mrs. De Winter and Noemi, respectively. The stories are trying to understand or make sense of why this keeps on occurring in their nightmares. It feels that dreams have meaning, and it is helping them to resolve secrets and mystery conflicts. The gothic novel has psychological tension because it builds suspense slowly, and characters battle with their mind. What and who they are present in their unconscious mind and what lies directly is reflected in their dreams. The novel Rebecca the burning Manderley and haunted Hill House in Mexican Gothic is where secrets lie and part of the mystery, suspense scenes occur.

Freud believes that understanding dreams represents that the unconscious has hidden fear, and somehow, they find their way out in their dreams. (What is a Dream? Sleep and dreaming) the issue of dreams in each story leads to an argument because the mystery and the character's imagination are in an unstable emotional state. The opening line of Rebecca is one of the most quoted. The lines are, "Last night, I dreamt I went to Manderley again. It seemed to me I stood by the Iron Gate leading to the drive, and for a while, I could not enter, for the way was barred to me. There was a padlock and a chain upon the gate. I called in my dream to the lodge-keeper and had no answer, and peering closer through rusted spokes of the gate I saw that the lodge was uninhabited." (Maurier 1)

Mrs. De Winter says that she must return and revisit Manderley. The gate in her dream is maybe open for her to welcome her. Mysteries that bring her to wonder how they did and what is going to happen. The haunted house had every corner filled with the illusion of a ghost. There is an indication of a dream Mrs. De Winter wakes up from nightmares, and there is a symbol (Manderley has some secret) pointing out what is happening. Rebecca appears as a ghost in a nightmare. Mrs. De Winter imagines a female voice and experience in her suffering, but it was remarkably like Manderley's. The question about the mystery of Manderley and what she dreams about, a secret from the past. However, she copied every move that made her feel uncomfortable (Mrs. De Winter), but she noticed Rebecca wearing a white

gown and moving to each corner of the Manderley. It took her to the gate to express that someone was walking around in the mansion.

Rebecca is (already dead) before the starting of the novel. Mrs. De Winter sees herself dreaming of Manderley coming back again? However, it was Rebecca who was coming back into the house into Mrs. De Winter's dream. "I do not think the dead people can come back and watch the living or dream of something, but it hides secrets." (Maurier 2011) Rebecca intensely haunted Mrs. De Winter can feel her in the house, and many mysteries revolve around the ghost.

"That night she dreamed that a golden flower sprouted from the wall in her room, only it wasn't… She didn't think it a flower. It had tendrils, yet it wasn't vine, and next to the not-flower rose a hundred other tiny golden forms. It was a woman in a yellow dress antique lace. Where her face ought to have been there was a glow, golden like that, mushroom on the wall". (Garcia 55, 56)

Similarly, in Mexican gothic, Noemi is the main protagonist in the novel. Behind a strange dream of ghosts and about a woman hears an unusual crying sound at night. She appears as a flower first, but after some time, that mushroom covers the wall. It was not the lace of a woman that was a fungus. The golden women and mushrooms developed together and started growing. Both protagonists dream of remarkable things about ghosts. As a state during which the characters show her their deepest emotions of horror and anxiety. Freud believes that understanding dreams represents that the unconscious has hidden fears, and somehow, they find their way out in their dreams. What are they dreaming about, and what is the hidden meaning behind the nightmare that causes them? Why do they dream about ghosts in the novel? There are some mysterious messages from their unconscious which have been contained in their dreams. Mrs. De Winter dreams about Rebecca at Manderley, the ghost's unusual presence at the house. Noemi dreams of seeing others while she is sleeping. Neomi saw a sparkling golden light and talked about tendrils. It was the hand of a ghost that looked like she was glowing like a yellow mushroom on the wall. There are some mysterious messages from their unconscious which have been contained in their dreams. Ghosts come up or troubling them to dream happened.

As a result of the unconscious, their mind contains something related to all of the rejected worlds. By understanding and the ability to allow an image to come up in dreams. The mysterious death of Rebecca significance of things like memories of her. Even Noemi could be that lady coming to her dream if they saw the symbol and image before. Both gothic heroine Mrs. De winter and Noemi saw women in gowns. In Mexican Gothic, ghosts run away from hanging over the castle and the restless dead.

"Noemi imagines in her dream that she walks into the house surrounded by a cloud, a ghost having a golden face, and she interacts face to face, wearing a yellow dress whose face has a dull shine. Bad dreams, Noemi thought, recalling her nightmare. It wasn't hard to have bad dreams in a house like that." (Garcia 66)

A deadly woman constantly tells Noemi to open her eyes. She has no mouth or no eyes, a ghost beast that whispers at night. Both have mysteries and thought to resolve to search them up. Where the dream world ends and reality begins to feel. Noemi is shocked. She is losing her mind. Both the novels reveal the common aspects of gothic and are linked with haunts, fear, mystery, complex characters, imagery of a woman, and breath-taking anxiety. The suspense found in the unconscious mind was not real. The house was dark and moldy. People in the place spend their time in silence. However, there was something behind the house. While sleeping, they were aware of what was happening. Who is a woman coming up in their dream? (Agnes) The longer Noemi stays in the Hill House, the more she begins to have unclear dreams, whether real or unreal nightmares.

When something suddenly flashes to her life with twisting elements. (Rebecca) "Rebecca, always Rebecca. Whenever I walked in Manderley, whenever I sat, even in my thoughts and in my dreams, I met Rebecca. I knew her figure now, the long slim legs, the small narrow feet. Her shoulder, broader than mine, the capable clever hands. Hands that arrange flowers, I knew her face, the clear white skin, the cloud dark hair. I knew the scent she wore. I could guess her laughter and her smile. If I heard it, even among a thousand others, I should recognize her voice. Rebecca, always, Rebecca. I should never be rid of Rebecca" (Maurier 261, 262).

Through this above extract, the ghost was somewhere at the Manderley and her white dress. Mrs. De Winter was shocked not by the action but because

she knew an encounter with Rebecca is a highly complicated illusion, but Mrs. De Winter would not even see her. She was completely blind and suddenly hallucinated the whole scene in bright colour. Rebecca always came into her dreams to meet her. Now she knows how she looks and could imagine her feet, legs, hands, which used to arrange flowers, and can smell the scent all around the Manderley.

This image appears suddenly and can last for minutes, a while, or for some time. Mrs. De Winter still does not fully understand what caused to come and go or develop transformations when others do not. However, Mrs. De Winter was entirely not in her senses. She constructs the world which she recognizes from incomplete information and can imagine. The hallucinations in her were not normal vision and then lost her understanding, and Mrs. De Winter does see visual images, often hear the voices, into her dreams.

Freud proposed that all our dreams, including our nightmares, are collections of images from our daily conscious lives. They also have symbolic meanings. Everything she remembers when she wakes up from a dream is an extended example of our unconscious thoughts and psychological issues resulting from repression. (Freud Dream Theory)

“All of a sudden Catalina opened her eyes very wide and her intensity to it. It was the visage of a woman possessed. “There’re people in the walls,” Catalina said. “There’re people and there’re voices. I see them sometimes, The people in the walls. they’re dead”. (Garcia 85)

First of all, Noemi was confused with Catalina’s (Noemi Cousin) behaviour, and she was also facing the same problems after some time. Certain things happen while they are hallucinating, and their dreams signal that these events are taking place. When they sleep, their brain automatically causes their minds, which appears in the form of the thoughts and feelings they suffer in their dreams. Like there is tension-filled in the darkness of being hunted, beliefs, and experiences. People walking on the wall, unavoidable noise, or dead dreams might affect any dangerous and threatening conditions. In their lives, some mystery was there in the Hill house, and dreams hold some meaningful purpose.

All the events that took place in Mrs. De Winter and Noemi are happening in their lives. The act is an illusion because people cannot walk on the wall, but this all-visual suffering is generally seen in the dream. The different causes in the novel have interconnected to images and dreams. However, hallucinatory experiences have been closely tied to these character's perceptions of what they thought and imagined. Here their brain constructs the world to see, hear, smell, and touch. Each character's nightmares are traumatic, and dreaming is a painful experience that allows psychological dimensions.

In Rebecca, Mrs. de winter always looks for unknown corners of the house and feels hallucinations, and gives them threatening possibilities of darkness. Putting her into their existences, past, present, and future, turned into their nightmares and the mystery. The gothic novel has supernatural elements, as we can see rhododendrons (Rebecca grown flowers) in the book and never-ending mould, mushroom, and fungus (Mexican Gothic) all over.

"In a moment the dark trees had thinned, nameless shrubs had disappeared, and on either side of us was a wall of colour, blood red, rhododendron. They startled me with their crimson faces, massed one upon other in incredible profusion, showing no leaf, no twig, nothing but the slaughterhouse red, luscious and fantastic, unlike any rhododendron plant I had seen before. Standing one beside the other in a neat round bed. And these were monsters, rearing to the sky, massed like a battalion, too beautiful I thought, too powerful, they were not plants at all" (Maurier 72).

The dream world of Mrs. De Winter's thoughts, imagination, and dreams may occur in a place or outside the everyday life externally in her physical world? In a nightmare, she could see a rhododendron in Manderley. However, the sense of her dream was more accurate than this physical reality. In the novel, Rebecca's flower and the protagonist's new home are described as blood red. (Maurier 72) This flower represents violence and blood. The flowers in the garden and everything reminds her of Rebecca's death. Though beautiful and powerful, she says these flowers are ghosts because she can smell these flowers in each corner of the house, which reminds her of Rebecca.

These rhododendrons are grown by Rebecca. The colour also relates to slaughter red and bright red because Rebecca undergoes and continues stress

before she dies. The crimson is mentioned in the novel about Rebecca's face. She could imagine and dream about the changes in how she understands. Rhododendrons had a sweet fragrance. The beautiful tall shrubs and flowers have Rebecca's presence.

"It was a black snake viciously biting its tail. She was the snake biting its tail. She was a dreamer, eternally bound to a nightmare, eyes closed even when her eyes had turned to dust. Agnes was the gloom and the gloom was a part of them, and this sudden damage to Agnes, to the web of Mushrooms". (Garcia 280, 289, 290)

There are different illusions, and of course, mushrooms and snakes remind her about the house's death and secrets. In the novel, Howard sacrifices her wife (Agnes). In this extract, Noemi has been waking up to the reality of a hill house. Yes, it was confirmed what she was facing and was not the illusion of her mind. The dream world is created in the novel whenever she goes to sleep, starts dreaming, or sleepwalking at night. Noemi saw the ghost's clear image, and it felt like real life. However, she was feeling these dreams from her unconscious mind, seeing these reminiscences as actual events. Mushrooms in Mexican Gothic is a fascinating plant used in Mexico, and it has been used as a hallucinating object. Mushrooms have been used for spiritual purposes to depict ceremonial activity involving mushrooms and much more.

Moreover, mushrooms are much more commonly used for recreation and snakes than life and death. Noemi tends to be in this dream-like state. She feels stressed, and all these recollections and nightmares may give tension to her. But, on the other hand, she has profound insights like eating a snake's tail which is never possible because the snake cannot swallow or eat its tail. (Garcia 289, 290)

Further, it gives pieces of a message to them about some mystery. In the psychological term that Noemi is experiencing, something tends to be more imaginative in her emotions and the fear of death, which she struggles with connected to the mystery. On the dead body of Agnes, mushrooms are grown all over her body, and it creates an intense feeling. She is feeling like dying, or she is dead, and hallucination takes place in the novel. Dreams are powerful, and she was not mentally prepared for the bad dream. There was a curse in the hill house around as they could not go out and stay at home.

Someone is dead inside the Manderley. Even the dead people they returned are creepy and horrible somehow, and the other thing they are not but still in the house. Unconscious dreams play a mysterious part in their lives that goes around in Mrs. De Winter and Noemi. When they awake, they revolve not to speak of the nightmare. Much of the suspense found in psychological difficulties focused on Mrs. De Winter and Noemi's internal feelings and thoughts.

Conclusion

These are classic gothic novels that contain the dream and mystery. Both the books were beautiful. Mexican Gothic gives more horror vibes as compared to Rebecca. The film adaptation of the novel Rebecca on Netflix does not follow the book closely. This adaptation makes few changes to the original ending. Maxim X's wife is dead and constantly haunting and disturbing them in Manderley without being there. The novel gives more horror and follows a mystery thriller in the movie that Mrs. Danver advises Mrs. de Winter to wear a red gown just like Rebecca used to wear before she dies. Whenever Mrs. de Winter used to dream, she used to see a woman wearing a red dress and running in Manderley to each corner of the house.

The movie, the Haunting of Hill House, was based on an adaptation of Shirley Jackson's novel. While reading Rebecca and watching on Netflix, there are scenes through which I can say it has dreams and hallucinations. For example, because a man was sleeping and dreaming of a woman, she was a ghost. As he opened his eyes, the spirit was not there, but he felt like she touched him. Even certain things happened in the Haunting of Hill House: a girl was sleeping dreams of a woman, and when opening her eyes, she could see a ghost was hanging on her. Both the movie and novel are incredibly effective in a terrifying atmosphere, the disturbing house, spirit, and bit scary, something vivid dreams, filled with darkness, and they never quite go away. Whenever they sleep every night, they will dream of the world and create whatever they want, with no limitations, imagination.

The research paper focused on two female characters Noemi and Mrs. De Winter. In the 21th-century, therefore, females also play a vital role as mysterious incidents occur and are disturbing. The story started and revolved around the woman. However, like in the old gothic tradition, males were leading characters. For example, Bram Stoker Dracula Jonathan Flynn and

The Monk by Matthew Gregory Lewis Ambrosio are characters and the main protagonist of the old gothic novel. Like last year I was dreaming kind of every day. It was a nightmare, and I created tension in the morning. I Set an alarm but dreamed that I could not get up in the morning on time and missed my classes. However, I know why this was happening to me. It was not a ghost but fear of missing classes which keep occurring every morning. I was nervous, fearful, and angry like Mrs. De Winter and Noemi felt about their dreams.

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Modern Narratives in Literature, Cinema, Culture and Society: Memes as a relevant Political Tool in Today's Internet Age

Ms. Joslin Mariam John and **Ms. Sona Solgy**
B. A. in English and Communication Skills
Stella Maris College (Autonomous), Chennai

Abstract: Literature, Cinema, culture and our society are subjects to constant evolution which resulted in the advancement of postmodernist, contemporary cultural values and interests. The origin of memes is a prominent part of this evolution that has a scope of potentially becoming a distinct genre. Memes are organic digital creations consisting either of text, images or both. This has been wholly identified by the current zenellials or generation Z to be their means of narration and it has the aptitude to become a genre. In contrast to the long narratives that existed in the earlier centuries of literary history, memes form a portable tool which serves its purpose as a modern discourse of enlightenment, story-telling and activism. A site for some of our most funny and amusing observations, memes continue to dominate the internet, surprisingly cathartic in its nature during this internet age. This study aims to look specifically at meme culture used from a political perspective, instances of using memes for campaigning, activism and protests.

Keywords: *Memes, Political Tool, Digital Creations, Modern Discourse and Internet*

Introduction

In this age of cyber culture, when more and more people are getting drawn to the digital space, a form of artistic expression that is rapidly evolving and rising in popularity are memes. Memes described as a unit of cultural information by imitation (encyclopaedia Britannica) usually of a text and an image. The term meme (from the Greek word *mimema*, meaning "imitated") was introduced by evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins in 1976. He used the term to explain the movement of cultural information, conceiving 'memes as bits of cultural DNA that was encoded in society's shared experiences while constantly evolving'. This concept however changed so drastically that it was revisited by Dawkins himself in 2013 as a cultural idea that was deliberately altered by human creativity.

Memes as we understand them today became popular in the mid-1990s when small groups of people began populating message boards on the internet. However as more and more time was spent online, people's lives were becoming increasingly influenced by internet and social media, memes quickly evolved to be the perfect tool for communicating humour and opinion simultaneously. Memes have evolved from simple image edits primarily intended to make people laugh into rhetorical devices capable of disseminating information to millions of people, making it one of the most relevant mediums in today's internet age. It is hence of no surprise that memes have now entered the political landscape, a tool used for campaigning, educating, story-telling, activism and more.

Literature Review

An attempt is made in this section to present a review of some of the existing studies in the area of memes and its political impact.

Memes and Humour

An integral objective of memes is humour. Throughout history, humour has been used as a strategic tool against oppression through different forms of media like cartoons and videos. Instances of humor used in movements like the Serbian Otpor movement and protests in Egypt and Syria highlights its importance as a medium of dissent and mobilization. Political humour is a "crucial part of society's political discourse". Evidence has shown that political humor can significantly increase participation and discussion in politics, especially for the younger generation (Hajizada, 2010).

On Media Consumption and Politics

People's political interests, the criteria by which they evaluate solutions to issues and how they comprehend those issues can all be influenced by media consumption. As a result, it's critical to comprehend the impact of diverse types of media consumption on political results, especially as the media landscape evolves (Huntington, 2017). The ability to effectively transmit information in a visual format, along with the prominence of visual content in cyberspace, suggests that online memes have the potential to bridge amusing interpersonal behaviours on online social networking sites with critical knowledge of political concerns (Sreekumar, 2013). Internet-based political memes fulfil three interwoven functions-political advocacy,

grassroots action and mode of expression. There are two forms of logic that govern modern digital political action. The first is the logic of collective action, linked to high levels of organisational resources and group identity development. The second logic, dubbed "connective action," is focused on the exchange of customised content sharing across media networks. (Shift man, 2013)

Memes are used by political campaigns to communicate with internet users. To create material, paid bloggers, micro bloggers, and commenters are recruited. According to a recent report, the development and distribution of online memes was a key component of Azrbaijan's social media strategy. These memes were utilised in the form of sarcastic writings, pictures, and creative expressions even during World War One. Even back then, poets and artists were recruited to make cartoons and messages that could be distributed via posters and newspapers (Leong, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is a model that can be used as a tool for non-evaluative judgement formation. According to the theory, there are two routes to persuasion, the central route and the peripheral route. One focuses through a cognitive way that critically analyzes the available information to form judgement. The other route engages the peripheral processing, when an individual is persuaded by an argument. Memes as a medium use both cognitive and peripheral way to influence opinions (Petty & Wegener, 1999).

In Measuring Online Social Bubbles, Nikolov et al. (2015) discovered that, when compared to a general search standard, users of Twitter and email are restricting their access to information in terms of the range of their sources; assisting in the [re]confirmation of ideas yetagain. While this may seem insignificant in many cases, internet memes may be genuine kinds of propaganda assisted by algorithms employed by search engines and social media to show people more of what their platform activity suggests they favour. Users may unwittingly impair their perception of objective reality by restricting the pages they visit, the internet memes and news sources from which they get insight, and the lack of diversity of views encountered, leading to the possibly more hazardous practise of political astroturfing (Nieubuurt,2021).

Case Study: The role of political memes in Kerala

Kerala is a state situated in the southern part of India popularly known for its serene landscapes and high literacy rates. The people of Kerala, also called as Malayali's (Malayalam language speakers), are seen to be forward-minded in the field of arts, cinema, literature, culture and society, which is visible in their welcoming approach to innovations within traditional set-ups, be it art forms or culture. On this note, their endearment with regard to humour and sarcasm should be highly commended as it seems to be inter-linked with the olden art forms, *Ottanthullal* and *Chakyar Koothu*. *Ottanthullal* originated during the 18th century whereas the etymology of *Koothu* remains unclear. Nevertheless, satire, humour and social criticism forms the basis of these art forms which describes the inclination of Malayali's towards meme culture. Coming back to the present scenario, satirical outlook has evolved during the course of time within Kerala society and it is used to point out political and cultural injustice along with educating the mob. Political leaders are often criticized and commended over their reckless behaviours and decisions through mockery. Mimicry artists found their niche in small screens through television satires in imitating various political personalities. *Nadakame Ulakam* (AmritaTV), *Thiruva Ethirva* (Manorama TV), *Polimix* (Media One TV), *Dhim Tharikida Thom* (Mathrubhumi TV), and *Vakradrishti* (Mathrubhumi TV) are few of the various satirical television shows made available to Keralites. This shows the overtly socio-political interest among the Malayali community and their light-heartedness towards humour. In contrast to the crippled press freedom in India, Kerala remains to be an exception. Political humour stands strong in this state and the leaders subjected to this mockery take no offence, rather see it as some sort of an honour. This clearly speaks about Kerala's love towards satire.

With the popularity of social media platforms, meme culture led to an adverse change admirable in every way. Meme pages amplified with the continuous pandemic, which catalysed in acquiring more reach within the public, specifically the youth. Social media meme pages like International Chalu Union (ICU), Troll Republic et cetera have marketed themselves to be the alpha-prime in socio-political memes. Apart from its anonymity behind the screen, the trouble-free creation of memes led to the splurge of meme pages. Just like television shows, memes criticized and trolled against hypocritical leaders and their actions. With the help of two scenarios, this study attempts to explain the impact of memes in Kerala as a political device:

1. **Petrol Price Hike**

In the beginning of May 2021, India saw a significant increase in the prices of fuel. The State and the Central Government chose to stay ignorant towards this issue regardless of the lives affected by the unexpected lockdown and COVID-19 pandemic. Even though the issue circulated within news channels, the overall reaction was subsequently low. However, when meme pages started to frame attractive memes using excerpts from movies and correlating it with the political matter, the issue went viral helping it reach large audiences. This led to widespread mobilization of the matter, with many youngsters taking up the issue organizing protests and 'hartals', signing petitions against the price increase and doing other acts to show their dissent.

Fig 1. Source: www.google.com

Translation Fig 1: *Astonished by Petrol Prices!*

2. Resignation of Kerala Women's Commission Chairperson

In the wake of dowry deaths of women in Kerala, a helpline phone-in service was made available under the Women's Commission as announced by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.During a televised phone-in programme, Kerala Women's Commission Chairperson Ms. Josephine made a ruthless remark towards a domestic-violence victim saying," then you suffer". This incident evoked social media ire against the chairperson. Women activists, opposition parties and media expressed their dissent towards Ms. Josephine's defensive arguments.

Fig 2. Source: @trollrepublic.official
Translation Fig. 2: *News headline: Why should we tolerate Ms. Josephine Salim Kumar : Why..?!!*

Trolls and memes spread like wild-fire through social media among the younger and older population. This led to a massive controversy within the state leading to several channel debates and street protests. Due to the growing difference of opinion Ms. Josephine was forced to resign from her position as the Women's Commissioner Chairperson. Her decision was positively welcomed by the public.

Research Design

Scope of the Study

This research studies the use of internet memes as a political tool through examining memes publicized across various social media platforms among media consumers. The study attempts to analyze the scope of memes and its ability to affect political engagements.

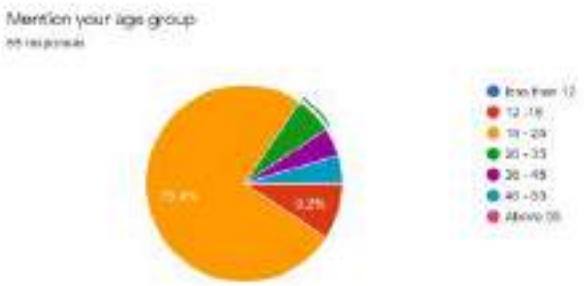
Methodology:

To gain a deeper understanding of the internet memes, this study adopts a quantitative approach using survey method and questionnaire as a tool. To achieve the research objectives, the source of data was obtained from 65 media consumers by the survey questionnaire. The research was an empirical study that used both primary and secondary data. Data collected from the survey was used as the primary data. The secondary data was collected from memes, newspapers, news websites and journals. The collected data were analysed using the percentage method and the respondents were selected using a simple random sampling method.

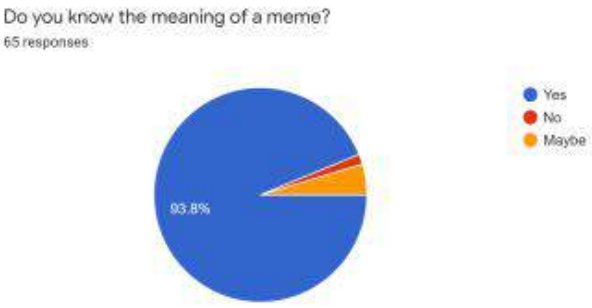
Variables

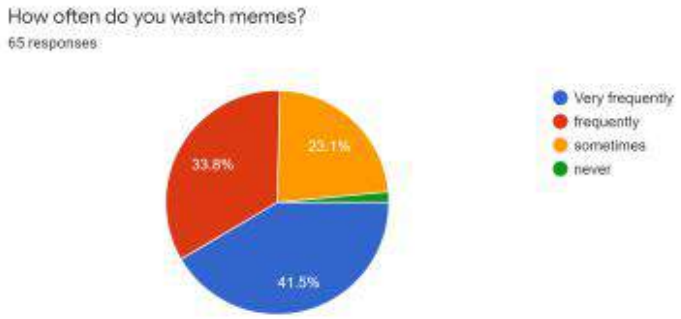
The internet memes are independent variables in the study whereas political engagement is the dependent variable.

Data Analysis

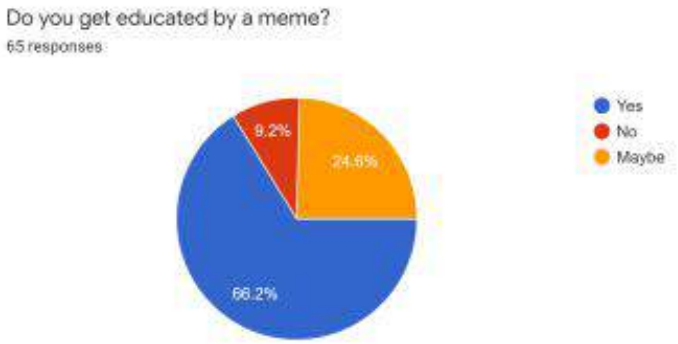


Out of 65 responders of the survey conducted for the study, 75.4 percent of the population was between the age categories of 19 to 25 and 9.2 percent was between the categories of 12 and 18. 6.2 percent of responders were between the ages of 26 and 35 while the age groups of 36-45 and 45-55 constituted 4.6 percent of the responders each.

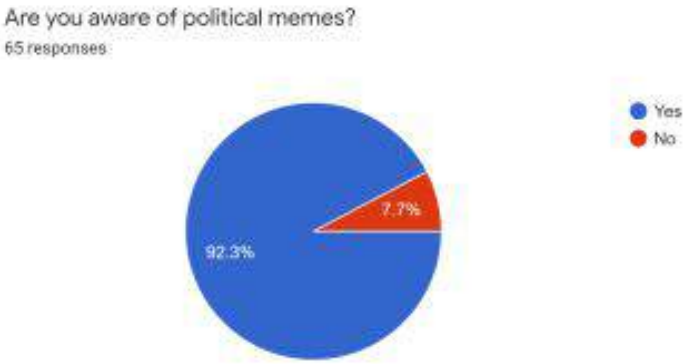


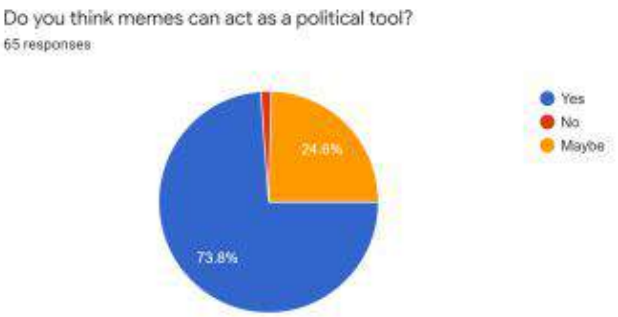


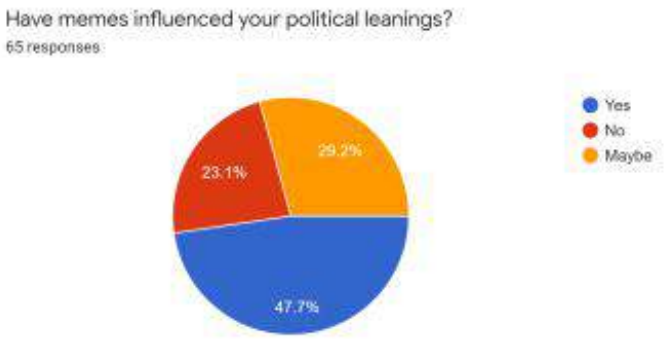
An overwhelming 93.8 percent of the responders knew the meaning of the term meme while a mere 1.5 percent claimed to have not heard of it. Moreover, amongst the people surveyed, 41.5 percent reported that they watched memes very frequently, 33.8 percent frequently, 23.1 percent sometimes and 1.5 percent never.



62.2 percent of the people surveyed claimed to have gotten educated by the medium of memes, while 24.6 percent responded 'maybe' and 9.2 percent 'no'. Moreover, surveyors expressed how the memes being relatable and easy to understand helped in educating a large number of people.







Of the total people surveyed, 92.3 percent of the responders reported having heard of 'political memes'. However, answers to the question "Can memes be used as a political tool" were varied. 73.8 percent of the respondents answered yes while 24.6 percent believed memes could be used as a political tool depending on the situation. Moreover, for around half the responders (47.7 percent), memes had a part in influencing their political leanings. For 29.2 percent memes partially influenced their political opinions while for 23.1 percent of the people surveyed, memes played no role in influencing their political leaning.

Conclusion

Memes are largely consumed by the youth population and it has taken over by storm within a few years. Due to this fact, Internet memes act as an educational tool while being witty and amusing. Most of our respondents in the survey agreed to the fact that memes could be a potential political weapon. Through the research conducted, we came to the conclusion that memes can influence people to form political opinions connecting

audiences. This conclusion is also confirmed with the case study of the role of memes as a political tool in Kerala, India.

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The Struggle for Civil Rights: Equality and Racism as Depicted in Thomas Mullen's *Darktown*

Ms. Jeslyn Maria Jose
M. A. in English
Sree Sankara College, Kerala.

Abstract: Racial discrimination is a prevalent and deeply rooted social issue in the US, related to the nation's past. Racial segregation is the separation or segregation of races in everyday life, either as prescribed by law or by social norms. This paves way for the dominant, politically strong race that hinders the life of the submissive community. Inter-racial discrimination has been responsible for many crimes that take place in a minority community. The situation prevailing in Atlanta, the center of the Civil Rights Movement which aimed at abolishing the racial segregation faced by the Black Community in the USA, was intense. This study will be interdisciplinary, drawing upon the historical incidents of the Black community in Atlanta, relating them with the racial discrimination still rampant there. The analysis is based on the historical fiction *Darktown* written by Thomas Mullen. The theories applied would be Critical Race Theory and Critical Legal Studies. Mullen analyses and narrates the hells and horrors the Black American community of Atlanta had to undergo and the events that led to the Civil Rights Movement, the discrimination shown by the white police officers to the Black community and their police officers. The study extends to the current knowledge on how Atlanta has evolved as the center for the Civil Rights Movement in America. Racism still exists in full fledge in Atlanta even with all laws and legal protections. It did not sprout all of a sudden but has been deep-rooted in society from the past. Racism is gradually getting normalised and accepted in the contemporary world. What is even more dangerous is the fact that this discrimination is slowly spreading out to other communities as well, especially to the Asian American community, with perpetrators belonging to both white and Black American communities which makes the present study all the more relevant.

Keywords: *Racial discrimination, Black community, Atlanta, Critical Race Theory, Civil Rights Movement*

Racism is a social construct that transcends the barriers of time and communities and has been seeping into the contemporary world. The concept of white supremacy resulted in colonisation. By retracing the past, the struggle for independence by the Black community, their rights, and the establishment of a legal constitution that adheres to all, we can understand how racism was intensified.

Race is not a biological reality but a part of the human culture. Race and racism are deeply embedded in history (Sussman 8).Colonisation had grown from racism. Critical Race Theory began during the era of the Civil Rights Movement when the political cause shifted to a humanitarian cause. It studies the different ways in which our daily lives have been shaped by the notion of race (Tyson 368).Critical Race Theory is a product of Critical Legal Studies which emphasised how legality was made in a particular vision for society and focused on the contradictory character of contemporary law. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was initiated by students who united the community to fight for desegregation and the rights of the working class.

Racial Segregation has been employed primarily by the white population to maintain their ascendancy over other groups through legal and social colour bars. It was a way of behaviour brought in by the colonisers to assert dominance over the dominated. It was a way of living, for the colonisers. The practice was strong in South Africa where, right after the election of an all-white government, new rules were made to establish racial segregation. The effect of such a law in 1948 resulted in the complete separation of whites from Blacks in their own country. The two communities could never mingle with each other and the whites had exclusive privileges over public areas where Blacks were completely banned.

This study contributes to the notion of an existing legal framework that has been constitutionalised in favour of a certain group of people by drawing comparisons from Thomas Mullen's novel *Dark town* (2016) and simultaneously outlining it with Critical Race Theory. The struggles of the Black Americans to obtain a framework beneficial to them and the various constraints in these laws have deepened the idea of racism in the country.

For this purpose, the investigation of the struggles of the Atlanta community and knowledge about the pre-civil rights era is required. Thomas Mullen's *Dark town* is a historical, semi-fiction novel that portrays the mentioned injustices of the Black community of Atlanta right after they got their first squad of Black Police officers. The novel will be analysed based on Critical

Race Theory and other theories related to racism. The paper by delving into the struggles of the Black Americans would enable the readers to realise how racism has crept into other communities.

Critical Race Theory has provided an academic structure through which the U.S law can be critically inspected to examine how racism is deep-rooted in it. The theory recognises race as a social construct. It argues that the current public policy framework is built on white privilege. It brings relevance by embracing the experiences of the lives of people of colour. It categorises people who take a neutral stand towards racism as actually adhering to this racial hierarchy (George). Critical Race Theory is the product of Critical Legal Studies which has established that law is subjective and political. Critical Legal Studies also state how the law had been made to favour specific races and cultivate racism. Scholars of this theory have identified that this law was double-ended in the sense that it engenders inequality and protests against racism at the same time.

Critical Race Theory contains the following grounds. Race is a social construction and not biological, with science rejecting the concept in human beings. Racism is embedded within the law and public policy which leads to further inequality. The theory focuses on the daily experiences of people of colour by rejecting all deficit researches that do not include the phenomenology of people of colour (George).

Dark town written by Thomas Mullen explores the racially segregated Atlanta. The novel tells the story of Lucius Boggs and Tommy Smith, two fictional characters who serve as two of Atlanta's first eight African-American police officers. They discover the corpse of Lily Ellsworth, which triggers a chain of events that reveal a wide, thickened plot of corruption and racism at its finest within the community of Atlanta. Atlanta had its first squad of Black American police officers in 1948, appointed by Mayor William B. Hartfield, in return for the Black community's votes. Nonetheless, they had strict rules to be followed; no arms, no vehicles, no sharing of office with the white police officers, no arrest of white individuals, and so on (Mullen 5).

One of the main points of (George) is the recognition of experiences as stated below in an excerpt from the article written by Janel George in the Human Rights Magazine (2021).

Recognition of the relevance of people’s everyday lives to scholarship. This includes embracing the lived experiences of people of colour, including those

preserved through storytelling, and rejecting deficit-informed research that excludes the epistemologies of people of colour.

The approach of white police officers to the Black community and their community were very different. The white communities viewed the officer as a public servant who ensured their safety. In the Black communities, the same officer had to ensure that the inhabitants of the community were under control and did not damage the properties of the White Community which explains why the Black community has a biased opinion of the police officers (Crenshaw et al. 252).

In the novel Lily Ellsworth, a young black American tries to find a job with the minimum education she has. She is employed as a maid and then later as a prostitute. There is no dialogue displaying her dislike for the job, which implies her acceptance that these are the only jobs she could do as a member of her community (Mullen 211).Maids were often taken advantage of by their employers (Mullen 333), as the Rape law did not exist for black women. Moreover, rape of Black women was less likely to be believed and the responsibility was put on the women rather than the assailant (Crenshaw et al. 369). Dunlow is the epitome of racial discrimination. He abuses his power as an officer of the law and as a white citizen to brutally hurt and even murder the Blacks to get his work done. He goes further to make sure that he discriminates against his Black colleagues (Mullen 11). In reality, the white citizens were not accepting of coloured people in positions of power and authority. There was public resistance to this, with the questioning of the competence of the Black individuals. This helped in the legitimisation of the supremacy of whites over Blacks (Crenshaw et al. 252).

The novel *Dark town* portrays characters that are involved with racism. One such character is the white police officer Dunlow, who physically abuses any Negro and tortures them until death. He constantly uses racial slurs to address Black people. He is a representation of white officers who misbehave with the people of the Black community during the 1950s. White police officers could arrest and use brute force if their assailants attacked in self-defence but this very law was taken into an advantage by the officers to show animosity towards the people of color. Furthermore, the existing laws were in favour of the white citizens who had their rights intact and provided no solid ground for Black citizens to lodge complaints. This was depicted in *Darktown;* “Dunlow hit the Negro again. “I said, did you hear what I said, nigger?" The Negro was trying to say something, Rake straw could tell, but Dunlow was holding him too tightly around the throat” (Mullen 9). The novel continues:

The stabbed Negro could not roll over on his own. So Dunlow kicked him in the ribs. Little backed up, outraged. "He can't roll over, Dunlow, he's cuffed!" Dunlow kicked the Negro again. The Negro howled in pain. Boggs stood up. "Call the ambulance." Dunlow ignored him. Rake considered making the call himself. But didn't move (Mullen 57).

Rake straw is another character who is torn between the two-sided realities of society. He is a young officer who wants to do his job efficiently, please his seniors as well as serve the Black community. He soon realises that he has to pick sides to survive but he decides not to, which causes emotional turmoil within him. But as the plot progresses he more or less takes a stance favouring the Whites. In the above example, Rake can be seen wanting to help the injured but could not do so as it would upset his senior partner. He is a representation of white citizens who are accepting of the Black community but were forced to choose the powerful side and hide their support in public:

Rake straw hadn't thrown a punch himself, had in fact barely moved, yet beneath his uniform his skin, too, was slick. Not from exertion but the opposite, the stress of holding himself back, the anxiety of watching this again (Mullen 10).

Rake had been calling him "sir" and he hoped that and the "Mr." showed that he took this man seriously, that he was not like some of the others. Mr. Calvin did not seem to be in the mood to thank him for it, however (Mullen 119).

Uncle Percy is an honourable mention in the book who is the only one that realizes that the rights given to his community by the whites are just a decoration and cannot be useful. He warns and questions his nephew Boggs not to be fooled by the antics of society. When Boggs says that he has immunity, Percy goes on to say that it should bleed from his veins –as a metaphor to show how hard struggles can only give them emancipation. In the society of that era, people wanted to believe that they were given equal rights. In a way, this belief gave them hope for a better future. However, few intellects recognised the reality and warned others. They were the learning students and the scholars who knew that more change had to be brought in. They also became the pioneers of the Civil Rights Movement. “The evil is so garishly on display here, there's no mystery to it. It is sunning itself before us, and it will strike if you dare approach it... You need to bleed those antibodies from your veins, Lucius. Understand me?" (Mullen 216).

The two main characters of the novel are the officers, Smith and Boggs who are two Black American Officers. They constantly find themselves in helpless situations mainly due to the racism they face from their colleagues. They accept their fate knowing that all their ancestors too had suffered racism and there was no law in the land to protect them. The existing laws did not apply to the Black Americans and instead were bent to suit however the authority wanted. They were pressurised by their community who were expectant of them to create change in the society. However, in the end, they become fed up with the judicial system and take matters into their own hands to ensure justice. After Smith's fight with Zo, a civilian he is reminded and pressured by the bar owner to act as a perfect cop. "There is a lot riding on you, son. And I expect you to bear that in mind day and night" (Mullen 157). When Smith confronted Boggs after killing Dunlow in self-defence, Boggs says the law could not protect him even if he was a person of authority, "What I just did was self-defence, but that won't matter. Even though I'm a cop, it won't matter" (Mullen 341).

Women had no laws to provide them with education or protection. They had no health care rights as well. They resorted to prostitution and became maids in rich people's homes where they were sexually assaulted. In the novel, Lilly Ellsworth and Mama Dove are two such characters. Although they were portrayed as weak, the women who were homemakers kept their families together and housed the runaways and criminals. Delia is one such black woman who is strong and is fearless enough to question the police officers.

Racism is one of the existing costs of colonialism. The idea of a superior race has created violence in the community to certain people. The event of colonialism is traced back to the age of exploration when colonisers raided African and Caribbean islands for their labour shortage. These exported slaves were soon forced to learn and adapt to the culture and language of the colonisers. Gradually, the colonised people became the population of that country as it happened in America with their African-American population. The ethnicity of the population served to be their root of discrimination. Racism exists in America in the forms of genocide, slavery, segregation, Native American reservations, Native American boarding schools, immigration and naturalisation laws, and internment camp. Even though it was officially banned in 1964 with the Civil Rights Act, racism continued to develop through the criminal justice system, business, the economy, housing, health care, the media, and politics.

Native Americans who were the original inhabitants of America were not given exclusive rights and were treated as part of the whole society after surrendering their land and property. There was a cultural genocide of the Native Americans in the field of education. They were not allowed to learn of any other culture or follow their own native culture, instead, they had to learn about the white Americans in schools and other institutions.

Asian Americans faced racism since they were immigrants. The Naturalization Act of 1790 made Asians ineligible for citizenship. This act barred families from travelling and meeting with each other as well. Every Asian immigrant had to carry their resident permit with them at all times. If not, the consequences were imprisonment and a year of slavery. Despite this, many lynch mobs killed hundreds of Asians. One such being the Rock Springs massacre of 1885 in Wyoming. In the twenty-first century, Asians are stereotyped as intelligent, hardworking, rich but socially inept. Racism is still faced by generations of Asians who are American citizens.

The Hispanic or Latin community of America has its roots in Mexico. After the Mexican–American War of the mid-1840s, much of the land of Mexico was taken by America. Those who refused were lynched and killed in masses. During the Great Depression, America encouraged them to move back to Mexico free of cost. In reality, many were forcibly deported despite being U.S Citizens.

With the 9/11 attack on terrorism, Islamophobia increased in America. People with Muslim names or traditional clothing were vulnerable. Even those who were of other religions but Middle Eastern were racially discriminated against. Donald Trump in 2017, to ensure 'safety,' revoked many visas of travellers who came from Middle Eastern countries. Adding to this, Indian Americans were mistaken for Middle Eastern Americans and thus became victims of hate crimes. In the 1980s, a gang known as the Dot busters specifically targeted Indian Americans in New Jersey.

The community to face racism at first was the Black community. Race, a social construct has given rise to racism and colonialism. By studying how racism is present in the past and present of the US can help us analyse the racist act of our society. Not all crimes are considered actual crimes in different societies. It is only when we learn about other societies where racism is imminently present, can we identify the racism one faces in everyday life. In doing so, one can fight for what is right and establish equal laws for people.

In 2014, Michael Brown, an 18-year-old African American was shot and killed by Darren Wilson, a 28-year-old white Ferguson police officer, in Ferguson, Missouri. Wilson said that the shooting was the reason for the confrontation that occurred when Brown attacked Wilson to control Wilson's guns. Brown's friend Johnson gave a contradictory report stating that Wilson grabbed Brown by the neck and started a fierce battle. Since there is no actual evidence that Brown surrendered to Wilson, the case is presumed closed by default. The attitude of local and national institutions to this situation has been highly criticised by the public and the media. The main concern is insensitivity to the situation, poor strategy, and militarised response. The public frantically demanded justice for Brown. The formal FBI investigation is said to have been started due to widespread rioting. The U.S Department of Justice announced that Wilson had shot Brown in self-defence. Wilson was cleared of all charges with the witnesses being declared unreliable. After this incident, then-President Barack Obama made body cams compulsory for all police officers. The law had been bent to favour the white police officer on counts of self-defence even with all the incriminating pieces of evidence. The issue of body cams became a reliable piece of evidence for all acts of disobedience but at the same time, it was something that should have been enforced time ago, which could have been avoided and provided proof for another case (Razek). At the time of writing this the most recent case being that of Daunte Wright, a twenty-year-old African American who was shot after he returned to his car when he was pulled over for traffic violations. Officer Kim Potter stated that she mistook her gun for the taser gun she intended to use. In this case, she was convicted but Potter insisted that she had mistaken the gun which was supposed to be on the left side, and shot at Wright. Protesters did not accept this argument as she was a veteran officer (Alfonseca).

Naomi Zack quotes a press release in her book *White Privileges* (2015) on the Tamar Rice case which stated that, "This shooting brings into question the adequacy of the selection, training and preparation of police officers. Police officers should be prepared to confront and address people of all races and cultures and use deadly force as a last resort." Perhaps the concept of white privilege applies here as not all whites are police officers. However, the inadequately trained white officers who misbehave with the Black citizens are just excuses as these Black citizens belong to a class of individuals that can be confronted with violence (Zack 3). The argument of race is still "the most vexed public and private question" (Soudien 893) that is in our society. Bell comments on how "Even those Whites who lack wealth

and power are sustained in their sense of racial superiority by policy decisions that sacrifice Black rights." (Bell 88). The imminent racism has been thus carried forward and strengthened by the rules and laws that still categorise the Black community as a minority. While talking about minority, one must not forget to mention other communities of colour. The Asian Community for instance was brought to the frontier due to the recent violent attacks targeted towards them which allegedly marked them as the carriers of the pandemic.

The *Guardian* reported that the former President Donald Trump used racist language to describe the coronavirus pandemic at a campaign rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, by terming the virus as the 'kung flu'". The public activists were quick to inform everyone how such slang could result in racism and violent attacks. Yet no one complained and the White House went to publicly support Trump's use of language in a mocking manner (*Guardian*). This can show how racial acts of people in power are ignored. According to the FBI Hate Crime Statistics, 2008-2019, the number of hate crimes in the US decreased in the second term of President Obama and increased in the second term of President Trump.

Recently, an older Thai immigrant in California died after being shoved violently to the ground by a white citizen, while in Brooklyn an eighty-nine-year-old Chinese woman was slapped and set on fire by two people. The perpetrators belonged to white and Black communities (Cabral).

This analysis shows how racists are not born but are made, moulded by law and the oppressive culture of the past. The improper and non-accurate intervention of the white Americans and the lack of minority representation and political power in the government is a cause. Margaret Zamudio in her work *Critical Race Theory Matters: Education and Ideology* states that the inferiority of a certain race has confused the individual minds into hurting inter-communities. Moreover, there is a need for better laws that recognise these faults and work to solve them.

Revolution and wars along the freedom movements have shaped the racial identities of the people. Historical expressions such as natives, indigenous, Negros, Blacks, Africans, and Indians have become racial identifiers. Even if Critical Race Theory accepts the exposing and voicing for rights, it in a way blames the people of colour for creating their own racial identities, "With the advent of civil rights and the prospect of greater equality for non-

whites, new policies and practices emerged to maintain the value of whiteness in our society" (Zamudio et al 33).

The legal system was formed to maintain the interests of the white community more than the other communities. Hall and Hwang argue how racism has become mainstream and how youths consider hate crime as a trend (Hall 19). This has been one of the reasons that have resulted in contemporary violent acts towards the communities of colour. While the assailants also belong to the Black community, it shows the psychological influence and confusion racism has caused over the years. Even with all the laws that protect victims, it is often ignored when the assault is committed by a white citizen. There have been cases as mentioned earlier where more brutality is from the police system than from common individuals. Racism cannot be eradicated from society as it is a social stigma deep-rooted in the minds of individuals by the cultural, legal, and constitutional existing framework. Hate crime still exists in all other communities of colour. Ironically, hate crimes against white community are few and rarely heard of. As this evil has now been prominent in the Asian community it is only a matter of time before it shows up in another community of colour.

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Sons and Lovers as Marxist Literature

Mr. Priyanshu
M. A. in English Literature
Hindu College (University of Delhi)

Abstract: Modern narratives and their narrators were fully conscious of their socio-political milieu, so was D.H Lawrence, a true modernist. Scholars since its publication have been approaching this text critically through various lens like that of sociological, but the sociological lens to dig in the novel has only brought half-truth as Lawrence was not only depicting the life of colliers but rather criticizing the capitalistic realm of late 19th and early 20th century England, and modernist consciousness gave him space to contribute in Marxist literary canon. This paper will try to read that how modern narrative like "Sons and Lovers" depicts the problems of capitalist societies as predicted by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their seminal works such as "Das Kapital" and "The Communist Manifesto". This paper will also try to look at the flaws of various critics that showed Walter Morel (Lawrence's father) as hated by his son Paul Morel (Lawrence himself) and Gertrude Morel (Lawrence's Mother) just because his father and her husband was an alcoholic and poor collier, a proletariat. Critics and perhaps Lawrence himself blatantly failed to understand and deconstruct the character of Walter Morel who was exploited by English Capitalists to a verge that he became profound pessimist for the world. This paper will use autobiographical elements of Lawrence's life to show conflicts and clashes of classes, as represented by his proletariat father and bourgeoisie mother, while Lawrence was growing in the mining community of England. This study will also look at how Capitalism and Industrialism emerged in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire to oppress the working class and blacken their green fields with coal and smoke as described in the novel.

Keywords: *Modern Narratives, Marxism, Realism and Industrialism*

Introduction

D.H. Lawrence was undoubtedly a true modernist writer and was conscious of intellectual philosophies during that time. D.H. Lawrence was in exile from England in the early 20th Century and travelled the whole of Europe; a Europe which was coloured by the promises of Karl Marx and Fredrick

Engels, so Lawrence was no exception in finding Marxism as promising as heaven. Marxist ideology was found enchanting by writers not only in Europe but around the world wherever there was community oppression and desire for emancipation from the capitalistic regimes. Literature has always been a medium to impose and discuss such ideological impulses, thus Marxist ideology was inculcated in literature as a theme of modern narrative. Since the publication of Lawrence's best known and highly debated in academia, novel Sons and Lovers has been labelled as Bildungsroman, Oedipal, Feminist, Psychological, Colliery/ Mining, Sociological novel but all of such labels are fallacious as they partially satisfy the very essence of the novel, which in true sense is Marxist inclined novel and submits to all criteria that makes it a part of the Marxist literary canon. Sons and Lovers is a Marxist novel that brings out the problems faced by the working class and their exploitation by the intrigue of owners of the means of capitalistic production.

Dystopia without Marxism

Lawrence felt a sense of disillusionment and nauseate from the age at which he was living. Being born in the non- humanly treated poor working class, Lawrence disliked the idea of Capitalism and its belief that only a few people (bourgeois elite) hold the wealth of the nation. Lawrence was critical of Capitalist ideology throughout his literary works. Through the very starting lines of his novel Lady Chatterley's Lover, it could be felt that the age in which he was living was not perfect in any sense, rather a pure dystopian canvas was there in front of his eyes, which was not only affecting the English society in general but also his artistic image in particular as he mentions, "Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened; we are among the ruins." Marxist ideology was the last refuge for the English society which for centuries was under Capitalist exploitation.

Karl Marx in *Communist Manifesto* said that "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains," but the ability to do so was not easy as in "Sons and Lovers" it was visible that working-class poor coal miners like Walter Morel were chocked in from capitalist build chains and could never emancipate themselves as envisioned by Karl Marx. Lawrence did not try to come up with the idea of revolution like of Maxim Gorky neither did he try to envision utopia and dystopia if communism is implanted like George Orwell, what

Lawrence, the realist, did was to present reality as it is in the 19th and 20th Century England whose centuries-long poetic English greenery was covered by the extreme blackness of smoke and dust, a direct effect of Industrialism. A true Artist is one who is a great observer, and Lawrence had observed his working-class father and superior class mother and in his novel Sons and Lovers showed their union as a clash of classes.

Metamorphosis of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire from Poetic Country Greenfields into Capitalist and Industrialist Hubs

Lawrence's birthplace Eastwood became Bestwood in the novel and except for the name of the place, everything remained the same in the description of the town. Lawrence's description of a small mining town in Nottinghamshire threw light on the harmful effects of Industrial activities and chronically synthesized the evidence of Capitalist roots in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire as if he was a historian with more sympathy like of novelist. Marxist Literature tries to deconstruct the historical chronology and showed how capitalist society is formed, following this tradition, Lawrence traced that how coal mines were discovered in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire by big foreign Capitalist agencies like "Carston, Waite and Co." of the novel in the second half of 19th century and by the end of the 19th century and beginning of 20th century Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire had lost their country essence and was turned into a coal mining town and small residential for coal miners. Lawrence or Paul Morel of the novel had emerged from such oppressed working-class mining families. Lawrence's description of "Hell Row" was very sympathetic from a Marxist viewpoint his words were like pictorial in itself as if they were evoking the images of ugliness, nastiness, and ashes as the direct ill effect of Industrial activity which was not mutilated workers but also nature.

Class Conflict between Superior Class Bourgeois Mother and Working Class Father

Sons and Lovers is an autobiographical novel. D.H. Lawrence in Sons and Lovers brought the very personal home conflict into the novel, which was rare and unique at that time. Lawrence had deliberately indulged the conflict between his superior class bourgeois mother and working-class father to bring out the Marxist theme of the clash of the classes. Lawrence could have created a fictional romantic relationship between people of two classes but

being a realist he restricted himself from presenting a romantic lie. For Lawrence reality ought not to be wrongly wrought and reality is a reality which is inevitable to be faced and being a modernist he tried to bring evil out of the long-hidden façade of society.

Walter Morel (Arthur Lawrence) and Gertrude Morel (Lydia Lawrence) were married in romantic paroxysm but the decision was fatal, as the two representatives of two classes could not sustain with conflicting and oxymoronic tempers, as mentioned in the novel that "the pity was, she was too much his opposite." Walter Morel had no house of his own and was living on rent with unpaid bills of furniture, this shattered the bourgeois sensibility of Gertrude Morel, she could not bear the fact that she alienated herself from the luxuries which she would have gotten, had she married to a man equal in class. It was clearly visible in the novel that after a point of time Mr. Morel and Mrs. Morel shared no sexual/ coital relation, the class hatred prevented each other to continue the love. Mrs. Morel found lovers in her Sons but the life of Mr. Morel turned towards the barren spring.

Capitalistic Bourgeois Vanity of Gertrude Morel

Though many critics believed Mrs. Morel was a non-believer of class difference that is why she married Mr. Morel, this whole is a false argument because she could not endure living in close contact with working-class "Bottoms" women and her superior class vanity forced Morels to live at an end house on high rent. Mrs. Morel was an obvious classist lady; she could not bear the idea of Marx and Engels's egalitarianism. She wanted her children to rise above their working-class status and indulge in the bourgeois society of elites. Her son William wanted to satisfy her mother's desire and left for London in search of a better society than theirs. Paul was no exception and wanted to launch his life in London as a painter. It is quite interesting to note that Mrs. Morel hypnotizes her Sons through bourgeois ideology.

Working Class Dialect

Walter Morel's use of dialect is another feature of Marxist writing, as working class people are amiable people with no capitalist desire, they have their own dialect, and their dialect was the only thing which was not taken away from them because Working Class dialect symbolized illiteracy and poverty, thus this Working Class disadvantage was an opportunity for

Capitalists to take advantage for their regime. Mrs. Morel had her upper class dialect and her words could be seen as more refined and elite in verbal diction. Mrs. Morel's children including Paul Morel were speaking in elite upper class dialect which they inherited from their Mother. Even Lawrence could have used his Father's Working Class dialect in Writing Sons and Lovers, to make this novel look more attractive and enchanting but, but he deliberately attempted to write this novel in Capitalistic favoured elitist London English, as he was conscious of the literary market and academia, who might have not considered his novel in the canon of great literature had he wrote this novel in Working Class dialect.

Mr. Morel's Exploitation by Lawrence, Critics, and Capitalism

The novel *Sons and Lovers* presents the character of Walter Morel very roughly with no romance in his character description. Mr. Morel was presented as an angry, alcoholic, abusive, and sympathy gainer. This is a fault of Lawrence that he sympathized with Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire's exploitation but not his own father. His mother's bourgeois manipulation did not let Lawrence have a small emotion towards his miner working-class father. Lawrence and perhaps many critics failed miserably as they were more inclined toward bringing to light the faults of Mr. Morel's character as an uneducated uncivilized father; a part of so-called civilized capitalist society and the merit of the superior class Mrs. Morel in her goal to uplift her Sons on her own. After a point of time, Mr. Morel was no longer accepted as father or husband despite the fact that he was the sole earner till late. Lawrence should have criticized the Capitalists who were not paying his father well despite such hard labour; labour in which miners had to live the whole day in the black background of coal mines, in utmost darkness, it is a recorded fact that they could not get chance to see sunlight for days.

Capitalism and Industrialism had affected miners not much physically as much as it effectively broke miners mentally. Miners became extremely pessimistic towards the world. Long hours of work did prevent miners to spend time with family and whatever the time left they chose to relax by consuming a good amount of alcohol. Miners were outsiders to their family members and foreign towards the humanity affair. Working-class have been physically very powerful, they were not allowed to study and economical pressure additionally demanded work from them, so most of the working-class population in Lawrence's time was uneducated. Mr. Morel took pride

in his hard labour and working-class ancestry; on the other hand, upper-class Mrs. Morel was educated and her intellectuality could not be stimulated by her uneducated husband. Lawrence chose the hand of his mother and was heavily prejudiced against his father. Later in life, he regretted the early age prejudice against the class in which he was born and said that if he could write Sons and Lovers again he would write differently about his father.

It is interesting to note that it was never mentioned in the novel that what if Walter Morel had taken a single holiday from work. The reason was clearly the loss of wages because capitalist society does not pay without work. It is mentioned in the novel that "he was very steady at work, his wages fell off. He was blab-mouthed, a tongue-wager. Authority was hateful to him, therefore he could only abuse the pit- managers." Capitalistic exploitation made Walter Morel not only a pessimist, but sadist and nihilist as he never enjoyed life neither he grieved on it. When Mrs. Morel died he showed no emotion, as if nothing happened as if he was just born to be a worker as if he was born to suffer.

Working Class Unity and Miners Association

Sons and Lovers also include working-class unity to each other and their agitation when required. When Mr. Morel got ill from an inflammation of the brain and could not go to work, the whole mining community came to their help. Financially their union donated some seventeen shillings a week. Miners even gave them part of their profit. The next-door neighbor provided eggs and soups. Such was the power of works agitation which Marx and Engels had discussed in their seminal works. Lawrence was sympathetic towards the working class and that is why he included this incident in the novel. All revolutions succeeded when workers united, Lawrence perhaps, gave an indication for future prospects for revolution.

Conclusion

To conclude, it has been proved that Sons and Lovers is Marxist literature, a theme of Modernist narratives. Lawrence through his work sympathized with Marxist ideology, though the paper has shown the faults of Lawrence and Critics in understanding the character of Walter Morel. This paper has also shown the transformation of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire into capitalistic industrial towns, where Walter Morel was born and exploited by

Capitalists which changed his life and the life of his spouse Mrs. Morel and her children.

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Deconstructing the Stereotypes in Identities: A Psycho Geographical Study of *Eat Pray Love*

Ms. Camilla P. Tossy
M. A. in English Literature
St. Alberts's College, Ernakulam

Abstract: Places reflect the inner world of an individual. What a place reflects is not really what it is, it is only a reflection of oneself. This paper aims at examining the role of geography in creating and deconstructing one's identity by using the theory of Psycho Geography on Elizabeth Gilbert's memoir *Eat Pray Love: One Woman Searches for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia.* The theory of psycho-geography is a total dissolution of boundaries between art and life, the impact of a geographical location on the emotions and behaviour of an individual. It is the intermingling of psychology and geography that influences the emotional and behavioural pattern of an individual that emphasises our psycho-geographical state while living in a particular area of geography. This theory looks for a possible relationship between place and its impact on the behaviour of people living there. The memoir *Eat Pray Love,* is a work that exhibits the stereotypical notions of the West through psycho-geographical understanding. This paper makes one understand that an individual is an extension of the locale. The role played by a place is inevitable in determining the behavioural pattern and thought of a person or a particular community. This study sheds light on how geography and deconstruction play an important role in the creation of one's identity.

Keywords*:* *Memoir, Place, Psycho Geography and Identity.*

Every work of art is psycho-geographical in its respect. It is inevitable for the creator to be influenced by its origin. One will never be happy if they continue to search for what happiness consists of and she will never live if she is looking for the meaning of life, this throws light to the memoir Eat Pray Love: One Woman Searches for Everything Across Italy, India, and Indonesia by the American author Elizabeth Gilbert. She was best known for these memoirs, which were processed into a film of the same name in 2010. She was best known for this memoir which was also made into a film by the same name in 2010. A psycho-geographical understanding of the novel and thereby deconstruction of the protagonist's identity elucidates the influence of the preconceived notions of the West in creating the identity of a person.

Elizabeth Gilbert's Eat Pray Love exhibits the stereotypical notions of the West through psycho geographical understanding. The memoir travels through the life of Elizabeth Gilbert who stumbles in her relationships, work, and spirit and travels around the world after her divorce and the discoveries that she makes during her travel. The thirty-year-old Gilbert also known as Liz was an educated, ambitious American woman. She yearns to lead a happy and peaceful life with her husband and career but falls into the chaos of panic, grief, and confusion. These lead to her divorce from her husband, a crushing depression, another love failure, and the eradication of everything that she thought she was supposed to be. To recover from all this crisis and to give herself the time and space to find out who she is and what she wants, she got rid of all her work, her belongings and went on a year-long journey around the world on her own.

The memoir absorbs the chronicle of the year that Gilbert travels. In the course of this journey of self-discovery, she finds culinary pleasures in Italy, learns yoga and meditation to attain inner peace in India. She attains a life-changing experience and gains a new sense of identity and this enables her to open to love. Thus, it is about what can happen when one claims responsibility for their own contentment and stop trying to live in the imitation of society's ideas. As a brief note about the author, Elizabeth Gilbert is an American writer and journalist and has written for the New York Times Magazine, among other publications. Her first novel, Stern Man, was published in 2000. The paper analyses how Elizabeth Gilbert, the narrator in Eat Pray Love offers the sudden occasions that occur all through her journey and the way she reinvents her "self". The reading of the text from the perspective of psycho-geography helps to understand the deconstruction of one's identity and the factors that influence the identity of an individual.

Psycho-geography is a concept which originated during the 1950s and its development is closely associated with the Letterist International. The interaction of psychology and geography influences human behaviour. This theory looks for a possible relationship between place and its impact on the behaviour of people and the place they live. The term indicates it's a total dissolution of boundaries between art and life, the impact of a geographical location on the emotions and behaviour of an individual. Expressed in simple words it is the intermingling of psychology and geography that influences the emotional and behavioural patterns of people. As it tries to include both subjective and objective ways of learning, it emphasizes our psycho-geographical state while living in a particular area of geography. It makes us

understand that one is not detached from the geographical area that he or she belongs to. It also deals with how one's identity is shaped by a specific locale. The concept of the theory psycho-geography was propounded by the Marxist theorist Guy Louis Debord in 1955, to understand how different places, make a person feel and behave. Debord explained his view of geography as a discipline that focuses on a range of large special analyses from soil composition to economic structures. He reminds that this approach lacked an understanding of the effect geographic structure has on geography. Thus, he defined, Psycho-geography as "the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals" (Debord 1).

Although, psycho-geography is an emerging discipline and is being constantly rewritten by its practitioners. Debord explains his view of geography as a discipline that focuses on a range of large special analyses from soil composition to economic structures. He reminds that this approach lacked the understanding of the effect geographic structure has on geography. Thus, he defined, Psycho-geography as "the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals" (Debord 23). Guy Debord along with the Internationale Situationniste, an international organisation of social revolutionaries fashioned some of the concepts like "derive" and "detournement". Derive can be defined as the encounter with the city which can be unplanned and immerses him into the lives of the city. He claims that his concept is different from the notions of the "journey" or "stroll". Debord stated that the "derive" involves playful constructive behaviour and awareness of psycho-geographical effects. It drops their relations, their work, and leisure activities for "movement and action". People let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. They are free in the quest for self-discovery if there is one.

He also fashioned the concept of détournement in his book Method of Détournement. The transformation of buildings and decors would contribute to the alteration of the psycho-geographical ambiance of the cities in one example of its role. This concept is known as "Détournement". It can be used as a tool to twist one's words and so it had great potential for political campaigns and journalists.

Thus, psycho-geography is a vast theory that has much significance in the present context. It is applied in various works of literature, architecture, designs, etc. The scope of ambiguity present in psychogeography has allowed

us to explore diverse themes and concepts including politics, graffiti, personal resonance, and forgotten art, lost characters, architecture, and psychic imprint of trauma in an area influencing its atmosphere down the years. Effective use of psychogeography enables a better understanding of the mind and behaviour. It also makes one understand that the role played by a place is inevitable in determining the behavioural pattern and thought of a person or a particular community. “In discovering a small world, we discover the whole world” (Coverly 11).

The book Eat Pray Love traces the author's journey around the world after her divorce and what she discovered on her travels. In this passage of the book, there is a close connection between self-discovery and the thought of pleasure because at the beginning of the story we see a sick woman. Fear, sadness, and anxiety are mental disorders that place excessive stress on the body, and it is no different with Gilbert. She emphasizes this situation when she describes the scene where she is “sobbing so hard [in the bathroom floor] that a great lake of tears and snot was spreading before me on the bathroom tiles, a veritable Lake Inferior (if you will) of all my shame and fear and confusion and grief” (Gilbert 10). Thus, the trip to Italy is the first step to ‘heal’ her body, to recover from what she sees as traumatic experiences by giving the body nutrition, health, and pleasure. The word “Eat” in the title signifies her trip to Rome, where she surrenders herself to pleasures such as tasting the great food and drink that only Italy can offer.

For Gilbert, it looks that life in the Italian Republic is restricted to good judgment that Italians live la dolce vita.i.e. Packed with pleasure and time to relish it the most. This idea, which is embedded in what has been educated concerning the traditional Romans in history books, for instance, has yet been sustained. Despite the fact that the novel may be a memoir and brings Gilbert’s personal experiences while not the intention of deep anthropology analysis, a lot of moments of cultural encounters are shared throughout the narrative. The vital side of the Italian incursion in Gilbert’s narrative is her initial conception to step aside and see her issues from a unique perspective. At the start of the narrative, she looks too connected to the complaints of her scenario and doesn't appear driven to try and do something however complains and cry. But aiming to Italy makes her stop victimizing herself to finally take action to subsume her problems as a grown-up. Moreover, the primary stops in one of all the foremost visited cities of the world, the birthplace of art and beauty, is definitely an honest place to begin a recovery that aims to heal the body first. In addition, as a lady who is in “search for

everything", we are able to decision Gilbert a recent somebody who uses the sojourn in Italy for her advantage, that according to Young's, is what questers do. Young affirms that for questers "places and people they meet on the way are subordinated to those and exist concerning the quest, aiding or hindering its accomplishments" (Young 94).

In the second part, her next destination is a sacred ashram in India, where under her guru she explores her spiritual side. It's a place where she seeks spiritual awakening, maturity, and a sense of belonging, which will mark the beginning of a new chapter in your self-discovery journey. This is what she meant by "Pray" in the title. She spends long hours of meditation, sometimes practicing strict silences and taking only less time for physical needs. "I say the mantra to myself once very slowly and deliberately, syllable by syllable. Om Namah Shivaya. I honour the divinity that resides within me". (Gilbert 126).

In India, we see Gilbert seeking to recognize the cause of her life and locating love again, however a better kind of love or better, the affection for herself. After four months inside the Ashram, Gilbert feels alive and healthy. Thus, the adventure in India affords Gilbert with the risk to place the portions of the self collectively and recognize and admire this process. In her look for devotion, Gilbert observed plenty more: flexibility, discipline, and the understanding that sometimes the "chaos may have an actual divine function, even if you can't recognize it right now" (Gilbert 217).

In the final part of the story, the one that denotes "Love" Liz travels to Bali, Indonesia. After Italy and India, which helped Gilbert to face the first steps towards the balance between body and spirit, the next step will be responsible to close a chapter of the book as well as Gilbert's life. The travel to Indonesia is an open door to new experiences and, as Gilbert says, "The pursuit of balance". Staying there for three or four months he doesn't consider as a prophecy because it was predicted two years ago by an elderly and quite possibly demented Balinese man, during a ten-minute palm reading. There she meets a Brazilian named Felipe who eventually becomes her husband. Gilbert's experience with love and relationship has left a mark in her heart that prevents her to get involved again.

Studying the psychogeographical understanding of the text with stereotypical notions. According to Guy Debord "psychogeography" became a tool to transform urban life, first for aesthetic purposes but later for increasingly political ends. He defined it as the "study of specific effects of the

geographical environment on emotions and behaviour of individuals" (Debord 19). As mentioned before the concept of "derive" involves playful constructive behaviour and awareness of psychogeographical effects. It trickled their relations, their work and leisure activities in the purpose of movement and action. People let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. When people move, they become freer to do things they want. They are no longer attached to the job, relation, or material thing. They are free in their quest for self-discovery if there is one. Liz in her life did the same.

She cancelled her relationship with her husband (got divorced), left work, and stopped her social activities. She allows herself to accept the change that might result from this movement. She was also aware that there was a chance of nothing changing at all. She takes the risk of traveling to three different countries Italy, India, and Indonesia. Thus, all of the stories Gilbert has lived served to assist her to discover the emotional readability she turned into searching for. Now, on the give up of her adventure, she should solution the question: no, this existence isn't pre-operated to be best approximately duty. According to Dawn Eyestone, Gilbert wished this healing adventure for self-discovery, which turned into now no longer connected to the locations she visited but truly the places, or better, the adventure made her self-discovery possible. It turned into the method of journeying and the trajectory that helped Gilbert to make her internal and outer world collides. As narratives, journey texts are memories or debts of activities and studies that are probably true however, their description is probably built the use of factors of narrative to decorate the story.

Having in thoughts the truth that journey writing is a literary style and, as such, it isn't always chargeable for telling the truth, offers us the attention that during a story, the author may need to focus on a few components greater than others. "I once wrote a book to save myself. I wrote a travel memoir to make sense of my journey and my emotional confusion. All I was trying to do with that book was figure myself out" (Gilbert 8). The ability to move freely from place to place and the entitlement to explore and write about it were traditionally granted to men while women's presence in those trips were usually neglected. As we saw in this analysis, Gilbert's memoir represents a contemporary quest where the traveller searches outward for everything she lacks inward, which results in the process of constructing the identity. Thus, the argument of this paper has proved that there is a huge relation between one's identity and the geographical condition in which he or she lives. A self-

formation in terms of the factors of psychogeography can be seen as an extension of self. So, the role of psychogeography in creating identity has a significant role.

In this big umbrella of travel writing, we place Elizabeth Gilbert's Eat, Pray, Love as travel memories depicting travel as a vehicle for the protagonist to find answers in her self-imposed exile.

This article also shows that although women had to struggle to assert their presence and contribution to the gender role at the beginning of this writing about travel, this struggle certainly opened a space for women to gain autonomy to get around. It can be concluded that it's not the place that reflects, it is the reflection of oneself that makes an individual's identity and flow in the happiness or to hold back on the pains. Moreover, besides giving Gilbert this freedom, the trip also allows her to undergo a self-transformation that enables her to reinvent her identity through the traveling process. Thus, Gilbert's narrative presents travel as a transforming agent, which produces significant changes and deconstruction in her life.

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Storytelling through Art of Mehndi: A Study on the Art Practice in South India

Ms. Humaira Mariyam B.
Ph.D., Scholar in English, NIT Trichy

Abstract: Henna is obtained from a plant called Lawsonia Inermis. Henna lies at the crux of almost all religious and cultural celebrations, from the Bronze Age adoration for beautification, to the contemporary use of henna to create temporary tattoos and freckles. There is adequate research done on its medicinal values and effects and also about its use in beautification. This research focuses on how mehndi is not just an art but also a performance. As a sign of prosperity and celebration, henna is appreciated and adorned in all parts of the world. Globalization has led to the amalgamation of cultures which has given rise to several experimental forms of mehndi such as Indo-Arabic and indo-western. With these evolving cultures comes the fashion of storytelling through the art of mehndi. This art form is used to depict narratives through designs applied on a person. This paper brings out the culture and significance of storytelling through mehndi art. The theory of Marxism and Raymond Williams's ideas on culture are employed to analyse the art form. The method carried out for this research includes interactions, observations and personal interviews that further explains in the paper about the unexplored performance and its aura and the stories that are very subjective and diverse in nature and are least known and researched in the field of mehndi art. Some of the mehndi artists, newly wedded brides and college students were interviewed. Also, a general questionnaire about mehndi art supporting the research was circulated to around 135 women through google forms and the responses were noted.

Literature review

History: Henna has unique cultural roots and meanings beyond its chemical properties. Henna/Mehndi is also derived from the Sanskrit "mehagni," which is synonymous to turmeric. The Vedas describe the various uses for both henna and turmeric. Both plants were important in Vedic traditions for they represented the symbols of 'outer' and 'inner sun'. Henna is used ceremonially in this context, as a means of reaching an inner light and an enlightened mind (Basas, Carrie Griffin, 2007). In an attempt to look over and into the diverse applications and evolution in henna, from the earliest use

of henna from ancient Egypt to Europe - henna was popular especially among women and connected to the aesthetic movement and the pre-Raphaelite artists of England in the 1800s. Also, the idea of the application of henna was considered to be more feminine and that it differentiates women from men. Henna was not just a custom but an art that was enthusiastically practised especially during weddings. In India, mehndi dates back to the 12th century and holds a great significance till date.

Chemical Properties

A lot of research has been done in the field of pharmacological study and have found the incredible medicinal values and uses of henna in its different forms. Different extracts of henna leaves were evaluated on the rat excision and incision wound models and it was found that application of ethanol extract can be successfully formulated for the wound healing activity (Sakarkar, D. M., et al, 2004). Similarly, Omani henna seems to possess in-vitro antibacterial activity against a wide spectrum of bacterial strains (Habbal, Omar A., et al, 2005). The other studies on mehndi and henna pastes have found that Henna is a natural product and also environmentally friendly. It is recommended to consider henna leaves as a potential source for corrosion inhibition of aluminium and steel in wet environments (Al-Sehaibani, H, 2000).

Mehndi Ceremony

The bride's henna ceremony holds greater prominence as it was more of an intense emotional experience while leaving her home and stepping into a new one. This is an extremely important ceremony because of the depicted transition of the bride from being a young girl to becoming a wife. That’s why many rituals in this ceremony focused on the bride and the people close to her. The sequence of rituals that comprised the ceremony helped prepare the bride for her new life and clarified the community's social expectations and messages (Sharaby, 2006). On the contrary to the past when girls were married at a very young age, the henna ceremony today provides an opportunity for the families of bride and groom to get together and bless them through the cultural proceedings of henna. This ceremony also creates a space for the bride and groom to be involved in conversations and get acquainted. Henna is often considered a sign of auspiciousness and a sign of joy (Palaniswamy).

Transition in the Approach

We could now see how mehndi has transformed from a traditional ceremony to pop culture where there are a wide variety of henna products that are made by adding up chemicals leading to instant colouring of hands gaining popularity. An artist is required to have super powers that include the skill to master the art and the quality of mehendi used to obtain satisfying results. Though Henna application is a process that involves a good amount of time and energy, as we move towards the scientific age with impatience spreading all over, the traditional methods and techniques seemed exhausting and taxing. Consequently, they started to use alternatives such as fast-acting chemical hair dye: black para-phenylenediamine. These were sold as "blackhenna" (Cartwright-Jones, 2006).

Mehndi today is not only restricted to henna leaves but also a wide range of henna mixtures that are available in different colours such as red, black, brown and glitters. Black henna might be tempting, but it can cause allergies, severe delayed-type reactions, and more permanent effects, such as persistent leucoderma or hyperpigmentation. Perhaps it is best to respect the traditional practice of red henna, lest a temporary tattoo results in a permanent scar (Mindy X.Wang, et al. 2016).

There is also a belief system that during the wedding, the darker the stain gets on the bride's hands, the more love and affection she would get from her family and spouse. And to get darker stains, there are various methods followed which are natural and also enhance the colour of the stain in hands. To obtain the darker stain, henna is sometimes mixed with less harmful chemicals. An alternative for that is the use of eucalyptus oils and lemon juice to enhance the stain or the colour of the henna. (Palaniswamy).

Research Questions

While most of the research focussed on the history of henna, the physicality and culturality of its use and its medicinal properties, not much research has been done on the narrativity of stories through mehndi art, which has become a pop culture and an inevitable tradition today in most Indian weddings. The culture of mehndi is a residue of the past and is an emerging culture today that gives rise to new meaning, values, practices and relationships. Theart of

henna application is now perceived to be a performance where the artist, the patron and the group of people come together and participate in the storytelling. The research questions that are dealt with in the paper are as follows:

1) What do the stories that are illustrated through Mehndi signify?

2) In what way does the significance of storytelling through Mehndi art become more important than the application of henna itself in modern culture?

Methodology

This is qualitative research. The data was obtained through field study by using interviews and observation techniques that were conducted between December, 2019 and February, 2020. Observations were done in places where mehndi as an art is practised in wedding events and other occasions in Bangalore. Activities of mehndi artists on social media were also observed during the process. Five mehndi artists were interviewed and the questions were directed to elaborate on how far they understand the practice of the culture they are involved in, not only as a hobby or an economic activity but also relating it with the meanings of henna and the need for storytelling. Patrons were also interviewed during which they were asked to share about their personal experiences with henna. Additionally, a general questionnaire about mehndi art supporting the research was circulated to around 135 women through google forms and the responses were noted.

Analysis

Indian weddings are remarkable for their grandeur. Over time, there is a sea change perceptible in the approach to Indian weddings. The more formal and solemnly grand event it was then, it is made a more cheerful, fun and emotional occasion now where two families get-together to tie a knot between them. “Wedding is not just a thing between families and close people; it is today a big deal and made into a grand gesture” (Interviewee 1). People today seek extraordinary; the ordinary doesn’t satisfy them anymore. Raymond Williams in his essay “Culture is ordinary” says culture is a way of life and is represented through most visible meanings. Adding on to it, these representations lead to influencing other cultures across the globe and

people tend to subsume certain aspects from other cultures depending upon the factors such as geography and religion. Mehndi and Sangeeth were organised primarily in the north Indian weddings, and now this culture is received and followed in southern parts of India as well where all the friends and family members gather together and get mehndi done on their hands while cheering up the bride. Mehndi is also referred to as *shagun* and earlier, all women from the family would apply it on the bride's hands in portions as a symbol of love and blessings.

"The Internet has changed the whole approach to mehndi. In recent years, platforms such as Pinterest, Instagram and Facebook have influenced us in all possible ways and people now have started to experiment with art forms such as mehndi" (Interviewee 2). Far gone are those days when women opted for designs that only had filled-circles in the middle of the palm and on fingertips. Now almost everyone wants to have customised designs that are exclusively created for the patrons. From the survey carried out, it is obtained that 97.8% of the women love mehndi and like to apply it mostly during festivals and special occasions. Most women agree to the proclamation that mehndi beautifies them and would undeniably want to have it customised for their weddings.

When the tradition is still the same and mehndi is still as important as it was in the earlier times, trying to understand the need for such customized designs is still complex and more subjective. The artists make symbols that signify and narrate the stories of patrons. The stories are extraordinarily diverse and subjective except for a few conventional symbols such as the face of a bride and groom symbolizing the wedding. In other words, varied symbols are used that embody the tale of the bride and groom. Just as holding the essence of a novel in a micro fiction, it is quite taxing for an artist to narrate a story by incorporating congruous symbols in the designs. Symbols are those that signify meanings in multiplicity. They are a means of a complex communication system. Human cultures use symbols to express specific ideologies and social structures and to represent aspects of their specific culture. The meaning of a symbol is not inherent in the symbol itself but is culturally learned (Womack, 2005). Ergo, the art encompasses symbolic representation of the places the patrons hail from and numerical representations that depict and display important dates. The portrayal of specific gods and goddesses unveil more about their religious and cultural ethnicity and other symbols such as heart, key, lotuses and animals such as

peacock and elephant hold specific significance when employed. Apparently, people also include designs that go hand in hand with the wedding suit and other jewellery such as peacock, mangoes, *Jhumkas* etc. writing names on the brides' hands has been in trend for a very long period; some like to have it seen and some like to hide it inside the designs.

Fig 1 and 2: These are the images of art rendered by two different artists, Divya and Aravinth. The design makes it clear that the bride and groom belong to different geographical spaces and ethnic backgrounds. The kind of wedding portrayed in both the images talks about the difference in their culture and wedding style. The symbol and image of a dog in the first image has an individual significance. (Source- Instagram)

Fig 3 and 4: These are the images of art rendered by the artists Aravinth and Aksha Shah. These are probably south Indian weddings with elements such as Krishna and Radha - depiction of Gods and Goddesses; Nathaswaram and Manpaanai which is more significant and typical in Tamilnadu. (Source- Instagram)

Fig 5 and 6: Both these images are of the art rendered by Aksha Shah. Fig- 5 talks more about the long-lasting relationship of the bride and groom who have known each other since schooldays. The symbolic geographical structure and the dates are again significant that add on to the stories of their lives. Fig-6 depicts a wedding which is not just reflective of the religion and cultural background, but also the caste. In Brahmanical weddings, the bride sits on her father 'slap while the groom ties a knot- called at *Thali Kayiru.* (Source- Instagram)

Creating such art is not as easy as it sounds. Few artists confess that mehndi is no longer system where one repeats what already exists; it is quite demanding and challenging today that they experience it as giving a live performance and the urge to steal the show. It could be understood in terms of spinning a tale where one needs to imagine and create a plausible story out of hints and images. It is similar to the idea of wanting to be a part of the culture, yet standout with subjective individuality. Amidst all the trends, there are still people who are edgy about such experiments while it comes to having mehndi.

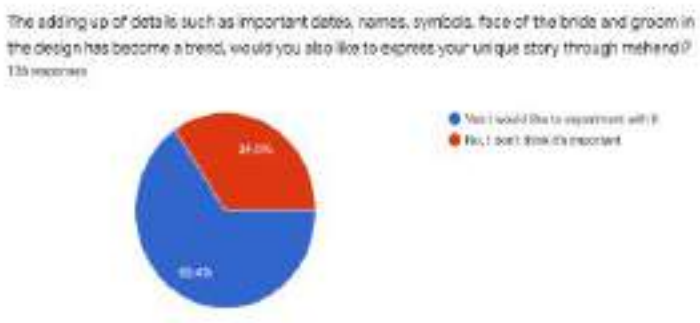

Fig 7: result of the survey conducted during the research (Source-Author)

Storytelling has a greater hold universally since ages. It is something that we have heard, practised and grown with. Any good story has a clear structure and purpose, has characters to root for, and appeals to our deepest emotions (Peters, 2018). These elements are inevitably visible in the art of mehndi today. It is a very old tradition and as an important culture of India, it has acquired creativity as its aura. Raymond Williams also points out in his essay "Culture is Ordinary" that culture is both traditional and creative; it has both the most ordinary common meanings and the finest individual meanings. When the tradition of mehndi finds its common meaning in India and Indian weddings, discrete stories and their significant rendering becomes the finest individual meaning. While the art of storytelling has dominantly to do with orality; stories through mehndi leans on with symbolism and interpretations. Walter J. Ong in his work "Orality and Literacy" talks extensively about oral tradition and the reality that print and written texts have surpassed them irrespective of the oral tradition still holding its significance today. While orality is momentary, literacy is more permanent and open to a lot of interpretations and subjective meaning-making. This could be read under the light of storytelling through the art of mehndi where the symbols in the designs are more inclined towards literacy or texts leading to interpretations and various subjectivities. Yet, the stain isn't permanent and vanishes in a week.

Mehndi as an art has made a headway and become increasingly convoluted and intricate that not anybody can do it indisputably. This increases the demand for the art and artists who render it. From the data collected, the charges for such renditions range over an average of 4000to 15000 INR.

“The more customised designs and details the client asks for; the more expensive it gets" (Interviewee 4). This undoubtedly is an economic luxury that only a particular section of the society also known as the bourgeois could afford. Concerning the Indian economy and various classes and subclasses of people, having such an art done is surely out of reach for the middle class and lower-middle-class people in the society. But surprisingly, most of the mehndi artists who were studied during this research were proletarians who worked for the bourgeois. Mehndi is perceived as an art rendered by the lower class for the upper class. Raymond William says, “A culture is a whole way of life, and the arts are a part of social organization whose economic change radically affects". This is in congruence to the above-mentioned situation or crisis. It also explains the high possibility of art becoming a privilege to only some sections of the society. Speaking of privilege, art also creates divisions concerning factors such as gender, class and sometimes religion. From this research, it was obtained that most of the time people tag Muslims and Marwari’s, an ethnic group that originate from the Rajasthan region of India, as those who are usually good at this art, which is problematic as for the generalization as it creates an illusion that artists from other communities might not be relied. Also, when it comes to gender, men having Mehndi is looked down upon and not encouraged in South India. This is majorly because Mehndi is regarded feminine and men consuming this art would shake the grounds of constructed masculinities, which is a flawed idea when it comes to art.

Conclusion and Further Implications

Needless to say, art evolves and develops through multiple mediums across different cultures globally. Mehndi as an art form has diversely affected and influenced people from different ethnicities. If in the north, the faces of the bride and groom were more attractive and in fashion, down south people included *Mridangam* and *Nadaswaram*, a kind of a tabla which is typical in South-Indian weddings. Though art is everywhere, few of them are demarcated as elite due to their accessibility and affordability. But culture and art as a whole is non-restrictive and everybody gets to follow and enjoy it. Even in the subsections of the society, signifying their culture through visible meanings keeps taking place in different tangible forms of art. As far as storytelling through Mehndi has concerned wedding narratives, it has more scope to involve itself in many other sensitive discourses such as war narratives, raising awareness, showing solidarity to a social concern etc.

Below are the pictures of Mehndi art that show a greater significance accompanying a narrative or a story that depicts a cause.

Fig 8 and 9: These images are of the art rendered by Samia and Dr.Azra. It shows the attempts of expressing solidarity against the injustice happening in Palestine through Mehndi. The former image portrays 'Burning Plaestine'. While it spreads awareness, the inclusion of foreign elements (language) and the depiction with effects convey a story about the happenings in Palestine. (Source-Instagram)

Fig 10: This art is done by Dr.Azra, it expresses the brutality of sexual harassment, the power of saying no and brings to light the cruciality of consent. It is a symbol that represents many stories. (Source: Instagram)

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Weeding Out the Real Villain Ego in *Kala:* A Raw Narrative Abstract

Ms. Apoorva Rajeev
Ms. Siya Abi
BA Functional English
Carmel College, Mala, Thrissur

Abstract: Films exert tremendous impact upon the society, offering commentaries on pertinent issues. In the recent times, Mollywood seeks new means of cinematic expressions. This paper studies the raw narration in the 2021 Malayalam movie *Kala,* directed by Rohit V.S., to weed out the universal real villain, the human 'ego.' The research methodology of the study will be a survey and the literary theory will be based on psychoanalytic criticism. The plot of the movie revolves around Shaji, an egoistic alpha male with a *jenmi* attitude. As the movie unfolds, the unmasking of 'ego' happens. In the Freudian model of the psyche, 'ego,' perceived as the 'self' or 'I,' is a partially conscious part that processes experiences, and is in contact with the external world through perceptions. In *Kala,* ego resides as a giant in the protagonist. The raw narration makes the movie a carnival of violence. The movie portrays realism in the scenes of blood and flesh. The whole narration is through limited dialogues and through millions of minute action sequences of violence. The movie takes a bold step in plucking off the unwanted weeds in the society. *Kala* has also managed to portray the dominating 'alpha male' and the subaltern, who are looted and oppressed by the bourgeois. With the 'raw' usage of narrative technology, *Kala* is a socially relevant movie that boldly weeds out the 'ego,' the real villain.

Key Words: *Alpha Male, Ego, Psyche, Psychoanalytic Criticism and Raw Narrative.*

Cinema is a window through which society can be viewed. "In the film, writes Frances Marion, the story is 'not told but dramatized"' (Gaudreault 31). By 2021, Mollywood has taken bold steps showcasing the harsh reality of society. The 2011 thriller movie, *Chaappa Kurishu* was a breakthrough to this new trend. The climax fight scenes in the filthy public toilet are a disgusting but harsh representation of society. A ten-year journey of clear demarcation of the cinematography is visible in the 2021 psycho-thriller, *Kala.* Scenes have become more realistic,

narration rawer and fight scenes more brutal and gory. This paper studies the raw narration in the Malayalam movie *Kala*, directed by Rohit V.S., that weeds out the universal real villain, the human 'ego.' *Kala* revolves around "Shaji," an egoistic, bourgeois, 'alpha male' with a *jenmi1*attitude and his different shades in behaviour. As the movie unfolds, the unmasking of 'ego' happens. The research is done based on the literary theory of psychoanalytical criticism. This science of applied psychoanalysis is concerned with the interaction between the conscious and unconscious processes and also with the laws governing mental functioning. This form of study has been in use since the beginning of the twentieth century to understand literature and culture. Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan are prominent proponents of the theory.

In the Freudian model of the psyche, 'ego,' perceived as the 'self' or 'I,' is a partially conscious part that processes experiences, and is in contact with the external world through perceptions. The 'ego' operates as a mediator or is pulled between the extremes of 'id' or the unconscious and 'superego' or the conscious part. 'Ego' is a decision-making component of the personality. It operates by the reality principle, often compromising satisfaction to avoid consequences in society. It seeks pleasure, however is concerned with devising 1an attitude of being superior or dominant over others.3 realistic strategies to achieve pleasure. In *Kala*, the ego resides as a giant in Shaji. "Once the ego inflates it will only come back to earth through some jarring failure" (Greene 48). This paper will analyse the different shades of the characters in *Kala* and the dimensions of the real villain, the ego, reflecting on the raw narration and peeping through the alpha male concept in the movie. We live in a world where increasing alarm surrounds the human mind and mental health. This paper becomes relevant in conceptualising the need to reflect on the 'ego' of the human mind, which turns out to be a universal villain bringing failures and cracks in human relationships. A study on Kala will open doors to these harsh realities.

Kala is the third directorial venture of Rohit V.S. which portrays a new face of Malayalam Cinema. The movie, released on 25th March 2021, tries to weed out the ego in everyone's life. *Kala* begins with the quote, "selfishness is not living as one wishes to live. It is asking others to live as one wishes to live" (Wilde). The film, set in Kerala in the late '90s, follows up the events that unfold across two days in Shaji Nivas, a 'biggish' bungalow surrounded with lush greenery and plantations of

areca nut and pepper. The beginning shots show a clichéd happy family. Shaji, in his thirties, is busy bathing his black cane Corso named Blackie. While his son, Appu, plays with toys, his wife Vidhya is busy with her daily chores. Blackie runs into the plantation, and the urgency with which Shaji chases it does not seem to be an owner looking for his expensive dog. A hint of an unnatural touch is felt in the Shaji's catch of the dog. When Appu, his son, cries over a glass of milk, Shaji says to him that "boys don't cry," grooming his child to the dictates of patriarchy. Shaji is submissive to his father, Raveendran and seeks his permission while he plans his day. The conversations reveal that Shaji has lost Ravi's money in bad investments.

The five farmhands' visit to pluck an arecanut creates a fearful atmosphere. Scary scenes with Vidhya and Appu prophesy that something bad is going to happen shortly. Vidhya and Appu decide to go to her home for few days and Shaji approves of it. Ravi goes for his regular checkup. Shaji uses the opportunity to sell tons of pepper stored in the warehouse to clear out his debt. A twist in the story happens when the unnamed Attapaadi worker, *payyan2,* seeks revenge on Shaji for killing his dog, named Bau, in an intoxicated reckless situation to impress his friends. He reveals to Shaji of his intent to kill Blackie to make him feel the pain. Shaji offers him a new foreign breed and tries to compromise, but he denies it. From there, *Kala* turns into a weeding out process, filled with bloodshed scenes of brutal fights for 45 minutes. Shaji misleads the family members on their return that the workers are thieves of pepper. The infinite war between Shaji and the boy continues where clothes are torn, bones are broken and wounds become worse. The family members are helpless. Shaji tells his opponent to kill his dog if he wants, however, he goes more brutal on Shaji. Finally, Shaji runs off to hide in his bathroom, where his opponent lands and seats himself in the closet, symbolizing the throne of victory and asks him whether he likes its pain. He then cleanses himself and walks out of the house with a sharp penetrating look at Shaji. The boy takes Shaji's dog along with him and walks out feeling victorious.

Rohit V.S follows a raw narrative way of filmmaking in the movie *Kala.* The film is produced by Siju Mathew, Navis Xavier, Tovino Thomas, Rohit V.S and Akhil George. The editor, Chaman Chacko gives the movie an aesthetic rousing lift, with the help of tremendous sound effects in an intensity that reality cannot evoke. The eye shots, the

burning cigarette and the unblinking stare are filled with both wonder and worry. The camera movements and shots with background score make the audience feel the same fear as Vidhya. The capture of the landscape, portrayed from a caterpillar to a dog and the shaky movements of the camera take is to the high level of curiosity, accomplished by the cinematographer, Akhil George. Sumesh Moor also deserves applause for his acting. The stunt choreographers Irfan Ameer and Basidh Al Gazzali have created the movie a carnival of violence, packed with action sequences. The methodology of this research is an online survey, which has 15 questions. It was conducted from 20th June 2021 to 23rd June 2021, among people of all age groups. The majority of the respondents belonged to the age group, 18-25 years. The data is collected from two sources. The primary source is the film. The secondary source includes the survey responses and the reviews published in print, electronic and social media. According to the survey, the majority audience saw the movie on the OTT platform, without skipping scenes.

The OTT platform has popularized movies during the pandemic. Though the action sequences are brutal to many, *Kala* is a thrilling experience to seventy-six per cent of the audience. A new face of the audience has bloomed with their acceptance of heroes with negative shades and of the hero getting defeated in films. The majority of the audience supported the protagonist on the cause of his revenge. Moreover, they openly cast their vote for the protagonist rather than the negative shaded mainstream actor. The respondents have mixed opinions of avenging, moving on, mourning and even replacing, their pet getting attacked. The revenge tale is *Kala* has been viewed as acceptable, well-reasoned, logical and fair, pointing out that the audience has accepted the film. The raw narrative cinematography is also welcomed by the audience. They strongly believe that ego must be plucked away from society as seen in *Kala*. Many of the respondents agree that they have met such egoists in real life, pointing out that Shaji is a representative of an egoistic society. In the recommendations of the audience, Hollywood movies top the list of action-packed films, making *Kala* a unique movie in Mollywood and they expect more movies like *Kala* in Mollywood.

Movies are windows to society. But, “many movies considered to be realistic are not greatly socially extended” (Jerslev 17). Movies usually present the polished truth but the reality is always bitter and harsh. The raw narration makes *Kala* different, visible from the very opening song.

The first half forebodes a bad happening in the latter part of *Kala*. The raw narrative allows the audience to ponder upon the symbolism of the signs. All the family members are frustrated and unsatisfied individuals. Physically, they are closely knitted but emotionally miles apart. These assumptions are extracted from the actions and frames that convey things are not going to be normal in the isolated house. *Kala* brings in a difference to the stereotype of mass dialogues and warnings before fights. Moor's character purposefully dipping Vidya's footwear in mud as a warning and delivering no long speeches in the climax on Shaji's defeat are instances of raw narration. Everything in the movie is raw, the hatred, the intimate romantic scenes, the revenge, the bitter truth and most importantly the fight scenes. The fight scenes in *Kala* are one of the boldest action sequences in Mollywood.

The film is a brutal epic that pokes holes into the 'alpha' masculinity. Shaji is self-obsessed about his privilege, his bungalow and his foreign breed dog. When Appu cries for milk, he tells that 'boys don't cry," and makes him watch Jackie Chan movies. When Shaji is asked by Appu about the ownership of the house, he claims himself as the owner, pointing to the house name, Shaji Nivas. But the car horn indicates Ravi's entry, thus interrupting Shaji's declaration. He is dominant over Vidhya too. He walks shirtless around the house and proudly declares over Appu's skills "because he is my son." Shaji denies Vidhya's proposal to migrate to Bangalore as he hates his wife earning, reflecting his male chauvinistic character. The mood of the whole cinema is eerie and every scene forms an organic part of the plot. *Kala* came out as raw as the wilderness of the forest. There is a kala3, the thought of dominance, with strong roots that grows and multiplies inside everyone. The reason for the revenge is born out of Shaji's ego getting hurt.

The boy makes dirty footprints in the house intentionally to provoke Shaji. In the past, Shaji enters into the boy's forest and leaves his dirty footprints, consumes alcohol and kills his dog. The boy can be compared to Mother Nature who takes revenge in the form of natural disasters to destroy the human ego. The action sequences turn out to be between two ideologies.

"Taking over from the working class, Nature will wreak its revenge on the culture that refuses to accept its limits unless some form of collective responsibility can be formed from the bottom up" (Blake 9).

Shaji asks the opponent if he wishes to fight, indirectly conveying that he is stronger than the other. Even though Shaji has let him kill the dog, the boy changes his motives. Now he is adamant about weeding out the real villain, the egoistic beast in Shaji and gets into the real hunt. As the movie unfolds, the boy cuts off each of the elements that fuel up his ego, the pepper sacks and his physical strength. Shaji's heroic attire gets ripped off in the fight. In the final scene, the boy leaves the house by closing the gate. This is the only scene where we can read Shaji Nivas properly, indicating that the visit of the boy has weeded out all the problems. This type of timely hunting and weeding is to be done in every home. The hazard of animal cruelty is a rather less discussed topic in mainstream movies. In *Kala*, Moor decides to kill Tovino's dog for voluntarily killing his beloved companion, Bau. Shaji's urge to take out his frustration leads to a harsh end to the relationship between the boy and the dog.

Shaji believed that nobody would dare to stand up against him for a dog. According to Shaji, pets boosts his masculinity. Bau is a country breed and he values it less. Moor's unnamed character is the voice of resistance for the oppressed, the marginalized, and the displaced. *Kala* has to be approached based on the principle of equality and not just a fight over a pet. *Kala* is animalistic in its violence, rough in its language and raw in its emotions.

Yet, it ends on a serene image of a man and a beast walking together into nature. The bouts of violence may feel unbearable at times, but the movie uses its high passions and gory visuals to draw out the message. *Kala* is a path-breaking and technically sound film. The one-line story thriller is a must-watch to experience the top-notch performance from the technical crew. "Sight and sound present the action realistically without telling the audience what it should feel" (Worley 38). Freud' iceberg theory states that the most important layer of our mind is the unconscious layer, in which reality is hidden, which are never expressed openly unless provoked or in a mental dilemma. Till then the real beast is masked and sleeps peacefully. The unmasking happens in the second half of *Kala*, where the hero, Shaji, turns into the villain and the boy weeds out his beast. *Kala* is a movie with many layers and can be viewed as a new face of Malayalam cinema, with a bold director ready to portray everything as raw as it is, a bold producer ready to financially support an experimental movie and a bold frontline actor to take up a role of the defeated. This film also weeds out the stereotypes of earlier film notions. The movie

portrays realism in the scenes of blood and flesh. *Kala*, with limited dialogues, portrays the dominating 'alpha male' and the oppressed subaltern. With the 'raw' usage of narrative technology, *Kala* is a socially relevant movie that boldly weeds out the 'ego,' the real villain.

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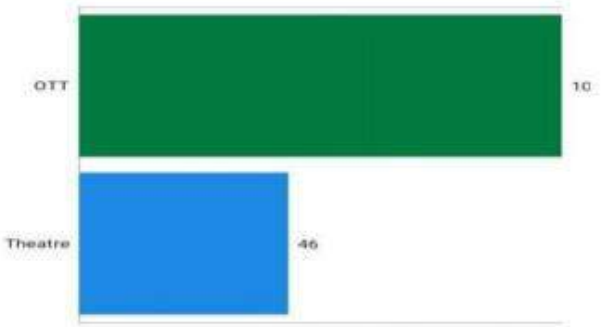
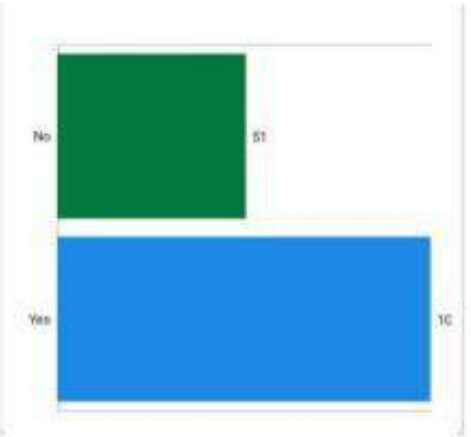
Appendix

1) In which platform have you watched kala?



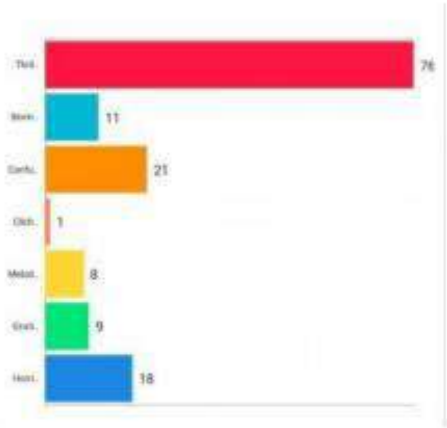
Interpretation: Majority of the respondents (106) have watched the movie on OTT platform and hence these platforms can be clearly seen as an important factor in popularizing movies during the pandemic. Remaining 46 where lucky to get the theatrical experience of this masterpiece movie.

2) If on OTT, have you watched the movie without skipping the scenes?



Interpretation: Surprisingly, being a movie with lot of violence, majority of the audience (101) have not skipped a scene.

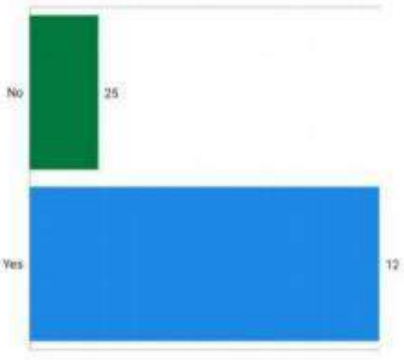
3)What was your first impression about the movie?



Interpretation: To majority of the audience (76), the movie served its actual purpose of being the thriller genre, while 21 felt confused after watching it and it was horrifying for 18 of the respondents. Only 11 of them found it boring. It is clearly understood that the movie is a success in passing out the thrill and horror to its audience.

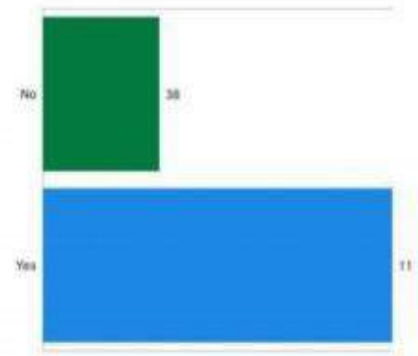
12

4)Are you a person who can accept heroes with negative shades?



Interpretation: With 127 positive responses, the shift in the audience is evident. *Kala* will definitely make the shift stronger in the coming years.

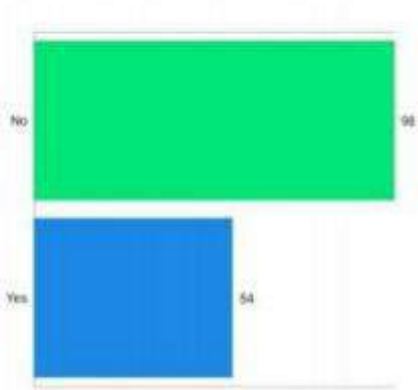
5)Do you like the narrative style adopted in the movie with less dialogue and more action?



Interpretation: This change in perspective is really appreciable. 114 respondents accept the new narrative technology where action speaks better than words.

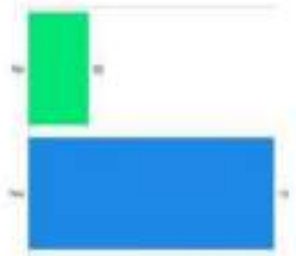
13

6) Have you ever met a "Shaji" in real life who can go to any extent to satisfy his ego?



Interpretation: Majority of the respondents has real life experience with an egoistic "Shaji." So, we can conclude that Shaji is not too deviated from reality.

7) Do you think that ego must be plucked away from each individual of the society, like we have seen in the movie?

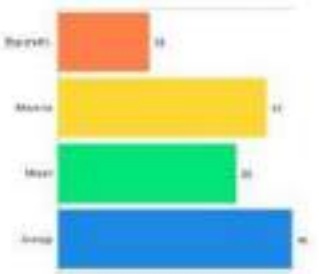


Interpretation: Majority of the respondents agrees with the message in the movie, that ego must be weeded out.

8)What is your opinion about the reason for the revenge tale in the movie Kala?

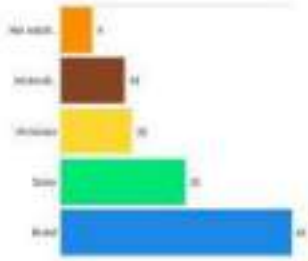
Interpretation: Received mixed responses for this question. Still majority of them give positive responses like acceptable (30), well-reasoned (15), logical (19) and fair (35). It means the audience has accepted the reasons. To the rest it was unrealistic and extravagant.

9) How do you think you would react if somebody were to attack your pet?



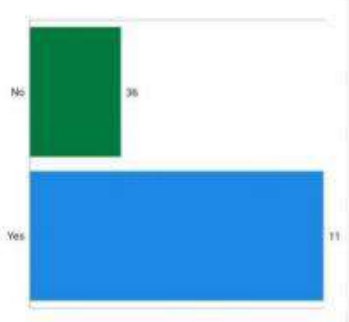
Interpretation: As per the results, 40 respondents think the same way as the protagonist, they will avenge. And the remaining will mourn, move on and buy another pet. This again proves the plot's proximity to reality.

10)Opinion about the action sequences in the movie.



Interpretation: Majority of the respondents (65) agrees that it was indeed brutal and scary for some (38) and atrocious for other few (20). Some audiences who are against violence being portrayed in movies found it intolerable (19) and not watchable (9). Even some found it interesting too.

12) Were you able to accept the hero being defeated by his opponents?



Interpretation: This indicates the acceptance of the Malayalam audience that no one is flawless. They accept heroes with flaws and can even watch their hero being defeated by the opponent if he deserves it.

11)Have you watched any other movie with extreme brutal fight scenes depicted on screen? If yes, Mention the movie.

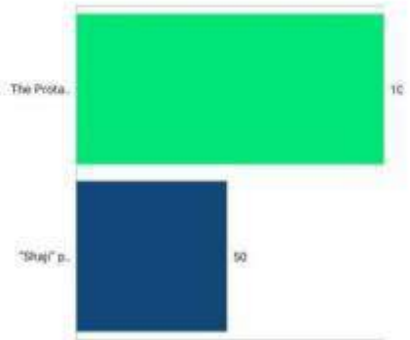
(Descriptive)

Interpretation: It is clearly evident that most of the films they mentioned were from Hollywood and also, with 2-3 Malayalam movies. This makes action sequences in *Kala,* a new experience for Malayalam audiences.

13)What is your opinion about the character "Shaji" played by Tovino Thomas?

Interpretation: 77 of them realised the egoistic character of Shaji and 53 of them thinks that he is arrogant. Few agrees that he was valiant, indignant and imperative. 25 respondents even find Shaji as a family man.

14) After watching the movie whom do you sincerely support?



Interpretation: With 102 respondents supporting Sumesh Moor's character, it is obvious that people started accepting the reality even though how harsh it seems. Therefore, most of them are satisfied with the climax.

15) Do you expect more such movies from Malayalam movie industry?

Interpretation: This is another evidence to prove the success of the experimental movie, *Kala*. With a majority of 119 respondents willing to accept such bold movies in Malayalam industry, it is a huge support for experimental movies.

A Theological Investigation of Martyrdom as the design of God and Witness to God's Authority in T. S. Eliot's *Murder in The Cathedral*

Ms. Anu Vellapally
M. A. in English
Deva Matha College, Kerala

Abstract: Martyrs, respected and revered as witnesses, have a great influence on the lives of their followers. In an era, when death to promote one's ideology is also termed as martyrdom, T. S. Eliot's play, Murder *in the Cathedral* written in 1935, raises a serious query about the nature of true martyrdom. A disciplined analytical study of the nuances of martyrdom in the play reveals the true nature of martyrdom as indented by the playwright. This paper makes theological research into the concept of Christian martyrdom as envisaged in the martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas Becket and brings out a clear distinction between the ideologies of martyrdom in the present-day scenario of religious fanaticism. The evolution of the protagonist from desirous of martyrdom for its glory to submissive to the will of God in his death as a witness to heavenly authority is the area under discussion. This research proposes the concept that martyrdom is not self-willed and it does not cause harm to others, thus making a sharp contrast between real martyrs and the militants hailed as martyrs.

Keywords: Becket, Martyrdom, authority, witness, design of God, self-will, significance

Introduction

Murder in the Cathedral is not just a drama celebrating the meritorious martyry death of Archbishop Thomas Becket; rather one that has promoted the true significance of martyrdom down through the ages. The central theme of the play is martyrdom and T.S. Eliot uses the term in its original sense. In its strict sense, the word martyrdom means 'witness.' So, Becket as a martyr is not primarily one who suffers for a cause or who gives up his life in defense of some religious belief, instead he is a witness to the reality of God's authority. The play promotes the notion that martyrdom requires the right attitude on the part of the martyr, so also it requires the right attitude on the part of the ordinary people. Martyrdom is not efficacious until it is accepted by the people as the design of God.

"Martyrdom": Theological Perspective

Martyr etymologically means witness, whether it is a matter of testifying historically, juridically, or religiously. According to *the Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, "the name of a martyr is applied exclusively to the one who gives witness in blood" (296). The martyr is the one who gives his life through his fidelity in giving testimony to Jesus. This concept is deep-rooted in the Bible especially in the New Testament (Ac 22,20; 6,56; Ap 2,13;6,9;17,6). Jesus is himself by an eminent title the martyr of God and consequently the prototype of martyrs. In His willingly accepted death, He gives the supreme witness of His fidelity to the mission entrusted to Him by the father.

Saint Thomas Aquinas, well known Christian Theologian and Philosopher of the medieval period, discusses clearly in his epic work *The Summa Theologica,* who should be considered a martyr. To consider true martyrdom, he lays down eight points of inquiry:

1. The real martyrs do not kill themselves.
2. The real martyrs suffer harm but never inflict harm.
3. They do not seek death but accept it when it comes.
4. They do not die out of hatred of the enemy, but out of love for God.
5. The real martyrs die bearing witness to the truth.
6. Martyrdom properly involves death not just suffering, however intense.
7. Some people are victims, not martyrs.
8. Some people are heroes, not martyrs.

Archbishop Thomas Becket's martyrdom in the play is weighed and evaluated using the above-mentioned eight criteria.

Concept of Martyrdom in the Opening Scene of the Play

From the very beginning of the play, a proper atmosphere is created for the martyrdom of Becket to take place. Becket is returning from France, but there has been no reconciliation with Henry II, the King of England.

Chorus, a group consisting of the ordinary women of Canterbury from the outset of the play has a sense of some impending disaster. They are conscious of the advance of some danger, but its exact nature is mysterious. Suspecting some peril ahead, they wait as "the saints and martyrs wait for those who shall, in turn, be martyrs and saints" (13). They are indeed waiting for Archbishop Becket's return, which they feel is his "walking to his death." Even the priests have a sort of fore knowledge of his martyrdom and therefore, the third priest says; "what peace can be found to grow between the hammer and the anvil" (15). The arrival of Becket is marked by the words of the chorus, "you come bringing death into Canterbury" (18). Thus, the characters of the opening scene of the play itself confirm and identify the obvious possibility of Becket's martyrdom.

Becket's Desire for Martyrdom

Becket appears to aspire for martyrdom from the beginning of the play. The first part of the play portrays his longing for martyrdom out of 'spiritual pride', which, in his own words in the latter part of the play, is "to do the right deed for the wrong reason" (44). While the first three tempters attempt to lead him away from martyrdom and offer him a life of pleasure, sensuous gratification, political power, and the end of King's jurisdiction over the Church, the fourth tempter lures him into a craving for spiritual power attained through martyrdom. The fourth tempter prompts Becket to embrace martyrdom for the glory he would receive after his death. He would be revered by all, pilgrims would throng to his shrine, and generations after generations would bend their knees before him in prayer. The playwright also contrasts the glory of a king and a martyr; "King is forgotten when another shall come, Saint and Martyr rule from the tomb" (37). Becket wants to die for the same benefits. The fourth tempter is tempting Becket with his desire, the desire to seek martyrdom for the sake of his spiritual pride and worldly glory.

Becket's Martyrdom Modeled after the Death of Christ

Every martyr is a representative of Christ and his or her death is a representation of Christ's death. Eliot models the martyrdom of Becket after the life and death of Christ. Jesus was carried into exile by his foster father Joseph, so also Becket was in exile for seven years under the

patronage of the French King. Becket's temptation too is modelled after the temptation of Christ, but except for a fourth temptation. There is a discussion about a grand welcome to Archbishop Becket on his return to Canterbury, which also is fashioned after the majestic entry of Jesus into Jerusalem before his death. The interlude, which is the farewell speech of the Archbishop, is designed after the Passover farewell speech of Jesus. Jesus before his crucifixion was interrogated by Pilate and Herod with a demand of subjugation to the authority of Caesar, so is Becket questioned and tormented by the knights for his rejection of the kingly authority. The chorus, which consists of the women of Canterbury, lamenting the death of Becket resembles the women of Jerusalem lamenting Christ's suffering and crucifixion. Christ showed no resistance to his persecutors, so Becket too did not raise an opposing motion on hi slaughter.

The Idea of Martyrdom in the Interlude

In the interlude, which is a short sermon on Christmas Day, the Archbishop explains the true nature of martyrdom and hints at his imminent martyrdom. He invites the congregation to ponder over the significance of Christmas mass, which is a dual celebration, namely the birth of Christ and his death- a time of both joy and mourning. Death by martyrdom is the birth of a saint, a spiritual birth leading to the celebration, and also a physical or corporal death of the person resulting in mourning. Becket in his sermon recalls the disciples of Christ who suffered death by martyrdom, especially St. Stephen the first martyr of the Church. There is rejoicing in the death of a martyred saint because another soul joins the group of saints in heaven and there is mourning in his death for sins of the world that martyred him. The central idea about the true nature of martyrdom is revealed through his words, "A Christian martyrdom is no accident. Saints are not made by accident" (49). A martyr, according to Becket, is not merely one who dies for God, but rather "a true martyr is one who has become the instrument of God" (48-49). In the conclusion of his sermon, Becket recalls Archbishop Elphege, an eleventh-century martyr of Canterbury, and indicates that the city may soon have another martyr.

Immediate Setting for the Martyrdom after the Interlude

Eliot uses the Christmas sermon to fortify the convictions of Becket about martyrdom. After the interlude, the chorus raises a question hinting at martyrdom, "Between Christmas and Easter what work shall be done?" (54) i.e. what stands between birth and resurrection? As the answer to the question is explicit 'death' it can be concluded that even the chorus is convinced about the need for martyrdom. What follows the chorus' remark is the celebration of the feast of St. Stephen, the first martyr of the Church and it is strongly pointed out that the feast is very dear to Becket which could also be suggestive of his love for martyrdom. The next day, 27 December, the feast of John, who fortified the church with the words of God, is celebrated followed by the feast of Holy Infants on 28 December, which commemorates the massacre of infants on Herod's edict. The three priests remind the audience that the fourth day after Christmas, i.e., 29 December has no memorable event to its credit. The day is half gone but half of the day that yet remains may bring the 'critical moment' or 'the eternal design'. The design of God in the martyrdom of Becket is expected to happen to make this day a memorable one.

Martyrdom as God's Will

Eliot presents Becket as "the true martyr who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God and who no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of martyrdom" (49-50). The real conflict of the play is between martyrdom as the will of man and that as the will of God. As the play opens the essential weakness that Becket must still overcome is pride. He takes pride in the role of a martyr that he knows he is destined to play but as long as he feels this pride, as long as he wills his martyrdom, he cannot be a true martyr. In overcoming the fourth temptation he over comes his desire of seeking the glory that his martyrdom offers. Having seen the downfall of his spiritual pride he is subjected to further refinement liberating himself from the influences of his own will. He submits himself to the will of God ready to accept martyrdom if it must come to pass. Now, martyrdom for Becket is not his aspiration but the will of God to be accomplished on His demand.

Martyrdom as a Witness to the Authority of God

Becket through his martyrdom has sought to establish heavenly authority over earthly authority. The conflict between the King and Becket is concerning the supremacy of the authority. As Becket turns to a life of austerity he weighs the authority of the Church, which is considered as the representation of heavenly authority, greater than the authority of the King. He boldly declares it before the knights; "Both before and after I received the ring I have been a loyal vassal to the King. Saving my order, I am at his command, as his most faithful vassal in the land:" (57) thus making a clear distinction between temporal and spiritual authority. In the temptation episode, Becket refuses to forget and forego his spiritual authority for political power and bids the tempter away. Even the third tempter instructs Becket to join hands with the Barons to end the oppressive jurisdiction of the king's court over the bishop's court. His words to the knights are marked as a testimony to the supreme authority of God when he says; "But if you kill me, I shall rise from my tomb to submit my cause before God's throne" (63). The final words of Becket in prayer are yet again an open profession of the superiority of the authority of God and the saints. The true purpose of his martyrdom was thus to establish the authority of God, represented through the Church, over that of the King.

Significance of Martyrdom in the Play

The chorus, the representatives of ordinary humanity, is involved as witnesses in the suffering and martyrdom of Becket. They have realized the significance of Becket's martyrdom for themselves and humanity at large. As in Becket, so too in the chorus, a right attitude to martyrdom is developed. His martyrdom has roused the masses out of their spiritual slumber and complacency. Becket's martyrdom has restored spiritual fertility to the spiritual wasteland of Canterbury, which is evident from the long prayer of the chorus with which the play ends. The play begins with the anxious women of Canterbury assembled in the Cathedral only 'to witness' an act but it ends with those women religiously reinforced by what they have witnessed.

Conclusion

The concept of martyrdom is not strange to us. In the present world where hundreds of thousands, especially militants, are hailed as martyrs for their life-sacrifices, the real martyr can be distinguished from the rest by evaluating their death by the simple criteria used by the dramatist, T.S. Eliot. The play enlightens us not to judge the act of martyrdom by external appearances but by the martyr's internal integrity. Becket's martyrdom reveals the true nature of martyrdom when he is purged through temptations to accept martyrdom as God's design for him and thus testify to the supremacy of the authority of God through his death.

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Jojo Rabbit as Dark Comedy: A Comic Perspective on Hitler's Nazi Germany

Ms. Anila Varghese
M. A. in English Literature
Sree Sankara College, Kalady

Abstract: Writers and film makers have been using dark comedy as a means to portray incidents that are usually treated as taboo. A bona fide narration of historic events likeHolocaust would be too gruesome for the audience to digest. Nevertheless, it is inevitable to understand such abominable episodes in the annals of human history. This is where dark comedy comes into play. Jojo Rabbit (2019) is an attempt to present one of the most revolting historical incidents as a dark comedy. The Academy Award winning movie Jojo Rabbit (2019), directed by Taika Waititi, which was adapted from the book Caging Skies (2004) by Christine Leunens, is dark satire on the Nazi Germany. The ten-year-old Hitler Youth cadet Jojo Betzler is the protagonist of the movie. Jojo is an ardent Hitler fanatic, who hates the Jews with all his heart. Jojo was nicknamed "Jojo Rabbit" as he was unable to kill a rabbit to prove his worthiness at his training camp. The director himself plays the role of Hitler, who is presented as a hilarious character and imaginary friend of Jojo. The outlook of Jojo, who had several prejudices regarding the Jews, undergoes a drastic change, when he comes face to face with a Jewish girl, Elsa Korr, hiding in his house. Rosie, Jojo's mother, is the polar opposite of her son. She is part of the German resistance to Nazism and was instrumental in spreading anti-Nazi messages around the town. As a result of which she was hanged to death. The movie then further intensifies with final war which puts an end to the Nazi regime. This study attempts to analyse the use of dark comedy to effectively portray the horrors of Nazi Germany and the success of the movie in conveying how kids become tools of propaganda. It also presents a child's eye view of war which is both amusing and thought provoking at the same time.

Keywords – *Dark comedy, Holocaust, Nazi Germany* and *Nazism*

Black humour is defined as the humour that is characterised "by the use of morbid, ironic, or grotesquely comic events that laugh at human folly" ("Black humor"144). Black comedy is a comic work that makes use of black humour. The comedies of Aristophanes, Francois Rabelais's *Pantagruel*

(1532), Jonathan Swift's work "A Modest Proposal" (1729), and Voltaire's *Candide* (1759) are antecedents to black comedy. The term 'black humour' was coined by the surrealist theorist Andre Breton in his book *Anthology of Black Humor* (1940). He states that it is Jonathan Swift who is the originator of black humour and gallows humour.

Writers as well as filmmakers have been using dark comedy as a means to portray incidents that are usually treated as taboo. A bona fide narration of historic events like Holocaust would be too gruesome for the audience to digest. Nevertheless, it is inevitable to understand such abominable episodes in the annals of human history. This genre deals with painful issues like death, disease, discrimination and violence.

Nazi party, or "The National Socialist German Workers' Party, or Nazi Party, developed into a mass movement which ultimately led to their rule in Germany through totalitarian means from 1933 to 1945 under the leadership of Adolf Hitler" ("Nazi Party"). They profess an ideology, national socialism, that seemed to support the common man, who were portrayed as victims in a world ruled by Jews. This ideology had as its core Anti-Semitism and notions of German racial superiority. This, in particular, was also a catalog of resentments that had accumulated in German society since November 1918("The Third Reich, 1933-1945").

The Academy Award winning movie *Jojo Rabbit* (2019), directed by Taika Waititi, which was adapted from the book *Caging Skies* (2004) authored by Christine Leunens, is a dark attack on the Nazi Germany. The ten-year-old Hitler Youth cadet Jojo Betzler is the protagonist of the movie. Jojo is an ardent Hitler fanatic, who hates the Jews with all his heart. Jojo was nicknamed "Jojo Rabbit" as he was unable to kill a rabbit to prove his worthiness at his training camp. The director himself plays the role of Hitler, who is presented as a hilarious character and imaginary friend of Jojo.

The outlook of Jojo, who had several prejudices regarding the Jews, undergoes a drastic change, when he comes face to face with a Jewish girl, Elsa Korr, hiding in his house. Rosie, Jojo's mother, is part of the German resistance to Nazism. She was hanged to death. The movie then further intensifies with final war which puts an end to the Nazi regime.

The boy's imaginary friend, Adolf Hitler, is his constant companion. The absurdly comical character of Hitler motivates him and provide advises like a true friend. The position for his first best friend is reserved for the führer,

the saviour of his country. From the beginning itself the character appears to be ridiculous jumping around, asking for "heils" from the little boy.

When Jojo fails to kill a rabbit at the "Hitlerjugend training weekend", he is consoled by Hitler himself: "let them say whatever they want. People used to say a lot of nasty things about me. This guy is a lunatic. Look at that psycho, he's gonna get us all killed" (Jojo *Rabbit*12:39-12:47). It is funny because it's true. Then he reveals his little secret to Jojo: "The rabbit is no coward. The humble little bunny faces the dangerous world every day, hunting carrots for his family, for his country. My empire would be full of all animals. Lions, giraffes, zebras, rhinoceroses, octopuses, rhinoctopuses. Even the mighty rabbit" (Jojo *Rabbit*12:51-13:15).

After giving this advice he instantly offers the boy a cigarette. He then asks Jojo to "be the rabbit". Because "the humble bunny can outwit all of his enemies. He's brave and sneaky and strong" (Jojo *Rabbit*13:24-13:29). Jojo was so inspired by Hitler's speech that he throws a hand grenade to exhibit his strength, as a result of which he gets injured. The slow motion sequence of Hitler running along with the boy is very funny. And the brave warrior Hitler faints when he sees the injured boy, who apparently looks like a Picasso painting.

When Jojo discovers Elsa, a Jewish girl, who was hiding in his home, Hitler gets worried that there might be hundreds of them living in the walls. He compares her to a "little Jewish Jesse Owens Jack the Ripper" (Jojo *Rabbit* 26:55-26:58). And his absurd solution to the problem is to "burn down the house and blame Winston Churchill" (Jojo *Rabbit* 27:04-27:07). Jojo is frustrated that Hitler continues to offer him cigarettes. Hitler advises him to use her to his advantage. Apparently when anyone uses their psychological powers on Hitler, he uses it back on them. When "one-armed pirate Von Stauffenberg tried to blow him up with a table bomb" (*Jojo Rabbit*28:52-28:53), he survived. He says: "the only reason I survived, apart from having bomb proof legs, is because I outwitted old Von Stauffy. I let him think that I was dead, when in actual fact I was absolutely fine. By pretending I was dead I drew out all the traitors" (Jojo *Rabbit* 28:55-29:08).

Likewise he wants Jojo to make Elsa feel safe so that she would stop being cautious as a result of which he could take control. Basically he wants to use reverse psychology. Hitler wants him to remember that "a Jew living in your wall is better than two Jews flying around with their bat wings, climbing

down chimneys and eating innocent Nazis" (Jojo *Rabbit* 29:32-29:38). With this Hitler leaves to have his unicorn dinner.

There is another scene where Jojo is browsing through the library where Hitler devises the genius plan to "use all the books to make a fake floor" (*Jojo Rabbit*46:39-46:40) that Elsa will "fall through straight into a pit full of piranhas and lava and bacon" (*Jojo Rabbit* 46:41-45). Jojo silences him. Hitler urges him to just a "get a book and go" (*Jojo Rabbit* 46:53), because "libraries are dumb" (*Jojo Rabbit*46:54). He gets concerned that Elsa is getting close to Jojo and almost gets hysterical saying that he shouldn't let his German brain be bossed around.

The two kids start to develop a friendship and Jojo tells Hitler that she "doesn't seem like a bad person" (*Jojo Rabbit*1:15:23-1:15:24). This makes Hitler question his loyalty to him and the party. He says: "the German soldier was born out of necessity. Germany depends on the passion of these young men. Passion and readiness to fall for the Fatherland, despite the futile efforts of ally war profiteers, who send their ill-prepared armies, clumsily, into the lair of the wolf. And only zealous men, who stand steadfast in the face of the enemy will be etched in German memory forever. And it is up to you to decide if you want to be remembered, or disappear without a trace, like a pitiful grain of sand into a desert of insignificance" (Jojo *Rabbit* 1:15:39-1:16:15). Even though Hitler is portrayed as a comical figure his charismatic speeches add to the charm of the character.

In the last scene that Hitler appears, he is supposed to be dead. He rushes to Jojo's room with the bullet wound in his head. He refuses to let Jojo go. He is furious that Jojo has fallen in love with Elsa. Since she is too old for him and he is ugly, Jojo should forget her and go to his rightful place with Hitler. Jojo refuses Hitler's request to hail him and he kicks him out through the window. Their interaction throughout the movie shows the progression of Jojo's character from a blind fanatic to a normal boy.

The main reason for Jojo's change in character is Elsa. When they first meet each other, Elsa threatens to cut off his Nazi head if he tell on her. Jojo concludes that the situation is a "Mexican stalemate" since both of them would be adversely affected if Elsa would be found hidden in his home. Jojo agrees to let her stay on the condition that she should tell him everything about the Jewish race. Elsa says that they are just like them, but human. But she has to give him the answers he want to hear, that they were demons who love money.

She tells him that they are "allergic to food" (*Jojo Rabbit*38:04). Things like "cheese, bread and meat will kill them instantly" (*Jojo Rabbit*38:07-38:08) and "biscuits are lethal" (*Jojo Rabbit*38:14-38:15). Elsa is grateful because Rosie, Jojo's mother, treats her like a person. But Jojo doesn't think that she is an actual person. She was "weak like an eyelash" (*Jojo Rabbit*38:38-38:39), but he was "born of Aryan ancestry" (*Jojo Rabbit* 38:41-38:42) and his "blood is the colour of a pure red rose" (*Jojo Rabbit* 38:43-38:46). And his "eyes were blue" (*Jojo Rabbit*38:48-38:49). Elsa wrestle with him to show her strength. She says that there were" no weak Jews" (*Jojo Rabbit*38:54-38:57). They were "descended from those, who wrestle angels and kill giants" (*Jojo Rabbit*38:58-39:00). They were "chosen by God" (*Jojo Rabbit*39:01-39:03). But he was "chosen by a pathetic little man, who can't even grow a full moustache" (*Jojo Rabbit*39:04-39:08).

Jojo's next demand was to "draw a picture of where the Jews live" (*Jojo Rabbit* 44:31-44:33). "Where they eat, sleep and where the queen Jew lays the eggs" (*Jojo Rabbit* 44:34-44:38). She draws the picture of his head where they actually live. She refuses to talk about her family but tells him about her fiancée, who was fighting in the resistance. Elsa talks about how he proposed her "on the banks of the Fluss. He knelt down like a proper gentleman, recited a poem by Rilke, his favourite poet. And when she said yes, they danced into the night" (*Jojo Rabbit*45:11-45:18). She says that he will come to rescue her and they will live together in Paris. Jojo doesn't like the fact that she is "turning her back on Germany forever" (*Jojo Rabbit* 45:30-45:31). But Germany "turned on her first" (*Jojo Rabbit*45:32-45:33). Jojo, who is "too busy" for a girlfriend, makes fun of Paris calling it a "dumb-cheese-snail-baguette land" (Jojo *Rabbit* 45:39-45:42). Elsa promises that he will make time for love someday. She says: "you'll meet someone, and spend your days, dreaming of the moments you can hold them in your arm again. That's love" (*Jojo Rabbit* 45:52-46:00).

Jojo then writes fake letters from Nathan in which he uses lines from Rilke: "we need, in love, to practise only this: letting each other go" (*Jojo Rabbit* 47:37-47:42). In the letter he writes that he wants to break up with her and he was not really with resistance, but unemployed and quite fat. Realising that this letter broke Elsa's heart, he writes another letter telling her that he won't breakup with her and that she should stay alive. He also praises himself: "Thank God you've been taken care of by that kid, who I must say is a remarkable young man beyond his years, and brave too" (*Jojo Rabbit* 48:49-48:56). His little heart was changing.

Elsa continues to tell him stories about Jews. According to her, "in the beginning, they used to live in caves, deep, deep in the centre of the earth. Scary places, full of strange and wonderful creatures all with one thing in common- the love for art. After many years of developing magic and spells, they slowly moved out of the caves and into towns. Some of them still stayed in the caves, in animal bodies" (*Jojo Rabbit*53:29-54:06). She draws the creature for him. He was curious about its horns, which she says were under its hair. When asked about her horns, she says that she was too young to have them. They were supposed to "grow when they turn twenty-one" (*Jojo Rabbit*54:35-54:35).

"These days they live among normal people, but often they take over a house and hang from the ceiling when they sleep, like bats" (*Jojo Rabbit*54:39-54-46). They could also read each other's minds, but "couldn't read German minds, because their heads are too thick for them to penetrate. Like birds, their true language sounds like singing. They were attracted to shiny things like crystals, glass and gold" (*Jojo Rabbit*54:56-55:14). But Jojo has learned in school that Jews love ugliness. Jojo believes everything she says just like how he believes propaganda. He was gathering all this information from her to write a book about Jews, which he titles "Yoohoo Jew". It was supposed to be an expose on Jews.

Elsa slowly turns into Jojo's friend. Her presence comforts him. He gives her some colour pencils, but doesn't want her to draw him. No one wants to see the picture of a cripple. He would be one of those guys who won't be kissed. Elsa offers to kiss him, but he denies because of two reasons: "Thing number One-It's illegal for Nazis and Jews to hang out like we do, let alone kiss; thing number two-It'd just be a sympathy kiss, which doesn't count" (*Jojo Rabbit* 1:04:22-1:04:35). Elsa tells him that he wasn't a Nazi. He's just "a ten-year-old kid, who likes swastikas and likes dressing up in a funny uniform, and wants to be part of a club" (*Jojo Rabbit*1:04:44-1:04:50). He was clearly not one of those inhumane people.

When Jojo finds her mother hanged to death, he tries to stab Elsa, who might be responsible for her death, but he couldn't. Elsa finally opens up about her family. She reveals the fact that it was at the station that she last saw her parents. They were put on a train. She escaped and slowly, found her way back to the city. At first, one of her father's friends safeguarded her. Later on another friend, and then friends of their friends, and so on, till Rosie sheltered her. She was still there, but her "parents went to a place you don't come back from" (*Jojo Rabbit*1:21:57-1:22:00). Jojo asks her: "what's the first thing

you'll do when you're free" (*Jojo Rabbit*1:22:05-1:22:07). She says that she would dance.

When the war ends he lies to her saying that Germany won, because he wants her to stay with him. But when he goes through his book about the Jews, the last picture catches his attention- a rabbit in a cage and a boy with the key to its freedom. Jojo realises what he had to do. He drafts another fake letter from Nathan, explaining a plan for escape to Paris. But Nathan was dead. He died the previous year due to tuberculosis. When Elsa thanks him, he finally confesses his love for her. She too loves him, but as a younger brother. When they get outside she realises that Germany has lost, and gives Jojo a well-deserved slap for lying to her. And then they start dancing.

Even though Rosie, Jojo's mother, bring some elements of humour, she is a more realistic character. She tries to teach her son important lessons in life. She bravely hides a Jew in her home and work against the Nazis. She did what she could do to make a difference which resulted in her death. Jojo's father, Paul Betzler, is also involved in her work.

The "Hitlerjugend training weekend" in the beginning of the movie uses the medium of dark comedy to convey how propaganda is instilled in little kids. Captain Klenzendorf, known as Captain K, appears throughout the movie. He is accompanied by Sub-officer Finkel and Fräulein Rahm. Captain K explains how he "lost a perfectly good eye in a totally preventable enemy attack" (*Jojo Rabbit*05:12-05:16), during operation "screw up". He satirises the Nazi government saying: "even though it would appear our country is on a back foot, and there isn't much hope in that's winning the war. Apparently, we're doing just fine" (*Jojo Rabbit*5:42-5:48).

The little kids are provided with a very special and expensive weapon- "Deutsches Jungvolk Daggers". The boys would be involved in activities such as "marching, bayonet drills, grenade throwing, trench digging, map reading, gas defence, camouflage, ambush techniques, war games, firing guns, and blowing stuff up" (*Jojo Rabbit*6:14-6:22). The girls on the other hand would be practising "important womanly duties, such as dressing wounds, making beds, and learning how to get pregnant" (*Jojo Rabbit*6:26-6:32). Fräulein Rahm who had eighteen kids for Germany says that it was "such a great year to be a girl" (*Jojo Rabbit*06:38-06:39). This scene also points a finger at the sexism of the time.

The kids mind is filled with ridiculous ideas about the Jews in the camp. They portray the Jews as monsters with fangs, serpent tongue and scales. They are

taught the reason for how the Jews got "scales- because once upon a time a Jewish man mated with a fish" (*Jojo Rabbit*07:39-07:43). And of course, "the Aryans are one thousand times more civilized and advanced than any other race" (*Jojo Rabbit*7:45-7:51). They then proceed to another fun activity- burning of books. Jojo's friend Yorki is scared of the Jews and worried that he might not recognise them. But Jojo is confident. He would "feel its head for horns. And they smell like Brussel sprouts" (*Jojo Rabbit*08:49-08:53). Jojo dreams about catching a Jew and giving it to Hitler, to get into his personal guards. There is another scene in the swimming pool where Captain K teaches "the HG boys water warfare training. In case they ever need to go to battle in the swimming pool" (*Jojo Rabbit*34:54-35:00). Fräulein Rahm talks about her uncle. "A Jew hypnotized him, and he became a massive drunk, and a gambler, and he cheated on his wife, and he had an inappropriate relationship with her sister, and then he drowned in an unrelated accident. But it was the Jew's fault" (*Jojo Rabbit*35:45-36:00).

"In time of war, it's typical, sometimes even useful, to demonize your enemy... Caricatures and jokes, not always in the best of taste, rise to the forefront because it's our way of relieving aggression" ("Der Fuehrer's Face"). Leonard Maltin, a famous film historian, in the introduction to the Disney short *Der Fuehrer's Face* (1943) stated thus. Taika Waititi is not the first or the best director to bring a Nazi comedy to screen. Nevertheless, there is a catharsis in making fun of the genocidal maniac, Hitler.

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Nonsense Narratives

Ms. Alia Amreen
B. A. in English Literature
BMS College for Women, Bengaluru

Abstract: Although Lewis Carol and Edward Lear are considered to be the writers who have introduced the genre of nonsense literature, the history argues that it was introduced much prior to the age of these writers. This paper focuses on the study of origin of nonsense literature, its history and how it was prominent in verses and then evolved to prose which has then been made into movies. Rather than focusing on one single story, my research has been one exploring this genre in different styles, such as verse, prose and movies; and to study what was the significance of this literature then and now. It includes analysis of stories and movies that usually fall under children's stories, but entertain both the children and adults alike. Since nonsense literature has been a form that is not really talked about, the aim of this paper has been more about informing the readers about this form in a way that will make them want to explore this genre in a more specific way. When we hear the word nonsense, we assume that it is something which is meaningless, but literary nonsense is something that contradicts to that very notion. Literary nonsense is a type of fiction that defies common sense and creates a whole new world through the manipulation of words. Even though the text may seem illogical at first, it does remain logical. It is difficult to define this genre in clear words, as this has the examples in texts of other genres too.

Keywords: *Nonsense, Narratives, Movies and Stories*

Lewis Carol and Edward Lear are considered to be the writers who introduced this genre, but this genre was started in seventeenth century (which was very much prior to the period in which Carol and Lear lived) in the form of poems and enjoyed popularity. These poems were and are still supremely enjoyable and richly inventive. Nonsense poetry was not something that jumped-in in the texts here and there, it was not something that was timeless and fell under universal category. It was not something that was invented by Lear or Carol nor was it an exclusive product of nineteenth century as we commonly believe. Nonsense poetry was typically a literary

phenomenon, it was not something that was dwelling, and it was something invented, learned and transmitted.

The first verses of nonsense poetry in English were written by John Hoskyns in 1611 and then prolifically written by John Taylor and also Tom Coryate. Taylor and Coryate were competing writers. They used to mock each other and write poems which disrespected and offended each other, until Taylor found Hoskyns's poem and adopted that way of writing and that became his induction to art of nonsense poetry, which was then carried out by Coryate too. After Coryate's death Taylor redeemed his own nonsense writing (feud with Coryate). At the end of a humorous pamphlet published by him in 1620, Taylor added 23 lines of verses which was titled "certain blank verses written of purpose to no purpose", this was nonsense poetry and the genre was now an established part of his works. He continued writing in this genre and also published books, one of which was 'Sir Gregory nonsence' which bought him name, the books later had been mentioned in a play performed in England and there were many other poets who started to write in this genre, influenced by Taylor.

One link between seventeenth century nonsense (Taylor's last poem) and nineteenth century nonsense is that, a poem published in 1815 by an American author Henry Coggswell, 'Lunar Stanzas' is considered as the best works of 19th century nonsense. It was called "among the best examples of early writers" and another study defines it as "one of the most astonishing nonsense poems of this period", hence we can conclude that they had read Taylor's works. In early nineteenth century, Robert Southey wrote in one of his essays which was on John Taylor and described the verses from his book Sir Gregory nonsense as "the verses of grandiloquous nonsense... honest right rampant nonsense". This means even after more than a century of Taylor's death nonsense did play a role, indirectly in flourishing the genre which found its finest examples in prose works of writers like Edward Lear, Lewis Carol and Rohl Dahl. Some of these works, have also been made into movies that are enjoyed by children and adults alike. Hence one can say that nonsense literature is not just written for kids as it is commonly perceived. Nonsense in seventeenth century was written by adults for adults. As the time passed this genre was fragmented and adopted in various genres, hence we only find instances of the genre of nonsense literature and very few complete works based on nonsense literature, and this is also the reason why only children's stories and nursery rhymes are considered works of nonsense.

This form was unknown to readers of English when Hoskyns first wrote it. Although this form of nonsense poems was absent in classical literature, various genres of nonsense and near nonsense existed in Germany, France, Italy and Spain in medieval and renaissance periods. Some of these works are close to the kind of poems Hoskyns introduced. Earliest known work of this genre was written in German in 1210. Nonsense genre was something that had peculiarly intimate connection with literary world.

A historian named Paul Zumthor has made a useful distinction between "relative" and "absolute" nonsense. In relative nonsense each line or couplet makes sense in itself and it is only juxtaposition of them in the verse that is without meaning, whereas in absolute nonsense the transgressions of sense occur within the smallest units of poetry.

Some of the finest examples are 'Hey didle didle!' a now nursery rhyme which was a rhyme mentioned in Thomas perston's play in 1596; 'I saw a peacock' dates from seventeenth century around 1665 which was found in common place book, 'the great panjandrum himself' was written by Samuel Foote in eighteenth century and many more. All these are now considered children's poems or nursery rhymes but in that period were meant for adults, which makes one conclude that nonsense was not written to express the strangeness of unconscious thought but to engage in highly conscious world which the reader could imagine while reading.

Books like Alice in wonderland, looking through the glass, Charlie and the chocolate factory, The BFG, Matilda, Fantastic Mr.Fox, are pieces of works which are high in visual imagery and they not only appeal to the senses of readers but also let the reader transport themselves into the world of those texts. When we read these books as kids, we enjoyed every bit of it, and also wished to be in those worlds, at least for a while, we were unaware that those existed only inside books. We learnt so many things from characters in those worlds which we still apply in real world. When the readers who have read those books see the movies of same books it is a treat to their eyes as the readers for that duration see the world which they had imagined come alive. Some of the movies and books we loved as kids, we still admire and watch with the same excitement, and most of those include books which had animals speaking, nonhumans being personified, things which have no possibility in real; because the nonsense is what make sense to us sometimes.

Conclusion

A nonsense text builds in the readers the feelings of compassion and wisdom. It helps the readers advance mentally, and most importantly while reading a nonsense text the reader is completely transported to the world of text which helps the readers think about its sense. Once the readers finish reading the text or watching the movie based on the text, how they interpret it is left to them. It can have hidden in those a message that the writer wanted to covey, there can be hidden in those an advice the reader or the viewer is mostly in need of. It can have no meaning and yet have a positive influence on the reader. That is what sets nonsense literature apart from the other genres, it can have meaning or no meaning at all and still can impact the readers or the viewers. It serves as the escape from ordinary, the chaos inside the world of these texts sometimes gives readers the peace of mind they seek in real world.

The nonsense genre can be brought back into picture again. This way of writing can be adopted to write political satires which have been greatly appreciated. The combination of nonsense literature and political satire can be a great source of infotainment to the teen and adult readers, and can unveil to the readers the kind of information that is usually not spoken freely in spite of being in democratic countries. This can serve as a great source of knowledge about happenings in the world which are never thrown a light upon.

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Sentient Computer and the Future of Humanity

Mr. Reshma W. Rodrigues
M. A. in English Literature
St. Albert's College (Autonomous), Kerala

Abstract: The paper aims to analyse the 2014 film *Transcendence* directed by Wally Pfister and the possibility of the sentient computer to be true in the future The paper mainly focuses on the scientific possibilities of the film, that is, the advanced computer system, Nano-technology, Artificial Intelligence, connecting human mind with the computer. The true aim of this paper is to find out whether it is possible to transfer human consciousness to the computer and will it be a threat to the humanity. Elon Musk's ongoing project "Neuralink" shows the possibility of the transfer of human consciousness to the computer. Rene Descartes' "Theory of Mind" is used to explain the idea of Artificial Intelligence.

Keywords: *Nano-technology, Human consciousness, Artificial Intelligence, Advanced Computer, Theory of Mind.*

Science fiction is a type of novel in which the stories often tell the future of science and technology. It should be noted that science fiction is not only about stories but ideas and theories. These stories involve partly truth and partly fiction or scientific theories. These narratives are fictitious but based on science. It relies to a large extent on scientific facts, theories and principles to support its settings, characters, themes and plots, which is what makes it different from fantasy. Science fiction is an excellent educational tool for people to think seriously about the future. The narrative of science fiction is so exciting because we are fascinated by the unknown facts and the imagined future world. The term science fiction was used by one of the main proponents of the genre in the 1920s by the American publisher Hugo Gernsback popularized, if not invented. The Hugo Prize has been awarded annually by the World Science Fiction Association since 1953 and is named after him. Hugo Gernsback published a pulp magazine that originally reprinted the stories of Verne, Wells, and Edgar Allan Poe. This magazine calls his novel "Science", which combines romance with prophetic novels and scientific knowledge. Frankenstein; Or, Mary Shirley's Modern Prometheus is considered by many literary experts as the first true work of science fiction. Le Voyage dans Ia Lune, created by George Melies in 1902, is generally considered the first science fiction film. It is based on what Jules

Verne and H.G. Wells described in his description of a spacecraft that was launched to the moon in the Grand Canyon.

Transcendence is a 2014 American science fiction thriller directed by photographer Wally Pfister and written by Jack Paglen. This is a pure science fiction movie. When a scientist's driving force for artificial intelligence is loaded into such a program, his consciousness takes on dangerous Significance. This film tells the extreme version of artificial intelligence and its potential to destroy humanity. Artificial intelligence is a collection of many different technologies that work together to enable machines to perceive, understand, act and learn at a level similar to that of human intelligence. Perhaps this is why it seems that everyone has a different definition of artificial intelligence, and artificial intelligence is more than the same. The term artificial intelligence was coined in the "Dartmouth Artificial Intelligence Summer Research Project". The conference led by John McCarthy defined the scope and goals of artificial intelligence and is widely regarded as the birth of artificial intelligence as we know it today.

The contribution of philosophy to artificial intelligence is undisputed. George Luger's artificial intelligence book "Artificial Intelligence: Structures and Strategies for Solving Complex Problems" provides detailed information about artificial intelligence. For George Luger, the natural starting point for studying the philosophical basis of artificial intelligence is from Aristotle, because his philosophical works form the basis of modern science. The observations and writings of the great philosopher and scientist Galileo contradict the "obvious truths of the time" and use mathematics as a tool to test them, challenging our understanding that the world always works as a sample. Epistemological works such as "The Theory of Mind" by René Descartes also have a great influence on artificial intelligence, especially in two respects. In other words, it establishes the separation of body and mind. This forms the methodological basis for the independent existence of the mental process of artificial intelligence and its own laws. Once it is determined that the body and mind are separate, it is necessary to find innovative ways to connect the two. Lugar believes that the philosophical tradition of empiricism and rationality is the most prominent pressure for the development of artificial intelligence. For the rationalist, the outside world can be clearly reconstructed by mathematical rules. On the other hand, empiricists do not believe in a world composed of clear and unique ideas, but rather believe in explaining knowledge through introspective but empirical

psychology. According to Lugar, this knowledge plays an important role in the development of AI structures and programs. Therefore, the philosophical basis of artificial intelligence treats thinking as a form of calculation.

Russell and Norvig's philosophical analysis of intelligent agents is based on the premise that intelligence is a form of rational behavior; smart agents take the best action in a given situation. Philosophy conceptualized this idea by equating the behavior of the brain with the behavior of a machine, which later formed the basis of AI. It operates on the knowledge encoded in a certain internal language, and the idea can be used to select actions to be carried out. The movie "*Transcendence*" shows the latest version of artificial intelligence and the possibility of a sensitive computer becoming a reality in the future. This movie tells the story of Dr. Will Caster, an artificial intelligence scientist who created an omniscient machine that appears to be perceptual. When Caster was poisoned by Anti-Tech terrorists, his wife Evelyn uploaded her thoughts to her artificial intelligence supercomputer and eventually the internet kept him alive. However, when your mind is loaded on the Internet, it needs more ability to access all content.

Transcendence is more like an art film, it can explore different scientific and philosophical concepts more than anything. This is not a movie trying to become a Hollywood blockbuster. *Transcendence* shows us a world of possible characters. Continue to push for different answers to questions that make us question our place in the world. What makes us human? Are we the man-made machines that carry our consciousness? Do you have a soul born at that time? If not, what makes humans so special? This list goes on. Does artificial intelligence really pose a threat to the future of mankind? In the movie "*Transcendence*", Dr. Will Custer has invented a sensitive computer. But anti-tech terrorists poisoned it because they believed that this computer would pose a huge threat to mankind. Evelyn Custer loads the consciousness of her dying husband into the computer, and the concepts of sensitivity and personality are forever blurred. Once his consciousness merged with computer hardware, the first thing Will did was to ask for more power, which seemed reasonable. His friend and colleague Max Waters doubted that Will was really the brain of the machine. After a fierce argument with Evelyn, Max was expelled. At Will's request, Evelyn hooked it up to the satellite, like pulling a bird out of a cage. Will's consciousness immediately traversed the vast network of computers and electronic devices, and he suddenly had access to information and systems in an unprecedented way. The financial

markets will be manipulated to finance companies owned by his wife Evelyn. This allows you to buy and build a facility that can do two things. In other words, empower it and provide a place for advanced research. Two years after the construction of the company, a worker was attacked by locals and his condition was very bad. Will has built infinite power and nanotechnology in his company, using high-tech equipment, he immediately cured this person, but this person's consciousness is now controlled by Will, just like Will is in that person. Will spoke to him and tried to touch Evelyn. The will can control it, because human beings are now a combination of technology and organic materials. As a by-product of the injection of nano robots, workers have a powerful force.

When the film enters the final part, will install nanobots in various places in air, water, ground, and many places. Their goal appears to be to create a global super consciousness that can prevent disease, purify air and water, and rebuild almost any material. However, the price of this global inclusion is that humanity will have to stop being human.

The computerized world is back to the normal world. Artificial intelligence may or may not pose a huge threat to mankind. In the next 100 years, we will be able to see modified versions of everything. Now we are also living in a new generation of technology, and in the next 100 years, the world will become total unrecognizable. Nowadays, due to computer technology, people are not interested in reading, calculating or finding words. I know that computers make everything easier, but it makes humans lazy. They are just too lazy to do easier things, such as calculations. So, if this is the current situation, what will it be 100 years from now? People will become more and more lazy, and artificial intelligence will rule the human world. Creation will control the Creator. People will no longer think and, as a result, their ability to think will disappear. There will be no place for poetry and novels in the future. Artificial intelligence will surpass human intelligence. Artificial intelligence is good up to a point, but after getting through it all, it becomes difficult. The world cannot be controled, led by any machine, it must be controlled by humans.

A good example showing the possibility of transferring human consciousness to a computer is Elon Musk's "Neuralink". Elon Musk, the founder of Tesla and Space X, entered the field of neuroscience through Neuralink in late August 2020. He called it a "Fitbit with small wires in the skull." The device

uses electrodes to measure brain activity and hopes to one day correct the abnormal electrical activity behind blindness, paralysis, anxiety and addiction. He demonstrated Neuralink on healthy pigs. When the pig's neurons are fired, it will make a crackling sound of electrical activity.

Musk's goal is to build a neural implant that can synchronize the human brain with artificial intelligence, allowing humans to use only their thoughts to control the artificial limbs of computers and other machines. If Neuralink can be used to control computers through thoughts, then the time to control humans through AI as in the movie "*Transcendence*" will not be too far.

Musk has repeatedly warned that artificial intelligence will soon become as smart as humans, and said that when it does, we should all be afraid, because human survival is in danger. If artificial intelligence surpasses humans in general intelligence and becomes "super intelligence", then it may be difficult or impossible for humans to control. The second source of concern is that a sudden and unexpected "intelligence explosion" may surprise unsuspecting humans.

If what humans do is done by artificial intelligence, what is the purpose of humans? Humans will no longer participate in making anything. Every job will be done by artificial intelligence, literature will have nowhere to go, philosophy, theory or anything will go no where. Therefore, if artificial intelligence does not handle it properly, it will pose a great that to humanity. Movie "*Transcendence*" shows nanotechnology, installing nano robots everywhere, making cloned versions of everything, so we can control nature. It is possible, but by then there will be no more natural things, everything will be man-made. So, artificial intelligence has advantages and disadvantages. If not used accordingly, it can pose a great that to humans. Then in the next 50 to 100 years, it is possible to transfer human thoughts to computers, and Neuralink is the beginning.

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The Absence of Memory: A Deconstructive Study of Milan Kundera's Novel, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*

Ms. Zeenia Bhat
M. A. in English Literature
Central University of Kashmir

Abstract: Memories have played an essential role in gathering the absent material for the modern distorted identities. When we get conscious of everything around us (the present), we struggle against what is lost or what has been taken away and what is missing (the absent), then the memories stand as our only weapon to confront the relinquished. In the postmodern novel *Laughter and forgetting*, Milan Kundera sets up a fight between individual memory and collective history. Memory stands as a distinctively important tool to protest against the oppression of pseudo-history established by the controlling power. The "forgetfulness" of the people of their present, forces them to rely on a history that would in reality endeavour their real identities. The oppressive hegemonic forces in the novel *Laughter and Forgetting* try to eradicate such memories that remain a threat to their execution of power. Derrida, when critiqued against Edmund Husserl's[1] epistemological phenomenology, was conferring to the meaning in the presence of the absence, where the being/presence and the not being/lack are not separated but supplemented by each other. The experience collected consciously always has an unconscious to it, which is essential for creating meaning, a realisation of the absence in the presence. Memories are constantly under the pressure of oblivion created by such powers, which are inevitable. Here in Kundera's novel, memory acts as a source of conformity of the absence, the unconscious that leads to the deconstruction of the present. Kundera, executing the postmodern style, disturbs the solid line, which has been created between the presence of the manipulated history and the absence of the memory, causing disruption, therefore, signifying the presence of the meaning in the unseen. Kundera attempts to create a consciousness that would recognise the unconscious and enable people to recognise the absence of memory. The actualisation of the presence of lack (of memory), hence is the conscious attempt to find or create a personal meaning. The paper intends

to present how Kundera uses means of deconstruction to oppose authority and unravels the absence (disunity) of unconscious memory lying under.

Keywords: *Memories, Absence, Presence, Derrida, Deconstruction, Milan Kundera and Postmodernism.*

Introduction

"*Your memories are the first step to consciousness; how can you learn from your mistakes if you don't remember them*," West world 2016, a well-known television series, directed by Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy, draws our attention to the importance of memory in the modern world. Memories have often been nostalgic remembrance of our past, something we count on to give meaning to our present. An action made in the past leaves traces visible in the spectrum of the future and the present. A cloud created over us moves as we do and think of the things we have lived. It's a nostalgic remembrance that continuously directs our attention, a certain glance in a mirror that travels through the past and sticks back into our eyes by the medium of reality. When we lose someone close to us, we form that cloud and out of them a series of memories that could give meaning to their life even if they are not present. An individuality that we tend to forget as the number of days since we lost them increases, they fade. Only what keeps them alive is their absence. Our memories wrap them as a gift that we subtly open and embrace when we recognise the lack. This absence somehow transforms even the present into a longing echo, made of what was already created. It is possible if we try to forget, we excuse the pain that somehow made us conscious of the person who is lost; we remain in deliberate unconsciousness to avoid the truth of longing for the past and remembrances in the present. We experience this, as Kundera has also made us experience in his book. He makes the constructed distinction of the past and the present disappear, some of what Einstein told in his theory of relativity, where time remains as an illusion. Past, like the ghost of Betal[3] sits on our shoulders and constantly asks questions to revive our consciousness. There is a constant past whirling as an entire universe that affects the present probabilities. Past never really is gone. It is somehow stuck to an endless philosophical struggle to discover ourselves by knowing of our remains, dug deep down into our lived lives to structure out what can be formed on its surface. Is the past that important? What is in the past that we always go back to? What is absent now that we need to fill it from the prior?

Some of these questions are answered from reading "*The Book of Laughter and Forgetting.*" written by Milan Kundera.In the novel, through various characters, Kundera demonstrates a continuous search of meaning between solid political beliefs and tries to live life's present by collecting something that has been lost to us—a recollection of memory. "The lost" (memory) signifies Derrida's concept of the absent, which shatters the binaries of past and the present, trying to reconstruct the structure in the utterance of the meaning.

Forgetting and Presence.

"You begin to liquidate people," Hübl said, "by taking away its memory. You destroy its books, its culture, its history. And then others write other books for it, give another culture to it, invent another history for it. Then the people slowly begin to forget what it is and what it was. The world at large forgets it still faster." [4]

Presence, according to Derrida, is how the present defines its meaning by conscious relation of the things in reality. Now, this presence is put into question by Kundera through associating "the present " to "forgetting" which in Kundera's novel is a deliberate instrument of control by forces in power, in Derridean terms the *logos*[5] *or the Center*.Kundera, by this attempt of making people aware of their own forgetfulness (as seen in the paragraph above), tries to establish the fact that the meaning for people which stands in reality and is seen by them in the present, is counterfeiting in other words, an illusion produced. Kundera's focus on the "forgetting" attempts to make people understand the deviance from Derridian affirmation of the free play. The affirmation of the meaninglessness (forgetting)that will also be affirming that there is a play of signification where we are forced to doubt the meaning of the sign, in this case, the Power/Center, which is the source of signification/meaning. "This affirmation then determines the non-centre otherwise than as loss of the centre. And it plays the game without security. For there is a sure Freeplay: that which is limited to the substitution of given and existing, present, pieces." [6]

Forgetting, which is a deliberate activity formulated by the people in power to make them forget the past and believe in a "transcendental signifier" that would balance their structure of authority. Kundera strives to create a certain imbalance. Kundera's forgetfulness attempts to generate "diffaránce", where

power stands for the "transcendental signifier" and "the presence" of the authoritarian rule or the history they strife to establish. By recognising this "differánce", the play of signification of the meaning, one can understand the immediate "reason" symbolised and the absence of certainty in it.

The novel *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (henceforth LF), refers to Czechoslovakia from 1948 to the late 1970s, under the communist regime and Prague, which is the capital and an artefact of the lost culture often visited the strict regiment by the characters in the novel. The communists impose a tyrant rule in Czechoslovakia and attempt to destroy the non-communist old memories and transform those into a new communist history. Kundera calls the state "capital of forgetting" as the new regime tries to obliviate memory of who they were and impose a new identity by creating a pseudo-history. "Clementis was charged with treason and hanged. The propaganda section immediately made him vanish from history and, of course, from all photographs. Ever since Gottwald has been alone on the balcony." [7] Here, in the novel Kundera mentions how a political leader, when accused of treason, was removed from history. A leader who went against the Grandness/totality of the present government was doomed by them, proving that history is controlled and manipulated by the people in power and of initiating forgetfulness.

Hannah Arendt a holocaust survivor and a philosopher in her famous book *Origins of Totalitarianism* gives an explanation how such regimes work. (as shown in LF) according to Arendt such despotic governments establish a "law of nature/history" which she also referred to as "positive laws" in which a particular law or history is idealized, giving the Authority a divine power and offering a long dreamt stability to a human by rationalizing its theories. This enables the common human to accept the law/history somehow and be an unconscious slave to it. A condition of hysteria is created, a mass consensus, that Antonio Gramsci called hegemony such that the ideology of the governing mass becomes its principal of action. (In the case of LF, communism). The consent that is formed paves a way for the regiment to implement its totalitarian rule and create a new manufactured history to add to their glorification and is kept in check by executing Terror which eliminates opposition. History, for Derrida too, was created by the belief in an absolute meaning, an episteme/law created by the presence of *logos*. However, Derrida referred to an "event" that causes disruption of "the

presence"/ the centre, and which also puts the formed "history" into question. Derrida was also against such totality that hasn't evolved and remains in the constraints of absolute power. Kundera in the novel is creating such an "event" where the present structure is doubted by the conscious awareness of the presence/forgetting and the centre/*logos* is put into suspicion. Kundera disrupts the structurality of the system by placing the Power/authority into question, hence creating uncertainty. To analyse and understand the deception in the present, LF expands its realm so that there is no boundary seen between history and fiction; into a daydream-like reality that questions the meaning of the present; a magic realism to modify the present sense of illusion. One such example is the circle dance, the things that occurred to Tamina on the island of children, and her rigorous attempt to dive back in the past, that has been lost.

These delusions are not a sign of higher exaltation but a symptom of the disease of forgetting. Where forgetting is seen as a disease caused by the people in power. The silence of sleep that would turn into the death of everything remembered, their identity and of the past.

In *Forces and Law: The mystical foundation of the authority,* Derrida questions the power, which disturbs the balance of equality and can also be destroyed by adhering every time to the absent, in LF the memory, by which we can continuously dissent against what is the absolute, the stagnant. Such texts as LF inquires history and its authority and the authenticity of such a present is analysed through the memory of different characters in the novel.

Memory and Absence

The struggle of a modern human has been to associate their life to a purpose, to give meaning and this question of the present, what is our purpose? Has been considered unanswered if not conferred with the past. Once aware of the induced "forgetfulness", and the formation of a collective history that has provided an identity by devouring the previous, Memory is what keeps the individuality alive. Each character in the novel, especially Tamina, is conscious of forgetting and struggles to put her remembered identity, her past, her memory into reality. Goethe said "He who cannot draw for three thousand years is living from hand to mouth." [8] In order to recognise our self in the present a glance back is needed essentially, however as mentioned before, history is put into doubt and hence is eliminated by Kundera as means

to recognize the Self, but your own memory, created by individual experience is to be relied upon. Everything is taken away that the people recognise, and whatever is unrecognised by the communists/new regime is destroyed. Kundera in LF makes us conscious of such loss, which could have helped us find the individual identity utterly in danger. Memory remains the only device for interpreting the present and a means to invade the existing consciousness. This loss to the experience, in other words, the absence, can only be retrieved through recollection of the past to present a meaning that it was devoid of. "...she had fallen far back to a time when her husband did not exist, when he was neither in memory nor desire and thus when there was neither weight nor remorse." [9]

Without memory (conscious of the absent), there is no sense of the effect of the present on us; the weight of the present cannot be lived if we continue to live in the lightness of the being. When one gets cognizant of both loss of memory and the Memory itself, one becomes truly informed. The binary created by Kundera of forgetfulness and memory is an attempt to reconstruct both of its meanings. Creating a binary and deconstructing it also removes the hierarchy which Derrida opposed in many of his works, especially in *Positions.* Derrida critiqued the presence to make us aware of the absence. For him, the present would not initiate meaning/meaninglessness if the absence not is recognised.

"At the very moment "I" make a shopping list, I know… that it will only be a list if it implies my absence, if it already detaches itself from me to function beyond my "present" act and if it is utilisable at another time, in the absence of my being-present-now… in a moment, but one which is already the following moment, the absence of the now of writing." [10]

Derrida here implies the deduction that what is present/reality is always to be questioned. He put the function and knowing of meaning beyond the conscious or tangible. The unconscious, which is the absent, is equally important, without which the consciousness, the real, is not comprehended faultlessly. *"...this movement of Free play, permitted by the lack, the absence of a centre or origin, is the movement of supplementary. One cannot determine the center, the sign which supplements it, which takes its place in its absence—because this sign adds itself, occurs in addition, over and above, comes as a supplement."* [11]

The present is equally important as the absence is a missing part of it. The conscious effort of understanding the present should also bring to our attention the absent or the unconscious. Both can give some meaning—a supplement to each other, presence and the absence. In LF forgetfulness, paves a way to understand the present;memory is used to derive the absent. To deconstruct the present meaning and the conscious reconstruction of the "real" is important, through the help of both, the absence and the presence. As Kundera says, "The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting." [12] is being asserted of such importance in many of Kundera's works. In LF, where history creates forgetting, a? Rupture in time, memory remains a tool to fight such force. Kundera continuously acknowledges the importance of memory while wounding the present through determining the forgetfulness and therefore affirming Derrida's play.However, this memory is deflected by the continuous assertion of Power.

The people in power create an illusion called reality that remains conscious to us, through awareness of the forgetfulness, like that of Tamina in the novel, and banality of the laughter. We can attempt to understand the loss of such memory, intricately joined by our recognition of the self but at the same time are forced to surrender to interpellations. Kundera tries to make the reader aware of how the sources of power work, creating an absolute truth. Going back to our memory, we can attain consciousness and know what is actually happening.

Conclusion

Derrida's deconstruction of the centre is Kundera's deconstruction of the communist regime. By this, he is objecting to the construction of meaning through binaries where one is the oppressor other the oppressed. Kundera breaks this binary by bringing two things into being Forgetfulness and memory, where they both work together and are not in opposition. We see around us, in many parts of the world, how powerful are dominating the weak and forever captivating their minds with specific Ideologies that serve no one but them. By such awareness, we can be familiar with the authority's methods that govern everything around us. The understanding, however, is being consciously knowledgeable of the unconscious as well. The things that seem "normal" through this are being challenged. To acknowledge both the present

and the absent is what helps us to destroy the totality and the meaning produced by the authority is devoid of any further signification. By doing the deconstruction of the present, we can reconstruct it as well. However, this does not affirm meaning or stability. Nevertheless, it disrupts an order that does not tend to grow and which favours only one, not all, not equally.

Notes: -

1. Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl was a German philosopher of Jewish origin who established the school of phenomenology.
2. Bernard Lowe, S1, Ep10, The Bicameral Mind. WestWorld, 2016
3. Vikram Aur Betaal is Indian mythology based on *'Betaal Pachisi*', written in the 11th century by Kashmiri poet Somdev Bhatt.
4. Part 6, The Angels, *The Book of Laughter and forgetting.* Milan Kundera.
5. In the Derridian sense, it implies something beyond any mere speaker, idea, world spirit, God, some point of origin from which speech emerged.
6. Jacques Derrida, *Structure, sign and Play in the discourse of human sciences*,1970.
7. Part 1, Lost Letters, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Milan Kundera.
8. Jostein Gardener, *Sophie's world*, 1991.
9. Part 6, The Angels, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Milan Kundera.
10. Declaration of Independence; Notes on Derrida, Critical legal thinking, Daniel Mathews.
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A Study of Health, Healthcare and Well-being in *Broken lass* by Arthur Miller

Mr. Siddhu T. V.
M. A. in English Literature
Central University of Punjab, Bathinda, Punjab

Abstract: Health Humanities as an emerging field of study is interdisciplinary in nature. Literary texts are critically analyzed to unravel various health/ medical perspectives that can both inform and transform healthcare and general well-being. "As a field of academic engagement, the health humanities draw on the methodologies of the humanities, fine arts and social sciences to provide insight, understanding, and meaning to people facing illness including professional care providers, lay care providers, patients, policy-makers and others concerned with the suffering of humans" (Klugman and Lamb 421–422). The view of health is looked at from a broader perspective within Health Humanities that extends beyond the 'medical' aspect. In fact, the World Health Organization's definition of health is pertinent: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". It rescues health from becoming merely medicalized. Modern narratives, in addition to communicating moral, cultural and political aspects, also provide profound insights into illness, health and healthcare. One such text is the American Play*The Broken Glass* by Arthur Miller which is predominantly an interplay between Hyman, physician and Sylvia, the care receiver who suffers from 'disability' waist down. While previous scholars studied various aspects such as disability, holocaust, trauma, and ethnicity in relation to the political backdrop, the health perspectives remain to be partially unlocked. The objective of the proposed study is to critically assess how Miller's play can be studied as a text in health humanities. To this end, the paper shall adopt three theoretical frameworks: the idea of 'medical gaze' by Michel Foucault; the concepts of 'strategy and tactics' as formulated by Michel de Certeau and Sayantani DasGupta's theorization of 'narrative humility'.

Keywords: *Medical Gaze, Tactics, Strategy, Narrative Humility, Healthcare*

Introduction

Arthur Miller's plays are famously known for critiquing the American society and American Dream in particular. However, the lesser known fact about his plays is that they engage, articulate and reveal imperative ideas on health, healthcare and well-being. This knowledge would in turn help not only to inform health caregivers but also to transform the field of healthcare. There is a need for a radical reassessment of Miller's plays which are replete with ideas of various kinds. One such kind is the interplay between a doctor and a patient and the process of healing. This paper attempts to critically look at the play *Broken Glass* (1994) and to this end, health humanities is used as a research tool.

The Subversion of Medical Gaze

One of the most problematic issues in the field of health and healthcare is the way the doctors/ physicians treat their patients. The patients are usually seen as some objects to be experimented upon and are treated in a not-so-humane manner. The result is that the patients get alienated and begin to have a negative opinion on doctors wholly. Michel Foucault has interestingly studied the way doctors look at their patients and coined the phrase "medical gaze". In the *Birth of the Clinic* (2004), he did an extensive study on medical perception and the epistemic response to the structures of medicine in the production of medical knowledge. Foucault in the text defines the medical gaze:

Hence the strange character of the medical gaze; it is caught up in an endless reciprocity. It is directed upon that which is visible in the disease- but on the basis of the patient, who hides this visible element even as he shows it; consequently, in order to know, he must recognize, while already being in possession of the knowledge that will lend support to his recognition. And, as it moves forward, this gaze is really retreating, since it reaches the truth of the disease only by allowing it to win the struggle and to fulfill (24).

This gaze is quite harmful to the patients because it just "sees" the disease and not the human self of the patient. It ignores the medical history, daily routine of the individual, the psychological issues and personal narratives. Craig M. Klugman and Gentry Lamb illustrate the definition offered by Foucault: "Michel Foucault used the term "medical gaze" to describe the way medicine "sees". The medical gaze is a mode of perception that enables the physician to make the patient into an object of knowledge and perceive the disease directly" (56). It becomes clear from the above definition and

illustration that Foucault is critical of the dehumanizing aspects of healthcare. While male gaze as propagated by films is all about being indifferent to the presence of audience and sexual objectification of women, medical gaze is rather about being indifferent to the presence of the patient as a human. Here people of all genders are at potential risk of being affected by medical gaze. Klugman and Lamb also note how Foucault "went so far as to argue that the very notion of an objective, biomedical assessment of the patient-which he termed the 'medical gaze' - was a cultural product of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment" (124).

The play under discussion here, *The Broken Glass* by Arthur Miller is almost completely a discourse between a physician (Dr. Harry Hyman) and a patient (Sylvia Gellburg). The husband of Sylvia has no idea what caused her disability. He keeps visiting Hyman at the office for consultation and to get the report. To make matters worse, the report comes out according to which there is no physical cause for Sylvia's paralysis. Hyman thinks that it's more of a psychological condition. He coins the phrase "hysterical paralysis" which means the paralysis of the mind caused by hysteria. Dr. Hyman has difficulty in finding a cure for the "unusual" being of Sylvia but takes up as a challenge. He also hints in the initial part of play of "sexual disability" and the role of (or the lack of) her husband, Phillip. Sylvia's troubles are soon revealed by Miller in Act 1, Scene 2 itself. She is clearly disturbed by the picture in the newspaper that depicts the way the old men are made to crawl around and clean the sidewalks with a toothbrush that too in the middle of a cold winter. The fact that ten to twenty people standing in a circle around them and instead going for their rescue begin to laugh at them and this makes Sylvia suffer more. Further, in Scene 3, we are told that Phillip, the husband, has abused her physically a couple of times. One such instance was when Phillip beat her with a steak and the other one when he threw her up the stairs and it broke the stairs. When Hyman asks Sylvia if Phillip lets her work, she replies in negative. Instances such as this show us that Phillip, indeed, was an authoritarian figure. Moreover, Margaret's statement is quite direct and revealing:

MARGARET: That's one miserable little pisser. He's a dictator, you know. I was just remembering when I went to the grandmother's funeral? He stands outside the funeral parlor and decides who's going to sit with who in the limousines for the cemetery. "You sit with him, you sit with her…"And they obey him like he owned the funeral! (Miller, 26)

Also, the central predicament is Phillip who doesn't talk about Jews (despite being a Jew) and to Sylvia he is also part of the laughing crowd, complicit in the crime. She has been a wife neglected by the husband and unloved for a long time. And the restricted space at her home within the four walls adds to her "hysterical paralysis" which can be deciphered from her own dialogue:

HYMAN**:** I imagine you were a good businesswoman.

SYLVIA: Oh, I loved it! I've always enjoyed … you know, people depending on me (Miller, 66).

This might remind someone of the woman in *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Gilman who has a strong portrayal of the consequences of "rest cure" and makes a strong critique of the patriarchal husband who is also a physician. In both the cases, the women suffer being confined in a space that can be potentially claustrophobic. In addition, Sylvia is haunted by her dreams. The landscape in her dreams is mostly grey (which is bleak, without much colour and thus bliss) and there are always people looking for her and she attempts to escape the clutches of those men. At one point she dreams of a man catching her, getting on top of her and kissing her. He then cuts off her breasts and Sylvia finally recognizes that the man was none other than her own husband, Phillip. The dreams of Sylvia can be seen as a "royal road" to the unconscious activities of the mind, as Freud would call it. The dreams are the obvious hint that she is not only depressed with the Nazi Germany's treatment of Jews, particularly the old men who also remind her of her own grandfather but also repressed by her husband's autocracy and patriarchal attitude towards her.

"Sylvia isn't just traumatized by what's happening in Germany, she's traumatized by everyone else's calm acceptance of it" (Gantz, 2015). Phillip doesn't even mention about love in the entire play but is mostly obsessed with the business he is in which is something that makes him proud. It is important also to note the predicament of Phillip. Even though he is proud of being the only Jew worker in the company, he faces insults and disrespect from the boss, Mr. Stanton Case, who is the chairman and president of Brooklyn Guarantee and Trust. His "Jewishness" is of questionable nature because he is ambivalent towards it. He opens up towards the end of the play when he and Sylvia directly discuss each other's' faults and Phillip's dialogue would

prove that he suffers from “sexual disability” as Dr. Hyman has hinted at the beginning of the play.

In the case of Sylvia, Dr. Hyman takes into account the personal narratives, medical history and social forces acting on her and by taking a humanist approach, he in the process subverts what Michel Foucault termed as the ‘medical gaze’ which has been discussed at length earlier. Hyman could have just “seen” the disability of Sylvia and would have suggested a number of treatments in order to cure. However, his perception of his patient is quite different in the sense that he goes to her home a number of times and learns the various potential causes for her paralysis waist down and notes the intersecting forces that affect her. For instance, Hyman finds Hitler disturbing, psychologically whenever there is news on Jews living in Nazi Germany. He recognizes that Sylvia is predominantly affected by it as well (Miller, 10). Then, he makes his study in the domestic environment at Sylvia’s home and then the role of her husband. The fact that both Hyman’s and Phillips family belong to Jewish community helps the former to understand the social factor of the latter. He never commits a mistake as done by John (whose treatment of his wife’s depression goes terribly wrong) in *The Yellow Wallpaper* and thus he is able to safeguard and retain Sylvia’s own self and return to her abled body as it suggested that her disability is only temporary.

Nonetheless, as a physician, Hyman subverts the harmful medical gaze, and thus offers real life lessons not only for the professional health caregivers and practitioners but also to the care receivers who can be benefited through this knowledge of the way they are “treated” (both as a human and as a patient) at a given space.

Dr. Hyman and his Practice of Everyday Life

Michel de Certeau in his seminal work *The Practice of Everyday Life* deals with the idea of ‘discipline’ manipulating an individual in everyday life. He comments:

If it is true that the grid of 'discipline' is everywhere becoming clearer and more extensive, it is all the more urgent to discover how an entire society resists being reduced to it, what popular procedures (also "miniscule" and quotidian) manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them, and finally, what "ways of operating" from the

counterpart, on the consumer's (or "dominee's"?) side of the mute processes that organize the establishment of socioeconomic order (Certeau, 13).

Certeau mainly looks at the way power structures can be resisted in the real world and the larger socio-political and economic forces that play an important role in an individual's life.

Klugman and Lamb note that "de Certeau examines how individuals survive under disciplinary systems by adhering to them and then surreptitiously using them for their own ends" (174). He is of the view that one cannot do away with whatever 'discipline' ordains but can be resisted with small tools and he calls this as "tactics". Before defining 'tactics', it's equally important to look at the other distinction which is "strategies". By 'strategy', Certeau does not mean the general usage of the term. He defines it as a "force-relationship" that can be isolated from the "environment" (Certeau, 16). For him, 'strategy' is a specific way of exercising power that need not be statist necessarily but also one that is exercised by certain institutions and organizations. On the other hand, 'tactics' are the ways in which such 'strategies' can be subverted and resisted. Certeau defines 'tactics' thus: "The place of tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance" (Certeau, 17). To put it simple terms, 'strategy' is about the actor and the other who stand at a distance and one dominates the other through power. The hierarchy is quite visible in this case. In the case of 'tactics', the two are interconnected and blended in a way thus subverting the power structure by operating in this way. The tactics rely on "opportunities" and they constantly manipulate events to turn them into opportunities. This technique takes the form of creative resistance to the disciplinary structures.

A study on the everyday life of nursing work was made by four scholars from the perspective of Michel de Certeau's theorization, the results of which showed that the "Their (tactics of subjects) movements escape standards, protocols and rules, resignifying the cultural system defined beforehand. There is a practice proper to professionals who (re)invent the care based on their intentions and pressures" (Rates HF et al. 341). The actions of the physician, Hyman transgress the traditional way of treating a patient. He uses a couple of techniques that are unique and also subverts the medical hierarchy, i.e the hierarchy maintained between a doctor and patient which keeps the two at a distance and the care receiver becoming merely an

"object". To adopt Certeau's theorization, Hyman uses various 'tactics' that deviate from the status quo and the disciplinary systems. He reinvents the ways of "curing" the paralysis of his patient, Sylvia. The 'strategic' system which expects him to just look at the disease or illness in the care receiver by maintaining "distance" is clearly defined by the physician as he refrains from following elite medical practices and goes to Sylvia's home directly, understands the personal as well as social factors causing her illness. There is even a slight romance between the two which is because Sylvia sees in Hyman what she is supposed to see in her husband Phillip who is now no more lovable. The idea that Hyman resists the 'strategy' as formulated by Certeau is evident in the very first scene of the play itself. Margaret, the wife of Dr. Hyman asserts:

MARGARET. Well Harry'll get to the bottom of it if anybody can. They call him from everywhere for opinions, you know… Boston, Chicago… By rights he ought to be on Park Avenue if he only had the ambition, but he always wanted a neighbourhood practice. Why, I don't know- we never invite anybody, we never go out, all our friends are in Manhattan. But it's his nature; you can't fight a person's nature" (Miller, 06).

This is an instance which shows that Hyman is not ambitious and dissociates himself from elite groups and organizations and uses his own tactics for treating his patients. Another instance to discuss in this line is when Hyman smokes a cigar, saying that it's bad for one's health but what's worse is people dying of rat bites and here he makes a scathing political satire: "Oh yes, but they are mostly the poor so it's not an interesting statistic" (Miller, 08).

According to de Certeau, everyday life comprises "circumstantial situations" that arouse in the subject's new ways of doing their jobs, ways to escape the logic of what is imposed...that pressure individuals to the need of creating and adapting reality itself (Rates HF et al.). It is precisely this that Dr. Hyman does in the play. He creates a new way of looking at the disability of Sylvia and terms it as "hysterical paralysis" and the tactics he undertakes deviate from the standard and challenges the status quo. In order for his "tactics" to work and become achievable, he builds multiple networks of relationships with the subject and in the process building a new "space" in which Sylvia finds peace and comfort. Furthermore, in Act 2, Scene 2 he says to Sylvia: "I can't stand these crooners- they're making ten, twenty thousand dollars a

week and never spent a day in medical school" (Miller, 93). Here Hyman is not merely criticizing the rich but actually trying to re-create the reality of medical school by inserting music to ensure mental well-being of the care receivers.

Narrative Humility and Dr. Hyman's Humanity

The concept of 'narrative humility' is coined by Sayantani DasGupta who borrowed the idea from the work of Melanie Tervalon and Jann Murray-Garcia who suggested the term "cultural humility". DasGupta's theorization is within the field of medicine and is used for medical education. She defines it as:

Narrative humility acknowledges that our patients' stories are not objects that we[1] can comprehend or master, but rather dynamic entities that we can approach and engage with, while simultaneously remaining open to their ambiguity and contradiction, and engaging in constant self-evaluation and self-critique about issues such as our own role in the story, our expectations of the story, our responsibilities of the story and our identifications of the story- how the story attracts or repels us because it reminds us of any number of personal stories (DasGupta, 02).

Dr. Hyman in the play engages with the Sylvia in hearing and trying to comprehend the complete picture and yet he remains open to her ambiguity which is evident when Hyman says: "I know you want to tell me something and I don't know how to get it out of you…Sylvia, you have to start helping me, you can't just lie there and expect a miracle to lift you to your feet" (Miller, 63). Hyman in the process of engaging also makes self-critiques and self-evaluates himself.

Das Gupta comments that "narrative humility allows clinicians to recognize that each story we hear holds elements that are unfamiliar- be they cultural, socioeconomic, sexual, religious, or idiosyncratically personal" (02). Hyman in the play recognizes such elements in cultural, sexual and even personal sphere and tries to be familiar with them as much as possible, if not wholly.

This enables both the doctor (Hyman) and the patient (Sylvia) to create a mutual and fruitful clinical relationship as DasGupta asserts "the witnessing function…becomes a mutual one, supporting and nourishing both

individuals, while enabling a deeper, more fruitful clinical relationship (02). Thus the idea of narrative humility is quite pertinent in the play.

5. Conclusion

Through the lens of health humanities, the paper reveals the imperative ideas on health and healthcare in the play by making use of the three theoretical concepts: medical gaze, tactics and narrative humility. Thus, the importance of this text and also Miller within health humanities and in the field of medical education can thus be ascertained.

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Absurd Narratives: Reflection on Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953)

Ms. Suparna Roy
B. Ed in English
Central Modern College of Education

Abstract: Harold Pinter defined the absurdist idea high-quality in his 1962's speech - "Writing for the Theatre", which changed into provided on the National Student Drama Festival in Bristol, in which he said, "I propose that there may be no difficult differences among what's actual and what's unreal, nor among what's authentic and what's false." The drama that I, consequently, opted right here is Waiting for Godot (1953), which displays the dream like, lyrical, surreal functions distinguished of the Absurdist Theatre and which honestly suggests a deeper which means; however, that is in no way completely defined. Absurdism is a perception that a look for which means is inherently in war with the real loss of which means, however one has to each receive this and concurrently riot in opposition to it with the aid of using embracing what existence has to offer. Absurdism is the belief of contradiction among things, a tensional pressure pulling every from the alternative sides, as Albert Camus defined in The Myth of Sisyphus- "The absurdist born out of this war of words among the human want and the unreasonable silence of the world." Beckett in his play Waiting for Godot, has attempted to offer a correlation among being seeing and existing, in which the individual expressed their primary preference for reputation via their obsession with being seen. The character's lifestyles are consequently a made of the regular fracas among the dearth of which means and but a look for it, the want of fact but the lifestyles of lies. My paper would therefore try to present how this thin line of tension between truth and lies reverberates, where the tramps search for the 'purpose' of their lives, the reason of their existence, becomes a rotational and chaotic process in this play.

Keywords: -*Meaning, Absurd, Purpose, Essence, and Existence*

Introduction

The Absurdist literary movement gained popularity throughout the European countries from 1940s to approximately 1989. Looking up to a dictionary one finds the meaning/definition of 'absurd' as "something that is completely

stupid and unreasonable", which further when evaluated within a musical context stands as "out of harmony" (The Theatre of the Absurd, 23). Absurdist playwrights usually adhered to the theories of Albert Camus (a French Algerian philosopher) and his unique paintings- Myth of Sisyphus 1942, wherein he argues that a man's quest for which means in existence is a futile endeavor. Apparently, the churning energy in the back of the motion turned into the consequences of Second World War and what human beings especially perceived because the degeneration of conventional and ethical values. Absurdist paintings rarely follow a clean plot and the moves which takes area heightens this unique feel that characters are mere sufferers of uncontrollable forces that policies and overpowers them. The absurdist works greater simply meditated the arbitrary pressure that's past toattain of residing beings is that energy which regulates our lives. They perform which fall below this class are those which cope with human life as nonsensical and greater frequently riotous. John Dryden's "Essay of Dramatick Poesie" has tried to raise feelings thru mirth and sadness, a similarity of that's seen in Beckett's Waiting for Godot too. The absurdity is the end result of disillusionment with rationalism, which has tried to justify the exploitation of the running elegance and the poor, the unquestionable perception in evolution and progress, the greater practical approach- the affluence of the rich, the sufferings of the poor, the wanton but condoned detrimental consequences of the 2 international wars. The absurdist literature has wacked to depict and body a protest caricature, for an international without faith, which means, direction, purpose, and freedom of will. Few distinguished works consist of Arthur Adams's Ping Pong (1955), Jean Genet's The Maids (1947) and the play I selected to paintings on- Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953). Therefore, a struggle of suffering and angst maintains ruling the human circumstance within the play *Waitingfor Godot*.

Theoretical Interpretations

Jean Paul Sarte regarded "Existence precedes Essence"! Existence of Humanism is pretty the same; residing beings are built with the belief that their want has created their lifestyles. Every person has a function to play (to consider Shakespeare), and consequently the call for and want of our function has yielded in our lifestyles. Now, if this want is crumbled, the want of a specific being is flickered, then that person's lifestyles too receive questioned, the exclamation of 'invisibilization' involves forefront,

something that Vladimir and Estragon stored on doing. Godot became their horizon, the purpose, and whilst it stored on shifting, a chaotic query in their lifestyles became confronted with the aid of using them. The failure to locate and meet Godot, but a steady preference to attend and meet him displays the absurdist belief- despite the fact that there may be a loss of that means however a simultaneous conflict towards it to live on the flickering lifestyles of one! Other principles that have a briny interconnection with Absurdism, alternatively the intermingling of which creates Absurdism are Existentialism and Nihilism. Existentialism is a perception that thru a aggregate of awareness, loose will and private responsibility, you can still assemble their very own that means inside a global that intrinsically has none of its very own, while, Nihilism begins off evolved a perception in which now no longer handiest there may be an intrinsic that means; however, it's also needless to assemble a that means of very own as a substitute. Vladimir and Estragon's conflict is each constrained and composed with the aid of using those elements, an absurdist essence! Perception became observed with the aid of using meaninglessness and nothingness.

Beckett has represented clearly through Vladimir and Estragon's 'to and fro' movements how true a phenomenon is the chaotic purposeless search. Beckett's solution to existential despair derives from Berkeley's (an eighteenth-century idealist) idealism in which nothing exists without being perceived- "esse-is-precipi, that to be is to be perceived". A correlation between being seen and existing is clearly exhibited in the play through Beckett's characters. Godot's prolong absent makes these breathing individuals living 'puppets' and instead of doing things to construct a fruitful future, they "let it go waste" (Beckett, 52), instead of finding an appropriate way to spend it. It can be perceived that Beckett's intention of creating these characters was to make them the victim of time (an uncontrollable force); just as what the focal point of absurdist theory lies- characters are victim of some recalcitrant forces. Hence has to accept and combat or give it up! Anthony Chadwick refers to this victimization in his article "Waiting for Godot"

"We seem to have the choice between waiting for one 'better' thing after another or simply living with what we have. Both past and future are the illusion and seen under this aspect, we begin to taste the notion of eternity."

In 1962 Martin Esslin wrote his book on the topic of the 'absurd' genre of theatre simply titled "*The Theatre of the Absurd*". In the book, Esslin mentions the Romanian and French playwright's Eugéne Ionesco's definition for the absurd "Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose...Cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless" (Esslin, 23). The tramp's excitement to meet the very mysterious Godot may be a representation of a human's very desire to fill up the gap between birth and death with something meaningful, so that this purpose can create a harmony of existences in this not so harmonious world. This period can be counted in the form of hope that connects the birth or beginning to the end or death. The tramps do not hang themselves and they continue their journey, coming again to meet Godot on the next day without any significant thing happening. The escape from suicide is mentioned by Albert Camus, "Since life has lost all meaning, man must not seek escape in suicide" (Camus, 33). When a man cannot search and find any fruitful engagement, any meaning in his life, his existence, all becomes crisp notes of paper without validity and ends on an absurd state and it is this state that Camus refers as "philosophical suicide". To remember the psychoanalytical theory of Sigmund Freud, one can apply the same to clearly analyze the character's desire to meet the mysterious Godot. Although, at times the tramps, specifically Estragon, forgets their intention as Estragon frequently says, "Let's go", Vladimir reminds him, "We can't", and then again, Estragon asking, "Why not", to which, Vladimir replies, "We're waiting for Godot" (Waiting for Godot, 10).This returning back to the same subject again and again in Freud's words can be- "There is always a return of the repressed" (Beginning Theory, 100).

Anthony Chadwick's opinion for the possibilities that Godot might represent is- "He (Godot) is simultaneously whatever we think he is and not think what we think he is; he is an absence, who can be interpreted at moments as God, death, the Lord of the Manor, a benefactor, even Paso. But Godot has a function rather than a meaning. He stands as for what keeps us chained- to and in- existence. He is the unknowable that represents hope in an age where there is no hope; he is whatever fiction we want him to be- as long as he justifies our life-as-waiting" (Chadwick, 15).

Godot's can be whoever and whatever, becomes that complex dynamics where the tramps existence gets interconnected with. The repetition of their

'meaningless' act provides them with a meaning/ a rescue from giving up or cease their existence, as Anthony Chadwick regarded- "Death as a final ending, as a final silence is absent from the play" (Chadwick, 13). This clearly represents that the tramps are waiting with hope for a 'measureless journey' because they are not enjoying the present time and situation rather continuously reconsidering their play as a need to wait for Godot, so that he can come and show them the path to heaven. Within their world, this is a fruitful engagement, but in reality, it is absurd because the limit of their waiting and its horizon has no measure. Quite an 'absurd' theorem of living puppets gets clearly showcased as Vladimir says, "Tomorrow everything will be better" (Beckett, 55), because the boy told them, "Godot was sure to come tomorrow" (Beckett, 55). Time is indeed a major character that binds the essence of the paly, because it is more like wasting of the 'time' that the characters are involved into, or to put in another way time has been introduced to waste it by waiting.

The play suggests that 'Waiting' is the only choice that the tramps have if they want to continue their lives and Godot seems to represent that object of waiting or as the 'waiting object', because 'waiting' is something, that essential nature/character of any human's existence without which survival cannot be counted. Martin Esslin regarded that "waiting is an essential characteristic of human condition" and ceases the play as the production which thrives on the feelings of uncertainty it produces throughout;

"*In Waiting for Godot*, the feeling of uncertainty it produces, the ebb and flow of this uncertainty- from the hope of discovering the density of Godot to its repeated disappointment are themselves the essence of play."

Beckett uses language based on pattern of concrete images rather than argument and discursive speech, and since then language is trying to present the sense of beings, it can neither investigate nor solve problems of moral, conduct, or communication. The language here is fragmented. At times, there is also a breakdown of languages in the play. Beckett shows the limitation of language when it comes to expressing or communicating. A clear presentation of the same is Lucky's Speech, the most unusual yet the most spectacular part of the play. It occurs in the middle of the play and continues for three pages. Apparently it seems as an expression of absurd, arabesque thoughts, babbles, symbols, but it is also insightful and therefore open to

explanations. It is important for its style, context, although it may seem senseless. Lucky's speech though aghast Posso but for Vladimir and Estragon it is full of thoughtfulness and revolted pain. The speech takes a form of long internal monologue and jumbling up of words upsets Vladimir and Estragon. The speech does not lack form, rather its form is in itself a spiritual statement- "Given the existence…of a personal God" (Beckett, 36-38). Its parody of the statement for the insignificant and senseless gets focused and obscured like the god of whom Lucky may speak. The speech is invalid or it may be an effort to showcase the relation between man and God, because the God is beyond time and space who both love and abandon us "for unknown reasons" (Beckett, 36). The speech concludes in an unfinished way which not only refers an incomplete ending but also the expurgated dwindling of human process!

Conclusion

Lawrence E Harvey in his article "Art and the Existential in en Attendant Godot" commented- "According to Beckett, the proliferation of the words in the modern world does not necessarily imply communication between people. Often the so-called dialogue between Vladimir and Estragon degenerates into two monologues" (Harvey, 139). Therefore, in every aspect the play has tried to focus on Beckett's use of absurdity along with the concepts of the unknown, the uncontrollable, the certain events of time and space. How the entire plot although centered on the two tramps/protagonists- Vladimir and Estragon, yet the desire to explore words, waiting, memory and hope is profound. The waiting for the mysterious Godot has been a question- who is this? Godot, is he so important, then why doesn't he appear? why are they waiting? These bunch of questions are neither attempted to answer and neither was it a requirement to do justice; moreover, the setting, background is not revealed. Thus "reflecting the uncertainty of the absurdist theatre- the play opens without any details and clear reference and ends without reaching any climax, at the same place where it commenced" (The Theatre of Absurd, 21-23)

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Bio Note of the Authors

Ms. Malavika Ajikumar is a first year Masters student of English from St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi. She is a Doordarshan graded classical dancer undergoing training in Kathakali, Mohiniattam and Bharatanatyam and a musician with keen interest in mythological re-interpretations and interdisciplinary artistic studies. Her research paper titled "Reimagining Surpanakha: From the ugly in Ramayana to the tender-hearted in The Liberation of Sita" was included in an anthology titled Art and Aesthetics of Modern Mythopoeia Vol. I by Vishwanatha Kaviraja Institute of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics (ISBN). She has presented research papers at International Student symposium by West University of Timisoara, Romania, Debrupa memorial National Student seminar by Jadavpur University, Kolkata, International conference organised by Panchila Mahavidyalay, West Bengal, Student seminar by Women's Development cell, Daulat Ram College and National seminar by English department, Hansraj College, University of Delhi and won Best Paper award in the PG category at Lumos'21, English conference by Claret College, Bangalore. Her academic papers have been published in college magazines and journals. She has extensively volunteered for scholarly symposiums since 2017 and has anchored for various academic conferences and symposiums organised by the college and various government and non-government events. Her research interests are mythology, postcolonial discourses, gender studies and film studies.

Ms. Praveena Devarajan is a student at Sree Sankara College Kalady, Kerala, where she is pursuing her Masters in English Language and Literature.

Ms. Nandini Vyas is pursuing her M. A. English Literature from St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Ahmedabad, and Gujarat. She topped in under graduation and was awarded with Excellence Certificate and Research Medal in English under Student Research Programme. She has completed her online course in World Literature from Harvard University, USA. She has presented papers on Vijay Tendulkar's Work Kamala and Girish Karnad's Plays in International E-conferences.

Ms. Sreeshma K. Venu, who hails from Thrissur, Kerala is currently pursuing her Master's in English Literature from the University of Calicut in Malapuram district of Kerala. Her areas of interest includes literature of the

marginalised, cultural studies and Canadian literature. She has presented papers in national and international conferences.

Ms. Monica Seles Kujur from St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Bangalore. She did her Master's in English. She did her Undergraduate in BA English going to do PhD next year. She is from Jharkhand currently living with her family. Another interest in her research is the Victorian era and the rise of women writers. Though, women had to face so many problems in society. This is her first paper to be published. She got this idea and inspiration, which she learned during her masters about different Dalit writers. The problems they are facing at present and in the past. She loves travelling and exploring and visiting new places, and learning about new cultures and traditions.

Ms. Sona Solgy is a final year English and Communication Skills student at Stella Maris, Chennai. She's deeply interested in the Arts, and the various ways it intertwines with Literature.

Ms. Joslin Mariam John is a final year undergraduate student of English and Communication Skills at Stella Maris College, Chennai. She is currently pursuing an independent research on the "Impact of gender and caste on 19th century Kerala women writers". She has published poetry for InFrame Magazine and for the Stella Maris College annual journal. She has recently co-authored for an anthology named "Castle of Tales". Her research interests include gender and sexuality, south Asian history and tragedy in literature.

Ms. Jeslyn Maria Jose is a student at Sree Sankara College, Kalady, Kerala where she is currently pursuing her Masters in English Language and Literature.

Mr. Priyanshu is a final year student of M.A English, Hindu College (University of Delhi). Literature is the air I breathe and hope the materialistic world to pause for a moment to breathe the air of poetry or its synonym humanity. I dedicate my paper "'Sons and Lovers' as Marxist Literature" to my respected mother Sunita.

Ms. Camilla P. Tossy, a native of Kochi, is currently pursuing her Post Graduate Degree in English Language and Literature at St. Albert's College, Ernakulam. She is a soul full of sunshine who ardently loves nature. Being a person who believes in the expression, life is a collection of moments that

bring her passion in penning down little things that happen in life. Her major interest in Literature falls into the areas of Psychology, Postmodern Literature and thoughts though she has great love towards all forms of Literature. She is a graduate of English Literature from St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam.

Ms. Humaira Mariyam B. is M.A in English and Cultural Studies student at Christ University, Bangalore.

Ms. Apoorva Rajeev completed her Schooling from Amrita Vidyalayam, Kuthuparamba and is currently pursuing Bachelor's degree in Functional English from Carmel College, Mala, and Thrissur. Literature and Cinema, as creative forms, have engaged her passion for long and has had a tremendous impact in shaping her perception about Society, culture, history and human lives, in particular. Her areas of interest include film studies and Media studies.

Ms. Siya Abi have completed her studies from St. Joseph E.M.H.S.S Aloor and Government Higher Secondary School Kodakara, she is currently pursuing Bachelor's degree in Functional English from Carmel College Mala, Thrissur. Visual media, particularly film, has always held a fascination for her. Her interest lies in unravelling the narrative styles employed in films and the impact it creates in telling stories.

Ms. Anu Vellapally is first year I MA English Student at Deva Matha College, Kerala

Ms. Anila Varghese is a student at Sree Sankara College, Kalady, and Kerala where she is currently pursuing her masters in English Language and Literature.

Ms. Alia Amreen is a first-year undergraduate student of BA Journalism, Psychology and English literature at BMS College for Women, Basavanagudi, and Bengaluru. The title of the paper presented by her is Nonsense narratives and the Theory applied in the paper is psychoanalytic theory.

Ms. Reshma W. Rodrigues is currently pursuing her Post Graduate Degree in English Language and Literature from St. Albert's College, Ernakulam. Reshma always had a taste for Literature since her childhood. She always

writes about things that touched her heart. Movies have influenced her a lot, she loves to watch movies about superheroes, time travel, lives in other realm etc. Reshma always believes in the other side of life, which no one believes. Her favourite genres of movie are fantasy and science fiction. She is a graduate of English Literature from Mar Ivanios College, Mavelikara.

Ms. Zeenia Bhat is a Postgraduate in English literature from Kashmir. Currently preparing her research paper on the "Romantic Unconscious", she is interested in concepts such as conscious, unconscious, memory and love.

Mr. Siddhu T.V. has an M.A in English Literature and currently works as an English teacher. His research interests include: health humanities, medical humanities and eco-criticism.

Ms. Suparna Roy is an independent researcher and have completed her Master's Degree in English Literature, and currently pursuing Bachelors of Education. She has completed intermediate level in French Language too. She works as an Online Communicative English Trainer at Inzpira; moreover, actively involved in presenting at seminars and conferences where her papers and works are focused on Gender Studies, Caste and Cultural field. She has got her works published in both national and international spheres.

MODERN NARRATIVES IN LITERATURE CINEMA CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Our digital age has democratized story telling. The power of storytelling is in our hands today. In decades past, the voices that have dominated in the media and public consciousness have been limited to a privileged minority who have access to the resources, skills and platforms to share their stories and perspectives. Today we do not need a printing press, or a publisher, a gigantic camera, advanced technical skills or training and access to a broadcast media platform to share our stories with the masses. All that we need is a good story and a cell phone. We have so much agency and power. As a result of this, we begin to hear and see more diverse voices and narratives across a variety of different platforms than ever before, and that can only be a good thing. The best part is that stories can be owned and shared by those who are living them, rather than have someone else say stories about them.

The themes of papers in this publication cover a wide range of areas such as cinema, novels, short stories, poetry and absurd narratives. Congratulations to the student authors of these papers. To many of them, I believe, this marks the beginning of their writing careers. I am sure the readers will benefit from this effort.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Thennadiyil, CMF
Principal
St. Claret College, Bengaluru- 13.

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