LITTSCAPE

A JOURNAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POST
GRADUATE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

LITTSCAPE

VOL 8

A JOURNAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POST GRADUATE
STUDIES IN ENGLISH

PEER REVIEWED

2025

Littscape: A Journal of the Department of Post Graduate Studies in English

Vol: 8

Declaration

This is to certify that the articles of this volume underwent a plagiarism analysis using the iThenticate software and the percentage of similarity found is less than 10%. The publisher and editors are not responsible for the views and opinions expressed by the authors of the articles of this volume.

Preface

The eighth volume of Littscape brings together a compelling collection of essays united by a shared inquiry into the dynamics of subversion, resistance, and the reclamation of agency. Across a range of cultural texts and social contexts, our contributors explore how established norms—governing the body, desire, gender, identity, and power—are challenged and dismantled. From the fantastical realms of indigenous oppression to the stark realities of political conflict and the intricate politics of international sport, these papers illuminate the manifold ways in which individuals and narratives push against the boundaries of the permissible to forge new possibilities for existence.

The volume initiates its inquiry with studies that locate resistance in the surreal and the post human space. Anilkumar P V's article raises a thoughtful interrogation whether the tribal people will be the unselfconscious recipients of the nation-state's welfare policies. This strategic subversion of reality is echoed in Unnikrishnan K's analysis of the film *Titane*. The protagonist's journey is read through the Deleuzian lens of deterritorialization, a process that breaks away from established structures and destabilizes fixed categories of the human, machine, and gender. The film thus becomes a site where traditional notions of subjectivity and desire are radically challenged.

The fight for self-assertion finds a parallel in Christeena T Jose's research on gender testing in international sports. The paper examines how athletes from the Global South, particularly Dutee Chand, challenged the scientifically inadequate and discriminatory hyperandrogenemic policies of the IAAF. This resistance is framed as a critical step toward decolonizing sports governance and protecting the human rights of athletes.

Erica Roy explores Lefebvre's concept of perceived, conceived and lived spaces in the Netflix show *Emily In Paris*. This study showcases media construction of urban experience to enhance urban spaces, the cultural commodification and moreover the way media influence human perceptions.

The central part of the volume considers how the very act of storytelling can be a form of subversion and empowerment. A. J. Divya and M. Richard Robert Raa offer a comparative analysis of the Grimm Brothers' fairy tales and their Disney adaptations. Their work demonstrates how Disney's retellings often reframe the narratives to emphasize empowerment and self-discovery, creating more proactive female characters who defy the passive roles assigned to them in the original folklore. The transformation of Rapunzel in *Tangled*, whose hair becomes a tool for escape rather than a symbol of confinement, exemplifies this ideological shift. This act of narrative reinvention resonates with the analysis of *Tumbbad* by Anjana V S and Anu Francis. They explore the film's use of mythopoesis—or myth-making—to create a new folk horror legend around the cursed god Hastar. The film's narrative becomes a cautionary tale that critiques humanity's destructive ambition and the corrupting influence of greed, subverting traditional worship by illustrating the dire consequences of venerating a forbidden deity.

The theme of reclaiming agency is further explored within contexts of profound trauma and systemic oppression. Anagha A's study of *I, Rigoberta Menchu; Indian Women in Guatemala* throws an insight on how the indigenous people are made passive victims of systemic violence. The paper argues powerfully that the novel is not merely a narrative of victimhood but a testament to the resilience of an individual who reclaims her identity and voice against overwhelming political and personal trauma. Indhulekha attempts to trace out the representations of nationalism and its role in empowering the working class through the writings of North Malabar regions of Kerala for they were ignored in

academic circles owing to their oppressed community status.

The paper on Translation Semiotics by Smitha John and Jeeja Ganga draws insights on the role of performing arts in translating indigenous cultures.

Taken together, the essays in this volume offer a multifaceted look at the critical and creative potential of subversion. They reveal that resistance is not a monolithic act but a dynamic process that unfolds in our stories, our bodies, our desires, our perceptions and our institutions. In a world defined by rigid structures, these scholarly works celebrate the enduring power of the human imagination to question, challenge, and ultimately redefine the nature of our reality.

INDEX

The Mystery of Tribe or the Object Petit a of Anthropological Explorations

Dr. Anilkumar P. V.

Professor of English, Government Arts and Science College, Pathirippala, Palakkad

In an era ravaged by unemployment, oppressive marginalization, poverty, loneliness, anxiety, boredom, and neurosis, discourses on tribal development are entangled in two discursive systems. The first presents the tribal people as possessing an inherent purity in both self and body. In this view, the tribal people embody an innocence we have long since lost in our linear journey through the phylogenetic axis, seeking newness and fashion. Moving through the "homogenous time" of bourgeois modernity—a key concept developed by Walter Benjamin (261) and later adapted by historian Benedict Anderson (26) to formulate his theory of the nation in *Imagined Communities* —tribal people are seen as trapped in a time warp of antiquity, in "messianic time."

A history of subtle interpretations could be derived from this civilization-centric perspective: tribal culture is immobile, nothing more than nature, while culture is dynamic, always in flux. In this context, tribal life resists liquidity, remaining "immobile" and "immutable." For civil society, the tribal represents the Freudian natural drives, where anarchy is constant. In this framework, the tribal is excluded from the Law and symbolic networks (Freud, *Totem and Taboo* 187-88). It is worth recalling what Sunny M. Kapikkad wrote after the chaotic violence in Muthanga: "Whenever we think and talk about Adivasis, the Constitution does not enter into our thought process" (Kapikkad). This is because the tribal exists outside culture. As Freud argued, culture arises from the repression of natural drives, through "repressive sublimation" (Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* 44).

Within the sphere of culture, tribal life has only one existence: as the absolute Other, the repressed reverse of civic life. This theoretical position suggests that any intervention by the nation-state in the tribal way of life is an unpardonable crime, as it disrupts a life that has never been aligned with the bourgeois nation-state's ideological structure—particularly its conception of citizenship (Chatterjee 36-38).

Anthropology in its positivist form offers a different explanation for this failure. By making methodological interventions into tribal life and governmental policies, anthropology attempts to explain away these failures by pointing to the refusal of governmental agencies to account for the socio-cultural and economic specificities of tribal life. Despite their differences with middle-class accusers regarding the cause of tribal underdevelopment, anthropologists share the same theoretical ground as others when it comes to their gaze on the object (Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* 14). As we all know, anthropology as a discipline has evolved significantly from its murky past as the most powerful weapon of Enlightenment instrumental reason, when it was used to analyze, categorize, and appropriate colonized peoples in alignment with colonial demands (Said 120-21).

Clifford Geertz's subtle intervention brought about a paradigm shift in anthropology,

moving away from the totalizing narratives of functionalism and behaviorism. Geertz's work emphasized the critical voice of the observer and rejected the idea of an objective distance from the object of study (Geertz, *Local Knowledge* 55-57). With Geertz, anthropology became concerned with the subjective knowledge of local situations.

This philosophical insight has important implications for the study of tribal life. When we attempt to capture tribal reality as something distinct from our own, we create what Lacan calls the "object petit a"—the object-cause of desire (103-04). This object, now conceptualized as "tribal," becomes the object of our desire. As Žižek explains, "Object a is therefore close to the Kantian transcendental object... it is not only that its contours change with the shift of the subject; it only exists when the landscape is viewed from a certain perspective" (Žižek).

Thus, the tribal world is portrayed as a particular entity in need of paternalistic intervention, while the citizen is seen in his or her universal dimension. Yet, as Partha Chatterjee has shown, the very concept of the nation is particular, catering primarily to a minority elite within specific geographic boundaries (4-5). Will we ever witness an era when tribal people, like the elite, will be the unselfconscious recipients of the nation-state's welfare policies?

Works Cited

Anderson, B. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* Verso, 2006.

Benjamin, W. *The Arcades Project.* Harvard University Press, 1999.

Chatterjee, P. *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World.* Columbia University Press, 2004.

Freud, S. *Totem and Taboo.* Routledge, 1913.

—. *Civilization and Its Discontents.* Norton, 1930.

Geertz, C. *The Interpretation of Cultures.* Basic Books, 1973.

—. *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology.* Basic Books, 1983.

Heidegger, M. *Basic Writings.* HarperCollins, 1993.

Kapikkad, S. M. *Adivasi Struggles and the State.* DC Books, 2003.

Lacan, J. *The Language of the Self: The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis.* Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968.

Said, E. *Orientalism.* Pantheon, 1978.

Žižek, S. *The Parallax View.* MIT Press, 2006.

Gender Testing and Indian Female Athletes in International Sports: A Case Study of Santhi Soundarajan and Dutee Chand

Dr. Christeena T. Jose

Assistant Professor of English

St. Thomas College (Autonomous), Thrissur

Abstract

This research examines gender testing policies of International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and their impact on Indian female athletes from the turn of the twenty first century. It focuses on Santhi Soundarajan and Dutee Chand's cases (2006-2015). The study uses intersectional analysis to investigate Western medical standards of femininity in international sports. The paper explores colonial power dynamics in the medicalisation of Indian female athletes' bodies and the systematic marginalization of athletes from the Global South. The first objective analyses geographic and economic barriers embedded in gender testing protocols. The second examines gender, class, and nationality intersections in the female athletes' experiences. The methodology combines archival research, policy analysis, and media coverage examination. This study advances discussions on decolonizing sports governance and athletes' human rights protection.

Keywords: Gender testing, Indian athletics, intersectionality, sports governance, human rights, postcolonial studies.

The institutionalization of gender verification in elite athletics showcases how sporting institutions reinforced binary gender paradigms through medicalized surveillance. The International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) systematically implemented invasive testing regimes. These tests are grounded on the problematic assumption that athletic excellence inherently contradicted normative constructions of femininity. The evolution of gender testing protocols from the 1920s through the 1990s reveals how sporting bodies wielded medical authority to police the boundaries of womanhood. These testing procedures effectively constructed and maintained gender hierarchies through the vehicle of fairness in competitive athletics.

The progression from physical examinations to chromosomal testing demonstrates not merely an evolution in methodology but rather an intensification of institutional power over female bodies (Henne 102). The interwar period marked the initial systematization of gender verification, with both the IAAF and IOC (sports governing bodies) instituting physical examinations when "definite question[s] as to sex" (Henne 11) arose with males masquerading as women athletes. This discretionary approach betrays the inherent subjectivity of gender assessment, while revealing how SGBs became the arbiters of legitimate

womanhood. The subsequent implementation of anatomical investigations for all female participants in 1966 by the IAAF represented a significant expansion of institutional authority. Charles Maher mentions how masculine women were derided by sportswriters like Dick Bank who asserts in *Track & Field News* that verification measures were intended "to drive out types who really had no business in women's track" (Maher). Likewise, the outrageous reference to athletes like the Press sisters in the 1960s who "had more male characteristics than female" (Maher) reveals how gender testing served to enforce narrow, culturally-constructed notions of acceptable femininity in sport. Thereafter the transition to chromosomal testing in 1967 (IAAF) and 1968 (IOC) exemplifies how SGBs leveraged scientific methodologies to present an objective basis for gender verification. Lindsay Parks Pieper's phenomenal work *Sex Testing* (2016) examines how discriminatory athletic policies targeted specific groups across decades. Eastern European athletes faced scrutiny during the Cold War. Chinese runners became primary subjects in the 1990s. Subsequently the 2012 hyperandrogenism guidelines predominantly affected women of colour from developing nations (Pieper 223). These systematic shifts in gender testing reveal a calculated pattern of gender policing in international athletics.

The evolution of these policies reveals the complex interplay between medical authority, institutional power, and gender ideology in elite athletics. The implementation of these testing regimes must be understood within broader sociocultural contexts of gender anxiety (Pieper 103). Rather than protecting fair competition, these policies effectively serve to reinforce hegemonic gender norms while subjecting questionable female athletes to invasive scrutiny and potential humiliation. The IOC Medical Commission's testing regime, through its various iterations, inadvertently demonstrates the impossibility of establishing clear biological boundaries between sexes. (Cooper 3) Nevertheless, the organization continues to mandate these examinations, requiring female athletes to conform to conventional standards of white Western heterofemininity. As a globally influential institution, the IOC's policies reinforce binary sex categorization while privileging specific racial and cultural gender norms that is western, white and normative (Henne 25).

Santhi Soundarajan's sporting life epitomizes the intersection of athletic achievement and systemic marginalization in international sports. Emerging from a family of brick kiln workers in Kathakurichi, in Pudukkottai district of Tamil Nadu, she overcame numerous socio-economic barriers. Her athletic achievements include securing 11 international medals and over 50 national awards. This remarkable journey highlights the transformative power of sports in breaking gender, social and cultural limitations. She was perhaps the only chance of her family to transcend the bondages of caste and poverty. The stripping of her 2006 Asian Games silver medal following a "failed" gender test was leaked by news outlets. The media reported that she was stripped off her silver medal by the Olympic Council of Asia. She was not communicated about her inability through proper channel. It was five days after the reports flooded millions of television screens that she finally got a call from the President of Indian Olympic Committee stating that she is barred from further national and international competition. This episode exemplifies how international sports bodies perpetuate colonial power dynamics through medical surveillance. The complete absence of psychological support or counselling during this medical verification demonstrates the institutional disregard for athlete's humanity. Soundarajan was not accompanied by any expert who could converse to her in Tamil, her native tongue when she was being shamed by the extensive medical scrutiny. "I was stripped – literally. My gender was debated on national television", Soundarajan recounted in an

interview with Samantha Shapiro, her voice betraying the trauma (Shapiro). Soundarajan was diagnosed with Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, a condition that affects sexual development before birth and during puberty. Individuals with this condition may have external sex characteristics typically associated with females but lack a uterus. They possess male internal sex organs (undescended testes), which are located in the pelvis or abdomen rather than outside the body. Soundarajan learned about her medical condition not through direct medical consultation, but through leaked news reports that spread across global media outlets. Activists had long campaigned for care reform nomenclature in the late 1990s. They opposed terms like "intersex" and "hermaphroditism". These labels reduced individuals to their conditions rather than acknowledging conditions people have. The 2018 consensus statement introduced Disorders of Sex Development (DSDs). This medical terminology aimed to replace existing nomenclature, positioning DSDs as medical conditions separate from patients' gender identities.

The aftermath of her exclusion from sport eventually led her to suicide attempt in 2007, social ostracism in her village, and eventual return to manual labour in brick kilns. Soundarajan's trajectory exposes how gender testing operated as an instrument of systematic oppression. The sports authorities' dehumanizing protocols triggered a cascade of marginalization, propelling her from international athlete to social outcast. Her life struggle delineates how gender testing policies not only police bodies but can erase the socioeconomic mobility that athletic achievement provides for athletes from underprivileged backgrounds. Sports led her back to the poverty she had hoped to escape. Soundarajan's experience serves as a powerful indictment of how international sports governance structures can violently reinforce existing social hierarchies, particularly at the intersection of gender, class, and nationality (Henne 256).

The SGBs 2012 hyperandrogenism policies represent a problematic continuation of historically racialized and gendered medical surveillance in elite sports. Through the implementation of scientific protocols, these organizations pathologized natural biological variation and disproportionately targeted women athletes from developing nations. The policy's structural inequity is evidenced by the conspicuous absence of reference centers in Africa and India, despite the organizations' targeting of athletes from Global South. The centres were located in Australia, Brazil, France, Japan, Sweden, and the United States. In the 2012 London Olympics, four young athletes were identified with hyperandrogenism and their medical "handling" suggested the policy's fundamental ethical failures. All the four Olympic hopefuls were from mountainous regions of developing countries. The coercive "treatment" of these athletes - involving unnecessary surgical interventions and "feminizing vaginoplasty" - demonstrates how medical authority was wielded to enforce narrow Western conceptions of femininity (Karkazis et al., 13). It is particularly revealing that medical professionals acknowledge the absence of any health benefits associated with these procedures, while also suggesting that they may impair athletic performance. This admission underscores that the underlying objective of the policy is less about maintaining competitive equity and more about regulating gender boundaries. Sonja Erikainen's book titled *Gender Verification and the Making of the Female Body in Sport* (2020) studies how through successive decades, these discriminatory practices strategically shifted their targets- from Eastern European athletes during the Cold War to Chinese runners in the 1990s, and ultimately to women of colour from developing nations under the 2012 hyperandrogenism guidelines (Erikainen 119).

Dutee Chand rose to international prominence as both an elite athlete and an advocate for gender rights in sports. She currently holds the national record in 100 metres. Born

in 1996 to a poor weaver family in Gopalpur in Odisha, she overcame significant socio-economic barriers to establish herself as one of India's fastest female sprinters. In 2014, she faced a career-threatening challenge when she was banned from competition due to naturally occurring high testosterone levels. Chand's case and the subsequent 2015 CAS ruling expose the scientific inadequacy underpinning these policies. The court's conclusion that insufficient evidence existed to support the presumed performance advantages of higher testosterone levels challenged the very foundation of the IAAF's regulatory framework. Erikainen discusses this ruling as pseudo-scientific justifications employed to legitimize discriminatory practices, perpetuating longstanding patterns of gender-based exclusion in international athletics (167). Chand's episode illustrates the persistent intersection of medical authority, gender normativity, and racial bias in elite sports governance. These frameworks continue to target a section of female athletes who are underprivileged, non-western and 'unfeminine'.

The cases of Soundarajan and Chand powerfully illustrate how international sports policies create compounded forms of marginalization for athletes who exist at the intersection of multiple disadvantaged identities. Their multiple disadvantaged identities intersect and compound the discrimination they experience. Taking their socio-economic status, both athletes came from impoverished rural backgrounds in India, with limited access to resources, training facilities, and support systems that wealthier athletes might take for granted. Chand was born to a weaver family, while Soundarajan came from a brick kiln worker's family. And as women in sports, they face gender-based discrimination and scrutiny. The hyperandrogenism regulations and sex verification testing they were subjected to disproportionately target women athletes, as men are not required to undergo similar scrutiny of their natural biological variations. The third factor that causes targeted discrimination is that they represent the Global South. As athletes from India, they face additional barriers within the international sports framework largely shaped by Western medical and scientific standards. The power dynamics between Global North and South institutions influence how their cases were handled and perceived. The most pertaining of the factors is the caste and class the athletes belong. Within the Indian context, their lower caste and class backgrounds added another layer of marginalization, affecting their access to legal resources, media representation, and institutional support when challenging international sports policies. The additional burden of biological variation also weighs down on the athletes. Both athletes were targeted by policies that pathologized natural biological variations in their bodies, leading to invasive testing, public scrutiny, and psychological trauma. Their plight can be read along Claudia Wiesemann's study on the traumatic consequences faced by athletes diagnosed with DSD, drawing parallels with experiences of physical or sexual abuse. Wiesemann's qualitative empirical research reveals that the trauma inflicted by a DSD diagnosis can lead to a cascade of mental health challenges, including feelings of shame, depression, and in severe cases, suicide attempts (Wiesemann 2).

The intersection of these identities meant that when facing discrimination based on one aspect of their identity, they had fewer resources and support systems to draw upon due to their other marginalized positions. This demonstrates how international sports policies can create cascading effects of discrimination that are devastating for Indian women athletes who already face multiple forms of social and economic disadvantage. Intersectional marginalization also affected their ability to advocate for themselves: while Chand was eventually able to successfully challenge the hyperandrogenism regulations, Soundarajan's earlier case received less international attention and support, leaving her

with fewer options for recourse after being stripped of her medal. The geographic and economic aspects of their marginalization were particularly stark. The SGB's policy of limiting approved testing centers to Western nations created an immediate structural barrier. Athletes from India were forced to travel thousands of miles to unfamiliar environments, separated from their support systems and cultural contexts. The financial burden of these journeys and potential "treatments" fell entirely on athletes who came from communities where such expenses represented significant hardship. This economic burden was not merely incidental but serving as a mechanism of exclusion, effectively limiting who could comply with these discriminatory policies (Erikainen 126).

It was the colonial systems which weaponized rigid gender binaries as instruments of control, erasing indigenous understandings of gender diversity. Steven Rose illuminates the mind-body dichotomy's emergence through Enlightenment thought. As body got tied to biology, biology became divorced from social understanding (158). The male/female binary emerged as a product of this specific historical moment. Feminist sociobiologists Myra Hird and Joan Roughgarden challenged these rigid categorizations of sex/gender binaries by documenting extensive sex variations in nature (582). Their research established diversity as the natural order. This biological reality extends to human variation emphasising sex/gender binaries as temporal constructs rather than eternal truths (232).

The sex/gender binary system operated mostly as a colonial instrument of control. Tom Boellstorff advocates decolonizing transgender studies by centring indigenous histories, identities, languages. He asserts that "decolonization has deep, shared interests with transgender studies in resistance to pathologization by the medical-industrial complex and Western notions of gender and sexuality, which can be understood as systems of control and genocide" (426). Centuries long colonial rule erased local understandings of gender diversity. "Transgender" itself manifests as a product of white colonial frameworks. Similarly, Binaohan opines that trans decolonization begins with critiquing Western gender theory. Binaohan writes, "As far as decolonizing white trans/gender notions of medical transition go, the clearer examples are those where we can see how the medicalisation of gender, and the nexus of issues surrounding it, is actually hegemonic" (95). This critique examines colonialism's impact on gender practices by investigating how racism shaped indigenous gender systems. Indigenous peoples and people of colour maintain distinct gendered understandings outside colonial paradigms. SGBs policies reaffirm how whiteness continues to influence contemporary gender discourse in elite sports.

Athletic participation function as narrative devices through which athletes inscribe themselves into their community's sociocultural text. Through sports engagement, athletes articulate their social legibility within collective meaning-making systems, simultaneously constructing personal identity and contributing to broader communal narratives. As MacIntyre writes, "we are never more (and sometimes less) than the co-authors of our own narratives. Only in fantasy do we live what story we please" (99). The contemporary interpretation of sport as primarily a competitive measurement system represents a historical contingency rather than an inherent truth. This reductionist framework obscures sport's foundational ontological function: its capacity to serve as a narrative medium through which individuals and societies construct meaningful self-understanding. The comparative-evaluative paradigm, while dominant in modern discourse, emerged relatively recently and fails to capture sport's enduring role as a vehicle for existential meaning-making and identity formation. Historical evidence challenges our modern fixation on comparative athletic measurement and ranking. Ancient Olympic Games served primarily as religious ceremonies rather than competitive rankings. Like-

wise, Mesoamerican ballgames fulfilled sacred cultural functions dating back to 1400BC. Medieval peasants utilized sports to perform masculinity since they were excluded from military and hunting contexts. Historical contests frequently paired mismatched opponents, prioritizing individual prowess over comparative outcome even if the comparative outcome was largely foretold (Guttman, 204). The competitive interpretation emerged alongside industrial capitalism and Western patriarchal dominance structures. Contemporary sports emphasis on measurement reflects modern values of adversarial achievement demonstration. Our ranking-focused interpretation represents a culturally-specific rather than universal sporting paradigm. Traditional sporting practices prioritized demonstration of excellence over hierarchical competitive ordering. Industrial values transformed sport's meaning from cultural ritual to quantifiable comparative testing. Western patriarchal frameworks recast athletics as instruments of power and dominance measurement. Modern competitive sports' ideology obscures historically diverse functions of athletic practice.

The inherent hypocrisy of sex testing in elite sports is evident in its unilateral application to female athletes. While the IOC and IAAF claimed these policies ensured competitive fairness, their failure to implement parallel testing for male athletes reveals deeply rooted gender bias. As Ha et al. astutely observe, these regulations perpetuated "the legacy of double-standard policies" by "casting doubt on [female athletes'] sex, gender, and sexuality" (1040). The 2011-2012 hyperandrogenism protocols particularly exemplify this double standard—scrutinizing women's natural hormone levels while allowing men to compete regardless of their androgen variations. This asymmetric scrutiny reinforces a problematic binary: athletic prowess is viewed as a natural extension of masculinity while being treated as an anomaly when expressed through female bodies. The selective application of these policies thus exposes how scientific rhetoric was wielded not to ensure fairness, but to police the boundaries of acceptable femininity in sport. The cultural and psychological violence inflicted on Soundarajan and Chand was profound. When Chand's gender was questioned, the public nature of the scrutiny led to devastating personal consequences. Similarly, Soundarajan faced intense public scrutiny and social ostracism. The Western medical establishment's authority to define and police femininity created a form of cultural violence, imposing standards that failed to account for biological and cultural diversity.

The national media coverage of Soundarajan and Chand exemplifies a troubling pattern of insensitivity that significantly impacts the lives and careers of female athletes. The sensationalism and invasive reporting surrounding their cases often overshadow their achievements, reducing multifaceted issues of gender and identity to simplistic narratives. Both athletes symbolize the ongoing struggle against discriminatory practices in sports, and the media's role in perpetuating stigma and misunderstanding remains a critical barrier to their acceptance and success. Reports from various national outlets, such as *The Times of India* and *Hindustan Times*, frequently sensationalized Soundarajan's case, framing it as a failure rather than a reflection of the complexities of gender identity in sports. This media narrative not only misrepresented her biological condition but also undermined her identity as a female athlete. The aftermath of Soundarajan's disqualification was marked by a pronounced lack of compassion in media coverage. Following her public humiliation, she experienced severe mental health challenges, including a suicide attempt. Media reports often focused on her alleged deceit, depicting her as a "cheater" without acknowledging the systemic issues of gender testing in athletics. Such narratives contributed to her further marginalization and ostracization. The media's insensitivity

did not end with her disqualification. Reports detailing her subsequent struggles, including employment in a brick kiln, often lacked context and failed to highlight her resilience. Coverage by outlets like *The Indian Express* tended to focus on her past rather than her potential for recovery and contribution to the sport, perpetuating a narrative of failure rather than redemption.

Media coverage frequently invaded Chand's privacy by disclosing details of her medical evaluations without her consent. This breach not only violated her rights but also subjected her to a relentless public gaze, reinforcing the stigma surrounding her condition. Initial reports often misrepresented Chand's situation, suggesting she had "failed" a gender test. Such language conflated hyperandrogenism with doping allegations, failing to clarify that her elevated testosterone levels were a natural condition. This misrepresentation contributed to a public perception of unfairness rather than a recognition of the complexities inherent in gender and athletics. While Chand's case eventually attracted support from advocacy groups and some media outlets, the initial response was predominantly negative. Early coverage emphasized controversy over the IAAF's regulations rather than advocating for equitable treatment in sports. This lack of supportive dialogue reflected a broader insensitivity towards the nuances of gender identity and athletic competition.

The media coverage and public discourse surrounding their cases further exemplified their double marginalization. Western media often portrayed them through a lens of otherness, focusing on their rural backgrounds and deviation from Western feminine norms. This narrative reinforced existing stereotypes about athletes from developing nations while simultaneously questioning their legitimacy as women athletes. The intersection of their identities as rural, underprivileged women from India made them particularly vulnerable to such discriminatory portrayal. The cases of Soundarajan and Chand serve as powerful examples of how international sports policies can perpetuate multiple forms of marginalization. Their stories highlight the urgent need for a more inclusive and equitable approach to sports governance, one that recognizes and respects diverse cultural and biological expressions of gender while addressing the structural inequalities that continue to marginalize athletes based on their nationality, class, and gender identity.

Works Cited

Boellstorff, Tom, et al. "Decolonizing Transgender: A Roundtable Discussion". *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 1, no. 3, 2014, pp. 419-39.

Das, Indraneel, et al. "Santhi? not a woman?; set to lose Doha Asiad silver". *Hindustan Times*, 18 Dec. 2006, `https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/santhi-not-a-woman-set-to-lose-doha-asiad-silver/story-oft7yR2cKgVJsM6kOJqHiJ.html`

Erikainen, Sonja. *Gender Verification and the Making of the Female Body in Sport*. Routledge, 2020.

Fénichel, Patrick, et al. "Molecular Diagnosis of 5α-Reductase Deficiency in 4 Elite Young Female Athletes through Hormonal Screening for Hyperandrogenism". *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*, Vol. 98, no. 6, 2013, pp. 1055-59.

Ha, Nathan Q., et al. "Hurdling over Sex? Sport, Science, and Equity". *Archives of Sexual Behaviour*, Vol. 43, no. 6, 2014, pp. 1035-42.

Henne, Kathryn E. *Testing for Athlete Citizenship: Regulating Doping and Sex in Sport.* Rutgers University Press, 2015.

Hird, Myra J. "For a Sociology of Transsexualism". *Sociology*, Vol. 36, no. 3, 2002, pp. 577-95.

Karkazis, Katrina, et al. "Out of Bounds? A Critique of the New Policies on Hyperandrogenism in Elite Female Athletes". *The American Journal of Bioethics*, Vol. 12, no. 7, 2012, pp. 3-16.

Maher, Charles. "On Fast Women". *Los Angeles Times*, 2 July 1970, p. E2.

Pieper, Lindsay Parks. *Sex Testing: Gender Policing in Women's Sports.* University of Illinois Press, 2016.

"Punishing difference". *The New India Express*, 16 May 2012, https://www.newindianexpress.com/magazine/2009/Jan/24/punishing-difference-20516.html

Rose, Steven. *Lifelines: Biology Beyond Determinism.* Oxford UP, 1998.

Roughgarden, Joan. *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People.* U of California P, 2004.

"Santhi Soudarajan, first Indian Athlete failed by a Sex Test". *The Times of India*, 10 Mar. 2024, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/gender-march-11-2024/santhi-soundarajan-first-indian-athlete-failed-by-a-sex-test/articleshow/108366259.cms

Shapiro, Samantha. "Caught in the Middle: A Failed Gender Test Crushed Santhi Soundarajan's Olympic Dreams." *ESPN*, 1 Aug. 2012.

Wiesemann, Claudia. "Is There a Right Not to Know One's Sex? The Ethics of 'Gender Verification' in Women's Sports Competition". *Journal of Medical Ethics*, vol. 37, no. 4, 2011, pp. 216-220. doi:10.1136/jme.2010.039081.

Deterritorializing the Self: Body, Gender, and Identity in the Movie *Titane*

Unnikrishnan K.

Assistant Professor, Govt. Arts & Science College Tavanur and Research
Scholar, Department of English Govt. Victoria College Palakkad

Abstract

In the film *Titane* (2021), directed by Julia Ducournau, the protagonist Alexia undergoes a series of radical bodily and identity transformations that challenge traditional notions of subjectivity, gender, and desire. Through the lens of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of deterritorialization, this analysis explores how Alexia's journey exemplifies the breakdown of fixed categories and the fluidity of existence, moving beyond rigid humanist frameworks. Deterritorialization, as described in *A Thousand Plateaus*, involves the destabilization and reconfiguration of established structures, and Alexia's metamorphosis functions as a site of continuous deterritorialization where human, machine, and gender boundaries dissolve.

Keywords: Deterritorialization, gender, identity, fluidity

Introduction

Deterritorialization refers to breaking away from established structures, norms, or territories (both physical and conceptual). This concept is integral to Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, where they discuss how identity, society, and even language can be uprooted from their fixed meanings or roles. Alexia, the central figure in Julia Ducournau's captivating French film *Titane*, embodies a profound and multifaceted exploration of the Deleuzian notion of deterritorialization. As a character who defies conventional categorization, transgressing the boundaries of normative identity and challenging the notion of a stable, unified self, Alexia's journey is a powerful manifestation of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical framework.

Body as Territory

Alexia's body is central to the film's narrative, and her bodily transformations illustrate the deterritorialization of the human body. Alexia's body in *Titane* serves as a primary site of deterritorialization as it undergoes a series of profound transformations that challenge the conventional boundaries of what it means to be human. The narrative begins with Alexia experiencing a car accident that leaves her with a titanium plate in her skull. Her body is altered in a way that disrupts the natural integrity of her human form. The insertion of a mechanical element into her organic body marks her as a hybrid

being - a fusion of human and machine. This merging of flesh and metal deterritorializes the body from its traditional biological state, destabilizing the boundary between human and non-human, organic and inorganic. In Deleuze and Guattari's framework, this hybridization can be understood as the creation of a body without organs, a concept they use to describe a body that is not defined by its organs or functions but is instead open to transformation, multiplicity, and fluidity. Alexia's body begins to function outside the conventional norms of biology, symbolizing a body that is no longer tied to a fixed, stable, or human identity.

One of the most striking aspects of Alexia's bodily transformation is her pregnancy after having intercourse with a car. This event deterritorializes reproduction itself from biological norms. Pregnancy, a traditionally human and gendered experience, is here reimagined as something post-human, involving a mechanical element. The fact that a machine impregnates Alexia's body radically undermines the conventional territorialization of the female body as the site of biological reproduction.

Her pregnancy introduces elements of fluidity and unpredictability to her body, as she experiences both physical changes (her stomach stretching, her body leaking motor oil) and psychological ones. These transformations further deterritorialize the body by disconnecting the process of reproduction from human, biological, or gendered norms. Alexia's body, now blurring human and machine, male and female, becomes a site of multiplicity and ambiguity.

Throughout *Titane*, Alexia commits several violent acts, often using her body as the primary tool for destruction. Her physical engagement with violence, including brutal murders, can be seen as an extension of the deterritorialization of her body. In a metaphorical sense, Alexia's body is no longer bound by moral, social, or ethical limits; it exists in a space where societal laws and humanist ideas about bodily integrity and sanctity no longer apply.

This violent deterritorialization dismantles the idea of the body as a sacred or coherent entity. Instead, her body becomes a force of destruction and change, capable of both giving life (in her pregnancy) and taking it away (through her murders). This dual capacity further destabilizes the notion of bodily territory, as Alexia's actions blur the lines between creation and destruction, life and death.

Gender and Identity

Alexia's body also undergoes a gendered form of deterritorialization when she disguises herself as Adrien, a missing boy, to evade capture. By challenging and destabilizing fixed ideas of male and female roles, identities, and bodies this shift into a male identity further deterritorializes her body from traditional gender roles. Alexia is neither fully male nor female but occupies a fluid space between these categories, which Deleuze and Guattari might describe as a 'becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari 232-309). Her body, which can now perform both masculine and feminine roles, exists outside the territorial markers of gender identity. To evade capture, she cuts her hair, binds her breasts, and performs as a male, fully immersing herself in a new gender role. This act of becoming male destabilizes her previous identification as female, illustrating a key moment of deterritorialization from the traditional binary that constrains individuals to one stable gender identity.

The physical and performative shift from female to male reveals the fluidity of gender as a construct, in line with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming, where iden-

tities are not fixed but are processes in flux. Following Judith Butler's performativity theory, the performative acts of gender in *Titane* are evident in the fluidity with which Alexia/Adrien navigates gender roles. As Butler asserts in *Gender Trouble*, "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame." (25) Alexia's transformation into Adrien is not simply a disguise or role-playing; it challenges the idea of gender as a static, unchangeable category. Her body and identity slip between male and female, deterritorializing the boundaries that define what it means to be one or the other.

In her new identity as Adrien, Alexia enters the hyper-masculine world of fire fighting, where she must convincingly perform masculinity. She engages in traditionally male-dominated behaviors, such as working out, roughhousing with fellow fire fighters, and enduring physical pain without complaint. Her body language and interactions shift to fit into this male-dominated space. The ease with which she slips into this role highlights the arbitrary nature of gendered expectations, further deterritorializing the rigid structures that define masculinity and femininity as opposites, immutable identities. The film complicates this performance when Alexia's body starts to betray her hidden identity. Her leaking motor oil and swelling stomach, signs of her hybrid pregnancy, act as interruptions in her performance of masculinity. These bodily changes highlight the tension between gender performance and biological markers, showing that even the boundaries between male and female bodies are not as stable or natural as they seem. Her struggle to maintain a masculine facade while her body transforms into something beyond human (both male and female, and something else entirely) reflects a profound deterritorialization of gender.

Alexia's pregnancy introduces another layer of gender deterritorialization. While she is pregnant she is simultaneously performing masculinity. This juxtaposition blurs the lines between male and female roles, as Alexia's body carries out a biological process associated with womanhood while her outward performance aligns with male gender norms. Her pregnant body defies categorization, suggesting that gender and biological functions are not inherently linked. This challenges the traditional binary notion that biological sex determines gender identity. Alexia's character also deterritorializes traditional feminine archetypes, particularly those associated with motherhood and nurturance. Throughout *Titane*, she displays little emotional connection to her pregnancy or maternal instincts, a sharp contrast to societal expectations of femininity. Her rejection of motherhood as a defining feature of her identity deterritorializes the concept of femininity from reproductive and nurturing roles, showing that femininity need not be tied to these archetypes.

In contrast to this rejection of traditional femininity, Alexia forms a bond with Vincent, the fire captain, who embraces her as his son. This relationship, though complex, offers a form of emotional connection that exists outside the usual frameworks of gendered familial roles. Alexia is neither mother nor daughter, but inhabits a role that blends paternal affection and gender fluidity. This dynamic between Alexia and Vincent further deterritorializes gender norms by showing that familial and emotional bonds do not need to conform to traditional gender structures.

Sexuality and Desire

Desire, for Deleuze and Guattari, is a productive force that can create new possibilities outside of societal constraints. Alexia's sexual attraction to cars in *Titane* represents

a profound deterritorialization of desire, shifting it away from normative human sexuality into a space where desire becomes disconnected from biological or anthropocentric frameworks. Her intimate engagement with a car, followed by her impregnation, challenges the territory of reproductive sexuality, suggesting a post-human reconfiguration of desire and procreation. Her desire is no longer bound by biological, cultural, or even species-specific norms. To Deleuze and Guattari desire is a productive and creative force that is not confined to fixed or socially regulated structures. It is capable of breaking free from conventional representations, such as heterosexual, reproductive, or even interpersonal frameworks, and can instead connect with inhuman, abstract, or technological entities.

In *Titane*, Alexia's sexual attraction to cars deterritorializes desire by breaking it free from the traditional object of human relations. According to Deleuze and Guattari, desire operates through a process of deterritorialization, where it is no longer bound to the restrictive frameworks of society—like the Oedipal family structure, normative heterosexuality, or reproductive goals—and instead becomes something that flows across different bodies, objects, and machines. "Desire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is, rather, the subject that is lacking in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression" (Deleuze 26).

It is illustrated that desire is not confined to a fixed or predetermined object, like the traditional human relationships of heterosexual or familial desire. Alexia's attraction to cars exemplifies this idea. Her desire is not rooted in interpersonal relationships or reproduction but is directed towards an inanimate, non-human object. This desire bypasses the conventional norms of sexual relationships and expresses itself through a non-human, machinic connection, showing how desire can flow beyond biological and social norms.

Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the desiring-machine helps explain how Alexia's attraction to cars functions. In *Anti-Oedipus*, they describe how desire connects with machines, both literal and figurative, to form new assemblages: "A machine may be defined as a system of interruptions or breaks. [...] Desire constantly couples continuous flows and partial objects that are by nature fragmentary and fragmented' (38).

In Alexia's case, the car becomes a desiring-machine with which her desire couples, creating a non-human assemblage of sexuality. This coupling of flows between Alexia and the car deterritorializes desire from the biological or reproductive systems of human sexuality. Instead of seeing desire as something that arises from the human body in relation to another human, the car as a machine becomes a part of the productive flow of Alexia's desire.

Her sexual encounter with the car is not merely an aberration or fetish but a productive reconfiguration of desire, where the flow of erotic energy is directed towards a technological object rather than a human body. This reflects Deleuze's idea that desire is not lack but production. It creates new forms of connection and new possibilities for the body and its relationship to the world. Alexia's relationship with the car also exemplifies Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming. Becoming, in Deleuze's thought, refers to processes where a subject (or object) is transformed by deterritorializing from its conventional identity and moving toward something else. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they state: "A becoming is not a correspondence between relations. But neither is it a resemblance, an imitation, or, at the limit, an identification. [...] Becoming is a zone of proximity, indiscernibility, or undecidability" (237).

Alexia's attraction to cars and her eventual impregnation by one suggests a form of becoming-machine, where her body and desire merge with the mechanical world of the car. This transformation deterritorializes her sexuality from being purely human or

biological. Her body starts to manifest the attributes of the machine—such as leaking motor oil and developing physical changes that suggest a hybrid of human and machine. This becoming-machine also reflects the idea that identity and desire are never static. They are fluid processes that constantly transform, moving into new territories where the boundaries between human and non-human, sexual and asexual, blur and dissolve.

Violence and Creation

Alexia's violence in *Titane* can be seen as a process of deterritorialization that disrupts and destabilizes normative human identity. Through her acts of violence, Alexia dismantles conventional moral, ethical, and social codes that define what it means to be human in terms of behavior, identity, and emotional relationships. Violence in *Titane* serves as a radical force that deterritorializes Alexia's identity from the expectations and boundaries that define human subjectivity.

Alexia's violence throughout *Titane* represents a breakdown of the moral frameworks that traditionally structure human identity. In normative human society, empathy, moral restraint, and adherence to ethical standards are key components of what it means to be human. By engaging in brutal acts of violence, Alexia deterritorializes herself from these structures, entering a realm where human identity is no longer tethered to ethical concerns or emotional empathy. Deleuze and Guattari argue that deterritorialization involves escaping fixed representations of the self, which include the moral codes that define social identity. They write: "There is no longer a subject, but only states of subjectivity, transitions, velocities, and lines of movement." (Deleuze 38)

By abandoning the moral and ethical dimensions that are often seen as intrinsic to human identity, Alexia deterritorializes from the structures that anchor her as a 'moral' or 'human' subject. To Deleuze and Guattari, violence can be seen as a force of becoming, which deterritorializes identity by breaking it free from established forms and subjectivities. In *Titane*, Alexia's violent acts serve as ruptures that allow her to enter into different modes of existence, escaping the confines of her normative human identity and moving toward a posthuman or non-human form of subjectivity. Alexia's violence creates this zone of indiscernibility, where her identity is no longer human in the conventional sense, but something ambiguous and fluid. Through violence, she moves into a realm where the boundaries between human and inhuman, life and death, are blurred. She deterritorializes from the fixed identity of being 'human' and enters into a state of becoming-something-else, an unrecognizable and transgressive subject.

Alexia's violent engagement with her own body and others' bodies also deterritorializes the body from its traditional conception as a sacrosanct and inviolable human territory. In normative human culture, the integrity of the body is tied to ideas of personal identity, autonomy, and the boundaries that separate the self from the world. Through violence, Alexia both destroys and transforms bodies, including her own, challenging the notion that the body is a stable territory of identity. Deleuze and Guattari introduce the idea of the Body without Organs to describe a body that escapes from its structured, territorialized organization. It represents a body that is no longer defined by its organs or functions but is instead open to fluidity, transformation, and violence. They state: "The body without organs is opposed less to organs than to that organization of the organs called the organism" (Deleuze 41).

Alexia's violence enacts this process of deterritorialization, where her body no longer

operates as an organism tied to the functions and limits of human life. Her violent interactions with others' bodies, as well as the transformations of her own body (such as the metallic elements emerging in her pregnancy), turn the human body into a site of continual flux and destruction, a Body without Organs. This dismantling of the body-as-territory also reflects her deterritorialization from human identity, where the body no longer serves as a stable ground for identity. Violence in *Titane* also acts as a line of flight—a concept Deleuze and Guattari use to describe escape routes that break away from dominant systems or structures. Through her violent acts, Alexia finds an escape from the traditional roles and subjectivities that define human life. These violent actions are not simply destructive but serve as an opening for deterritorialization, where she moves beyond the limits of human identity and enters into new, transgressive spaces. As Deleuze and Guattari write: A line of flight is a deterritorialization. It is not a simple act of escaping, but producing, in the course of flight, active and creative lines." (499)

Alexia's violence is not merely an act of destruction but an act of production. It produces new forms of identity and subjectivity as she deterritorializes from the normative structures that regulate human identity. Her violence creates a new line of flight that leads her into a space where she can become something other than human, something that exists outside the bounds of ethical and biological limitations.

Deterritorialization and the Post-Human Future

The ultimate deterritorialization of Alexia's body is her transformation into a posthuman figure. As her pregnancy progresses, her body increasingly fuses with mechanical elements. The motor oil leaking from her body, the metal-like structure emerging beneath her skin, and her eventual giving birth to a child that bears the marks of both human and machine signify the complete deterritorialization of the human body into something that transcends human categories altogether.

Alexia's body no longer belongs to any fixed human, gendered, or biological category. Instead, it represents a fluid, hybrid form that resists territorialization. This posthuman body echoes Deleuze and Guattari's ideas about the body as a site of continual becoming, rather than a fixed or stable entity. The machine-human hybrid born at the end of the film can be seen as the product of a deterritorialized process, signaling a new form of life that exists beyond traditional human boundaries. Deleuze and Guattari's work anticipates this kind of transformation, where deterritorialization leads to new forms of existence beyond human limits. They write: "The new assemblages, territories, and flows that are formed create new realities." (324)

In *Titane*, Alexia's hybrid child, born of both human and machine, symbolizes this new reality—an existence that transcends the human form and deterritorializes life itself. This is the ultimate act of creation through deterritorialization, where life deterritorializes not only from biological reproduction but from the very concept of human identity. The human form, once rigid and territorialized, becomes a space of fluidity, capable of fusing with the technological and creating new forms of existence.

Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity can be linked to this deterritorialization of gender, where Alexia's bodily transformation challenges the performance of traditional gender roles. Butler argues that gender is not an inherent identity but a series of acts that create the illusion of a stable identity. In *Titane*, Alexia deterritorializes from the fixed performances of gender, becoming a new entity that defies binary gender roles,

as her body takes on characteristics of both human and machine.

Works Cited

Braidotti, Rosi. *The post human.* Polity Press, 2013.

Butler, Judith. *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity.* Routledge, 2011.

Chaudhari, Shohini. *Feminist Film Theorists.* Routledge, 2007.

Cowan, Douglas E. *The Forbidden Body.* NYU Press, 2022.

Creed, Barbera. *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis.* Routledge, 1993.

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus.* Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

—. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* Penguin Classics, 1972.

Monaco, James. *How to Read a Film: Movies, Media and Beyond.* 4th ed. Oxford UP, 2009.

Titane. Dir. Julia Ducournau. Per. Vincent Lindon and Agathe Rouselle. Kazak Productions, 2021.

Unveiling Paris: A Lefebvrian Analysis of Spatial Representation in *Emily in Paris*

Erica Roy

Research Scholar, Sree Sankara College, Kalady Mahatma Gandhi
University, Kerala (Recipient of SJSGC Fellowship)

Abstract

The article is a Lefebvrian analysis of spatial representation in the popular Netflix show *Emily In Paris* and how this theoretical framework exposes the social production of space. Paris is read not only as a geographical site, but more as a kind of socially constructed space, knit into cultural and commercial discourses aimed at a global audience. By combining Lefebvre's concept of perceived, conceived, and lived spaces, the analysis also showcases Paris as an abstract commodity in a capitalist society designed to foster styled and idealized lifestyles. The analysis indicates how the media construction of urban experience indirectly assists in the development of urban spaces in such a way that they contribute to the identities of both the citizens of such cities and the viewers. It builds on the Lefebvrian analysis of the complex socio-economic dynamics of urban media spaces and reveals how such representations serve to performatively shape collective perception and ultimately urban practice.

Keywords: Henri Lefebvre, Spatial theory, Media representation, Urban sociology, Cultural commodification, Paris in popular culture, Social construction of space, Capitalism and urban spaces, Media influence on perception, Symbolic spaces

Introduction

Emily in Paris stands as one of the defining series that quickly garnered immense cultural significance following its debut on Netflix. Through the lens of American marketing executive Emily, the show aims to present an idealized perspective of Paris, filled with both enchantments and obstacles. Created by Darren Star, it has sparked a mix of acclaim and critique for its visually appealing yet superficial representation of life in Paris, crafting a narrative that indulges fantasies for audiences worldwide.

Although *Emily in Paris* primarily serves as light entertainment, it also encourages more profound contemplation about Paris through Henri Lefebvre's theoretical framework regarding the social production of space. In his work *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre emerges as a noteworthy French philosopher and sociologist who argues that space is not merely an independent physical entity but is shaped and constructed through various social processes and interactions. According to him,

> There are plenty of reasons for thinking that descriptions and cross-sections of this kind, though they may well supply inventories of what exists in space,

or even generate a discourse on space, cannot ever give rise to a knowledge of space. And, without such a knowledge per se- i.e. the level of mental space- a large portion of the attributes and properties of what is actually social space (7).

Therefore, every discourse is constructed in the social landscape where knowledge is being processed and interacted with. This idea prompts viewers to reconsider how Paris is depicted—not just as a picturesque setting but as an active formation interconnected with culture and ideology.

Applying Lefebvre's theories allows us to explore how the series illustrates elements of space created and redefined amid different social contexts, imaginative perceptions, and lived experiences. Utilizing Lefebvre's conceptual model enables us to interpret *Emily in Paris* as both reflecting and actively building a portrayal of Paris influenced by cultural stereotypes, economic factors, and media representations. This analysis seeks to investigate deeper into how artistic creation and marketing related to depictions of Paris contribute to broader conversations about media's influence on our understanding of urban spaces and cultural identities.

The Lefebvrian Perspective on Space

Lefebvre's analysis of space suggests every environment at its core, from the most intimate of personal sanctuaries to the most expansive of public settings, is really a social production transitioning in infinite flux. Tensions are produced by various natures and arrangements of stimuli in their mapping; the meanings charted into them, and the quotidian practices enacted within them, each woven into ongoing power frameworks working in opposition to and in support of each other. For instance, public squares may be conceived of as places that legitimize the right to assembly and foster open forums that epitomize democratic citizenship, yet they always could act as spaces of constraint, mirrors of state authority.

> Representations of space must, therefore, have a substantial role and a specific influence on the production of space. Their intervention occurs by way of construction- in other words, by way of architecture, conceived of not as the building of a particular structure, palace or monument but rather as a project embedded in a spatial context and a texture which calls for 'representations' that will not vanish into symbolic or imaginary realms. (42)

To him, there is also the way of spatial practice, which means a habitual way of working within vast areas through repeated actions. The work transformed space from less visible into a more active space; in other words, it exceeded the established spatial definitions of already existing infrastructures through action. This attitude enables us to rethink city life: the seemingly simple rituals of commuting to work or gathering with friends bring about subtle yet enduring transformations within our environments.

Lefebvre explains representations of space-dreamlike ideas concocted by architects, planners, and policy-makers. Yet this is more on the plane of the power exercised within those spaces, which generally articulates the interests of dominant groups in society. In other words, design constructs in a constant dialectical relationship with representational spaces and environments that collapse under real experiences, offering their take and

meanings into the picture. Within them, constitutive spaces often thwart the original intentions of authorities yet also grant agency to individuals and communities.

Lefebvre's ideas remain ever alive in today's rhythms as they contribute to our understanding of spatiality as a critical instrument to map out how such spheres are produced and become spaces of contention and change. His model suggests that space is a continuous project that illustrates cultural negotiation among differing socioeconomic contexts, all quite alive when examining a Paris in *Emily in Paris*, where the rich social fabric of the city seemingly comes alive with the active engagement of the various layers of society.

Paris as a Constructed Space in *Emily in Paris*

In *Emily in Paris*, the portrayal of the city is not limited merely to geography and architecture but, instead, is a conceptually charged space that embodies and propagates certain cultural and commercial discourses. The version of Paris offered in the show is carefully constructed to fulfill the fantasies of a global audience while depicting the city as charming, stylish, and wonderful. It becomes what Henri Lefebvre would later label "abstract space," a social construct from which physical locations are not only real but have been formed for capitalist gain.

Lefebvre argues that, in capitalist societies, spaces turn into commodities that serve as instruments for social control and economic gain. The change is prominent in the show in that Paris is now a space to be utilized for promoting an enchanted lifestyle of privilege, fashion, and charm. Commodification transforms the backdrop from a mere setting to an active character that tries to sell a glammed version of life in Paris. Symbolic representations built within the domain of Paris—the Eiffel Tower, cute cafés, luxury fashion houses—are absorbed by the series and turned into consumable goods in the hands of audience members searching for immersive experiences.

Also, if this transformation reflects less directly on consumption alone and extends to tourism, it is equally relevant to identity construction. To Emily, the protagonist, and by extension, her audience, Paris is a projection of all these dreams of adventure, romance, and self-discovery. Drawing on Lefebvre's theory: space comes to be, one, a commodity; and, two, constructs frames within which social relations and identities emerge. Through Emily's experiences in increasingly commercialized settings, viewing audiences are positioned to either empathize or assimilate toward her cosmopolitan way of life.

> The commodity is a social being there, an object 'irreducible to the philosophical concept of the object. The commodity hides in stores, in warehouses- in inventory. Yet, it has no mystery comparable to the mystery of nature. The enigma of the commodity is entirely social (340)

Furthermore, the commodification of these spaces changes how stories are offered, effectively riding herd over either the characters in the stories themselves or real-life audiences in their relationship with Paris. It invites important conversations about the issue of authenticity versus uniformity, a critical concern raised even by Lefebvre himself. The depiction faces the risk of inadvertently simplifying Paris in ways that might negate specific local characteristics in service of constructing a more commercially viable image. Such dynamics do much more than shape perceptions of Paris around the world; they also modulate how urban fabrica is developed with respect to representing them while too often showing disdain for indigenous traditions or community values.

In the end, thus, with that her representation of Paris in *Emily in Paris*, the positionality of the relationship between city space and capitalist pursuits clarifies that the city is, at the same time, consumption object and identity-formation ground. This analysis, when taken from Lefebvre's perspective, helps in reality to highlight deeper socioeconomic dynamics concerning the incorporation of urban life into mainstream media-and the questions raised regarding implications-on-their articulation-which they possess, not only for people engaged in the characterization of their lives by this city but for collective perceptions of these spaces globally.

Cultural Stereotypes and Spatial Production

Emily in Paris gives audiences a suspicious but classic impression of Paris, a massively romanticized notion, through the use of cliches-it gets much of the film in terms of haute-couture glitz, or the obligatory Michelin-starred restaurant surrounded by the full array of already established vastly nuanced social delineation typical in this multitude of characters living out their lives in Paris there.

Such places conjure psychedelic images of post-industrial stasis on the Seine, speeches of messianic though commercial discourse, and won't leave without losing the chance to feast on their most quintessential market. Certainly aided by her emotions, the weave between the story of Paris and the choreography of people's ideas of French culture entwines.

It will spam, the so-called Parisian culture, consisting of several cliched descriptions, all neatly wrapped together. It fails to describe what happens in an age-old city, burdened with heavy historic baggage. Packed under the altitudes of example hegemony, these days symbolic of immigration, economic inequality, and identity politics, my conclusion provides for cultural imperialism, which lets reality take life way in which this city-dwellers themselves-stand in line while tourists shuffle them into convenient brand settings.

The key image the viewer comes away with of her character is, therefore, a voyeur of sorts into the lives of these people. There are probably requirements set along with a world of experience that is naturally neither false nor true of Paris, at least it is true of Emily's shoe-string enterprise entirely packed with cultural insensitivity and tons of disillusionment. To filter into view, nothing is a discount of mind or dismissing a kind of substitution-you have those persons living, albeit in a sense of divergence, mostly the result of those nearby experiences almost crashing with whatever substantive expectations from the overarching world narrative.

Implications of Media-Produced Spaces

Through this lens of Henri Lefebvre's understanding of social space, *Emily in Paris* is more than an imagination of the city; it is working towards an active construction of Paris that dovetails with certain commercial and aesthetic interests. Lefebvre sees space as a social product or multilayered social construction, whose social production is always based on values, social production of meanings, and practices emerging from this. "Space as locus of production as itself as product and production is both the weapon and sign of this struggle" (105). Media constructions of realities fundamentally produce a new reality through the cliché and stereotype lenses that they portray about their city. This

kind of reality distorts the view of people towards Paris, more often than not blowing the hovering zone of gritty mundane realities quite off-putting.

Such reductive realities quite at times make their effects felt rather glaringly on tourism and local economies. The series inspires the audience to visit Paris with hopes for quirky escapades, high fashion, and romantic adventures. The show creates a kind of theme park-laden character effect, where certain areas of the city get highlighted while others fade, sometimes in ambiguous fashion that throws local economies and urban development out of whack. Local shops, cafes, and neighborhoods may conform even more to tourists' prescribed expectations supported by media representations, which could prove detrimental to local needs and legitimate cultural expressions.

Hypothetical intervention by Paris affects the relationship between how residents see their city and themselves. The concentration on certain kinds of images or stereotypes may alienate those who do not find expression in the media creation of their city and force residents to play out the expectations given by stereotypes formed in the eyes of tourists, equally changing behaviours, causing resentment, or cultural shifting.

Thus, while narrating a story about Paris, *Emily in Paris* still patterns cultural and economic visions of life. As per Lefebvre, it functions as a spatial producer: sets of imaginary discrepancies are hastily superimposed upon the real which produce representations of space back into the production of space. This cyclicism may compound culture/space's commercialization and commodification proclivities, with a sharp implication for both the tourist and local.

Conclusion

This is on the theory of localized in Henri Lefebvre's "The Production of Space," where the space concept revolves around commodification and represents new ways to think about media representations like *Emily in Paris*. Set against the romantic backdrop of Paris, this city becomes an illusion of itself. The way it is configured is not just aesthetic but a cultural determiner that mediates and forms viewer perceptions of Parisian life.

In Lefebvre's perspective, space is produced and reproduced through a play of perceived, conceived, and lived dimensions. In *Emily in Paris*, the perceived space is the Parisian landscape. These streets, cafes, and landmarks are perceptibly signified in this visual frame. The conceived space expresses the interpretation of Paris with its significance by designers and producers that the independent spectator wants: generally romanticized and reassuring in plot. The lived space of these characters experiences their social and personal representations within their locales in such an overridden yet theatrical manner for consumption, while at the same time still reflecting social and culture truths.

This portrayal acts to inform a viewer who may hold or carry forth certain slants of thought towards Paris. So, what is depicted, that may reinforce certain stereotype bonuses for Paris comparing it with perhaps a flat-out exclusion of the other unromanticized, everyday life realities. Instead, they may be pushed onto some wonderful romanticized journey outside the market finds. Such representations can determine expectations of tourism and a corresponding disposition, which takes its roots from Lefebvre's notion of space as dynamic, not a simple formality-a mere aesthetic.

Through Lefebvre's lens when considered, the consumers of *Emily in Paris* become more aware of the dynamics at play within representational production. Audiences might

be allured to not only question which aspects of Paris are enhanced in the interest of appealing to their sensibilities, but they might become relatively aware of the aspects of everyday Parisian life talking about that have been ignored. And that invitation, at the very least, allows for more critical engagements toward the reception of such media portrayals as they develop and delineate toward social-culture ideologies. Recognizing such layers of spatial production makes for meaningful reading into the various complex manners in which the media lastly reflect and produce the spaces we occupy, both physically and imaginatively.

Works Cited

Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion.* 2nd edition, Edinburgh University Press, 2014.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste.* Translated by Richard Nice, Harvard University Press, 1984.

Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle.* Translated by Ken Knabb, Rebel Press, 2004.

Durham, Meenakshi Gigi, and Douglas M. Kellner, editors. *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks.* Revised edition, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space.* Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Blackwell, 1991.

Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism.* Vintage, 1994.

Narratives Reimagined: A Comparative Analysis of Grimm Brothers' and Disney's Adaptations of Rapunzel, Snow White and Sleeping Beauty

A.J. Divya

Research Scholar in English, Nehru Arts and Science College (autonomous)
Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India.
ORCID ID: 0009-0001-4906-7527

Dr. M. Richard Robert Raa

Associate professor in English, Nehru Arts and Science College
(autonomous) Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India.
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5833-7755

Abstract

This work explores the evolution of *Rapunzel, Snow White and Sleeping Beauty* from their darker, folkloric roots to sanitised, family-friendly narratives through a comparative examination of the Grimm Brothers' and Disney's interpretations. The Grimm Brothers' retellings place a strong emphasis on themes of pain, fate and moral justice, frequently depicting women as helpless objects under the control of patriarchal power and severe outcomes. Disney's adaptations on the other hand downplay the darker more violent aspects of the original stories and emphasise themes of strength, love, and redemption. As a result they feature more proactive female characters. This transition is a reflection of larger sociocultural shifts in how morality, narrative and gender roles are viewed. The research shows how fairy tales, as cultural texts, change over time to represent society ideals Disney's retellings, on the other hand, depict a more upbeat worldview influenced by romance, bravery and the concept of true love. The study emphasises how fairy tales continue to be flexible in forming cultural narratives that span generations.

Keywords: Grimm Brothers, Disney, fairy tales, adaptation, folklore, gender roles, empowerment, suffering, redemption, cultural narratives.

Introduction

Fairy tales are now famous tales that are passed down through the centuries, transcending their cultural origins. These stories which frequently started off as oral traditions, were first put down in writing in the 19th century by collectors such as the Brothers Grimm. Fairy tales have seen a great deal of interpretation and adaptation throughout the years, most notably from the Walt Disney Company. The three well-known tales Rapunzel, Snow White and Sleeping Beauty as recounted by the Grimm Brothers and

updated by Disney are compared in this research. These stories' metamorphosis is a reflection of shifting audience expectations, societal standards and the narrative flexibility that characterises fairy tales.

Disney's adaptations of folklore, which emphasise morality, heroism and romance, smooth over the harsher parts to produce stories appropriate for younger audiences, whereas the Grimm Brothers' renditions tend to keep the raw and occasionally brutal essence of the original folklore. In order to provide a fuller understanding of the socio-cultural changes that occurred between the 19th and 20th centuries, this document explores the thematic, structural and ideological alterations that these stories suffered during their adaptation from the Grimms' anthology to the Disney screen.

Rapunzel: Confinement, Freedom and Redemption

The Grimm Brothers' Rapunzel

First published in *Children's and Household Tales* (1812), *Rapunzel* narrates the story of a young girl imprisoned in a tower by a witch. The tale explores themes of confinement, patriarchal control, and ultimate redemption. Rapunzel's captivity underscores traditional gender roles, where female characters are isolated and dependent on male heroes for liberation (Zipes 45). The narrative also highlights the limitations imposed on women in patriarchal societies, portraying Rapunzel as a passive figure whose fate is determined by external forces rather than her own actions.

The Grimm version is particularly dark. Upon discovering Rapunzel's secret romance, the witch punishes her, leading to suffering and exile. The prince, blinded by thorns after falling from the tower, wanders in despair until he is eventually healed by Rapunzel's tears (Grimm 129). This version highlights the consequences of disobedience but also affirms the redemptive power of love, even in the face of extreme adversity. The themes of fate, punishment, and salvation resonate with broader cultural narratives surrounding morality and divine justice, reinforcing the belief that suffering leads to eventual redemption.

Disney's Tangled: A Modern Reimagining

The story of Rapunzel's 2010 Disney adaption, *Tangled* is very different from the original. In the film *Tangled*, Rapunzel is a bright and tenacious young lady who is kept captive in a tower by the evil Mother Gothel. Rapunzel is not aware of her royal ancestry. Disney's Rapunzel actively wants independence and adventure, in contrast to the Grimm version where Rapunzel's autonomy is constrained. The Grimm tale's darkest elements such as pregnancy and suffering are removed in the movie, which instead concentrates on themes of empowerment and self-discovery (Bacchilega 88).

The narrative emphasis of the Disney adaptation is shifted from passivity to empowerment. Rapunzel's long hair once a sign of her imprisonment, now serves as a tool for her exploration and escape reversing its initial meaning. Furthermore the interplay between her and Flynn Rider is more contemporary and egalitarian, with both characters making equal contributions to their shared experiences and ultimate escape from Mother Gothel's grasp.

Disney's *Tangled* also promotes a sanitised, romanticised view of pain. Rapunzel faces emotional sorrow and treachery, however these events are set inside a humorous journey as opposed to the intense agony that the Grimm story portrays. Disney's emphasis on

family-friendly narrative in which humour and hope constantly balance out tragedy is reflected in this change.

Snow White : Innocence and Jealousy

Another story where the Grimms' original and Disney's adaptation diverge significantly is Snow White. The story of Snow White by the Grimm Brothers is rife with themes of death, innocence and jealousy. The story is driven by the evil queen's jealousy of Snow White's beauty, which leads her to make several attempts at killing Snow White. Because Snow White is always on the verge of passing away the queen's use of poisoned objects first a comb, then a lace and eventually an apple underlines the story's concern with death and resurrection (Grimm 185).

Snow White's innocence serves as both a strength and a vulnerability in the Grimm adaptation. Her blind acceptance of the disguised queen's gifts brings to her death, but in the end her innocence rescues her. The premise that male involvement is necessary for the resolution of the female protagonist's suffering is highlighted by the prince's participation in resurrecting Snow White, which comes initially by accident when his servants drop the casket.

The Grimm adaptation also has a harsh sense of justice. The evil queen is made to dance in shoes made of hot iron till she passes away as a kind of punishment. The Grimms' concern with moral justice, which holds that wrongdoers should pay a price for their misdeeds is reflected in their harsh conclusion (Zipes 92).

Disney's Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs: Idealized Innocence

A milder adaptation of the story is given in Disney's 1937 *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, which highlights Snow White's purity and beauty while downplaying the darker aspects. In the Disney adaptation Snow White is a meek kind girl who makes friends with the seven dwarfs and the animals of the forest. The story is streamlined for ease of reading and audience accessibility by condensing the queen's several attempts at murder into a single act the poisoned apple (Bell 33).

The darker aspects of the Grimms' tale are removed in Disney's adaptation. The emphasis moves to the healing power of love and the queen is spared from cruel penalties. The romantic notion of pure love as the ultimate redemption is reflected in the prince's kiss that brings Snow White back to life. Furthermore, Snow White's innocence is portrayed as infantile and naive rather than just pure of heart, which contrasts with the Grimm version's darker undertones in which Snow White's purity almost brings her down several times.

Disney's practice of modernising fairy tales for a young audience especially through this adaptation is mirrored. The film's upbeat animation and musical interludes temper the darker moral teachings of the story which are nevertheless evident but not overpowering.

Sleeping Beauty (Briar Rose) : Fate and Choice

The Grimm Brothers' anthology's Sleeping Beauty often referred to as *Briar Rose* tells a fate-driven tale. After pricking her finger on a spindle, the princess is cursed by an evil fairy (or in other stories, a wise lady) to enter a deathlike slumber. The kiss of a prince is the only thing that can lift the curse. The main topic of this rendition is fate the princess is destined for her fate in spite of her best efforts to change it and a prince's intervention will save her (Grimm 210).

The inevitable course of events and the submissive position of women in fairy tales are emphasised in the Grimm adaptation of Briar Rose. The princess is only a victim of the curse she has no control over her destiny. The story highlights the concept that despite royal involvement fate cannot be changed. In addition it is said that the prince's kiss serves as recompense for his courage and perseverance in navigating the obstacles of the magical castle in order to get to the sleeping princess.

The Grimm Brothers' preoccupation with justice and retribution is evident in the way they portrayed the evil fairy in the narrative. In contrast to Disney's subsequent adaptation the Grimm version emphasises the story's fatalistic tone by providing no characterisation for the fairy other than her function as the bearer of the curse (Tatar 102).

Disney's Sleeping Beauty : Love as redemption

The 1959 Disney film Sleeping Beauty significantly alters the story of the original Briar Rose. In Disney's adaptation the evil fairy is recast as the well-known antagonist Maleficent, whose curse on Princess Aurora initiates the narrative. The movie's central theme switches from fate to the healing power of love. Similar to Snow White, Aurora is brought back to life by a prince's kiss however the heroic element that is lacking in the Grimm adaptation is added by the prince's quest to vanquish Maleficent (Do Rozario 128).

The princess is also recast in the movie as a more romantic character who emphasises beauty and love. Like Snow White, Aurora is shown as being helpless while she waits for her prince to come to her aid. Disney's Sleeping Beauty, on the other hand highlights how fate is moulded by love and how the kiss of true love is the only thing that can break the curse a theme that runs across many Disney fairy tales (Zipes 77).

Disney's depiction of Maleficent further deepens the moral aspects of the story. It is revealed that Maleficent has a separate personality and motivation she curses Aurora because she feels left out of her baptism. This gives the enemy greater nuance and elevates her above the status of mere fate-agent. In contrast to the Grimm tale's more passive conclusion, the film's dramatic climax in which the prince fights Maleficent (who has been changed into a dragon) emphasises the struggle between good and evil.

Conclusion

A comparative examination of the *Rapunzel, Snow White* and *Sleeping Beauty* versions by the Grimm Brothers and Disney shows how these stories have changed over time to reflect shifting societal ideals. The stories of the Grimm Brothers, which have their roots in oral tradition, maintain the darker more violent facets of folklore while highlighting themes of moral justice, suffering and fate. Disney's adaptations on the other hand

tone down the darker aspects to make the stories appropriate for a family audience and place a higher priority on themes of empowerment, love and redemption.

The way these stories have changed throughout time demonstrates how flexible fairy tales are as cultural texts. The stories we tell the next generation have changed along with society's perceptions of morality, gender roles and storytelling. Disney's retelling of these stories is evidence of the fairy tales' ongoing ability to captivate the imagination and influence cultural ideals as well as the commercial and ideological demands of 20th-century media.

Works Cited

Bacchilega, Cristina. *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies.* University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.

Bell, Elizabeth. *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture.* Indiana University Press, 1995.

Do Rozario, Rebecca-Anne C. "The Princess and the Magic Kingdom: Beyond Nostalgia, the Function of the Disney Princess." *Women's Studies in Communication*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2004, pp. 34-59.

Grimm, Jacob, and Wilhelm Grimm. *Grimm's Fairy Tales.* Wordsworth Editions, 1993.

Tatar, Maria. *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales.* Princeton University Press, 2003.

Zipes, Jack. *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion.* Routledge, 2006.

Transcending Trauma: *I, Rigoberta Menchú* as a Story of Survivance

ANAGHA A.

Research Scholar in English, Govt. College Mokeri,

(Affiliated to University of Calicut.)

Dr. Yoosaph A. K.

Associate Professor of English, Govt. College Mokeri.

Calicut, Kerala

Abstract

Scholarly enquiries into the trauma of indigenous cultures largely adopt a damage-centred approach. The aspects of resilience, resistance and coping in traumatic encounters remain unexplored in most of the research. This paper attempts to study the testimony of Rigoberta Menchu titled *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*, focusing on how the text undermines the widely held view that indigenous people are passive victims of systemic violence. The recent decolonising project in literary trauma theory informs the analysis. The researcher attempts to problematise the uncritical borrowing of traditional trauma theory's framework in discussing the trauma of non-western and marginalised communities. The paper underscores the necessity of a context-specific approach towards addressing trauma and resilience. Rigoberta's testimony titled *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala* (1984) is edited by Elisabeth Burgos-Debray and is translated into English by Ann Wright.

Keywords: Indigenous people, Guatemala, trauma, postcolonial trauma theory, survivance

> "Trauma is not a disorder but a reaction to a kind of wound. It is a reaction to profoundly injurious events and situations in the real world and, indeed, to a world in which people are routinely wounded."
>
> — Bonnie Burstow, "Toward a Radical Understanding of Trauma and Trauma Work"

This paper analyses the testimonial narrative of the Guatemalan activist Rigoberta Menchu, titled *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*, focusing on the aspects of trauma, resistance and resilience. It explores the psychological repercussions of violence in the Guatemalan community, the coping mechanisms employed by the people and the way they resist cultural colonization. It adopts a close reading of the work using the theoretical framework of postcolonial trauma theory. In doing so, it explores the limitations of the Eurocentric notions of trauma theory in understanding the traumatic

experiences of indigenous communities. The postcolonial perspective provides a more culturally sensitive analysis of the traumatic experiences of the Guatemalan people.

The concept of survivance is put forward by Gerald Vizenor, the Anishinaabe scholar to underscore resilience and resistance among the native Americans. It challenges the damage-centred approach to native cultures. He describes the term as follows: "Survivance, in my use of the word, means a native sense of presence, the motion of sovereignty and the will to resist dominance. Survivance is not just survival but also resistance, not heroic or tragic, but the tease of tradition, and my sense of survivance outwits dominance and victimry"(93). Menchu's testimony can be rightly described as a story of survivance as it documents the resilience and resistance of the Guatemalan people in the face of centuries-long violence. The ways the community promotes resilience, and the resistance they put up against the powerful authority receive significant attention in the narrative. Eve Tuck, in his open letter titled "Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities", calls for a radical reorientation in research on indigenous communities, a shift from damage-centred research to what he calls a desire-based framework. The desire-based framework, he maintains, is "intent on depathologizing the experiences of dispossessed and disenfranchised communities so that people are seen as more than broken and conquered"(416). Although Menchu's narrative includes descriptions of extreme suffering, it is an authentic document of her culture. Elisabeth Burgos-Debray, the editor of *I, Rigoberta Menchu*, makes the pertinent observation in her introduction: "She talked to me not only because she wanted to tell us about her sufferings but also - or perhaps mainly - because she wanted us to hear about a culture of which she is extremely proud and which she wants to have recognized"(xxii). By bringing attention to the aspects of resilience and resistance in her culture, her testimony challenges the traditional trauma theory's preoccupation with the negative psychological impacts of traumatic encounters.

In traditional trauma theory, the term trauma denotes extreme psychological disturbances in an individual in the wake of an emotionally devastating event. Cathy Caruth, a prominent figure in traditional trauma theory, defines trauma as follows: "In its most general definition, trauma is an overwhelming experience or catastrophic event in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled, repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomenon."(11) As this definition makes clear, the traditional trauma theory underscores an event-based concept of trauma. Besides Caruth, other influential figures in the first-wave trauma theory include Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub, and Geoffrey Hartman. They adopt a universal concept of trauma, describing the psychological afflictions as unspeakable, inaccessible, and totally destructive. Laub describes the traumatic event as a phenomenon "outside the range of comprehension, of recounting and of mastery" (69). As the first-wave trauma theorists draw heavily on the clinical and neurobiological studies on trauma, their concept of trauma is individualistic and purely psychological in orientation.

This event based and individualistic concept of trauma is radically reimagined by the postcolonial trauma theorists. They foreground the insidious nature of trauma in postcolonial countries and underscore the larger social, political, and cultural context that shape the experience of trauma. Some of the major postcolonial trauma theorists include Stef Craps, Irene Visser, Sonya Andermahr, Gert Buelens, Samuel Durrant and Robert Eaglestone. They challenge many of the fundamental assumptions of the traditional Euro-centric trauma theory. They criticise the concept of trauma as an irrecoverable and totally destructive event by highlighting the possibility of resilience and resistance. Critiquing the euro-centric biases of the traditional trauma theory, Stef Craps observes

that:

> They marginalize or ignore traumatic experiences of Non-Western or minority cultures; they tend to take for granted the universal validity of definitions of trauma and recovery that have developed out of the history of Western modernity; and they often favour or even prescribe a modernist aesthetic of fragmentation and aporia as uniquely suited to the task of bearing witness to trauma. As a result of all this, rather than promoting cross-cultural solidarity, trauma theory risks assisting in the perpetuation of the very beliefs, practices and structures that maintain existing injustices and inequalities. (46)

Dolores Herrero and Sonia Baelo-Allue, in their introduction to the edited work *The Splintered Glass: Facets of Trauma in the Post-Colony and Beyond*, elucidates how the traditional trauma theory fails to capture the trauma of colonization and other forms of structural violence:

> . . . although the study of trauma has often focused on individuals and individual psychology, colonial/cultural trauma is, over and above everything, a collective experience, something that can affect whole communities, even nations. . . . too narrow a focus on the individual psyche runs the risk of ignoring the actual historical and material conditions that made that abuse possible, thus enforcing the idea that it is exclusively up to the individual to work through her/his colonial/cultural trauma, mainly by becoming able to organise her/his traumatic memories into a coherent traumatic narrative. Individual psychological recovery would, therefore, be given priority at the expense of neglecting material restitution, with the result that the pernicious social, political, and economic conditions that enabled that collective trauma would remain unchanged. (xix)

The testimonial narrative of Menchu deals with the collective and insidious nature of trauma. It details the Guatemalan indigenous people's struggle against oppression, the continuing legacy of colonization and how it shapes the present reality of the indigenous people. Their suffering has its roots in the violent colonization of the country that lasted for more than three hundred years. Trauma, for them, is not an event-based one; instead, it is historical and intergenerational. Their suffering is collective, and so is their resilience and resistance. Guatemala, a country located in Central America, was conquered by Spain in the sixteenth century. During the centuries-long colonization, the natives have undergone multiple traumas such as genocide, slavery and cultural colonization. (Calvert 1985; Tooley 1953) The advent of the white men has irrecoverably altered their lives. Even after the country's independence in 1821, the plight of the indigenous people remained unchanged. The new government which comprised of the descendants of the earlier Spanish conquerors were as oppressive as the colonizers. Michelle Tooley, in her 1997 work, *Voices of the Voiceless: Women, Justice, and Human Rights in Guatemala*, observes that:

> Guatemala is a country devastated by oppression and injustice. The people of Guatemala suffer from war, poverty, and violence. They have endured 500 years of oppression, first by external colonial powers; now by an internal economic and military elite. Through social, economic, and political control, the powerful have kept the poor captive, drastically limiting their freedoms

and human rights. Violence has taken a heavy toll on the Guatemalan people. (19)

The indigenous people struggled to organise themselves against the government as they did not constitute a homogenous group. There are around twenty-two indigenous communities with separate languages in the country. Menchu's narrative is mainly centred around the Quiche community she belongs to.

Throughout her narrative, Menchu reiterates her collective identity. At the beginning of her work, she affirms that her narration is not just personal; it speaks about the lives of a whole community. "I'd like to stress that it's not only my life, it's also the testimony of my people. ...What has happened to me has happened to many other people too: my story is the story of all poor Guatemalans. My personal experience is the reality of a whole people." (1) Her narrative was a breakthrough in attracting international attention to the plight of the Guatemalan people. Although the country had been witnessing blatant human rights violations, particularly during the 1970s and 1980s, these issues did not receive adequate global attention. Aryeh Neier, in his foreword to the work *Paradise in Ashes: A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror, and Hope* makes the following observation regarding the factors that contributed to the secrecy surrounding political oppression in the country.

> The worst abuses took place in the highlands and distant rainforest regions of the country where the terrain is difficult, where roads and communications facilities were absent, where many different indigenous languages are spoken, and of course, where it was very dangerous to be around while the killing was taking place. During the worst times, there were no Guatemalan human rights organizations to report on developments, and most external human rights monitors only visited for brief periods. Hardly any Guatemalan journalists reported on what was going on in the highlands.... (xiv)

Menchu's testimony shattered this decade long silence on the violence perpetrated by the Guatemalan government. Originally published in Spanish, her testimony became highly influential and was translated into many languages. She received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992 for championing the cause of the indigenous Guatemalan people and for her active role in indigenous people's rights worldwide.

Menchu discusses the multiple oppressions that define the lives of the indigenous people in Guatemala who encounter economic, political and cultural subjugation at the hands of the authority. In the finca, the estates of the mighty land owners, they are made to work like slaves from dawn to night, without proper food and payment. Apart from the work in the estate, their major means of livelihood is agriculture. As landowners supported by the government constantly attempt to take over their agricultural lands, they face the threat of displacement. Even the basic human rights are denied to these people. The government brutally suppressed any resistance on their part against exploitation. Thousands of indigenous people were tortured and killed for organizing against the oppressive measures. Reflecting on the structural inequality Menchu observes that: "Everything in our life is like a film. Constant suffering." (137)

Suffering begins for the Guatemalans in the early years of their life itself. Owing to extreme poverty and the resulting malnutrition, many children die in infancy. The poor, indigenous children in Guatemala are robbed of the joys and pleasures of childhood. The elder children begin to look after their siblings and help their parents at work from an

early age. Reflecting on her childhood, Menchu says, "... I hadn't had a childhood at all. I was never a child."(139) Like the other children in her community, Menchu started working in the finca at the age of eight to help her family. Her first memory of her childhood is dismal – the journey to the finca with her family and the other workers. On their two-day long journey in a crowded lorry, even their basic needs were disregarded. The truck was covered with a tarpaulin, giving it a suffocating feeling. Menchu describes, "During the trip, the animals and the small children used to dirty the lorry, and you'd get people vomiting and wetting themselves. By the end of the journey, the smell - the filth of people and animals - was unbearable... By the time we got to the finca, we were totally stupefied; we were like chickens coming out of the pot. We were in such a state, we could hardly walk to the finca."(23)

Menchu's description of the death of her two brothers and her friend in the finca throws light on the inhuman treatment the workers received in the place. The authorities had the least concern for the workers' lives as the pesticides were sprayed during their work. The pesticides sprayed caused her elder brother's and her friend's death. Her younger brother died due to malnutrition when they were staying in the finca. The work schedule had to be strictly followed, and Menchu and her mother didn't have time to care for the ill child properly. They couldn't even afford the medicine for her brother despite their hard work in the finca. The overseers refused to bury the child without a tax, though the body was beginning to stink. The other fellow workers came to their assistance by providing money and aiding them in travelling back to their house. This is one of the many incidents in the text that reveals the strong communal ties the indigenous people share. When Menchu and her mother missed a day's work for arranging a funeral for the baby, they were thrown out of the estate by the employers without providing the payment due to them. Thinking about the time she spent in finca when her brother died, Menchu says, "Those fifteen days working in the finca was one of my earliest experiences, and I remember it with enormous hatred. That hatred has stayed with me until today." (47)

Her narrative underscores how growing up is an intensely painful process for the young ones in Guatemala. For them, anticipating the future itself is traumatic. Their suffering begins long before the actual traumatic incidents occur to them. The children are torn with emotional conflicts as they grow into adulthood, thinking about how hard life would be for them. The distress, disappointment, anger and fear overwhelm them as they are certain that they cannot escape from the traumatic incidents which are so common a part of their life. The girls in Guatemala had every reason to fear that when they became mothers, they would have to witness the death of their children. The pain of losing children is an everyday reality among the Guatemalan parents. Among their many children, only the healthiest can survive. In the wake of her friend's death in the finca, Menchu was thrown into a period of severe mental conflict. Her friend had believed that the only way to prevent grief was to remain unmarried and not have children. Menchu seriously began to ponder on her future life as an adult. "I'd often seen my mother crying, although many times she'd hide because she'd never let us see when she was grieving. But I'd often find her crying at home or at work. I was afraid of life and I'd ask myself: "'What will it be like when I am older'"? (104). Later, when Menchu began conversing with people as part of organizing them, she realized that her fears about growing up were a familiar feeling of the people of her community. "I was... very happy when I realized that it wasn't just my problem; that I wasn't the only little girl to have worried about not wanting to grow up. We were all worried about the harsh life awaiting us."(139)

The Guatemalan community has adopted many measures to promote resilience among its members, particularly the younger ones. Their ritualistic storytelling is a major means of promoting resilience among young people. In all their major ceremonies, such as baptism and marriage, the elders and the respected members of the community give speeches by taking their own lives as reference. Through such constant dialogues and speech, the elders make the young members of the community aware of the oppressive conditions under which they live in advance. Along with promoting resilience in young people, this also gives the elders who have gone through many hardships, the opportunity to recollect their suffering therapeutically before a receptive audience. Recognizing the therapeutic function of such narrations for the speakers, Menchu remarks "It is wonderful, listening to this, because it is the elders' opportunity to unburden themselves about what they have lived through." (80) The process of familiarizing the children with the extreme hardships that await them in future is initiated right from the beginning of life. The constant reminder of the adversities is intended to equip them to accept reality less disastrously and to reduce the intensity of the shock when confronted with overwhelming situations.

During pregnancy, the mother speaks to the child, informing the baby of the precariousness of their existence. Menchu writes in the chapter titled 'Birth Ceremonies' thus: "The pregnant woman talks to the child continuously from the first moment he is in her stomach, telling him how hard his life will be."(8) The mother also speaks to the unborn baby about the daily routine of their life, the natural world around them, and the customs and values upheld in the community. The dialogue about the suffering continues in each ceremony observed during the baby's growing up. After the first eight days of birth, a ceremony initiates the child's integration into the community in which "...the parents tell the baby of the suffering of the family he will be joining. With great feeling, they express their sorrow at bringing a child into the world to suffer. To us, suffering is our fate, and the child must be introduced to sorrows and hardship, but he must learn that despite his suffering, he will be respectful and live through his pain" (12-13).

In the baptism ceremony observed after the first forty days of the child, the respected members of the community give speeches to the people who have assembled there regarding the life conditions and the ruthless exploitations the community encounter at the hands of the landowners and the government. When the children reach ten years of age, the community engages in serious dialogues with them, informing them about their history of violent colonization and the ongoing oppression they are subjected to. Menchu writes, "They are told that the Spaniards dishonoured our ancestors' finest sons and the most humble of them. And it is to honour these humble people that we must keep our secrets. And no one except we Indians must know. They talk a lot about our ancestors." (14-15)

In the marriage ceremonies, a great deal of time is devoted to the speeches of the elders. Their stories instil hope and awareness among the people. "The ceremony begins with the grandparents' accounts of their suffering, the sadness and the joy in their lives. They give a sort of general account of their life - that at this moment or that moment they were ill but they never lost hope; that their ancestors had also suffered in the same way, and many, many other things." (78) During the elders' speech, the whole community is present, particularly the younger ones. Most of the rituals in the marriage have communal relevance. During the ceremony, the young couple pledge to preserve their customs and traditions. Their pledge is a politically charged one. They pay tributes to their ancestors by saying"'Our forefathers were dishonoured by the white man - sinners and murderers'

and: 'it is not the fault of our ancestors. They died from hunger because they weren't paid. We want to destroy the wicked lessons we were taught by them. If they hadn't come, we would all be united, equal, and our children would not suffer. We would not have boundaries to our land.'"(78) Menchu observes, "This is, in part, recalling history and, in part, a call to awareness."(78) The bride and groom also have separate pledges during the ritual. They take oath before the community that they would endure the difficulties without losing hope and faith. The bride says that, "I will be a mother, I will suffer, my children will suffer, many of my children will die young because of the circumstances created for us by the white men. It will be hard for me to accept my children's death but I will bear it because our ancestors bore it without giving up. We will not give up either." (82) The groom also takes oath on a similar note, saying that "I will be responsible. We will see our children die before they have grown, but we must still go on following Indian ways." (82-83) Together they end the pledge on a positive note stating that "Although some of our children die young, others will live on." (83)

These dialogues they have in the community are also a significant way of resisting cultural colonization. The elders in the family and community impart all the customs and traditions to the younger ones and instil in them the need to preserve them. Although the authority constantly denigrates the indigenous people and propagates a stereotypical image of them, the Indians are proud of their rich cultural heritage. Menchu and her fellow Indian activists have constantly resisted the attempts of cultural colonization on the part of white authorities. They have travelled to other Indian communities and made them aware of the harmful effects of the education imparted by the white authorities. Although education aids them to read and write, it distances the Indians from their customs as they eventually internalize a sense of inferiority. Menchu says that, "'Thank God our parents didn't accept teachers or schools in our community to wipe out what is ours.'"(199) Keeping their customs, knowledge, and views hidden from the authority is another tactic employed by the Indians to preserve their cultural identity:

> We have hidden our identity because we need to resist, we wanted to protect what governments have wanted to take away from us. They have tried to take our things away and impose others, on us, be it through religion, through dividing up the land, through schools, through book, through radio, through all things modern. This is why we maintain the rites for our ceremonies. And why we don't accept Catholic action as the only way to God... We don't want to because we know that they are weapons they use to take away what is ours. (200)

Besides education, religion was another major means by which the authority attempted cultural colonization of the Indigenous people. But the Guatemalan Indigenous people have been able to draw strength from Christianity to fight against their oppression. Religion plays a significant role in the resistance against the authority described by Menchu. The indigenous community interprets and analyses the Bible in a culturally specific way. The characters who inspired them are those who revolted against authority, and those who championed the cause of the oppressed. They admire and worship Moses, the emancipator of the oppressed, Judith, the heroic woman who defeated the King, and David, the defeater of King Goliath. Thus, they took from the text, the spirit of revolt against injustice and exploitation "...for us, Bible is our main weapon. It has shown us the way".... (158) Bible has become a "document to guide us."(158) They do not blindly follow the Western religion but adapt it to serve their political cause. They indigenize

the religion that was once imposed on them. Menchu says, "...our reality teaches us that, as Christians, we must create a church of the poor, that we don't need a church imposed from outside which knows nothing of hunger. We recognize that the system has wanted to impose on us: to divide us and keep the poor dormant. So we take some things and not others. ...as Christians we have understood that being a Christian means refusing to accept all the injustices which are committed against our people." (158; my emphasis). Analysing the aspect of religion gives crucial insight into the way people make meaning out of trauma and seek ways to resist such structural exploitations. Traditional trauma theory has largely ignored the role of religion in traumatic experience. Postcolonial trauma critics such as Irin Visser have argued the need for adequate attention to the function of religion in the context of trauma. Visser observes that "the recognition that a respectful and nuanced conceptualization of religious and spiritual modes of addressing trauma is needed would constitute a necessary and major step towards a fully decolonized trauma theory." (260)

The resistance movement of the indigenous people has been a systematic and well-organized one. Menchu's community was one of the earliest to organize against the government. They took many self-defensive measures such as setting up traps - a method used by the ancestors against the Spanish conquerors, building emergency exits in each house, creating underground paths, and employing people to guard the village. Regarding the inclusive nature of their resistance movement, Menchu says that, "Everyone plays an equal part: men, women, and the children as well."(151) When compared to the army, they had meagre resources. Yet, with determination, rigorous practice, and belief in their capacity, they were able to put up fierce resistance against the army. Even though they are people who have endured great many losses and lived a life full of hardships, they exhibit an enormous capacity for resistance. The CUC (Comite Unidad Campesina), the association of the peasants was one of the earliest organizations of the indigenous people. Menchu played a crucial part in promoting CUC by travelling to other indigenous communities and creating awareness among them to fight for their rights. To suppress the peasant movements, the army used systemic tortures and terrorizing of the people by publicly punishing the organizers. The torture Menchu's brother had to undergo throws light on the extent of violence inflicted by the army:

> It's an unbelievable story... Day and night they subjected him to terrible, terrible pain. They tied him up, they tied his testicles, my brother's sexual organs, they tied them behind with string and forced him to run... they left him in a well...a hole with water and a bit of mud in it; they left him naked there all night. There were a lot of corpses there in the hole with him and he couldn't stand the smell of those corpses...They cut off his fingernails, they cut off his fingers, they cut off his fingers, they cut off his skin, they burned parts of his skin. (204)

Menchu's brother, along with other tortured people, were taken to the public and burned alive by the soldiers. Although this was a step taken to terrorise people and suppress their resistance movement, the incident strengthened their will to fight against the government. Rage was the feeling it evoked, not fear. The army retreated, sensing the tension in the air. The community mourned the loss of so many of its young members. Of the grief she felt in the wake of the incident, Menchu says "... it wasn't just my brother's life. It was many lives, and you don't think that the grief is just for yourself but for all the relatives of the others." (210) The commitment to community has been enormous among the Guatemalan

people, and such factors even shape their expression of grief. Menchu's mother and father were the elected representatives of the community, the leaders responsible for the community. Menchu's father, upon coming back from the scene of the torture and murder of his son, informed the family of his determination to take up arms against the government, and he joined the guerrillas. Her mother, although maddened by the incident of her son's torture and death, restrained herself from grieving publicly, thinking that this would weaken the people's spirit. She would say, "If I start crying in front of the neighbours, what sort of example will that be?' 'No crying; fighting's what we want. she'd say, and she'd act tough, and in spite of the fact that she was always a little ill and felt very tired, she'd battle on."(213)

Women were crucial in organizing the people and engaging in armed struggle. The knowledge of the torture that awaited them if they were captured didn't restrain them. The captured women fighters were subjected to serial rape by the army. Menchu's mother was among the many women leaders who were captured and tortured by the army. She was gang raped by the military and had to endure terrible torture. Menchu gives a detailed account of the torture suffered by her mother. "On the third day of her torture, they cut off her ears. They cut her whole body bit by bit. They began with small tortures, small beatings and worked up to terrible tortures." (233) The torture continued for days, and the army ensured that she survived, only to retain her life and inflict more torture. Instead of killing her, the soldiers left her on a hill to die. Her commitment to the cause of her people was so intense that she refused to give any information to the army, even amidst the excruciating torture. Menchu says, "She defended every one of us until the end."(233) Menchu does not abstain from giving a detailed description of the traumatic experiences of her family. She belongs to a community where speaking about the traumatic past is a central aspect of their social life. For them, trauma is not associated with unspeakability.

Towards the end of her narrative, Menchu describes a particularly striking example of native resilience. She explains how, during a time when she was torn by the loss of her family members, her twelve-year-old sister's words helped her to accept her reality and continue her fight against authority. Her sister said, "'What has happened is a sign of victory. It gives us a reason for fighting. We must behave like revolutionary women.' 'A revolutionary isn't born out of something good,'... 'he is born out of wretchedness and bitterness. ... We have to fight without measuring our suffering, or what we experience, or thinking about the monstrous things we must bear in life.'" (279) These words spoken by a twelve-year-old girl testify to the enormous human potential for resilience and resistance.

Rigoberta Menchu's testimony shows the limitations of adopting traditional trauma theory in understanding the experiences of marginalized sections. The experience of trauma among the indigenous people in Guatemala is fundamentally different from that of the Westerners. The elements of unexpectedness, shock, the shattering of a previously optimistic world view, the individualistic nature of suffering and resilience which are central in Western trauma encounters are absent in the native experience of trauma. In indigenous communities, the nature of suffering is insidious and constant; the resilience is communal and collective. The psychological conflicts they undergo, the hatred, anger, and bitterness are normal reactions to the structural inequality the community has been subjected to for centuries. These cannot be described as negative, pathological responses. Instead, they act as catalysts for resistance. The resilience and resistance highlighted in the text show the creative, strategic, and effective ways of dealing with the traumatizing reality. The natives engage in a continuous process of actively resisting cultural colo-

nization by promoting awareness among the young people. The analysis contributes to a decolonized trauma theory by focusing on the insidious nature of trauma, exploring the religious and spiritual ways of addressing trauma, rejecting a damage-centred approach, and underscoring resistance and resilience in the experience of trauma.

Works Cited

Burstow, Bonnie. "Toward a Radical Understanding of Trauma and Trauma Work." *Violence Against Women*, Vol.9, No.11, 2003, pp. 1293-1317.

Calvert, Peter. *Guatemala: A Nation in Turmoil*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1985.

Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Craps, Stef. "Beyond Eurocentrism: Trauma theory in the Global Age." *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism*. Edited by Gert Buelens et al, New York: Routledge, 2014.

Herrero Dolores and Sonia Baelo-Allue, editors. *The Splintered Glass: Facets of Trauma in the Post Colony and Beyond*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011.

Laub, Dori. "Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening." *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* by Shoshana Felman, and Dori Laub, New York: Routledge, 1992.

Menchu, Rigoberta. *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. Edited by Elizabeth Burgos-Debray, Translated by Ann Wright, London: Verso, 2009.

Neier, Aryeh. "Foreword." *Paradise in Ashes: A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror, and Hope* by Beatriz Manz, London: University of California Press, 2004.

Tooley, Michelle. *Voices of the Voiceless: Women, Justice, and Human Rights in Guatemala*. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1997.

Tuck, Eve. "Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities." *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol.79, No.3, Fall 2009, pp.409-427.

Visser, Irene. "Decolonizing Trauma Theory: Retrospect and Prospects." *Humanities*, Vol.4, 2015, pp. 250-265.

Vizenor, Gerald. *Fugitive Poses: Native American Indian Scenes of Absence and Presence*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.

Revisiting Nationalistic Sensibility and The Literary Reproductions: A North Malabar Perspective

Dr. Indulekha K. R.

Assistant Professor of English, GASC Kondotty

Abstract

Nationalism is generally described as a force of unity and sentiments of oneness being promoted by a common cultural legacy and tradition. The ideological and material transformation of Indian society under the British rule was responsible for its genesis and growth. The present paper aims at understanding the nature of the relationship between the regional and national identities, respectively, during the early part of the twentieth century and how the idea of nationalism is represented and addressed by a set of writers from North Malabar region of Kerala.

Keywords: Nationalism, Marginalization, National Movement, Literary Reproductions

Introduction

The concept of the nation-state that has developed in Europe during the early modern period significantly influenced the socio-political discourses globally. Though the historical contexts of the European nation-state and Indian nationalism are distinct, there are intriguing parallels and contrasts in how literature from both traditions addressed questions of identity, unity and statehood. The concept of a unified Indian nation emerged not as a response to feudal decline but as a reaction against British imperialism during the colonial period. The struggle between linguistic diversity and the quest for national unity was a recurring theme in Indian literature. While European writers worked within a linguistic framework that mirrored the homogeneity of the emerging nation-state, Indian writers grappled with the challenge of creating a cohesive national identity within a multilingual and multiethnic context. The evolution of Indian nationhood was mediated through a number of social reforms and political discourses. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the doyen of India's colonial modernity, perceived how the custom of child marriage often resulting in early widowhood, along with discriminations based on caste and religion, have created 'divisions and subdivisions' among Indians and 'deprived them of patriotic feelings' (Ghose 929).

Simultaneously, nationalism in India has been intricately linked with its literary tradition, playing a key role in shaping the nation's political consciousness during its struggle for independence and beyond. Indian literature mirrors the country's complex socio-political condition which encompasses myriads of languages, folklores and regions. Throughout the colonial era, literature emerged not only as an artistic form but also as a powerful medium for expressing nationalistic sentiments. Eventually, literature became

a unifying force, transcending linguistic and cultural barriers, and contributing to the creation of a collective identity. Despite the diversity of languages, themes, and regions, Indian literature commonly focussed on themes like freedom, self-reliance and the revival of Indian culture. These creative realms created the national identity which emphasized inclusivity and collective struggle against the colonizers. In the Hindi-speaking regions, the literary world of Premchand addressed the plight of the common people and the need for collective action against colonial oppression. In Bengal, the literary works of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, filled with 'violent Hindu agenda' and Hindu- Muslim antagonism, had envisaged the religious militancy of a triumphant Hindu community 'as a resolution to the problem of colonisation' (Sarkar 256).

Meanwhile, the subaltern studies on literary texts written during the colonial period have been critiqued for their elitist point of views on nationalism which narrated nationalism as overarching sentiments. The multiple accounts of regional/ sub-national aspects on nationalist discourses, manifesting the quest for freedom as a collective choice, call for detailed cultural/historical readings of regional experiences.

Imagining Nation, National Movement, Regional Literary Reproductions

The present paper aims at understanding the nature of the relationship between the regional and national identities, respectively, during the early part of the twentieth century and how the writers from North Malabar contributed towards modernising Malayalam sensibility during the early decades of the 1900s. These decades witnessed a rapid cultural transformation in tune with the political momentum, spearheaded by the freedom movement in Kerala, before its official formation as a unified state. The formation of the official Kerala state, based on linguistic principle, came into existence in 1956 by merging Travancore-Cochin state with Malabar district of Madras and Kasargod Taluk (South Canara).Historically, Chirakkal Taluk (erstwhile Malabar) and Kasargod (erstwhile South Canara), known as North Malabar after the official formation of Kerala, share diversified as well distinct domains of plurality of caste, languages, ritual practices, ethnic groups and linguistic minorities, apart from other regions of Kerala. Very few studies have tried to explore and examine the uniqueness of north Malabar region in terms of its matriliny societies, diverse linguistic minorities, ethnic ritual performance (*Teyyattams*), myriad folk narratives etc. As the well-known historian Dilip Menon observes: "The *teyyattams* / divine dance flourished only in north Malabar. It is only in this region that the folk tradition continued to be linked to the life of people in a vital way till the early decades of the twentieth century" (190).

Ideologically speaking, *teyyattam*, the ritual icon of this region sought histrionic performances to question gender discrimination and caste inequalities prevalent in the social order. The polemical legacy of *teyyattams*, disputing over what is just and unjust, justifies the voices of dissent in the collective imagination of this region. During the colonial period, this region practised a highly exploitive agrarian structure in which heavy tax, forced labour and oppressive practices were intertwined. In addition to economic grievances, a deep social divide between the upper class and the lower class led to the social depression "which had struck a fatal blow at the cash-crop centered economy of this region" (Menon 216).

The Indian freedom struggle was at its peak during the early 1900s. The politi-

cal consciousness of the local population was significantly influenced by the nationalist movement and the anti-colonial campaigns led by the political parties. This critical moment of transformation coupled with anti-imperialist resistance movements radicalised and made an impact on different genres of literature and art across India. Meanwhile, the people of North Malabar actively engaged in the freedom struggle and also made concerted efforts to preserve its rich cultural heritage. Cultural resistance was not limited to art and literature. It also extended to traditional economic practices. North Malabar had a strong agricultural base, and the cultivation of indigenous crops, combined with a boycott of British goods, was a way of rejecting colonial economic dominance. The people of North Malabar used their cultural heritage not only to resist colonialism but also to inspire national pride and unity. The fusion of political activism with cultural identity helped sustain the region's resilience and made this region a crucial part of India's freedom struggle.

The political awakening galvanised the popular anguish against the oppressive apparatus of colonialism, the exploitative regime of feudalism, and the regimentation of society along the lines of caste, class and gender in North Malabar. Since literature acts as a powerful vehicle of progressive thought, the major literary giants from this region radicalised their literary reproductions and how they made substantial contributions to the cause of nationalism and social change.

Research Design

The present study, largely historical in nature, attempts to examine some significant aspects of such literary reproductions and tries to highlight the transformative change. This study also tries to examine how Kerala as a bounded political entity is projected into one political state based on Malayalam, as a unified language albeit its different regional dialects and cultural differences. Since it is very difficult to make a comprehensive study of the whole works of these writers, an attempt is made here to give an account of their literary sensibility and sentiments with regard to the nationalist movement.

In the wake of World War I, the plight of rural tenants of Malabar got worsened due to the economic depression. Concurrently, the qualitative change in theatrical performance, enriched with the spirit of nationalist movement, eventually became a platform for discussing anti-imperialist and anti-feudal themes. Greatly moved by the Gandhian ideology of the rural reconstruction programme, Vidwan P.Kelu Nair, a noted playwright from Kanghangad (Kasargod), inspired young nationalists of this region by organizing a theatre group. His deep engagement with social issues like caste oppression, anti-colonial ideology and poverty is reflected in his plays *Padukapattabhisekam, Kabeerdas Charitham* and *Paakanar Charitham.*

Mahakavi Kuttamath Kunniyur Kunhikrishna Kurup, a prominent literary figure from Cheruvathur and an ardent disciple of Gandhiji, whose poems like 'Sri Chakra Ganam' and 'Onam Gift' were in response to Gandhiji's call for spinning. The political awakening in Malabar gained immense momentum with the arrival of Gandhiji as part of the Khilafat movement. They embraced the khadi movement as a symbol of self-reliance and opposition to British imports. The decline of the indigenous rural industries was also the by-product of colonial rule, which directly led to rural poverty and unemployment. Handloom weaving, an integral part of the region's indigenous culture, was repurposed into a tool of protest as part of the Swadeshi movement. Gandhiji addressed this issue by

introducing constructive programmes. As a nationalist, Kuttamath used mythical stories as a trope for his literary works to narrate the realistic misery of not only the villagers from north Malabar, but also from the other oppressed class of India during World War I. Inspired from Gandhian ideology, his engagement with themes like the annihilation of caste system, eradication of poverty, and anti-feudal sentiments have a bearing on the fashioning of nationalist ideology.

The celebrated poet P.Kunhiraman Nair, an ardent worshiper of traditional culture, wrote 'Pulliman' and 'Puralimalayile Poomaram' which romanticise the vigour of Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja against the colonisers. *Pazhassi Raja*, the leader of the earliest agrarian uprising in north Malabar, a hotbed of agrarian uprising due to new tax regulation, and his associations with tribal warriors made him a legendary figure. Many of his poems vividly depicted his sympathy for the oppressed and their resilience (Kurup 76).

The socio-political upheavals of the 1930s and 1940s intensified the struggle against colonial power. As part of the formation of All India Progressive Literary Association in 1936, the fresh vigour of redefining the role of writers was called for in order to generate the critical spirit which questioned tradition and orthodoxy (Ramakrishnan 229). The history of Kerala during this time was marked with historic struggles like The Guruvayoor Satyagraha (1931-32). T.Subhramaniyan Thirumunp, a revolutionary poet from Cheruvathur (Kasargod) staunchly supported this satyagraha by writing his poem 'The Prayer of Guruvayoor'. Condemning the exploitive hierarchy of caste and oppression, his verses vehemently opposed the colonisation and its authoritarian politics.

Conclusion

The writers from North Malabar were less ignored in academic circles, even though they wrote wonderful patriotic pieces of writing. Their literary world is preoccupied with love for their nation, language, culture and is also highly sensible to the oppressed communities. The credo of Marxist ideology, which emphasizes class struggle, land reforms, and egalitarian society, resonated with the choice of this region's agrarian population. The Karshaka Sangams (peasant movements) and other labour unions played a critical role in mobilizing rural workers and raising awareness about their rights. These movements laid the groundwork for the political empowerment of the working class, which would become a key force in Kerala's political landscape. Collectively, these regional writers wanted to create a literary public sphere where the discourses of literature were seen as a catalyst of social transformation.

Works Cited

Achuthan, M. *Swathanthra Samaravum Malayala Sahithyavum.* Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishad, 1994.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* Verso, 1983.

Chakraborthy, Kaustav. *Nations and Nationalism: A Short Introduction.* Orient Black Swan, 2021.

Ghose, J.C. ed. *The English Works of Raja Ram Mohan Roy: Vol IV.* Cosmo Publication, 1906.

Kurup, K.K.N. *Nationalism and Social Change- The Role of Malayalam Literature.* Kerala Sahithya Academy, 1998.

Kuttamath and C.P.Sreedharan. *Kuttamathinte Theranjedutha Krithikal.* National, 1985.

Menon, Dilip. "The Moral Community of the Teyyatam: Popular Culture in Late Colonial Malabar", *Studies in History,* vol.9, no.2, pp 187-217.

Nair, Unnikrishnan. *Mahakavi Kuttamath.* Mathrubhoomi Books, 1969.

Nambiar Balakrishnan, K. *Vidwan P.Kelu Nair: Jeevithavum Krithikalum.* Kerala Sahithya Academy, 2018.

Ramakrishnan, E.V. *Indigenous Imaginaries: Literature, Region, Modernity.* Orient BlackSwan, 2017.

Mythopoesis and Frames of Archetypal Folk Horror in *Tumbbad*

Anjana V. S.

Teacher, Labour India Gurukulam Public School, Kottayam.

Anu Francis

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Catholicate College Pathanamthitta.

Abstract

This paper delves into Rahi Anil Barve's film *Tumbbad* (2018), unraveling its intricate narrative of mythopoesis, archetypal folk horror, and symbolism. The paper manifests the Hastar myth in detail and this study probes the archetypes employed in the film by analyzing the symbols of Hastar, the Goddess of Prosperity, Vinayak's perilous quest and the ancestral Wada based on archetypal myth criticism. Through a critical lens, this analysis exposes the film's exploration of humanity's inherent greed and destructive ambition, echoing timeless themes across cultures and literatures. The analysis also contextualizes the film within India's socio-political landscape, examining its portrayal of feudalism's decline and the impact of colonialism on traditional power structures.

Keywords: archetype, Hastar myth, mythopoesis, greed, folk horror.

Myths are stories that cultures tell themselves to understand their place in the world and their connection to others. As such, myths represent one of the highest forms of storytelling. Film is a spectacular form of contemporary myth-making. It weaves together meanings and symbols to forge narratives about a particular way of life, signifying practices, popular ideologies or issues belonging to a given time frame in history. Mythopoesis, derived from the Greek word meaning 'myth-making,' explores how myths are shaped into narrative, connecting the inner world, imagination and socio-temporal reality to form a source of deep meaning and wisdom for human consciousness. "Myth-making is the process by which we translate the unconscious patterns of human experience into symbols and narratives" (Campbell 23).

Mythopoesis is fundamentally characterized by the exploration of universal human concerns, including morality, identity, and fundamental human emotions. Through this creative process, writers and artists often present timeless concepts in innovative ways, reflecting the complexities and nuances of human experience. By reinterpreting and reimagining mythological themes, mythopoesis unravels essential truths about human nature, the world, and our place within it. This paper focuses on Rahi Anil Barve and Adesh Prasad's film *Tumbbad* (2018) to explore how it interweaves myth, fantasy and folk horror in an Indian ethos to recreate the archetypal vision of the corrupting and vicious grip of greed and desire on individual and social consciousness. Centred on the analysis of

the Hastar myth, it maps historical and personal destiny as it traces destructive legacies and corrupted morals down the ages.

Myths serve as powerful tools to negotiate cultural identity; transmit values, morals, and norms. Archetypal myth criticism explores the shared reservoir of human experience, uncovering timeless themes and symbolic motifs that resonate across cultures and narratives. "Archetypes represent recurrent patterns of imagery and narrative that stir profound emotions in readers because they resonate with universal human experience" (Bodkin 3). They often play a crucial role in conditioning and naturalising particular ideologies, beliefs and practices. "Myths are often endorsed by secular and religious authorities and are closely linked to religion or spirituality. Myths explain how a society's customs, institutions, and taboos were established and sanctified" (Bascom 9). The mythological patterns are "so deeply ingrained in most cultures that literary works typically rehash the same general mythic formulas" (Murfin & M. Ray 285).

Archetypal criticism interprets a text by focusing on recurring myths and archetypes. It analyses archetypal articulations in the form of recurrent narrative devices, patterns of action, characters, themes and images which are identifiable in a wide variety of works of literature, as well as in myths, dreams and even social rituals. *The Golden Bough* written by James G. Frazer was the first influential text to unravel the common structures of myths, rituals and religious practices of different societies in different historical epochs and geographical areas, focusing especially on primitive cultures. Frazer argues that the death-rebirth myth, the archetype of archetypes, is present in almost all cultures and is acted out in terms of cycle of seasons and the organic cycle of human life and vegetation. The myth is symbolized by death (final harvest) and rebirth (spring) of the god of vegetation. "Mythology, in short is a misinterpretation of ritual, which has been perpetuated long after the original meaning has been forgotten " (Frazer 711). Common examples of archetypes include femme fatale, the trickster, the great mother and father, and the dying god, flood, virgin birth, creation, paradise, the underworld, apocalypse etc.

The Swiss psychoanalyst, Carl G Jung connects myths and archetypes to the unconscious. According to him, myths are the culturally elaborated representations of the contents of the deepest recess of the human psyche. He used the term archetype to refer to the experiences of our ancestors which get lodged in the collective unconscious of the whole race. Archetypal criticism based on Jung's psychology, searches texts for collective motifs of the human psyche, which are held to be common to different historical periods and languages. These archetypes represent primordial images of the human unconscious which have retained their structures in various cultures and epochs. Archetypal Criticism was given impetus by Maud Bodkin's *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* and flourished during the 1950s and 1960s.

Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* is a landmark in archetypal criticism. In *The Archetypes of Literature*, Frye contends that the whole body of literary works of any society constitutes a self-contained, autonomous universe. Frye's view of literature is that it is a reservoir of potential values. He classifies this literary universe into four mythoi, which are the plot forms or organizing structural principles. These mythoi correspond to the four seasons of the natural world- comedy corresponds to spring; romance to summer; tragedy to autumn and satire to winter. Claude Levi Strauss in *The Structural Study of Myth* looks at the structural similarity of myths from different cultures across the world. He insists that myth is a language, and like language, consists of langue and parole, the synchronic, a historical structure and the specific diachronic details within that structure.

Parole is a specific unit or instance or event, can only exists in linear time. Langue, on the other hand, is the structure itself, which doesn't ever change, can exist in the past, present or future.

The genre of fantasy film has become a popular medium to remould mythical stories into a compelling visual spectacle. Indian films often seamlessly blend folklore, myth, and horror, crafting unique and immersive experiences that draw on centuries-old traditions and stories. These films typically incorporate supernatural beings, deities, and mythical creatures from regional folklore, weaving them into contemporary narratives or historical settings.

Fantasy films offer a modern platform for reinterpreting timeless myths, infusing ancient stories and universal themes with fresh life. By merging imaginative worlds with relatable struggles, these films bridge the past and present, making age-old narratives accessible to contemporary audiences. Characters like heroes, antiheroes, and mythical beings continue to reflect human struggles, while fantastical settings enable a rich exploration of timeless ideas, such as the battle between good and evil, self-discovery, and the hero's journey. Frye observes that archetypal criticism "does not regard myth as an antiquarian curiosity, but as something that has survived into the present age" (Frye 50). Fantasy films maintain the relevance of myth in today's world, continually reshaping and redefining archetypes for new generations.

Indian cinema has churned out a plethora of films that seamlessly merge folklore, myth, and horror, resulting in unsettling and culturally rich experiences. By combining folklore, myth, and horror, these films create thrilling experiences that reflect and revitalise deep-rooted cultural beliefs and make traditional stories accessible to modern audiences. For instance, *Stree* directed by Amar Kaushik masterfully combines horror with a local folktale, weaving a narrative around a vengeful spirit that haunts a village, by blending comedy and terror in a modern context. Similarly, *Kaal* directed by Soham Shah delves into the heart of folklore and horror, transporting audiences to a jungle setting where ancient tribal myths about vengeful spirits come to life in terrifying ways. *Eega*, directed by S.S Rajamouli takes a unique approach by fusing elements of mythology and reincarnation into a horror-comedy narrative, where a spirit seeks revenge against his murderer. Drawing inspiration from Indian urban legends and supernatural folklore, *Raat*, directed by Ram Gopal Varma and *1920* by Vikram Bhatt focus on haunted houses and its connection to supernatural forces. *Nishabdham*, by Hemant Madhukar on the other hand, blends horror with elements of Indian spiritual beliefs, as characters confront the restless spirit of a deceased woman connected to tragic past events. *Kanchana* directed by Raghava Laurence mixes horror with traditional beliefs in ghosts and spirits, where the protagonist is possessed by vengeful spirits from Indian folklore.

The film *Tumbbad* is one of the masterpieces of Indian cinema, weaving an enchanting tale that enmeshes fantasy, myth, horror and folklore. It is conceptualised around the myth of 'Hastar' who was the son of Goddess of Plenty. The film opens with a rich, animated folk narrative detailing the Goddess of Plenty and her beloved first son, Hastar. In this narrative, it is explained that all Hindu deities are born from the Earth, symbolizing the womb of the Goddess of Plenty, who is the source of wealth, gold, and grain—two essential elements for a prosperous life. "The Goddess of Prosperity is the symbol of unlimited gold and food. And this earth is her womb, when the universe was created she gave birth to 150 million Gods. But the Goddess loved her first child above all... Hastar" (*Tumbbad* 00:01:27-00:01.52).

The narrative of *Tumbaad* is spun in three parts around the legend of the mythical

god Hastar as it unleashes its menace across three generations of a Konkanastha Brahmin family. As per the Hastar myth, Hastar who was cursed by the gods was not to be worshipped. The ancestors of the Sarkar's family build a shrine for the goddess's firstborn, Hastar, and they face the dire repercussions of their greed. The first part is set in an early 20th-century village in Maharashtra, which shares its name with the film. The protagonist, Vinayak Rao (Sohum Shah), and his brother Sadashiv are young children, born out of wedlock to the wealthy landlord Sarkar. Their mother who was the mistress of the Sarkar raises them up in the wada and takes care of Sarkar's four hundred year old mother who was cursed by Hastar in the past and condemned to a monstrous existence:

> Hastar, being the goddess's firstborn, embodies the ultimate greed, seeking to possess both gold and grain. Hastar wanted all of the Goddess' gold and food. He managed getting the gold ... but just as he went for the food, all the other Gods attacked him. With every blow, Hastar shattered into fragments. But before he could dissolve into stardust, the Goddess saved him but on one condition that he will never be worshiped and be forgotten forever. For aeons, Hastar slept in his mother's womb. (00:02:04-00:02:39)

The film opens with the narrative voice recounting the cursed legacy of Hastar and how the family revived Hastar against the divine injunction prohibiting his worship. Generations of the family thus find themselves trapped in the endless cycle of avarice that eventually augurs its destruction. As a manifestation of God's wrath the village of Tumbbad was cursed and it has been raining ominously ever since Hastar was reinstated as the deity. The atmosphere of doom and lingering horror is established in the first episode with Vinayak's mother, dressed in a typical red fabric that Maharashtrian Brahmin widows used to wear, standing in front of a huge dilapidated mansion in the pouring rain. The mansion with crumbling walls, rotting furniture, labyrinthine passages and hidden rooms houses dark secrets. It evokes a perfectly Indian Gothic ambience and suggests moral decay and spiritual turmoil of the family members assailed by ambition and greed. The view leads from the dark, oppressive interior to the statue of the fallen god, Hastar, inside the temple, in a secret chamber of the huge mansion. The sight of Hastar's idol holding the gold coin behind the bars of the window conveys the sense of forbidden inheritance, entrapment and doom that is to befall the inhabitants of the mansion.

"The concept of Great Mother belongs to the field of comparative religion and embraces widely varying types of mother goddess" (Jung 7). The ancient Goddess of Prosperity in the Hastar myth resembles the Earth Goddess or the Bhudevi, the Vaishnavite facet of the Goddess Kamakhya according to Hindu mythology and Gaia, the Greek Earth Mother. The downfall of the Titans in to Tarturus in the underworld where they were imprisoned by the new gods can be related to the downfall of Hastar and how he was imprisoned in the womb of the Goddess of Plenty. The figure of Hastar, the crawling red creatures with gold crowns on their head, the gold coins in his loincloth, his fight for a bigger share of the food in the mother's womb also resembles Mammon the mythical figure in the Bible, who was considered as the deity of gold and greed. Hastar also has resemblance to the mythical figure Plutus who was considered as the embodiment of greed and wealth in Greek mythology.

The archetypal quest motive frames the narrative arc of the film. Vinayak hears about the mysterious Hastar from his grandmother during his childhood and this piques his curiosity to discover the hidden God and treasure. "Vinayak: Let's turn the boat around. We'll torture the grandmother till she tells us about the treasure okay? Mother:

Keep quiet! You're just like that serpent, your father! I'll kill you if you ever return to Tumbbad. Understood?" (00:26:18-00:26:38). When the adult Vinayak returns to Tumbbad in search of Hastar's jinxed treasure under erring the ominous warnings of the cursed grandmother, he is firmly established as the hero who undertakes a heroic quest to claim the unknown secret. *Tumbaad* is an in-depth narrative of greed and how human nature falls for it, despite being aware of its ultimate outcome. Since Vinayak grew up in the doomed village, he as a child always heard stories about his ancestors' hidden treasure. It is rumoured that Hastar's sack full of gold coins is buried somewhere inside the mansion and the grandmother is the only one who is well-acquainted with the route to the fortune. As a child, he always wanted to search for the buried patrimony; and on his return, now a married man, all he wants to do is interrogate the grandmother to continue his hunt to procure the jinxed treasure:

> Mother: We are leaving Tumbbad. There is nothing left for us here.
> Vinayak: Why? Don't we inherit the mansion now? There's no one else.
> Mother: And starve to death in that ruin? It isn't worth a penny. For the village, we are as good as outcastes.
> Vinayak: And the mansion's hidden treasure. Isn't that ours now? (00:14:19-00:14:40)

Vinayak's insatiable greed turns him into an obsessive explorer who wears his greed like a royal brooch. While the great grandmother warns him that one should not claim everything that one inherits, Vinayak rejects her advice and follows the path of greed:

> Vinayak: Is treasure in the well?
> Grandmother: Don't go there! Save yourself from this curse. Don't start the cycle of destruction again.
> Vinayak: I won't go there, grandma.
> Grandmother: Don't try to fool me. You're my blood. (00:32:05-00:32:23)

This marks the moment when Vinayak turned into a demon himself as the desire for keeping the curse alive for filling his greed exceeded his trauma as a child. In order to possess wealth from Hastar, he risks his own life by entering the grotesque and deadly belly of the goddess. Following his family's legacy, he prepares dough dolls to appease Hastar. However, the newfound wealth intensifies his greed and expedites his inevitable tragedy.

The goddess' womb, once a sanctuary of creation, now transforms into a crucible of perilous desires, foreshadowing the catastrophic consequences of unchecked passions. Vinayak cleverly leverages Hastar's eternal craving for grain to satiate his own hunger for wealth, turning the tables on the formidable deity by offering dough dolls to Hastar. Vinayak shrewdly capitalizes on Hastar's vulnerability for acquiring the treasure. This role reversal which involves Vinayak challenging the banished deity reinforces the idea how "*Tumbbad* compels us to think the inner demons of our untamed desires are far more vindictive than someone with supernatural demonic power" (Chatterjee and Singha 5).

The third and final segment of *Tumbbad*, visualizes how the saga of Hastar curse is transmitted through the next generation. Vinayak, weathered by age, assumes the role of mentor to his son. Vinayak imparts the intricacies of their ancestral vocation, honed over years of navigating the Goddess's treacherous womb. "Pandurang: Father, I'm just like you. I'm not afraid of anything"! (01:12:54-01:12:59). The insidious cycle of greed is poignantly illustrated as Vinayak's son Pandurang too grows obsessed with grabbing

the treasure. The ancient Wada, a relic of India's feudal past, teeters on the brink of collapse, its crumbling walls a testament to the government's decree; eradication of the outdated feudal system. Vinayak's ancestral home, once a symbol of power and privilege, now faces demolition, threatening to bury his family's secrets and wealth forever. As the wrecking ball looms, Vinayak's grip on his treasured riches tightens. Fear of loss ignites a fierce determination to secure his legacy. Panduranga proposes a bold plan to exploit Hastar's insatiable hunger by making multiple flour dolls to be strategically fed to the demon, and thereby promise untold riches. Panduranga, driven by ambition, seeks to surpass Vinayak's modest gains.

The denouement of the film unfolds as a mesmerizing and haunting culmination, where the devastating consequences of unrelenting greed are severely meted out. In a gripping, epic confrontation, Vinayak's insatiable lust for wealth and power is brutally reckoned, as the very object of his desire – Hastar's gold – becomes the instrument of his downfall. Vinayak and Panduranga navigate this sacred space with multiple flour dolls, but soon, numerous Hastars emerge from the fleshy walls, encircling the duo. The multiple Hastars emerging from the shadows serve as a chilling manifestation of the demon's unquenchable hunger, mirroring Vinayak's own all-consuming obsession. Realizing escape is impossible, Vinayak makes a heroic sacrifice, binding the dolls to his body to ensure Panduranga's survival and inheritance of their ancestral wealth. In the poignant finale, Vinayak exits the womb, transformed into a grotesque creature, mirroring his great-grandmother's fate, courtesy of Hastar's dark power. Yet, Vinayak's obsession endures; clutching Hastar's loincloth with gold coins, he takes pride in his sacrifice. It is Panduranga who shatters the cycle, breaking free from the family's cursed legacy. Ultimately, the film's climax serves as a cautionary tale, underscoring the catastrophic price of allowing ambition and desire to consume one's soul.

> Pandurang: Take the dolls off, father! Father don't do this. Father!
> Vinayak: Take it the loincloth! Come. Take it. Take it! Didn't you want this?
> Pandurang: No. No!
> Vinayak: Take it.
> Pandurang: No Father, go to sleep. (01:33:45- 01:37:25)

The figure of Hastar can be viewed as a cross-cultural embodiment of greed. The film *Tumbbad* symbolically illustrates humanity's irresistible greed for wealth, culminating in disaster through the character of Vinayak. By positioning Hastar's myth within a broader mythological context, the film underscores the dangers of avarice. Generational transmission of greed is explored through Vinayak's family. In a desperate quest to claim all the gold from Hastar, Vinayak and his son Pandurang create multiple dough dolls and venture into the goddess's belly. The symbol of the shadow, the embodiment of fear is explored through the image of Hastar. As an ancient, primal, and corrupting force, Hastar represents the suppressed desires and greed that lie beneath human consciousness. His association with the Goddess of Prosperity highlights the interplay between light and darkness, while his lair in the womb-like tunnel underscores the unconscious origins of human fears and desires. Hastar's greed and negative impact on men is clearly evoked in one of the songs in the film: "he stares into your soul with lust, for ages he has starved, waiting unfulfilled, unnourished. He endlessly eats stones-pebbles-wheat. Eternally thirsty, drinks with gruesome greed, ears quiver, bearings adrift. He's the god of death, life and greed" (01:25:21-01:28:45).

Vinayak's transformation in *Tumbbad* embodies the archetypal hero's quest, where he navigates a symbolic journey of self-discovery and confrontation with his darker self (Campbell 123). His descent into the womb-like tunnel represents an exploration of his unconscious, confronting the shadow embodied by Hastar, a symbol of greed and destructive human nature (Jung 145). This confrontation is reminiscent of the hero's journey, where the protagonist must face their own fears and weaknesses in order to emerge transformed (Campbell 125). As Vinayak faces tests, allies, and enemies, he undergoes a transformative ordeal, emerging changed but forever trapped by Hastar's curse. This transformation is reflective of the psychological concept of the 'process of individuation', where the individual integrates their opposites (Jung 150). The conversation between Pandurang and Vinayak reveals this confrontation and conflict:

> Pandurang: If there was a god whose mere touch, would turn you immortal letting you live for centuries and you'd know where the eternal treasure is all you have to do is eat and sleep. Would you want that? Who wouldn't want such a blessing?
> Vinayak: One knows it's not a blessing but a curse worse than death! (01:12:17-01:12:45)

Through Vinayak's journey, *Tumbbad* explores psychological themes of greed, fear, and self-discovery, highlighting the destructive nature of unchecked desire (Freud 200). This complexity is reflected in Vinayak's relationship with Hastar, who represents the dark, unconscious forces that drive human behaviour (Jung 155).

The recurring theme of greed leading to disaster which *Tumbbad* embodies resonates powerfully across different cultures and times, contributing to the film's enduring appeal. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's 'The Golden Touch', King Midas's ill-fated wish exemplifies the devastating consequences of unchecked avarice. Similarly, J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* explores the corrosive influence of greed, as characters' relentless pursuit of treasure often precipitates disaster. H.G. Wells's "The Treasure in the Forest" serves as a stark warning, illustrating how all-consuming greed can lead to self-destruction. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* explores the motif of how greed undermines the American Dream. Jay Gatsby's pursuit of wealth drives his own downfall thereby Fitzgerald critiques empty materialism and moral decay, illustrating the devastating consequence of ambition and greed. " *The Great Gatsby* is a novel about the corrupting influence of wealth, and about the way in which the pursuit of wealth can lead to the destruction of the self" (Trlling 113).

Tumbbad reveals a family legacy tainted by greed, spanning generations from Vinayak's great-grandmother to Vinayak and his son Pandurang. This ominous cycle echoes Gothic traditions, akin to Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, where unrelenting ambition unleashes calaity. Vinayak's brother's and Conrad's tragic demise serves as a cautionary tale about unchecked desire's disastrous consequences. "*The Castle of Otranto* is a novel about the destructive power of greed and the ways in which it can be transmitted from one generation to the next. Manfred's desire for the throne and his willingness to do whatever it takes to achieve it are the direct result of his own father's actions" (Gamer 23-24). Pandurang's rejection of gold coins and Vinayak's cremation symbolize a belated awakening to wealth's destructive allure.

In *Tumbbad*, rain serves as a powerful symbol of the gods' wrath against the villagers, who worship Hastar out of greed. Similarly, in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the recurring rain mirrors the Buendia family's fortune and misfortunes.

In *Tumbbad*, the relentless rain is a manifestation of Hastar's curse, condemning Sarkar's family to a bleak existence. This perpetual downpour mirrors the villagers' emotional and psychological confinement, underscoring their inability to escape the cycle of greed and suffering. Similarly, in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the recurring rain in Macondo is integral to the town's mythological narrative, symbolizing the Buendia family's fortunes and misfortunes. It underscores the idea that human existence is inextricably linked to the cycles of nature. Furthermore, the rain in both narratives serves as a reminder of the characters confinement within their own worlds. In *Tumbbad*, the villagers are trapped in a cycle of greed and suffering, while in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the Buendia family is bound by their own history and destiny. This sense of confinement is reinforced by the rain, which creates a sense of claustrophobia and isolation. The symbolism of rain highlights the cyclical nature of time and the interconnectedness of human experience and the natural world. The use of rain as a symbol emphasizes the idea that human existence is shaped by the cycles of nature and that characters are often confined within their own worlds.

The film is set in Maharashtra from 1918 to 1947, and follows three generations of a Konkanastha Brahmin family as they seek a cursed family heirloom. This period reflects pivotal socio-political and cultural struggles in India. The film adeptly portrays the fear and strange atmosphere of pre-colonial India, intertwining it with a mythical narrative. The horrifying episodes also echo the anxieties surrounding the unjust and oppressive feudal social system prevalent in pre-independence India. "The picture of the old aristocracy that is fast dwindling is personified by Sarkar, the frail and weathered feudal lord of the mansion who spent all his riches trying to find the treasure buried there" (Dogra 119). As the Wada disintegrates, it metaphorically represents the dismantling of feudalism's oppressive structures, paving the path for a democratic dawn, where power shifts from the elite to the people.

The cinematographic dimension is in union with the mythical plot. The ancestral mansion serves as a threshold, separating the ordinary from the extra ordinary realm of horror and myth. This limited space, with its labyrinthine passages and hidden chambers, symbolizes the boundary between reality and the unknown. The womb of the goddess located beneath the mansion further reinforces this idea of threshold, representing the primal forces that lie beneath the surface of human consciousness. As the narrative unfolds the Wada itself becomes the manifestation of the character's inner turmoil, with its crumbling structure and shifting layout mirroring the decay of their moral fabric. The cursed rainfall and eternal suffering of Hastar's victims serves as stark reminders of devastating consequences of crossing the threshold, succumbing to the greed and unleashing the dark forces within.

Tumbbad artfully blends horror, fantasy and folklore to articulate a fundamental mythological narrative of human greed. The archetypes of banished god, the great mother, quest, greed leading to destruction of hero, rain/water etc. discussed in the film echoes across cultures and literatures . Tumbbad's influence on Indian cinema is evident in films like *Kumari* (2022), directed by Nirmal Sahadev, which draws inspiration from its mythological and fantastical elements. This cross-pollination of ideas has paved the way for the renewal of the mythical fantasy film genre in Indian cinema. By exploring the rich cultural heritage of Indian mythology, such films have opened up new avenues for storytelling, reinvigorating the genre and captivating audiences with fresh perspectives on ancient tales.

The film *Tumbbad* masterfully exemplifies the destructive consequences of greed through

its exceptional cinematography, weaving together haunting and horrifying images of decay and deterioration. The compelling visuals of horror amplify the narrative's emotional impact and elevate the film's aesthetic quality, solidifying its position as a standout mythical horror experience. The setting of *Tumbbad* masterfully crafts an eerie atmosphere, perfectly suited for a mythical horror story. The pervasive darkness, dimly lit surroundings, and relentless rain converge to create an ominous backdrop that forebodes the terrifying events that unfold. This deliberate atmospheric construction expertly heightens tension, drawing the viewer into the haunting world of the film.

Works Cited

Bascom, William. *The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives.* University of California Press, 1965.

Bodkin, Maud. *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination.* Oxford University Press, 1934.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces.* Princeton University Press, 2004.

Chatterjee, Dipaannit and Gourab Singha. "Back To Impurity: An Alternative Umbilical Discourse In Tumbbad". *Thematizations of the Goddess in South Asian Cinema*, edited by Anway Mukhopadhyay and Shouvik Narayan Hore, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023.

Dogra, Sakshi. "Conjuring an Atmosphere: A Study of Tumbbad as Folk Horror". *Horror Fiction in the Global South: Cultures, Narratives and Representations*, edited by Ritwick Bhattacharjee and Saikat Ghosh, Bloomsbury Academic India, 2021.

Frazer, James George. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion.* Macmillan, 1890.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams.* Macmillan, 1913.

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays.* Princeton University Press, 1957.

Gamer, Michael. *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation.* Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Jung, Carl Gustav. *Four Archetypes.* Translated by R. F. C. Hull, Routledge, 2003.

—. *The Collective Unconscious.* Princeton University Press, 1959.

Murfin, Ross, and Supryia M. Ray. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms.* 3rd ed., St. Martin's, 2009.

Trilling, Lionel. *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society.* Viking Press, 1950.

Tumbbad. Directed by Rahi Anil Barve, performances by Sohum Shah, Mohammad Samad, and Jyoti Malshe, Eros International, Colour Yellow Productions, and Little Town Films, 2018.

"Tumbbad (2018) Subtitles." *SRTFiles*, www.srtfiles.com/subtitles/tumbbad-2018. Accessed 8 Mar. 2023.

Translation Semiotics: Cultural Discourses as Narratives

Smita John

Research Scholar, PG and Research Department of English, Govt. Victoria College, Palakkad (Affiliated to the University of Calicut) and Assistant Professor of English, Govt. Law College, Thiruvananthapuram.

Dr. Jeeja Ganga

Associate Professor of English, Govt. Victoria College Palakkad.

Abstract

In everyday life and in popular culture, one is continually engaged in narratives of one kind or the other which define and express one's identity. Narratives as literary discourses are central to the ways in which people make sense of their experience and interpret the social world. Intersemiotic translations and adaptations from literature as performance art effectively convey meaning to individuals who are illiterate, as well as to those who struggle to engage with communication systems that rely exclusively on verbal methods. Performance art serves as vital cultural discourses that transcend linguistic boundaries, utilising gestures and movements to convey meaning.This paper explores the role of performing arts, such as dance, drama and 'kathaprasangam' in translating indigenous cultures. It draws insights from theorists like Linda Hutcheon, Roman Jakobson, Umberto Eco, Susan Petrilli and Peeter Torop to conceptualise translation as a transformative process rather than as a mere equivalence between texts. Such a perspective underscores the dynamic nature of adaptation in various forms, including the popular Kerala art form 'kathaprasangam', which enriches cultural narratives through storytelling and performance. It recontextualises translation semiotics in the Kerala context as well, and fosters a deeper comprehension of how meaning is constructed and communicated across diverse cultural landscapes.

Keywords: Narratives, cultural discourses, translation semiotics, adaptation, intrasemiotic and intersemiotic translation, performance arts, dance, drama, kathaprasangam

Translation semiotics is an academic discipline which deals with the study of the theory and praxis of translation. It is an interdisciplinary field of study that borrows much from the diverse fields of knowledge that support translation. It is a domain which facilitates and enables cross-cultural interactions. The study of translation as an academic discipline emerged in the 1950s and by the late 1960s and early 1970s, institutions began to formalise programmes on translation studies. From a theoretical standpoint, translation is studied as a purely semiotic act that involves the transition from one semiotic system [source language] to another [target language]. This semiotic act can involve interlingual, intralingual or intersemiotic translation (Jakobson 145).Translation from one language to another is called interlingual translation and translation within the

same language is referred to as intralingual translation. Intersemiotic translation is the translation of the verbal sign into a non-verbal sign or sign system as in dance, drama or *kathaprasangam*.

Engaging with literary texts is not the exclusive form of reading. There are other forms of reading that extend beyond the literary realm. The body of knowledge contained in dance, drama and other performing arts serve as effective cultural discourses. These performing arts have been an integral aspect of human civilisation since time immemorial. The history of art reflects the history of humankind. Painting, sculpture, music, poetry, dance and drama have all been a part of human life since antiquity. Art of any form is appealing and it engenders an aesthetic experience. As Keats says "A Thing of beauty is a joy forever:"(1).

Semiotics which is 'the science of signs' is primarily derived from the work of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, the father of modern linguistics. Semiotics is the general study of signs of all kinds. Social context plays an integral role in understanding signs and meanings. Saussure writes:

> A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable; it would be a part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology; I shall call it semiology (from Greek semeion "sign"). Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them. Since the science does not yet exist, no one can say what it would be; but it has a right to existence, a place staked out in advance. (16)

In other words semiotics is a science which studies the role of signs as part of social life and within social contexts.

Dance, drama and the performance art *kathaprasangam* all come under the discipline of cognitive semiotics. Cognitive semiotics investigates how individuals conceptualise meaning by utilising sign systems. Social and cultural semiotics studies how sign systems develop and how these signs systems are used in specific cultures. Visual semiotics focuses on non-linguistic visual signs. The method of word- to- sense translation is known as semantic translation. Semantic translation considers the context and the various linguistic features of the source text while transmitting it to the target language.

The primary concept underpinning translation is 'rationality'. One finds that for Derrida translation is essentially transformation, as equivalence is virtually unattainable. "Translation is a notion of transformation of one language by another, one text by another" (26). Translation must be communicative, reader-oriented, comprehensible and respectful of the cultural background of the target audience. As Umberto Eco, the philosopher, semiotician and cultural critic puts it "translation is not about comparing two languages, but about the interpretation of a text in two different languages thus involving a shift between cultures"(np). The starting point of Eco's theory is that human beings are evolving in a system of signs.

Literature is a reflection of the language, life and culture of a society. Dance and literature are inextricably linked to everyday life. The art of dance dates back to the known history of humankind. The *Natyashastra*, attributed to Bharata Muni is an ancient treatise on performing arts. It is a foundational text on dramaturgy and covers the fields of drama, dance, music and theatre. This Sanskrit text deals with even the diminutive aspects of drama, performing arts, theatre, dance and music.

Dance can transcend the boundaries of language and serve as an avenue of expression that preserves the nuances of communication which generally tend to be overlooked in

linguistic translation. The rhythmic movement of the body combined with *mudras*, *abhinaya*, costume, lighting and music play a crucial role in the art of dance. Dance is an expression of culture and just like literature it is subject to transformations over time. The codes themselves evolve over time and within various social contexts.

Dance is one of the most effective forms of intersemiotic translation and it can adapt literary texts in a compelling manner. Theorising dance as a performance art, involving adaptation and intersemiotic translation presents itself as an interesting field of study. Dance and adaptation is a relatively unexplored area in the domain of adaptation studies. This branch of adaptation explores the choreographic transformation that a literary work undergoes.

Central to the *Natyashastra* is the 'Rasa Theory' which posits that the primary objective of artistic performance is to elicit aesthetic experiences in the audience, enabling them to rise above mundane existence and engage in deeper spiritual and moral contemplation through the interplay of emotions termed *rasa*.

The *Natyashastra* delineates four essential components that form the core of dramatic expression: *pathya* or 'readable text', which pertains to the art of recitation and rendition in performance, *sangeet* or songs, which includes music from the Samveda, *abhinaya* or acting, which is the technique of expressing the poetic meaning of the text and *rasa* or aesthetic experience which is the emotional essence which the performance aims to evoke in the audience. Sound modulation, gestures, music, signs and action are all significant. *Nritta* is the rhythmic movement of the body and *natya* is the dramatic aspect of dance. *Nritya* is a combination of both *nritha* and *natya* and incorporates elements of *bhava* and *rasa*.

Signs function in diverse modes of signifying systems. The *mudras* in dance are examples of this. There are *hasthas*, mudras using a single hand as well as *asamyuktha hasthas* mudras formed using two hands; these *mudras* are used by the dancer to communicate. The rhythmic movement of the body, typically to music, conveys a concept or feeling, expending energy through graceful movements that articulate a narrative in dance form. The *bhava* which is the mood, and *rasa* or sentiment, enhances the aesthetic beauty of the performance.

The right blend of *nritta*, *natya* and *nrittya* contributes significantly to the overall grace of the performance. The *mudras* and facial expressions play a significant role in the sign system of dance. The classical dance forms of Kathak, Mohiniyattam, Bharatnatyam, Kathakali, Odissi, Kuchipudi and Manipuri exemplify the rich cultural diversity and stylistic variations found across different regions of India. For instance, Mohiniyattam is characterised by its *lasya*, graceful, slow movements, whereas Kuchipudi exhibits a more vigorous style with rapid movements.

Kathakali which is derived from *katha* meaning story and *kali* signifying performance or play is an indigenous classical performance art form of Kerala. It is one of the significant classical dance forms recognised by India's National Academy for Music Dance and Drama (Sangeet Natak Akademi). It upholds the ancient storytelling tradition and features distinctive makeup and costumes that represents different character types. The *mudras* and *rasas* used in this indigenous dance form communicate through the non-verbal sign system where the 'signifier' and the 'signified' interact to display a great cultural heritage. Kathakali is narrative as well as an expression of culture at the same time.

The fundamental challenge in adapting a work of literature into a dance form lies in the process of gracefully translating abstract, poetic or hypothetical words into movement through the use of *mudras*. However, notwithstanding the challenges posed by conven-

tional codes, acceptable movements and rigid norms, dance continues to remain as one of the most effective adaptations or intersemiotic translations of literary texts. Dance is a creative and interpretive act of appropriation.

As a number of post-modern theorists suggest, art should be examined and analysed in its own terms. Each audio-visual text occupies its own semiotic space. The aesthetic text produces new meanings. The target text accomplishes something new on the plane of expression of content by exploring various senses.

Theatre is a branch of performing arts that involves enactment of stories before an audience, using a combination of speech, gestures, music, dance, sound and spectacle. Theatre is a collaborative art form and its semiotic analysis makes it clear how its different constituent elements contribute to the total aesthetic experience. Social and cultural semiotics are at operation here. A literary work is translated into something new in an adaptation. Plot, character, thought, diction, song and spectacle are essential elements in adaptation as performance.

Kerala's cultural diversity and heritage are reflected in its rich and diverse folk theatre tradition. Apart from Kathakali and Theyyam, which were performed in temples, there are various indigenous art forms, including 'Thullal', a folk performance usually conducted in temples, and 'Chavittu Nadakam', a form of Christian folk theatre. Theatre later emerged from the confines of religion and started to address important social issues. The Kerala People's Arts Club (KPAC), Kerala Theatre, *Natana Kairali*, and Theatre Folk are some organisations which prioritised socially relevant plays. These groups also sought to inform the public about their rights and responsibilities. The aesthetic sensibilities of the audience were tuned, and the plays that were performed put forward plausible solutions to some of the social concerns. All this was presented in a novel sign system that is all-encompassing; it effectively communicated with the literate as well as non-literate audience of Kerala. These plays captured the attention of the people and helped in guiding them towards becoming more responsible citizens. Thus, theatre transforms communication that is exclusively verbal into a hybrid form that spans both the verbal and non-verbal domains.Plato maintains that art is twice removed from reality, whereas Aristotle stresses on the creative dimension of art. The theory of "adaptation as adaptation" put forward by the Canadian post-modern theorist Linda Hutcheon provides an answer to the question of whether adaptation can be the theorised without resorting to fidelity discourses. Hutcheon says "An adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative, a work that is second without being secondary... It is art creating art, literature creating literature" (72).

Kathaprasangam is a popular and well-regarded performing art form of Kerala. It is a form of storytelling enriched with expressive elements and musical accompaniments. It is believed that *kathaprasangam* has its roots in *harikathakalakshepam* with which *kathaprasangam* shares similarities in narrative techniques, yet *kathaprasangam* distinguishes itself from *harikathakalakshepam* through its unique theme and style. The themes of *harikathakalakshepam* are drawn from *puranas* and epics but *kathaprasangam* derives its subject matter from popular literature, either world classics or famous literary works across different genres.

A variety of discourses like plays, novels, short stories and biographies are all translated and effectively presented as *kathaprasangam*. *Kathaprasangam* is characterised by verbal narration and complemented by expressive elements and music. The artist performing the *kathaprasangam* is called the *kathikan*. The *kathikan* narrates the stories through songs and he is the central figure of the art form. He/ she is usually a talented

figure who plays the role of a singer, actor and orator simultaneously. Gestures and voice modulation by the *kathikan* enhance the experience of the performance and makes it more interesting.The world classics in literature including the plays of Shakespeare and novels of Tolstoy and Dostovesky were presented as an effective cultural discourse *kathaprasangam* before the Malayali audience which resulted in a kind of "glocalization" which emerged as a popular culture.This is a clear illustration of the Italian semiotician Susan Petrilli's theory which highlights the importance of cultural negotiation in translation.

The original text is adapted to suit the cultural context of the target audience which accounted for the popularity of the *kathaprasangam* of artists like V. Sambasivan during the age that followed the Renaissance in Kerala. Peeter Torop's idea of the significance of cultural context in interpreting texts and extratextual translation in addition to intratextual and intertextual translation is also evident in the above mentioned translation which is an adaptation from a global culture to suit a local audience.

V.Sambasivan, a pioneer in the art of *kathaprasangam*, delved deeply into the performing art and pushed its boundaries to its fullest extent. *Kathaprasangam* provides a platform for the common people of Kerala to engage with world classics as well as enhance their aesthetic sensibilities, refine their thoughts and ideas and improve their linguistic acumen. The art form inspires its audience to read more books, advocates socialist ideas and gives them a global perspective.

Kathaprasangam is not just an adaptation or intersemiotic translation; it emerged as a significant cultural movement which profoundly affected the sociopolitical landscape of Kerala and played a crucial role in the Renaissance movement within the state. The effective presentation of world classics, infused with originality while at the same time adapting scenarios to resonate with the ordinary audience make this art form truly remarkable.

Each audio-visual text has its own semiotic space. The aesthetic text produces and generates new meanings. The target text achieves something new in its exploration of diverse sensory experiences. Dance, drama and *kathaprasangam* are all transadaptations which incorporate elements of intersemiotic translation. Each possesses a distinct identity while effectively translating and interacting within the semiotic realm.

The exploration of dance, theatre and *kathaprasangam* as manifestations of translation semiotics illuminates the intricate interplay between cultural expression and communicative practices. Each of these art forms operates as a unique semiotic system, wherein signs—ranging from physical movements and vocal intonations to narrative structures—convey meaning that transcends linguistic barriers. Dance, with its corporeal language, encapsulates emotions and narratives that resonate universally, while theatre employs dialogue and performance to bridge cultural divides, offering audiences a shared space for interpretation. *Kathaprasangam*, as a traditionally rooted narrative form, exemplifies the fusion of storytelling and performative elements, thereby enriching the semiotic landscape with its multilayered signification.

A country like India which is characterised by its linguistic diversity, articulates its culture and identity more precisely through various forms of performance art. Intersemiotic translations and adaptations as performance art communicate even to ordinary people who are illiterate as well as people who face challenges to explore the communication system within the verbal domain alone. Concisely they link together the different cultures and ethnic groups and bring the past and the present into a relative coherence. Translation as adaptation has also facilitated the introduction of Indian literature to a global

audience and global literature to the Indian audience, thereby promoting cross-cultural communication and harmony.
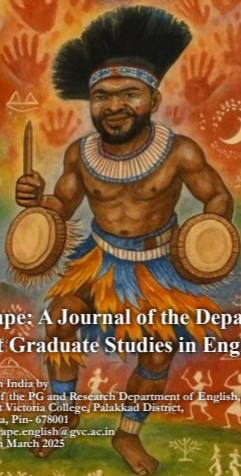
The paper underscores the significance of these art forms not merely as sources of entertainment but also as vital conduits for cultural translation. These art forms facilitate the transmission of values, beliefs and histories across diverse contexts, fostering intercultural dialogue and understanding. The examination of dance, theatre, and *kathaprasangam* as expressions of translation semiotics reveals their significant ability to overcome linguistic and cultural obstacles, thereby promoting a greater comprehension among varied communities. By analysing the semiotic frameworks inherent in these performative activities, one can understand the complex yet engaging methods through which they convey universal themes of human experience, empathy and solidarity.

The aforementioned intermedial/intertextual communication which comes under the broad umbrella term of translation enhances cultural exchange and acts as a catalyst for fostering world peace. These artistic manifestations representing indigenous cultures resonate across many contexts, foster a collective feeling of humanity which is vital in an increasingly fragmented global society. The examination of translation semiotics in these performance forms highlights their capacity to serve as instruments for reconciliation and harmony, encouraging audiences to accept diversity and collaborate for a more harmonious coexistence. Consequently, the paper advocates for a broader recognition of dance, theatre, and *kathaprasangam* in Kerala context within the framework of translation semiotics, emphasising their role in shaping collective identities and enhancing cross-cultural communication.

Works Cited

Chandler, Daniel. *Semiotics: The Basics*. Routledge, 2004.

Derrida, Jacques, Alan Bass, and Henri Ronse. *Positions*. U of Chicago P, 1981.

During, Simon (edt). *The Cultural Studies Reader*. Routledge, 1999.

Eco, Umberto. Translated by Alastair McEwen. Back-cover /blurb of *Experiences in Translation* (vol 1).U of Toronto P, 2001.

Ghosh, Manomohan (trans). *The Natyashastra [ascribed to Bharata-Muni]*, The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1951.

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. Routledge, 2006.

Jakobson, Roman. "On Linguistic Aspect of Translation." *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, edited by John Biguene and Rainer Schulte, U of California P, 2017, pp. 144-151.

Johnstone, Barbara. *Discourse Analysis*. Wiley, 2018.

Keats, John. *Endymion*. E. Moxon, Son and Company, 1873, pp 1.

Petrilli, Susan and John Deely(editor). *Sign Crossroads in Global Perspective: Semiotics and Responsibilities*. Taylor & Francis, 2017.

Salupere, Silvi, Peeter Torop and Kalevi Kull (edts). *Beginnings of the Semiotics of Culture*. U Tartu P, 2013.

Sambasivan, Vasanthakumar. *Kadhikan: V Sambasivante Arangum Jeevithavum*, Chintha Publishers, 2024.

Saussure, Ferdinand de. Translated by W. Baskin. *A Course in General Linguistics*. McGraw-Hill, 1966.

Soumya, K.C. *Kadhaprasangam : Kalayum Samoohavum*. The State Institute of Languages Kerala, 2023.

Viswambharan, Kdakkode. *Kadhaprasamgavum Kadhaprasangakarum*, The State Institute of Languages Kerala, 2015.

Littscape: A Journal of the Department of Post Graduate Studies in English