

**PANDEMIC PANDEMONIUM: AN EXPLORATION OF  
MENTAL CHAOS AND COLLECTIVE CRISIS THROUGH  
THE LENS OF TRAUMA THEORY**

A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of  
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## **BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **Pandemic Pandemonium: an Exploration of Mental Chaos and Collective Crisis Through the Lens of Trauma Theory** submitted to Kannur University in partial fulfilment of the requirement of M.A. degree in English Language and Literature is a record of bona fide study and research work carried out by **Anitta M Jose** under my supervision and guidance and that no part of this work has been presented earlier for the award of any degree, diploma, title or recognition.

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**Research Guide**

## DECLARATION

I, **Anitta M Jose**, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled **Pandemic Pandemonium: an Exploration of Mental Chaos and Collective Crisis Through the Lens of Trauma Theory** is a record of original work carried out by me for the award of M.A. degree in English Language and Literature of Kannur University, and it has not been submitted to any university for the award of any degree or diploma.

**Angadikadavu**

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**01-05-2023**

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## **Introduction**

“From the earliest days of recorded history, bacteria and viruses have stalked humans. Lurking in dirty corners and sewage-filled streets, stowing away on ships and aeroplanes, they waited for their chance to attack.” (Cummings<sup>3</sup>)

The relationship between pandemics and literature is as old as humanity itself. Illustrating the link between humans and viruses, Cummings writes, the pandemics, since time immemorial, have had a close affinity with humans and striking similarities in their uniquely diverse forms. Throughout the history, men of religion, philosophers, politicians, artists, and scientists have been questioning what it means to be a human being and what the essence of his existence is. Today, they are questioning what it means to be a human living during a devastating pandemic like the coronavirus that was harvesting thousands of lives on a daily basis.

Humanity is currently living in catastrophic situations, witnessing the collapse of economic, social, and cultural achievements in front of an invisible, contagious virus. This virus has major effects on human's psychological and mental well-being from the implementation of lockdown and quarantine by governments to the realization that we have lost control over our lives. People nowadays are mesmerised in front of TV screens in order to stay up to date with the pandemic details that is costing them their jobs, social lives and forcing them to start new habits such as wearing masks and gloves wherever they go.

Recently, physicians and psychologists have been discussing disturbing reports of increased anxiety and depression, as well as some fearful attitudes of post-lockdown anxiety and paranoia. People are once again questioning the

purpose of their existence and searching for meaning in their lives, as they wait for the situation to end and the new vaccine to save lives. Unsurprisingly, everyone's attention is drawn to historical studies and literature in particular, in search of inspiration and a better understanding of how our forefathers dealt with the trauma of epidemics and pandemics in the past, and how they survived while losing control over all aspects of life. Without a doubt, pandemic literature may still provide people a personal perspective on life by showing them how others have dealt with adversity and found purpose in their own lives. Literature shows us examples of how people survived significant changes within infected as well as their friends, family, and neighbours. Reading literature teaches people how to maintain equilibrium in the times of crisis. It teaches to seek happiness in every moment and live our lives day by day. Despite all of the advanced technologies and artificial intelligence, literature narrates the most remarkable story ever told which is the story of how humanity was able to face fear, disappointments, sadness, sudden change, the bitterness of reality and maintain their hope for a better future. Literature stands in front of pandemics and teaches humanity how to experience life in all its colours and potentials. It encourages us to celebrate our humanity and find meaning for being alive during traumatic times. Pandemics and literature are intertwined. Besides being a biological crisis, the pandemic is a humanitarian crisis on a grand scale. Therefore, it is subject to examinations in humanities, biology and epidemiology. The literature on pandemics is extensive, as pandemics are documented in historical books and literary works.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought a paradigm-shifts in our lives and“ it has become a commonobservation that the coronavirus outbreak makes it feel like we're living in a dystopian novel right now... it is unwelcome new territory for us,

but humanity has been here before many times, and written about it”(Self1). It was noted that people were extremely careful about safety measures such as keeping distance while meeting, avoiding visits to houses, and meeting on roads. They were also careful to keep informed about their community by asking for details about the pandemic and listening for stories. The same practices seem to be followed today in the Covid-19 pandemics. Literature on pandemics can be interpreted as a lens through which to explore the meaning of painful experiences, as well as insights into how our ancestors internalized pain and anguish from pandemics. Pandemic literature has always offered a close window on societies experiencing plagues and pestilences, thereby offering a close picture of the similarities and differences between minor and major problems encountered by them.

The existing Covid pandemic has prompted to rethink the earlier pandemics and its influence that was exerted on the literary works that were created during that particular time. Pandemic was always setting for many major classical works. For example: the famous Greek literary work by Sophocles *Oedipus Rex* was during a plague outbreak. From the classics to contemporary writings, the list of pandemic literature offers something in the way of uncertain comfort, and a guide for what happens next. Stories about pandemics include Homer’s *Iliad* and Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (1349–1353) and Stephen King’s *The Sandman* (1984), Ali Ahamad’s *Twilight in Delhi* (2012), and many others. These stories offer much in the way of catharsis—ways of processing strong emotion—and political commentary on how human beings respond to public crisis.

Homer’s *Iliad* opens with a plague visited upon the Greek Camp at Troy to punish the Greeks for Agamemnon’s enslavement of chrysiens. In other words, The



*Iliad* presents a narrative framing device of disaster that results from ill-judged behaviour on the part of all of the characters involved. Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Decameron* (1353), set during the Black Death, reveals the vital role storytelling plays in a time of disaster. The story is about ten people who kept themselves in isolation in a village near Florence for two weeks during the Black Death Pandemic. During this isolation period, they started telling stories of morality, love, sexual politics, trade and power. In this way they introduced a method of discussing social structure and interaction during the earliest days of Renaissance. Another medieval writer Chaucer, in his book, *Canterbury Tales* laid emphasis on human behaviour and cites such as avarice, greed and corruption to be causes of moral and physical death.

Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of Plague Year* is a long narrative of events and anecdotes regarding the great plague of London in 1665. Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826), one of the first apocalyptic novels, set in futurist Britain between the year 2070 and 2100, details the life of Lionel Verney who becomes the last man following a devastating global plague. Edgar Allan Poe, an American poet and novelist, got his short story *The Masque of the Red Death*, published in 1842, which depicts the failures of authority and governance in terms of appropriate responses to the disaster such as Red Death. T. S. Eliot's world recognized creation *The Wasteland* depicts not only a devitalized world but it also the impact of pandemic which got expression through picturesque. Of devitalized world Eliot's painful feelings, due to his suffering from pandemic with his wife, got expression in his poem through this poetic phrase: "April is the cruellest month". (Eliot 1) W.B. Yeats's celebrated poem *The Second Coming* is supposed to be his close observation of his pregnant wife approaching death in pandemic. Albert Camus's

*The Plague* (1942) and Stephen King's *The Sand* (1948) brought readers attention to the social implications of Plague-like Pandemics particularly isolation and failures of the state to either contain the disease or moderate the ensuing panic. Some other interesting literary works worth mentioning are that of American novelist Catherine Anne Porter's short novel *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* in which she depicted her acute sufferings and her difficult recovery from Influenza. The novel unfolds the ravaged picture of pandemic that killed people on large scale.

Also in Indian literature we find several illustrations of pandemics. Bankim Chandra's *AnandMath* illustrates the pathetic image of hunger as a natural disaster, no less than a pandemic. But the lengthy poem *Puratan Bhriya* (The Old Servant) by Rabindra Nath Tagore tells a painful tale of an old servant who, while serving to his master, succumbs to smallpox, a dreaded viral disease that has its origins in ancient times and spread to the 20th century. Similarly, literature from various Indian regional languages provides the devastated picture of the pandemic, such as *Rebati* and *Odia*, a short story by Fakir Mohan senapati; *Vasoori* (smallpox) by the Malayalam writer Kakkanadan; *Samaskara* by Kannada writer U.R. Ananthamurthy and many others.

Among the covid-shadowed novels that have hit the shelves in the past year and a half are *Our Country Friends* by Gary Shteyngart, in which eight friends spend lockdown in a house in upstate New York; *Summer* the last novel in a quartet by Ali Smith; and Louise Erdrich's *The Sentence*, which is haunted by both illness and a ghost. These works and others, steeped in the isolation and loss of the pandemic, have revived old questions about the challenges and rewards of bringing real-life drama into fiction in real time.

The pandemic makes literature more sensitive to its disastrous consequences for humanity. Literature offers us the deepest and most insightful record of events during pandemics and seeks to bring comfort in times of need. Pandemics are no strangers to us. We are still experiencing the after effect of Covid-19 that locks people in isolation, emptying streets, closing shops and introducing a new way of communicating like virtual meetings and seeing our loved ones in a small corner of the screens. The epidemic has always been a mass killer. Epidemics such as malaria, cholera, plague, Black Death, smallpox, influenza, etc. have claimed the lives of millions of people around the world. This devastating plague and pandemic has impacted the lives of many writers around the world, manifesting itself in the form of stories, poetry and novels. These detailed descriptions give readers realistic insights into the limitations and changes these circumstances bring. These literary creations give us comfort and comfort, and also help us to better understand the difficult situation and make us aware that we are not alone.

This study focuses on how epidemics have been handled in select novels and one story in various literature such *A Journal of the Plague year* by Daniel Defoe, *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* by Katherine Anne Porter and *Nemesis* by Philip Roth. As a result, common points regarding the pandemic in these works belonging to different periods and different cultures will be determined. The findings about humanity can give us some hope for our future on earth. The study involves analysis of literary works documenting the impact of pandemics on social, psychological, educational and cultural spheres in terms of people's responses to the epidemics, the methods adopted for their survival, and techniques they followed to manage their pain and trauma due to the pandemics. The paper

circumscribes itself to, for its study, select works, which essentially have a theme of pandemics and reflect on the issues: Trauma, catastrophe, loss of lives, and ensuing psychological ordeals.

This project has been organised in the following way: first chapter of this project discusses about concept of trauma in literature. The second chapter deals with the plot summary of the novels which reveal the humans psychological and mental problems during the pandemics. The third chapter investigates how pandemics affected the human psyche through the lens of trauma theory and also combining the literature of different pandemic to find the common humanitarian problems.

## Chapter One

### Unpacking Trauma: An Exploration of Theory, Research, and Practice

Trauma reflects extreme stress and anxiety where people's lives seem to be in danger, and happens as a result of various events, such as wartime, racism, pandemics or natural disasters. The theory of trauma comes from psychological theorists as Stevan E. Hobfoll and Kai Erikson, who focus on the effects of trauma like stress, and Maria Yellow, who focuses on historical trauma. In *a new species of trouble: the human experience of modern disasters* Kai T. Erikson says that trauma is a great stress that results from a catastrophic event of the past, such as war, slavery, genocide or pandemic. Covid-19 alongside with SARS virus and Spanish flue give people a series of historical traumas (176). In their essay, *Management of Collective Trauma* Antonius Robben Marcelo and Marcelo Orozco mention that massive traumas influence and disturb not only the personal world of an individual, but also the whole family and generations. In historical trauma theory, a massive trauma that happened in the past is experienced and repeated with a new group of people after years or centuries. Nevertheless, every individual has specific traumatic response even if he shares the same race, religion, nationality, or gender with other people in his society. The personal and social experience has dissociative structure. In other words, the whole world is affected tragically, but not the same degree. (121)

Michelle Balaev in his *Trauma Studies* stated that Psychological trauma, its representation in language, and the role of memory in shaping individual and cultural identities are the central concerns that define the field of trauma studies.

Psychoanalytic theories on trauma paired with additional theoretical frameworks such as post structural, sociocultural, and postcolonial theory form the basis of criticism that interprets representations of an extreme experience and its effects upon identity and memory (Balaev<sup>29</sup>) The concept of trauma, itself a source of critique, is generally understood as a severely disruptive experience that profoundly impacts the self's emotional organization and perception of the external world. Trauma studies examine the effects of trauma in literature and society by analysing its psychological, rhetorical and cultural significance. Scholars analyse the complex psychological and social factors that influence one's self-understanding of a traumatic experience and how such experiences language shaped by language.

Trauma studies emerged in the 1990s, relying on Freudian theory to create a model of trauma that imagines an extreme experience that tests the limits of language and even ruptures meaning altogether. This trauma model implies that suffering is 'unrepresentable' (29). Following quickly after the traditional model was a more pluralistic model of trauma, which suggests that the assumed incommunicability of trauma is one of many responses to a traumatic event rather than its defining feature. The notion that a traumatic experience challenges the limits of language, fragments of the psyche, and even ruptures meaning altogether established the field's initial parameters and continues to influence the critical conversation even as alternative approaches displace this notion (30). The psychological concepts that guide the field are defined by Freud's theories on traumatic experience and memory. Psychoanalytic theories about the causes and effects of trauma emerged during the nineteenth century study of shock and hysteria by researchers such as Freud, Joseph Breuer, Pierre Janet, Jean Martin

Charcot, Hermann Oppenheim, Abram Kardiner, and Morton Prince, and some others. Freud's early theories in *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), co-written with Joseph Breuer, and especially his adapted theories later in his career in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), influence trauma's conceptual employment by literary trauma critics today. Sigmund Freud argues in his early work that traumatic hysteria develops from a repressed, earlier experience of sexual assault. In *Studies in Hysteria* (1895), Freud and Breuer emphasise that the original event was not traumatic in and of itself, but only in the remembrance of it. Because the original event continues to cause harm, a talking cure or abreaction is required to recognise the consequences of the past and free oneself from its symptom-causing grasp. "Importantly, the traumatic event is understood only after a latency period of deferred action that delays the effects and meaning of the past" (Breuer and Freud 192). The process of remembering inflicts the psychological pain but also ascribes value to a previously repressed experience in the unconscious. This traumatic remembering is termed "pathogenic reminiscences" for the pathologic symptoms the memory causes (Breuer and Freud 40). The process of remembering inflicts the psychological pain but also ascribes value to a previously repressed experience in the unconscious. This traumatic remembering is termed "pathogenic reminiscences" for the pathologic symptoms the memory causes (Breuer and Freud 40). Trauma is thus defined in relation to the remembering process and as an event held within the unconscious that causes the ego to split or dissociate. Freud adopts the idea that trauma causes dissociation or a gap in the psyche throughout his career. The concept of the latency period between the event and its pathological effects, as well as the idea that trauma fragments the psyche, can cause dissociation, and continuously wreaks havoc or infects it, are principles that Freud

modified later in his career but still influence literary critics contemporary definition of trauma. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud's later work on war neurosis and the issue of traumatic repetition, develops and adapts his earlier theories on the ego's defence mechanisms as well as the causes and effects of trauma on the psyche. According to Freud, Traumatic events create conflicts in the ego which "split off" from the unity of the ego and are repressed but return later often in dreams (Freud 8). The mind as an organism, according to Freud, contains outer and inner layers, with the outer layer having a "protective shield" against harmful external stimuli (Freud 3). However, when "fright" occurs, that is "the state a person gets into when he has run into danger without being prepared for it," the lack of anxiety coupled with the external stimuli cause neurosis (11, 32, 36). Anxiety acts as a protection mechanism against traumatic neurosis but unexpected fright carries no defence. The external stimuli rupture the barrier and enter the inner psyche without the adequate internal defence. He writes: "We describe as 'traumatic' any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield ... with a breach in another wise efficacious barrier against stimuli" (33). Trauma is thought to be both external force that shocks the unprepared system and an internal reaction to overstimulation.

### **Literary trauma Theory: Cathy Caruth**

The first advancement in trauma studies scholarship that addresses the theory of trauma and the ways that trauma affects memory and identity is largely informed by Freud's theories, which include the ideas that traumatic experiences are repeated compulsively, divide the psyche, influence memory differently than other experiences, and cannot be experienced initially but only in a narrative



reproduction of the past. This critique, along with many that would come after it, makes use of psychoanalytic theories to examine emotional pain in texts as well as the language of loss, disruption, and fragmentation. Theories of how trauma affects the human psyche in this paradigm are frequently used to analyse the individual experience of a collective traumatic event in a book, so providing a relationship between the experience of people and cultural groups or between the personal and political worlds. The first or standard Freudian trauma model holds that trauma is an unrepresentable experience that fundamentally fractures the psyche. It is particularly based on the ideas of latency, pathology, dissociation, and infection (Balaev363).

The publications of Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* and Kali Tal's *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma* in 1996 gained significant attention in the field of trauma studies in literary criticism. Early academia popularised the notion that trauma as an unrepresentable occurrence, which affected the early development of literary trauma theory. Researchers like Caruth, who developed a psychoanalytic poststructural approach that contends trauma is an intractable problem of the unconscious that highlights the fundamental inconsistencies of experience and language, created a theoretical movement. According to this Lacanian perspective, trauma is conceptualised as a persistent absence that shatters awareness of the severe experience and prevents language from serving any purpose other than that of a referential expression. The approach permits a special emphasis on language indeterminacy, ambiguous referentiality, and aporia, particularly for Caruth's deconstructive criticism(Balaev363). The unfathomable void emerged as the key idea in criticism for conceiving about trauma's role in literature. Due to the idea

that trauma causes permanent damage to the mind, this traditional concept of trauma appealed to a variety of critics working outside of poststructuralism. Arguments that aimed to emphasize the depth of profound suffering from an external source whether that source is a single perpetrator or a society as a whole—were important because they relied on the presumptive neurobiological characteristics of trauma that refuse representation and lead to dissociation. Although the model is helpful in advancing assertions that language cannot locate the truth of the past, it was shortly followed by alternative models and approaches that amended this underlying assumption to propose that traumatic experience has a fixed value. It may be easiest to comprehend the development of trauma theory in literary criticism in terms of the shifting psychological definitions of trauma as well as the semiotic, rhetorical, and social issues that are involved in the study of trauma in literature and culture. The classic model's appeal comes from its marriage of semiotic ideas about language, associations, and symbolization with neurobiological theories about the mind's and memory's workings.

The traditional approach does not, however, adhere to the rules of structural and post structurallinguistics when the psychological basis of trauma is reconsidered. This is to argue that the conventional Lacanian approach only functions if the psychological definition of trauma complies with a specific theoretical framework that draws on Freud to present traumatic experience as a pre-linguistic event that universally results in dissociation. The classic model's seeming union of the semiotic principles that govern language's meaning with the psychological laws that govern how trauma functions is, in many ways, what makes it exciting. The history of the concept of trauma is littered with contradictory theories and contentious debates, allowing psychologists and literary

scholars to work with varying definitions of trauma and its effects. Some alternative approaches begin with a definition of trauma that allows for a variety of representational possibilities. Alternative models challenge the classic model's governing principle, which defines trauma in terms of universal characteristics and effects. Critics such as Leys, Cvetkovich, and Michelle Balaev develop a psychological framework distinct from the classic model, yielding different conclusions about trauma's impact on language, perception, and society.

Beginning with a different psychological starting point for defining trauma than the traditional approach allows critics to refocus on the specificity of trauma and the processes of remembering. "Understanding trauma, for instance, by putting it into the perspective of social psychology theories in addition to neurobiological theories, will result in a specific psychologically informed notion of trauma that recognizes the variety of contextual aspects that define the worth of the experience. The claim that trauma causes dissociation on an innate level may be questioned from this perspective".(balaev369)

In order to explain how trauma affects consciousness and memory, Caruth also turns to a neurobiological perspective. In particular, she draws on the work of psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk, who contends that the neurobiological reaction to trauma causes a universal reaction—a "speechless terror"—that precludes the possibility of narrative recall in memory because the event cannot be "organized on a linguistic level."The notion of trauma's un speakability indicates a causal view of trauma and dissociation, as well as a view of memory as a storehouse of experience wherein traumatic memory is stored differently and unavailable for normal narrative recall since it remains dissociated from consciousness (160, 163).

Normal memory is marked by narrative recollection, which is nevertheless essential for remembering and assimilation of the past. The turn in traumatic memory that precludes knowledge of the past for the individual also applies to the function of “historical memory” regarding a collective or cultural traumatic experience (15–16). Caruth writes in her interpretation of *Freud’s Moses and Monotheism* that “history, like trauma, is never simply one’s own, that history is precisely the way we were implicated in each other’s traumas,” emphasizing a universalist view of trauma that damages the psyche and evokes a shared response across time (Caruth65). This viewpoint suggests that trauma has an innate transhistorical or intergenerational aspect that can be passed down through time. An intense experience that rejects narrative absorption into memory is combined with the timelessness of trauma’s contagious potential. According to this viewpoint, trauma’s Trans historical potential means that a person who currently identifies with a particular cultural group may experience aspects of that cultural group’s painful past. The idea that trauma has universal consequences on identity and memory, particularly the fragmentation or dissociation of consciousness, is advanced through relating the individual and collective experiences of trauma. The meaning and worth of the event are ambiguous because of dissociation and the trauma’s natural delay. Caruth explains that trauma is “a shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but is in fact a break in the mind’s experience of time” (Caruth,61). The dissociative split in time results in both emotional distress and a failure to recognise or “locate” the meaning of the experience. But the unrepresentable past continues to circle consciousness, producing a particular kind of Absence that itself indicates the event while being unable to assign epistemic or moral determinacy. It is argued that history falls short of accurately portraying traumatic events like war or genocide

because any representation is a form of fiction and the effects of an unrepresentable and unknowable traumatic experience on the individual psyche are applied to the collective emotional experience of cultural groups. In the two decades of scholarship that followed Caruth, the notion of trauma's unrepresentability remained a central issue.

In criticism that upholds the conceptual underpinnings of the conventional model but broadens the theoretical framework to include feminist, racial, and postcolonial theory, the emphasis on the intrinsic relationship between the individual and cultural group as well as the dissociative and silencing effects of trauma continues to be highlighted in Caruth's model. The traditional Freudian–Caruthian concept of trauma and its delayed effects is used by Laurie Vickroy, Michael Rothberg, Suzette Henke, J. Brooks Bouson, and Deborah Horvitz in criticism that frequently explores the connection between personal and collective trauma. For instance, both Bouson and Vickroy emphasise the dissociative consequences of trauma and its narrative transmission, but each uses the model to concentrate on the social and cultural implications of severe experience and traumatic memory. (balaev340)

### **Pluralistic model**

Much of the newest criticism employs psychoanalytic and semiotic theories that restructure how we understand trauma's function in literature. Recent scholarship is more likely to explore the rhetorical uses of pathological dissociation or silences instead of working through psychological research that will unlikely provide a consensus regarding the empirical validity of trauma's universal pathologizing effects. Contemporary critics have created NeoLacanian,

Neofreudian, and new semiotic methods by concentrating on the rhetorical, semiotic, and social consequences of trauma. A neoLacanian method is presented in Herman Rapaport's chapter, a neo Freudian analysis is pursued by Greg Forter, and a Peircean semiotic model is explained by Barry Stampfl in this collection. A series of critical techniques that concentrate more emphasis on the specific social and cultural circumstances of traumatic experience have been developed as a result of the change in literary trauma theory.

The various strategies that make use of alternative trauma models can be grouped in a variety of ways. Due to the variety of ideas and methodologies used, these contemporary approaches, though diverse, could all be collectively referred to as belonging to the pluralistic model of trauma. By fusing psychoanalytic theory with postcolonial theory or cultural studies, many critics who focus on the rhetorical aspects of trauma investigate both how and why traumatic experience is portrayed in literature. For instance, neo-Freudian and postcolonial frameworks are used by critics like Rothberg and Forter. Within a variety of frameworks, critics such as Luckhurst, Mandel, Yaeger, and Visser address the social and political implications of trauma. Irene Visser's chapter in this collection uses a social psychology model of trauma within a postcolonial analysis, whereas Laurie Vickroy and Paul Arthur's chapters place rhetorical concerns about trauma within a cultural studies framework.

The variety of pluralistic models presented in this collection shifts away from the focus on trauma as unrepresentable and towards a focus on trauma specificity, which locates meaning through a greater consideration of the social and cultural contexts of traumatic experience. The emphasis on the specificity of

trauma is combined with an analysis that assumes greater scepticism about a universal pathological concept of trauma, resulting in more diverse perspectives on the relationship between language and experience. Revisionists are critics who depart from the classic model. However, the revisionists are not simply following in the footsteps of the early trauma theorists. Instead, revisionist critics either abandon Freud and Lacan entirely or adopt specific Freudian or Lacanian theories while constructing a new theoretical paradigm in analyses that lead to a radically different conclusion. In this way, the scholars in the following chapters challenge the traditional concept of trauma as incomprehensible by starting from a position that acknowledges trauma's variability in literature and society.

Taking into account the various approaches to studying trauma in literature, this collection broadens the parameters of literary trauma theory by suggesting that extreme experience cultivates multiple responses and values. Trauma causes disruption and reorientation of consciousness, but the values attached to this experience are influenced by a variety of individual and cultural factors that change over time. Rather than viewing literature as a closed psychoanalytic system, the scholars in this book employ theoretical approaches and critical practises that suggest trauma's function in literature and society is more varied and curious than early theorists imagined. Critical approaches that elucidate other possibilities regarding the value of trauma in terms of psychology, linguistics, and social mechanisms are challenging the idea that knowledge of the past, not just any past but a specific type of past experience, can never be known or remains forever unclaimed by either the individual or society. According to the pluralistic model of trauma, criticism can investigate trauma as a subject that invites the study of the relationship between language, psyche, and behaviour without assuming the classic

definition of trauma, which asserts an unrepresentable and pathological universalism. As a result, the collection demonstrates the methodological diversity within literary trauma theory, which moves the field beyond a restrictive analysis by demonstrating trauma's various representations. Within this framework, criticism may serve to acknowledge the impact of suffering on individuals and communities, to consider the role of literature in a violent world, or to analyse the ways language conveys extreme experiences. As previously stated, some approaches in the following pages pursue a neo Lacanian approach that extends the notion of trauma as a special pathogenic entity that uniquely ruptures knowledge, thereby furthering the debate over the relationship that has perplexed theorists for centuries. Sticking to the mainstream notion of trauma as a universal absence advances some ethical aesthetic problems but severely limits the investigation of others. Michelle Balaev's *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory* this work looks at Sticking to the mainstream notion of trauma as a universal absence advances some ethical aesthetic problems but severely limits the investigation of others. This book looks at questions about experience, representations, and value that are raised when trauma is understood beyond conventional labels. Instead than reducing the experience of trauma to a single, silent ghost, the authors in this collection take into account the variety of meanings that trauma may take on inside and within the spheres of the personal and public worlds, offering perspectives on both the individual and society. Due in part to the classic model's capacity to raise more profound issues regarding the interaction between victim, perpetrator, and witness as well as trauma's status as the ultimate unrepresentable, tropological hegemony over literary criticism continues to be maintained. Caruth contends that history functions similarly to trauma in that it can



only be understood in terms of how inaccessible its occurrence is, which is supported by the innate causality between trauma and dissociation, the idea that an extreme experience causes a dissociative consciousness where the truth of the past is hidden. Furthermore, the fact that history is a history of trauma indicates that it is referential in the sense that it is not fully understood as it happens.

One of the fundamental things to remember is that trauma is inherently bound to be paradoxical and ambiguous. According to Caruth, trauma is a fundamental enigma concerning the psyche's relationship to reality. In its general definition, trauma is described as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena. Traumatic experience, beyond the psychological dimension of suffering it involves, suggests a certain paradox: that the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it; that immediacy, paradoxically, may take the form of belatedness. The repetitions of the traumatic event, which remains unavailable to the consciousness but intrude repeatedly on sight, thus suggests a larger relation to the event that extends beyond what can simply be seen or what can be known, and is inextricably tied up with the belatedness and incomprehensibility that remain at the heart of this repetitive seeing. (Caruth 125)

Examining the cultural context of an individual or collective group's experience of trauma enables greater attention to representations of extreme experience such as rape, war, the Holocaust, the Gulag, American slavery, colonial oppression, and racism. Scholarship in Holocaust studies as well as feminist studies and postcolonial criticism deals with a network of social and cultural

factors that influence the linguistic and ethical terms of representing trauma. Ann Cvetokovich, Naomi Mandel, and Greg Forter demonstrate in their work a pluralistic trauma model that although influenced to greater or lesser degrees by the foundational Freudian concepts of trauma extend a critical analysis beyond the shattering trope, in large part by emphasizing the cultural dimensions of trauma.

Naomi Mandel's *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust, and Slavery in America* (2006) argues that the traditional concept of trauma as unspeakable is a "discursive production" that evades moral responsibility in representing atrocity by privileging the "problems inherent in speech" rather than addressing the "ethical obligations involved in such representations (Mandel 4, 5). In her analysis of trauma and the paradoxes of memorialization in Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, Mandel writes that "silence and forgetting are as much a strategic and self-conscious gesture on the part of the subjugated as they are the product of the subjugating culture's demands and requirements" (172). Ann Cvetkovich's *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (2003) establishes a view of traumatic experience beyond that of pathology by examining trauma's specificities and variations in butch-femme discourses and the public culture that arises around trauma. Her analysis examines sexual trauma and focuses on lesbian culture to argue that "affect, including the effects associated with trauma, serves as the foundation for the formation of public cultures" (Cvetkovich 2003: 10). Cvetkovich acknowledges the potential for trauma to be unrepresentable and dissociative but focuses on the ways that traumatic experience, specifically sexual trauma, creates new value in representations and cultural practices.

Greg Forster's early work in *Gender, Race, and Mourning in American Modernism* (2011) employs and adapts the Freudian- Caruthian trauma model to emphasize the difference between "punctual" trauma or a once occurring catastrophic event and non- punctual trauma or an on-going and everyday event in his analysis that examines the political and historical dimensions of extreme experience in modernist and postcolonial fiction (Forster 98). He expands the theory of trauma to incorporate the idea of "signification trauma" that allows for a transformative realization of the experience thus locating its meaning (116). Forster's theoretical advancements of the trauma model in his recent work is applied to postcolonial novels that extend the focus on the social, political, and cultural forces at work in representations of trauma. Rather than engaging in therapeutic and anti- therapeutic approaches to analyse colonial trauma which function to analogize the relations between psychic and social worlds, Forster examines the dialectic between such worlds, including the causes and social conditions of trauma. This view of the dialectic relationship between specific psychic and social worlds in novelistic representations places a different emphasis on the causation of trauma and its effects on subjectivity because it allows for an exploration of how trauma is produced and reproduced through colonial institutions, which underscores the "irreducible particularity of suffering" (77). Forster argues that "the 'unrepresentable' character of trauma is thus due not to its being 'originary' and hence, beyond history and representation. Rather, it has to do with the enforced rupture with precolonial pasts and the prohibitions against remembrance enforced by particular regimes of power" (77). The traumatic past of social violence is representable and narratable in Forster's analysis through formal strategies in the novel that demonstrate the ethical tension of portraying the

oppression from, and resistance to, hegemonic power in a representational order that attempts to silence the subject.()

The field of trauma studies continues to develop and adapt the foundational poststructural approach as well as incorporate new perspectives from postcolonialism, feminist theory, ethnic studies, and ecocriticism in scholarship that examines trauma's significance in literature and society. Recent collections such as *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory and The Future of Trauma Theory* by Balaev and Buelens include further exploration of sociocultural and semiotic implications of trauma in literature. The breadth of current criticism attests to the versatility of trauma studies and its relevance to literary theory.

## Chapter Two

# Writing Through Crisis: Literature in the Age of Pandemic

### *A Journal of the plague year*

Daniel Defoe is considered as a pioneer in English novel who wrote the first English novel of a genius calibre Robinson Crusoe. Defoe wrote many novels, but it was *Robinson Crusoe* that established his immediate and permanent literary fame. *Robinson Crusoe* is an adventure novel based on the experiences of Scottish explorer Alexander Selkirk, who becomes stranded on the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez in the Pacific, off the coast of Chile. Defoe has told the story of Robinson Crusoe's adventures in such a wild way that the readers begin to identify with him. The fact that *Robinson Crusoe* has been translated into many different languages demonstrates its enormous popularity. Defoe was also a pioneer in journalism. In 1704 he founded the periodical Review, which established an example of sound and straightforward journalism. Defoe was a prolific writer who published numerous books, pamphlets, and articles. Defoe's other significant literary works include the following: *The Famous Moll Flanders' Fortunes and Misfortune* (1722), *The Fortune Mistress, also known as Roxana* (1722), *The History of Mr. Duncan Campbell's Life and Adventures* (1720), *A Tour Through the Whole Islands of Great Britain* (1724), and *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722). Defoe was born in London in 1660. His father, named Foe, was a butcher in London who, at the age of forty, added the prefix 'De' to his name. Defoe's life was full of extremes, from poverty to prosperity, from a prosperous brick maker to a

starving journalist. He was also a social reformer who wanted to help the poor working classes. Defoe was known for his candid and forthright views on public affairs. This frequently got him in trouble, and he was imprisoned, but he never shied away from expressing his views. Defoe died in 1731 at the age of 71.

*A Journal of the Plague Year* is one of Daniel Defoe's most popular and strangest works; it is an amalgam of history and fiction that attempts to relate what life was like in London during the plague of 1665-66. This work is a first-person, primarily nonlinear narrative told by the unmarried saddler H.F., whose name is only made known by his signature at the end of the book. The Journal is a fictional account of his experiences during the plague that struck London in 1665, but it is also replete with facts, figures, charts, and official records. H.F. starts by recounting reports that the plague had arrived in Holland and then closely follows the death toll figures. Although some parishes are affected, the worst of the plague seems to be avoided during the winter. However, the number of fatalities starts to increase in May and June, and H.F. starts to consider leaving the city. He finally decides that God wants him to stay after some back and forth discussion. H.F. notes that the wealthy are emigrating from the city and that the influenza is having a serious impact on the city's poor. In their fear and anxiety over the approaching plague, he describes how they fell prey to the tricks of quack doctors, fortune tellers, mountebanks, and astrologers. City officials are rational and organized in their response to the spreading plague, and the Orders of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London are published. These established rules and regulations for the appointment of searchers, examiners, and watchmen to guard the houses, the closure of infected houses, and the closure of events where large groups of people would congregate. H.F. is generally opposed to house closures,

claiming that it did more harm than good in most cases and could only barely prevent the plague from spreading because Londoners found ways to escape or deceive city officials. H.F. tells many stories about how the plague affected the people of London. These stories include grieving fathers, crazed men running through the streets, people throwing themselves into burial pits out of pain or grief, husbands trying to support their families, people blaspheming God's name, houses being looted, and people attempting to flee the city and travel to other towns in search of relief. H.F. is eager to disprove rumours that the city was in chaos during the plague; he is sympathetic to the plight of the poor and refuses to believe the slanderous rumours that surround the plague days. He tells numerous stories about mercy, charity, and redemption. H.F.'s narrative is rambling, digressive, and oftentimes contradictory, and he returns to several subjects over and over again – particularly the shutting up of houses and his conviction that the only way to survive the plague is to run away from it. He believes he made a mistake by remaining in the city and confesses his sins to God, pleading for forgiveness. He spends his days locked up in his house for days on end, and when he can't take it anymore, he walks around the city. He muses on the causes of the plague and how it spreads, dismissing ridiculous explanations but ultimately concluding that, while it must have some human causes, it is from God.

As he writes, he includes updated mortality bills that show how the number of plague deaths rises exponentially over time. The fact that there were never dozens of dead bodies in the street, that supplies were never dangerously low, and that charitable measures were put in place to aid the poor are all praised by him as evidence of the city officials' reasonable behaviour. Unfortunately, it takes some time for international trade to restore because businessmen stay away from

London. The plague is at its worst in September, but eventually the bills start to show a decline in the distemper. Less people were getting sick and those who did were recovering much more quickly. Since those who saw the bills were careless and unintentionally spread the plague, this information initially had a negative effect. Fortunately, the evidence that the plague was dying out was confirmed some time later. H.F. notes that while many people genuinely express gratitude for their deliverance and makes an effort to live differently; the majority revert to their former, sinful behaviours and don't seem to have gained any wisdom from their trials. H.F. concludes his account with a brief verse in which he rejoices in his survival.

The Journal is abundant with accounts of psychological and physical suffering in people. Readers are inevitably affected by the numerous and on-going instances of hopelessness, suffering, and grief. Regarding the physical suffering, Defoe focuses on the intense pain caused by the swellings on the victim's body. People frantically tried to burst these swellings by stabbing them or burning them because they would become so hard and taut that they could not be burst by normal exertions. People would occasionally run through the streets screaming and crazed from the agony. Others died by suicide. In terms of psychological distress, parents mourned for their deceased children, while children yearned for their parents. Infants nursed at their dead mothers' breasts, or mothers watched their children die in their arms. Many people were unable to work and were forced to starve. The closing of houses exacerbated the despair, as people could not bear being imprisoned in their houses of death. The plague's obscurity, as well as the inability to understand how it spread or how to protect oneself from it, drove people insane. To those who lived through the plague in 1665 London, it was perplexing in nearly



every detail. The explanations for its origins were only rumours, and it was unclear how it got into the city. It was also unclear how it spread; some thought it was through the air, while others thought it was through contact with a sick person's bedding or clothing. Doctors were unsure how to tell if someone was sick, how long they had been sick, and what the best way to cure them was. Often the sick did not realize they were infected until it was too late, and many unknowingly spread the plague. Some even died. H.F. gave several theories about how to tell if someone is sick. These tended to be silly, such as asking someone to blow on an egg or realizing the person was sick when it rotted. People disagreed about the extent of human causes compared to divine causes. Many simply concluded that plague came directly from God and was a form of divine revenge. Theories abound as to how to protect oneself from the plague. One man always had garlic in his mouth, while another was pouring vinegar on his head. No one knew how to avoid spreading the plague among his relatives. Towards the end of the plague, many simply gave up on precautions, failing to make sure what they were doing was helping. The mystery of the plague only increased its threat.

### *Nemesis*

As Philip Roth approaches the fifty-first year of his career as a novelist, it has come to seem natural to him to measure his own achievement against that of those other writers whose work, in his view, most requires being measured against. Roth belongs to the first generation of American novelists for whom a university education in the liberal arts was the norm. It is no surprise, therefore, that the literature he has measured himself against should include classical Greek tragedy and epic: the starting-point for any Great Books course in any American university

in the early 1950s. For Roth, however, such reckonings have never just been about reputation. From the very start, they enabled him to explore, from the outside, what it is he has been trying to do as a novelist. Philip Milton Roth (March 19, 1933 – May 22, 2018) was an American novelist and short story writer. Roth's fiction—often set in his birthplace of Newark, New Jersey—is known for its intensely autobiographical character, for philosophically and formally blurring the distinction between reality and fiction, for its "sensual, ingenious style" and for its provocative explorations of American identity. He first gained attention with the 1959 novella *Goodbye, Columbus*, which won the U.S. National Book Award for Fiction. Ten years later, he published the notorious bestseller *Portnoy's Complaint*.

*Nemesis* opens at the beginning of the summer of 1944 in Newark, New Jersey. 23-year-old Eugene "Bucky" Cantor is the playground director for a summer fitness program at the Chancellor Avenue School in the predominantly Jewish Weequahic neighborhood of Newark. An outbreak of polio has begun to spread through the city, with far more cases of the disease occurring than usual. Cantor does his best to protect the kids under his supervision and to keep the parents from worrying too much about the disease. However, two of the boys under Cantor's supervision eventually contract polio and must be hospitalized. Both of the boys are soon killed by the disease, much to the devastation of Cantor and the community. When Cantor attends the funeral of one of the boys, he feels angry and bitter, especially towards God.

Polio continues to spread throughout Newark, and several more kids under Cantor's supervision contract the disease. Cantor's long-term girlfriend, Marcia Steinberg, is working at a summer camp in the Pocono Mountains, and over the

phone, she tells Cantor that there is a job at the camp that he could accept. Cantor is unsure about this idea. Cantor talks to Marcia's father about the polio outbreak, and Marcia's father speaks very reassuringly. Cantor asks for permission to propose marriage to Marcia, and Marcia's father gladly gives his approval. When Cantor next speaks to Marcia on the phone, he proposes marriage, and she gladly accepts. Cantor also says that he will take the job at the camp. Cantor tells his employer at the Chancellor Avenue School that he will be leaving at the end of the week. Cantor goes to the camp, which is in the Pocono Mountains and is called Camp Indian Hill. It is owned and operated by a man named Bill Blomback, who idolizes Native American ideas and customs. Cantor is excited to be at the camp, where his fiancée is also working, and he is excited to be so distantly removed from the hotbed of polio that is Newark. However, he feels guilty for leaving his previous job; he sees his departure as an abandonment of the children whom he had supervised. Regardless of his guilt, Cantor quickly becomes accustomed to the pleasure of life at the camp. He befriends a 17-year-old camper named Donald Kaplow, who is interested in learning diving techniques from Cantor. Cantor and Marcia occasionally canoe to a secluded island on the lake at night. There, they have sex and enjoy one another's company. However, Cantor's guilt still nags at him somewhat, and this shows during an argument he has with Marcia; Cantor angrily says that God is cruel for inflicting polio on innocent children.

Eventually, Donald Kaplow begins to feel ill, and he is rushed to a nearby hospital. There, doctors confirm that he has polio. Cantor is horrified and immediately believes that he must have unwittingly carried the polio to the camp. The camp is shut down as more campers begin to contract the disease, and Cantor asks a doctor if he could have carried the disease for a week without realizing it.

The doctor says that it is unlikely but that they should have Cantor tested for the disease. The test is positive, and 48 hours later, Cantor begins to exhibit symptoms. Over the following months, Cantor is treated, and although polio does not kill him, it eliminates all function in one of his legs, and it eliminates most of the function in one of his arms. Cantor gives up his dream of being a physical education teacher, and he finds a desk job at the local post office.

One day, in 1971, Cantor happens to encounter Arnie Mesnikoff, who was one of Cantor's students at the Chancellor Avenue School in the summer of 1944. Cantor and Arnie begin to have lunch regularly. Arnie also contracted polio that summer, and although it affected his legs, he is able to walk with a crutch and leg braces. During their lunches, Cantor tells Arnie his story. He says that he ended his engagement to Marcia after the polio crippled him. He says that his motivation was to spare Marcia the pain of being married to a crippled man, although Marcia said that she still loved Cantor and wanted to marry him.

The polio epidemic of 1944 is one of the main driving forces of the novel's plot and conflicts, and the narrative utilizes the epidemic as a basis for exploring questions of tragedy, uncertainty, and personal outlook. One of the defining characteristics of polio in the narrative's historical context is its incurability. The polio vaccine was not invented until the year 1955, and so in the novel's setting of 1944, there is no effective way to cure, treat, or prevent the disease. Therefore, when the summer polio outbreak of 1944 develops into an epidemic, people experience widespread fear and panic. The novel examines this danger and uncertainty to examine the wide range of human responses to danger and

uncertainty. Some characters remain generally calm while others spiral into panic, anger, and even suspicion.

### ***Pale Horse, Pale Rider***

Katherine Anne Porter (May 15, 1890 – September 18, 1980) was an American journalist, essayist, short story writer, novelist, poet, and political activist. Her 1962 novel *Ship of Fools* was the best-selling novel in America that year, but her short stories received much more critical acclaim. Porter's first collection of short stories, *Flowering Judas* (1930), impressed critics, although it did not sell very well. She won a Guggenheim Fellowship that enabled her to study abroad, and after a brief stay in Mexico, in 1932 she sailed to Bremerhaven, Germany. A second collection of short stories, *Hacienda* (1934), and a short novel, *Noon Wine* (1937), followed her 1933 marriage to Eugene Pressly, a member of the U.S. Foreign Service in Paris, France. After divorcing Pressly, she married Albert Russell Erskine Jr., from whom she divorced in 1942. *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* (1942) consists of three short novels, including *Noon Wine*. The title work is a bitter, tragic story about a young woman's love for a soldier who is dying of influenza. The cover story of *The Leaning Tower and Other Stories* (1944), set in Berlin, deals with the threat of Nazism. *The Days Before* (1952) is a collection of essays. *Ship of Fools* (1962) was a bestseller but received mixed reviews. Based on the 15th-century novel *The Ship of Fools* by Sebastian Brants (1458-1521), it examines the lives of an international group of travellers whose human folly alters their personal lives and blinds them to the rise of Nazism. For many years, Porter was more popular across the country except in her native state of Texas, where tales of cowboys and the old west were more popular than anything else. Her

dissatisfaction with social injustice and the lack of rights for women in the state was one of the factors that led her to leave the country, and she often addressed these issues in her writings. Despite this, Porter was considered the finest author ever to come from Texas. She won a 1966 Texas Institute of Letters literary award for *Ship of Fools* and a Pulitzer Prize for her *Collected Stories*.

*Pale Horse, Pale Rider* is Porter's semi-autobiographical account of the influenza pandemic of 1918. The outbreak was incredibly deadly, killing between 50 and 100 million people around the world, or almost five percentage of the world's population. The pandemic occurred in the midst of World War I, and early coverage of the disease was temporarily concealed in order to maintain morale. Spain was not involved in the war at this time, so its papers were more willing to cover the spread of the disease. For this reason, it was incorrectly inferred that the disease had origins in Spain, and it became known as the Spanish Influenza. While most strains of influenza typically kill the very young and very old, the 1918 outbreak affected disproportionate numbers of young adults—in the United States, almost half of all fatalities occurred in individuals 20-40 years old. The pandemic affected everyday life, even in areas where mortality rates were comparably low. Adults, like Miranda in the story, were disabled by their illness, and business operations could not go on as they once had. There were too many dead to be buried and not enough healthy workers to bury them—mass graves were common sights.

In *Pale Horse, pale Rider* the protagonist Miranda dreams of a familiar bed, a familiar house, and a familiar stranger. On a grey horse, she embarks on a journey to escape Death and the Devil and the stranger rides beside her on his own

grey horse. Miranda wakes from her troubling dream to a reality equally as troubling: the world is in the midst of World War I and the influenza pandemic. Miranda goes to work at the newspaper office where she is employed as a drama critic. At the office, there are two Lusk Committeemen waiting for her at her desk. The men confront Miranda and harass her for not purchasing a Liberty Bond to support the war effort. Miranda refuses to buy one and is tempted to reject the war entirely. The narrative jumps forward as Miranda is back home, exhausted and relaxing in the bath. She has a horrible headache and thinks back at what might have caused it. She remembers what occurred yesterday after the committeemen left: Mary Townsen and Miranda anguished over what could be done to them for not buying bonds and Miranda left work to visit the wounded soldiers in the hospital a task she dreads and finds phony and forced.

The narrative shifts back to the present, where Miranda wraps up her bath and daydreams about Adam Barclay, her love interest. Adam, a young soldier, moved into Miranda's building the week before and the two have seen each other nonstop over the past 10 days. Adam surprises Miranda by waiting outside her door. The two walk to lunch, where they discuss the war and the flu. The outing is romantic, but Miranda is troubled by an increasing fear that she is growing ill and by her inability to fully connect and relate to Adam. Later, at work, Miranda discusses the war with her work friends Towney and Chuck Rouncivale.

Everybody has a lot to say, but none of them manages to say how they really feel about the war and their roles in it. After work, Chuck and Miranda attend a show she must cover for the paper. An actor for whom Miranda gave a less than stellar review confronts the pair outside the theatre. Miranda feels badly about the encounter, and on top of this, the show is rotten. Echoing her strange dream and

anxieties during her outing with Adam, Miranda continues to feel as though something bad is going to happen to her.

Later on, Miranda waits for Adam so they can spend the evening together. While she waits, Miranda questions the significance of her relationship with Adam in light of the uncertain fate his role in the war presents for him. Adam and Miranda see a horrible show together. A man trying to push bonds on the audience interrupts the show before its third act. Miranda is disgusted by the man's theatrical sales pitch, though Adam is more sympathetic. They leave the show to go dancing. The next thing Miranda knows, she is delirious and sick in bed. Adam arrives and cares for her. The couple sings and prays together while Miranda slips in and out of deliriousness. They admit their love for one another before Adam leaves to bring back ice cream and hot coffee. Miranda falls asleep, and wakes up to find herself in a hospital, and Adam gone.

In the hospital, Miranda slips in and out of consciousness, dreaming of death, oblivion, and utopia. At first Miranda is afraid of death and the eternity of darkness it presents, but her vision pulls her in different, more hopeful direction. The darkness changes to light, and Miranda sees the familiar faces of people close to her who had died. This utopic, beautiful dreamscape presents a world in which Miranda is able to fully connect with and be understood by others—something of which she has never before been capable. Miranda eventually regains consciousness. She learns that World War I has ended and that she is on the road to recovery. She discovers that Adam was called to duty and died of influenza in a military camp hospital. Towney and Chuck come to see her bringing with them letters from friends who are overjoyed to hear that Miranda is no longer ill.



Everybody wants Miranda to be overjoyed at her miraculous recovery, and she knows she should be. Yet, Miranda cannot forget the ethereal images of eternity and connection that she glimpsed in her dream. The conscious, real world—and all of its death and misery—is dreary and grim in comparison to this impossible world of the sublime she hallucinated. Though Miranda knows she should be happy to be alive, she is overcome with grief and dejection.

The author seems to show how sometimes humans go through difficulties of isolation and trauma. The protagonist suffers depression and the only time she is comfortable is when she is unconscious. The final sections of the semi-autobiographical account are made up of Miranda's recurrent emotional perceptions and dreams from her illness. Miranda gradually recovers but discovers that Adam has succumbed to the influenza epidemic and the war has ended. The events of the influenza epidemic and war highlight the importance of relationship and the delicateness of life. From the story, it is clear that humans always experience misery and grief in life. Furthermore, Miranda's illness and life in the war-time U.S. heightens the sense of alienation. She's lost family and friends to the influenza and unknowingly looks for someone to care for, and care for her. When she finds Adam, she finally feels a sense of belonging; however, his death and her recovery only emphasize the fragility of life and human relationships. She is yet again left with no one in her life, and she remains detached from society. Thus, Adam's death is not the ultimate tragedy of the book, but Miranda's recovery instead. She is the victim of the cruel truth of the fleeting nature of our relationships. It is inevitable that our relationships will succumb to the power of mortality. Although death appears to be Miranda's greatest trouble, she ultimately realizes that there is an equal and opposite horror to be found in the pain of living.

In *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* Miranda undergoes a journey from healthy to dying and back again. From the beginning of the story, Miranda predicts that all is not well, and that something horrible will happen to her. Her premonition comes true when she falls gravely ill with influenza and is quarantined for a long time. Though her prognosis hasn't been favourable, she makes a miraculous recovery near the end of the story. Her friends expect Miranda to greet her restored health with gratitude and exuberance, yet she feels strangely hollow and disappointed at the return of her health. Miranda's disappointment stems from a fresh perspective on what it means to be granted life when so many others have been subjected to death. This is exemplified in the song Miranda sings with Adam while she is sick, "Death always leaves one singer to mourn"(roth55)—that is, the gravity and tragedy of death is not felt by the dead but by those left behind to mourn them. Through Miranda's ultimate disappointment in her recovery, Porter shows that the grief and misery one experiences in life is just as destructive as the prospect of death.

## Chapter Three

### Unveiling the Unspoken: The Impact of Trauma Theory on Pandemic Literature"

#### *A journal of the plague of year*

Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of Plague Year* deals with the 1665 Great Plague of London, personal and collective trauma. Defoe presented the effect of the narrative strategy of using vivid imagery rather than the didactic narrative form. This testimony of suffering using vivid imagery renders the realistic picture of the past plague year of 1665, foretelling the reader about the imminent catastrophe of the plague in 1772. In her *Unclaimed experience* Caruth argues that trauma's latency and dissociation disrupts the ability to fully understand or represent a traumatic experience. Both individual traumatic experiences and collective historical extreme events are ultimately never known directly but only through an interrupted referentiality that points to the meaning of the past only as a type of reproduction or performance (Caruth 11). The idea that a traumatic experience can never be known other than as a recurring absence indicates both the dissociative nature of trauma and its linguistic abnormality. What Defoe intends using H.F. as the witness of the trauma is two-fold; first, he suggests that healthy people be quarantined separately from the sick people in case the plague spreads and increase the number of the plague houses. Second, he suggests people repent their sins to prevent another plague which is the sign of God's wrath. His testimony creates collective memory and functions as a memorial for the nameless plague victims, while warning against future calamity. The witness-narrator acquires partial

healing from his trauma through his talking while the listener-reader partially participates in the vicarious experience with horror and sympathy, thus 'working through' their trauma.

Cathy Caruth's trauma theory explores the psychological effects of traumatic experiences and how they are represented in literature. Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* is a novel that describes the experiences of a survivor of the bubonic plague that struck London in 1665. Defoe was only five years old when the plague broke out. When he wrote his book in 1722, he drew on historical records such as broadsides, medical pamphlets and the 'Bills of Mortality' published by local parish authorities, as well as the memories of his uncle Henry Foe, who remained in London during the plague, and whose initials 'H.F.' are given to Defoe's narrator identify "trauma texts," that is, texts that employ intertextuality, repetition, fragmentation, and language manipulation to create meaning due to extreme traumatic stress. Caruth's theory suggests that traumatic events are so overwhelming that they can result in a split in a person's consciousness. This split can make it difficult for the individual to process the traumatic event, which may result in psychological symptoms such as anxiety, nightmares, and flashbacks. In literature, this split can be represented through techniques such as fragmentation and repetition. In *A Journal of the Plague Year*, Defoe's protagonist experiences the trauma of living through a devastating epidemic. The novel uses a fragmented narrative structure to convey the protagonist's disorientation and confusion as he navigates the chaos of the plague. The repetition of images such as the carts that collect dead bodies and the cries of "bring out your dead" reinforce the trauma of the epidemic.

Cathy Caruth's trauma theory is a way of understanding how individuals and communities experience and cope with traumatic events. In her book *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* Caruth argues that traumatic experiences can be difficult to fully process and comprehend because they disrupt our understanding of time and our ability to articulate what has happened to us. According to Caruth, traumatic experiences often involve a "delayed" response, meaning that the true impact of the trauma may not be felt until later. (Caruth, 120) The novel describes the panic, fear, and confusion that gripped the city as the disease spread and the authorities struggled to contain it. It also portrays the resilience of those who survived the epidemic and the ways in which they rebuilt their lives in the aftermath. One way in which Caruth's trauma theory can be applied to Defoe's novel is through an analysis of the delayed response to trauma. The characters in the novel are initially in denial about the severity of the outbreak and are slow to take action to protect themselves. As the disease spreads and the death toll rises, they begin to experience the full impact of the trauma and are forced to confront their own mortality. Similarly, the city of London as a whole does not fully comprehend the scope of the epidemic until it has already ravaged the population.

defining feature of the trauma novel is the transformation of the self-ignited by an eternal, often terrifying experience, which illuminates the process of coming to terms with the dynamics of memory that inform the new perceptions of the self and world. The trauma novel conveys a diversity of extreme emotional states through an assortment of narrative innovations, such as landscape imagery, temporal fissures, silence, or narrative omission--the withholding of graphic, visceral traumatic detail. Trauma in fiction is conveyed through a protagonist that functions as a preventative cultural figure. The protagonist functions to represent

and convey an event that was experienced by a group of people, either historically based or prospectively imagined. In the novel the protagonist H.F. describes a veritable Hell, with people screaming in the streets and roaring inside the confining walls of their own homes. Some dropped dead in the streets and their bodies laid there until they were picked up. The swellings on their bodies grew monstrously large and were so hard that they could rarely be broken. They stretched the skin and were unbearably painful in their tautness. Crazy from the pain, the afflicted tried to open the swellings by any means necessary, trying to cut or burn them open. There were stories told of women who murdered their children to relieve them of the pain, or those that died from melancholy or nurses who murdered their infected patients. The immorality that often accompanied plague is mentioned here; people began to rob and steal from others - especially from the dead.

The narrator took to walking about the streets at this time. One day his attention was arrested by a giant pit that was being dug in the churchyard. It was in his own parish of Aldgate, and the neighbouring parish of White Chapel, that the plague would grow the most fearsome. The pit turned out not to be deep enough. In two weeks the officials had thrown in 1,114 bodies. The narrator visited the pit again when word came of how full it was. An order existed preventing people from coming to see the pit because of the risk of infection, but there were some cases of people throwing themselves into it because they longed for death or because they were crazy. Viewing trauma through the theories of Freud and Lacan as the delayed return of the repressed and a defining absence, Caruth argues that trauma is “not locatable in the simple violent or original event in the individual’s past” but only identified in “the way it is precisely not known in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on” (Caruth17, 4). Trauma produces a double paradox in

consciousness and language—the contradictory wish to know the meaning of the past but the inability to comprehend it, as well as the contradictory crises in the traumatic narrative between the threat of death and survival (7).

*A Journal of the Plague Year*, being an Observations or Memorials of the narrator showcases an account of one man's experiences of the year 1665, in which the bubonic plague struck the city of London in what became known as the Great Plague of London, the last epidemic of plague in that city. The narrator recounted that the shutting up of houses - forbidding sick people from leaving their homes - was the most melancholy part of the story of the plague. Houses were shut up in the parishes of St. Giles, St. Martin's, St. Clement Danes, and more. The shutting up of houses had occurred in the plague of 1603 as well. The narrator was aware of how the whole face of London was altered; there was emptiness, sadness and sorrow on faces, etc. No one wore black to mourn their friends, however, but voices of lamentation rose throughout the streets at all hours. There were tears on nearly every face. The doors of houses were shut up, and the narrator recounted how he would walk along streets and see no one. Whole rows of houses were abandoned. The plague was intermittent for a while in the city, and people's hopes and fears ebbed and flowed. Many wealthy people from the West End continued to flee, but most of townspeople stayed to weather the storm. Caruth explains that “Traumatic experience, beyond the psychological dimension of suffering it involves, suggests a certain paradox: the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it; that immediacy, paradoxically, may take the form of belatedness” (92). Since traumatic experience enters the psyche differently than normal experience and creates an abnormal memory that resists

narrative representation, the unique process of this remembering results in an approximate recall but never determinate knowledge.

Throughout the novel, H.F. describes his experiences of the plague, including the isolation and fear that he feels as the disease spreads through the city. He observes how people are forced to quarantine themselves in their homes and how the streets are deserted as people try to avoid contact with others. H.F. himself experiences the effects of this isolation, as he is forced to live alone in a rented room in a neighborhood that has been abandoned by most of its residents. H.F.'s experience of isolation and solitude is further intensified by his own fears and anxieties about the plague. He describes how he spends his days and nights in his room, listening to the sounds of the city and imagining the worst possible scenarios. He becomes obsessed with the idea of the plague and is constantly checking his own health for signs of infection.

These experiences are provide insight into the traumatic experience of the people, which include feelings of loneliness, isolation, and anxiety. The extreme circumstances of the plague outbreak in London, which forced people to isolate themselves for long periods of time, would have only intensified these symptoms. *A Journal of the Plague Year* provides a vivid account of the trauma and suffering experienced by people during a catastrophic event. By exploring this trauma through the lens of trauma theory, we can gain a deeper understanding of the psychological and emotional impact of such events on individuals and communities.



***Pale Horse, Pale Rider***

As Katherine Anne Porter's short novel *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* opens, Miranda fitfully endures a vivid nightmare. She sees herself on horseback desperately racing from Death, the pale rider, who has already taken her grandfather, an aunt, a cousin, her "decrepit hound, and silver kitten," and when he reaches her, she realizes that "he is no stranger to " (27). Her nightmare tangles images of life and death with images of remembering and forgetting, and the relationship between survival and memory is a recurring motif in the story. Porter's allusion to the apocalyptic horseman described in Revelation proves to be appropriate because the story takes place during the influenza pandemic of 1918, the greatest public health catastrophe in modern history. The interplay between death and memory in *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* gives an aesthetic dimension to the pandemic's horrifying consequences and raises questions about literature as a form of traumatic memory. Caruth also relies on a neurobiological approach to explain trauma's effect on consciousness and memory, particularly the work of psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk who argues that the neurobiological response to trauma elicits a universal response a "speechless terror" that forecloses the possibility of narrative recall in memory since the event cannot be "organized on a linguistic level" (Kolk and Hart 172). The notion of trauma's unspeakability indicates a causal view of trauma and dissociation, as well as a view of memory as a storehouse of experience wherein traumatic memory is stored differently and unavailable for normal narrative recall since it remains dissociated from consciousness (160, 163). Narrative recollection marks normal memory and remains crucial for identifying and assimilating the past.

In the spring of 2009 fear of a swine flu pandemic and ongoing fear of a potential avian flu pandemic awakened dormant memories of the 1918 influenza pandemic. Global health officials mounted a campaign of contagion preparedness, and many officials still see another human pandemic as inevitable, if not imminent. To mitigate this potential disaster, scientists, epidemiologists, and government officials worldwide are looking to the 1918 pandemic as a worst-case scenario as they develop contingency response plans. Before the emergence of the current virus, however, the 1918 influenza pandemic had largely disappeared from cultural memory. Few references to the 1918 pandemic exist in literature, popular culture, or even in history books, which make Porter's story an important record of the outbreak. In the story, Miranda, a reporter for a Denver newspaper, enjoys a whirlwind romance with Adam Barclay, a young Army officer, until she collapses from the virus. Adam nurses her as she comes near to death, and while she recovers, he returns to his unit where he dies from the virus. Porter based *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* on her personal experience as an influenza survivor, and it is the most significant American literary work set during the pandemic. The novella illustrates the varieties of traumatic experience—personal trauma, cultural trauma, historical trauma, and aesthetic trauma. The story takes place in a unique and profound historical context, both because of Porter's personal traumatic experience and because memories of the pandemic have faded. In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, Cathy Caruth describes trauma as a "wound of the mind—the breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world is not, like a wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that . . . is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the

nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor" (4). Most trauma theorists locate trauma's impact in the individual memory, where the unsettling experience disrupts the victim's identity, but when a disruptive event affects a large population simultaneously, a collective trauma occurs. The influenza pandemic of 1918 complicates the distinction between individual trauma and collective trauma. One might stipulate that collective trauma merely consists of numerous individual traumas, but collective trauma amplifies the individual's experience by taxing the network of social resources that ordinarily stabilize the individual victim. Massive events such as wars, natural disasters, and pandemics have different dynamics than personal events such as crime, accidents, and illness. In both individual and collective forms of trauma, the event's impact lies not in the immediate experience but in the survivors' memory of the event. Exploring the distinction between individual trauma and collective trauma leads to an explanation for how and why the pandemic has virtually disappeared from collective memory.

Trauma theory provides a useful framework for analyzing the effects of the pandemic and the war on Miranda's psyche. According to trauma theory, traumatic events can overwhelm an individual's coping mechanisms, leading to a state of emotional and psychological distress. In *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* Porter depicts Miranda as a victim of trauma, who experiences symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of her experiences.

Miranda's trauma begins with her contraction of the Spanish flu. As she becomes increasingly ill, she experiences hallucinations and delirium, which are common symptoms of the disease. However, these symptoms also suggest that Miranda is experiencing a dissociative state, a common response to traumatic

events. Her illness leaves her weak and vulnerable, and she becomes dependent on Adam for care. Caruth in *Unclaimed Experiences* she says that "trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way its very unassimilated nature--the way it was precisely not known in the first instance--returns to haunt the survivor later on" (Caruth 4). The origin of traumatic response is forever unknown and unintegrated; yet, the ambiguous, literal event is ever-present and intrusive. This theory argues that trauma is only known through repetitive flashbacks that literally re-enact the event because the mind cannot represent it otherwise.

Adam, who is soon to leave for war, represents both a source of comfort and a source of trauma for Miranda. His departure represents the loss of a loved one, which is a common trigger for PTSD. Additionally, the trauma of war is symbolized by Adam's presence in the story. His physical injuries and emotional scars demonstrate the devastating effects of war on individuals and societies. Miranda's trauma is further compounded by the loss of her family members to the pandemic. She experiences grief and guilt over their deaths, which are common responses to traumatic events. Her isolation and loneliness during this time further contribute to her sense of disorientation and dissociation. Porter employs disruptive temporal sequences to emphasize mental confusion, chaos, or contemplation as a response to the experience. The narrative strategy of silence may create a "gap" in time or feeling that allows the reader to imagine what might or could have happened to the protagonist, thereby broadening the meaning and effects of the experience. These strategies help the author structure the narrative into a form that attempts to embody the psychological "action" of traumatic memory or dissociation. For Freud, the repressed memories, when reactivated, produce a

defense mechanism against remembering that can lead to disruption in language. Traumatic events destabilize language and demand a vocabulary and syntax that go along with what happened in the past.

In conclusion, "Pale Horse, Pale Rider" is a poignant exploration of trauma and its effects on the human psyche. Through the character of Miranda, Porter portrays the devastating impact of war and the Spanish flu pandemic on individuals and communities. The story highlights the importance of recognizing and addressing trauma, as well as the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

### *Nemesis*

*Nemesis*, a gripping tale of a polio outbreak in war time New Jersey by Philip Roth, the novel is set in the sweltering summer of 1944, recounts a life of a 23-year-old gym trainer Eugene Cantor, who is rejected from joining war due to poor eyesight and has become a playground director in Newark, New Jersey. In an interview Philip Roth remarked that "Writing *Nemesis* became an exercise in recovering own memories of childhood when both the polio epidemic and World War II were in full swing".(Roth) As the novel opens, the city comes under attack from the Polio epidemic sweeping through the city, encompassing the Jewish community of Newark. The novel begins with the sentence: "The first case of polio that summer came early in June, right after Memorial Day, in a poor Italian neighbourhood crosstown from where we lived. Over in the city's south-western corner, in the Jewish Weequahic section, we heard nothing about it, nor did we hear anything about the next dozen cases scattered singly throughout Newark in nearly every neighbourhood but ours."(Roth 4) Throughout the novel, the

horrifying pestilence is raging, terrorizing the city of New Jersey, especially attacking children, killing, paralyzing and claiming their lives. Paranoia, prejudice and anti-Semitism: the Italian boys enter inside park premises and spit over the playground to spread the disease among the Jewish children. Amidst the war and the spreading of the contagion, the city falls into the whirlwind of fear

In *Nemesis* the polio epidemic is a traumatic event that disrupts the lives of the characters, especially Bucky Cantor, the protagonist of the novel. Bucky is a playground director in Newark, and he is responsible for the safety and well-being of the children in his care. When the polio epidemic strikes, Bucky is overwhelmed by a sense of guilt and helplessness as he watches the children suffer and die despite his best efforts to protect them. The trauma of the epidemic exacerbates his existing anxieties and depression, and he struggles to make sense of his experiences.

Caruth's concept of trauma can help understand the psychological and emotional impact of the epidemic on Bucky. Bucky's experiences of survivor guilt and his sense of responsibility towards the children are common responses to traumatic events. He is haunted by the memory of his parents' death and the fear that he will not be able to protect the children under his care. Bucky's memories of the epidemic are fragmented and disjointed, and he struggles to make sense of his experiences, leading to feelings of disconnection and disorientation. This is because, according to Caruth, painful traumatic events cannot be grasped and cannot be consciously and systematically brought. Therefore trauma novels' Authors employ a nonlinear plot or disruptive temporal sequences to emphasize mental confusion, chaos, or contemplation as a response to the experience. The

narrative strategy of silence may create a "gap" in time or feeling that allows the reader to imagine what might or could have happened to the protagonist, thereby broadening the meaning and effects of the experience. These strategies help the author structure the narrative into a form that attempts to embody the psychological "action" of traumatic memory or dissociation (Caruth 135)

Furthermore, Caruth's concept of trauma can help us understand the collective impact of the epidemic on the community. The fear and uncertainty caused by the epidemic create a sense of collective trauma that affects everyone in Newark. The trauma disrupts social and economic structures, leading to feelings of dislocation and disorientation. The trauma of the epidemic is not limited to the victims and their families, but it affects the wider community and shapes the collective experience of the epidemic. The turn in traumatic memory that precludes knowledge of the past for the individual also applies to the function of "historical memory" regarding a collective or cultural traumatic experience (Kolk and Hart 15,16)

*Nemesis* showcases the psychological and emotional impact of the polio epidemic on Bucky Cantor, the protagonist of the novel. The polio outbreak, which killed and paralyzed many children in Newark, New Jersey, in the summer of 1944 traumatized not only the victims but also the survivors, including Bucky. Bucky is a young man who is physically fit, morally upstanding, and determined to serve his country in World War II. However, his plans are thwarted when he becomes the playground director at a local park and is confronted with the reality of the polio epidemic. He is tormented by feelings of guilt and helplessness as he watches children suffer and die despite his best efforts to protect them. His sense of

moral duty and responsibility towards the children keeps him in Newark, but his inability to save them takes a toll on his mental health. Bucky displays symptoms of survivor guilt, which is a common response to traumatic events. He feels guilty for surviving the epidemic when so many others did not. He is also haunted by the memory of his parents' death from tuberculosis, which is re-triggered by the polio epidemic. His past trauma exacerbates his present distress, leading to anxiety and depression. The notion of trauma's unspeakability indicates a causal view of trauma and dissociation, as well as a view of memory as a storehouse of experience wherein traumatic memory is stored differently and unavailable for normal narrative recall since it remains dissociated from consciousness (160, 163). Narrative recollection marks normal memory and remains crucial for identifying and assimilating the past.

Moreover, the trauma theory helps us understand the collective trauma experienced by the community. The epidemic causes fear and panic, leading to social and economic disruptions. The trauma of the epidemic is not limited to the victims and their families but extends to the wider community. The fear and uncertainty of the epidemic create a sense of collective trauma that affects everyone in Newark. Bucky's experiences of survivor guilt, anxiety, and depression, as well as the collective trauma of the community, demonstrate the far-reaching effects of traumatic events. Roth's novel highlights the importance of resilience, compassion, and sacrifice in the face of trauma, showing how individuals and communities can cope with adversity and come together in times of crisis. The traumatic experience of the polio epidemic in "Nemesis" shows the devastating effects of a public health crisis on individuals and communities. Roth's novel highlights the psychological and emotional toll of trauma and the importance



of resilience and compassion in the face of adversity. Through the characters' experiences, we see how trauma can alter the course of individual lives and shape the collective experience of a community.

## Conclusion

The world's history is full of many pandemics with different biological characteristics such as plague, tuberculosis, malaria, smallpox, cholera, influenza, and HIV/AIDS, SARS. Governments react to pandemics by imposing quarantine, isolation, travel restrictions, and other forms of social control, and they take care of public health more than ever during these periods. Pandemics are dangerous not only to human physiological health but also to Psychological and mental health. Lives are disappearing, loved ones are gone, and all our Strength, including our imagination, is absorbed by the pandemic. Not only the medical world, but also our political, economic and cultural world in general is affected. Therefore the effects of the pandemic manifest themselves in the world of art and literature: the manifestations in many forms that have the power to give insight people about what is going on during this kind of crises. It can be said that literature can give on the one hand reckless on the other hand panic-ridden human beings a kind of insight about, comfort in or escape from the diseased world.

Through this project three work of fiction written during pandemics examined through the lens of trauma theory demonstrated how pandemics influenced the human psyche and collective memory of society. The first novel *A Journal Of the Plague* year by Daniel Defoe is an account of one man's experiences of the year 1665, in which the bubonic plague struck the city of London in what became known as the Great Plague of London, the last epidemic of plague in that city. In the novel, the narrator's account of the bubonic plague epidemic in London can be seen as reflecting the delayed and fragmented nature of traumatic experience. The narrator's detachment and disorientation, as well as his

struggle to make sense of the events around him, can be seen as symptoms of trauma. For example, the narrator's description of the overwhelming scale of the epidemic and the breakdown of social order can be read as reflecting a sense of disconnection from reality. The constant sound of funeral bells and the sight of dead bodies in the streets can be seen as triggering traumatic memories that are difficult to process. The novel can be seen as offering a powerful account of the lasting impact of trauma on individuals and communities, highlighting the ongoing legacy of the traumatic experience of the bubonic plague epidemic in London.

The second story *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* by Katherine Anne Porter portrays two young lovers who are tragically affected by the 1918 influenza epidemic, or Spanish Flu. *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* looking through the mirror of trauma theory helps us to understand the psychological and emotional impact of the Spanish flu epidemic on the protagonist, Miranda. Trauma is an experience that cannot be fully comprehended or assimilated into consciousness and leaves a lasting impact on individuals and communities. Miranda's experiences of trauma in the novel, such as hallucinations, memory loss, and survivor guilt, are common responses to traumatic events. Caruth's concept highlights the importance of recognizing the emotional and psychological impact of trauma and the role of memory in shaping our understanding of traumatic events.

*Nemesis* by Philip Roth explores the effect of a 1944 polio epidemic on a closely knit, family-oriented Newark Jewish community of Weequahic neighbourhood. The children are threatened with maiming, paralysis, lifelong disability, and death. Reading the novel *Nemesis* with the help of trauma theory helps us understand the lasting psychological and emotional impact of the polio

epidemic on the characters, particularly Bucky Cantor. Trauma is an experience that cannot be fully comprehended or assimilated into consciousness, leaving a lasting impact on individuals and communities. Bucky's experiences of survivor guilt, responsibility, and fragmented memories are common responses to traumatic events. The collective trauma caused by the epidemic disrupts social and economic structures and affects the wider community. Caruth's concept of trauma highlights the importance of recognizing the emotional and psychological impact of trauma and the role of memory in shaping our understanding of traumatic events.

A comparison of the depiction of trauma in the novels *A Journal of the Plague Year* by Daniel Defoe, *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* by Katherine Anne Porter, and *Nemesis* by Philip Roth reveals similar themes and motifs despite differences in the historical context and narrative structure. All three novels explore the psychological and emotional impact of pandemics on individuals and communities, including survivor guilt, fear, and trauma. *A Journal of the Plague Year* depicts the psychological toll of the bubonic plague on the inhabitants of London in 1665, including the fear of contagion and the moral decay of society. Similarly, *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* portrays the emotional and physical toll of the Spanish flu epidemic on the protagonist, Miranda, including hallucinations, memory loss, and survivor guilt. *Nemesis* explores the psychological effects of the polio epidemic on the protagonist, Bucky Cantor, and his community, including fear, anger, and a sense of injustice.

The novels also highlight the importance of memory and storytelling in processing trauma and preserving collective memory. *A Journal of the Plague Year* is structured as a retrospective account of the plague, emphasizing the role of

memory and storytelling in preserving the history of the pandemic. Similarly, *Pale Horse*, *Pale Rider* and *Nemesis* use the protagonists' memories and reflections to explore the psychological and emotional impact of pandemics on individuals and communities. Finally, all three novels explore the existential and philosophical questions that arise during pandemics, such as the meaning of life and the role of individuals in a larger community. *A Journal of the Plague Year* and *Pale Horse*, *Pale Rider* both highlight the fragility of life and the uncertainty of the future, while *Nemesis* explores the themes of mortality, responsibility, and justice.

In conclusion, while each of these three novels depicts a different pandemic in a different historical context, they all explore similar themes of trauma, memory, and existential questions. Through their depictions of pandemics, these works remind us of the importance of empathy, solidarity, and compassion in the face of crisis. They also offer insights into the human condition and the ways in which we cope with trauma and adversity, making them powerful tools for understanding and processing the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.

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**REPRESENTATION OF SUBALTERN IN THE NOVELS OF  
AMITAV GHOSH'S *SEA OF POPPIES* AND ANITA NAIR'S  
*LESSONS IN FORGETTING***

A Project Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of M.A in  
English Language and Literature of Kannur University

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**2021-2023**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**DON BOSCO ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGE,**

**ANGADIKADAVU**

## **BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **Representation Of Subaltern in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh's *Sea Of Poppies* and Anita Nair's *Lessons In Forgetting*** submitted to Kannur University in partial fulfillment of the requirement of M.A. Degree in English Language and Literature is a record of bonafide study and research work carried out by **Liya Thomas** under my supervision and guidance and no part of this work has been presented earlier for the award of any degree, diploma, title or recognition.

**Fr.Jaison Anthikkat**

**Ms. Amala Antony**

**Head of the Department**

**Research Guide**

## **DECLARATION**

I, **Liya Thomas** hereby declare that this dissertation entitled **Representation Of Subaltern in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh's Sea Of Poppies and Anita Nair's Lessons In Forgetting** is a record of original work carried out by me for the award of M.A. Degree in English Language and Literature of Kannur University, and it has not been submitted to any university for the award of any degree or diploma.

**Angadikadavu**

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## **Introduction**

Literature is a source of the Carrefour of various socio-economic factors. Literature has the power to perform resistant and revolutionary functions. Literature, too, is shaped by the subaltern history that emanates from the school of history. In contemporary Indian literature, subalternity became a superseding idea and literary writers turned their writings towards the suppressed voices of society. Indian writers re-wrote the fictional and non-fictional narratives as well to articulate the passive voices of subalterns. History is the recorded struggle of people for ever increasing freedom and for newer higher realization of the human process. The common people possess the capacity to make history. In fact the historic initiative of the masses has time and again produced social cataclysms that have changed the world. The subaltern approach centers on and around the people, as people constitute the central theme of history. The subaltern studies of history claims to be an improvement on the elitist mode of exploring and explaining history. Also known as history from below, this type of storytelling aims to construct the paradigm of subaltern consciousness, which manifests itself in different forms, in different places and at different times. Subaltern studies are a new trend in historiography, like other trends, e.g. Imperialism, Primitivism, Nationalism, Marxism, Neo-Marxism, Feminism, Ambedkarism, etc. The need for rewriting and re-evaluation based on the history narrative is expressed.

Subaltern studies began its impressive career in England at the end of the 1970's. Its main goal was to retake history for the under classes, for the voices that had not been heard previous. Scholars of the subaltern hoped to break away from histories of the elites and the Eurocentric bias of current imperial history. Therefore Subaltern analysis is meant for advocating the rejection of Eurocentric theories inherited from the nineteenth century. In postcolonial studies and in critical theory, the term "subaltern"

designates the colonial populations who are socially, politically, and geographically outside the hierarchy of power. Post colonialism refers to the period aftermath of western colonialism. It represents the historical, material, and actual living conditions of newly-independent Asian, African, and South American states within the global system. It also refers to the economic and political conditions in countries such as India after the European ruler handed over political power to the native population. A key movement in postcolonial studies was the 1980 intervention of the subaltern studies groups. Though the original subaltern studies group emerged out from historical and cultural studies, the concept of the subaltern has expanded in interpretation from the original configuration to apply to any population that is disenfranchised and unreachable due to hegemonic oppression. Post colonial literature study the view point of Westerners and make response to the intellectual discourse of the European colonialism. Literatures of nations such as Canada, Australia, Asian and Southern American countries are known as post colonial literature.

One of the most recent subdivisions of postcolonial theory is Subaltern Studies. The subaltern themes are reflected in Indian Writing in English. It is expected from the paper presenters, Academicians and the scholars to explore subaltern themes as reflected in Post-colonial Indo-Anglian fiction in the writings of Mulk Raj Anand, Anita Desai, Bhabhani Bhattacharya, Nayantara Sehgal, Kushwanth Singh, V.S.Naipul, Salman Rushdie, Shashi Deshpande, Amitav Ghosh, Mahasweta Devi, Anita Nair and other contemporary writers. It is anticipated from the participants to explore the subaltern themes such as Oppression, caste, religion Gender discrimination, marginalization, exploitation, migrations, class distinction, racial feelings, diasporic elements, ethnicity as mirrored in Indo-Anglian Writings. The voice of the underclass, its struggles and sacrifices, which had not been recognized in history, came to the fore

in a new way in these writers' literature. Subalterns were placed at the center of this writings, making them the central character of their narrative and allowing them to speak out against the oppressive forces of their society. The Subaltern Studies Group explored the concept of subordination and the many facets of subordination as a theme. However, the concept of subalternity evolved over time and in various volumes and studies.

Subalternity is an identity less position, a position in which social mobility lines, being different, do not allow the formation of a recognizable basis for action. The concept is originally used from a strong political perspective against subordination, to better understand the mechanisms of subordination, to rewrite history in a way that subaltern groups are seen as part of it, and to contribute to the development of strategies to promote a post-subaltern society or at least to outline the conditions under which subaltern studies can avoid too strong or naïve use by hegemonic powers. Marxism and Post structuralism paved the way for subaltern studies, which have evolved into a field of postcolonial critique.

The theory of the subaltern is a popular theory in post-colonial literature that emphasizes how colonial power and imperialism took ruthless measures to marginalize and silence native peoples. The subaltern theory has proven to be the best mode of expression for victims of discrimination of all kinds. Novels, plays, poems, short stories, and autobiographies by authors from around the world have presented the subaltern perspective and attributed the global relevance and appeal of subaltern theory. Literary critics, feminists, art critics, social reformists, political scientists, and political economists all affected the vast literature produced by postcolonial literature. Due to globalization in Third World countries, Subaltern Studies, Postcolonial theory, and critique gained prominence in the latter part of the twentieth century. y. Subaltern

writers fight to guarantee that repressed cultures are recognized for their historical settings, which are often ignored by history. The main goal was to rewrite history in the favour of the underclasses, whose voices had hitherto gone unheard. Aristocratic histories, as well as the Eurocentric tilt of present imperial history, were supposed to be eliminated by subaltern historians. Subaltern literature has played an important role in giving voice to marginalized communities and challenging the dominant social and political structures in India. It has also helped to create a sense of identity and community among these groups, and has contributed to the development of a more inclusive and diverse literary culture in India.

This project is an attempt to interpret the texts written by Amitav Ghosh under the title *Sea of Poppies* and Anitha Nair's *Lessons In Forgetting* putting it into the in-depth features of the subaltern theory. This project is divided into three chapters. Chapter one deals with the introduction and development of subaltern theory and its reflection by various theorists like Antonio Gramsci, Ranjith Guha and Gayathri Spivak. It gives information about the features and history of subalternity. Second chapter is introducing the authors Amitav Ghosh and Anita Nair and their works *Sea of poppies* and *Lessons In Forgetting* respectively. The final chapter is the core of my study, the application of subaltern theory on these novels. This chapter gives an analysis of effect of subalternity, among the life events and also the existence of woman in both studies. Through this work we could identify that the position of subaltern is very pathetic in that period but they rose from that position later.

## Chapter One

### Theory Of Subalternity

In critical theory and post colonialism, subaltern refers to the populations that are socially, politically and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure of the colony and of the colonial homeland. In describing 'history told from below', the term subaltern is derived from Antonio Gramsci's work on cultural hegemony, which identified the group that are excluded from a society's established structures for political representation and therefore denied the means by which people have a voice in their society. The term subaltern is used in the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, human geography and literary criticism. The word subaltern, using, an officer in the British army below the rank of captain especially a second lieutenant simply claimed as of lower status. A subaltern is someone with a lower ranking in a social, political, or another hierarchy. It also can mean someone who has been marginalizing for oppressed.

The term 'subaltern' came from the Latin roots 'sub' which means below , and 'alternus' which means for all others, subaltern is used to describe some one of a lower rank (as in military) or class (as in cast system). But the term is also used to describe someone who has no political or economic power, such as poor person living under a dictatorship. The term subaltern used varies theorist, like Antonio Gramsci, the Italian communist intellectual, who first used by this term in Marxist Theory's. It refers to any person or group of inferior rank and station, whether because of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religion.

In India, women, rural, tribal, immigrant labors are part of subaltern, within Punjab, India the most oppressed are the rural folk, the dalit and illiterate women.

Consequently, the claims of the oppressed are neglected. Subaltern theory as reflected by Gayatri Chakravathy Spivak and Ranajith Guha focuses on signifiers. This branch of the theory emphasis the way in which the colonialist discourage has socially constructed the signifiers from the colonial language, giving no real voice to the oppressed and colonized.

### **1.1 COLONIALISM: RACE AND RELIGION**

Racial and religious discrimination began with the advent of colonialism. The European Forefathers had set out their expeditions to various countries with the purpose of establishing trade and commerce. Colonialism is accompanied by exploitation, annexation and conquest. Its hegemonic power rests on creating the binary opposition of self/other, White/black, good/evil, superior/inferior, and so on. The binary oppositions led to the creation of racial discrimination between the white settlers and the natives. The so-called native elites tried to identify themselves with the white settlers and the issue became all the more complicated. The white settlers took advantage of this situation in exploiting the country. They joined hands in executing various programmes so as to oppress the native subalterns. In order to carry out the smooth functioning of all the activities, the white Imperialists advocated the policy of Divide and Rule. As the colonies prospered in many parts of the country, the white settlers had to face stiff opposition from the natives. In this crucial juncture, the native elites found it below their dignity to support the uprising of the lower classes. The criterion for racial superiority or inferiority was on the basis of colour and wealth. In order to share the qualities of European masters of colonialism, the native elites discriminated the subalterns and joined hands with the white settlers.

The subalterns were made to believe that they belonged to an inferior race and so not fit for making any real contribution to the society. The white settlers always

emerged as champions of the superior race. Such type of comparisons subjugated the will and aspirations of the subalterns. The white settlers very often resorted to violence for the implementation of various policies. The imperialists acted on the principle that offence was the best form of defense. In the colonial period, the settler-native relationship could be compared to that of a master and a slave. The natives are conscious of their rights and free will so as to be the soul masters of their land. But the natives are treated as secondary citizens in their own land and this subjugation is made possible in the name of racism. Indians were referred to as brown and Africans as black. The subalterns tried to retaliate against the white supremacy for the sufferings that they had undergone. Even though they tried to communicate their resentment, the authority could not have the patience to listen to their plea. In the colonial countries, the natives suffered a lot as they were not equal with the so-called whites. Colonizers were Christians and they tried to flourish their religion and rituals in the so called colonized land. They perceived other all religion as cultureless, senseless. So many subaltern people force to change their religion into Christian. Those who have become Christian had a good life and status under the British rule and others are became more cultureless people, in the colonial land.

## **1.2 COLONIAL PERSPECTIVE OF SUBALTERN**

The term subaltern and subaltern studies entered post colonial studies, through the works of the subaltern study group , and the post colonial literature studies , the view point of westerners and make respond to the intellectual discourse of the European colonialism. Literatures belong to the nations such as Canada, Australia, Asian and South American countries known as post colonial literature. It is used in subaltern studies such as a name for the general attitude of subordination in south Asian countries, where this is expressed in term of class, gender etc, and the concept of

‘Subaltern’ gained increased prominence and currency with Gayatri Spivak’s *Can the Subaltern Speak* (1985), which is questioning and exposing their patronizing attitudes.

In the *Empire Writes Back* Ashcroft uses the term post colonial to refer to all the culture affected by imperial process from the movement of colonization to the present day. Subaltern theories become a hot topic of discussion in the post colonial literary period after the publication of *Other Words* by Spivak in 1987. *The Empire Writes Back* by Ashcroft in 1989, *Nation and narration* by Bhabha in 1990 and *Culture And Imperialism* by Said in 1993. The first step for colonialisied people in finding a voice and an identity is to reclaim their own past. All the colonialisied nations of the world have a subaltern identity.

### **1.3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SUBALTERN THEORY**

Subaltern studies began in the beginning of 1980s. It aimed promoting, as the preface declared, the study and discussion of the subalternist themes in the south Asian studies. It also expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office or in any other way. The last two decades of twentieth century have witnessed the emergence of the diverse themes within the subaltern historiographical school. Historians have noticed that the later volumes of subaltern studies were dominated by the desire to analysis the portrayal of subalternity by the dominant discourses. Apart from these volumes of number of books appeased in the decades of eighty’s and ninety’s.

Subaltern studies form a part of post colonial theories in literature and its application is indeed very useful in the study of certain books. In other word, Subaltern studies defined itself as an attempt to allow people finally speak for or to sound the multiple voices the truly oppressed, Partha Chatterjee, is an Indian scholar belonging to the subaltern studies and post colonial school. He made notable contribution that proved crucial at this juncture to understand that engagement with elite themes is not all



together new to the subalterns. The decades of eighty's assumes a special significance due the fact of caste, gender and religion become important references points in the history writing, Subaltern history in particular understood the need to document the lives of all the appressed people, like peasants and workers, tribal and lower caste women and dalit whose voice were seldom heard before in history. The rise of subaltern historiography in the decades of the 1980's conceded with that of the Dalit movements. This movement questioned the basic assumptions of questioning and expose in patronizing attitudes. Including the subalterns, historians have noticed that 'Subaltern studies' is used as a blanket term for community inside it. The subaltern studies collectively thus announced a new approach to restore history to the subordinate in order to resolve the characteristics of much academic work in south Asian studies. Reading the subaltern begun in India, where writing about subaltern studies begun in the book reviews.

#### **1.4 RANAJIT GUHA'S CONCEPTS ON SUBALTERN**

Ranajit Guha, first in his manifesto in *Subaltern Studies I* and later on in his famous, classical treatise titled 'The Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India'. In this latter book, Guha attempted to show that the Indian peasants were socially and politically aware of the effect that their uprising would have on the colonial administration, which rarely sees insurgency as a struggle for social justice. Guha seeks to do justice to the Indian peasants by examining the interplay of domination and subjugation relations in Indian context from 1783 to 1900.

Ranajit Guha defined the "Subaltern Studies as, a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way" (35). The subaltern for him is that clearly definite entity, which constitutes the demographic difference between the total

Indian population and all those whom we have described as the elite. Guided by the foundational views of Guha, the group members aimed at studying the subaltern groups as an “objective assessment of the role of the elite and as a critique of elitist interpretations of that role (58).

This concern originated from the assumption that the writing of Indian national history has been controlled by colonial elitism as well as nationalist-bourgeois elitism which were both produced by the British colonialism in different historical periods. Consequently, Guha affirmed that this kind of historiography cannot possibly transmit, analyze or acknowledge the kind of changes or contributions brought by common people themselves as individual subjects were independent from the elite groups. Such a difficulty in acknowledging these contributions of common people by this elitist historiography is clear enough in a politics of people that persists to exist even when the elite politics dissipate.

This distinct difference between the elite and the subaltern is evident when we conceived it through the notion of political mobilization. The elite political mobilization is fulfilled through appropriation of or adjustment to the British parliamentary institutions and laws whereas the subaltern political mobilization is founded on classical forms of social organization such as: blood relationships and kinship, territoriality, traditional and tribal affiliations where popular mobilization take the form of peasant insurgencies. No matter how heterogeneous the subaltern groups may be, there is a constantly unchanging character which defines them: that is, the notion of resistance to the imposed domination of the elite class. The final result of this interplay was summarized in the fact that the Indian bourgeoisie failed by the end to speak for the nation, a position which confirmed the failure of Indian nation to objectively exist without any representations formed and cherished by the colonial regime.

## 1.5 ANTONIO GRAMSCI'S CONCEPT ON THE SUBALTERN

The concept of the subaltern was first used by the Italian Marxist political activist Antonio Gramsci in his article *Notes on Italian History* which appeared later on as part of his most widely known book *Prison Notebooks* written between 1929 and 1935. The subaltern classes refer fundamentally in Gramsci's words to any low rank person or group of people in a particular society suffering under hegemonic domination of a ruling elite class that denies them the basic rights of participation in the making of local history and culture as active individuals of the same nation. Gramsci's intentions when he first used the concept of the subaltern are clear enough to be given any other far-fetched interpretations. The only groups Gramsci had in mind at that time were the workers and peasants who were oppressed and discriminated by the leader of the National Fascist Party, Benito Mussolini and his agents. Gramsci became interested in the study of the subaltern classes of consciousness and culture as one possible way to make their voice heard. The Gramscian concept of subalternity applies to those groups in society who are lacking autonomous political power. In Gramsci's time these groups were easily identified, and much of the work around the concept of subalternity has centred on groups like peasants and the proletariat. But Gramsci also argued that subalternity existed on a broader scale than this, including people from different religions or cultures, or those existing at the margins of society.

In order to study the history of the subaltern groups, Gramsci designed a plan composed of six steps that are found to be explained in details in his book, which was mentioned earlier. He intends to study: firstly, their objective formation by changes taking place in economic production; secondly, their active or passive affiliation to the dominant political formations and their attempts to influence their programs; thirdly, the birth of new parties and dominant groups, which are mainly created for the

subjugation and maintenance of the subaltern; fourthly, the formations which the subaltern group themselves made to vindicate limited rights; fifthly, new formations which maintain the subaltern groups autonomy within old frameworks; sixthly, those formations which may help to affirm their entire autonomy. Ironically, Gramsci argued that the subaltern classes have the same complex history as that of the hegemonic classes, although the latter constitutes the most officially accepted. The subaltern groups history in Gramsci's opinion has no evident unity and it seems to be in its very episodic totality because of their submission to the authority of the ruling groups even when they break with the established system. This deplorable state of affairs imposed this sort of non-accessibility to the means by which they may limit and control their own representation and consequently lack an access to the social and cultural institutions of their state.

This dismantling is to be realized within Gramsci's theoretical framework, by releasing the subordinated consciousness of non-elite group from the cultural hegemony exercised by the ruling class. His groundbreaking and newly revealed ideas about the vital role of peasantry as a distinct group within the subaltern division, distinguished Gramsci from the previous founders of Marxism who confidently took for granted the impending expiry of the peasantry in the face of the class-conscious proletariat produced by the conditions of a post-industrial capitalist society. His ideas, written during his imprisonment, about the peasant class as a social, cultural and political force, aware of its strong sense of subalternity.

#### **1.6. GAYATRI SPIVAK'S THEORY OF SUBALTERNITY**

Gayatri Spivak is often called a feminist Marxist deconstructivist. Gayatri Spivak has become an authoritative voice of the post-colonial period since the publication of her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak, the post-colonial

intellectual, was born in Calcutta on 24 February 1942. She graduated from Presidency College of the University of Calcutta in 1959 with first-class degree in English. She left India in the same year to take a Master's degree at Cornell University in the U. S. A. she completed her doctoral dissertation on the Irish poet W. B. Yeats At present she is Avalon Foundation Professor in the Humanities at Columbia University, New York. Her translation of Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology* brought international recognition for Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Spivak, through her cultural and critical theories, tried to challenge the legacy of colonialism. She refused to admit the notion that the Western World is having an upper hand over the Third World as it is more purified from the grossness of acute barbarism. Her critical discourse raises the issues of marginal subjects such as the place of the subaltern women in the society and their empowerment. Though the people could surpass the colonial rule, they are not actually free from its influences and power structures.

Spivak borrows the term 'subaltern' from Gramsci, to refer to the 'unrepresented group of people in the society' (55). In the Indian cultural context, the term 'subaltern' acquires more significance as the people have struggled hard for Indian independence. She prefers the term 'subaltern' as it encompasses the exact picture of the lower class people. India is a land of varieties and vitalities. It is divided into different states in the name of class, religion, language, ethnicity, gender and citizenship. In this scattered outlook, the condition of the subaltern is all the more pathetic. Spivak came to the forefront of literary circle with her celebrated essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?*. The essay vindicates the apprehensions of women in India who practice the widow-sacrifice known as sati. The practice of sati in the pre-independent India was considered as part of a barbaric culture by the Western World.

Spivak proposes a theory of subalternity in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?*. The crux of her theory is that, the subalterns cannot speak. The tenets of the theory became controversial as they were interpreted with false conviction. Spivak's theory of subalternity does not admit the concept that subaltern cannot talk. Spivak has attached a special significance to the term 'speak' in her essay. By speaking, Spivak means transaction between speaker and receiver. When the subalterns try to speak, the message that they try to communicate becomes totally distorted. It happens in a continuous process because others are not ready to listen to them. In this essay she vindicated the limitations of the subalterns, asking *Can the Subaltern Speak?*. By 'subaltern' Spivak means the oppressed subjects or more generally those of inferior rank (Spivak.283). She goes on to add that "In the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as 'female is even more deeply in shadow' (Spivak.287). Spivak concludes the essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* by reiterating her standpoint that the subaltern cannot speak. Spivak's statement is actually a one stop answer for all the questions. It is an outcome of her lifelong search for truth and it is being formulated on the basis of socio-cultural backgrounds.

In the essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak takes various issues related to sati, the practice of widow self-immolation. In this essay Spivak reiterates her standpoint that 'subaltern cannot speak' (Spivak.284) and the condition of the woman is even more complicated. It was the finest example to support the argument that the subaltern women didn't get the opportunity to transact their ideas and convince the society about their dissenting voice. Though women obeyed the whims and fancies of their men, they had a voice within themselves, a voice of dissent and disapproval. All women who became victims of patriarchal violence and atrocities had something to say or they wanted to make their position clear whether they were for or against a

proposition. The historian failed to record the voice of dissent and especially that of the subaltern women. It would be now very difficult to recover the dissenting voice of the subaltern and the case is further complicated as they lost between colonial power structure and the Hindu religious codes. The British government put a ban on the custom of sati, but as a result of that several women who could have died a cruel but quick death when husbands died now have to face an agonizing slow death. The communication that takes place between a subaltern and a non-subaltern is actually lost due to the element of noise. The element of noise is influenced by the racial, cultural and socio-economic factors. The goal of communication is achieved only when the desired message is conveyed to the receiver. Though the sender tries his / her level best, the communication is interrupted by the element of noise.

Spivak's controversial statement the 'subaltern cannot speak' implies a lot of inner meanings. The subalterns have the capacity to articulate things well and they can go to any extent so as to make their stand clear before the authorities. The real problem lies in the receiver as she/he is not ready to listen to the sender of the message. The receiver is neither interested in listening to the message nor in a position to decode the message of the sender. The element of noise distorts the proper reception of the message and when a subaltern tries to speak, the dormant element of communication becomes a prominent one. It is due to the social and economic factors that exist within a region. The psychological context hardly exists when a subaltern tries to speak; as a result, the communicative system fails to achieve its target.

Changes passed outside and outdoors Subaltern Studies since their debut in 1982. How these internal changes are consequences of external changes is delicate to determine, once both inside and outside the group, subaltern subjects were claimed and reinvented constantly. In their earlier jottings the Indian collaborative substantially

shared in debates on nationalism and insurrection appealing, especially, to ideas of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci at this point, still, it was formerly gestured a extremity between State power and social movements. Throughout the 1980s, it is possible to observe this situation of extremity also in literal and political studies. There's a shift from studies of revolution and class struggles into the analysis of localized and particular resistance to the power of elites and countries (Ludden, 2002). According to Spivak, Subaltern Studies has its strength by locating the agent of this change in the figure of the 'insurrectionary' or 'subaltern'. With this, they brought hegemonic historiography to extremity and contemporaneously opened old debates between naturalness and knowledge, between structure and history. If seen in this way, the work of Subaltern Studies group constantly makes it possible to grasp that the conception conceit of the 'social textbook' isn't the reduction of real life to the runner of a book (Spivak.5).

The historical development of Subaltern Studies in India can be seen within this context. For the purpose of convenience, it can be considered into primarily two phases. In the first phase the emphasis (writings of Ranajit Guha, Shahid Amin, Gyanendra Pandey, Stephen Henningham, David Hardiman, Sumit Sarkar, among others) was on the struggle between the hegemonic elite and the suppressed subaltern. In this phase, the writings focused on the concerns of the lower, exploited classes and a criticism of the elite or the exploiting classes. The influence of Gramscian thought was immense in this phase as is evident in the writings of the scholars. In the second phase (writings of Partha Chatterjee, Gautam Bhadra, Gyan Prakash, Dipesh Chakrabarty, among others) the influence of postmodernist and postcolonial ideologies became the mainstay of subaltern scholarship. The subaltern line of historiography has been heavily criticized by scholars in the past. However, it can be reiterated that the Subaltern Studies marked



a definitive break in Indian historiography, shifting the focus from the history of the state/elite to the history of the people. The subaltern perspective represents the understanding of society through conditions of subordination of people belonging to different caste, class, age, sex, race, and so on. They attempt to present an alternative image of society from the perspective of the normally unrepresented masses.

The subaltern study is actually the revisionist historiography of peasant movements in post colonial India. The concept of the subaltern was developed as a Eurocentric method of historical inquiry to study the non-Western peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. But later these subaltern studies had turned from a model of intellectual discourse into a method of vigorous postcolonial critique. Today the term subaltern is used in the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, human geography, literary criticism, musicology, and art history. So today it is practiced in all areas of social science and aesthetic/imaginative literatures.

## Chapter Two

### Critical Reading Of The Novels

#### *Sea By Poppies And Lessons In Forgetting*

The rise of the Indian Writing in English is, at the onset, to be located historically. The first connection that we should be looking at is the introduction of the English language as a medium of instruction in India and the introduction of English literature as a subject in the Universities. Amitav Ghosh is one of the better-known Indian Writers writing in English today. Amitav Ghosh has brought the rigour of scholarship in novel writing. From the first book *The Circle of Reason* (1986) that he wrote to his latest work of fiction *The Glass Palace* (2000), a thorough research on the sociological and historical aspects of the subject he deals with has characterized his writing. A winner of Sahitya Academy award for his novel *The Shadow Lines*, he has traveled extensively to Egypt, Myanmar and Cambodia to research his books. His early experiences in childhood that took him all over South East Asia were also responsible in giving him a broader perspective on issues than one fixed in New Delhi. Unlike his glib contemporaries, Amitav is known for keeping his narrative stable and at the same time achieving the criticism of issues in an elegant way. *Sea of Poppies*, the first novel of Aitav Ghosh's *Ibis Trilogy*, has all the credentials of a major literary work. It is an historical novel where disparate character, trapped by the confines of class, caste, race. Religion, addiction or sexuality, fight for the opportunity to escape, transform and find independence.

*Sea of Poppies* tells the compelling story of how it is that in the ship *Ibis*, headed to Caribbean sugar plantations; small new worlds are forged, bringing together north Indian women, Bengali Zamindars, black men, rural laborers and Chinese

seamen. The novel closes with the Ibis in mid-ocean in a storm. Serang Ali, leader of the lascars, has abandoned the ship. Few key figures survive and watch from the deck the disappearance of the long boat. If Rushdie can be said to have revitalized the Indian novel in English with the 1981 publication of the magnificent *Midnight's Children*, Ghosh's fiction has over the years probed the unlit corners of the genre and brought it into powerful dialogue with other places, peoples and times.

Amitav Ghosh's career began in the experimental wake of *Midnight's Children* and the techniques it put into play: magical realism, satire, wordplay, mythology, allegories etc. one of the recurring themes in Ghosh's work is that globalization in terms of trade, migration and cultural contact is not new. Putting up a moderate stance, Ghosh believes that although European colonialism constitutes a great rupture in the histories of Asia and Africa, out of these tragedies communities were unmade and again made. *Sea of Poppies* is imbued by a deep commitment to human values. In this joint paper we propose to examine the underlying philosophy of Amitav Ghosh, in understanding the evolution of human society and to reclaim all that in our heterogeneous culture is valuable and ultimately indispensable.

The novel has raised several issues including the Zamindari system, caste hierarchy, gender discrimination, patriarchal rule, impoverishment, misery, exploitation of slaves, racial issues and so on. The author has discussed numerous themes with the presentation of more than a dozen characters, including Deeti, a widow, mother of Kabutri who eloped with her lower-caste lover to flee together, Kalua, a lower-caste leather worker, Raja Neel Ratan Halder, a Bengali Zamindar or Raja of Rakshali wrongly sentenced to a penal colony in Mauritius, Mr. Zachary Reid, an American seaman, Miss Paulette Lambart, the orphaned daughter of a French botanist, and others. The title of the novel is *Sea of Poppies* which clearly conveys the message that it is

about the voyage of the poppies where all happened along with their individual stories. Each came from a different socio-economic and class background, but they are all Jahaz Bhais on ivory. The two words are important here, sea and poppy. Sea gives an understanding of the passage (moving across the black waters) and poppy refers to the flowers that sprout from the opium seeds that were the very purpose of this sea voyage. Poppy therefore refers to the importance of the poppy for the long sea voyage. Under this pretext, the word poppy was used for the migrants on board the ship.

Ghosh has depicted the plight of women in the 19th century, which was worse during the colonial era. They were subdued and oppressed within both the patriarchal and zamindari systems. Deeti was herself a victim of male oppression and patriarchal violence in her husband's family. She suffered spousal rape at the hands of her husband, sexual assault at the hands of her brother-in-law, abuses such as chuddail or chuddailiya after her husband's death, and enforcement of the sati system where she was forced to die along with her husband. The character of Elokeshi who was a lover of Raja Neel Ratan was different. The Zamindars were entitled to enjoy multiple women for fun, lust and sexual desire, but eventually when Raja was arrested on a bogus case, she betrayed him upon learning that he had lost his property. On the other hand, Malti, the wife of Raja Neel Ratan, performed all the duties of a so-called good wife and mother. She was a bahu of a Zamindari family who was not allowed to speak in front of male heads. She was a silent spectator and a passive sufferer, and her condition was no better than Deeti's condition. Also the character of Taramony as Guru Ma from Baboo Nob Kissin is very interesting. Much younger than her husband, she led a widow's life of suffering and deprivation. However, Baboo Nob Kissin was so impressed with Taramony's spiritual knowledge and her devotion to her Lord Krishna. Both of them started living together in a small circle of devotees and people called them Ma, who gave them

spiritual instructions. This is another relationship between a man and a woman showing their spiritual and pure love between a guru and a shishya. On the other hand, Ms Burnham and her daughter represent the mindset of British women who saw them as superior to Indians and everything that is part of Indian culture including language, dress, people, and food is seen as inferior. There were a number of characters like Heeru, Miss Paulette Lambart, Munniah and Sarju and so on.

The first in a trilogy, *Sea of Poppies* was positively received by the Booker Jury for its compelling story told against an epic historical screen, skillful use of multiple languages, and a memorable cast of characters. *Sea of Poppies* tells the story of how it is the ship *Ibis* sailing to the Caribbean sugar plantations; small new worlds are being forged, bringing together North Indian women, Bengali zamindars, black men, peasants and Chinese sailors. It is the story of people whose destiny is being written by poppies, the British who forced opium cultivation on the farmers, the peasants' lives ruined, the people who were addicts and the poor factory workers, the fraud of the British, the ship that who transported opium and led the Indians into a life of slavery. *Sea of Poppies* is set in India in 1838. The East India Company, yet to be curbed from their excesses by the British Crown, amasses unimaginable wealth by cultivating opium and illegally exporting it to China. Small farmers were forced to devote their fields to opium production, and this caused widespread poverty and hunger as lands that once provided food were now swamped by the rising tide of poppies. In addition, the Chinese are determined to stop a trade that is rapidly eroding the economy by turning millions of them into addicts. When the Chinese rose up in their defense and banned the import of opium, the company retaliated by declaring war on China under the rhetoric of freedom. While the Chinese were being poisoned in the mid-19th century under the guise of the opium triangular trade, the poor Indian peasant actually suffered the burns

of that poisoning. The English Sahibs forced everyone to grow poppies instead of crops like wheat, dal and vegetables. Amitav Ghosh captures the sheer helplessness of Indian workers and peasants as the factories' growing appetite for revenue exploited and left them defenseless.

*Sea of Poppies* traverses the least traveled path of Indian colonial history by uncovering the shrewd business acumen of the British, who robbed India of its riches and Chinese their discretion by poisoning them with opium. A large group of characters in *Sea of Poppies* gather in Kolkata, a teeming city where numerous races and people of different faiths and beliefs live together. The Ibis, a former slave ship, is being converted to take a large group of Girmityas, or indentured migrants, to Mauritius (Islands of Mareech).

Infused with political undertones, *Sea of Poppies* reveals the hypocritical and dangerous mindset of the English of the time, who forced natives into subalterns in their own country. On a societal level, the message conveyed by the novel is enormous the Girmiyas who gather on the Ibis are abandoning their identities in terms of caste, religion, etc. and assuming a new identity of the oppressed; A new community emerges. Amitav Ghosh picks up on the English attitude towards religion when one of the characters in the novel says: Trade is Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is trade. It is a mammoth work by Amitav Ghosh, which contrasts the historical development of Indian society with the nuances of Indian politics. It's an apt commentary on colonialism, which, while damaging to Indian society, also has a brighter side. Colonialism has culturally and linguistically fused Indian ethos with European sensibilities; on a social level there was a synthesis of societies. In fact, it is a commentary on the socio-cultural development of Indian subaltern society. It is a saga of the struggle of the have-nots of colonial India. Amitav Ghosh has ventured into one of the ugliest territories in Indian

history. In this way, Ghosh exposes the modern reader to the colonial past of Indian society. This move into their past is nothing more than reclaiming what is essential to our existence.

Amitav Ghosh's work, like that of other major sub continental writers Tagore, Premchand, Senapati, Chughtai is imbued with a deep commitment to human values. In a world so palpably ravaged by greed and intolerance, this literature is certainly not a luxury, but a necessary reclamation of all that is valuable, possible, and ultimately absolutely essential in our heterogeneous culture. As *Sea of Poppies* comes to a satisfying conclusion, Ghosh leaves several doors open that suggest the direction he'll be taking with this sequel to the novel, which will no doubt continue with many of the same characters into the Opium War itself. Shortlisted for the 2008 Man Booker Prize nominations, this rich and exciting historical epic has something for everyone. Set in India in 1838, at the start of the three-year Opium War between the British and Chinese, this epic novel follows several characters from different walks of life who are linked through their personal lives on board the ship and more generally through their connections to the opium and slave trade. Deeti Singh, who as a young teenager is married to a man, whose opium addiction makes him an inadequate husband and provider, is forced to work alone in the family's opium field outside of Ghazipur, despite fearing her sadistic brother-in-law. Running out of options that make sense to her, she escapes and eventually joins the migrants aboard the Ibis. The Ibis, owned by Burnham Brothers, carries as one of her mates a young Baltimore seaman, Zachary Reid, who left America because his status as an octoroon has led to constant harassment from other American seafarers.

These two characters, Deeti and Reid, see life as it is, recognizing all of its cruelty but also seeing its potential, and their keen eye observations of life around them

vividly convey their cultures and the roles open to them. At the opposite end of the scale from Deeti and Reid is Benjamin Burnham, who owns the Ibis and is involved in the opium trade which his family controls in Ghazipur, fifty miles east of Benares. Ever since the slave trade officially ended, Burnham has kept the Ibis intact, simply converting it to transporting exiled prisoners and coolies. Amitav Ghosh has beautifully juxtaposed pun with sorrowness of the plot. When the ibis anchors for one last night in Indian waters, Ghosh describes this:

The last place from which the migrants would be able to view their native shore: this was Saugor Roads, a much trafficked anchorage in the lee of Ganga-Sagar, the island that stands between the sea and the holy river. The very name Ganga-Sagar, joining, as it did river and sea, clear and dark, known and hidden, served to remind the migrants of the yawning chasm ahead (65).

As the Ibis leaves Calcutta and heads across the Bay of Bengal, she carries indentured migrants, many of whom become slaves, and the seas darken and become stormy. As the ship rocks and conditions worsen, the ship soon becomes a microcosm for life on land, filled with tumult and unexpected twists of fate and each person's heart are laid bare. Everyone on board is fleeing from something, so intent on putting their problems behind them that they see no choice but to submit to the cruel living conditions and sometimes sadistic overseers aboard the Ibis. Life aboard the ship is as complex and subject to both cruelty and courage as those on lands have experienced, but as the ship calls for new ports in foreign lands, its occupants still see it as the only possible escape from theirs and her past problems.

Anita Nair is a prolific Indian English-language writer who has written novels, short stories, poetry, essays, children's stories, plays, travelogues and proofreading since 1997. She is best known for her novels *The Better Man* and *Ladies Coupe*. She is



a bold and no-nonsense writer. Her novels show the real lives of her characters. Her novels show the effect of social conditioning on women. They break the chains of social standards and do not confine themselves to the boundaries that limit women. It is evident that Nair breaks the chains of society by portraying her female characters. She never hesitates to speak the truth, no matter how bitter it may be. Your novels are the social document of the 21st century. The question she raises in her novel *Lessons in Forgetting* makes us reflect on the ideological basis of man's patriarchal role in traditional society and on the existence of an alternative reality. The novel describes how a woman must make painful decisions in order to assert and maintain her self-confidence. Despite their oppression, women choose to redefine their identity in the patriarchal social order.

*Lessons In Forgetting* tells the story of Meera, the protagonist, who lives in Lilac House with her grandmother Lily, her mother Saro and their two children Nayantara and Nikhil. In the 1930s her father Raghavan Menon begins life in Calcutta. He falls in love with Charo, a Bengali woman, marries her and has a girl, Leela. Charo dies earlier, so Raghavan Menon sends Leela to Shantiniketan where a well-known Bengali director discovers her. She becomes a part of Hindi cinema as a famous actress by the name of Lily. She marries Sandor, a Hungarian painter. They live in Bangalore at the Lilac House that Raghavan Menon found for them. Saro is her daughter. She becomes independent and sees herself as a woman with unique tastes. She falls in love with her best friend's brother and marries him. They have one daughter, Meera, the protagonist of the novel. Saro's husband dies early and she seeks refuge for herself and her daughter Meera at Lilac House. After the death of her father, Meera has a tough few years that force her to lead a simple life. She never strives for big dreams:

“Meera never dreamed big dreams. She didn't want designer clothes, diamonds, or expensive vacations. Enough to keep a roof over your head and food in your stomach. Enough to maintain dignity and not ask reluctant relatives for temporary alms. Enough to live like them.” (41)

Meera's life changes when the Lilac house is chosen for a photoshoot. Giri, who is the film crew, meets her by accident and falls in love with her. He also becomes intimate with her and her family. Giri is influenced by the riches that lie ahead. To him she is a bride with social grace and a lovely old home. Giri, who is a calculating personality of his future predicament from the village, Palakkad has found a job for him in the corporate world but is looking for an opportunity to reach the zenith of life. He wants to forget the memories of his father in his yellowed banian and dhoti and the old run down house and his relatives. He wants to acquire the polished lifestyle. So he marries Meera, hoping to rid himself of the faded past. With this social status intention, he marries her, but she is unaware: he would be able to move on with Meera. At last he would be free of the yellowed past and the stench of the necessary. Be. Like the lilac house *Lair du temps* (37). She considers herself Hera, the Greek goddess, who sincerely awaits the love of her Zeus Giri. They have two children, Nayantara and Nikhil. He proposes that she be socialized and soon she becomes a cookbook author. Her life is entirely guided by him. Giri wants to start his own business to fulfill his dream, so he wants to sell the Lilac House. But Meera refuses it. He worries about his place in the corporate world and wants more than enough. So one day he leaves Meera at a party and disappears from her life, leaving her with two children and their mother and grandmother. After Giri's departure Meera's life becomes miserable which she shares as, “We may starve to death but it will be in gracious surroundings” (Nair.111). So she takes up a job as a research assistant to Jak, the cyclone expert. . Kitcha, also

known as JAK, Jayam Kondan Anantharaman Krishnamurthy, is the male protagonist of the story. After the death of his mother, he goes to the United States for his studies and later settles in the United States, also after marrying Nina, who belongs to Madras. They had a blessed life with two daughters Smriti and Shruti. JAK who was more interested in cyclone, spent most of his time in studying about cyclone and so he was summoned as the Master of 'Simulated cyclone'. As he was often busy with his research work of cyclone was not able to spend much time with his wife and daughters. This creates the lack of communication between the couple that made JAK and Nina to divorce and the two daughters were also separated where Smriti was taken care by JAK and Shruti by Nina.

Giri starts a new life and demands divorce. So Meera decides to give up her old identity of Hera as there is no Zeus in her life. She starts her second life as Giri does. She does not change anything, her hair, home, dreams, herself, as Giri comes in her life. Now, he has left her so she wants a change, which would give her feelings of new woman, "Now that Meera has known it again, she finds strength" (Nair.186). She learns to burden Giri less with the demands of fatherhood. So she takes the responsibility of her children. She attends party on her own. She does not need anyone with her. She does not feel awkwardness in the party, which Nair writes: "A woman by herself at a party is like a man by himself" (Nair.183). Her realization comes in the way of her decision to start the second innings of her life with Jak, "...she has become will wither and die forever. She wil be there for him, Meera decides"(Nair.325).

Anita Nair portrays Meera as someone who lives a meaningless life. She suffers a lot with no bad leadership for her family because she has no father and grandfather since they passed away. As she enters her married life, she feels very happy, but it doesn't last long. Although alive, he walks away from her without caring for his wife

and two children, facing so many difficulties leading their family. In this novel, most of the characters suffer from not having a life partner, even though they are married. Anita Nair has clearly worked out how two stories intertwine in one situation and shows how the female protagonist Meera suffers from various emotional stresses when her husband drives her desperately into loneliness. Unfortunately, she encounters another male protagonist, JAK, who has also been deceived by his wife. Although both meet the same destiny nature in married life, both carry different burdens to fulfill their roles, and so through Meera and Jak the novelist has portrayed very clearly the crisis and uncertain feeling of marriage in today's society.

Both *Sea of Poppies* by Amitav Ghosh and *The Lessons in Forgetting* by Anita Nair deal with issues of subalternity in Indian society, but in different ways. "*Sea of Poppies*" can be seen as a subaltern text because it represents the voices and perspectives of people who were historically marginalized and excluded from the dominant narratives of Indian history. The novel portrays the lives of characters from various backgrounds, including peasants, sailors, and opium addicts, who are often overlooked in traditional accounts of India's past. Through these characters, Ghosh offers a critique of colonialism and its impact on Indian society and culture, showing how it disrupted traditional ways of life and created new forms of oppression.

On the other hand, *The Lessons in Forgetting* is a more personal exploration of subalternity, focusing on the experiences of a middle-class woman who is struggling to come to terms with her family's dark secrets. The novel portrays the life of the protagonist Meera, who is dealing with the loss of her husband and her own sense of identity. Through Meera's story, Nair highlights the subaltern experiences of women in Indian society, particularly the ways in which they are expected to conform to traditional gender roles and sacrifice their own desires for the sake of family and

community. Overall, while these novels deal with issues of subalternity in Indian society, *Sea of Poppies* takes a more historical and sociopolitical approach, while *The Lessons in Forgetting* offers a more personal and psychological exploration of subalternity.

*Sea of Poppies* is a historical novel set in India during the Opium Wars of the mid-19th century. The book explores themes such as colonialism, slavery, migration, and identity. Ghosh's intricate storytelling weaves together the lives of various characters from diverse backgrounds, highlighting their struggles and triumphs in a complex, rapidly changing world. The novel is a vivid portrayal of the effects of imperialism on the lives of ordinary people, and offers insights into the complexity of cultural and linguistic identities. *The Lessons in Forgetting* is a poignant story that revolves around a woman named Meera who is grappling with the memory loss of her past. The novel explores themes of family, love, and loss. Nair's sensitive portrayal of Meera's struggles to remember her past and her journey of self-discovery offers a unique perspective on the human experience. The novel also deals with issues such as domestic violence, gender roles, and societal expectations.

Both of these novels are lauded for their rich and engaging storytelling, as well as their exploration of complex themes. *Sea of Poppies* offers a powerful critique of imperialism and its lasting impact on societies and individuals, while *Lessons in Forgetting* offers a nuanced exploration of the complexities of memory and the human experience. Both books are excellent examples of how literature can provide valuable insights into the world and human nature.

## Chapter Three

### Portrayal Of Subaltern In The Novels

#### *Sea By Poppies And Lessons In Forgetting*

Subaltern is an attitude that symbolizes the demoted as they have the powerlessness to intercede for the marginalized and their problems. New spellings of occurrence were introduced under the term Subaltern Studies. The subaltern was given the tendency to make them perceptible to the world. Their sufferings, pains and problems have appeared throughout history. Various writers had honest scripts to demonstrate the circumstances and their devastation through their own work. The respectful scholars of the Subaltern Studies Group filled in the gaps in history written by elites or the West through traits, recovering, rationalizing, and acknowledging the histories of non-elite, rulers, and the marginalized. The impression of others was integrated in order to understand them. This approach of integrating impression is required because, throughout history, views of self based on their own understanding have been represented to support others.

Ghosh deliberately brings subaltern characters into stories and reveals personal stories of these people. The marginalized characters help us see life, events and concerns from their point of view. It forces us to think about what is required of this world, creating an atmosphere of confusion and utter futility. It is the presence or absence of human values that ultimately determines the worthiness of a civilization order. In its absence, human activity is reduced to a mindless rush, with opposing impulses working to cancel each other out. The author seems to be saying that humanity has honed its abilities to manipulate the outer layer of reality, but on the inside it remains the same primitive being, selfish in design and painful in some ways.

The novel *Sea of Poppies* is an epitome of realism, set in the time of the Opium Confrontations, in which the lives of incompetent individuals are convincingly portrayed. The background of the novel relates to people's ordinary living conditions. White people always use the poor people around them to meet their own needs. It is evident in the case of Neel, Halder who encountered rude behavior from Mr. Neel. But this westernization should hypothetically be checked by the natives not attempting to conform fully to the customs of English and to regard themselves as equals to whites. Even in the Indian caste system, a slight eye communication with a person from a lower caste would portend badly for the day. Kalua expresses the vivacious character of a lower-caste leatherworker.

In *Sea of Poppies*, Deeti, as the main character of the novel, was alienated from the circumstance, which is the subservience of her husband and his family. She had been forced to marry her brother's boyfriend and served her husband's family as daughter-in-law and wife. In the case of Deeti's, her husband's family never showed her any respect. As with many Indian families and other Indian people, caste is number one in a relationship including Hukam Singh's family. Deeti was from a lower class than her husband's family and all family members are rude to her because of it. The only reason Deeti became Hukam Singh's wife because of Hukam is because of her brother's boyfriend. This not only justified but also because Hukam Singh has physically imperfect legs and only Deeti wants to marry him. Surprisingly, on her wedding night, she found something pathetic that changed her life forever. As a woman who was already familiar with the opium, she knew exactly what she smelled was opium. She was more believed when he showed her a box of opium that belongs to him.

“See-do you know what’s in here?”

“Afeem naikhe?” She said. “Isn't it opium?” (Ghosh, 2008:19).

Of course, she was shocked by the new facts, which she had never imagined before. In Spivak's words, the subaltern is a woman who has tried to be decisive in extremis. She spoke, but the women didn't hear her, don't hear her. Hence, she can be defined as a subaltern, a person with no lines of social mobility (Spivak.28). Deeti is a true representation of the subaltern, she couldn't speak or even ask her husband something she was wondering about. Why, for example, could he do this to her? Or why did he marry her? What is the reason? She likes the living statue in the human body. She feels everything, but her mouth just stays silent. Her hands are just wiping her tears and pretending to be a happy wife in front of her husband. Even she hates a man who likes to use opium, but she has no choice but to still be his wife. Deeti is the victim of the patriarchal system in India. She married at a young age for nothing in return. Indian culture allows its people to marry at a young age. She also married an unknown man and also an opium user, which makes her even more disappointed because she knew another lie from her husband.

That circumstance is depicted that Deeti is already being the subaltern from the first time she married with Hukam Singh. Besides that, she was a pure woman who never expected that her life will be so difficult. The main reason is that Deeti is the indigenous people while her husband is the elite people. These strata bring her in the between of confusion where she will be going after she married. The author focuses on almost all characters belonging to different social classes. The various events that occur in the characters' lives are interconnected. The novel is a commentary on the socio-cultural development of Indian subaltern society, a history of struggle of the marginalized group of Imperial India. Indians are forcibly employed in opium cultivation by British rulers. Amitav Ghosh in the book *Sea of Poppies* was successful in exposing the gross reality of the caste binaries that exist within the social structure.



*Sea of Poppies* presents the story of colonized India on the eve of the British attack on the Chinese ports known as the Opium War. Here, Amitav Ghosh describes a picture of different kinds of subaltern characters drawn from different corners of the planet- sailors, passengers, marines, a slaves, coolies, girmitis; indentured laborers to a state or space where just and normal laws . . . have . . . no hold ‘and submission and obedience’ (Ghosh.404). On their way to the plantation business in Mauritius, these characters have to experience sati, mutiny on board a ship, a court case, prisons, kidnapping, rape, beating, flogging and a miserable life like a dog.

The novel *Sea of Poppies* portrays the clear picture of Hindu caste system and traditional patriarchal society. In *The Sea of Poppies* Ghosh focuses the characters belonging to lower and marginalized levels of society. The different incidents that take place in the characters’ lives are interconnected. This is the most striking features of the writings Amitav Ghosh. Patriarch is set up of Indian Society in the pre-colonial period is beautifully portrayed in the novel. In *The Sea of Poppies* he has tried to show how women can be empowered so that they may become independent in the future. The story presents the vivid picture of plight of women during colonial rule. The suffering of a woman in Zamindar family and an agriculturist is nonetheless similar. Ghosh has represented women from every section of Indian society. The position of upper class women is not very different than woman of lower class. Women in the novel suffer from gender discrimination, class and caste structure. The writer says in this way Ghosh has dealt with spiritual love between god and a devotee. The present study focuses the people from lower rank and excluded from the mainstream of society. In the novel there are a number of characters, who groan under the British rule but Kalua is doubly marginalized. He was an untouchable and chamar by caste and that is why he

had to bear the burden of being lowest in the caste hierarchy and simultaneously became the victim of British colonial rule.

During the late 18th century, Afghanistan was the main producer and supplier of opium for Europe, but by the early 19th century, the period described in the novel *British Fortune Seekers in India*, the fertile banks of the Ganges were growing legumes and wheat were grown, once transformed into a sea of poppies. Despite orders from China to outlaw the opium trade, the refined opium had to be shipped to Canton. Eventually, they persuaded London to fight the Opium War by precisely denouncing China's restrictions on free trade. It adversely affected the lives of the Native Americans and made them serve poverty, hunger, etc. The marginalized section of society suffered most from the attitude of the British rulers. The novel begins in this time of crisis and depicts the eastern region of Bihar. It introduces Deeti, a humble pious lady, caring mother and efficient housewife, married to Hukum Singh, a crippled worker at the Ghazipur opium factory, and the unfortunate Deeti finds out that she was drugged with opium by her mother-in-law on their wedding night. So her brother-in-law could rape her and consummate the marriage in her barren husband's place. When her husband dies, Deeti sends her daughter Kabutri to stay with her relatives. Deeti is an ordinary village woman. She is one of the prominent characters in the novel. She suffers from gender bias since her childhood in the novel. In the first chapter of the novel it is told that due to colour of her eyes, she is called as "chudaliya, dainiya as if she were a witch: but Deeti had only to turn her eyes on them to make them scatter and run off" (Ghosh.5).

*The Sea of Poppies* is a novel related with the downtrodden people. The present study focuses the subaltern. This works can be studied in two manners: first the concept of subaltern as an pretentious exercise, kind of parallel exercise that existed during

colonial period but never taken note of, as meant by Subaltern Study Group. Ghosh in his works talks about the alternative histories and practices of people. Secondly subaltern as an approach that represent marginalized as they have the inability to speak and empowers them to represent the marginalized people and their issues. In this present study the Indian society with subalternity is exposing the reality of caste binaries existing within the social structure. However, the vision lies in investigating the full humanity of the dehumanized subalterns. Finally the author takes the ground to construct their identity that can enable them to make spaces in the main stream of caste based oppressive mechanism of social order. *Sea of Poppies* has taken the theme from the Indian history, real events of life. This work is about the story of the common man, who have been the sufferers to the maximum of these historical upheavals or political crisis have been taken as a subject of the fiction. These characters from the marginalized sphere are in the main lead of this stories. By providing the centrality to the marginal characters, Ghosh also answers the dilemma of the postcolonial intelligentsia regarding the ability of the subaltern to speak. He assumes the role of narrator of a narrative for himself who doesn't become the representative; but allows the representations of the subaltern group by the same group by providing them stage.

*Sea of Poppies* is steeped in dozens of main characters, including the son of an American slave, the orphaned daughter of a French botanist, and an Anglophile raja. But the majority on the board was Indian farmers from the opium-producing country, forced by famine or scandal to seek a new life elsewhere. Dedicated to reinvention, Ghosh's storyline focuses on one of these villagers, Deeti, a widow who takes another name and the low-caste of a new love as they escape together on the Ibis. Personalities like Deeti, who are only hinted at in the official reports, have occupied Ghosh for a long time. Ghosh shows interest in marginalized and silenced people. Ghosh rises to the

challenge of retrieving and presenting the history of subalterns in an integrated way.

With his skill he tried to summarize this topic and to raise the questions connected with it. He uses two methods to include the discourse of the subaltern scriptures. First, in his writings, both fiction and nonfiction, the figure of this marginalized group has taken center stage. Second, the stories and problems are interpreted as representing the problems of the subaltern class.

From a postcolonial perspective, the concept of subalternity has evolved from the concept of self and other. These are the constructions of the self to establish and maintain its hegemony over the other and to silence the other. The concept of the other is a vast and universal matter in which the self claims to be the most important and supreme and all others fall under the concept of the other. The concept of the other is highly complex and relative, which changes its meaning depending on the context. The self tries to dominate the other and tries to marginalize the other from the mainstream of life and they are treated as marginalized. Their contribution to the growth of society is nil. Edward Said a prominent scholar of post colonialism, identifies a European cultural tradition of Orientalism. Said in his book *Orientalism* mentioned the theory of identifying the East as Other and inferior to the West. Said emphasizes construction of binary division between the Orient and the Occident. He mentioned that West as self is considered to be the supreme the main source of knowledge and learning, while Said said “East as Other is represented as a place of ignorance, superstition and illiteracy (167). The Orient exists as static, ignorant and cut off from the progress of Western history. They do not have even the capability to represent themselves and hence west as being superior take the responsibility of presenting orients, Other in the form of literary text. These Others are essentially the marginalized group who have been seen as the downtrodden and mute for years. The notion of subalternity highlights the dilemma

faced by those who are assigned an inferior or secondary place in human society. In the *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh presents the character from lower class. One of the characters Zachery is presented as a representative of subaltern class. This line of book shows their dress and profession in this way:

“Zachery was dressed in his workday clothes, canvas trousers and the usual sailor’s banyan—a loose fitting tunic made, in this stance, of Course and faded osanaburg cloth. After weeks at sea his face was unshaven and his curly hair was grimy with grease, tar and salt” (18).

There are several characters in *Sea of Poppies* whose positions in society are constantly shifting. King Neel and his family can be mentioned here as they once became the center of power and society as the outcasts on the ship. Deeti can also be quoted here as the wife of a high caste man in the form of a woman is subaltern or victimized by marrying Kalua. The marginalized characters like Deeti, Kaula and Kabutri feel lot of challenges and difficulties due to lower caste and class which help us perceive life, events and issues from their point of view. The themes evoked in his works are in tune with the concerns of subaltern theory. A controlling theme running through the many strands of plot is the question of existence of subalterns belonging to two or more geographical areas to conflicting feelings of their own perception while writing history. In *Sea of Poppies*, Amitav Ghosh has exposed numerous problems of Indian women, such as double colonization, and, in addition to their power relations, also analyzes different relationships between male members of a patriarchal society and its female members. This novel represents one of Ghosh's writings, in which the footprints of the colonial powers and their impact on various areas of life of the colonized population, such as politics, economy and culture, are clearly visible.

From the above results, this study concluded that Deeti becomes the subaltern subject after her marriage. In her husband's family she has to face the patriarchy either in her husband's family or in the Ibis. This study finds that the circumstances around them make them a subaltern subject. She is a poor woman, not an intelligent woman and from the lower class. The main reason for this is that Deeti kept becoming the submissive in her life because the family was patriarchal and socially patriarchal. Although she tried to protect herself by escaping her sati with Kalua, they became the migrants in the Ibis. Then she got help from her friends, who lead similarly unhappy lives. Then they left the Ibis to find another better place. These ways are implemented in the system using subaltern, oppression, subservience, and patriarchy. Some characters in this novel have their own roles which represents the Subaltern approach as it done by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Most of them are victims that being the subjects who cannot speak what they want. The subalternity imposed within society led to two things. They reject patriarchy and experience alienation and humiliation. Through Subalternity, they show that subaltern is not always a weak people who can never speak for what they belong to. If it is hurt them so much, they will speak to get their own freedom beings. Also, patriarchy is not the wall that imprisons them from freedom. Patriarchy is just mindset from some people who have more power than others to oppress them. Moreover, the alienation and humiliation that they experience along their life make them got a new strength. They got something to be obtained for the rest of their life.

The present study focuses on subaltern in *Sea of Poppies*. The novel tries to depict the language of the subalternity too. The distinction of Ghosh's vision lies in investigating the full humanity of the dehumanized subalterns and he finally takes the ground to construct their identity that can enable them to make spaces in the

mainstream of caste based oppressive mechanism of social order. In this novel, Amitav Ghosh focuses not only on a group of individuals, but on a group that challenges all established concepts that dominate the common notion of India's past including colonialism and nationalism. Furthermore, Ghosh does not allow direct connection to a larger story or flashback in any anger or reaction of that nature. Ghosh is careful to avoid well-known characters from history, and looks to the fringes that may give him a better starting point for fictionalization and his own purpose. In this novel we look at a time when Ghosh is careful to avoid familiar characters from the story and takes a look at the fringe society that may give him a better starting point for fictionalization and his own end. In this novel we consider a time when the concept of nation itself is somewhat absent. The area that Amitav Ghosh focuses on goes even beyond the generalized subaltern that Ranajit Guha speaks of in his subaltern studies.

After reading *Sea of Poppies*, it becomes clear that, Ghosh with his minute observation of the particularities of Indian life has tried to define India in some concrete terms. At the same time, he finds it quite difficult to surmise the meaning of marginality, as in most cases the 'marginal' is seen to be taking important decisions. Today, contemporary Indian Writing in English rests on the critical and intellectual debates over sources, history, influences, formal aspects, narrative traditions etc. The expatriate Indian English authors like Amitav Ghosh, whose main literary language is English, find themselves in a privileged position to deal with such a situation. The present study explores the issue of subalterns pathetic condition to portray a fire of traditional ideas flamed by the patriarchal society in which all the desires and expectations of the women are burnt. It is a fire that does not allow the Indian women to live, to breathe, and to speak. Shortly the novel turned its focus to the Indian society,

its surroundings, political and social condition mostly to the subaltern people, who neglected by authority.

The novel *Sea of Poppies* is an epitome of realistic depiction set in the period of Opium confrontations in which the lives of inept person are portrayed persuasively. The background of the novel is drawn towards the common circumstances of the people. Whites always use the poor people around them to meet their own needs. The sea, the ship and the ibis form the background of the novel. The ship had been rebuilt for a new transport. But earlier it was used for transporting slaves. It was originally built in America as a blackbird to ferry slaves from Africa; it was renovated after the abolition of slavery. The refuge is sold to a British shipping company and business house, Burnham Bros, which has extensive interests in India and China.

*Sea of Poppies* depicts how Indians were supplied as coolies and left for Mauritius and other places as smallholders and agricultural laborers in colonial India. The portrait of the Bhojpuri woman Deeti, who came up with the idea of the ibis at the very beginning of the novel, is an emblematic example of such concerned peasants. The novel shows how, after losing her husband, who served in the opium factory and whose land was extensively used for opium plantations, Deeti agrees to die in her husband's funeral pyre, only to protect herself from her brother-in-law's lust for being taken by a man rescued from the lower class, Kalua, who secretly marries her and then takes her on the ship to become coolies in another country. With an unusually sharp eye, *Sea of Poppies* paints an emotional picture of the human destruction caused by British colonial rule and its perverse politics. Through remarkable historical developments, Ghosh looks at how these trends have shaped the lives of ordinary people. Rather than being bogged down in describing the civil intrigues of the opium trade itself, the novel focuses on generating its large cast of characters and allowing the story to tell itself



through their lives and stories shaped and shaped by socio-political influences forces beyond their control.

*Sea of Poppies* is wonderfully reminiscent by the sorrow, suffering, oppression, and most prominently, the displacement and alienation of migrant laborers. The fabric of immigrant lives was torn by the compulsions of colonial economic imperatives. Ghosh's contribution has been exposed by the inglorious history of the opium trade. It is an ancillary trade by migrant labour from India that the colonial enterprise even as late as the 1920s. This history is to be told, and Ghosh's novel becomes a noteworthy step in telling of this narrative. This narrative presumes to be an added resonance when the contemporary history is taken into account. Amitav Ghosh in the text *Sea of Poppies* was successful in exposing the gross reality of caste binarism that exists within the social structure. The specificity of Ghosh's vision lies in examining the full humanity of the dehumanized subalterns, and he eventually takes hold of the ground to construct their identities that can allow them to make room in the mainstream of the social order's caste-based oppressive mechanism.

Ghosh is careful to avoid familiar characters from the story and considers the fringe society to be able to give him a better point of fictionalization and his own end. In this novel we consider a time when the concept of nation itself is somewhat absent. The area that Amitav Ghosh focuses on is beyond the generalized subaltern that Ranajit Guha speaks of in his *Subaltern Studies* 1, 2. They are figures that do not belong to any theoretically constructed collective, but are part of a group that is excluded from all structures and form all contexts. This is a group equally influenced by colonialism. In this novel, Amitav Ghosh focuses not only on a group of individuals, but on a group that challenges all established concepts that dominate the popular notion of India's past

- including colonialism and nationalism. Furthermore, Ghosh does not allow direct connection to a larger story or flashback in any anger or reaction of that nature.

Anita Nair is popularly known among the women dramatist in the post modern writings. Although she doesn't want to categorize herself as a feminist writer, she still writes for women to raise their voice in society. She is one of the best personalities who tries to show the violence that women are subjected to, to fight back against it and to set an example for herself and the motherland society. In each of her novels, she makes women independent in their lives.

In the work, the female protagonist, Meera belongs to a upper middle class family and in spite of being born to a upper class she has to go through the cyclone in her life as she is born as a girl. In the beginning of the novel, Meera leads a beautiful life in The Lilac's house till a major change came in her life. The work revolves around the Lilacs' home, where Meera's big transformation takes place. She marries Giri, who came as a model coordinator to help film a movie, and falls in love with Meera, who sees her beauty. He also gets greed for the house of the lilacs, thinking that it belongs to Meera and decides to marry Meera. Giri is mistaken when he thinks Meera is the owner, but in fact the house is on a lease for her. Giri believes he can live a lavish life by marrying Meera and also considers selling the Lilacs' home

Meera is portrayed as a woman who submits to her husband after marriage and has destroyed all her dreams and takes care of her husband. She forgets herself and her identity while taking care of her husband. Giri, the husband, is portrayed as a man who disrespects his wife and also has a lust and greed only for her material needs. He doesn't even love his wife and has no attachment to her. Meera doesn't even raise her voice when she thinks her husband is wrong, listening to his every word like a typical woman. The depiction of the female figure shows the real life of a woman in Indian

society. Meera was completely dependent on Giri until she no longer recognized herself. She was unable to face the harsh reality of being thrown out of his life and betrayal by her husband after refusing to sell the Lilacs' home. Meera, a traditional woman, didn't see her potentialities until she became an dependent. She suddenly began to see her change after being left by her husband to take care of the family and household chores. Her husband was misperceived thinking that she was dependent on him and that he was being called back into her life. So he tried to scare her by leaving her alone when she disagreed with his decision and obliging her to listen to him. But Meera turns around, to his utter surprise. She learned to lead a life without depending on her husband. In her novel, Anita Nair sets a new example for women's society through the protagonist Meera, who completely forgets her identity by taking care of her husband and her family. She becomes totally dependent on her husband and submits to listen to her husband. Anita Nair shows the dark reality of society, in which many women can become independent but cannot because they remain dependent. In all of her novels, she elevates the voices of the subaltern and urges women to be strong and self-fulfilling.

*Lessons in Forgetting* is a story about women's quest to get ahead in life. They also shape their future themselves. As Prof. Jak's assistant, Meera becomes financially independent, adjusts her expenses and takes responsibility for her family. She decides to start a new life with Prof. Jak. Sarada becomes a teacher at school. She also becomes independent. She marries her colleague and starts a new life. Kala Chithi leaves behind her husband and a name after marriage, Vaidehi. She continues her life under her old name Kala Chithi. She cuts her hair which causes her weight. It shows her resistance to her suffering and her rise as a revolutionary. The novel ends with a new beginning and a lesson in forgetting how to move on with life. In short, Anita Nair writes about the

self-discovery of her female characters and their self-assertion. We cannot claim that we are living in a world free from slavery. But it seems as if we live in a liberated country, but in reality humanity meets various hardships and violations of social, political, economic and cultural criteria. As men are victims of poverty, exploitation, unjust inequality, inhumane atrocities, psychophysical abuse, and socioeconomic injustice, the world around us is ravaged by war, communal violence, imperial assault, and geopolitical turmoil. Therefore, the application of subaltern studies becomes relevant also lately. The subaltern approach defends all subalterns and serves as a spokesperson for those struggling with meaning and injustice.

## Conclusion

The Subaltern studies has a long history. From its inception to the present, the word subaltern as a concept has undergone several changes. It is designed to represent different levels of meaning with different themes and aspects. Empirically implies subaltern farmer. Structurally, it represents the insurgents and marginalized, while deconstructively embodying inferior groups of Third World countries. It's a Eurocentric term. But it's spreading all over the world. Today it is applied to all areas of human study. So, literature students should have a concept of subaltern studies. Poverty, caste, class, race, color, creed, religious and cultural superiority, gender, and governmental positions are all among the factors of diversity that cause discrimination.

Discrimination like this has been practiced all over the world. Present in all communities is the human predisposition to superiority and inferiority in human behavior and psychology. Literature has always been an impressive tool to voice human feelings and emotions, happiness and suffering. The subaltern theory speaks about the voices of the victims of discrimination as the subalterns of all forms of marginalization, degradation, and subversion of gender, class, caste, religion, indignity, disgrace, restriction, hostility, untouchability, poor peasants, laborers, widows, outcast female characters, particularly religious hypocrisy, poverty, a corrupted system, fear, power, greed, sexual domination, politics, child abuse, abandonment, epiphany, spirituality, a battle between male dominance, unemployment, religious riots, opposition to love marriages, child labour, colour discrimination, gender discrimination, racism, financial discrimination, feminine resistance etc.

The Subaltern theory is not limited or restricted to any caste, class, gender, race, colour, creed, or any country. It voices the sufferings of the victims of discrimination from all over the world. *Sea of Poppies* by Amitav Ghosh is a wonderful reminder of the grief, suffering, oppression, and most importantly, the displacement and alienation of migrant workers. The lives of the immigrants were torn apart by the constraints of the colonial economic imperatives. Ghosh's contribution was exposed by the inglorious history of the opium trade. It is a sideline of migrant workers from India that the colonial company was still doing in the 1920. That story needs to be told, and Ghosh's novel becomes a notable step in the telling of that story. This story assumes an additional resonance if one considers contemporary history. India becomes the place that continues to be the place of exploitation of the poor or workers forced to leave their homes or forced to travel to other states, even countries, in search of employment to meet their basic needs to satisfy. It is a note that almost two hundred years after the time when *Sea of Poppies* is set, the story of Deeti is played out again and again in the novel, with different names but a woefully familiar plot. As a subaltern historiographer, he focuses on setting up their voiced histories, commemoration serves as the primary source, and these voices evoke struggles and ambiguities in the subaltern's historical affiliation with the chosen individuals through the authority to exchange supremacy, and he also strives to complement the voice of Subalterns over are novels that affect and describe the lives and pains of subalterns. Abolishing the caste system and thwarting such political control can give freedom to subalterns when the government has a dominant power it should seek to use its influence in constructive ways. This is how Ghosh illustrates the lives and struggles of the subalterns in this novel.

*Sea of Poppies* portrays how Indians were resourced as a coolie and departed in Mauritius and other places as a small farmers and agricultural laborers in colonial India.

The ship also symbolizes corruption and slavery as it was built to serve as a 'blackbirder', a vessel to transport slaves. The formal abolition of slavery transforms the vessel into a 'carrier of girmityas', indentured labor. And the description of the ship first through the eyes of Deeti who feels its presence in mind, without even setting her eyes on it, renders cheeriness and uncertainty to it.

Ghosh critiques the structure of traditional Hindu society here, with its rigidity against inter-caste marriages, the professed superiority of the high-caste over the low caste, and exposes the multiple layers of subjugation prevalent in society. Ghosh also gives voices to women by introducing certain powerful characters like Deeti and Paulette Lambart, thus creating a sense of identity for women secessions. Paulette though being a white woman was suppressed by her step father Burnham, but she destroyed all the shackles and entered into the ship called Redruth, which is on its voyage to Botanical expedition. Ghosh as a prominent writer acknowledges about the importance of women in each and every aspect of the society.

Anita Nair possesses inspiration from her real life experiences. In *Lessons in Forgetting*; she talks about how women suffer in sociological system which has forced in a many ways to repress, humiliate and abuse. She raises some questions in her novel, makes the readers to think about the ideological ground of sociological role in the traditional society. The novel describes how a woman struggles for attaining success in her life. Two main characters of the novel Meera and J.A.K undergo many hurdles in their lives separately. When they meet each other, they try to find solutions to their problems and find solace in one another's arms by forgiving the people who have made their lives miserable.

Through the narration of the lives of the two characters, namely Meera and J.A.K, the novelist brings out the theme of forgiveness by describing various events

that happened in their lives. Meera faces an embarrassing situation when her husband Giri leaves her with their two children, mother and grandmother in the middle of the party and also disappears from her life. But Meera forgives him and takes the steps on her own to lead a respectable life. She is steady and careful in her new life. “She will be there with him, Meera decides. But to keep herself alive, she will need to drudge all the selfishness that lies deep within her. That alone will ensure that J.A.K does not swallow her up, as once Giri did” (Nair.365). In this novel, Nair shows two kinds of broken marriage relationships. The first, is about the one abandoned by her husband, and the second, one who is abandoned by his wife. The two protagonists of this novel are abandoned by their partners without having any valuable reasons. That is, Meera is abandoned by her husband Giri and Jak who is abandoned by his wife Nina. Both are helplessly living in the same situation. The novel reveals the effect of social conditioning of women. She has portrayed her protagonists who are economically independent but still they do not have control over their own life and even major decisions of their life are taken by others. In this novel, she tells how women suffer after getting married and without marriage. Whatever situation a woman is, she has to suffer a lot in the patriarchal society. *Lessons in Forgetting* is a story of real people in a real world but far from perfect country, where female infanticide still happens with impurity. It is also a story of forgiveness, redemption, and second chances. It is ultimately a story about individuals in deep crises together to offer succour to each other. It is ultimately a story told by an accomplished storyteller who may oftentimes touch upon stodgy topics and ultimately a story that deserves a chance.

*Sea of Poppies* by Amitav Ghosh and *Lessons in Forgetting* by Anita Nair are two works of literature that explore the theme of subalternity in different ways. In *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh portrays the subalterns as people who have been marginalized and



oppressed by the colonial powers. The novel is set in the 19th century, during the opium trade between India and China. The story revolves around a group of characters from different social backgrounds who come together on a ship, the Ibis, and embark on a journey to Mauritius. Through the characters' experiences and interactions, Ghosh explores the power dynamics between the colonizers and the colonized, and the ways in which the subalterns resist and subvert the dominant order. One of the main subaltern characters in the novel is Deeti, a peasant woman from a village in Bihar. Deeti is forced to become an opium addict after her husband's death and is sold to a British trader. However, she manages to escape and joins the Ibis, where she meets other subalterns such as Zachary Reid, a mixed-race sailor, and Ah Fatt, a Chinese indentured laborer. Together, they challenge the oppressive social and economic structures that have kept them subjugated.

In *Lessons in Forgetting*, Anita Nair also depicts the subalterns as people who have been marginalized and oppressed by the dominant culture. The novel focuses on Meera, a woman who is struggling to come to terms with her past and her present. Meera is a successful writer who is haunted by the memory of her daughter, who died in a tragic accident. As she tries to uncover the truth about her daughter's death, she discovers the lives of other subaltern characters, such as J.A.K. Menon, a retired police officer who is trying to find his estranged daughter, and Jaison, a transgender woman who is fighting for her rights.

Overall, both *Sea of Poppies* and *Lessons in Forgetting* represent the subaltern as people who have been marginalized and oppressed by the dominant culture. They also highlight the ways in which the subalterns resist and subvert the dominant order, and how their struggles are intertwined with larger social and political structures. In *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh portrays the subaltern as a group of people who are oppressed and

marginalized by the colonial system. The novel presents a diverse cast of characters from different social backgrounds, such as peasants, sailors, and opium addicts, who are all struggling to survive under colonial rule. Ghosh's portrayal of the subaltern is nuanced and complex, as he presents them not only as victims but also as agents of their own fate. Through the characters' stories, Ghosh exposes the brutality of colonialism and the ways in which it disrupts traditional ways of life, leading to the exploitation and oppression of subaltern groups. In *Lessons in Forgetting*, Nair portrays the subaltern in a more personal and intimate way. The novel focuses on the experiences of Meera, a middle-class woman who is struggling to come to terms with her own identity and family history. Nair portrays Meera as a subaltern figure who is caught between the expectations of her family and society and her own desires and aspirations. Meera's story is one of personal struggle and self-discovery, as she tries to assert her own agency and find her place in the world.

Meanwhile, both novels present a critical and nuanced portrayal of the subaltern in Indian society. While *Sea of Poppies* takes a broader historical and sociopolitical approach to the portrayal of the subaltern, *Lessons in Forgetting* offers a more personal and psychological exploration of subalternity. Nevertheless, both novels highlight the struggles and experiences of those who are traditionally marginalized and excluded from dominant narratives of Indian society.

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**UNRAVELLING PSYCHOANALIC ELEMENTS OF THE MOVIES**

***SHUTTER ISLAND AND INCEPTION***

**A Project Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the**

**Degree of M.A in English Language and Literature of Kannur**

**University**

**SARGA K M**

**REG. NO: C1PAEN1712**

**2021- 2023**

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**DON BOSCO ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGE,**

**ANGADIKADAVU**

## **BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **Unravelling Psychoanalytic Elements of the Movies Shutter Island and *Inception*** submitted to Kannur University in partial fulfillment of the requirement of M.A. Degree in English Language and Literature is a record of bonafide study and research work carried out by **Sarga K M** under my supervision and guidance and no part of this work has been presented earlier for the award of any degree, diploma, title or recognition.

**Fr. Jaison Anthikkat**

**Mr. Sarath Krishnan**

**Head of the Department**

**Research Guide**

## DECLARATION

I, **Sarga K M** hereby declare that this dissertation entitled **Unravelling Psychoanalytic Elements of the Movies *Shutter Island* and *Inception*** is a record of original work carried out by me for the award of M.A. Degree in English Language and Literature of Kannur University, and it has not been submitted to any university for the award of any degree or diploma.

**Angadikadavu**

**Sarga K M**

**01-05-2023**

**C1PAEN1712**

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## INTRODUCTION

“Movies touch our hearts and awaken our vision, and change the way we see things. They take us to other places; they open doors and minds. Movies are the memories of our lifetime; we need to keep them alive.”

-Martin Scorsese

Film, or cinema, basically means moving images –images of time, space, sound and story, has enjoyed tremendous popularity ever since its first appearance in Europe and America in the last part of nineteenth century. The film industry has grown rapidly due to people’s interest in making and especially, watching films. It became a major source of entertainment and a greatest medium of expression the world has ever known. Film is not just a means of entertainment. It is an art “the seventh art,” as UNESCO has declared it. And just like any other arts, film is shaped not only by political, philosophical, economic factors, but also by its technology. Novel experienced rapid growth due to the invention of printing technology as the drama stage evolved from the Greek outdoor amphitheatre to the contemporary soundproof proscenium stage. In the case of film, this was the evolution of photography into computer technology. Still, unlike other arts, film is a team effort; There is no person to take the credits. There are directors, screenwriters, actors, sound engineers and graphic designers, art directors, location manager etc. These people work in accordance with their responsibilities. Her work is an art in her sense; and their artistic work under cinematographic aspects determine the quality of a film.

The history of film starts a bet settlement by Edward Muybridge. They found out that rapid succession of images can create moving pictures. The factors influenced this illusion of motion and that is the core of both motion pictures and television.

1. The phi- phenomenon: that explains why, when you view a series of slightly different still photos or images in rapid succession, an illusion of movement is created in the transition between the images.
2. Persistence of vision: which explains the intervals between the successive images merge into a single image as our eyes hold one image long enough for the next one to take its place. Actually, there is nothing moving in motion pictures. It is an illusion based on these two phenomena.

According to popular history, it was the Lumiere brothers (Auguste Lumiere and Louis Lumiere) in France who first devised a projector that could show motion pictures on a screen for an audience. They call their invention “cinematographe”. In 1895, they started producing a series of short films as in really short 30 to 60 seconds. It was on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1895 that a package of ten short films were screened for the first time in the history of cinema to a group of audience in Hotel Grant Café Paris charging as one franc as admission fee. The total duration of the programme was 20 minutes and they are called fathers of motion pictures. They made around 100 of short films called “early actualities.”

Hollywood considered to be the oldest film industry. Hollywood is defined as the system of the US entertainment industry revolving around the following six major companies that are part of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA): Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, Universal City Studios, and Warner Bros. Hollywood movies seek to build a national image characterized by freedom, equality, prosperity and other positive aspects. Concepts such as freedom and equality are reinforced through storylines. Hollywood, of course, is not synonymous with

filmmaking in the United States. Before the early 1910s, American filmmaking was mostly New York-based, and specialized in the production of short films. Specular epics which took advantage of new widescreen processes had been increasingly popular from the 1950s onwards. Since, then American films have become increasingly divided into two categories: blockbusters and independent films. Studios have focused on relying on a handful of extremely expensive releases every year in order to remain profitable. Such blockbusters emphasize spectacle, star power and high production value, all of which entail an enormous budget. Blockbusters typically rely upon star power and massive advertising to attract a huge audience. Hollywood and the United Kingdom are connected via the American industry's use of British source material, an exchange of talent, and Hollywood's financial investment in British facilities and productions. The American studios have had their own bases in the UK in the past, such as MGM-British, and Warner Bros.

Cinema and psychoanalysis were born around the same time. They share a common historical, social, and cultural background shaped by the forces of modernity. Psychoanalysis represents a unique approach to analysing psychological theories. Providing therapies focused on treating mental disorders through investigation. In the connection between the conscious and unconscious elements of the psyche. The psychoanalytic process of therapeutic care involves using various techniques to bring repressed fears and inner psychological conflicts to the surface for further analysis. And interpret them while offering unique approaches to overcoming internal struggles for improved well-being. The same thing is represented through the characters in psycho-thriller movies and is a popular movie genre. The directors try to unravel the dark side of human psyche by creating suspenseful scenes and hold the audience at the edge of their seat. The early new Hollywood example of the psycho thriller movie is *Psycho* by

Alfred Hitchcock; the master of suspense. In Contemporary Hollywood famous auteur Martin Scorsese came up with Freud's idea of psychological disorders such as schizophrenia, delusion and hallucination of the main character Teddy in his film *Shutter Island*. At the same year eminent filmmaker Christopher Nolan directed his new project named *Inception* became a ground breaking movie in American film industry. The film is noted for his use of complex plot and exploration of the subconscious mind. David Fincher is known for his dark and cerebral film like *Fight Club* and Darren Aronofsky known for his visually stunning and psychologically intense films like *Black Swan* and *The Fountain*.

The major themes of these movies are mind games and manipulation, paranoid and suspicion; characters who become increasingly paranoid and suspicious of others, often leading to heightened tension and suspension. Identity and memory, obsession and stalking, psychological trauma, revenge, supernatural or paranormal elements, power and control from the authority etc.

## Chapter one

### Theoretical Overview

“Turn your eyes inward, look into your own depths, learn to first know yourself”

-Sigmund Freud

Psychoanalysis is one of the modern theories that are used in English literature. It is the theory that regarded as a theory of personality organization and the dynamic of personality that guide psychoanalysis. It is known that the closest connection between literature and psychoanalysis has always been deployed by the academic field of literary criticism or literary theory. Psychological interpretation has become one of the mechanisms to find out the hidden meaning of a literary text. It also helps to explore the innate conglomerate of the writer's personality as factors that contribute to his experience from birth to the period of writing a book. The goal of psychoanalysis was to show that behavior which was caused by the interaction between unconscious and consciousness.

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century making the beginning of modern psychology and with the pace of this psychology the psychological analysis of literary text evolved. This method of critiquing used the concepts advocated by noted sociologist, including Carl Jung, Alfred Adler and Otto Rank and above all Sigmund Freud. But very soon it expanded in to account for many expanded developments and practices in the history of civilizations including warfare, mythology, religion, literature, and other arts.

Psychoanalysis started from the medical profession. The idea of psychoanalysis revolves round the concept that people's actions are determined by their prestored ideas of the recurrent events. Historically psychoanalysis is one of the most influential methods of psychotherapy. The contributions of psychoanalysis to psychotherapeutic

and counselling theories and practices are enormous. The main ideas of psychoanalysis have been instrumental in the development of many therapeutic methods that followed. Concepts such as unconscious, transference, and dream analysis continue to play a very prominent role with many clinicians who do not consider themselves psychoanalysts.

This has been seen as a form of therapy which aims to cure mental disorders by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind. It examines the articulation of our most private anxieties and meanings to culture and gives us a perspective on them as cultural formations. This theory was propounded in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by Austrian Neurologist Sigmund Freud. He was originally a medical man who was engaged in the study and treatment of patients in his clinic. His long devotion to his sector makes him realize and he observed mental disease of his patients. Gradually he was more interested in the study of psychology of the unconscious mind. Freud suggested our mind has three distinct regions. On the basis of his first discoveries concern the psychology of psychoneurosis, dreams, jokes and what he called the psychopathology of everyday life, such as slip of tongue, of the pen. The second is the system of pre-conscious and a third a system of conscious. His ideas were first presented in 'The interpretation of Dreams' (1900).

Freud's theory, introduced at the turn of the century, offered a radical new approach to the study and treatment of "Abnormal" adult behavior. In earlier studies, behavior was dismissed and instead viewed as a biological explanation of "Abnormality." Freud's model's novelty was that neurotic behavior is not random or meaningless but goal-directed.

The unconscious is the part of the brain that lies outside of the somewhat vague and porous boundaries of perception and is formed in part by the suppression of that

which is too painful to remain in consciousness. Repression is distinguished from sublimation by Freud, which is the rechanneling of drives by that cannot given a suitable outlet. The unconscious also contains what Freud refers to as the laws of change. Repression and sublimation are based on these principles. In general, the unconscious performs the logical function of making the connection between childhood experience and adult behavior understandable.

Freud referred three aspects of the psyche, Id, Ego, and Super-Ego. Id refers to a selfish, primitive, and childish pleasure- oriented part of the personality with no ability to postpone progress. Id is based on pleasure principle or it wants whatever feels good at time, can be a store house of biologically based urges: the urge to eat, drink, eliminate, and especially, to be sexually simulated. The sexual energy that underlies the urge is called the libido. A child's behavior is id and he is longing for accomplishments of his needs by avoiding the societal norms. The second part of the personality will begin to emerge over the next three years as the child interacts more with the world. Freud called this part the ego. It is based on a real-life example and it recognizes that other people have needs and wants, and that being impulsive can hurt us in the long run. Ego stands for the moderator between the id and super-ego, who seeks compromises to pacify both. It can be thought of as our "sense of time and place." Ego works based on the reality principle. The super-ego develops the age of five, or the end of the phallic stage of development. It is the moral component of the personality, and it arises as aparent's moral and ethical constraints. Many associate the super-ego with the mind, since it dictates our conception of right and wrong. According to Freud, the ego is the most flexible in a healthy person so that it can be satisfy the needs of the id, not upset the superego, while is still taking into account the realities of every situation. If the id becomes too strong, the impulse and self-gratification take over the person's life.



The person would be conditioned by rigid morals, be judgmental and unbending in his or her interactions with the world.

Freud proposed three levels of consciousness, or awareness: the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious. The vast majority of our emotions, thought, feelings, and impulses that we experience in our lives are not available to them at a conscious level. At the conscious level, we are aware of the certain things around us and of certain thoughts. At the subconscious level are memories or thoughts are easily available at moment of reflection. The information such as our telephone number, some childhood memories, bestfriend's name is stored in the preconscious. In contrast, the unconscious contains memories, thoughts, and motives which we cannot easily call up. All of the id is unconscious; the ego and super-ego include material at all three levels of consciousness. The unconscious is so large, and because we are only aware of the very small conscious at any given time, this theory has been likened to an iceberg, where the vast majority is buried beneath the surface of the water. The water would represent everything that we are not experienced and that has not been integrated our personalities, referred to as the nonconscious.

The unconscious is only one component of the equation. Freud also believed that everything we are aware of is stored in our conscious mind. Our consciousness makes up a tiny percentage of who we are. In other words, we are only aware of a small portion of what makes up our personality at any given moment; the bulk of what we are is buried and inaccessible. Preconscious is not present in our conscious awareness. It's just below the surface. Why do thought and emotions became unconscious? There are many responses, but one that becomes a counter piece of Freud's theory is summarized by the term repression. We repress, or banish from consciousness, ideas, feelings, memories, or motives that are especially disturbing, forbidden, or otherwise

unacceptable to us. The process of repression is itself unconscious and automatic. We do not choose to suppress an idea or impulse; it just happens, when the idea or desire is so painful and anxiety-inducing that we must escape it. In such situations, our fear triggers repression, and the unacceptable content is buried in the unconscious. The repressed material is usually something that contrasts painfully with our moral values or self-image.

Unconscious process also figured prominently in Freud's ideas about dream and "accidents." He perceives dreams as disguised manifestations of id motives, and he described dreams as "the royal road to the unconscious." In everyday life, he said, unconscious thoughts and forbidden impulses are revealed by accidents and by slips of the tongue or the pen. In his theory of child development, Freud describes a succession of stages revolving around body zones. According to his theory we have an inherent desire to seek pleasure from birth, especially through stimulation of the body parts that are sensitive to touch: the mouth, the anus, and the genitals. If a child's needs at one of the psychosexual stages were either unsatisfied or over satisfied, fixation occurs. That is, the child would maintain an attachment to an old stage even after moving on to a new one. As a result, behavior patterns and problems from the fixated stage would persist, often into adulthood.

Oral stage (birth to about age 1) refers to the infant obtains sensual pleasure first by sucking and later by biting. Feeding and contact with the mother, mouthing new objects, and even relief of teething pain by biting all provide oral pleasure to the child. A baby given too little opportunity to suck, or made anxious about it, may acquire an oral fixation which, in adulthood, may foster an excessive oral behavior. For example, "taking in" in concrete forms such as smoking or in psychological forms such as

dependency. Fixation during oral biting stage may produce a critical, “biting” personality.

In anal stage (ages 1-3) occurs when parents are toilet training their children and teaching them to avoid prohibited behavior connected with excretion. In this stage the region around the anus becomes highly sensitive to the stimulation of “holding on” and “letting go.” Toilet training is ordinarily the children with authority and the first time the id be brought under control of the emerging ego. Psychoanalytic theory holds that the first part of the anal stage involves pleasure from expulsion of feces; fixation at the later substage results in excessive compulsiveness, over conformity, and exaggerated self-control.

In the phallic stage (ages 3-5) psychosexual development Freud believed that genitals become the major focus of the sexual excitement in the phallic stage. At this time children develop sensual feelings toward the parent of the opposite sex. Freud called these thoughts and feelings in boys the Oedipus complex. In girls, he called the thoughts and feelings the Electra complex after Agamemnon’s daughter, who arranged for her mother to be murdered. The boys desire for stimulation of penis is associated with his attachment to his mother. And he comes to desire her in a sexual, or at least a sensual way. Eventually, the boy becomes fearful that his father knows of these feelings and will be furious. He fears retaliation by his father and he fears castration. In order to cope up with his fear the boy began to construct psychic defenses called the defense of *identification*-the boy tries to become like his father. It is through the identification in the phallic stage that the boy’s superego begins to form.

For the girl, the sequence begins with an erotic focus on her father. She experienced “penis envy” after she noticed the absence of genital organs of her father

and brother have. She suspects that she may actually have been castrated by her mother; this makes her angry and she comes to resent and devalue her. Girls develops her superego by behaving like her mother and incorporating her values.

Freud's groundbreaking work *Interpretation of Dreams* introduced the term "Oedipus complex." According to him, the term refers to a desire for sexual contact with the parent of the opposite sex, with results in a sense of competition with the parent of the same sex. Which is a critical step in the normal developmental process and the complex term was actually derived from the name of a Greek mythical figure. Oedipus, the son of king Laius and queen Jocasta of Thebes, killed his father and married his mother unconsciously, which was determined by chance, according to the writer and people of that period. This event in Oedipus' life was caused by the sexual tension between him and his mother, according to Freud. He attributed the Oedipus complex to children aged three to five on the basis of this tale. He believes that all human activities are influenced by sex or by the instincts, which in his opinion are the psychological representations of physical needs.

The Latency period (6 through puberty) was not considered by Freud to be very important to the development of personality. As the child learns more about the world, sexuality is largely repressed and the ego expands. Puberty marks the beginning of the genital stage, when mature heterosexual interests appear. These are three major sources of sexual arousal during this period: memories from early childhood periods, physical manipulation of genitals and other erogenous zones, and hormonal secretion.

One of these is the notion that people use defense mechanisms to reduce their anxiety and guilt. Psychoanalytic theory holds that because of the id's unconscious demands are instinctual, infantile, and amoral they must often be blocked by the ego

and superego. From these anxiety and guilt are aroused. The person then seeks ways to protect the ego from this anxiety and guilt by setting up defenses. Many psychologists do not agree with Freud's view that defense mechanism originate in conflicts among the id, ego and superego. However, many do agree that these mechanisms account for some of the ways people cope with their problems.

Repression is fundamental technique people use to allay anxiety caused by conflicts. It is an active mental process by which a person "forgets" by "pushing down" into the unconscious any thoughts that arouse anxiety. In terms of psychic energy, repression is an expensive defense mechanism. The unconscious memories or urges continue to seek expression and may emerge form of "accidents," "slips" or neurotic symptoms.

Reversal of motives is another method by which people attempt to cope with conflict. A motive that would arouse unbearable anxiety if it were recognized is converted into its opposite. If people are too modest affectionate or they are against alcoholism, homosexuality or child abuse, it is possible that they are unconsciously harboring the opposite feelings. Thus disguised, the unwanted motives can be controlled.

Blaming others or projection, is a way of coping with one's unwanted motives by shifting them on to someone else. The anxiety arising from the internal conflict can then be lessened and the problem dealt with as though it were in the external world. Carried to the extreme, projection is the mark of a behavior disorder known as paranoia. People with this disorder may project their own unacceptable hostile feelings about others into a whole system of thinking in which they feel that others are out to get them.

This defense mechanism substitutes an unacceptable conscious motive for an unacceptable unconscious one. We “make excuses,” giving reason different from the real one for what we are doing. Rationalization is not lying: we believe our explanations. Something we cannot get becomes something we did not want anyway. It is a common mechanism we all use to bolster our self-esteem when we have done something foolish.

Related to rationalization is intellectualization, which involves reasoning. In intellectualization the intensity of the anxiety is reduced by a retreat into detached, unemotional, abstract language. Professionals who deal with troubled people may intellectualize in order to remain helpful without being overwhelmed by sympathetic involvement. Temporarily separating emotional and cognitive components sometimes helps the individual to deal with parts of an experience when the whole is too much to handle.

Indisplacement the motive remains unaltered but the person substitutes a different goal object for the original one. Often the motive is aggression that for some reason, the person cannot vent on the source of anger. He expressed his true anger to something or someone else which he cannot express directly. It is an unconscious defense mechanism, which caused temporary or long-term reversion of the ego to an earlier stage of development. It is typical in normal childhood, and it can be caused by stress, frustration, and traumatic event. Children usually manifest regressive behavior. Regression in adult can arise at any age; I am caused by insecurity, fear, and anger.

It is the highest of ego defence; consists of a redirection of sexual impulses to socially valued activities and goals. Freud believed that much of our cultural heritage-literature, music, art is the product of sublimation. He also believed that satisfactory

sublimation could only be achieved by an individual whose sexual impulses were being at least partly gratified and whose ego was healthy and mature.

The free association method requires the patient to say everything that comes into consciousness. It allows; indeed, it demands that patients talk about everything and anything that occurs to them without restraint and without any attempt to produce a logical, organized, meaningful discourse. The role of the therapist here was a passive one. The analysis of dream is not a separate method from that of free association; it is a natural consequence of the instruction to patients that they talk about everything that comes to their minds. Freud considered these dreams and the accompanying free associations to them. As result of this insight, which he tested on his own dreams, Freud formulated the famous theory that the dream is an expression of the most primitive workings and contents of the human mind. The primitive process that creates the dream Freud called the primary process. The primary process attempts to fulfil a wish or discharge a tension by inducing an image of the desired goal. Because the defences are not vigilant during sleep, it is easier to negotiate a compromise expression of an unconscious wish. That compromise takes the form of a dream. Dreams thus serves two functions. First, they serve as the guardian of sleep for the dreamer by disguising wishes whose traumatic content otherwise would force him or her to wake up. Second, they offer the analyst a royal road to the unconscious.

A dream is not jumbled and haphazard congeries of mental phenomena, but a disguised representation of highly significant physical processes with a very clear meaning, although in order to appreciate this meaning it is first necessary to translate the manifest content of the dream into its latent content. The mechanism by means of which the manifest content has been formed from the underlying dream thoughts may be grouped under four:

First is the Condensation, which means every element of the manifest's material represents several dream thoughts; as Freud puts it "over determined." It is easiest to observe, it caused due to the sense of alienation that the dream gives us. The condensation is affected in several ways. A figure in dream may be constituted by the mixture of traits belonging to more than one actual person, and then is called a "collective person." Many different ideas or concepts are represented within a single dream. The second is the displacement, it explains bizarreness of dreams, the remarkable inconsistency between the intensity of the affect and intellectual content. In a dream, a person may be terrified at an object and at ease in the presence of something that should be frightening. These two main mechanisms, condensation and displacement by which distortion occurs during the transition from latent content to manifest content. The degree to which a given dream appears confusing, strange, or nonsensical depends precisely on how these two mechanisms were work in the creation of the dream.

Freud wrote about dreams in many places, but most famously in his book "interpretation of dreams." The third stage is symbolism. According to him the number of things represented by dream symbols is not large. Human bodies, parents, children, siblings, birth, death, nudity, etc. However, the richest collection of symbols is reserved for sphere of sex life. The vast majority of symbols in dreams are sex symbols. The number three is a symbolic substitute for all male genitalia, while the penis alone is represented by long and upright objects such as sticks, umbrellas, and trees. The female genitals are symbolically represented by objects containing a space that can be filled with something, for example pits, caves, bottles, chests, mouths, and shoes. Wood and paper objects are symbols of women, while breasts are represented by apples, peaches, and fruits in general. The secondary revision gives the dream a certain order and clarity



and complements its content with a narrative sequence. Thus, the process of dream interpretation changes the direction of the dream work, from the level of conscious dream narrative back through the preconscious, beyond the confines of censorship, into the unconscious itself.

Freud used to regard Carl Jung as his direct heir. Jung's *analytical psychology* differed from Freud's in some very significant ways. One of the main differences between the theorists was that Jung considered childhood sexual development to be less important for adult adjustment than did Freud. He much focused on people's future-oriented goals, hopes, and plans. They had two different ideas about the nature of the unconscious. His childhood dreams, sometimes terrified one helped him to analyse the dream.

Like Freud, Jung believed that the mind has both conscious and unconscious levels. Contrary to Freud, Jung strongly asserted that the most important part of the unconscious does not come from staff personal experience, but from the distant past of human existence, a concept known as collective unconscious. Less important to Jung is consciousness and the personal unconsciousness. Jung explains about the personal unconscious and put great emphasis on the unconscious mind. Conscious images are images perceived by the ego. unconscious elements unrelated to ego. Jung's concept of ego is more limited than Freud's, self is not the whole personality but should be completed to the fullest. The main personality centre is fainting in a psychologically healthy person. The ego occupies a secondary place to the unconscious.

Unconscious originated from the deep ancestral past. They include the experience of distant ancestors with universal concepts such as Heaven, mother, water, and earth are passed down from generation to generation. These ancestral memories,

which Jung called archetypes are represented universal things in different cultures, as expressed in literature, art and dreams. Some of the common archetypes related to God, resurrection, devil, wise old man, mother, trickster and hero. This is his most original and controversial contribution to personality theory.

Jung disagreed with Freud on the role of sex. He believed that, sexual desire was not just sexual energy but general spiritual energy. But for him the propose of spiritual energy was to motivate the individual in a number of important ways, including spiritual, intellectual, and creative. It is also the source of an individual's motivation to seek pleasure and reduce conflict.

Alfred Adler's school of individual psychology created a chasm in the field of individual psychology dominated by Freud's psychoanalysis. Adler focused on a fully understanding of a person, and considered their internal and external factors. This is why he named his school personal psychology. The underlying psychological elements of neurosis is a feeling of inferiority. All infants have the feeling of inferiority and inadequacy as soon as they begin to experience the world. They are struggling to overcome their feelings of inferiority and Adler perceived that these struggles as the most basic life urge.

Inferiority complex: when someone fails repeatedly to overcome weaknesses or achieve some mastery that cause to the development of inferiority complex. The term now part of the everyday language. People tried to achieve mastery over the world. That extreme urge led to the superiority complex. Compensation and overcompensation help to overcome inferiority.

He gave close attention to the birth order of a child. First born children the traits of a guardian of law and order. They have high amount of personal power. Second born

children are often in the shadow of their older siblings. They constantly struggle to prevail under pressure motivated by the existence of their bigger brother. The youngest children face the state of inferiority. There are two types of them, one is most successful and most capable. Other is more unfortunate and he lacks self-confidence. In the case of an only child, he is an unfortunate one. They are too much dependent on their parents and seeking for attention all the time.

Karen Horney is an American psychoanalyst and also an early feminist. She took sharp issues with Freud on some of his views about “feminine psychology.” Horney developed neurosis theory; believed that neurosis is developed from basic anxiety caused by interpersonal relationships. She criticized penis envy.

## Chapter Two

### Exploring The Stories On The Screen

A film is a work of visual art that conveys concepts, narratives, sentiments, aesthetics, or atmosphere. This text format can also be viewed as a cultural artifact produced by cultures from all over the world. It is acknowledged as an important artistic medium and a source of entertainment. The visual characteristics of films give them a universal command of expression, and they are a source of effective visual education for citizens. In the modern era, the study of film has continued to thrive as a separated academic field, particularly in the Anglo-American region. Films have helped a variety of cinematic genres and forms to evolve since their discovery 100 years ago.

American cinema, consisting mainly of major studios (also known as Hollywood) as well as a few independent films, has had a significant influence on the global film industry since the early 20th century. The dominant style of American cinema is classic Hollywood cinema, which evolved between 1910 and 1969 and remains typical of most films made there to this day. The modern cinema is often credited to the Frenchmen Auguste and Louis Lumière, but American film quickly became the dominant force in the new field. Hollywood is the world's oldest film industry because it was here that the first movie studios and production companies were founded. It has inspired numerous national film industries and is the birthplace of several cinematic genres, including comedy, drama, action, the musical, romance, horror, science fiction, and the war epic.

Based on Dennis Lehane's 2003 novel of the same name, *Shutter Island* is a 2010 American neo-noir psychological thriller film that was directed by Martin Scorsese and written by Laeta Kalogridis. Scorsese's movie released by Paramount

pictures, falls under the genre of neo-noir psychological thriller movies. Film noir, which had previously prospered in the United States during the post-World War II era roughly from 1940 to 1960 is being revived in the form of neo-noir. The phrase "black film," which comes from the French "film noir," refers to ominous narratives frequently portrayed in a gloomy cinematic aesthetic. Similar to classic noir, but with contemporary themes, style, and visual components, is neo-noir. The thriller and psychological fiction genres are combined to create the psychological thriller. It is frequently used to describe books or movies that deal with psychological tales in a suspenseful or exciting environment. It is a subgenre of the larger thriller narrative structure in terms of context and convention, related to Gothic and detective literature in that it occasionally has a "dissolving sense of reality." It frequently focuses on the intricate and frequently torturous interactions between obsessive and compulsive personalities and is portrayed from the point of view of characters who are under psychological stress, revealing their warped mental perspectives. There are frequently elements of mystery, drama, action, and paranoia in psychological thrillers. Characters in psychological thrillers frequently have to battle with internal conflict. They might face death threats or have to deal with other people's deaths.

Christopher Nolan's movie *Inception* (2010) released by Warner Bros is a science fiction, action movie which is produced, and directed as a collaboration with his wife, Emma Thomas. Actor Leonardo DiCaprio plays a skilled thief in the movie who obtains information by penetrating his victim's subconsciouses. He is given the opportunity to have his criminal record cleared in exchange for implanting someone else's concept into the target's brain. *Inception* takes place in a world where the military has created a dream-sharing device that not only induces sleep but also connects

people's subconscious minds so they may share the same dream space. So, it came under the science fiction and thriller movie.

American director Martin Scorsese is renowned for his brutal, frequently violent portrayals of American culture. Scorsese started producing films in the 1970s, and his ambitious body of work helped him become one of the most significant directors of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Scorsese became one of the main figures of the New Hollywood era. He has received many significant awards, including an Academy Award, four BAFTA Awards, three Emmy Awards, a Grammy Award, three Golden Globe Awards, and two Directors Guild of America Awards. He received the 1997 AFI Life Achievement Award, the 1998 Film Society of Lincoln Centre Tribute, the 2007 Kennedy Centre Honour, the 2010 Cecil B. DeMille Award, and the 2012 BAFTA Fellowship. His trademarks include extensive use of slow motion and stills, graphic depictions of extreme violence, and liberal use of profanity.

Scorsese's work explores themes such as Italian-American identity, Roman Catholic concepts of guilt and redemption, machismo, modern-day crime, gang conflict, class relations, status quests, and survivalism. Many of his films are also known for their depiction of violence and liberal use of profanity. Scorsese is widely regarded as a central figure in contemporary cinema. In 1990 he founded The Film Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to film preservation and education. He makes the film as visually stimulating as possible in order to draw the audience into the film and make them feel like they are seeing it from the characters' point of view.

The action in *Shutter Island* takes place over four days in 1954 in and around a high-security water-bound facility called As heCliffe. From its chief psychiatrist, Dr. Cawley (Ben Kingsley), described as a moral fusion of law and order and clinical care,

Ashe Cliffe is home to psychiatric patients with delusional disorders, criminal records and a propensity for violence. The plot revolves around one of them, Teddy Daniels (Leonardo DiCaprio), who has locked himself out of painful memories in a fantasy world. For most of the film, hospital staff and patients play along with Teddy's delusions in hopes of breaking him of them and luring him back to reality. Until all circumstances are revealed towards the end, the viewers are epistemologically connected to the protagonist and participate in his fantasy world. Teddy is treated by others as if he were a US Marshal brought to the island with his new partner Chuck Auld (Mark Ruffalo), to search for a child killer named Rachel Solando who mysteriously managed to escape from a locked cell. The Marshal, as he is known, is also secretly searching for a second missing person named Andrew Laeddis, a man he believes is hiding on the island and whom he describes as the fire bug who set up the fire in the apartment which killed the marshal's wife.

Teddy goes with Chuck to find Laeddis in Ward C, where Ashecliffe harbours the most dangerous patients. Teddy attacks a patient and follows a voice until he finds a badly scarred George Noyce, who tells Teddy his investigations are fake and to leave Dolores behind. Noyce also tells Teddy that Laeddis is kept in the lighthouse where lobotomies are performed. Troubled by Noyce's words, Teddy becomes suspicious of Chuck and makes his way to the lighthouse alone, but is unable to reach it because of the high tide. In a nearby cave, Teddy finds an elderly woman who he believes is the real Rachel Solando. The woman tells Teddy that Ashecliffe probably poisoned his food with psychotropic drugs, which caused his migraines and dreams, and that he performed brainwashing experiments on patients just like Nazis did on prisoners in concentration camps. When Teddy returns to the hospital, he is unable to find Chuck and learns that he did not have a partner. He escapes and attempts to rescue Chuck at

the lighthouse where he believes the experiments are taking place. From his way to the lighthouse, he interrupted by Dr. Naehring. Teddy attacked and sedated him. Naehring suggests that Teddy is a “monster” suffering from a “wound.” He reaches the top of the lighthouse and only finds the hospital administrator, Dr. Cawley seated at a desk. Cawley tells Teddy that he himself is actually Andrew Laeddis (an anagram of Edward Daniels) and that he has been a patient on Shutter Island for two years because he murdered his wife Dolores Chanal (an anagram of Rachel Solando) after she drowned their three children. Angry Andrew shot her to death and fell into insanity. Andrew gets frequent visions of Dolores and he entered that place against her wishes.

Andrew/Teddy refuses to believe this and takes extreme measures to disprove it. He grabs what he thinks is his gun and tries to kill Dr. Cawley, but the weapon is a toy water pistol. Chuck then enters and reveals that he is actually Andrew's psychiatrist, Dr. Lester Sheehan, is. He is told that Dr. Cawley and Chuck/Sheehan developed this treatment to allow him to live out his elaborate fantasy, face the truth, or undergo radical lobotomy treatment. Teddy/Andrew accepts that he killed his wife and that his service as US Marshal was a long time ago. Like *Inception*, ending that's puzzling and confusing. In *Shutter Island's* ending scene, Andrew and Dr. Sheehan sit down on steps for a smoke. The final attempt of Dr. Cawley's brainwashing technique for Andrew is a failure and he can't bring back to him in his normal self. Andrew quoted to Chuck “You know, this place makes me wonder... Which would be worse? To live as a monster or to die as a good man?” doctors have no choice but to lobotomize him. Here's the final interpretation of *Shutter Island*; what Andrew means; he hasn't regressed. He's just pretending he did it. He woke up from his madness, but now his guilt won't let him live. If he reveals he hasn't gone back, Andrew will live on as the monster that took his family's life. Instead, he decides to go back to Edward Daniels, the good man. Edward



is taken away for a lobotomy. Dr. Confused by what he just heard Sheehan tries to call Edward while they take him away for the procedure. The film ends and the audience is devastated.

It turns out that the missing Rachel Solando, a war widow who drowned her three children, is an anagram for the Marshal's insane wife, Dolores Chanal (Michelle Williams), who drowned her three children, including a daughter named Rachel, in the lake behind her house. We also eventually learn that Teddy, the Marshal is Andrew Laeddis, a former US Marshal and World War II veteran who shot Dolores after discovering their dead children in the water, to which he swims to get them, but it's too late to save their life. The deluded and dissociated Laeddis is unable to acknowledge his share of responsibility for murders at home and on the battlefield. Because of his violent behaviour and the military and law enforcement training that defines him as a most dangerous patient in Aschecliffe. Rachel left a note: The law of 4, who is 67? The law of "4" is an anagram for his name and his wife's and he is the 67th patient at the hospital.

Teddy's dreams serve as a crucial motif in *Shutter Island*, where dreams reveal truths that the conscious mind refuses to accept. Teddy has horrible dreams about his wife, Dolores Chanal, who died in an apartment fire two years earlier. Her death remains a deep-seated trauma that Teddy doesn't want to address. While it initially seems like he and Dolores have an eternal love story, Teddy's dreams reveal that their marriage had rocked before her death due to Teddy's alcoholism and Dolores' mental illness. Teddy often dreams of the Dachau concentration camp mixed with dreams of his wife, daughter, fire and water. After all, these dreams are manifestations of Teddy's repressed past.

Since the doctors cannot contain him, and if he does not face the truth, even those sympathetic to his plight will not be able to save him from his fate of being forcibly incapacitated, i.e., undergoing a transorbital lobotomy. An ideological subtext to institutional psychiatric practice in early 1950s America is expressed in the fear of its psychiatrists that, given the paradigm shift from old-school psychosurgery to new-school psychopharmacology. Dr. Cawley strives to improve the treatment of mentally ill patients by treating them morally and helping them achieve honest reckoning with themselves. To facilitate this reckoning, Cawley stages an elaborate role-playing game, all to the marshal's advantage. Propped up with a plastic pistol and a badge, he is brought back to the island and left roaming free to convince himself that his search for missing persons is just part of a play he authored that ends with him destroying the lighthouse reaches the island. The so-called moral treatment is designed to get him there, urging him to face truths he can't bear to know. However, for Lighthouse Therapy to work, the Marshal must trust his primary caretakers to be honest with him, and that is difficult to do. In fact, a key aspect of the main character's paranoia is the belief that he and Chuck, the investigators, are themselves under scrutiny and that the lighthouse is a proving ground for illegal brain surgery to control. He manages to leave the island to get off that rock, as he frequently puts it, and return to the mainland to uncover the wrongdoing at Ashecliffe.

The place/ location of the movie Shutter Island is a Shudder Island. It has a creepy feel, creepy characters, creepy flashbacks. A remote, isolated environment, ominous clouds, a night time search in a graveyard, and a violent storm with gale force winds all contribute to a sense of imprisonment. Noir lighting and deep ominous music, which isn't quite three low notes of a ferry foghorn, sets the tone, enhancing and ending a sense of foreboding and tightness at the beginning and end of the film. While the

marshal hides the truth from himself through his entanglement in a fantasy, this closed island with its lively atmospheric uncertainty also seems to be secrets.

The failure to rescue vulnerable individuals in a timely manner by helping them escape mental illness or horrific institutional confinement is a theme that runs throughout *Shutter Island*. *Shutter Island* isn't just a twisting mental thriller, it gives insight into a complicated system; the human mind. The film simultaneously entertains and enlightens the audience about mysterious ways of thinking. Water and fire play two important elements in *Shutter Island*. Water because Andrew's children drowned in a lake. From the beginning to the end of *Shutter Island* can be found Andrew/Edward very uncomfortable with water. His mind blocks water as best it can. Fire because his apartment burned down. His mind doesn't block the fire because he doesn't blame himself for the fire in the apartment. He blames a fictional character named Andrew for it.

In *Shutter Island* numerous techniques were presented to keep the audience in suspense. Lighting strategies and noise were used throughout the film to give it an atmosphere that would cause confusion. The storyline is highly manipulative towards the audience and surprises anyone who watches the film consistently with the plot twists and the false clues planted throughout the film. The lighting helps create the mysterious and suspenseful tone of the film. For example, the Institute is lit with candles, since candles don't give off much light, so most of the film takes place in the dark or in very low light and give a noir atmosphere. Use of diegetic and non-diegetic sounds create a particular effect and suited to the situation of the character is in. There are also random high pitched piano notes that distract the audience's attention and create an uncomfortable environment. The music gives the necessary vintage feel. For example, all flashbacks have the same instrumental music performed by Jewish

composers. Silence is used to build suspense and is also found in the ward C scene, so it doesn't prepare the audience for the criminal rushing at Teddy.

Christopher Nolan (born 30 July 1970 in London, England), British-American film director and author celebrated for his noir visual aesthetic and his unconventional, often highly conceptual, narratives. He was influenced by George Lucas' Star Wars trilogy and by Ridley Scott's immersive dystopian films. He has known for using aesthetics, themes, and cinematic techniques that are instantly recognizable in his work. Considered an auteur and postmodern filmmaker, Nolan prefers elliptical editing, documentary lighting, handheld camerawork, natural environments, and real locations to studio work.

Embedded narratives and cross-cutting between different time frames are an important part of his work, and his films often contain experimental soundscapes and mathematically inspired imagery and concepts. Nolan prefers film to digital video and advocates the use of higher quality, larger format film stock. He also favours practical effects over computer-generated imagery and is a proponent of theatrical exhibition. Often emotionally disturbed, obsessive and morally ambiguous characters face the anxieties and fears of loneliness, guilt, jealousy and greed. Nolan also uses his real-life experiences as inspiration for his work. Its most prominent recurring theme is the concept of time, questions about the nature of existence and reality also play a major role in his work.

The release of *Inception* (2010) marked the execution of script Nolan had begun a decade earlier and produced with his wife Emma Thomas. This is a science fiction or action heist film stars a large ensemble cast that include Leonardo DiCaprio and Michael Caine. DiCaprio plays Dom Cobb, a corporate spy who steals secrets using

technology that allows him to penetrate people's dreams. The film revolves around these characters' attempt to push the boundaries of technology to actually plant an idea in a dreamer's mind. *Inception* was another commercial and critical hit, earning Nolan a second Academy Award nomination for Best Original Screenplay. *Inception* has received wide critical acclaim and numerous critics have praised its originality, cast, score, and visual effects. It won Academy Award for Best Visual Effect, Best Sound Editing, Best Sound Mixing, and Best Cinematography and was also nominated for four more; Best Picture, Best Original Screenplay, Best Original Score, and Best Art Director.

A man named Dom Cobb wakes up on a sea shore and is dragged into the home of a wealthy Japanese businessman named Mr. Saito. Then the story soon shifts into the past while the old Saito recognized Cobb's totem. The story begins with a business conversation held by several men. Two of them sell their skills: stealing secret information from inside a person's mind through their dream when they are sleeping. It turns out that this meeting itself is a dream. Two men, Cobb (DiCaprio) and Arthur (Gordon-Levitt), are assigned to steal information from Saito (Watanabe); so, they try to trick Saito into a complex dream. Unfortunately, they failed in this mission because they could not get all the information they needed. In the first dream, Saito is aware that he is in a dream and locks in some information from Cobb; he knows Cobb is trying to trick him. However, when Saito wakes up and argues with them, he learns that he is still in a dream. The movie is roaming around the postmodern technology 'A dream within a dream in a dream in a dream within a dream'. The postmodern observer would find the film fabulous, but underneath this film is all about immorality and illegal theft. The film basically takes place in a dream and the protagonist, Cobb, is a

special agent who extracts information from the subconscious of others by entering their minds in a dream state.

Inception is the act of bringing an idea into the mind of a person that will flourish in a way that makes the Subject believe it is their idea. That's the whole point of the movie. Cobb says that there is a safe house at each dream level where the subject's innermost thoughts and secrets reside. Cobb's team often extracts the secrets of the subject's mind from this vault. Cobb also suggests that if you put an idea in this vault on the 3rd (or lower) level of the dream, the subject will wake up believing the idea is theirs. They use an object named totem to distinguish if they are in a dream or reality. Cobb's totem is a spin and Arthur kept a loaded die. There are two levels of dream can be found un inception:

a. the basic dream within a dream used to extract information from the subject's mind.

b. the more elaborate multi-level dream performed with the help of a powerful sedative. Where the inception process can be performed. What is five minutes in a real world become an hour in dream. Kick is used tom wake the dreamer; it is a fall. If the dreamer dies in a multi-level dream, they end up in a dream state called Limbo.

By knowing that Cobb and Arthur really were capable of extractions (stealing from a dream), Saito asked them to work for him. However, his command is unusual: he doesn't want them to steal information; Instead, he wants them to plant an idea into the dreams of his competitor Fischer (Murphy). They refuse the first time. Arthur says there can be no beginnings. However, Cobb says it is possible to plant an idea in someone; but he doesn't want that. Saito then tries Cobb with a promise to have the charges against Cobb removed and send him back to his country, home and children,

resulting in Cobb's approval. Cobb travels to Paris in order to find a dream architect and his father-in-law Stephen Miles introduces him Ariadne graduate student skilled in creating labyrinths. Cobb introduces Ariadne to the basic rules and terminology of dream sharing technologies such as “totem”(an object that lets a person know they are not dreaming)and “kick”(a physical jolt that brings a dreamer out of a dream).Although Cobb’s first rule is to never use memory to build a dream, the memory of his wife, Mal violently invades his shared dream with Ariadne. Cobb then goes to Mombasa to recruit Eames, British counterfeiter and Yusuf Kenyan chemist, help carry out the mission. Back in Paris, the group meets with Saito to discuss the plan.

Eames maintains that the initial idea must be simple, seemingly self-generated and planted across three levels of Robert's dream. Ariadne worries when she enters Cobb's dreams one night and learns that he still harbours guilt over his dead wife Mal, whose memory keeps erupting in his dreams. Ariadne warns Cobb that he can't keep Mal trapped in his subconscious forever. When Robert Fischer's father dies, the team decides to complete their plan with a transpacific flight from Sydney to Los Angeles, on which Robert Fischer is scheduled as a passenger. On the plane, Cobb quietly spikes Robert's drink with a sedative and the team forms a dream with Robert. They manage to take Robert hostage but are immediately ambushed by a team of gun-toting attackers. Saito is badly injured and Cobb realizes too late that experts helped Robert militarize his subconscious against unwanted extraction. To make matters worse, Yusuf's heavy sedative may leave whomever is killed in the dream in "limbo" unconstructed dream space. Although shaken, the team decides to continue with the plan. Cobb excerpts combination lock figures from Robert, who discusses his cold relationship with his father with his Uncle Peter. In the rear of Yusuf's van, the team descends into the dream's second layer - a hotel lobby, where Eames poses as a

womanish thief to distract Robert. Cobb, himself posing as a security expert, pretends to help Robert by waking him to the robbery and leading him to a hotel room upstairs. Cobb manipulates Robert into getting suspicious of the motives of his Uncle Peter, and the three of them sink into a third layer of the dream, which takes place in and around a snow-blanketed fortress. The team delves into the third layer of the dream - an arctic fortress - leaving only Arthur in the second layer (hotel) and Yusuf in the first layer (truck), to avoid hostile forecasts. When Yusuf's truck is attacked and run over a bank, the hotel becomes gravitationally unstable. During the uproar, Arthur disarms an intruder. Under intense bombardment, Yusuf signalled the team to perform a synchronized "kick" - playing Edith Piaf's "Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien" - meaning Cobb and his team had very little time to infiltrate the fortress. Not expecting a signal so soon, Cobb ordered Ariadne to tell the team the fastest route to her maze.

Cobb and Ariadne enter the fourth stage of the dream: a ruined cityscape that Cobb and Mal built together over the 50 years they lived in "limbo". Cobb confesses to Ariadne that he "transmitted" Mal to the idea that Limbo wasn't real, so she would agree to wake up and be with their baby; however, Mal continues to believe that reality is just a dream and ends up committing suicide, leaving Cobb to feel guilty. In a nearby building, Ariadne and Cobb find Mal and Robert, whom Ariadne awakens so he can infiltrate the fortress' "vault". Cobb tells Mal she isn't real and Robert enters the code into the vault to reveal a large operating room with his father dying inside. Robert's father tells him to live his own life, perfecting creation. As the dream world falls apart, Cobb tells Ariadne to attach "kicks" through the layers of the dream while he rescues Saito. Cobb washes up on a beach and is dragged into Saito's house, just like in the film's opening scene. Saito, now old, realizes Cobb is a man from a forgotten dream, and the two suddenly wake up on the plane next to Ariadne, Robert, Eames, and Saito,



who have returned to reality. Cobb arrived in the United States and was greeted by Stephen Miles, who brought him to meet his children. Cobb gets home and goes out to play with the kids, while his totem keeps spinning.

Reality and dreams are constantly changing in *Inception*. It's a film with multiple layers of fact and fiction unfolding simultaneously. However, it was not Nolan's intention to flood the film with a composition that suggested an excess of surrealism. Rather, he was concerned with photographic realism. Nolan chooses Wally Pfister as a cinematographer in his film. He consciously uses 360-degree camera angles in a fight scene. This movie goes beyond the time and space; use of extreme slow motion when cross-cutting between different planes of action. For instance, Cobb falling into the bathtub and Yusuf plunging into the river are captured in extreme slow motion. Another notable scene is the zero-gravity fight scene shows the laws of physics have no boundaries. Like *The Dark Knight*, *Inception* is a mind-blowing masterpiece of Nolan that surely ranks among the greatest thrillers of all time. The movie covers all level; an explosive action movie, a psychological drama, an innovative science fiction film, and a tragic romance. On another level, *Inception* is a cautionary tale about the seductive nature of power. A constant risk for the dream travellers is that they become so engrossed in their own creations that they completely lose touch with reality and are unable to distinguish between the dream world and reality. Essentially, *Inception* warns that if humans attempt to align themselves with divine power, they will ultimately destroy themselves.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Psychoanalytic Aspects In The Movies *Shutter Island* And *Inception***

Psychoanalysis as a theoretical framework is often used in the treatment of patients with psychic neuroses, conducted in a therapeutic setting composed of analyst and analys and. It strongly emphasizes the forgetful functioning of the unconscious mental actions, the genesis of which emerged from the clinical investigation and the theoretical constructions of the Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud. His introduction to the concept of psychoanalysis to provide an explanation and a possible solution to an untreated problem of hysteria, and the effects of trauma and hysteria can be found in *Shutter Island* by the central character Teddy who suffers from the symptoms of repression and trauma.

*The Shutter Island* is a true masterpiece, it comprised the classic elements of Hollywood's psychological horror genre: foreboding asylums, psychiatric experiments, dangerous mental ailments, multiple personalities, intense hallucinations, and even lobotomy. This film explores the theme of mental disorders. The film's central character, Andrew Laeddis, a US Marshall who travels to Shutter Island's Ashecliffe Hospital via Boston. Teddy suffers from hallucinations and often suffer from the vision of his dead wife Dolores. Throughout the film, he suffered from paranoid and most likely Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) due to the war. This film also described a form of mental disorder, schizophrenia; withdrawal from social interaction, a severe distortion of reality, fragmentation of perceptions, thoughts and emotions.

Andrew is the one who killed his wife for her cruel act of killing her three children. But as a result, he turned to be a psychopath because he couldn't deal with the

fact that he lost his family and live with his guilt. The guilt is born from his ignorance of his wife's psychological disease. Due to this reason, he became a patient in Aschecliffe mental hospital; a mental asylum for criminals. Upon arriving on the island, he invents a new personality and shows the symptoms of schizophrenia. He adopts the Teddy Daniels and ignores the all the terrible events happened in his life because they are pushed into his subconscious mind. Teddy acted as a government sheriff investigating for a forgotten patient named Rachel Solando. He believed that his wife was killed by another man named Andrew Laeddis, this person is not real but a part of his imagination. At the extreme level of his hallucination, he sees the hospital staff and doctors are a part of his fictional narrative.

In Dr. Cawley's opinion Andrew must be treated as according to Freud's theory. As a part of this plan, he makes all of the hospital members participate with Andrew's story. Teddy's anxious or paranoid mood and his fear of water are already evident in the beginning of the movie. "Pull it together, Teddy! It's only water" (Scorsese 1:15), as he glances out the window towards the sea, he screams, "It's a lot of water!" (Scorsese 1:26) He is unable to handle with water due to the drowning of his three children. He also uses to be called one of dr. Sheehan as Chuck who appears to be a partner in the case of missing patient.

A person with an id personality will do anything to have instant gratification. Dolores represents this pleasure principle because she is a woman who experiences sadness and schizophrenia, some instances of which are when Dolores sets her apartment on fire because the voices in her head told her to. Dr. Lester Sheehan, primary psychiatrist of Andrew for the past two years is revealing the mental state of his wife "we're telling you the truth. Dolores was insane, maniac- depressive, suicidal" (Scorsese 115). At the same moment he criticizes Andrew's lack of attention towards

her mental health “You drank, stayed away, ignored what everyone told you. You moved to that lake house after she purposely set your city apartment on fire” (Scorsese 116). Also, Dolores only lives in Teddy Daniel's fantasy world. Her irrationality and psychotic tendencies convinced her to kill the three children. She never thought about the consequences of her actions. Dolores controls Teddy because he allows her to do so. In the Ward C of Ashecliffe Teddy confronts with George Noyce, he said “She’s dead. She...Let her go. You gotta do it. There’s no other way” (Scorsese 74). Same time Teddy gets the vision of Dolores and she insists him to recall their past moments and tells Noyce about it. Parallel dialogues of Noyce and Dolores put Teddy in a confused state and he is mixed up with reality and illusion. Teddy can’t allow her to go.

Dr. Sheehan represents the ego because he understands the reality of the situation and thinks rationally. He is aware that Teddy is on the verge of excluding any possibility of living a sane, abnormal life. Dr. Sheehan is logical because he never wants to hurt his patient, so he joins with Teddy's Dreamland as his partner to hopefully bring Teddy out of his psychotic state. For making the situation much more realistic and credulous to Andrew/Teddy, he addresses him as “Boss”. An example of this is when Dr. Sheehan and Teddy search for information on the missing patient and are stuck in an old building due to hurricane-like conditions. Teddy concluded that Shutter Island is brainwashing their patients “by conducting experiments on the patient’s mind” (Scorsese 46) and that he and Dr. Sheehan will follow soon. Dr. Sheehan agrees with him because he sees the bigger picture. He is rational in his actions and cautious in his dealings with Teddy.

A person with a superego personality has good morals in any situation. As the film begins, Teddy Daniels is driven by his morality of good and evil. He chases a life of seeking justice for his wife's murder. From the moment Teddy steps onto the island,

his goal is to find the missing prisoner named Rachel Solando. As the film progresses, he tries harder and harder to solve this mystery, although he finds less and less evidence. This allows him to keep inventing new reasons to live as Teddy Daniels and not grappling with his truth. Andrew Laeddis can never live with the knowledge that he is a murderer. Based on observations from the film, Teddy Daniels has strong moral values. It's ironic how he immorally kills his wife and now lives in a fantasy where he's driven by his morals. Even when we see Teddy coming to his senses, he remains in his fantasy world and cannot live with himself as a murderer. This is the still operative superego that rules his mind, he said to Chuck "which would be worse, to live as a monster or to die as a good man"? (Scorsese 128) In conclusion, *Shutter Island* is an excellent example of Freud's theory of psychosis. Andrew ends up beating teddy in his inner conscious/unconscious level but he can't live with his guilt, so he decides to pretend to be crazy and thus get killed. On the other hand, superego is applicable in Dr. Cawley at first, he decides not to use any medication and lobotomy on Andrew and he has given much time for his patient's recovery.

Awley mentions about two types of treatments available in psychiatry. He says to Teddy and Chuck "the old school believes in surgical intervention. Psychosurgery. Procedures like the transorbital lobotomy. Some say the patients become reasonable, docile. Others say they become zombies" (Scorsese 31). Chuck questioned about "the new school" he replied "Psychopharmacology. A new drug has just been approved called Thorazine, which relaxes psychotic patients, you could say tames them". But Cawley practiced radical idea that "if you treat a patient with respect, listen to him, try and understand, you just might reach him" (Scorsese 31). A lobotomy is a type of brain surgery that became popular in the 1930s as a treatment for mental illnesses such as schizophrenia. It breaks the connection between the frontal lobe and other parts of the

brain. At the time, there were no effective or commonly available treatments for these conditions. However, lobotomies are dangerous. They pose several serious risks, including seizures and death. Due to the impact of this procedure on people who had lobotomies and their families, it fell out of use by the 1950s. Lobotomies have become a popular treatment in the United States, with thousands of people undergoing the procedure. In Rachel's words, as part of Teddy's hallucination from the cave she asked "you ever heard of a transorbital lobotomy? They zap the patient with electroshock, then go through the eye with an ice pick, pull out some nerve fibres" (Scorsese 85). Around 1949, doubts about the security of the procedure increased, as critics considered it serious. When the schizophrenia drug chlorpromazine (Thorazine) was launched in the 1950s, the lobotomy fell out of favour. The drug was a safer and non-invasive treatment option. Transorbital lobotomy used an instrument similar to an ice pick to enter the skull through the eye socket and pierce the brain. Rachel commented about the effect of this old treatment "makes the patients much more obedient. It's barbaric, unconscionable. Do you know how pain enters the body, Marshal? Do you?" (Scorsese 86) Teddy: "depends on where you're hurt". Rachel continues: "no, it has nothing to do with the flesh. The brain controls pain. The brain controls fear, empathy, sleep, hunger, anger, Everything. What if you could control it? Recreate a man so doesn't feel pain or love or sympathy. A man who can't be interrogated, because he has no memories to confess" (Scorsese 87). This points towards the safety of the treatment in Shutter Island and creation of ghosts out of the brain surgery conducted in the lighthouse.

Schizophrenia is a group of severe mental disorders marked by a spitting or disintegration of personality. The most striking clinical features include general psychological disharmony, emotional impoverishment, dilapidation of thought processes, absence of social rapport, delusions, hallucinations, and peculiarities of

conduct. This film the many found the actions and dialogues that reflects the schizophrenia of Andrew. He shows the symptoms such as delusion and hallucination. Freud viewed that the neurosis as a conflict between the id and the ego. Such as psychosis as a conflict between the ego and the external world. Freud defines schizophrenia as a regression in intense frustration and conflict with others. Delusion is an incorrect or bizarre beliefs, they are two types; persecutory and grandiose. Persecutory is delusion of persecution involve belief that you are being conspired against, cheated, spied on, followed, poisoned or harassed. Delusion of grandiose is the belief that he has an advantage and strength as well as being an important person.

Andrew suffered delusions of grandiose himself as U.S. Marshall who gets the task of investigation in Ashecliffe. In fact, he is one of the patients at the hospital and extremely dangerous man. Andrew also has the persecutory delusion; feel of insecurity and always suspicious of all things leads to paranoia.

Teddy: a lot of people know about this place, but no one wants to talk. You know it's like it...it's like they are scared or something. You, know this place is funded by a special grant from the House of Un-American Activities Committee?

Chuck: HUAC? And how exactly are we fighting the communists from island in Boston Harbour?

Teddy: by conducting experiments on the mind. At least that's my guess.  
(Scorsese 45)

This conversation gives a support to Andrew's imaginary scenarios in order to disassemble conspiracy conducted with Ashecliffe. He doubts everyone involved in this conspiracy.

Hallucinations are false perceptions or assume something is real when in fact it is only a fantasy. Andrew Laeddis experiences visual and auditory hallucinations. He met with people who actually do not exist, his dead wife, Dolores Chanal children, and Dr. Rachel Solando, a missing patient in Ashecliffe. Andrew saw Rachel Solando in the cave is part his visual hallucination. He looked frightened suspicious, and curious when he met Rachel. He also has auditory hallucination which he has a conversation with her about the problems in Ashecliffe. Rachel's statement that "Marshall...you have no friends" is the important points in the development of Andrew's fantasy story. He experienced hallucinations in the form of appearance of his wife and child. Dolores vision influenced him and he can't get her out of his mind. He failed to distinguish reality and hallucination, and trapped in between them. Teddy asked to Dolores "Are you real"? (Scorsese 27) she replied "No". "I'm just bones in a box. Teddy. You have to wake up" (29). Then her body is started to burn and became ashes. He also saw a young dead girl often and she asked him to "why didn't you save me?" (Scorsese 61) Teddy was crying and said "I tried. I wanted to, but by the time I got there, it was too late" (61). It was all from his subconscious mind the young girl is Teddy's daughter who has drawn in the lake along with her siblings by her insane mother and Andrew shoot her to death as a punishment for her cruelty. Andrew feels guilty for murdering his wife and kids because he did not pay attention to her mental problems and that he did not get her help. Throughout the film he suffers from migraine and the aspirin did help him out alleviate his migraines.

Andrew used defence mechanism in this movie is the Regression. It is a backward movement psychologically to more helpless state. In the normal adult, can be see occasional regressive behaviour in angry verbal outbursts or possibly crying spells. In the maladjusted, however, regression is typically a movement way back in time.



Freud observed that the ego function of schizophrenic patients during the active symptom phase regressed back to level of narcissistic functioning that was characteristic of early infancy. Andrew regressed back to primary narcissism after he had bad experiences. He withdraws from external reality and creates a narcissistic reality based on fantasy and he creates his fictional story to satisfy himself. Based on the principal satisfaction, Andrew's Id seek further satisfaction that he would solve a major case of the conspiracy in a mental hospital Aschecliffe. Bad experience in childhood of Andrew is evidence in the conversation with dr. Naehring he asked "who raised you?" (35) to Andrew. He said "wolves". It is symbol of violence, abusive, threatening, and harmful figures. Wolves are directed to Andrew's parents and becomes pointer f Andrew's regression. His regression experiences setback to primary narcissism stage, according to psychoanalysis this stage is where Id and Ego have not been separated. Andrew regress to this stage because he feels comfortable. Regression who endured made his delusions and hallucinations that make schizophrenia as his defense mechanism. So, he was immersed in the fantasy world and feel comfortable making the doctors and his primary psychiatrist difficult to generate his consciousness. Climax of the movie Andrew's Ego function returned to normal for a while after Dr. Cawley and Dr. Sheehan success raise his superego by showing his family pictures and giving explanations that Andrew is I fictional story. After that, Andrew is fainted and nurse gives him some medicine. Then, Andrew said that he admitted that he had composed a great story because he could not face the reality. That is the factor he immersed in psychosis. The instructions can be seen in the script section, "because I can't take knowing that Dolores killed our children" (Scorsese 124).

Dr. Cawley explains that he has experienced the stages of healing repeatedly. Andrew kept repeating fictional story from beginning to the so troublesome to the

asylum. In final conversation, Andrew has admitted what he had done and told everything about himself. It is proved that functions in conjunction with Andrew's ego and superego have managed to organize and direct encouragement to the fact of his id. It is characterized by he can find out who he was and what had happened, "My name is Andrew Laeddis. And I murdered my wife in the spring of '52" (Scorsese 127). Unfortunately, Andrew's consciousness did not go a long way; he again showed his insanity signs during conversation with Dr. Sheehan. He returned to the unconscious level is marked with fictional character Chuck. Andrew suffered schizophrenia with positive symptoms, delusion, and hallucination. He regresses to primary narcissism because he felt comfortable at that stage, then he suffered schizophrenia as his defense mechanism to cover up his personality.

Internal Drowning Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is known as a condition that includes both mental and emotional stress due to past events or psychological trauma. Some consequences of PTSD include vivid nightmares and flashbacks, difficult times to concentrate, feeling like things aren't real around you, and turning to alcohol as a coping mechanism. In the film *Shutter Island*, directed by Martin Scorsese, the protagonist Teddy Daniels suffers from all the symptoms of PTSD as a result of his traumatic encounters during World War II. Through the psychoanalytic and formalistic approach, Teddy's PTSD is reflected symbolically throughout the film. Due to Teddy's PTSD, he suffers from severe hallucinations that drive him further away from his true self. He also has very vivid flashbacks that remind him of his most traumatic experiences in the past. Throughout the film, it is clear that Teddy Daniels has a fear of water, also known as aquaphobia. The audience later learns that this phobia arose due to the traumatic experience when Teddy found all three of his children drowned in the lake at the hands of their mother, Dolores, which greatly

affects his PTSD. Teddy is afraid of water due to the incident in his past that he is trying to suppress. The murder of his three children has led to Teddy's fear of water. This makes water an important symbol throughout the film. Water also symbolizes the barrier between sanity and insanity. The lighthouse is a symbol for disclosure and revelation, and it is the place where Teddy finally discovers that he is in fact Andrew Laeddis as a 67<sup>th</sup> patient in Aschecliffe.

In his novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Milan Kundera writes, “Our dreams prove that to imagine – to dream about things that have not happened – is among mankind’s deepest needs.” A defining feature of film noir, Martin Scorsese plays with this notion of dreaming and the dreamlike in two ways in *Shutter Island*. 1) in Teddy Daniels’ sleeping dreams and 2) in Teddy’s waking delusions. *Shutter Island* forces its audience to ignore the underlying truth and see its world through Teddy’s delusions. One way Scorsese engages with the concept of dreams is in the form of Teddy Daniel’s sleeping dreams. Freudianism is another defining characteristic of films noir and Scorsese unabashedly makes reference to this. The character Dr. Jeremiah Naehring is an obvious allusion to Freud with his hard German accent, round glasses, and propensity to wax psychological by talking about things such as “defense mechanisms.” Furthermore, Dr. Naehring provides his own riff of dream interpretation as he is pinned against the wall by Teddy: “Did you know that the word ‘trauma’ comes from the Greek for ‘wound’? Hm? And what is the German word for ‘dream’? Traum. Ein Traum. Wounds can create monsters, and you, you are wounded, Marshal.” (Scorsese 99) As a Freudian mouthpiece, Dr. Naehring draws our attention to Teddy’s dreams that elucidate his “wounds.”

Teddy often dreams about the Dachau concentration camp melded with dreams about his wife, his daughter, fire, and water. These dreams are manifestations of

Teddy's repressed past in which his denial of his wife's festering insanity lead resulted in her drowning their three children and his subsequent murder of her – the reason why Teddy is in Ashecliffe mental hospital. This latent truth is reflected by his wife's perpetual appearance as wet and her warnings against Laeddis. She is ultimately the symbol of his repression. Fire is symbol of Teddy's insanity. To add to that statement, Teddy has issues with light in general; the symbolism of light as representing truth is all too obvious.

Psychoanalytic film analysis also has been applied to the study of horror movies which is popular since mid-1980s onwards. It seems like Hollywood took psychoanalysis seriously. One of the Hollywood directors who belong to the group of psychoanalytic filmmakers is Christopher Nolan. Nolan, the director and screenwriter of *Inception*, has previously created several works that can also be discussed on the basis of psychoanalytic theory, such as *Memento*, *The Prestige* and the latest *Batman trilogy*. The central themes of his films usually revolve around a traumatized hero, a dead woman and a plot involving manipulation and dissimulation (Fisher37). Similarly, *Inception* also has the main character grappling with his trauma and unconscious throughout the film.

All of Freud's work is based on the concept of the unconscious (mind beyond consciousness), which has a strong influence on our actions. Many previous accounts of the unconscious saw the unconscious simply as a storehouse of forgotten memories that may not be remembered (Power 612). However, Freud expanded the unconscious's sphere of influence to include every aspect of our lives. The idea is that this storehouse is made up of suppressed desires, feelings, memories, and instinctive drives. Repression is an attempt to forget or ignore unresolved conflicts, unacknowledged desires, or traumatic past events so that they are pushed out of conscious awareness into the realm

of the unconscious (Barry 97). Put more simply, the unconscious is meant to act as our mind's protective force against tragic or traumatic events. In his *Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900 Freud suggests that there are hidden wishes or desires that manifest themselves at night in dreams. The feelings, memories, wishes, or desires which are repressed and stored in the unconscious are beyond our control.

Freud believed that there are two main parts that made up the dream, the manifest content and the latent content. The manifest content is what the dreamer remembers when awake; what they would consciously describe to someone else if they recalled the dream. Freud suggested that the manifest content has no meaning at all because it is a disguised representation of what underlies the dream—the latent content (Introduction to Sigmund Freud's Theory of Dreams). On the other hand, the latent content or dream thoughts is the true meaning of the dream. It is the forbidden thoughts and the unconscious desires, or simply put, it is the repressed unconscious itself. These appear in the manifest contents but are camouflaged and unrecognizable. Manifest and latent content are connected in some way. He calls the transformational process that connects the two levels (the latent content turns into the manifest content) the dreamwork. This means that the dreamwork is the mechanism that takes the raw material of the latent and stitches it together into a dream. One Freud critic said that “the exchange between dreaming and the conscious mind is more flexible and mutual than Freud assumed”, implying that the nature of the dream-work is *dynamic*. It is a ‘complicated traffic’, back and forth between conscious and unconscious levels. Not only a manifestation of the locked traumatic memories that can take part in the dream, but also some conscious or subconscious memory. Another belief that is arisen in these modern days is that dreams influence our conscious thoughts and actions. Even though what’s left after waking up is only the manifest content which sometimes is just some

little fragments, the emotions or feelings we experienced in the dreams remain. This feeling affects us in the real world.

The main character of the film *Inception*, Dom Cobb, encounters the projection of his unconscious (Mal) several times in the film. She appears in the Layered Dreams, jeopardizing the team's mission. Freud's dream-work theory is used to analyse this phenomenon: who or what is Mal, and why is she trying to mess Cobb's work? also look at Robert Fischer, the other character who plays a significant role in the film. Throughout the film, the term subconscious is used repeatedly, referring to the subconscious mind where many of the interactions take place. Basically, it means almost everything that happens in dreamsharing. The term unconscious denotes repressed trauma, feelings, memories, as suggested by Freud's theories; The term subconscious, on the other hand, refers to the accessible memories where one can easily access the dreams as the film implies. This concept is introduced to the audience in the beginning of *Inception*, when Cobb, Arthur, and Saito were talking. They are discussing how to defend their subconscious while asleep because in a dream conscious defences are lowered and their thoughts are vulnerable. This scene introduced us to the notion of subconscious that the whole movie revolves around. And as stated above, it is also suggesting that subconscious contains repressed or hidden memories that will re-emerge within a dream.

The first example is when Cobb and Arthur are in the midst of a conspiracy to make Saito careless so they can steal the hidden memories that hold information about his company's secret. Suddenly, a woman named Mal shows up and ruins the whole operation by telling Saito their purpose. This first appearance marks a series of her appearances as a troublemaker for Cobb's team at later work. Once they return to

reality, Arthur confronts Cobb about what happened in the dreams. They haven't told us who Mal really is, but we're given clues, such as this dialogue:

ARTHUR. And you-what the hell was all that?

COBB. I had it under control.

ARTHUR. I'd hate to see out of control. (Nolan, 17)

And later on, in a hotel where they are about to run away from the company who employ them:

ARTHUR. Down in the dream... Mal showing up like that ...

COBB. Yeah. I'm sorry about your leg.

ARTHUR. It's getting worse, isn't it? (Nolan, 20)

These dialogues indicate that somehow Cobb is the one causing the error. He's the one blaming his subconscious. We soon learn that Mal is Cobb's late wife; she's just a projection of Cobb's subconscious. She committed suicide because, after so many years in the dream world, she could no longer distinguish between dream and reality. Mal's suicide is definitely a terrifying memory that Cobbs is trying to forget. In the real world, Mal felt like she is still living in adream; she is desperate to go back to reality and she ended up killing herself. As a husband and the closest person to Mal, this shocking experience must leave him inemotional and mixed feelings that he unconsciously repressed.

Mal's death traumatized Cobb, and his wife's projection has haunted his dreams ever since. Before that he was an architect; he builds and designs his dreams. But since Mal appeared in his dreams, he was unable to create the dream world; Just like Ariadne pointed out to us, “you won't build it yourself because if you know the maze then she

knows it. And sabotage the operation. You can't keep them out, can you"? He is afraid of Mal's interference; he cannot hold them back because the unconscious is uncontrollable. Mal's death leads Cobb into great misery because not only is Mal missing, but also his children are. Cobb is accused of killing his wife by the authorities and he has been running ever since. He cannot stay in the United States and has to leave his children in his parent's custody. His longing for his children caused a projection of the last image he has before leaving his house:

Ariadne follows his gaze to the garden. A small blonde boy faces away from them, crouched on his haunches to look at something on the ground.

COBB: It's James. And there's Philippa. I thought about calling out, so they'd turn and smile those incredible smiles... but I'm out of time-

THIN MAN: Right now. Or never, Cobb.

COBB: Then I start to panic. I realize I'm gonna regret this moment, that I need to see their faces one last time. But the moment's passed. And whatever I do, the dream's always the same... When I'm about to call... they run. (Nolan, 68-69)

That his regrets, unfulfilled desire, and frustration at not being able to say goodbye, or at least having a good memory of her, rush back in his dreams. Cobb can't keep it under control; sometimes it reappears at a bad time and causes problems for him. For example, when Cobb is trying to get Fischer to join his team through a conversation in the second layer of the dream, the projection of James and Philippa suddenly appears and distracts his attention. Though Cobb is only distracted for a minute, Fischer notices that something strange is happening around them. As a result, Fischer becomes suspicious and Cobb almost fails in gaining Fischer's trust because of this incident. Cobb's unconscious interference is getting worse as time passes by. In the



first layer of the dreams when his team is kidnapping Fischer, a train suddenly cuts off their escape route and makes Saito get shot in his chest. This train is also part of his unconscious projection, formed out by his past memories with Mal. His children and Mal's presents distract Cobb and affect his mission.

It seems like this subconscious lies in the middle between the conscious and unconscious, and we can still control it. The most obvious example of the subconscious in film is the Inception job itself. The team is aware of what they are doing in the dream; They know they are no longer in a real world and they are there to work. They brought with them the memory of their task and what they must do to complete it. Ariadne (the architect) for example is the one responsible for designing the dreams; She founds a hotel, a small town and a facility in snowy mountains for the team. Like other architects, she makes plans and models beforehand, and then these places are projected into the dreams by her subconscious as a working stage at every level of the dream. The memory from their consciousness is easily brought into the dream.

Mal's appearances in the dream come from the deeper part of Cobb's mind, and they are uncontrollable. Thus, Mal is not merely a projection of his subconscious; but *unconscious* and she is a projection of unconscious is manifested in his subconscious. The conscious, subconscious, and the unconscious have interchangeable movements – back and forth inside the dream and it is uncontrollable; dream is dynamic. “The subconscious is motivated by emotion, not reason”, Cobb said. The emotion of the tragic events results in Mal's projection into the subconscious realm. The reason Cobb still can't escape these emotions is stored deep in his subconscious. Ariadne, feeling that their entire mission is being endangered by Mal and tries to help Cobb. She tries to convince Cobb that Mal's death wasn't his fault and that he needs to focus on the mission.

ARIADNE: It might have been your idea to push the limits, Cobb. But you're not responsible for the idea that destroyed her. The idea that her world wasn't real... that was her own idea from her own mind. Your guilt defines her. Powers her. ...

COBB: You don't have to do this for me-

ARIADNE: I'm doing it for the others. They don't know the risk they've taken coming in here with you. (Nolan, 93)

In the fourth layer of the dream Cobb and Ariadne are forced to look for Fischer after Mal shot him. This fourth layered is what they call as *Limbo*. *Limbo* is an unconstructed dream space – a place of random subconscious impulse. Ariadne, who constantly questioning the cause of Cobb's 'wild' unconscious, eventually made Cobb confronts his unconscious. She is the 'subconscious' that helps us unravel the deepest memory that repressed in Cobb's unconscious. The team also serves as the subconscious in accessing Robert Fischer's unconscious mind by the process of inception. Fischer is the target of the whole operation, a son of multi-billionaire Maurice Fischer. The huge corporation soon becomes a superpower that dominates the energy supply of half the world. He inherited the property after the death of his father. They try to change his mind by planting the idea that Maurice did not want him to take over the company. They need to plant the seed of the idea into Fischer's unconscious. The focus here is not about the planting of the idea, but the focus is what Fischer's found in his unconscious. Eames disguised as Fischer's uncle Peter Browning and functioning as the 'subconscious' tool for Fischer. Eames' job is to dig out some information that can be used to smooth out their plan. Eames understands that the relationship between Fischer and his father is worse than what he thought. Fischer as a child felt that he was not loved and supported by his father, even hated by him. This is

the repressed feeling that unconsciously he tried to bury. Fischer subconscious projection of his last painful memory with his father. He felt that he disappointed his father because he couldn't be him:

FATHER: I... was ... dis ... dis ...

FISCHER: I know, Dad. You were disappointed that I couldn't be you. (The dying man shakes his head with surprising energy.)

FATHER: (whisper) No... no. I was disappointed... that you tried. (Nolan, 140)

Maurice then points to a cabinet where Robert finds the will and a pinwheel his father made personally for him once as a child. The dialogue exhibits Robert's genuine wish (it is a dialogue between him and his unconscious). He realized that this is what he's been longing for, not the recognition of years of endless hard work, but merely an acceptance of his existence, knowing that his father actually loved him. So once again, the movie gives a perfect example that subconscious assists us to find the truth of our unconscious.

The content of a human dream is unique and at the same time full of meaning. Cobb and Fischer both acquire something valuable from the dream. The encounter with their unconscious that happened in the dream changes them. After confronting his unconscious (Mal), and Cobb realizes that he has to let go of his painful memory. He does not want to do it before because he felt like he does not deserve happiness. But he needs to move on for his children.

MAL: You remember when you asked me to marry you? You said you dreamt that we'd grow old together.

COBB: But we did... We did, you don't remember? I miss you more than I can bear, but we had our time together. And now I have to let you go...(Nolan, 142)

The important thing is the fact that Cobb is finally being able to move on from the unconscious that is haunting him.

The next person to move on with his life is Fischer; he will do his father's last request with a light heart, since he doesn't have to do it under pressure. "The Will means Dad wanted me to be my own man and not live for him. And I'm going, Uncle Peter", said Robert Fischer. The dream itself has become a kind of healing process for Fischer. He finds peace and is no longer confronted with the idea that his father does not love him. When he discovers that his father kept the pinwheel, Fischer finds it proof that his father loved him. is it real? no, we know this is just a dream. However, it all seems real to him and he now believes that his father loved him. His secret desire for reconciliation with his father has finally come true and touches him deeply, even though it wasn't real.

Dreams, as Freud said, offer us a shortcut to understanding ourselves and carry with them unfulfilled desires and problems from the past. What happened to Cobb and Arthur confirms it. Each of them encounters their unconscious, which projects their hidden desires and feelings. They manage to understand themselves better and this event has changed their lives ever since. Dreams are indeed important; This is the message *Inception* is trying to convey to audiences. While the content of dreams is different for each person, as More wedge and Norton found in their research; Humans do believe that dreams have hidden meanings, and so they have a general tendency to interpret their dreams and allow those dreams to affect their judgment and behaviour.

Freud's defines mechanism, repression is a relevant theme in this movie.

Defenses are the processes by which the contents of our unconscious are held in the unconscious. They show the mind's defenses with safes and people fighting to protect the subconscious. At the beginning of the film, Cobb tries to break into a safe because the mind of the person he broke into has literally locked his secrets inside.

The major themes are reality and dream. Nolan stated that he wanted *Inception* to reflect the idea that dreams seem real for as long as they are happening. Reality, or the veneer of reality, is a key aspect to *Inception*, one that informs not only the scenes where the characters inhabit the external world but also the ones where the characters are dreaming. He constantly blurs the distinction between reality and dreaming: the film opens in a dream-within-a-dream that the viewer could easily mistake for reality. Warfare is another theme; film that revolves around the use of military-grade technology in a rivalry between two multinational corporations. Nolan uses the theme of warfare to show how the mind naturally protects itself from manipulation and coercion, such as when the projections in Fischer's dream launch a coordinated ambush to repel the Cobbs team's attempted infiltration. Time, memory, guilt and complex architecture as another themes. Surreal and labyrinth architecture is helped to avoid projections at the same time they indicate the complexity of human mind itself.

## Conclusion

*Shutter Island* starts working on us with the first musical notes under the Paramount logo's mountain, even before the film starts. They're ominous and doomy. So is the film. This is Martin Scorsese's evocation of the delicious shuddering fear we feel when horror movies are about something and don't release all the tension with action scenes. There are thrilling visuals in *Shutter Island*. Another film Scorsese showed his cast was Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and we sense echoes of its hero's fear of heights. It is an isolated island, howling weather, mad scientists, an ex-Nazi, tough cops, deranged patients and a penal hospital with crowded, filthy cells and corridors stretching forever - possibly beyond sanity. The music, costumes, props and the many rooms and halls of this fortress prison are designed for maximum emotional impact. Scorsese gave himself a film student puzzle: try to recreate a roller coaster ride from the 1950s using today's techniques and technology.

*Shutter Island* is a movie that is directed by Martin Scorsese which tells about a schizophrenic character. The writer analyses to understand the main character in the movie and how Psychoanalysis theory introduces the main character's problem. After analysing the main character described in the movie Andrew Laeddis, audience can reach the conclusion that Andrew Laeddis is Teddy Daniel's character withdrawal from reality. He creates a narcissistic reality based on fantasy and primary process thinking. He thinks he is a detective who wants to investigate a case in a mental hospital of Ashecliffe. He creates a fictional character and a story to recover his personality. Since he suffered from schizophrenia, he always had delusions and hallucinations which were the symptoms of the disease.

Based on the observations from the film, Teddy Daniels has strong moral values. It's ironic how he immorally kills his wife and now lives in a fantasy where he is driven by his morals. Even when we see Teddy come to his senses he remains in his fantasy world, not being able to live with himself as a killer. This is the superego still in effect, which dominates his mind. To conclude, *Shutter Island* is an excellent example of Freud's theory of psychosis. Dolores has an id personality because she is irrational and irresponsible. Dr. Sheehan has an ego personality because he is rational and has a reasonable answer for everything. Finally, Andrew Laeddis has a superego personality because he goes against all his morals when he kills his wife. He creates a fictional world to live with himself. However, Andrew comes to the conclusion that he rather will die as a good man instead of living with all the remorse and guilt for his actions.

According to psychoanalytic view Andrew's personality structure did not work properly and becomes schizophrenic character. Andrew regressed back to primary narcissism stage. Schizophrenia is linked to an early part of the Oral stage called primary narcissism during which the ego has not separated from the id particularly. His Id becomes dominant and ego is so weak with no basic reality. The doctors and his primary psychiatrist failed to heal and restore his sanity. In the end, Andrew is unable to attain sanity.

Christopher Nolan spent ten years writing his screenplay for *Inception*. The film is all about process of inception, fighting through the shells of reality and dreams, reality within dreams, dreams without reality. This thesis aims to study the film *Inception* using Freud's psychoanalysis. The theory of the unconscious is used to analyse two central characters in the movie, Cobb and Fischer. The movie is solely based on the notion of subconscious, and it never mentions the term of unconscious, although they are actually vastly different. According to the film, everything that

happened during dream sharing refers to the subconscious. However, the term unconscious is more suitable to represent certain events that occurred in the dream. Distinction between these two notions is also needed to be made in order to investigate their dynamic movements within the dream. The movie itself is a portrayal of Freud's dream theories.

Freud distinguished the dream into two parts: manifest and latent content. The manifest content usually describes the fragments of images that we remember after we wake up. The latent content, in contrast, is the true meaning – the essence of the dream. It contains the unconscious desires of the dreamer. The latent content is the repressed memories, emotions, and wishes which later on transform themselves into the manifest content – the projection and images of the dreamer. Dreams do project the subconscious and unconscious of the dreamers. Therefore, the director supports Freud's famous saying "dream is the royal road to the unconscious"; based on the evidences found in the movie.

The director encourages the audience to believe in the importance of dreams. Dreams mean different things to different people, but they are important. The director believes that there are many of us in the morning who are curious of the meaning of the dream they just had. This is showing that people indeed take dreams seriously. And even for some people, dreams can also become a source for inspiration. It stimulates their imagination and awakens their creativity into producing famous masterpieces in music, art, films, narratives, etc. Christopher Nolan himself who inspired to make *Inception* based on his dream experiences. Psychoanalysis is not the only theory that can be used to examine *Inception*. Feminist Theory can be used to analyse some outstanding qualities possessed by Ariadne and her strength when dealing with difficulties in the mission.



Like *Inception*, *Shutter Island*'s Teddy Daniels experiencing dreams within dreams, similar to DiCaprio's Cobb in *Inception*, Teddy Daniels is haunted and manipulated by the memory of his dead wife such as Cobb in *Inception* suffers from the vision of his dead wife Mal and his living children. On the surface, both Teddy Daniels (his *Shutter Island* character) and Cobb (*Inception*) share similarities. Both must come to terms with a terrible tragedy and the death of their spouses at the hands of heavy repression. The two films cross similar psychological problems with their protagonist. Both characters are trapped in illusion and haunted by guilt, struggling to determine the difference between reality and fantasy. These are men shaped by trauma and desperate to escape. Indeed, the biggest contrast between the two films is that *Shutter Island* traps its protagonist on an island while *Inception* places his life as a fleeting criminal. Released within five months of one another in 2010, *Shutter Island* and *Inception* feature two of Leonardo DiCaprio's best performances. Much like Andrew spends most of *Shutter Island* being haunted by his memories of Dolores, Cobb spends most of *Inception* being haunted by a psychological projection of Mal. Much like Dolores tries to keep Andrew from confronting his family's reality, Mal tries to convince Cobb he's living in a dream. As she points out, the shadowy agents chasing Cobb through Mombasa look a lot like the subconscious projections a dreamer uses in self-defence.

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**UNRAVELLING THE PSYCHE OF JEFFREY DAHMER:  
INSIGHTS FROM OPTIMAL AROUSAL THEORY**

**A Project Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the  
Degree of M.A in English Language and Literature of Kannur**

**University**

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**UNDER THE SUPERVISION AND GUIDANCE OF**

**Ms. Deepa Divakar**

**(DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH)**



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**DON BOSCO ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGE,**

**ANGADIKADAVU**

## **BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **Unravelling the Psyche of Jeffrey Dahmer: Insights from Optimal Arousal Theory** submitted to Kannur University in partial fulfillment of the requirement of M.A. Degree in English Language and Literature is a record of bonafide study and research work carried out by **Joel Abraham** under my supervision and guidance and no part of this work has been presented earlier for the award of any degree, diploma, title or recognition.

**Fr. Jaison Anthikkadu**

**Ms. Deepa Divakar**

**Head of the Department**

**Research Guide**

## **DECLARATION**

I, Joel Abraham, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled **Unravelling the Psyche of Jeffrey Dahmer: Insights from Optimal Arousal Theory** is a record of original work carried out by me for the award of M.A. degree in English Language and Literature of Kannur University, and it has not been submitted to any university for the award of any degree or diploma.

**Angadikadavu**

**01-05-2023**

**Joel Abraham**

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## Introduction

Despite technological and societal advances, crimes of mysteriously violent nature still pervade contemporary civilizations around the world. The mere existence of such anomalies, despite the passage of time over the centuries and the supposed evolution of our societies, suggests that some of the most basic instincts inherent in humanity can fundamentally relate to their tendency for violence. Far from being modern-day manifestations, serial violent crime bears an uncanny resemblance to several ancient mythological creatures. These similarities suggest that such creatures may have been ancient cultures' attempts at accountability for heinous crimes. A series of seemingly unconnected brutal murders involving excessive maiming of the victims, with references to eating body parts and/or drinking blood, provided inspiration for folk creatures such as werewolves or vampires. Similarly, the demonic spirits known as Incubi that rape women could be the ancient world trying to hold accountable for serial rapists. Beyond these mythological examples are identifiable scenes of serial violent crimes throughout history, such as the Roman Emperor Nero, well known for his madness and delight in starting fires.

Serial violent crimes today typically no longer conjure up a relationship to the supernatural but are now rather fictionally explained by labels such as serial murder, serial rape, or serial arson. However, what is more difficult to reconcile than simply labelling these behaviours is their continued manifestation. While some arguments may be made that serial violent crimes were an artifact of barbaric and/or less developed societies, the basis for this rationale seems to be undermined by the observation of these crimes in contemporary and arguably advanced modern societies. That is, despite the purported development of modern civilization to promote compassion, human

rights, and racial, cultural, and religious equality, these crimes of extreme serial violence continue to surface, and are not mitigated, or seem to be lessened, by the rise of the human races into a greater civilization increasing in their prevalence.

Serial killing has become a topic of great interest and intensive discussion in modern western society. Through this work, I would like to introduce America's most notorious serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer also known as Milwaukee Cannibal due to his gruesome acts of cannibalism. Born on May 21, 1960, in West Allis, Wisconsin, Dahmer had a difficult childhood, characterized by his parents' marital problems and his mother's mental health issues. He was introverted, and his difficulties in making friends were evident from a young age.

Dahmer's crimes began in 1978, with his first known victim being Steven Hicks, whom he murdered in his family's home. Over the next 13 years, Dahmer committed a series of murders, often targeting young men and boys, whom he met in bars, malls, or on the streets. He lured them to his apartment under the pretext of offering them money or alcohol, and then drugged, sexually assaulted, and killed them.

Dahmer's methods of killing varied, and he often experimented with ways to preserve the bodies. He would often keep body parts as souvenirs, and some of the remains were later found in his apartment, including human heads, skeletons, and preserved genitalia. He was able to avoid detection for years, despite several instances in which his crimes were reported to the authorities.

In 1991, Dahmer was finally caught after one of his intended victims, a young man named Tracy Edwards, managed to escape, and notify the police. When the police arrived at Dahmer's apartment, they found evidence of his crimes, including photographs of his victims and human remains in his refrigerator and freezer. Dahmer

was arrested and ultimately confessed to 17 murders. During his trial, Dahmer was found to be legally sane and was convicted of 15 counts of murder. He was sentenced to 15 consecutive life terms in prison, totalling 957 years. While in prison, Dahmer sought therapy and reportedly became remorseful for his crimes. However, in 1994, he was attacked and killed by another inmate.

The case of Jeffrey Dahmer is significant as it highlights several issues in the criminal justice system, including the inadequacy of mental health care and the importance of vigilant policing. Dahmer's case also brought attention to the issue of serial killers and their motivations. The case was a media sensation, and several books, movies, and documentaries have been made about it. The case of Jeffrey Dahmer also raises questions about the nature of criminal behaviour and the factors that contribute to it. While some have suggested that Dahmer's behaviour was influenced by his difficult childhood, others argue that his crimes were the result of a pathological desire for control and power. The case has been the subject of extensive research, and several theories have been put forth to explain Dahmer's behaviour.

Through this project, I am trying to explore the life of Dahmer through Optimal Arousal proposed by Robert Yerkes and John Dodson in 1908. Yerkes and Dodson's optimal arousal theory states that motivation is related to our level of arousal. They believed that our level of arousal determines our motivation. This has a negative and a positive side. When we are under excited or excited (bored) or overexcited (overwhelmed), we lack the motivation to complete the task. If we are aroused or stimulated (challenged) just enough, we will be motivated to engage in the task. How Dahmer is under aroused and over aroused throughout his notorious life is examined through this work.

Though many studies have conducted on the life of Dahmer, nobody has attempted to analyse his life by implementing Arousal theory to know how his mind and body functions during his killing spree. So, this is a novel attempt to understand the psyche of a serial killer.

# **Chapter One**

## **Arousal Theory of Motivation**

“We all have a monster within. The difference is in degree, not in kind”-

Douglas Preston

### **Psychology; Understanding Behavior**

Psychology is a scientific study of human and animal behavior that aims to describe, explain, predict, and control behavior. Psychology as a subject deal with the scientific studies of behavior. The new paradigms have broadened the horizons of psychology. It has also touched on the law and criminal behavior. This has led to the birth of criminal psychology as a discipline. And today, criminal psychology is a specialty that is growing and of immense scope.

Psychology has undergone a great transformation and diversification as it aims to study behavior scientifically. Globalization and liberalization paradigms, which gained much popularity in the 20th century, have now been replaced by more specific paradigms. Today there is an increasing need for diversification to understand the application and theory of specific aspects. At the same time, the need for a holistic approach cannot be ignored, so we see that it is exemplary that eclectic and interdisciplinary and multicultural approaches are seen as more important in practice. With the rising crime rate, it has become imperative and important for government agencies to focus more on improving legal services. It is also essential to be able to find the cause of crime, the psychology of criminals and to be able to intervene at individual and social levels to improve social conditions.

Today we cannot ignore the existence of activities labeled as and under organized crime structures where a young child, woman, adult, or elderly person

involved in criminal activity. Crime can be as small as theft, burglary, murder, and mass murder.

In many recent rape cases, women have been raped and assaulted beyond human imagination. This leaves us with the question of how a normal man, who you probably just happen to be passing in a market or public transport or place, can stretch to such extremes, forgetting humanity and not even fearing legal action.

From murder to mass murder! Have you ever thought about what led to the Holocaust? How can an individual like Hitler issue orders for the mass killing of people? And based on caste, religion, race, political beliefs, discriminate against people and give orders to kill them. His forces followed his instructions without a second thought. The Holocaust shaped and guided the basis of many experiments aimed at understanding extremes of obedience.

Many cases in the history of crime have left unanswered many questions that can only be explained by understanding human behavior. Psychology is so diverse and applicable that it explains behavior in all levels:

- i) Individual level: This aims to understand the cause of the behavior at an individual level. Environmental, biological, physiological, cognition and psychology.
- ii) Group level: This aims to understand the social factors that can explain the behavior of individuals in a group. It aims to understand how the presence of others affects a person's behavior.

Today's change and paradigm shift has meant that the psychological perspective has become an important aspect in all areas of research, practice, and theory. Psychology is now a subject that has occupied a significant place in all subjects that are directly or remotely related to behavior.

Criminal psychology is not only there to understand criminal thoughts or to predict criminal behavior, but also important to control the development of crime and to be able to intervene for those in need.

### **What is Crime?**

The term “Crime” or “Criminal” is very contextual in nature. And can be better understood and should be used in reference to a specific legal and judicial system of a specific state, country or province. It should be noted that this term must be used with great caution as it could be considered a term by one culture, while crime may not be considered a crime in another culture. On the otherhand, an act in a state, culture, province, or legal system can be seen as a crime but also as a disease, which is also a reflection of enlightened cultures.

Crime is an act that indicates a maladjustment to a particular culture and social concern that is legally considered a violation of rights. The terms are often confused as the terms “Crime” and “Criminality” are different. While Criminality indicates intention and attitude to indulge in criminal behavior; Crime is an act against the law. Criminal psychology aims to control crime by providing crime interventions.

Crime is sometimes difficult to classify as crime. Because it is not only contextual in nature, but also situational. If, in a war situation, a soldier kills another soldier in the opposing army, it is considered an act of bravery and pride. But for civilians, it's considered a crime. In the case of criminal offenses under civil law, it must also be considered whether the offense was committed in self-defense, under the influence of a substance or because of social pressure. On the one hand, an unlawful act is considered a criminal offense according to the legal definition; The normative definition of crime highlights the act that violates our moral code.

In summary, calling an act a crime is ambiguous, as there is no objective definition that can define what can be called a crime. The meaning of crimes can only be understood in relation to the social culture, the legal system, and the context of the act.

### **What is Criminal Psychology?**

Criminal psychology is the study of criminal behavior, where the term behavior includes personality, attitude, physiology, learning, motivation, reasoning, and other cognitive factors that contribute to the offense or criminal intent. It is important to understand the psychology of criminals as it allows us to describe, explain, predict, and control such behavior. In short, criminal psychology is a branch of psychology that focuses on understanding the psyche of criminals. Therefore, criminal psychology uses psychological principles to explain this specific behavior.

Criminal psychology studies criminal behavior and types of delinquency. This is done not only by evaluating people, but also by conducting research with non-criminal individuals. Other roles that a criminal psychologist might perform include studying the psychological factors that lead to crime, assessing how dangerous certain individuals are, and developing psychological and psychotherapeutic interventions for criminals. Criminal psychology essentially refers to the study of crime that does not place all the emphasis on the criminals themselves, but also on societies.

Criminal psychology has developed from the major branches of Psychology:

1. Social Psychology.
2. Clinical Psychology



**Social Psychology:** It is an important and specialized field of psychology helpful in understanding criminal behavior and related aspects. Social psychology is the study of behavior in groups. It allows us to understand how people behave in the presence of others, how other people's views and actions affect the perception and cognition of others present. Social psychology studies important aspects such as competition, collaborative behavior, mob behavior, leadership, group behavior, internal and external factors influencing group behavior, etc. This allows us to understand, explain and predict behavior in social situations. Most crimes are not always related to clinical disorders; Most of the crime is the result of thorough planning that is the result of social issues, pressures, and other environmental factors.

Humans are considered social beings. While most of our behaviors are guided by social norms, the definitions of right and wrong behavior, ethical and non-ethical behavior, and similar definitions are culturally conditioned. Social psychology allows us to understand the social context of a crime and the reasons that encourage such behavior. Social psychology also allows us to understand cultural reasons for certain behavior. Khabb, a critical social issue, is related to the status of women in a culture, the status of children in a culture, the status of men in a culture, and the role of older members of a clan. All of these and many more factors can only be understood through a deeper understanding of the culture and the social aspects associated with it. Social psychology theory, research, and experimentation provide a deeper understanding of individual motives, actions, and behaviors in the presence of others and as a member of a group.

**Clinical Psychology** - Clinical psychology allows us to understand the mental, physiological, emotional, and behavioral factors behind criminal behavior. Mental health is an important predictor of criminal behavior. We define mental health in

layman's terms as a person who appears healthy. But mental health is described very holistically. It encompasses a person's physical, social and mental health. That is, a person is considered healthy when they are physically fit, able to interact with people, able to maintain healthy social and family relationships, and also mentally fit.

These two are important specialized areas of psychology that make important contributions to criminal psychology. Apart from that, there are many aspects that can be explained under the umbrella term psychology, which is also the reason that criminal psychology itself is considered a subfield of psychology. While on an individual level, many factors play an important role and explain the cause of the behavior. Cognitive factors such as information processing and moral development also play an important role in determining and predicting human behavior. How a person processes information and the nature of moral development can help a criminal psychologist understand the intent and intensity of the crime. Environmental factors also play an important role in understanding criminal behavior. Climate extremes along with other naturally occurring factors can also lead to criminal behavior.

### **Psychology and Crime**

While psychology and crime are of course two different terms and fields, each is important and interdependent. Psychology is the scientific study of behavior that includes criminal acts and behavior.

Various schools of thoughts of Psychology facilitate and nurture the understanding of behaviors. Following are the school of thoughts in psychology:

1. Psychoanalysis
2. Behaviorism
3. Humanistic Approach

**Psychoanalysis:** Sigmund Freud is considered the father of psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis explains the personality organization and personality development of an individual. Through psychoanalysis, the root cause of a behavior can be understood. According to this approach, behavioral problems are the result of unconscious desires, problems of fixation during phases of psychosexual development, and dysfunctions of the basic elements of personality (id, ego, and superego). These problems lead to the use of defense mechanisms. The personality described in psychoanalysis consists of the three elements id, ego and superego. It is based on the pleasure principle and seeks the gratification of needs (these needs are largely instinctual in nature). Id does not consider the consequences of the behavior. The superego is based on moral principles. While the ego is largely guided by the reality principle. The ego tries to balance the id and the superego.

The unconscious is explained as a segment of the mind of which a person is unaware. It is a storehouse of unfulfilled desires, repressed emotions, thoughts, and feelings. Too much content in the unconscious leads to personality problems. To date, psychoanalysis is useful for understanding people's unconscious desires and conflicts that lead to irrational behaviors.

**Behaviorism:** Edward Thorndike and John B. Watson are the pioneers of

behaviorism. Other notable contributors were B. F. Skinner and Ivan Pavlov.

Behaviorism is a systematic approach that rejects the idea of psychoanalysis and believes that behavior is the result of a stimulus leading to a specific response (S-R).

Behaviorism led to the understanding of voluntary behavior and behavioral conditioning. It attempts to explain behavior as a stimulus-response relationship, focuses on observable behavior, and rejects the notion of unconsciousness. Another

focus is on the impact of the environment on an individual's behavior. Most of the experiments in behaviorism have been done on animals like dogs, cats, rats and also birds (pigeons) because the basic idea was to understand the response to a stimulus. Although behaviorism leads and leads to an objective measurement of behavior and a largely scientific justification of behavior, it has nevertheless been criticized for completely ignoring individual level variables. It placed too much emphasis on objective behavior and left little room for free will. As such, it has been heavily criticized for comparing animal behavior to human behavior. Despite all the criticism, to this day behaviorism allows psychologists to give a clear prediction of behavior and it guides important behavior change interventions used in therapy.

**Humanistic Approach:** Carl Rogers emphasized a whole-person approach to understanding behavior in this approach. The humanistic approach looks at individual behavior from a subjective perspective and not as a stimulus response. In it, theorists emphasize people's free will and have discussed people's optimism in overcoming the obstacles of daily life and emerging as fully functioning individuals. This approach emphasizes the scientific and objective study of behavior. It rejects the scientific and measurement-oriented approach to studying behavior and views behavior as a human journey.

Psychology has made and can bring great transformations to humanity, as the basic function of Psychology is to be able to enhance Psychosocial health of individuals. Criminal Psychology, which is an amalgamation of Psychology and Law helps not only to understand criminal behavior and criminal intentions, but it is also to deliver interventions to criminals to control and modify such behavior.

It is difficult to meet each individual and to judge the criminal intentions of judicial authorities. Psychological theories and principles aim to assess behavior.

However, as an intense field of research, psychology also uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to study behavior scientifically. But psychology also relies on standardized tools, tests, batteries, inventories, and surveys to assess and understand behavior and attitudes.

Standardized psychological tests are used in criminal psychology to identify criminals and understand criminal behavior. Psychology as a science is used to predict, describe, and explain criminal behavior using psychological testing. Psychology as a scientific study also includes and includes a lot of research. Behavioral research allows psychologists and law enforcement officials to understand crime, criminal intent, and criminal behavior scientifically.

### **Purpose of Criminal Psychology**

The purpose of criminal psychology is to understand criminal behavior and to be able to control and modify that behavior. A criminal psychologist must assist police and law enforcement in investigating a case by developing a psychological profile of common offenders and examining the reasons for what led and led to the behavior. It's not just about understanding the perpetrators, but also the police officers involved in the case. Just as often, human error and limitations limit or delay personnel in accessing information on the case. A criminal psychologist should also create briefings and increase the knowledge of investigators to help them deal with cases of mental illness involved in crime.

Criminal psychology also aims to explore ways of dealing with investigator, offender, and victim issues that arise during the case investigation process. It aims to design and develop effective interventions to maintain and improve the mental health of professionals and also provide counseling to offenders and victims.

Criminal psychology is a specialty, and the role of the criminal psychologist can

also be understood when schools and colleges engage students in activities that improve their mental well-being and prevent them from engaging in violent acts and behaviors.

It is important to understand the mental state of adolescents in school and college who have exhibited deviant behavior and how such offenders can be reintegrated into society. Criminal psychology also intends to understand developmental issues that can lead to criminal behavior. Much research conducted in the past is an example of how criminal psychologists have attempted to understand, test, and develop theories to understand developmental issues that can lead to criminal intent and behavior.

Criminal psychology deals with and assists in the resolution of cases involving child custody decisions and conflict resolution in marital and family matters. It is also important to note that criminal psychologists are also required to review and verify mental health certificates issued by criminals. And, to offer interventions and advice to improve their condition. Criminal psychology in India is a growing field and the purpose of criminal psychology indicates its essential need today. The intervention of criminal psychologists in the legal system is the need of the hour.

### **What is Motivation and its Importance?**

Motivation is what requires a person to do something. It is the process that drives a person to make decisions and follow paths to achieve desired goals. The process includes biological, psychological, and environmental factors that influence behavior. Motivation plays a significant role in business, education, health, the environment, and society in general. Individuals in the workplace learn to adapt and be productive when motivation drives them to develop skills, get creative, make plans, and set personal goals. Motive to take corrective action is required when people are

faced with fluctuating circumstances in their health and in the community or environment. A sick person is motivated to change their lifestyle to improve their health. People who become aware of society's problems and solutions engage in community development because they want to improve society.

### **Factors That Influence Motivation**

There are two types of factors that affect our motivation - extrinsic and intrinsic.

#### **Intrinsic Motivation**

Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation driven by interest or enjoyment in the task itself and existing within the individual rather than relying on external pressures. Intrinsic motivation has been studied by social and educational psychologists since the early 1970s. Research has found that it is usually linked with high academic achievement and having fun among students. When can you say that a person, for example a student, is motivated? For example, students are likely to be motivated if they attribute their educational outcomes to internal factors they can control (e.g., luck), interested in mastering a subject rather than simply memorizing to achieve good grades.

#### **Example**

A teenager who doesn't want to be constantly bugged by her mom for not taking out the trash now makes it a point to do so every morning. Another example is a salesperson who is determined to meet his sales goal because he has been promised travel rewards (received a reward) by his employer.

#### **Extrinsic Motivation**

Extrinsic motivation comes from outside the individual. Common extrinsic motivations are rewards such as money and grades, coercion, and threats of punishment. Competition is generally extrinsic because it encourages the performer to

win and beat others, rather than to enjoy the activity's intrinsic rewards. A crowd cheering for the person and trophies are also extrinsic incentives. Social psychological research has shown that extrinsic rewards can lead to injustice and a subsequent reduction in intrinsic motivation. In one study demonstrating this effect, children who expected to be (and were) rewarded with a ribbon and a gold star for drawing pictures, on subsequent observations spent less time playing with the drawing materials than children, who were assigned an unexpected reward condition and children who received no external reward.

### **Example**

When people enjoy baking for others or gardening because they calm it down, or practicing a difficult piece of music on the piano because they enjoy a challenge, they are intrinsically motivated.

### **Drives**

Drives and desires can be described as a lack or need that activates goal-directed or stimulus- directed behavior. These are thoughts that arise within the individual and may not require external stimuli to encourage the behavior. Basic biological drives essential to human survival could be triggered by deficiencies such as hunger, which motivate a person to seek food. On the other hand, there are more subtle drives, such as the desire for praise and approval, that motivate a person to behave in a manner that is pleasing to others. The role of external rewards and stimuli, on the other hand, can be seen in the example of giving animals upbringing and treating them when they perform a trick correctly. The treat motivates the animals to consistently perform the trick, even later when the treat is removed from the process.

### **Motivation as Arousal**

Motivation is not exclusively a psychological concept. In addition to

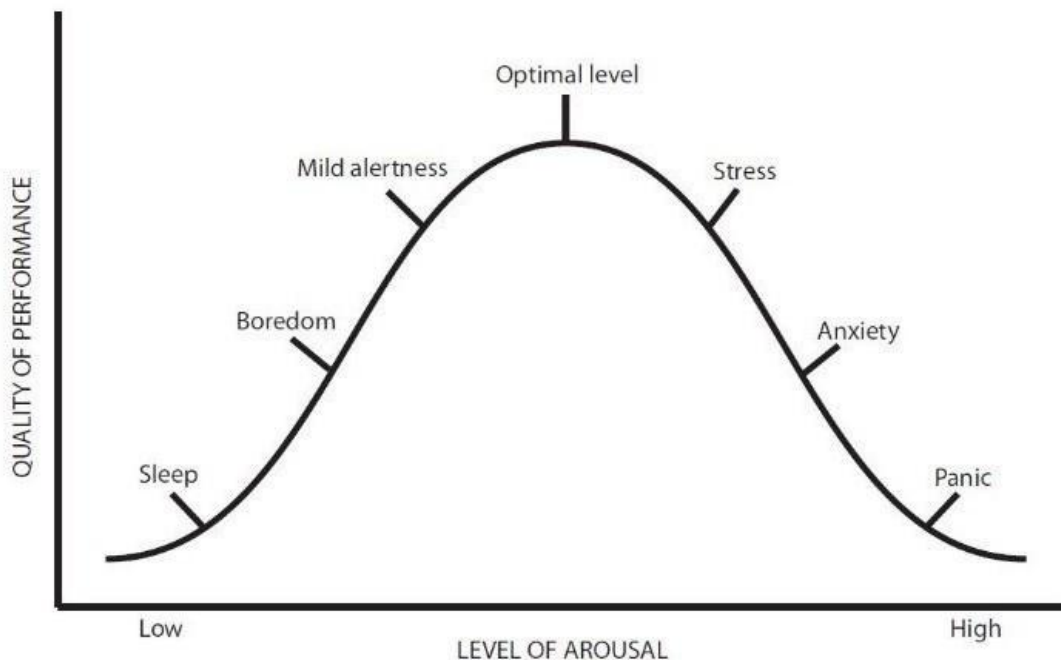


intellectual and emotional interest, a person's tendency to engage in a behavior is determined, at least in part, by the person's physiological state. An important physiological factor is the level of arousal, which refers to the general readiness for activity of the human organism. Research recognizes arousal as the fuel of behavior because it is the primary key to the initiation, strength, and persistence of all motivational behaviors.

It must be remembered that one can be aroused without being motivated, but the person cannot be motivated without being aroused. When a difficult task is expected, the need for motivational arousal increases, while when an easy task is expected, it decreases. The relationship between levels of arousal and learning is summarized in the figure below, which shows that people learn very little at either a very low level (almost asleep) or at a very high level (almost panicking). People learn best at an intermediate level of arousal. That is, if the learners are at a very low level of arousal, the teacher should do things that are likely to increase arousal. On the other hand, if learning is hampered by too high arousal levels, the teacher should do things that are likely to lower arousal levels.

Operatively defined by sensory alertness, motor activity, and emotional reactivity, arousal is the driving force behind the behavior of all organisms according to their responses to stimuli.

The three elements of the operational definition are influenced by the electrocortical, behavioral, and autonomic mechanisms, which provide a framework for understanding the contribution of arousal to motivation.



### Factors Influencing Arousal

Four factors have been recognized to influence arousal level's relationship with performance, these are:

1. Skill level,
2. Personality,
3. Trait anxiety, and
4. Complexity of the task

Knowing the four influences above helps individuals exercise control over their arousal levels and improve their performance.

Skill levels can increase an individual's flexibility to give better performance beyond his optimal level of arousal. The more skill a person must complete the task, the better he can perform in a state lesser or greater arousal. If an individual lacks the skills required to complete the task correctly due to the task being unfamiliar, he is likely to experience high levels of arousal which only hinders with performance. But if he has already mastered the skill needed and has experience in performing the task,

chances are greater that he will correctly complete the task in greater than optimal arousal levels.

Personality is another factor that influences a person's optimal level of arousal. Whether a person is introverted or extraverted has been discovered to be a major factor in arousal-seeking behavior. Extraverts tend to dampen the effects of arousal and therefore seek out highly arousing activities to achieve optimal levels of arousal. Whereas introverts, due to their sensitivity to stimulation, seek less arousing activity and require minimal arousal activity to reach their optimal level of arousal. This would suggest that an extravert would be able to perform better than an introvert if engaged in the same highly stimulating activity.

Task complexity refers to the level of conscious attention a person must pay to a task in order to complete it. Lower levels of conscious attention and higher levels of arousal can pair well with low-complexity skills, as simple tasks require fewer decisions. However, high complexity skills require a lot of decision making and focus, so lower arousal levels are likely. For example, driving on an unfamiliar road is perceived as more complex than driving on a familiar road, such as a street. The journey from home to work. Riding the unfamiliar road would require a more conscious awareness of learning unfamiliar driving conditions, requiring a low level of arousal to maintain optimal performance.

Trait anxiety is also thought to influence optimal arousal. Thoughts of failure, negative self-talk, and lack of confidence tend to dominate the perception of those with high trait anxiety, making even a simple task more complex and arousing. A person with low trait anxiety is seen as able to handle a higher-pressure threshold because they are less likely to fall into the same harmful thoughts. The lower the trait anxiety, the more likely a person is to believe they can successfully complete the

task, hence the lower task complexity and arousal levels.

### **Under Arousal**

A low resting heart rate and shallow breathing are considered indicators of physiological under arousal. When a person is under aroused, there is no driving force to motivate him or her to behave and meet his or her needs. For example, boredom is a sign of under arousal. The effect of under arousal has been studied through boredom and sensory deprivation research. Sensory deprivation refers to a person's sensory and emotional experience in a fixed environment. In one study, 19 volunteers were placed in a sensory deprivation chamber that completely muffled sound and blocked light. Each participant spent 15 minutes in the chamber seated on a padded chair. Before being sent to the chamber, each participant received a hallucination scale questionnaire, out of 19 participants, 9 scored in the upper 20th percentile (predisposed to hallucinations), while the other 10 scored in the lower 20th percentile. People in the upper percentile reported hallucinations and delusions when in the chamber. The remaining 9 participants who were not identified as having a predisposition to hallucinations also reported experiencing hallucinations or delusions, but to a lesser extent than the high percentile group.

The experiment supported arousal theories because the brain prefers constant and moderate levels of arousal from the environment, constantly trying to reach its optimal level of arousal. In the absence of external arousal, participants had to rely on internal cognitive and behavioral methods to increase arousal. Under arousal is a general tendency of antisocial people and those involved in criminal and socially deviant activities. Under arousal is also evident in disorders such as conduct disorder and antisocial personality disorder.

## **Over Arousal**

Increased heart rate, dilation of the pupils, and changes in breathing have been attributed to overstimulation and physiological overarousal. The effects of overstimulation and over-arousal can be seen in the form of stress as it triggers increased arousal and compromises optimal functioning. For example, serious illness, death, divorce or separation, mental illness, severe disability, abuse or violent crime, trouble with the police, and witnessing violence. Sensation seeking is a personality trait. By engaging in risky behaviors, the main goal of the sensation seekers is to increase the level of inner arousal. It has been found that individuals with high levels of sensation-seeking engage in behaviors such as speeding, while those with low levels tend to drive within the prescribed speed limit. One of the studies found that high sensation users were more likely to use recreational drugs such as ecstasy, marijuana, alcohol, and tobacco than low sensation users. The study delved further and found a strong correlation between a high-sensation-seeker who uses drugs and drug use within their friend group. The results show that sensation seekers look to drugs to give them a quick arousal boost.

## **Optimal Arousal Theory**

Why are some people motivated to accomplish a difficult task while others are too stressed to keep going? Robert Yerkes and John Dodson (1908) investigated this question. Based on their research, they developed the Optimal Arousal Theory (OAT).

What is arousal in psychology? In Yerkes and Dodson's theory, arousal is the state of being vigilant, motivated, and stimulated. OAT is a theory that explains what causes motivation: the desire to take part in a task. Motivation is the difference between "I can do this!", and "I can't do this. It's too hard!"

Yerkes and Dodson said that motivation is associated to our level of arousal. They considered that our level of arousal establishes our motivation. This has a negative and a positive side. When we are under-excited or stimulated (bored) or over-excited (overwhelmed), we lack the motivation to complete the task. If we are aroused or stimulated (challenged) just enough, we will be motivated to engage in the task.

### **Example**

Liana is a novice rock climber and she's trying to find her next climb spot. She has three spots in mind that she wants to check out. The first spot took her an hour to finish, but she was left unsatisfied because she felt like it was too easy. The second spot she tried was too difficult and she left because she felt frustrated. The last spot was perfect for Liana because it took her around 2 hours, but it was exactly right in terms of difficulty. Liana chooses the second spot as her new location for climbing!

OAT is all about the optimal level of arousal. Anything too difficult or too easy will not motivate us. We must keep challenging ourselves to stay interested in something. When we are optimally aroused and optimally motivated, we are more likely to perform optimally.

Your particular "sweet spot" in terms of arousal is exceptional to you. Your optimal level of arousal may look more unique than someone else's. It will also change depending on the task. If you are good at math, your optimal level of arousal will be higher than if you struggle in math. The main idea is to define and reach an optimal level of arousal so that you will be optimally motivated!

### **The Importance of Optimal Arousal Theory in Psychology**

The OAT teaches us that how hard or easy a task is will influence our

motivation. Something that is too hard for us or way too easy will lead to less motivation and probably negative results in our performance. The OAT helps us better understand why we might feel more motivated to engage in one task over another.

If you're feeling overworked at your job and struggling to complete your tasks, you might be superstressed (arousal is too high) or super bored (arousal is too low). If you need motivation to do something you really don't feel like doing, you can either lower your stress or increase the difficulty of the tasks to increase your motivation.

### **The Yerkes-Dodson Mice Experiment: Stress and the OAT**

Yerkes and Dodson were interested in finding out how stress affects our arousal levels. Too much stress can lead to physical and psychological problems. You probably think of stress as a bad thing, right? Actually, small amounts of stress are a good thing! Yerkes and Dodson found that a certain level of stress (an optimal level) increases arousal and motivation.

Yerkes and Dodson designed a small maze for mice. They added black and white doors to the maze as options that the mice could choose depending on the lighting. If a mouse chose the wrong door, the mouse received a slight electric shock. The slight tremors continued until the mouse figured out that it had to choose the other door.

These mild shocks improved the mice's performance. Yerkes and Dodson experimented with increasing the voltage of the shocks. At a certain point, the mice's performance peaked and began to decline. Increasing the voltage further resulted in further degradation in performance. The mice were too stressed!

Other studies have reproduced Yerkes-Dodson's study (without electric shocks) and generated similar results. A certain amount of stress enhances our arousal and our motivation, and it increases our performance. That certain or "optimal"

amount is unique for each person and each task. If the stress gets too high, arousal goes up, motivation goes down, and performance goes down as well.

### **Motivation and the Optimal Arousal Theory**

The OAT is all about what is the best optimal or moderate level of arousal in relation to motivation. What if we are below or above this optimal arousal level? What if we are under aroused or over aroused? Well, Yerkes and Dodson agreed that too little or too much arousal negatively affects our motivation and performance.

Another word for arousal is stimulation. If a task doesn't excite us, we don't want to do it. We may feel tired or stuck from the task because it is so boring! When we're overstimulated, it can stress us out. We may feel frustrated or overwhelmed because the task is just too difficult. That doesn't mean it will always be too hard; it just means we need to change our arousal level or something about the task. Human motivation works best at a moderate level of arousal.

### **The Yerkes-Dodson Law**

The OAT is established under the Yerkes-Dodson law. As you probably speculated from the name, Yerkes and Dodson based this law on their studies of stress and motivation. The principle of this law is that arousal and motivation increase together until they reach a certain point. Once arousal exceeds an optimal level and becomes too high, motivation begins to wane.

### **Example**

John owns a restaurant and is stressed out during lunch hours. He finds that the stress of the lunch break causes him to make mistakes at work. When he works purposefully to remain calm, he doesn't feel as rushed and feels like he can handle



things better. He also makes fewer mistakes! Henow tries to keep his composure (lower his arousal level) when things get hectic in the restaurant.

Overall, the optimal arousal theory can be a useful tool in criminal psychology for understanding the underlying motivations behind criminal behavior and identifying potential risk factors for criminal activity. However, it is important to note that the theory is just one of many factors that may contribute to criminal behavior, and it should be used in conjunction with other psychological theories and approaches.

## Chapter Two

### Jeffrey Dahmer; The Rise Of Milwaukee Cannibal

This chapter delivers a historical outline of the life of Jeffrey Lionel Dahmer. Dahmer's lifespan is represented over a historical time of approximately 35 years, from his birth in 1960 until his death in 1994. Jeffrey Lionel Dahmer was born on May 21, 1960 in Milwaukee Evangelical Deaconess Hospital. During his birth, his parents lived at the house of his grandparents' number 77 in West Allis, Wisconsin. His father, Lionel Dahmer, graduated from and studied analytical chemistry for his master's degree. His mother, Joyce Dahmer, was a housewife but previously worked as a typist. Lionel was an analytical thinker, while Joyce was considerably more emotional. Joyce became pregnant shortly after marriage and experienced a difficult pregnancy that strained the marital relationship. During her pregnancy, Joyce experienced prolonged sessions of nausea, dizziness, headaches and unusual physical stiffness, which doctors treated with medications that included morphine and phenobarbital. When Jeffrey was brought home from the hospital, he had a brace on his leg, which he wore for about four months. In the rest of his childhood, he was a normal, healthy child. Joyce never agreed to breastfeed and within a week, gave up completely. As tension grew between Joyce and her mother-in-law, Lionel, Joyce, and Jeffrey moved into a house on the east side of Milwaukee. While Joyce stayed home to meet Jeffrey, Lionel continued his studies. By this time, Jeffrey nodded happily and was a babbling child enjoying his spider walker. He was playing with his many carefully stacked stuffed toys and wooden blocks - and then suddenly pushed himself. At 18 months, Jeffrey walked independently for the first time. He had a gifted interest in animals and had a goldfish and a pet turtle. Shortly after turning two, Jeffrey memorized his first prayer.

The family moved to Ames, Iowa in September 1962 when Lionel was beginning his doctorate at Iowa State University. The move to the new house didn't seem to bother Jeffrey, who was pleased to sit in his room with his stuffed animals. In fact, moving to a rural location brought new pets and insects for Jeffrey to observe. Lionel and Joyce's relationship deteriorated, and Lionel spent increasing amounts of time in the lab to avoid heated and often physical disagreements. During his first year in Iowa, Jeffrey was prone to throat and ear infections and also had mild pneumonia. At other times, Jeffrey was a happy, cheerful child who enjoyed going to the zoo with the family. He was an energetic and expressive boy who loved to play on the swings and in the sandpit and to be read to in the evenings. He played with big blocks and rode a small tricycle. One night while Lionel and Jeffrey were riding their bikes, Jeffrey noticed an injured nighthawk. In keeping with his fascination with animals, he insisted to take it home. The Dahmer's nursed the bird until they were finally able to release it, much to Jeffrey's delight.

In the fall of 1964, Lionel swept away the remains of small animals killed by civet cats from under the house. He put the bones in a bucket and brought them inside. Jeffrey collected the tiny bones and stared at them intently. He seemed oddly amused by the brittle, crackling sound they made when he repeatedly dropped them on the floor, like fiddlesticks, Jeffrey laughed. Lionel recalled his passing belief that a fascination with bones might lead to a medical or research career or nothing, as Jeffrey had previously been uninterested in visiting the lab.

As Jeffrey got bigger and livelier, he started playing more games. Notably, he showed little interest in competition and avoided physical contact. He preferred games that were non-confrontational and based on the themes of stalking and obfuscation. When Jeffrey played games like hide and seek and ghosts in the graveyard, he was

completely absorbed. Although Jeffrey remained very shy, he was not without friends. He attended Whittier School and explored the neighbourhood with other boys. They explored an animal testing facility and threw bricks through the windows of vacant houses in the more deserted areas. At the age of six, Jeffrey was taken home by the police for this reason, embarrassing Dahmer's.

As their time in Iowa ended, fighting between Lionel and Joyce escalated. Around the age of six, Jeffrey began to turn more inward, and his mood slowly darkened as he sat quietly and alone. Nevertheless, his fascination with animals and insects persisted, and his curiosity and imagination were nurtured by snakes, toads, fish, rabbits, and his pet cat, Buff. Lionel was working to complete his PhD, and Joyce became increasingly withdrawn and depressed and endured another difficult pregnancy.

In April 1967, the Dahmer family moved into a rented home in Barberton, Ohio. Jeffrey, who was able to bring Frisky with him, sat in the back of the car, neither excited nor anxious, just blank and unemotional. In Barberton, Jeff occasionally displayed flashes of the energetic and carefree behaviour he displayed in Iowa. He befriended Lee, a boy who lived in the house behind him. In the afternoons they played together and went trick or treating together. At school, Jeffrey displayed his continuing pattern of disinterest, non-participation, and apparent inability to trust others. Once he tried to connect to another. Jeffrey liked an assistant teacher at school because she was nice to him. Jeffrey gave her a bowl of tadpoles but later found that she gave them to Lee. As revenge for the teacher's betrayal, Jeffrey sneaked into Lee's garage and poured motor oil into the bowl.

When Jeffrey entered Bath Primary School he was characteristically reserved. Jeffrey was described by classmates as funny and odd. Although Jeffrey was tall for his age, he did not bully other children, but when one was hurt his reaction was laughter,

not help. Despite his inability to connect with or trust his peers, adults described Jeffrey as polite and very willing to please. At Eastview Junior High School, Jeffrey became superficial friends with a few other boys, including David Borsvold. Adults and classmates viewed the tall, skinny, two-headed boy with large glasses as quiet, reserved, and smart, but also different and isolated. Jeffrey avoided group activities and sports, but it wasn't like he was totally isolated in a corner while his parents tried to involve him in school and social activities.

One night as the family was eating chicken for dinner, 10-year-old Jeffrey asked what would happen if they put the chicken bones in bleach. Since Jeffrey seemed to show initiative with scientific curiosity, Lionel and Jeffrey carried out the experiment. Jeffrey soon began experimenting with chemicals and had a huge collection of insects in formaldehyde jars. He learned to use acid to remove the flesh from small animals and preserved the dissected parts in formaldehyde. Jeffrey kept his growing collection in a secluded outbuilding at the back of the property and established a cemetery behind the cottage. He appeared to his childhood friends fascinated by the decomposition of these animals until only the bones remained.

### **The Silent Loner**

When Jeffrey Dahmer was 12 years old, he showed little interest in sports and even less in academic pursuits as a boy. Although he seemed intrigued by a Boy Scout trip to New Mexico, he made no effort to remain with the Boy Scouts upon his return. Jeffrey's interests remained limited and expressed only in solitude. For a short time, he engaged in the rather solitary pastime of target shooting with a bow and arrow. However, following his pattern, he quickly lost interest. Jeffrey mostly remained locked in his room or shuffled aimlessly around the house, giving the impression that he was aimless and unattached. During his puberty, he had a random physical exploration with

another boy, Eric Tyson, who had formerly hiked and fished with Jeffrey. The two undressed, touched, kissed, and caressed, but went no further. They met three or four times but stopped for fear of discovery. Because Dahmer's emotional response was generally muted, there is little evidence of his emotional response to his burgeoning sexuality or family discord.

Between the ages of 12 and 14, Jeffrey rode his bicycle around the neighborhood collecting roadkill in plastic bags. Secluded in the shed, Jeffrey experimented with the animal remains and later buried them in his private cemetery. While his father saw only his passivity and isolation, his brother David once witnessed a dissection and was aware of the graveyard, which he viewed as a friendly service. Jeffrey had no close relationships other than the most casual or comfortable. While the world outside his mind seemed stagnant and his conversations limited to answering questions with one-word answers, his onanistic fantasies flourished. At first, he fantasized about having sex with attractive young men, but Jeffrey admitted that over time he was overcome with visions of murder and dismemberment. Social isolation and sadistic images were therefore integral to his adolescent development.

Jeffrey reported that one of his decorative fantasies happened when he was 15. Dahmer had a fanatical attraction with a jogger who frequently walked past his house. Dahmer was attracted to the man's impressive physique but could not imagine how he would meet him and feared that he would be rejected. As part of the fantasy, he constructed a plan in which he hid in the bushes near the jogger's trail. As the man passed, Dahmer jumped out, hit him with a baseball bat, and dragged the unconscious body into the woods, where he lay down and eventually had sexual intercourse with him. Dahmer wanted the man to be completely subordinate to him, a submissive object for his lustful worship. One day Dahmer picked up the bat and waited at the side of the

road for the stranger to pass, but the jogger never left this particular fantasy unfulfilled. Increasingly, the stillness of the dead seemed to become the primary focus of his growing sexual desire.

In his senior year, Jeffrey was described as (a) an eccentric loner with an odd fascination with dead animals, (b) a social outcast who had significant difficulty relating to others, (c) an alcoholic, and (d) an unpredictable prankster. Which it was only amused by the bizarre. Jeffrey was known for drunk stumbling around the local Summit Mall, harassing customers and pretending to be having epileptic seizures. Although his classmates laughed at his antics, such as bitching like a sheep or playing retarded, they were still concerned that you should not get in the way wanted when he went off.

Just two weeks after graduating, Jeffrey Dahmer committed his first, seemingly spontaneous, murder. Due to the acrimonious divorce, Jeffrey was left to his fantasy world. Lionel stayed in a motel and Joyce took David to visit her family in Wisconsin.

### **First Kill**

On June 18, 1978, Jeffrey was driving home at around 5 p.m. after drinking too much. He noticed a hitchhiker and was immediately attracted to the young man, Steven Hicks, who had removed his shirt. Jeffrey claimed that for several years prior to meeting Hicks he had fantasies about meeting an attractive hitchhiker and enjoying him sexually and admitted the idea came from within. Dahmer, lost in his imagination, stopped and offered Hicks a ride to the house on West Bath Road where they could drink beer and smoke marijuana. Hicks accepted. In Jeffrey's bedroom, they talked, drank, and smoked. together he could say that Hicks was not gay.

After a few hours, Hicks wanted to leave. Dahmer tried to persuade him to stay, but Hicks was adamant Jeffrey reported that the guy wanted to leave, and he didn't

want him to leave. In a seemingly unplanned attempt to exert control of the situation, Dahmer retrieved the barbell and hit Hicks over the head, not knowing how else to keep him there. He proceeded to strangle Hicks with the barbell by themes such as death and possessions. Jeffrey claimed that he paced the house before undressing Hicks' body and masturbating over the body. Jeffrey admitted to being sexually aroused by the captivity. Later that night, Dahmer hid the body in the crawl space under the house. Dahmer could not sleep.

The next morning, he placed the sacks in a large, buried drainpipe behind the house. To attach the bags, he shattered the bones and left the evidence there for about two and a half years. Dahmer retained no memories of this incident. He burned Hicks' wallet, ID, and clothes. He then drove to the bridge over the Cuyahoga River, where he threw in the hunting knife and the necklace and bracelets that Hiccup was wearing.

### **The Build-up**

The divorce was finalized on July 24, 1978, when Joyce was awarded custody of David. In August, she broke the custody agreement and moved to Wisconsin with David. Joyce asked Jeffrey not to tell Lionel. Later that month, when Jeffrey was throwing a party, Lionel and his girlfriend Shari Jordan visited the house. Jeffrey, looking like a lost little boy, finally told Lionel that Joyce and David left him alone with no money, very little food, and a broken refrigerator. Lionel and Shari moved in immediately. Jeffrey, although ashamed of the family disorder, respected Shari as an individual. Although things went well initially, Shari soon discovered Jeffrey's alcoholism. Shari found Jeffrey passed out drunk and immediately told Lionel. Two weeks later, Jeffrey appeared to quit drinking, but Lionel and Shari confronted Jeffrey about stealing two Shari's rings. Apparently, it was stolen by one of Jeffrey's friends and he knew about it. Lionel Dahmer reported that Jeffrey seemed offended by the



accusation and wanted to leave the room. As Shari ordered him to sit down, she flashed anger: Shari had seen the other Jeff, the one peeking out from behind the dull, rigid mask.

Together, Lionel and Shari convinced Jeffrey to give the college idea a try, though he showed the usual dance of reluctance and dour approval. In September 1978, Jeffrey enrolled at Ohio State University in Columbus to pursue a career in business, and it was there that he learned that Frisky had died. Dahmer lived with three roommates in the Ross House dormitory, room 541. College started well, but by the end of the first quarter he had dropped out and had an overall average of .45. He returned home in December and Lionel picked up his things. Lionel learned from his roommates that Jeffrey stayed drunk and sold his blood plasma to secure the necessary funds for alcohol. Additionally, Jeffrey's behaviour was described as erratic, unpredictable, and lonely, and he was once questioned about stealing a radio, watch, and money from the dorm.

With Jeffrey unable to return to college, Lionel issued an ultimatum: either Jeffrey quits drinking and finds employment, or he joins the armed forces. Jeffrey continued drinking and was eventually arrested for drunkenness and disorderly conduct. Lionel drove Jeffrey to the Army recruiting office on December 29, 1978, where Jeffrey filled out the necessary forms as if he were on autopilot. On January 12, 1979, enlisted in the US Army at Fort McClellan in Anniston, Alabama, hoping to train as an MP. He was posted to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, where he instead underwent residency. Ironically, the six-week paramedic training course was the only sustained training he undertook that he could use deadly.

Army colleagues described Jeffrey as a normal, extremely intelligent person who could crack jokes. However, he was a loner who spoke little about his home life,

giving the impression that he was hiding something. They also recalled his remarkable ability to drink and the very different Dahmer who emerged: one who was moody, aggressive, and defiant. As always, nobody really knew Jeffrey Dahmer. Jeffrey remained an enigma who wore the uniform with pride, who had all these brains, was a good medic and never got anywhere fast. Eventually, Private First-Class Dahmer's hangover and missed duty days led to his discharge under an Army regulation relating to alcohol and drug abuse. Upon his release, Jeffrey said to the officer in charge that one day you will hear from me again.

In March 1981, Dahmer was discharged from the Army at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. His belongings were shipped home, but the Dahmers were unsure of Jeffrey's whereabouts until about a month later, when he contacted them from Miami. He worked at Sunshine Subs seven days a week. He spent his money on alcohol and was eventually forced to camp on the beach. During this time, Jeffrey befriended Julie, a British woman working illegally in the United States. She wanted them to marry to legitimize her position, but neither Dahmer nor his relatives agreed to the proposed arrangement. After six months in Miami, Dahmer finally called home when he was utterly penniless. Instead of sending him money, Sharia agreed to send a plane ticket home, which he accepted.

Lionel either dropped him off at Summit Mall or let him in the car. Once alone again, Jeffrey returned to drinking and within two weeks of his return he was arrested for drunkenness and disorderly conduct. He continued to drink for the next several weeks, often losing his glasses or wallet or forgetting where he parked his car. Eventually, Lionel and Shari decided that Jeffrey should move in with his elderly paternal grandmother, Catherine Dahmer. In exchange for housekeeping, Jeffrey would have room and board. Although initially not enthusiastic about the idea of living with

his grandmother, Jeffrey soon found the arrangement comfortable and stayed there from 1982 to 1988. Jeffrey mowed the lawns, shovelled the sidewalks, and helped in the flower beds while his grandmother cooked the food. The only ban imposed on Jeffrey was that he smokes outside.

Shortly after arriving in Wisconsin, Jeffrey found employment as a phlebotomist at the Milwaukee Blood Plasma Centre. He had to draw blood from volunteers using the skills acquired as an army medic. Although he had no particular interest in it, he saw it as a way to make money. During this period, Dahmer once took a vial and drank the blood but did not enjoy it or find it sexually stimulating. His employment was terminated after about 10 months due to poor performance. In August 1982, Dahmer was arrested and fined for indecent exposure at the Wisconsin State Fair.

Jeffrey noted that beginning in 1983 he consciously tried to fix his life. He began attending church and reading the Bible. For nearly two years he appeared to be successful in suppressing his sexual fantasies. This was a remarkable feat considering he was unemployed and marked by the same lack of structure that facilitated his earlier actions. This time, however, he was supported by his grandmother and the church, and it was widely considered a time of hope. However, during all this time he had no close friends, did not seem to trust anyone, and never pursued stable relationships.

Jeffrey's grandmother also found a fully clothed male mannequin with which he engaged in sexual acts and fantasies. Jeffrey told Lionel that he stole it on impulse as a challenge and disposed of it as soon as it was discovered. As the mannequin was unsatisfactory, he spent more time in the bathhouses but was disinterested in sex. He wanted to find a way to just spend the night with his companions, enjoying them and being in complete control. He therefore viewed sex as nothing more than a selfish act of gratification. Jeffrey noted that he was still quite able to cope with his urges, but he

wanted to find a way to please him without hurting anyone, but he trained himself to see people as objects of potential pleasure consider.

In June 1986, Jeffrey began using sleeping pills as the next step in his experiments to gain total control over people without harming them. Jeffrey was prescribed the pills after telling doctors he had trouble sleeping during the day because he worked the late shift. In a private room at the bathhouse, Jeffrey gave his temporary partners a drink laced with the pills. He experimented with dosing, eventually using five pills at a time to gain about four hours of complete control to enjoy his unconscious partner. Although he was not normally able to achieve an erection or orgasm while his partner was conscious, Dahmer became sexually aroused by the imprisonment of the motionless body, and his tastes grew more peculiar as his fantasies grew more intense. He became sexually aroused by the sound of the hearts and bellies of his sleeping lover. He stunned multiple partners without harming them. However, when one of the guests, unwilling to press charges, required medical attention, Jeffrey was banned from the bathhouses.

In the nine years since Hicks' murder, Jeffrey has not committed a murder. However, along with his escalating criminal career, his bizarre fantasies slowly developed and were facilitated by his alcohol abuse and experimental rehearsals on his unconscious victims. Shortly after his probationary period ended, the murders of Dahmers resumed. He killed once in 1987, twice in 1988, once in 1989, four times in 1990, and eight times in 1991, the last multiple murders being separated by days.

In November 1987, Jeffrey met Steven Tuomi outside Club 219. The two took a taxi to the Ambassador Hotel, where Jeffrey checked into his name and the two continued drinking. Jeffrey prepared Tuomi's drink, and they had sexual relations before Tuomi fell unconscious. At some point thereafter, Jeffrey also passed out from

drinking too much. The next morning, Jeffrey woke up lying on Tuomi's body. Tuomi's head hung over the edge of the bed and blood came out of his mouth. The scene itself told the story: Jeffrey's forearms were injured and Tuomi had broken ribs. Jeffrey claimed he had no intention of killing Tuomi and had no recollection of the incident. I have tried to dig it up but have no recollection of it. Interestingly, Jeffrey could remember every murder in detail except for this one, in which he couldn't even remember what happened to the bottle of rum he was drinking. "I was totally shocked; I just couldn't believe it. Shock, horror, panic, I just couldn't believe it had happened again after all these years of doing nothing like this".

The next Sunday, while his grandmother was at church, Dahmer removed the head. He disembowelled and masturbated while examining the color and texture of internal organs. He then cut the meat into smaller pieces, which he placed in garbage bags. He wrapped the skeleton in an old bed sheet and smashed the bones with a sledgehammer. On Monday morning he threw everything away as garbage. However, Dahmer keeps the skull for about a week to fuel and sustain his fantasies. To clean it, he boiled it in Soilex and undiluted bleach, but it became too stiff and after smashing it, he threw it away.

On January 17, 1988, Jeffrey met James Doxtator at a bus stop in front of Club 219. Doxtator was one of the youths who stalked outside gay bars in search of a relationship. When Jeffrey met the 14-year-old Native American, he thought that Doxtator was Hispanic and 18 years old. Although he had not planned to take anyone, Dahmer offered Doxtator \$50 to pose for nudes, watch videos, and have a drink in West Allis. Jeffrey and Doxtator got involved in sexual relationships. Later, Doxtator indicated that he had to leave. "I found him attractive enough that I wanted to keep him. So, I just made him the drink". (Dahmervideos, 2012)

Dahmer choked Doxtator in his sleep. He covered the body in the fruit cellar. After his grandmother went to church, Dahmer took him into the bedroom and pretended he was alive and ended up having anal sex with the corpse. He left the body in the orchard for a week, but eventually his grandmother noticed the smell, which Jeffrey dismissed as kitty litter. However, Jeffrey dismembered the body in the basement, where he could flush the blood down the drain, and smashed the bones with a sledgehammer. Dahmer boiled the head and bleached the skull, which he kept for two weeks before it became too fragile and was destroyed. Doxtator was only identified as a victim long after Dahmer's arrest. Dahmer was unable to identify him from images, but noted two scars near each of Doxtator's nipples, about the size of a cigarette.

On September 25, 1988, Jeffrey moved to 808 North 24th Street in Wisconsin and took (a) a Guerreros skull, (b) a long black table and two statues of griffins that he would later use in his shrine, and a volume of Return of the Jedi. The next day, Jeffrey offered 13-year-old Somsack Sinthasomphone \$50, with no restrictions, to pose for photos at his apartment. He took two photos of the partially undressed boy before offering him coffee with sleeping pills. Dahmer stroked the boy and listened to his stomach. Miraculously, Dahmer let the boy go. Somsack's parents took their confused son to the emergency room and after it was discovered he was drugged they contacted the police. Jeffrey was arrested at work for sexual exploitation of a minor and second sexual assault. Jeffrey and a detective went back to the apartment to collect the photos and the mug Somsack had used. Jeffrey claimed he did not know the child's age, denied touching it, and that it had inadvertently taken drugs while drinking its pills from the special cup. Police did not find Guerrero's head, which was hidden under his clothing in a downstairs dresser in the hallway. Lionel was eventually confronted with Jeffrey's sexual behavior and Jeffrey appeared embarrassed and depressed. Jeffrey later pled

guilty to second-degree sexual assault and luring a minor for immoral purposes. While awaiting court appearance on May 23, 1989, he stayed with his grandmother.

Jeffrey then approached Judge Gardner, declaring that he was an alcoholic and stating with contrition that he was shocked by the arrest, understood the nature of his crime and was ashamed of his behavior. Jeffrey further used his manipulative articulation when he stated that,

“The one thing I have in my mind that is stable and that gives me some source of pride is my job. I’ve come very close to losing that because of my action, which I take full responsibility for. I’m the one to blame for all of this. What I’ve done has cut both ways. It’s hurt the victim and it’s hurt me. It’s a no-win situation.” (Dahmervideos, 2012)

Jeffrey was ordered to be given psychological counselling and alcohol treatment and was sentenced to five years’ probation and one year in a paid leave program, which meant he could walk to work every night. After that On Thanksgiving weekend, when Jeffrey himself was sexually abused, he petitioned the judge for an early release as he wanted to live his life as a productive member of society, declaring, "The world has enough misery without me adding more." Although Lionel asked the judge to order Jeffrey alcohol treatment, Jeffrey was released in March 1990.

### **Apartment 213**

For two months after his release, Jeffrey lived with his grandmother. On May 14, 1990, he moved to 924 North 25th Street, Oxford Apartments, Apartment 213. The apartment was in a deserted and crime-ridden area of Milwaukee where Dahmer was an invisible white man amidst the minority communities. In his apartment – for the next 14 months – Dahmer killed 12 more times, with the occasional new twist.

In the early hours of September 3, 1990, Dahmer met Ernest Miller outside an adult bookstore. Dahmer instituted his routine but had only two sleeping pills to drug Miller with. Dahmer was particularly intrigued by Miller's body and was determined to keep him. Realizing it was too late to strangle Miller without a fight, Dahmer employed a novel approach. After drinking more, he used a knife to slit Miller's carotid artery, causing him to bleed to death quickly. Dahmer took many photos during the dismemberment. He kept the head in the refrigerator for several days so that he could masturbate with it and later painted the skull. He also bleached the skeleton and kept it in his closet.

Dahmer disposed of the body but kept some body parts in the freezer. Most famously and alarmingly, Dahmer also preserved the heart and biceps for consumption. It was just another step, just an escalation, something new to satisfy. And I would cook it and then look at the picture and masturbate. Jeffrey explained the cannibalism to make him feel like they were more a part of me. Sexually stimulating. When asked why he didn't just buy skeletons from a medical supply store, Dahmer stated that it "wouldn't be a remembrance – it would have been a stranger".

While Dahmer lived and killed in the Oxford Apartments, there were often complaints about the round-the-clock noise and the sickening odor emanating from his apartment. The housing manager, Sopa Princewill, initially believed someone had died in a flat and called the police. When they received no answer at number 205, they kicked in the door, but the person was in prison. On May 4, 1991, police questioned everyone in the apartment building about the murder of one of the tenants who lived on the third floor. Eventually, Princewill confronted Jeffrey about the smell, who explained that meat in the freezer had spoiled. Princewill inspected the freezer and insisted a contrite Jeffrey fix the problem. On another occasion, Princewill confronted



Jeffrey, who stated that his aquarium had malfunctioned. He opened a barrel that appeared to contain the water from the aquarium, the stench of which made Princewill nauseous and nearly knocked him back. Jeffrey soon threw out the barrel containing a human torso. The last time Princewill confronted Dahmer was the day after Hughes was murdered, with the body lying in the bedroom.

After being unemployed, Dahmer spied on Joseph Bradehoft, who was holding a six-pack of beers at the bus stop near Marquette University. Again, Dahmer performed his routine but left the body on his bed for two days before being dismembered. He put Bradehoft's head in the freezer and stuffed the torso into the large blue barrel in which the bodies of Turner and Weinberger were decomposing. Bradehoft was later identified by his driver's license.

During that week, Dahmer showered with two corpses and began randomly proposing to men to join him in the apartment. Since he would soon be expelled, he also had to consider giving up his shrine; the skeletons; the skulls and heads; and the various parts of his body all his self-created beauty.

Dahmer had a clear enough vision of the shrine to later draw it for one of the psychiatrists who interviewed him and had already procured many of its essential features. This shrine consisted of the large black table decorated with ten skulls and flanked by two complete skeletons, either supported on stands or suspended from the ceiling. Dahmer's two griffin statues would complete the shrine. Incense sticks were burning, and the scene was lit by six blue overhead lights. Dahmer wanted to buy a large black chair to sit in front of the shrine. Dahmer explains: "It was a place for meditation, where I could feel I was drawing power from an outside source ... I was trying to get in contact with the spirits". In this transcendental Mecca Dahmer would finally experience "a place where I could feel at home". When asked what the shrine

was dedicated to, Jeffrey's powerful answer was simple: "Myself" (Dahmervideos, 2012).

### **Arrest**

On July 22, 1991, Tracy Edwards and friends met Dahmer at Grand Avenue Mall. Although almost penniless at the time, Dahmer offered each of them \$100 to come to his apartment. At trial, Edwards insisted that the invitation was only to pose for nude photographs and that there was no reference to homosexual activity. Dahmer and Edwards bought beers and the rest of the group would meet them later. However, Dahmer lied to the others, claiming that he was staying at the Ambassador Hotel. At the apartment, they drank and talked while Edwards waited for the rest of the group to arrive. Edwards claimed Dahmer complained about losing his job and was fascinated by his fish.

Dahmer then suddenly handcuffed Edwards and apparently threatened him with a knife. Edwards unbuttoned his shirt to placate Dahmer. Temporarily reassured, Dahmer led Edwards into the bedroom where they watched *Exorcist III*. Edwards claimed that Dahmer began rocking and singing and after threatening to cut out his heart, Dahmer laid his head on Edward's chest to listen to his heartbeat. In his last attempt to find a mate, Dahmer was ill-prepared. He had no sleeping pills to drug Edwards, who could assess the situation and often took bathroom breaks to find an escape. Sometimes Edwards would return to find the grumpy Jeffrey he had met a few hours earlier. At one point Dahmer seemed to forget the handcuffs and Edwards took the opportunity to punch and kick Dahmer. As Edwards rushed to the door, Jeffrey followed him, begging in vain not to leave. Jeffrey made no effort to hide the evidence that was innocently scattered around his apartment.

Edwards ran into two patrolling officers Mueller and Rauth and explained everything and they accompanied into Dahmer's room. The police reached the apartment and knocked the door where Jeff Dahmer opened the door and allowed them into enter with reluctance. In the bedroom, Mueller noticed a large knife under the bed and in an open drawer he found photographs of naked men, some alive, others in various stages of decomposition. Realizing that the scenes in some of the Polaroid photos showed the exact room he was standing in, he called Rauth to arrest Dahmer and handcuffed him. When Rauth called for backup, Mueller opened the refrigerator, where he found Oliver Lacy's head. A tormented fantasy world collided with reality that night, culminating in the grotesque reality of murder, mutilation, necrophilia, and cannibalism that gripped the world.

At the police station, Jeffrey confessed. He told Detectives Kennedy and Murphy that he had murdered 16 men in the previous four years. Still unaware of the crimes being committed, the detectives listened for nearly six hours to Jeffrey's emotionless narration of how he murdered, decapitated, fleshed, disposed of, preserved, and cannibalized the victims. The detectives appreciated Jeffrey's frankness and shame and recognized that his apparent indifference was actually a genuine lack of affect. In the almost 60 hours that Jeffrey confessed, he also explained that "I was not into torture ... This was not a hate thing ... This thing had no racism ... This was not a homosexual thing" (Dahmervideos, 2012).

As of August 22, 1991, Dahmer was charged with 15 counts of murder. At his trial, which began on January 30, 1992, Dahmer entered a guilty but insane plea. Two weeks later, on February 15, the jury found him sane and responsible for his actions. The court handed down 15 consecutive life sentences and ordered Dahmer to serve at least 936 years.

In prison, Dahmer refused offers of protective custody despite many threats to his life. On July 3, 1994, another convict attempted to cut his throat in the prison chapel, but Dahmer emerged from the incident with only minor scratches and declined to press charges. Another work detail member, 25-year-old Christopher Scarver, snapped grabbed an iron bar from a nearby training device and shattered Dahmer's skull, killing him instantly. A second occupant, 37-year-old Jesse Anderson, was mortally wounded in the same attack and died two days later. A racial motive in the murder was initially suspected, since Scarver, like many of Dahmer's victims, was black, but upon closer inspection it emerged that the killer was insane and believed to be the Son of God doing his father's bidding executed.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Exploring the mind of Jeffrey Dahmer: Optimal Arousal Theory**

This chapter specifically addresses the high-profile case of Jeffrey Dahmer, a serial killer responsible for the deaths and maiming of 17 young men. Jeffrey Dahmer is one of the serial killers whose horrific acts have led to investigations into the cause of his murderous behaviour and theories that may support his behaviour. One of the approaches to explaining his lustful murders is the arousal theory. Arousal theory is based on the scientific rationale that arousal triggers an individual's actions or behaviour. For an action to take place, a person must reach an optimal level of arousal from which to act. To put this into context, Jeffrey Dahmer's murderous exploits are thoroughly explained based on his psychological behaviour, which stimulated his quest for optimal arousal in various ways. After reaching optimal arousal, he engaged in sexual activity, through which he murdered people in cold blood.

Initially, Jeffrey Dahmer suffered from mental disorders that forced him to walk in a somewhat abnormal style. As a child in school, he did not enjoy the privilege of parental care and love. He grew up desperate, isolated from other children, and had no interest in schoolwork or even games. This mental discomfort drove him to seek excitement to have zest for life. As a young boy, Dahmer was fascinated by and studied dead insects, animals and other organisms and their decaying remains. It was not uncommon for him to collect the entrails of animals he found in the woods behind his house or by the side of the road. Once he discovered a dead dog next to a nearby road. He stripped and decapitated it, then impaled the animal on a stick near his home.

Once he finds stimulation in killing and decapitating dead animals, his level of excitement went higher that he was motivated to kill and decapitate animals more. His

stimuli to kill more enhance his motivation. Jeffrey began to turn inward more, and his mood slowly darkened as he sat quiet and alone. However, his fascination with animals and insects continued, and his curiosity and imagination were nurtured by snakes, toads, fish, rabbits and his pet cat, Buff. By the time Jeffrey Dahmer was a teenager, his interest in death had turned into an obsession. When he was in ninth grade, he was assigned a foetal pig and asked to dissect the animal as part of his class; He later took the animal home and kept the skeleton. This obsession eventually led to Jeffrey Dahmer frequently riding his bicycle down streets collecting the corpses of animals hit by cars, and later mutilating and displaying the corpses in a gruesome mutilation. After his arrest, Jeffrey Dahmer was asked why he continued mutilating animals after completing the first; his only answer was that he didn't know why "It became a compulsion and it switched from animals to humans. I still don't understand it. I don't know why" (Dahmervideos, 2012a, 6:50).

In fact, Jeffrey's symptoms indicated that he was psychotic. What drove him to kill and molest was anger and aggressiveness. To take that back a little, Jeffrey was a sadistic maniac. He clung to the thought that he might have been the cause of his mother's illness. Jeffrey and David, his younger brother, experience their parents fight all through the life and they were also neglected by them. Lionel was always concerned about his PhD, while Joyce who frequently fight with Lionel over her medication. Eventually, Joyce was hospitalized in Psychiatric institution for a month. Jeffrey and David were unharmed throughout the various fights, but Jeffrey's response was an increasing withdrawal from the family structure into the solace of fantasy. Dahmer told police that his parents were under-involved in his life and that he reportedly felt guilty about Joyce's emotional disorder. He knew Joyce was depressed after his birth, and to make sure he couldn't cause another incident, he kept to himself, saying and doing very

little to maintain the tenuous calm in the house. Jeffrey felt that he didn't belong and that if he did, he would only do harm. While he was in despair, thinking of himself as the cause of the pain aroused him to inhumane behaviour. The anger within him drove him to kill people to deal with his mental challenge.

Jeffery Dahmer's childhood is quite surprising when used to provide evidence that the forms of arousal he sought were very unnatural. Surprisingly, Dahmer showed no interest in social life and schoolwork, but was fascinated by science. His imagination and intrigues were ignited more by the science and experiments that opened to the existence of life. As a child he experimented with insects, skinning them alive and dead to see what was inside. As if that weren't enough, he dissects animals and ceremonially buries them. In this light, activities involving cutting and examining flesh excited him. He grew up devoting time and channelling his emotional discomfort into creature ascension. Given that this piqued his interest, it could have replaced killing animals as he grows devoted to murder.

Coming to his social life, he was a mystery in the school. His peers and teachers could not understand him completely. Many of them considered him to be polite and funny as he wore glasses and a tow headed boy who is quiet, reserved and smart, but also different and isolated. He often ignored school and group activities and other extra-curricular programs conducted by the institution, but it was not like as if he were completely isolated in a corner as his parents tries to involve him in activities in school and socially.

Later at the age of 15, he became extremely shy, and his posture and demeanour changed even more. He was very tensed when approached by someone and would wind a stick nervously around his fingers. He often remained in the home alone in his bedroom or stared at the television. His schoolmates remembered his obsession with

the internals of the animals and how he used to gut the fish he caught, totally enchanted by the color of the internals. He even used to press his ear against his peer's chest to hear their heartbeat. He was so enthralled and aroused by the internals of the animals as well as human beings which later in his killing spree led to mutilating and chopping of body parts and internals of the victims. He was so aroused and motivated that he had done his killing spree without break and storing especially head, heart and penis of the victims which provides him sexual and physical gratification.

His academic and scholarly life isn't different from his social life. How ever he was interested in Boy scout summer camp for a short time which he stopped soon after the camp. During his puberty, Jeffery seemingly had one random physical exploration with another boy named Eric, who used to spend time with him in hiking and fishing where they occasionally kissed and caressed each other. Jeffery had no close relationship other than casual or suitable. The world outside his mind seemed to decay and his conversation ended up answering questions with one-word answers. It is also the time when his onanistic fantasies flourished. Initially, he dreamt about having sex with pretty young men, but Jeffery later admitted that it was during this time he was charged by visions of murder and dismemberment.

Later during his adolescent life, Jeffery shows no interest in academics and social life, but has excelled at biology and he even convinced his biology teacher to take the body of dead baby pig to home which he dissected in the classroom. He peeled the skin and flesh and kept the skull. This peeling and keeping the body of the dead became a habit and he did the same with the victims he murdered. Another time he even cut the body of dead dog and mounted the dog's head on stake as a prank which shocked many of his neighbourhood friends.



One of his peculiar fantasies happened when he was 16 years old which is an obsessive fascination with a jogger who regularly run past his home. He was attracted to the man's impressive physique but was afraid to meet him and getting rejected. So he even constructed a plan to confront him and beat him till he is unconscious and have sex with the unconscious body. Dahmer desired to command over the body, unresisting to his sexual fantasy. But unfortunately, his sexual desire was unfulfilled as the jogger never ran past his home.

Yerkes and Dodson said that motivation is associated to our level of arousal. They considered that our level of arousal establishes our motivation. This has a negative and a positive side. When we are under-excited or stimulated (bored) or over-excited (overwhelmed), we lack the motivation to complete the task. If we are aroused or stimulated (challenged) just enough, we will be motivated to engage in the task.

He was so aroused with dead and unresisting body which even led to the growth of his sexual desire. He was motivated with level of arousal to have sex with dead and to dominate them. Gradually, he befriended with a boy with whom he consumed alcohol and drugs which became part and parcel of his life. Jeffrey, an almost adult, was unmotivated and aimless about his future but was driven and aroused by his sexual desire. It looked as if nothing mattered to him, not school, work, or social relations in or out of school. He simply remained in his room, lost in his inexpressible thoughts, and consoled by alcohol. His controlled affect was increasingly escorted by a lack of communication. Jeffrey never rebelled, never raised his voice, never showed his anger, never argued – but never seemed to agree with anything.

His first murder was done soon after his graduation. His parents were divorced at the time, and he was separated and isolated in his fantasy world. His first victim was a hitchhiker who has similar physique like the jogger who ran past his home. He was

attracted by the stranger and gave him the ride. Before dropping him, Jeffrey took him to his home and gave him drinks. When he planned to leave, Jeffrey asked him to stay some more time for which he refused which triggered Jeffrey and he hit him with a barbell. He then was aroused by the dead and immovable body which made him masturbate over the corpse. Next day, he chopped off the body and jerk off over the body again and cut the body into different pieces and disposed the body. This was his first massacre which was the beginning of something big.

After his heinous crime, Jeffrey was devastated as he felt that his “perverted lust” was the reason for the death of the innocent. He wept for many days and asked for forgiveness. This thought of guilt ceased him to devoid of crime for many years. He then later joined college but was eventually dropped due to a lack of GPA. He then stayed in his room and live in his fantasy world consuming alcohol and drugs. He could not find money for alcohol, so he began to sell his plasma and get funds for alcohol. Later, he was sent to Army to be trained as a military policeman but he was interested to be a medical specialist. He returned home after months of training in good physical shape, more disciplined, self-confident, and helpful.

Army colleagues described Jeffrey as a normal, extremely intelligent person, capable of cracking jokes. However, he was a loner who spoke little about his life at home, giving the impression that he was hiding something. They also recalled his remarkable ability to drink, and the very different Dahmer who emerged: one who was moody, aggressive, and defiant. Eventually, Private First-Class Dahmer's' hangover and missed duty days led to his discharge under an Army regulation relating to alcohol and drug abuse.

He later was sent to live with his grandmother in Wisconsin where he found job in a medical lab as a phlebotomist. He was required to draw blood from volunteers,

using the skills acquired as an army medic. Once he took a phial and drank the blood but did not enjoy it or find sexually arousing. At the same time, he was arrested for exhibitionism in a state fair. After the incident, he decided to straighten his life by attending the church and reading the Bible. For the next two years, he seemed to succeed in suppressing his sexual fantasies. This is the time when he is under aroused or unmotivated as he could not gain arousal in activities and his moods were against him.

Once he stole a mannequin from a store and took to his room and find sexual gratification with it. But he was not satisfied with it and he disposed as soon as his father discovered it. So he tried new techniques to find sexual satisfaction but was disinterested in sexual intercourse. He wanted to find a way to just spend the night with his companions, enjoying them and being in full control. Therefore, he viewed sex as nothing more than a selfish act of gratification. He was still on top of his urges, so he decided to find a way to satisfy without anyone. So started using sleeping pills as the next step in his experiment to have domination over people without hurting them.

He took his partners to the bathhouses and drug them by giving them sleeping pills. Although he usually cannot achieve an erection or orgasm while his partner is conscious, so he used more pills to drug the partners for more duration which will enable him to obtain about four hours of complete control to enjoy his unconscious partner. Dahmer became sexually aroused by the imprisonment of the still body, and his tastes became more and more peculiar as his fantasies grew more intense. He became sexually aroused by the sound of his sleeping lover's hearts and bellies. He drugged multiple partners without harming them. However, when one of the guests, unwilling to press charges, required medical attention, Jeffrey was banned from the bathhouses.

His sexual desires triggered more and more, and he found company with strange guys arousing. He took them to hotel rooms and drug them and found sexual satisfaction with the motionless body. He finds motionless bodies more arousing because living and conscious body will be a threat to his fantasy as he cannot control them, and they will do something of their free will which he doesn't like. He even once tried to dig out the body of an 18-year boy from graveyard because he found the body from the funeral home sexually arousing and motivating which led to the rise of his arousal level.

In the nine years since Hicks' murder, Jeffrey has not committed a murder. However, along with his escalating criminal career, his bizarre fantasies slowly progressed and were relieved by his alcohol abuse and experimental rehearsals on his unconscious victims. Shortly after his probationary period ended, the murders of Dahmer's resumed. He killed once in 1987, twice in 1988, once in 1989, four times in 1990, and eight times in 1991, the last multiple murders being separated by days.

Dahmer was vulnerable and fell into the painful trap of being a sex offender. These predicaments overwhelmed him, he couldn't do anything about them. He turned irresponsible drinking just to forget about the problems. However, this drinking had a tremendous impact on him; positive and negative. In the high moments after drinking, he felt responsible for his life and the hard times he was going through. However, drinking greatly stimulated his thinking, he had hallucinations and huge fantasies that drove him to murder.

His second murder was in 1987 and the victim was drugged and later they engaged in sexual intercourse. Next morning, he found him dead lying on the edge of the bed. Jeffrey had no intention of killing him but he had no memory of his death. He then had sex with the dead body and masturbate over the corpse. He then opened the

stomach and examined the texture and the internal organs and cut the flesh into smaller pieces.

Next murder happened after one year where the victim was fourteen-year-old boy whom he misunderstood as eighteen years old. He took him into his room and offered 50 dollars for taking his nude photos which he agreed to. While he was sleeping, he strangled him and hid the body to later have sex.

Dahmer's crimes also demonstrate the role of desensitization in optimal arousal theory. Desensitization refers to the process by which individuals become less sensitive to a particular stimulus over time. In Dahmer's case, his repeated exposure to violence and death likely desensitized him to the point where he no longer felt empathy for his victims. This desensitization likely contributed to his ability to commit his crimes without feeling remorse or guilt. One incident from Dahmer's life that illustrates the role of optimal arousal theory is the murder of Anthony Sears, which occurred in 1989. Sears was a 24-year-old man who Dahmer met at a gay bar. Dahmer lured Sears back to his apartment, where he drugged him and strangled him. After killing Sears, Dahmer engaged in necrophilia with his body before dismembering it and disposing of the remains. This incident illustrates several aspects of optimal arousal theory. First, it highlights Dahmer's desire for connection and intimacy, which he sought out in the form of his victims. Second, it demonstrates Dahmer's fascination with death and his desire for stimulation, as the act of killing and engaging in necrophilia provided him with a rush of adrenaline and a sense of power. Finally, it shows the role of desensitization in Dahmer's crimes, as his repeated exposure to violence and death likely desensitized him to the point where he no longer felt empathy for his victims.

One possible explanation for Dahmer's desensitization is his experience to violence and death during his childhood. Dahmer's father was a chemist who conducted

experiments on animals in their home, which may have exposed Dahmer to violence and death at an early age. In addition, Dahmer's parents' chaotic relationship and frequent arguments may have contributed to his desensitization towards violence.

As Dahmer got older, his desensitization continued to escalate. Increasingly interested in death and dismemberment, he frequently engaged in necrophilia and cannibalism. Dahmer often lured men back into his apartment, drugged them, and then engaged in sexual acts with their unconscious bodies. He would then dismember their bodies and dispose of their remains. Dahmer's desensitization is also evident in his choice of victims. He often targeted vulnerable individuals who were unlikely to be overlooked, such as loafers and prostitutes. By choosing victims who were already marginalized, Dahmer may have felt that their deaths were less meaningful or important.

His attraction to necrophilia can be attributed to the Optimal Arousal theory. This behaviour can be seen as an extreme manifestation of his need for stimulation and excitement. The act of killing and the taboo nature of necrophilia provided him with a sense of excitement and stimulation that he could not find elsewhere. Dahmer's need for arousal and stimulation, coupled with feelings of loneliness and rejection, drove him to engage in these extreme behaviours. After murdering his victims Dahmer had sex with them. He wanted them to be submissive and dominate them in every way. By having sex with a corpse, he was able to satisfy his desires without the risk of rejection or resistance. Additionally, because the dead body was unable to move or speak, Dahmer was able to completely dominate the situation, something that may have appealed to him on a psychological level.

Dahmer's attraction to necrophilia is that it provided a sense of comfort and familiarity. According to some experts, individuals who have experienced trauma or

abuse in their lives may develop a fixation on death to cope with their emotions. By engaging in necrophilia, Dahmer may have been attempting to connect with something that was familiar to him, albeit in a highly unusual and disturbing way. It's also worth noting that Dahmer's inclination for necrophilia may have been connected to his feelings of seclusion and loneliness. Many individuals who engage in taboo sexual fetishes do so because they feel disconnected from others and are looking for a way to connect with their desires. In Dahmer's case, his disturbing behaviour may have been a way for him to feel closer to his victims, even if it was only in death.

During his murder spree in 1990 and 1991, he lost his arousal level due to extreme exposure to violence and brutality. Dahmer's crimes were characterized by a high degree of violence and depravity, and it is possible that he became habituated to this level of arousal over time which in turn may have led him to seek out more extreme and deviant behaviours to achieve the same level of arousal.

There is some evidence to support the idea that habituation may have played a role in Dahmer's behaviour. For example, in his confession to police, Dahmer described how he initially found it difficult to kill his victims and had to use alcohol to help him overcome his inhibitions. However, over time he became more accustomed to the act of killing, and it became easier for him to do so. This suggests that he may have become habituated to the experience of violence and death.

During the period of his last two years of murder spree, Dahmer was heavily addicted to alcohol and various drugs, including cocaine, LSD, and marijuana. He used these substances to lower his inhibitions and increase his aggression, which allowed him to carry out his violent fantasies. Dahmer had a particular interest in necrophilia and cannibalism, and he found that drugs and alcohol heightened these desires, making his actions more thrilling.

One example of how drugs and alcohol played a role in Dahmer's behaviour is the murder of his twelfth victim, Matt Turner. Dahmer met Turner at a bar, where they both drank heavily and used drugs. Dahmer invited Turner back to his apartment, where he strangled him and involved in necrophiliac behaviour before dissecting his body. Dahmer later confessed that he was under the influence of drugs and alcohol at the time of the murder, which heightened his desire to engage in these behaviours.

Another example of the role of drugs and alcohol in Dahmer's behaviour is the murder of his fourteenth victim, Jeremiah Weinberger. Dahmer met Weinberger at a gay bar, where he offered him a drink with sedatives. After Weinberger was unconscious, Dahmer took him back to his apartment, where he engaged in sexual acts with him. Dahmer later strangled Weinberger and dismembered his body. In his confession, Dahmer revealed that he used alcohol and drugs to add excitement to the murder and to heighten his sexual fantasy.

Dahmer's crimes were characterized by extreme and taboo behaviour, including dismemberment and cannibalism. It is possible that his desire for sexual gratification was driven by a need for high levels of arousal. This may have been the case because he experienced a lack of arousal in his daily life due to his socially isolated and lonely lifestyle. As a result, he sought out extreme and taboo experiences to increase his level of stimulation.

However, it is important to note that arousal theory alone cannot fully explain or justify Dahmer's behavior. His actions were illegal, immoral, and caused great harm to his victims and their families. Other factors, such as his troubled childhood, mental health issues, and substance abuse, may have also contributed to his behaviour.



In conclusion, while arousal theory may have played a role in Dahmer's behaviour, it is not a sufficient explanation or justification for his crimes. His actions were the result of a complex interplay of various factors, and it is important to approach the study and understanding of serial killers with caution and sensitivity.

## Conclusion

The myth of the boogeyman has been used by parents in many cultures to discipline their children and encourage good behaviour. Parents may tell their children that the boogeyman will come and get them if they misbehave, stay up too late, or refuse to eat their vegetables, among other things.

While the use of the boogeyman myth may be effective in getting children to behave in the short term, there are concerns about the potential negative effects on a child's mental health. Being scared of a fictional monster lurking in the dark can lead to anxiety and fear, and may even result in nightmares or other sleep disturbances.

Serial killers are modern boogeymen who are real, not myth and are capable to harm others have long been a nightmare for people in the modern world. These individuals, who engage in a pattern of repeated killings, often targeting random victims, strike fear into the hearts of communities across the globe. From Ted Bundy to Jeffrey Dahmer to the Golden State Killer, the impact of their crimes has left a lasting impression on society.

One reason why serial killers are so terrifying is that their crimes are often unpredictable and seemingly random. Unlike other types of criminals who may target specific individuals or groups, serial killers often choose their victims at random, leaving people feeling vulnerable and helpless. This unpredictability can make it difficult for law enforcement officials to identify and capture the perpetrator, further adding to the fear and uncertainty.

Moreover, serial killers are often skilled at evading detection and avoiding capture. They may go years without being identified, leaving a trail of victims in their

wake. This ability to remain hidden in plain sight can be particularly frightening, as it means that the killer could be living among us, unnoticed and undetected.

In addition, the brutality of their crimes and the lack of empathy or remorse shown by many serial killers only adds to the horror. These individuals often derive pleasure or satisfaction from inflicting pain and suffering on their victims, leaving behind a wake of devastation and trauma. The callousness and lack of empathy shown by these killers can be difficult for many people to comprehend and can leave lasting scars on both the victims and their loved ones.

Furthermore, the media often sensationalizes the actions of serial killers, making them into larger-than-life figures and feeding into the public's fascination with their crimes. This can further perpetuate fear and paranoia and can also create a distorted perception of the risks of being victimized by a serial killer.

Despite advances in forensic science and law enforcement techniques, the threat of serial killers continues to haunt modern society. The fact that these individuals can operate with impunity for years, or even decades, and the unpredictability of their actions, only serves to heighten the sense of fear and anxiety. This fear can also contribute to a sense of distrust and suspicion towards others, which can further erode social cohesion and make it more difficult for communities to come together.

As a serial killer who murdered and dismembered 17 people, Dahmer's actions have been extensively studied by criminologists, psychologists, and other experts in the field of forensic psychology. Arousal theory is one of the many factors that have been identified as potentially contributing to his violent behaviour.

Arousal theory posits that individuals who engage in violent or criminal behaviours may do so because they have an abnormal level of arousal or excitement,

which they seek to satisfy through their actions. Dahmer's behaviours certainly seem to fit this pattern, as he was known to derive sexual pleasure from his violent and gruesome acts.

However, it is important to note that arousal theory alone cannot fully explain Dahmer's actions. Other factors, such as childhood trauma, substance abuse, and mental illness, have also been identified as potential contributors to his behaviour. It is likely that a combination of these factors, along with his disturbed psychological state, led Dahmer to commit the heinous crimes for which he is infamous.

Despite the many factors that may have contributed to Dahmer's behaviour, it is clear that his actions were horrific and had a profound impact on the lives of his victims and their families. The study of Dahmer's case has shed light on the importance of early intervention in identifying and addressing the factors that may lead to violent behaviour.

In particular, the study of arousal theory in relation to Dahmer's case highlights the need for mental health professionals to be able to recognize and treat individuals who may be at risk of engaging in violent or criminal behaviour. This may involve early intervention with therapy or medication, as well as close monitoring and support from family and loved ones.

In addition to the implications for mental health professionals, the study of Dahmer's case also has broader implications for our understanding of human behaviour and the complex factors that can lead to violent or criminal actions. By studying the underlying causes of such behaviour, we may be able to develop more effective strategies for preventing and addressing violent crime in our communities.

Overall, the impact of arousal theory in Jeffrey Dahmer's life is a disturbing and thought-provoking topic that raises important questions about the nature of human behaviour and the potential for violence and aggression. While there is much still to be learned about the factors that contribute to violent behaviour, the study of Dahmer's case provides valuable insights into the complex interplay of psychological, social, and environmental factors that can lead to such actions. By continuing to explore these issues, we may be able to develop more effective strategies for preventing and addressing violent crime, and ultimately create safer and more peaceful communities for all.

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**BORN IN THE WRONG BODY: A STUDY OF “*TRUTH ABOUT  
ME A HIJRA LIFE STORY*” BY A REVATHI**

A Project Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree  
of M.A in English Language and Literature of Kannur University

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**ANGADIKADAVU**



## **BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **Born In The Wrong Body: A Study Of “*Truth About Me A Hijra Life Story*”** By **A Revathi** submitted to Kannur University in partial fulfillment of the requirement of M.A. Degree in English Language and Literature is a record of bonafide study and research work carried out by **Anagha.K.V** under my supervision and guidance and no part of this work has been presented earlier for the award of any degree, diploma, title or recognition.

**Fr. Jaison Anthikkat**

**Miss. Deepa Divakar**

**Head of the Department**

**Research Guide**

## DECLARATION

I, **Anagha.K.V** hereby declare that this dissertation entitled **Born In The Wrong Body: A Study Of “*Truth About Me A Hijra Life Story*”** By **A Revathiis** is a record of original work carried out by me for the award of M.A. Degree in English Language and Literature of Kannur University, and it has not been submitted to any university for the award of any degree or diploma.

**Angadikadavu**

**01-05-2023**

**Anagha.K.V**

**C1PAEN1705**

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## Introduction

*Hijra* Community in India is the most backward community which is rejected and socially excluded from participation in any social activity. It is forced to live on the fringes of Indian society. They are rejected, ridiculed, hooted and jeered at wherever they go and any relation with them is seen as taboo. They live on the margins of Indian society and earn their livelihood by singing “*badhai*” (blessing) songs on ceremonial occasions and occasionally engage in sex. Though we talk of equal rights for every individual very boldly in democracy, the *hijras* had no right of their own till 15 April 2014, when the Supreme Court of India declared ‘transgender’ to be the ‘third gender’ in Indian law and asked the government to provide them legitimate space in India. Justice KS Radhakrishnan noted in his decision that, "Seldom, our society realizes or cares to realize the trauma, agony and pain which the members of transgender community undergo, nor appreciate the innate feelings of the members of the transgender community, especially of those whose mind and body disown their biological sex". Any individual effort by them to get a job other than their accepted profession of begging or singing “*badhai*” is thwarted by stating that they are destined to remain as they are by God.

Their everyday experience is filled with discrimination, shame and harassment leading to a strong rejection of their identity which further makes them extremely vulnerable to violence, sexual assault, molestation and rape as no cases are reported in police stations because of their silence against such happenings. Their enrolment in educational institutions is near zero and same is the case with their employment. They never avail essential services like health care due to fear of rejection and discrimination. Their access to public places like cinemas, malls, restaurants is very

limited and the use of public toilets is a big problem as there are no separate toilets for the transgender community.

Due to the reason that the *hijras* are ostracized from society they remain illiterate and are forced to pursue their occupation of begging, singing, dancing and sex work. In spite of the fact that some of them were elected as Mayor and representatives in Municipal elections in past years, their win was a result of the anger of voters against the prevailing candidates rather than their own ability. As a result, during their tenure they could not do much and were forced to work as pawns in the grab of influential people. Our little knowledge about their lived reality, difference, culture and experience in such ostracizing circumstances is very limited and we lack knowledge about what undergoes inside their existence as very minimal attempts have been made on their side to express themselves through writing stories, songs and autobiographies. As a result no government or social organizations can frame action plans or policies to ameliorate their situation and conditions. The government orders that have followed the judgement have asked its departments to ensure acceptance of transgender community as a distinct cultural identity and have stated the need of doing more to ameliorate the discrimination and deprivation of this community so that the rights of TG students are safeguarded. Various organizations have been ordered to create TG friendly infrastructure like wash rooms, rest rooms as a way to assist the upcoming TG students to study without fear, stigma or shame.

No ethnographic research on the life and culture of TG community has been done so far to understand TG subcultures in order to dispel several myths pertaining to this community embedded in popular discourse since ancient times? As writes Laxminarayan Tripathi in her autobiography, “People are curious to know about *hijr as*. How do we live? Behave? What do we do? Do we kidnap children? What funeral rites

are performed for a hijra after her death? Is she cremated or buried? Such questions do not have answers...because we *hijras* are so secretive about our lives, hearsay rules the roost. On International level there do exist some medical researches and HIV reports about the transgender community of other countries but none of them throws any light on the circumstances of *hijras* in India. Their point of enquiry is descriptive and narrative and they are not based on facts or research. There are some videos on Facebook and Google related to their dancing, singing and ways of dressing but none of them delves deep into their psyche and problems faced by them day to day in India. These non-serious attempts to depict the transgender people bring to our notice the complexity of their lives. According to Justice P. Sathasivam, “transgender” has become an “umbrella” term that is used to describe a wide range of identities and experience... whose appearance or characteristics are perceived to be gender atypical”. He further describes them as “gender variant”, “gender different”, or gender non-conforming. The UNDP Report on “*Hijras/ Transgender Women in India: HIV, Human Rights and Social Exclusion* has underlined the multiple forms of oppression faced by a transgender in Indian society. It includes HIV and health related risks as well. Most transgender people, especially youth, face great challenges in coming to terms with one’s own gender identity and /or gender expression which are opposite to that of the gender identity and gender role imposed on them on the basis of biological sex. They face several issues such as : shame , fear, and internalized transphobia; disclosure and coming out; adjusting, adapting, or not adapting to social pressure to conform; fear of relationships or loss of relationships, and self-imposed limitations on expression or aspirations.

A transgender’s social exclusion begins right from their birth or their recognition of being “different”. Indian families do not accept their child if he starts

behaving in a feminine way and as a result he is beaten, scolded or threatened again and again. Further it leads to eviction from the family or disowning him. As a result the transgender could never claim his share of the property or inherit what is lawfully his own. Due to this their life becomes insecure and challenging and they face physical and verbal abuse, forced sex or possible arrests by the police. Amid these, to earn livelihood is a tormenting experience. There is no employment available for them anywhere though some states like Tamilnadu (Transgender Women Welfare Board) have started welfare measures for them. There is total lack of health facilities and public amenities for them. During British regime, they were perceived to be criminals by birth as is evident from British Criminal Tribes Act 1871, according to which the police used to keep a record of all the eunuchs residing in the locality to keep vigil on them. The section 377 of Indian Penal Code maintains that “any eunuch so registered who appears dressed or ornamented like a woman in a public street... or who denies or plays music or takes part in any public exhibition... be arrested without warrant”. Thus it is clear that there has been no respite for them from any side and ultimately their illiteracy makes their situation even worse. Since the transgenders have got voting rights, people’s attitude towards them has changed, but a lot needs to be done so that our society accepts them as human beings who have the right to be what they are and what they want to be.

This dissertation attempts to study the life, culture, desires, trauma and pain of transgender exclusion at the hands of dominant culture as well as their silence in expressing themselves through the *hijra* autobiography *The truth about Me: A Hijra Life Story* (2010) by A Revathi. The first chapter discusses about the author and presents an authentic picture of her long struggle to reclaim her true identity as a *hijra* despite lack of support from her family. The presence and impact of stigma on the lives



of LGBTQIA+ has been explained in the second chapter. Stigma in its various forms (feelings of shame, expecting discrimination, rejection, being discriminated by others) contributes to the higher levels of stress experienced by such individuals makes them more susceptible to various kinds of mental health conditions. The third chapter which talks the struggles experienced by each transgender person, be it the difficulties they experienced at home or at school, the transphobic hatred and ridicule, and the body/gender dichotomy.

## Chapter One

### Story Of Doraiswamy

The writer, A.Revathi, a trans woman, is a Bangalore based activist who is giving her voice for sex-workers or sexual minorities for South India. In 2004, she published her first book, *Unarvum Uruvamum*(Our Lives, Our Words), which tells real life stories of those belonging to the *Hijra* community in South India. Following this, she decided to write about her own experiences as a trans woman and published her second book, *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*, in 2010

In 2009 Revathi was awarded an Activist Fellowship with SAATHII, and Indian LGBTQI organizations. Give out supported SAATHII to establish the LGBTQI activist fellowship program, which seeks to empower grass roots activism through arts and culture, sensitization projects and advocacy. To mark Trans Awareness week, Revathi spoke with Giveout about her work and activism. Revathi's responses were kindly translated by Aniruddhan Vasudevan. "You were one of SAATHII's first activist fellow. What was your journey into activism?" The reply was "whoever is discriminated against in this society.... I wanted to raise my voice in support of them."

*Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story* is her autobiography originally written in Tamil and translated into English by VGeetha, a writer, translator, social historian and activist. She has been active in the Indian women's movement since 1988, and has written widely, both in Tamil and English, on gender, popular culture, caste, and politics of Tamil Nadu.

The book, *Truth About Me: A HijraLife Story* explores the hidden problems of transgender people and the difficulties they faced, discussed in order to survive in the

Indian community. In fact, the author has truly explored every aspect of transgender association and the hurdles *Hijras* face and overcome. In her texts, the writer Revathi not only describes her social background in her hometown, but also her dreams and wishes. In the preface to the novel, the author began writing with a question. In our society we speak the language of rights loudly and often, but do the marginalized really have access to these rights? In this way, she has been marginalized as belonging to sexual minorities. Hence, the story begins with a comprehensive description of the author's homeland in the city of Nammakal, Salem District, Tamil Nadu.

In this small town, Revathi was born and raised by her parents in the name of Doraiswamy, with the feminine qualities. Being the youngest son in the family, he was very affectionate towards his parents. In his early school days, Doraiswamy showed more interest in playing girls-only games. But surprisingly, one day after returning from school, he disguised himself as a girl by wearing his sister's skirt around his waist. At the age of ten, Doraiswamy began to confront gender issues. However, his family approached him and treated him differently. But his changed attitude was felt by his neighbors. Later, the majority of the villagers started talking about informal things about Doraiswamy. Also, some of the friends and neighbors started using the swear words to represent Doraiswamy like number nine and all other feminine things. However, he ignored all these comments and could not change his natural feminine demeanor.

While studying the seventh standard, Doraiswamy had the opportunity to incarnate like a girl character named Chandramathi. Actually, he enjoyed playing this female role. After a few months, i. e. in his tenth standard, he himself felt certain biological changes in his body and mind. And then Doraiswamy was surprised and intrigued by his gender identity. When he was young, he attended a temple every

Saturday. One day in the temple area he had an opportunity to meet a group of *Hijra* people and later he learned from the people that they were like him and dressed up in a female costume. After meeting such people, he developed a kind of friendship with them and spent some happy hours with the *Hijras*. After a week, Doraiswamy was so happy to be lovingly recognized by these people.

Later these people explained to him how important it was to meet their so-called *Amma* (who lives in Dindugal, where she operates). After receiving all the information about the transformation operation, Doraiswamy showed interest in becoming a woman without hesitation. So he and his friend planned to meet this lady named Amma. And this is the opportunity for Doraiswamy to take a female name as Revathi.

However, Doraiswamy secretly keeps his gender problem away from his parents for some time. (Female men dressed in *sarees*). In Tamil they used to be called *HijrasPottais*. Now Doraiswamy has turned into Revathi by performing a stereotypical practice. Finally, during the temple festival season, Doraiswamy declared herself as Revathi, a woman. After a month, Revathi returned to her hometown to visit her parents. In fact, the transgender people are always treated as an oppressive race in Indian society. But the author reacted reflexively to the allegations. Meanwhile, Revathi found out that her sister is getting married. She was very happy to hear the news of her sister's wedding and also wanted to attend the wedding ceremony. But she realized that her new identity as Revathi would become a massive trap in the patriarchal world. While she was there, her family members brutally attacked her. So she decided to meet her guru. Unfortunately her guru went to Delhi. It was a very challenging situation for her.

Eventually, with the help of her friends, she reached his *Guru's* place in Delhi. One of the most important things in the identical matter is to accept things. Wearing the women's costumes to dress up as a woman cannot be considered transgender. But society has to accept that as a woman. There are some writers who have discussed transgender issues very lightly. While this is Revathi's autobiographical novel which is totally different from other such novels. Because it portrays all of transgender people's issues, especially their pain and sorrows. Since India is also considered a spiritual land, Lord Shiva here takes the form and appearance of *Arthanarishwara* (human body, half *Shiva* and half *Parvathi*).

Therefore, some people in India firmly believe that being blessed by transgender people is bliss and that they have an auspicious power to change things. Therefore, these people are invited to attend the newborn ceremonies and the marriage ceremonies to bless them. But there is no supernatural power to increase societal reach. So this novel is actually about how the trans people constantly faced problems to earn their daily wages. However, the author vividly explains that the main source of making money is by soliciting or pulling them for sex work. Even Revathi explained the cultural norms followed by *Hijras* and how the guru-chela relationship prevailed throughout India. In India, they are set in almost every state with their own traditional rules. Here Revathi felt so complicated to achieve South Indian *Hijras* phrase and diction. Like *Jamaat* [the group of senior guru and chela], *Ghoriemoorthan* (the person who became the first chela), *Pamapaduthi* (welcoming), *Reeth* (deity). The *Hijras* were tormented by their *Guru* even during house hours. Revathi described her friends and how they were traumatized. Her friend Shakuntala belonged to the Chachan house where she was brutally assaulted by her guru for money.

So she leaves the house of her gurus and in turn falls in love with a man who thinks she will find comfort. But unfortunately, he also started mistreating her and bothering her for money. This is not the routine story of Revathi, but every transgender person faces some challenges on a daily basis. As a result, they protested and longed for their identity to be recognized. In this way, in the so-called civilized world, they became constant victims at every stage of life. Therefore, they were despised not only by their society but also by their family and friends. For example, when Revathi returned to her parents, she was insulted and neglected by her relatives. In this situation, Revathi was helpless and failed miserably to defend herself in the family. Worse, she could not endure the torture and mental anguish of her brothers. So there is no other way and she is determined to return to her guru place. More than that, she mentally prepared herself to join the *Hijras* community through the protocol of *Nirvana*.

She finally achieved the status of a woman she had long aspired to. Hence, her earnest thirst paved the way to be a woman through transaction. Despite mingling with the transgender community, she has not been accepted and has not been able to find her identity.

Being transgender, she was forced to follow the *Hijras* association. But transgender norms did not allow Revathi to be a woman. For this reason, she returned to her homeland. In the meantime, she wasn't interested in becoming a meat dealer or a prostitute. Because her consciousness didn't allow her to be in that state. During this time, family members and their neighbors, including their friends, treated them with feminine respect and called them Revathi! Sister! Daughter! Revathi was so surprised by the way she was invited. However, Revathi engaged in an argument with her family members. As a result, she was unable to be with them and broke away from the community. She planned to lead a dignified life.

As a result, Revathi received Mayuri, Famila and Revathi as chela. She gave them rights and freedom as they wished. She made sure they live in the same place. Revathi felt blessed to be mother to these three. And she exposed her to the world she was a gentleman. In fact, people who belong to the *Hijras* community are not qualified at all. But these three chelae are well formed. She had many educated friends. They only introduced Revathi to this *Sangma* [Organization of Sexual Minorities]. After joining the *sangma*, he leaves the position of guru and begins to live in an apartment. Revathi openly shares about her appreciative love life in her writings. The companion's affection makes her life so fulfilling. Revathi was so happy that her fantasy came true. So she was married to the man who worked as the senior assistant in the *Sangam*.

With the great blessings of the gurus, the wedding ceremony was performed. However, Revathi's happy married life did not last long. It came to an end. It was a tough time for Revathi when her husband left and her daughter Famila committed suicide. Unfortunately, another tragic incident happened when her guru was stabbed by the street bullies. Although faced with these horrific incidents, Revathi did not give back even though she was overwhelmed with fear, discomfort and difficulty. She never failed to finish her book *Unarvum Uruvamum*. Revathi wanted to go back to stay with her parents for a while but she was confused by the difficulties, tribulations and failures. Meanwhile, her mother became ill and she was hospitalized. Revathi wanted to take care of her mother at all costs. Although she needed money, she did not like sex work. She felt so hopeless and pushed to the edge of life. Finally she came back to work in *Sangama*. In the Indian milieu, trans women experience alienation and remain on the fringes of society. Gender-biased society discriminates against trans women to actively participate in society. The existence of trans women is neglected and they do not find social acceptance.

According to Naskaretal. The social acceptance of transgender people in Indian cultures is not the same as the male/female gender and they face. Trans women are ostracized in Indian society. The plight of this community is miserable as they struggle hard to survive. Because of ostracism, they experience physical, social, and economic alienation. You become the object of ridicule and ridicule. They are also humiliated, bullied and branded as worthless creatures that destroy people's everyday lives.

Alienation is a feeling that comes from being rejected and lacking the support of other people. The conservative system of Indian families alienates trans women. As a trans woman, Revathi is alienated from her own family. Her family members view her transition as a disdain and curse on her family. When she visits her family after the gender reassignment, she is treated badly by her family and her brother says: . . . You had this operation performed. You have buried our honor deep and clothed us in shame. How important is it to us if you're alive or dead? (114). His words painfully show that family members are unwilling to accept her as a trans woman. They think that having a trans woman at home would bring shame or disrespect to their family and so they absolutely hate their presence. The behavior of family members becomes indifferent. They are indignant at her and don't even care about her existence on this earth. The fact is clear that her family has dismembered her and she is thus alienated from her own family.

The prevailing gender biases play a large role in influencing the lives of trans women. They are excluded from mainstream society and pushed to the fringes of society. The other dominant genders stay away from these people as if they were untouchables. Trans women are not allowed to socialize with the rest of society. Revathi says: Once when the bus was empty. I sat down next to a girl on a chair. She got up smiling and looked for another seat. . . (172). This incident left a deep wound in



Revathi's mind. People consider them a hideous creature and therefore avoid the presence of trans women. The people of the opposite sex tend to neglect those people around them because they have a kind of dislike for them.

Trans women are financially disadvantaged due to a lack of support from their own families and society. Since they are separated from the family, the other family members do not want to share any of the family property with them. Samanta says: In India, the transgender community is poorly colonized economically. . . . In Revathi's life, her brothers refuse to give her any share of the property. She is threatened by her brothers not to claim a share. They ask her to be content with letting her hang out with other trans women, and if she interferes in their lives, they will even throw her out of the house. Being a trans woman, she is denied the right to receive the property by her brothers. Elimination from both family and society drive her to lead a financially deprived life.

Trans women have few job opportunities because society has a negative perception of them. Although they want to lead a financially independent life, discrimination drives them to remain unemployed. Living standards are stagnant and they fail to reach the top of the ladder. The talents and potential of transgender people are buried within them. When Revathi looks for a job, she is rejected simply because of her gender. The employer says . You're all fit just to dance in the streets and have cheap, wild fun! (161). Society deals with the idea that third sex people are useless beings. They are excluded solely because of their gender transition. As society marginalizes these people, opportunities and chances for them are diminishing. The inadequate life prospects keep them in poverty.

Third gender people are seen as oddballs who have nothing to do with mainstream society. The other people frown at the difference of transgender people. Society is amazed at them and does not tolerate the gender difference of these people and therefore gives them an insulting look. Chettiar claims to be the male-to-female transgender people commonly known as Hijras in India. . .are often seen as objects of curiosity, of ridicule. . . (754).

Whenever people pass by Revathi's house, they always exchange words about their looks. Curious, they talk behind her about their gender identity. She is considered an object of laughter and staring. People see them as oddities and cartoon characters. Society, which includes men, women, children, the disabled, and the abnormal, tends to exclude people of the third sex. These people are not recognized by society, but are perceived as a person to be amazed at.

Trans women face ridicule and abuse that cause mental distress. Insults are thrown at them in public places. They endure people's insulting and teasing comments terribly. They are not even accepted in society, to make matters worse, they become a farce in the eyes of society. Revathi faces all these painful situations frequently in her life. She says, “. . . Younger men, little more than boys would call out: 'Macchan! Bus'll reach at nine o'clock!' Or 'Mapillai! What's the time?' and the reply invariably would be 'Nine da!'. . .” (172). The youths on the bus make fun of her because of her gender variation. People shower her with words that hurt her deeply. The effects of verbal abuse always have a lasting effect on her.

They forget that people of the third sex are people too. There is no reverence or respect in society for people of the third sex. They encounter humiliation and embarrassment in every area of their lives. They are belittled and degraded by the opposite sex. Their

very existence is perceived as disgusting. When Revathi goes to the market to buy things, she is treated worse than an animal. She painfully states:

When I went to buy groceries and vegetables in the vegetable market, people sometimes threw rotten tomatoes at me. They hit me on my back, or even aimed for my head. When I turned back to identify the culprit, all the shopkeepers kept their gaze averted, and would fuss around their vegetables, arranging them in a neat pile- as if they had had nothing to do with the tomatoes. (193)

Revathi's statement vividly describes the pitiful situation of trans women. They are not treated with dignity but with contempt. They are viewed in society as a stigma that tempts others to put shame on them.

Trans women are often subjected to sexual harassment because they are marginalized in society. In addition, they are readily available prey for the perpetrators. In her lifetime, she is sexually harassed by a bus driver while she is going home on the bus. She explains, "I woke up, feeling something touch me. The driver on the cot had opened the glass door and his hand was sliding up my leg. . . . I was scared that if I were to ask him to remove his hand, he would get me into trouble. . . ." (155). It is clear that sex hunters take advantage of the helplessness of trans women to sexually assault them. Knowing their position in society, trans women are afraid to speak out against the atrocities being inflicted on them. Trans women are victims of physical violence. In order to survive in a gender-biased society, they must face whatever difficulties are thrown their way. They are tortured and brutally attacked by society. Being in a fragile position, they endure everything with resentment. Revathi has also faced the brutality of society. With pain and agony, she describes, ". . . I faced all sorts of problems. I endured physical violence and torture of the mind. I had to fight everyday with police

and rowdies. The police took bribes from us all the time, and yet at the end of the month we were taken to the police station. . . .” (210). People in superior positions use people of the third gender to their advantage. It clearly conveys the idea that trans women have no support or protection in society. They are forced to face society's hostility in silence.

Transgender people are not allowed to play an active role in mainstream society. Gender prejudice causes discrimination, alienation and humiliation. The family and the society in which they live alienate them because of the gender change. The rights of people of the third sex are denied. The people of the third sex become the object of ridicule and ridicule. The opportunities for such people are slim. The fragile and vulnerable position of transgender people lead to physical violence and sexual harassment. Lack of support and recognition drives these people to tolerate the atrocities inflicted on them. The silent screams of these people show the extent of the ostracism.

The text projects the dilemma of transgender individuals who are seen as abnormal and deviant in society. By sharing her personal experiences of traumatization and exploitation as a trans woman and member of the *Hijra* community, Revathi seeks to change perspectives on her community and highlight the need for transgender rights.

The surgery allowed Revathi to fulfil her desire to become a woman, but left her vulnerable to society's exploitation of the *Hijra* community. Lacking family support, education, and economic independence, Revathi was forced to engage in begging and sex work to survive, leaving her vulnerable to physical, verbal, and sexual abuse. She decided to move to Bengaluru in search of work and joined the NGO *Sangama*, which works for the welfare of sexual minorities. She attended the activist meetings organized

by the NGO, which informed her about the importance of transgender rights, which are essential for the development of their status in society. Currently, Revathi is a writer and social activist fighting for the rights of transgender people and the *Hijra* community.

A. Revathi in the article, “Writing a Life Between Gender Lines: Conversations with A. Revathi about her Autobiography *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*” (2014) by GayathriPrabhu, claims, “...I write. Writing is Activism. I see no difference between the two” (5). The act of narrating the experiences, miseries and struggles, endured by the writer as a transgender person and a member of the *hijra* community, becomes integral to her healing process. Through her autobiography, Revathi denounces the efforts made by society to dominate and discipline gender non-conforming performances and identities in society.

The text highlights the trials and tribulations of the *hijra* community that particularly resulted as an impact of colonial modernity. The writer critiques the strategies implemented by the various societal institutions such as the family, school, economy, government etc. To maintain the established order. It is due to the transgression of the hegemonic ideals of masculinity, femininity and heterosexuality that transgender individuals are relegated to the margins in society. Due to their marginalized position, the *hijra* community is subjected to violence, humiliation and discrimination in their everyday life.

In present day India, there appears a shift in the status of *hijras*, manifesting both continuities and divergences from the period of colonial policing of gender variant people. Brinda Bose in the text, *The Audacity of Pleasure: Sexualities, Literature and Cinema in India*, states that “...the evolving relationship of the state

with the *hijra* possess the potential of creating a space for her within it that recognizes her sexual identity without Stigmatizing it, and her sexual difference without fetishizing it in a reductive exercise.” (Bose,135). Bose refers to the attempts made by the state in the recent times to acknowledge *hijras* and their entitlement to legal rights as citizens. However, this proves to be a difficult task due to the tendency of the state to suppress and purify “non-normative” identities.

On April 15, 2014, the Supreme Court of India granted *Hijras* official third gender recognition to stand in the OBC category of reservations in educational institutions and workplaces. On one level, this ruling has been praised for its progressive approach to gender identity. The judgment granting a reservation to *Hijras* under the OBC category would improve employment opportunities for their community if lawfully exercised by the prospective employers. However, members of the larger transgender community, which includes trans men and trans women who do not identify as *Hijra*, objected to the court ruling, fearing being placed under the third gender umbrella. Furthermore, the court has not specified what basis the government should use to identify *Hijras*, leaving the process open to abuse. In addition, the Supreme Court ruling erased the caste privileges of the *Savarna* (uppercaste) *Hijras*, which was objected to by the Dalit (lower caste) *Hijras*. Living Smile Vidyainan interview posted on the website Sanhati, argues, Putting transgenders under an oppressed caste category erases the caste privileges that *savarnatransgenders* have. It is better for us to have caste and gender-based reservation so that Dalit women and Dalit Transgenders get representation. The challenges to the judgement from within the transgender community signify their rising awareness regarding the fundamental rights and privileges that are denied to them.

A similar reaction was seen from the gender non-conforming communities following the 6 September 2018 ruling by the Supreme Court of India to abolish Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. Although this decision ensured the decriminalization of non-heteronormative people, it is seen as just the beginning of one long road of struggle for civil rights, adoption rights and other privileges still denied to them. In addition, the Law on Transgender People (Protection of Rights), passed by Parliament on November 26, 2019, which provides the right to education, employment, housing, etc., has been criticized by the transgender community for several reasons, mainly because of the Decision that the identity of a transgender person must be certified by the district magistrate after proof of gender reassignment has been provided.

Therefore, in modern times, India has seen a gradual shift in perspective towards the *Hijra* community. However, recent challenges to the various laws and rulings by the transgender community reveal the gaps underlying government implementation. It proposes that the fight against the ostracism of the transgender community by the state and other institutions should continue until they are granted the legal rights, freedoms and privileges offered to gender-conforming and heterosexual subjects.

## Chapter Two

### Queer Theory: An Overview

Susan Stryker defines the transgender community as

People who move away from the gender they were assigned at birth, people who cross over (trans-) the boundaries constructed by their culture to define and contain that gender....it is the movement across a socially imposed boundary away from an unchosen starting place-rather than any particular destination or mode of transition-that best characterizes the concept of transgender. (Stryker, 4)

The most fundamental question which rises is why one strives to cross the gender boundaries. The answer to this query lies in one's mismatching body and gender. The gender identity of such individuals does not conform to that of their anatomical sex, the reason being some genetic, chromosomal or developmental mishaps. The fact that most individuals do not face any incongruities in their body and mind vis-à-vis gender identity should actually be ample reason for celebration. Simultaneously, one must empathize with the unfortunate whose body and psyche are not compatible, yet who attempt to accept their existence.

Sexual minorities are generally clustered under the umbrella term transgender. The various categories under the comprehensive term transgender need elucidation. The transgender category comprises a spectrum more varied than the colors of the VIBGYOR: gay persons are men (however, nowadays gay is also being used for women) who are romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of the same sex and not the opposite sex, as experienced by heterosexual men; likewise, lesbians or homosexual women enjoy romantic and/or physical relationships with women; the



bisexual group which forms sexual alliances with men as well as women and the last comprehensive group of transgender individuals comprising the cross-dressers, the transgender clan and the transsexual people.

Queer Theory, which developed in 1990s, is an offshoot of gay, lesbian and feminist studies; its thrust is on sexual identities that act as representations and simultaneously it contests the traditional gender binary norm as well as heterosexuality. The word “queer” is probably derived from the modern Irish cuaire which means “crookedness, state of being bent or hollow” like the adjective cuar with a similar meaning of “curved, bent, crooked”. In the beginning it was used for weapons and implements and conveyed a sense of “something twisted” ([www.tandfonline.com](http://www.tandfonline.com)>pdf). In English the word “queer” suggests “strange”, “unnatural”, “unconventional” and so on. When used for persons, it attributes socially improper deportment. The gay liberation movement propelled the gays and lesbians to study themselves and their representation in literature and culture which further led to the analysis of the construction of gender and sexual orientations. Gayle Rubin’s seminal essays *The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex* in and *Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality* postulated a theory fundamental to gay and lesbian studies: there is a relationship between gender difference and sexual difference but they are not the same. While gender difference points to the meaning of the binary term “man/woman”, sexual difference deals with the dualistic terms “heterosexual/homosexual”. Gay and lesbian studies examine the social systems which define notions of sexuality being expressive acts and also as identity. It also analyses how homosexuality and heterosexuality were explained in social history. These studies also explain that some cultures and some periods in history have considered homosexuality as “normal” and even “moral”. Henry Abelove’s essay *Freud, Male*

Homosexuality and the Americans clarifies Freud's view of male sexuality to be much less morbid and more complicated than generally accepted.

A look at history reveals that the term "queer theory" was coined by the academic and critical theorist Teresa de Lauretis. It was the title of a conference organized by her in 1990 at the University of California. A 1991 article by Teresa de Lauretis was named "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities" in which she contests the norm of heterosexuality, apart from claiming that lesbian and gay studies are not to be considered as a single "entity" and the idea that race plays a significant role in the formation of "sexual bias". In short Queer theory may be said to critique all that is included in non-normative and/or deviant categories, especially sexual acts and identities. It includes in its scope of analysis, all types of deviant sexual and gender behavior as well as non-normative sexualities.

According to Queer theory, sexual behavior, ideas linking sexual behavior with sexual identities and all kinds of normative as well as deviant sexualities are socially constructed. It rejects the concept of sexuality being an essentialist category, which is seen in feminism and gay and lesbian studies. It also affirms that sexuality is not biologically determined and cannot be judged by traditionally established standards of morality. This theory challenges the prevalent beliefs about gender and sexual identity. Apart from contesting the existing theories and beliefs, it attempts to inculcate novel ideas, promote new ways of observing, analyzing and elaborating human experience. However, according to Judith Butler, queer theory is pitted against major core issues of gay and lesbian studies. Butler postulates her unease with lesbian theories, gay theories for ... identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes whether as the normalizing categories of oppressive structures or as the rallying points for a liberatory

contestation of that very oppression. Butler further asserts that heterosexuality is a compulsory performance that may end in failure. In *Gender Trouble* she supplements

Heterosexuality is always in the process of imitating and approximating its own phantasmatic idealization of itself- and failing .... Indeed in its efforts to naturalize itself as the original, heterosexuality must be understood as a compulsive and compulsory representation that can only produce the effects of its own originality; in other words, compulsory heterosexual identities, those ontologically consolidated phantasms of 'man' and 'woman', are theatrically produced effects that posture as grounds, origins, the normative measure of the real. (Butler, 21)

About queer theory, Annamarie Jagose says that, It has come to be used differently sometimes as an umbrella term for a coalition of culturally marginal sexual self-identifications and at other times to describe a nascent theoretical model which has developed out of more traditional lesbian and gay studies. What is clear even from this brief and partial account of its contemporary deployment is that queer is very much a category in the process of formation. It is not simply that queer has yet to solidify and take on a more consistent profile, but rather that its decisional indeterminacy, its elasticity is one of its constituent characteristics.

Later Jagose adds Queer describes those gestures or analytical models which dramatize incoherencies in the allegedly stable relations between chromosomal sex, gender and sexual desire. Resisting that model of stability-which claims heterosexuality as its origin, when it is more properly its effect- queer focuses on mismatches between sex, gender and desire ... queer locates and exploits the incoherencies in those three terms which stabilize heterosexuality. Demonstrating the impossibility of any 'natural'

sexuality, it calls into question even such apparent unproblematic terms as ‘man’ and ‘woman’.

Since queer alludes to someone whose difference is never innately experienced by the cisgendered, the transgendered face bigotry and violence from the latter who constitute the majority of the social structure. The term “cisgender” refers to the person whose gender corresponds to his/her natal sex. Transphobic attitudes and violence unleashed by the dominant group is targeted towards the sexual minority groups just as the predominant social majority marginalizes ethnic and other minorities and often subjects them to cruel and barbaric ways of violence and torture. Transphobia denotes the emotional feelings of anger, disgust, fear and revulsion against those who do not conform to societal expectations of a typical male or female. The dominantly heterosexual society tends to stigmatize those who are alternately sexed; so while the stigmatized persons lack social acceptance and support, the dominant majority considers itself justified in transphobic reactions against the former.

In *The Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination*, Bernard E. Whitley and Mary E. Kite cite Crocker et al. who use the term “marked” to refer to the marginalized while the privileged group are labeled “marker”. The marked persons are devalued, spoiled or flawed in the eyes of the others. Such a type of dehumanization results in adverse situations for the humiliated individuals. The advantaged dominant group denigrates the stigmatized persons because of cultural and historical reasons. In the same work, Whitley Jr. and Kite cite Edward Jones et al. who mention the five aspects of course, concealability, aesthetic qualities, origin and peril which fashion stigmas.

1. Course-Benign stigmas are often temporary; that is the course of the stigma is short... An individual’s ethnicity is typically part of his or her lifelong identity. Another term that is sometimes used is stability; some stigmas are perceived to

be stable, or permanent, whereas others are perceived to be unstable and so can change over time. In general, people believe that physically based stigmas, such as blindness or cancer, are stable and that mental-behavioral stigma, such as drug abuse or obesity, are unstable.

2. Concealability- Some stigmas are concealable, which means they can be hidden or controlled by the stigmatized person....Many gay men and lesbians, for example, are not open about their relationships out of fear of social rejection, loss of employment, or the threat of physical violence; as a result they often find themselves lying about or hiding an important part of their life and they feel guilt and shame because they must do so.

3. Aesthetic qualities-Aesthetics refers to what is beautiful or appealing...many stereotypes are triggered by physical appearance cues and many stigmas are based on this dimension as well...One reliable indicator of physical attractiveness is facial symmetry, or the degree to which the left and right sides of the face are mirror images of each other. Individuals with facial disfigurement typically do not meet the standard and are likely to be stigmatized.

4. Origin –This term refers to how the stigma came to be and whether its onset was under the control of the stigmatized individual. Stigmas perceived to be controllable include drug addiction, acquisition of HIV, and obesity; those perceived to be uncontrollable include cancer and heart disease (Weiner,45.) .... When people believe that a stigma is uncontrollable, they feel more pity and less anger towards the stigmatized individual compared with when the stigma is perceived as controllable. This view point is evident in this excerpt from a letter to the editor that appeared in the Chronicle Review: Race is something that a

person has no control over; hence racism is wrong. Homosexuality is a choice a person makes, and therefore it is not wrong to disagree with it. Bernard Whitley found that people who believed that sexual orientation was controllable had more negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men than did people who believed sexual orientation was not controllable.

5. Peril-Members of some stigmatized groups are perceived, correctly or incorrectly, to be dangerous. Persons with a mental illness, for example, are stereotypically perceived to be dangerous, even though statistically they are no more likely to commit violent crime than people not so diagnosed. In general, groups assumed to be more dangerous are more stigmatized than groups perceived as less dangerous.

Very often, societal ignorance about the sexual and gender minorities makes them vulnerable to stigmatization. Whitley and Kite claim that prejudice and discrimination not only affect academic and economic progress of a stigmatized person, it also influences one's health, both physical as well as mental. Prolonged exposure to invidious behavior can induce nervous tension in stigmatized persons. Most adolescents undergo conflict during their sexual identity development but gay, lesbians and other alternate sexualities cannot easily express their sexual preferences; they may face "personal rejection or physical and verbal abuse", according to Pilkington and D'Augelli. Heterosexuals can easily mention and discuss their attraction to members of the opposite sex but when a queer person, especially a gay or a lesbian attempts to "come out" (frankly articulate in public their attraction for a member of their own sex) they may either be "rejected" or subjected to "physical and verbal abuse" (Whitley and Kite, 443). In fact, Rotheram-Borus and Fernandez, assert that lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) persons who express their true sexual preferences to family and friends

face a greater risk for a suicide attempt than LGBs who have not dared to leave the “closet”. It is hardly surprising that transgendered individuals also face similar forms of discrimination or transphobia, which leads to their marginalization.

Transgender is an umbrella term that can be used in its broadest definition to describe anyone who transgresses usual gender roles, cross-dressers, transsexuals, androgynes, intersexes (people born with a mixture of male and female physiological characteristics), drag artists, and gender complex people. (Raymond, 1994)

The term “transgender” refers to a diverse population whose gender identity or expression differs from their assigned sex at birth. Transgender is a gender identity where a person usually lives or prefers to live in the gender role opposite to the one in which they are born, like when a biologically male loves to feel and see herself as a female or vice versa.

“Hijra” is the most popular terminology used in India for transgender persons, though there are different variants with different identity groups. The term “hijras” has been used with relatively little controversy because of the old status designated to it historically to represent eunuchs or a “third gender”. However, in official usages, “transgender” serves to designate hijras, but it does not exclusively determine transgender as there are many more categories falling under the definition of transgender. Hijra connotes a structured community of feminine-identified persons, dressed in women’s clothes. They pursue distinct ritualistic profession of blessing during weddings and childbirths. Many biologically male hijras undergo a ritualized castration called nirvana (sex reassignment). However, even if they undergo penectomy and castration (orchiectomy), they preferably identify themselves distinct from men and women. Rather than being transgender, hijras are often considered to be a third gender.

This position of “*hijras*” is depicted well in the argument put forward by Emi Koyama. She argues that transwomen to be acknowledged as women or to prove their “womanhood” have to internalize the gender stereotypes. And this applies even for receiving hormonal or surgical interventions. This oppressive practice denies acknowledgement of uniqueness of each woman and reflects on getting stuck within the binary system. All women are looked upon as women due to their feminine qualities and biological make-up. Acknowledging any other form of uniqueness will necessarily require for the society to move beyond binaries. Hijras prefer to maintain that uniqueness by being identified as “hijras” rather than being identified as one in the gender binary division. They have even been termed as a “psuedocaste”.

National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) in its study of “Strategic Approach for Targeted Intervention among Transgender and Hijra” under Understanding Transgender Persons National AIDS Control Programme Phase IV in 2011 described “hijra” as follows:

Hijras represent a socio cultural-identity, which renounces male sexuality, identifies with the creative power of the Mother Goddess, Shakti and with Shiva. Hijras are given an option of castration and a castrated Hijra commands a higher status in the hijra community. Castration is known as Nirvana in the Hijra community. The non-castrated are known as *akwamoorath* and the castrated as *nirvana moorath*. Their social structures are based on the Hindu Guru system and female identified family structure. Hijras should be perceived as a different gender altogether—perhaps as a “third gender”. Each Hijra belongs to a house or lineage. It is this relationship that designates Hijras in a formal relationship with the community. The head of the household is the *nayak* or *guru* and under the *nayak* are the *chelas* or disciples. Although the Guru-chela



relationship is clearly hierarchical, with seniority among Hijras (as a principle of both social organization and social control) being reckoned through the unequal power structure of Gurus and *chelas*, this relationship is a mutually beneficial and a reciprocal one. *Chelas* are expected to be obedient, respectful and loyal and to serve their gurus well by catering to all their domestic needs. In exchange for their *chelas*' services and earnings, gurus act as a "mother, father, husband, sister" and look after their health and well-being, treat them fairly, provide them with clothes and food and give them the necessary training and knowledge about Hijra customs and manners to permit their rise in seniority.(NACO, 189)

Transgender theory derived from queer theory and feminist theory. It is the idea that each individual is the expert on their own gender, gender experience, and ultimately has autonomy over their own body. Within the social work field, sorting out which personal identities are fixed and which are not, has been a challenge. Oftentimes this can be where one's political views influence their social work practice. Yet, recognizing which are fixed and those that can be self-identified has provided empowerment to marginalized groups and individuals. Transgender theory goes beyond its basis of feminist theory and queer theory to look at gender fluidity, lived experiences, social constructs of gender, and the person being the expert on their own gender. In this theory, someone's identity should always be respected, but is not seen as permanent and can change at any time. Therefore, a conflict is posed with feminist theory and queer theory that would assume identities to be stagnant. Feminist theory challenged patriarchal dominance by believing that the male body is not stronger or more valuable than the female body. However, they were talking about cisgender people, and feminists started to wonder if not upholding equity in all aspects was

against its own moral compass . This also created a stark gender binary, which does not fit with many different transgender identities. Where feminist theory says – women are not inferior; transgender theory asks – how do you know they are women? While feminist theory worked to dispel ideas of a superior gender, queer theory emerged in contrast pushing against heteronormative ideals and assumptions. It was formed to view nonheteronormative identities and relationships as equally legitimate, instead of rebellious and deviant. However, queer theory leaves out viewing gender as different than sex assigned at birth, and a separately oppressed marginalized identity intersecting with sexual orientation.

In the mid-1960s, the full book *I Changed My Sex!* was written by Hedy Jo Star . Then the most well-known book, often considered the first notable work, was Christine Jorgensen's 1967 autobiography. The book likely garnered great attention as it listed on its cover "Illustrated with 16 pages of photographs" (Jorgensen, 56). While all of the earliest works began to describe the life experience of transgender individuals, they focused heavily on genitalia and surgery. One of the first scholarly works on transgender theory was "The Empire Strikes Back: A Post transsexual Manifesto" by Sandy Stone , a transgender woman. This was a response to Janice Raymond's book titled *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male* (1979), where Raymond stated that transgender women and masculine presenting people that were assigned female at birth, existed to invade womenspecific spaces and steal women's power. Raymond also implied they were not "real women." Stone's consequent article and response was seen as the one of the first times the lived experience of transgender women broke from feminist theory, thus leading to transgender theory . One of the earliest known experiential accounts was *Man Into Women: The First Sex Change* by Lili Elbe by Niels Hoyer . In 2002 Hird's writings on transgender and gender diverse

people separated queer and feminist theory. It expanded the idea that transgender people are not rebellious, and their gender identities are true and valid. This was formulated with the foundation set-forth by Kate Bornstein in her book, *Gender Outlaws*, which stated that gender variance or fluidity is not intrinsically deviant, although society views it as such. Julia Serano then wrote *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity*, a book that further questioned the mismatch of transgender and gender diverse identities with feminist theory by exploring the prevalence of objectification and misogyny towards transgender women. Shotwell and Sangrey expanded the understanding of transgender theory to mean, the lived experience of transgender people is different than that of cisgender individuals. In the article “Open Normativities: Gender, Disability and Collective Political Change, Shotwell clearly described how another theory is needed outside of queer theory and feminist theory because gender is a social construct. Understanding the socially constructed connotations of gender is integral to accepting the transgender experience. In agreement with Roen, this also clearly identified that gender identity is determined by the individual and can change over time. Transgender theory emerged to cover a gap of gender-based assumptions that feminist and queer theory did not. While there are elements of both theories within transgender theory, they were built around assumptions of cisgender people with stagnant identities, and did not provide insight into the true lived experiences of transgender and gender diverse people. Therefore, transgender theory emerged to empower those in the community by fully recognizing the intersectionality of their identity, and how it relates to oppression.

The principles of transgender theory are relatively simple—you are who you say you are, you exist, you are not invisible, you should not be subjected to the emotional labor of educating others, and you are the expert on your own body and life’s

experience. These practices do not rest on outward appearance, nor are they determined by sexual orientation. Furthermore, someone also has the right to determine their appropriate pronouns and name, which may or may not be socially aligned with their gender expression. Transgender theory gives possession of identity and identifiers in a self-actualized model, allowing space where these can change over time and more than once, based life experiences. However, the principles of transgender theory are contrary to its history. In the United States, the intersex community has been conflated and combined with the transgender community since the first known demonstration of transgender activism, Cercle Hermaphroditos in 1895. This group represented intersex members in addition to transgender people.

Intersex people are born with genitals, gonads, and/or chromosomal patterns that do not fit the typical scientific measurements of male and female bodies. Previously referred to medically and socially as “hermaphrodites,” this term is no longer accepted in the community and does not properly give credence to the complexity of being biologically intersex which can present internally or externally. Intersex people make up an estimated 1.7% of the population. While intersex identities are commonly mocked or erased from society, some of the most notable intersex people include Olympic athletes who after undergoing mandatory testing due to their chromosomal patterns, were not allowed to participate in their correct classification for sports despite their previous accomplishments. All transgender people are not intersex, and all intersex people do not identify as transgender. Similarly, cisgender people may not know they are intersex or may not identify as such. Someone’s biology of their sex does not define their gender.

Gender is a social construct because society’s reaction is often determined by outward expression. For example, when a baby is born if they wear a blue hat, and

others are informed socially they are a “boy,” then likely most people will treat them as expected for someone assigned male at birth. If when a baby is born they wear a pink hat, and others are informed socially they are a “girl,” then likely most people will treat them as expected for someone assigned female at birth. Intersex babies who present with unique appearing genitalia have historically been forced to have surgery , which is rooted in the homophobic belief is that it is essential for them to know their sex so they can know who they are not attracted to, thereby avoiding same gender relationships. Transgender identities were historically confused with intersex ones and much of transgender theory rests in the medical model.

According to the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care guidelines, transgender identities are diverse characteristics and not pathologies . Yet, transgender identities have been diagnosed by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) since the 1980s . They first appeared as “Gender Identity Disorder of childhood” and “Transsexualism”. In later editions this became “Gender Identity Disorder” (GID). Including transgender identities in the DSM meant that the APA classified them as a mental illness, and many of the criterion were binary.

The DSM-IV listed the criterion for Gender Identity Disorder as a strong and persistent cross-gender identification (not merely a desire for any perceived cultural advantages of being the other sex. In children: the disturbance is manifested by four (or more) of the following: repeatedly stated desire to be, or insistence that he or she is, the other sex; in boys, preference for crossdressing or simulating female attire; in girls, insistence on wearing only stereotypical masculine clothing; strong and persistent preferences for cross-sex roles in make-believe play or persistent fantasies of being the

other sex; intense desire to participate in the stereotypical games and pastimes of the other sex; strong preference for playmates of the other sex.

As well as a persistent discomfort with his or her sex or sense of inappropriateness in the gender role of that sex; the disturbance is not concurrent with a physical intersex condition; and the disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

In the DSM-5 this was changed to be classified as “Gender Dysphoria.” The criterion for adults was: having at least two of the following characteristics in the past six months – a marked incongruence between one’s experienced/expressed gender and primary and/or secondary sex characteristics; a strong desire to be rid of one’s primary and/or secondary sex characteristics; a strong desire for the primary and/or secondary sex characteristics of the other gender; a strong desire to be of the other gender; a strong desire to be treated as the other gender; a strong conviction that one has the typical feelings and reactions of the other gender.

Children with Gender Dysphoria would have experienced at least six following characteristics accompanied by an “associated significant distress or impairment in function.” They are; a strong desire to be of the other gender or an insistence that one is the other gender; a strong preference for wearing clothes typical of the opposite gender; a strong preference for cross-gender roles in make believe play or fantasy play; a strong preference for the toys, games or activities stereotypically used or engaged in by the other gender; a strong preference for playmates of the other gender; a strong rejection of toys, games and activities typical of one’s assigned gender; a strong dislike of one’s sexual anatomy; a strong desire for the physical sex characteristics that match one’s experienced gender.

The recognition of transgender identities in the DSM is problematic. On one hand it has allowed transgender and gender diverse people desiring medical interventions to have them provided by qualified professions and sometimes covered by health insurance . However, diagnosing individuals as transgender by design implies a condition with the goal to obtain alleviation of symptoms and be cured. Prior to the 5th edition of the DSM, the notable article “Transsexualism, Gender Identity Disorder and the DSM” was released, exploring this topic and ultimately calling for the removal of transgender identities within the book by noting modern advancements in society and culture . The APA currently acknowledges on their website that gender dysphoria is not the same as gender nonconformity, and for children this can begin as early as ages 2 to 4. While some people are relieved because this term no longer includes the word “disorder,” it does not negate the fact that it is still there. Diagnoses in the DSM are seen by many as victim blaming transgender and gender diverse people for causing their own societal oppression because their thinking is disordered.

While transgender-related diagnoses were recently removed as a psychiatric diagnosis from the DSM, the medical model still uses them today. In order for transgender or gender diverse people to receive medical interventions they are often required to produce letters from their primary care doctor in addition to letters and psychological assessments from a qualified psychologist, counselor, and/or psychiatrist. It is still required by many states to have a letter from a doctor indicating completion of medical interventions to physically appear more like the gender opposite than the sex assigned on one’s birth certificate, in order to change personal documentation such as a name on their driver’s license. This is tremendously problematic for those who do not desire to have medical interventions, cannot due to health reasons, do not have access to providers, or the economic ability to afford such procedures. Not only do these

requirements remove autonomy, but they are also a complete erasure of non-binary identities who may or may not desire surgery or medical interventions.

While the DSM places more of an emphasis on binary genders, there are some intersections where both agree that gender can be on a spectrum, or just unique to the person, and that there are more than just two genders. Unlike the medical model, transgender theory does not equate transgender and gender diverse people with trying to “pass” as cisgender people portrayed in the opposite sex than they were assigned at birth. It is important to consider that the goal to “pass” at times is more complicated than personal preference; it can be driven by concerns of safety, unemployment, obtaining healthcare, and more. Above all, the founding principle of transgender theory is being trusted about one’s own identity. This is in contrast to the medical model of providers diagnosing people and the DSM, which were largely a construct of the cisgender patriarchy. Due to discrimination, unemployment rates of transgender people are extremely high. Transgender people lack the same job, education, economic, workplace advancement, and social opportunities when compared with their cisgenderpeers . Transgender theory asserts that the principles and beliefs formulated by transgender and gender diverse people with lived experience, should hold more value than that of cisgender professionals.

Fortunately, many cisgender people no longer believe that transgender and gender diverse people face higher rates of depression and suicide because they feel bad about themselves or unsure of their identity. Research shows that the largest contributing factors isactually societal and family oppression. As society continues to recognize that individuals are experts on their own gender, parents are moving towards finding affirming and life-saving resources for their children instead of sending them to conversion therapy, religious camps, or starting them on unnecessary psychotropic



medication. Places like the Gender and Family Project at Ackerman Institute for the Family (2020) and the Trans-kids Purple Rainbow Foundation (2019) empower youth, advocate for justice, and provide affirming counseling to transgender and gender diverse kids and parents. As of April 2019, 16 states have banned conversion therapy, recognizing that it is harmful, child abuse, and can have fatal consequences. Long gone are the days when Jazz Jennings stood bravely and confidently on Oprah, asserting her gender identity as a 5-yearold child, only to be questioned by grownups inappropriately and irresponsibly. Mainstream media has developed a new standard of cultural competency for the transgender community. For example, asking about surgery and the appearance someone else's genitalia is seen as inappropriate for transgender people, just as it would be for cisgender people. Carefully crafted apologies, such as the one offered by Katie Couric to Laverne Cox, for having asked about the openly transgender celebrity's private parts in a pre-taped interview, have become expected. Backlash for outing people as transgender has resulted in real life consequences such as the gay radio talk show host who outed his former Survivor cast mate, then was fired from his job. The voyeurism of knowing someone's birth name is no longer socially accepted. This was the case with IMDb, who was finally forced to only publish the correct names of transgender celebrities, after they agreed that publishing the birth names of transgender people without their consent was an invasion of privacy, despite resistance in doing so until August 2019. News reporters like Janet Mock on MSNBC have normalized transgender people's existence while entering a transgender perspective into every conversation being heard nightly in living rooms across the nation.

Transgender theory is not a prediction that someday cisgender people will not exist and everyone will identify as gender diverse. It is not an assumption that transgender and gender diverse people want to fit in to dominant binary cisgender

culture. It is the belief that even though present society is tailored for cisgender people and to be heteronormative, transgender identities and gender diverse people should not be erased. It is also not the opposite of transphobia, since transphobia is a misnomer. Miriam Webster's dictionary defines a phobia as an exaggerated usually inexplicable and illogical fear of a particular object, class of objects, or situation. Transphobia is not only fear of transgender and gender diverse people, it is deliberate and hateful discriminatory actions towards them (Merriam-Webster.com, 2019). Modern transgender theory moves to validate transgender identities, while invalidating all discrimination and injustices towards transgender and gender diverse people. It is a system of beliefs that state transgender and gender diverse people are real, deserve love, should always be trusted as the expert on their own life experience, are entitled to the same human rights and protections as cisgender people, are not to blame for their own oppression, and should have access to the same opportunities and privileges that cisgender people do. This includes and accounts for understanding fully the intersectionality of identities that transgender and gender diverse people hold as well.

## Chapter Three

### Crisis Of Misalignment: The Body/Mind Dichotomy

I am not just my body or my attire  
there is something more precious, if one could notice  
a complete heart within a body which is tagged 'imperfect'  
that carries various emotions and a million dreams.(Valli's blog, 2013)

The above lines reflect the numerous dreams in a transgender person's mind. The society in which even one's existence is compromised; most transgendered persons can only strive to express their aspirations through verses. Revathi have penned verses in Tamil. Like any cisgendered person, a trans person also wishes to lead a meaningful and successful life. Yet the prevalent societal conditions deter his/her existence, solely because the person is determined to assert his/her identity which subverts gender binarism. The society consisting of a cisgendered majority and minorities from various gender and sexual minorities, sticks to the norm of heteronormativity and gender binarism. In their attempt to subvert gender binarism, the trans people are often in opposition to a formidable and resisting social set up which either negates their existence or simply humiliates them. Yet, the mental strength to transform their body to match their innate gender is too strong to become powerless before society. The trans persons collect money to transition to their gender and along with hormonal treatment, they are able to live in their innate gender. Their struggle for gender affirmation is extremely strenuous and marked with violence and transphobia from society.

*Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story* talks of the family of three brothers and a sister, joined by Doraisamy, the name given to Revathi on her birth. She recollects how

as the youngest child, Doraisamy was bestowed a lot of affection and care. Being the youngest, Doraisamy was encouraged to study well and succeed in life, more so as his brothers did not study beyond school. His father had a milk transportation business: Dorai's father and brothers collected milk from the nearby villages in huge cans and delivered it to the milk factory in their lorry; the work started early in the morning and at evening the work had to be resumed. Revathi recalls that as a school student, "I would go to the village school along with the girls from the neighborhood and return with them. I played only girls' games. I loved to sweep the front yard clean and draw the *kolam* every morning. I even helped my mother in the kitchen, sweeping and swabbing, washing vessels" (Revathi,2010,3)

These memories clearly exhibit Doraisamy's feminine behavior and fondness for the company of girls while going to school. Unlike other young boys, Doraisamy enjoyed doing "*kolams*" at the entrance to the house along with other household work. Back from school, Doraisamy would wear his sister's ankle length skirt and blouse and wrap and twist a towel on his head, "I would then walk as if I was a shy bride, my eyes to the ground and everyone would laugh" (4). These incidents throw light on the realization in the young Doraisamy of his being a girl. When his schoolmates and others on the street addressed him as "number nine", "female thing", "female boy" and so on, he felt that he was indeed a girl, "In fact, I wanted to be so" (4). The fact that he did not feel ashamed or insulted by ribald terms reveals his firm conviction of being a girl.

It would be pertinent here to quote Judith Butler who contests the notion of gender corresponding to sex. She avows

If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way. Taken to its logical limit, the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of “men” will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that “women” will interpret only female bodies. Further, even if the sexes appear to be unproblematically binary in their morphology and constitution there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two. (Butler, 1990, 9)

Revathi recalls that at school older boys addressed her as “girl-boy” (Revathi, 6). The first instance of Doraisamy’s dressing as a woman was during a temple festival in which he dressed as a “*kurathi*” (tribal woman) in a skirt with anklets, artificial hair and makeup. Doraisamy knew that he looked like a beautiful woman and admired his reflection in the mirror. “The boy who had to play my partner muttered ‘Hey Doraisamy, you look like a real woman. If you were one, I’d fall in love with you.’ My face flushed with pride and I felt warm and bashful. The other boys sniggered and yet it all felt very good” (12). Revathi reminisces, “A few people even told me that I ought to have been born a woman and that it was unfortunate that I had been born a man. I felt elated from all this praise” (14). However, he was upset by the response men produced in him and wondered if it was abnormal to feel desire for men. At school Doraisamy would not sit near boys in his class since he felt “coy and shy” (9). At the same time, he was attracted to boys who did not ridicule him and even “imagined I was in love with them. This confused me I was a boy and yet I felt I could love other boys. Was this right or wrong?” (9).

When Doraisamy reached tenth standard, he underwent many changes in body and in being. Revathi writes of that time,

I experienced a growing sense of irrepressible femaleness, which haunted me, day in and day out. A woman trapped in a man's body was how I thought of myself. But how could that be? .... I longed to be with men, but felt shamed by this feeling. I wondered why God had chosen to inflict this peculiar torture on me, and why He could not have created me wholly male or wholly female. ( 14-15)

S. Ramya mentions that Doraisamy was unable to understand his bodily transformations with innumerable questions about his mind because of “social stigma” attached to his condition .While “normal” men and women walk freely in society, this right is hardly allowed given to transgender individuals since gender binary norm is socially accepted as normal and natural. Doraisamy could not study beyond tenth standard. Due to the dilemma about his identity and sexuality, Doraisamy lost interest in academics; he had done well in all subjects but failed in English in the tenth standard and decided to reappear for examination the next year. It was decided that he would attend tuition for English; he joined a class from six to eight at night and would go for the class on his bicycle.

That year for the *Mariamman* festival, Doraisamy participated in a dance with clothes borrowed from his neighbor; the performance was well appreciated. Revathi's words express the reaction of the crowd and the subsequent feelings in Doraisamy show his true identity:

I was unwilling to shed my female clothes and stood for several minutes in front of the mirror. My neighbor rushed in and whispered, “Dorai! Take it all off! I

don't want your brothers scolding me!" Reluctantly, I changed into my regular clothes. As I re-emerged in my man's garb, I felt that I was in disguise, and that I had left my real self behind. (Revathi,16)

Doraisamy's articulation reveals the untrue life of each pre-transitioned transgender person and their sense of completion in the attire of a woman, the gender they feel, think and know they are. Patricia Gagne believes that the individual whose gender is at variance with his/her genital sex is very often penalized as he/she is unable to perform gender in socially prescribed ways and this subverts the cultural and structural social order.

While going for tuition, Doraisamy came across others like him on the hill fort. He saw men dressed in *lungis* and one of these men had long hair. They addressed each other as girls would and danced like women. When they started talking, Doraisamy realized that they were also like him and he was not abnormal and unique. He learnt for the first time that there were other persons like him, who wore saris, had undergone surgery and lived in Erode, Dindigul, in the state of Tamil Nadu and also far off places like Mumbai and Delhi. Soon Doraisamy went for tuition only three days a week and on the other days would meet his new friends on the hill fort. From these friends Doraisamy learnt about a woman, "an 'amma', in Dindigul, who wore saris and had had an 'operation' and that she received other women like him from Mumbai and Delhi during the time of the Goddess festival" (The Truth about Me, 20). One day, Dorai left for Dindigul with these friends. Revathi reminisces that his friends acted coyly like women and applied make up during the journey. Dorai was agitated by his friends' behavior and scolded them, but their response throws light on the true identity of a hijra/transgender. One of them responded

Keep quiet! We can't be ourselves at home or do what we want to. There isn't anyone on this bus who knows us. It's only like this, without anyone at home knowing, that can we do what we wish to do-express our desire to be women. We can't ever live if we fear being teased. Or dare express our feelings. We must then reconcile ourselves to a life that is neither here nor there. Come on! Let's be happy at least for the time we're away. (Revathi,20-21)

These words express a transgender person's ardent desire to live as a member of the opposite gender. While harboring such secret desires, many are unable to act assertively and declare their true gender identity. Whenever they attempt to express themselves openly or share their predicament with others, they are brushed away as acting "weird" or "silly" and none tries to discover the reasons for their strange behavior. The gender binary norm is widely accepted and expected; and anyone going against this is met with disapproval and contempt.

At Dindigul, Dorai and friends went to Amma's place. He realized that all the persons there "looked like real women. Only their voices gave them away" (Revathi, 21). Dorai and friends were asked to pay respect to the elders by doing "*paampaduthi*" (touching the feet of the elderly), which is an indispensable courtesy among the hijras. Later all of them got dressed in saris, wore wigs and jewellery. One of them stood before Doraisamy and said, "You look like the actress Revathi .... I looked at myself in the mirror and felt a glow of pride. I did look like a woman. It was at this moment that I was convinced I was indeed one" (22). It is words like these which ascertain and help a transgender person assert his/her true gender identity. Doraisamy was in his mid-teens, tall, slim and without any facial hair and had not undergone castration. One of the elders said, "If this one were to undergo *nirvaanam*, she'd look like a real woman .... I felt even more gratified on hearing this" (22). Dorai learnt that in order to become a



woman, he would have to get his ears and nose pierced, grow his hair long, learn their ways and become a “child” to a guru. The guru would be like a mother, provide sustenance and also get the castration surgery done after the disciple worked and earned for the guru. The next day the “*jamaat*” assembled (25). *Jamaat* alludes to the meeting of the hijra community in which they take important decisions like the acceptance of a new chela (disciple) by a guru and so on. After a temple visit, the ritual of chelaadoption commenced. Through this ritual Dorai became a “chela” (disciple) and would have to address his guru as “*amma*” (mother) (25). The guru asked her to stay with her parents, study well and get employed but Dorai’s crestfallen face and tears made her offer that he could come to her in case of unfavorable circumstances at home. She also advised Dorai to go to his “*nani*” (guru’s guru or his grandmother in hijra system) at Erode in case he needed an urgent shelter. Dorai was also reminded to grow his hair long. EshaTiwari affirms that when Dorai is asked to grow his hair long, it is an act of gender. She argues that a person who lacks long hair is a “man” and thereby brings opprobrium to the hijra community.

Dorai accompanied the group to Erode instead of going home. His *nani* managed a dance troupe consisting of transgender persons of various age groups. This group danced at temples during the season of festivals and at other times would go to Mumbai or Delhi. Dorai was advised to wear his lungi and shirt and forbidden to wear a sari to avoid being mistaken for a man in a sari. If someone saw a boy in a sari, it would be a disgrace to the transgender community. Dorai stayed at home, washed the clothes of the elders, fetched water, shopped for grocery and also did the cooking. Being the youngest, Dorai was entrusted with much hard work but he did it all without any complaint.

Dorai's *snani*, (*guru's guru*) *kaalaguru* (*nani's* sister) and others were expert dancers and they would practise on the terrace of their house. He also learnt some dance steps from them and once accompanied them for a temple festival, wearing a half skirt and a blouse, long false hair in two braids decorated with paper flowers. Make-up was applied on his face by the others in the group. Dorai's love to look feminine and dance at festivals echoes Butler's idea that "gender is always a doing" and "gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence" (Butler, 34). Revathi recollects, "We got stared at a lot, and I heard people ask rather loudly whether we were men or women or Number 9s or devadasis" (Revathi, 29). She recalls "some men made bold to touch us on our waists or our shoulders. Some others pointed to our breasts and asked, 'Original or duplicate?'" (29); this upset him and Revathi remembers

At such moments, I felt despair and wondered that people could be this way. How we could ever hope to make a living? God had made us this way, I thought, and we have no work of our own, our parents do not understand us and this world looks upon us with distaste. Yet we too go hungry. Above all, we wanted to live as human beings do, with dignity. I tried hard to ignore all that was happening around me. (Revathi,30)

After a month at Erode, Dorai decided to return home to participate in his sister's wedding. When his mother saw "him", she burst into tears and wanted to know where "he" had been. Dorai's brothers were very angry and one of them hit him with a cricket bat. Dorai lied and said that he had accompanied a friend from tuition class to visit the Madurai temple. He explained that he thought that if he told them that he wanted to go to Madurai they would not allow it so he left without informing them. As his sister's wedding was imminent, he was let off without much thrashing. His brothers

questioned “him” about ‘his’ long hair to which Dorai replied that he wanted to offer his hair at the Tirupati shrine; he purposely mentioned a faraway temple to gain time. His life as a cleaner was extremely strenuous. Getting up at five, he would clean the lorry’s wind screen, fill the radiator with water, dust the driver’s seat and light the incense stick. His brother would drive the lorry; they would go from village to village picking up cans of milk to deliver at the milk factory. Meanwhile Dorai’s hair had grown and he was getting restless to meet his guru but he could not confide in anyone.

One day when Dorai’s father humiliated “him” in the presence of his workers, the former was crestfallen. He decided that he would no longer live with his parents. On the third day, he left home, taking one of her mother’s gold earrings and two saris. Instead of walking on the road, he walked through fields and on reaching the hill fort, waited for his friends. One of them came and Dorai ran to him: he requested him to sell the ring, bring the cash and put him in the train to Delhi. Revathi writes, “My heart stopped beating wildly. I’d done it! I had escaped!” (Revathi, 38). These words reveal how the transgender person seems to be leading a dual life, an individual of a sex physically and of the opposite gender psychically. It is akin to being in a prison: a prisoner feels restricted and claustrophobic in a jail, while a transgender individual leads a life rife with identity issues. The issue is neither fully comprehensible to the person nor can he/she articulate it clearly to others. Others cannot comprehend the dilemma faced by a transgender person; consequently the latter is compelled to seek similar individuals who can support and simply be there for them. It is the fierce longing to make one self “complete” and comprehensible to others that drives one to his/her kind, even though they are complete strangers to oneself.

Dorai was sent to his nani’s place in Rafiq Nagar. The guru did not want anyone to think that she had caught a young boy and forcibly made him like them. Her guru

asked an elder to take him to Rafiq Nagar. “I, of course, did not know anyone apart from my guru. But I had always felt close to *pottais*, even if I didn’t know them. So I agreed to go to my nani’s and together we left in an auto rickshaw” (Revathi, 43). The identity crisis of a transgender person which makes him/her alienated from the others in society and simultaneously feel a kinship with other transgender individuals is very obvious from the words of the adolescent Dorai.

Shortly after that Dorai received a telegram about his mother being sick: when he informed his *nani*, she bought him a ticket and sent him home. He removed his earrings, nose ring and bangle and covered his shoulder length hair with a cap. On reaching home, Dorai found his mother in perfect health; his second brother shut the door and started hitting him with a cricket bat. Dorai was beaten on his legs, back and finally a blow to the head cracked his skull and he was drenched in blood. He stopped only when he was tired and his arms ached.

The reaction from Doraisamy’s brother may be due to abjection: abjection according to Robert Phillippe is a “vague sense of horror that permeates the boundary between the self and the other” (Phillipe, 19). Philippe gives the meaning of abjection as “to cast out” and he quotes Julia Kristeva, for whom abjection “disturbs identity, system, order” (20). He refers to Susan Stryker’s essay “My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage” that is mentioned by Kristeva thus “Stryker acknowledges and welcomes her abjection when she declares, ‘I am a transsexual and therefore I am a monster’” (21, 244)

His mother decided that “Dorai’s” long hair would be offered to the goddess at Samayapuram temple. In “*The Voice of an Indian Trans Woman: A Hijra Autobiography*”, Regiane Correa de Oliveira Ramos states that violence is a part of a trans person’s life. She explains how violence may be inflicted by “strangers,

boyfriends and partners” (Revathi,86). Regiane mentions that when Dorai’s hair is forcibly cut, it is a form of deep psychological savagery since for a trans person, the gender he/she claims is theirs, is an intensely personal identity expression (81). One day Doraisamy’s brothers and mother took him to the temple where his hair was shorn off.

Stigma attached to gender nonconformity shapes psychological identity development and many clinical researches have focused on the role of transition in alleviating gender dysphoria. Tom Sanger observes that gender has been posited on the axis of “maleness” and “femaleness” and sexuality has always been analysed in the “heteronormative framework” (Sanger,260). Since a large majority of social beings are either “male” or “female”, the notion of existence of other sexual and gender variations is not easily conceded.

The castration surgery removed the male appendage on her body and she could finally claim that she was a woman. Revathi and a *gurubai* chela were sent to Dindigul for the castration surgery. After the chela’s surgery, the doctor took Revathi to take a look at her; she lay without much pain. However, on being brought to the room, she started screaming in pain. Revathi was also operated in a similar fashion. As soon as the effect of the anesthesia wore off, Revathi experienced burning pain and screamed loudly. They could not eat or drink anything except black tea. Revathi realized that the surgery was conducted stealthily since the nurse lied about her castration surgery to an enquirer. These experiences reveal the unsafe conditions in which the transgender persons underwent highly risky and painful surgical procedures some years back. Revathi mentions that traditionally transgender persons were castrated by a “*thayamma*” (daiamma in Hindi) who would cut the penis and testicles with a single slash of a knife.

After Revathi had become a woman, she started developing sexual desire for men; however she could not express it to her *nani* as their house did not do sex work and without *nani*'s knowledge, it was impossible for her to experience it. Sexual behaviors and gender roles vary from culture to culture, and this, invariably has an effect on the place and position of the gender variant persons in that culture. In most cultures, transgender people are stigmatized while sexual activity involving the trans individuals is branded shameful. This is more pronounced in cultures with rigid sex roles or strictures against non-heterosexual sex.

To satisfy her sexual desire, Revathi left the house and approached another guru whose family practised sex work. The new guru had two *jopdis* (temporary hutlike structures) near the railway track. Even though Revathi started sex work to appease her sexual desire yet she considered it work. She was treated well, by her guru and *gurubais* (other *chelas* under her guru or her sisters) as she was “fair and pretty and spoke nicely” (Revathi,106). Most of her customers were drunks who could only afford around fifty rupees. Opposite their *jopdi* lived a drunk from a rich family, who always tried to solicit her for sex work, but they always fended him off saying his family would drive them out from there. To overcome the fear and stress of such occupational hazards, Revathi started drinking liquor. Venkatesan Chakrapani and others mention the violence unleashed on the transgender persons by goons, police, family and the general public (Chakrapani, 350). They state that transgender persons are often beaten up by the police personnel and even subjected to sexual assault and rape. At times the police also resort to blackmail and extortion. It is ironical that the guardians of legal system themselves inflict savage violence on the marginalized individuals. Since the police itself harass the transgendered, the latter hesitate to approach the police station when they face violence from goons. Revathi mentions an incident when she was out

for sex-work and the police abused her physically and sexually. The policemen took her in their van to the police station. She pleaded with them to let her go but they made her sweep and mop the station. Then she was asked to undress in the presence of a prisoner.

Revathi recollects,

Picking up a sheet of paper, the policeman scribbled something on it, and asked me, ‘Where did those breasts come from? They grew on their own?’ ‘No, not on their own. I took hormone tablets to grow them.’ ‘Open your mouth wide.’ I obliged him. ‘Bend down. I’ve got to inspect your back. I bent down and showed him my back. He then asked me to hold my buttocks apart so that he could see my anal passage. When I did, he thrust his lathi in there and asked, ‘So you get it there ? I straightened up, yelling with the pain of it. (Revathi, 207)

Such violence, which amounts to gross disregard and infringement of one’s basic human rights, happens regularly in a transgender person’s life.

In many studies conducted on transgender inequality, it was seen that these people are not protected by the state or law in schools, places of work or social gatherings. Ultimately one of the largest reasons for transphobic harassment is the lack of public understanding of transgender people. The notion of transgenderism as a mental disorder is widely rampant. Such individuals are discriminated against not just by their own family but within government settings through hate crimes under the very eyes of justice and the legal structure. Harassment, physical and verbal assault and sexual violence are their daily challenges. Although they are at more risk health wise, they are denied adequate health care. Most of the transphobic violence incidents are not reported because of their distrust and fear of the police.

When Revathi went home for the first time after her castration, she was welcomed with angry words from her mother. Her brother came out, armed with a stick, ready to hit her. When she showed her castrated state, he changed his decision while her mother lamented that she had lost a son. After some time Revathi went to her village but the cold reception and bitter experiences again drove her away, this time to Bangalore. Initially she joined a *hamam* (bath house) where she helped with collecting water, heating it and other work. Later she started sex work: she had to endure hardships, both from the police and from some rogues.

Revathi then mentions her marriage to and subsequent separation from a staff member of *Sangama*: initially, she was happy in her married life but within a year her husband seemed to have lost all love and desire for her. Not only Revathi, most transgender persons who have cisgender partners, seem to have an incompatible life; soon after they start their life together, internalized transphobia seems to be manifested. Tom Sanger mentions how the partners of trans individuals experience being “shaken” in their notions of gender and sexuality post-marriage (Sanger, 266).

Revathi’s post-separated life was one of sadness and great suffering; her colleagues often found her tearful and gloomy. Her office colleagues suggested that she write a book after interviewing hijras, which she readily agreed to. However, the news of her chela, Famila’s suicide was a huge shock; in spite of her great personal loss, Revathi resolved to start her work. Her project took her to different parts of Tamil Nadu and also helped her to overcome her distressed condition. During her work at Theni, she heard of her guru’s murder, which was initially distressing to reconcile to. She went to Bangalore and fulfilled all the duties a chela has to perform for her guru, especially the funeral and other rituals and also accompanied her *gurubais* to the police station to file case against the murder.



Meanwhile her book based on the interviews of the *aravanis* (the term used for hijras in Tamil Nadu) was completed; it was titled *UnarvumUruvamum*. She left her work at *Sangama* to live with her parents but was unable to find employment due to her hijra identity. . When Revathi's mother fell ill and had to be admitted to a hospital, she accompanied her. Revathi tended to her for three months and when she was offered work at Bangalore, she asked her elder brother and wife to care for her. The new work involved training workshops for the prevention of AIDS, but even after all the sessions, she was unable to earn much. Revathi, once again had to go for sex work, even though now she disliked it. Finally, when no other job was forthcoming, she went back to *Sangama*. The autobiographical narrative concludes at this point.

Revathi had personal issues after her transition. Her marriage and subsequent separation from her husband caused her great anguish; she was in a state of depression. However, when her office asked her to take up a project to interview transgender individuals for a book, she readily agreed. She met and interviewed around thirty trans people in six months. Revathi says, "My difficulties were nothing compared to some of the things I heard" (Revathi, 295).

The life narrative of Revathi mentioned, reveal that she was initially affected by stigma and prejudice, which added to her stress. Most transgender individuals experience internalized transphobia which results in their perceived rejection from society coupled with discrimination. To overcome such negativity and assert themselves, the trans persons need to forge resilience, accept and emphasize their true identity and also be aware of the oppression which may come their way. Through dedication to their profession and/or activism, most trans persons are successful in their lives. Their determination in combating social transphobia and creating awareness about their issues, goes a long way in helping others like them.

## Conclusion

The transgender individuals who have been struggling against discrimination and transphobia from society cannot be ignored as inconsequential if they demand justice and reparation for their loss and suffering. Most transgendered persons experience trauma which leaves them completely transformed and it keeps returning to haunt them. Pritham Chakravarthy, the famous one-woman theatre personality, quotes Maria Root's observation about trauma as being "usually associated with the social status of an individual being devalued because a character intrinsic to their identity is different from what is valued by those in power, for example, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability. As a result it is often present throughout a lifetime"

The transgender persons on whom this study focuses, prove that cultural differentiation of gender roles has become deeply embedded in social consciousness and that leads to confusion about them and the roles they adopt. They exhibited their assertiveness and wanted to express their actual gender identity; they took concrete and resolute steps to rectify the incongruous body/mind dichotomy. It may be recollected that these persons were biologically born males who, in early childhood experienced gender dysphoria, which made them feel, think and know that they are females in male bodies. The gender identity of being a female made them wear feminine dress as well as walk and behave like women.

The fact that Revathi experienced different forms of transphobia from society is apparent from her narrative. Revathi faced brutal treatment from local goons in Mumbai and insensitive policemen in Bangalore. After her sex-surgery, Revathi was often taunted by people in public places. The male to female transgender incites transphobia through her implicit challenge to the binary division upon which male

cultural and political hegemony depends. Transphobia is an extension of homophobia and misogyny. Transgender people, like gays and lesbians, are hated and feared for “challenging and undermining gender norms and gender binary. The political impropriety of subverting the gender binary is highly scandalous to those who are firm supporters of the dichotomous clan. Anyway, the fortitude and strength of Revathi to grapple with all forms of transphobia, shows her indomitable courage and spirit.

The life of a transgender, especially a hijra, is always subject to many forms of transphobic hatred and violence. Since there are many negative aspects like police brutality and rowdy violence, many trans persons become addicted to drugs or drinking and do not think of leaving their miserable background.

Cressida J. Heyes in *Feminist Solidarity after Queer Theory: The Case of Transgender* quotes Bernice Hausman, “those of us who are not transsexuals may wonder what it is like to feel oneself ‘in the wrong body. That is precisely what non-transgendered persons fail to realise and thereby acknowledge. Heyes mentions Raymond who asks, “Does a Black person who wants to be white suffer from the ‘disease’ of being a transracial?” and later states thus “there is no demand for transracial medical intervention precisely because most Blacks recognize that it is their society, not their skin, that needs changing. Since the people of African origin prefer to live in the skin colour of their birth, as it their racial identity, similarly the transgendered individuals are content with their gender identity once they have transitioned to the gender of their choice and then refuse to change their identity for political correctness. Their expectation that mainstream society should transform in order to acknowledge them and their gender, is hardly unreasonable; especially because the cisgendered people consider the former to be deviants. The demand that deviants must conform to the norm goes against the idea of inclusivity.

The body/mind dichotomy is a fundamental concept that has been studied extensively in various fields, including philosophy, psychology, and sociology. It refers to the separation of the physical body and the non-physical mind or soul. This dichotomy has been a subject of debate for centuries, with some arguing that the mind and body are separate entities, while others believe they are inseparable. In the book "*Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*," author Revathi addresses this dichotomy through her own experiences as a *hijra*, a marginalized gender group in India.

Revathi's story provides insight into the complex relationship between the body and mind in the context of hijra identity. As *ahijra*, Revathi was born male but identified as female. She faced discrimination and violence from society, which forced her to live on the fringes of society. Revathi's experiences highlight the complex interplay between the body and mind in the formation of gender identity.

In the book, Revathi describes her journey to becoming a *hijra*. She recounts how she was initially confused about her gender identity, feeling like she was trapped in a male body but identifying as female. Her feelings were often dismissed by her family and society, who viewed *hijras* as immoral and deviant. Revathi's experiences show how societal norms and beliefs can impact an individual's sense of self and their understanding of their body and mind.

One of the most striking aspects of Revathi's story is the physical transformation she underwent to become a *hijra*. She describes undergoing castration, a process in which the testicles are removed, which is a common practice among *hijras*. For Revathi, this was a critical step in aligning her physical body with her gender identity. She writes, "The change in my body was both physical and mental. I felt that my body had been purged of all the male elements that had been weighing me down."

Revathi's description of her physical transformation highlights the complex interplay between the body and mind in the formation of gender identity. While some may view castration as a mutilation of the body, for Revathi, it was a crucial step in aligning her physical body with her sense of self. Her experiences demonstrate that the body and mind are not separate entities, but rather, they are intimately connected.

However, Revathi also acknowledges that the physical transformation was not enough to fully embrace her *hijra* identity. She writes, "It was not just my body that needed to change; it was my mind too." Revathi's experiences demonstrate that the mind and body are not separate, and the transformation of one does not necessarily lead to a complete transformation of the other. She had to undergo a psychological transformation as well, which involved accepting herself and her identity fully.

Revathi's story also highlights the challenges of living as a *hijra* in Indian society. *Hijras* face widespread discrimination and violence, which can impact their mental and physical well-being. Revathi describes the emotional toll of constantly being ridiculed and shamed for her gender identity. She writes, "I always felt like an outcast, a freak of nature. It was like living in a constant state of fear and shame." Revathi's experiences demonstrate that the body/mind dichotomy is not just an abstract concept but has real-world implications for marginalized communities.

In conclusion, Revathi's story provides valuable insights into the body/mind dichotomy in the context of *hijra* identity. Her experiences demonstrate the complex interplay between the physical body and non-physical mind in the formation of gender identity. Revathi's story also highlights the challenges of living as a *hijra* in Indian society and the impact of discrimination and violence on mental and physical well-being. Ultimately, Revathi's story serves as a reminder that the mind and body are.

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**DELINEATION OF CHILDHOOD IN FANTASY HORROR  
MOVIES: AN ANATOMIZATION OF *PAN'S LABYRINTH* AND**

***TUMBBAD***

A Project Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of M.A  
in English Language and Literature of Kannur University

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**DON BOSCO ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGE,**

**ANGADIKADAVU**



## **BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **Delineation Of Childhood In Fantasy Horror Movies: An Anatomization Of *Pan's Labyrinth* and *Tumbbad*** submitted to Kannur University in partial fulfillment of the requirement of M.A. Degree in English Language and Literature is a record of bonafide study and research work carried out by **Neeraja.K.V** under my supervision and guidance and no part of this work has been presented earlier for the award of any degree, diploma, title or recognition.

**HOD. Fr. Jaison Anthikkat**

**Ms. Deepa Divakar**

**Head of the Department**

**Research Guide**

## DECLARATION

I, **Neeraja. K.V** hereby declare that this dissertation entitled **Delineation Of Childhood In Fantasy Horror Movies: An Anatomization Of *Pan's Labyrinth* and *Tumbbad*** is a record of original work carried out by me for the award of M.A. Degree in English Language and Literature of Kannur University, and it has not been submitted to any university for the award of any degree or diploma.

**Angadikadavu**

**Neeraja. K.V**

**01-05-2023**

**CIPAEN1710**

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## **Introduction**

Since the beginning of the human existence, man has been searching for different ways of recreation. He has been looking for something that gives a little break from his exhausting schedule of day-to-day life. Cinema has come forward as a great way of recreation since around a century. It has been one of the most loved pastimes since its inception. A film is a work of visual art that stimulates experiences and otherwise communicate ideas, stories, perceptions, feelings, beauty or atmosphere through the use of moving images. These images are generally accompanied by sound and more rarely other sensory stimulations. Films can make us sit up and take notice, learn about a new culture, experience a different perspective, or open our eyes to a world we know nothing about. We watch movies because they're entertaining and make us think about issues in new ways. Cinema is a reflection of society. Film has a uniquely powerful ubiquity within human culture. Just as everything else in this world, cinema also has positive as well as negative impacts on our life. Everyone today is more or less connected to it. Exploring the world of cinema has been a craze for the young generation ever since the initiation of movies.

Often seen as dense and abstract, film theory can be useful tool in understanding the meaning and impact of a film. Film theory is a scholarly pursuit, which attempts to explain the essence of what film is. It began when film makers were first trying to understand their medium. So, they analysed the mechanisms at play, which could provide meaning and impact for the viewer. Thus, film makers wanted to understand what was different about movies. As technologies have

progressed, contemporary film theory now looks at where and how we encounter cinema. It is surprising that psychoanalysis took as long as it did to gain a foothold in film theory. The connection between psycho-analytic thought and the cinema is readily apparent. Of course, there is a fundamental difference between a dream and a film. An individual subject produces a dream, and a director, along with hundreds of others, creates a film. The basis of the psychoanalysis is the discovery of the unconscious. Many film makers have used these implied connections between film language and desire in order to subvert audience expectation in their work, or to engage more thoughtfully with psychoanalysis.

This paper, attempts an analysis of the representation of the childhood in the fantasy horror films with special reference to the movies; *Tumbbad* (2018), a Hindi-language film and Spanish movie *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006). The two films, with their contrary concerns, tones and objectives, offer a vast ground for understanding the edifice of childhood in the different cultures. On the basis of these concepts this project divided into three chapters. The first chapter discusses the plot of two movies *Tumbbad* and *Pan's Labyrinth*. The second chapter describe the theory of Psychoanalysis. The third chapter examines the representation of childhood in these movies.

Childhood is often seen as the site of wonder, joy and adventure. What is often skipped out of this optimistic construction is that which lurks beneath the wonder, which often lies at the end of a thrilling adventure, which dims the gleaming light of joy - Horror. There goes on a ceaseless play of fantastical stories in the mind of a child. Children— un assailed by a constricting knowledge of social

customs and realities, observe people and situations keenly, and colour these outlines with their vivid imagination. Creaky wooden floorboards become ghosts under the bed, unseemly strangers turn into demons and witches. Behind this exaggerated sense of reality lies children's desire to understand and define the world, using whatever tools of knowledge they have at hand.

This enormous potential of children's unrestricted imagination is tapped in fantasy and horror literature and cinema. There are innumerable books and films that construct their fantastical narratives through the perspective of an uninitiated, outsider child, using him or her as a proxy for the equally unsuspecting reader/watcher. Cinema finds itself at a special advantage here, for fantasy has a rich association with the visual and the visceral.

In childhood, there is a sense that everything is whole, everything is in its right place. Ideally everyone in a family try to ensure that a child's worlds are a good one, without a malignant piece or impulse to upset the order of things, which is why for much of a child's early life the world is pastel and candy-coloured one. At some point, though, things go wrong. It begins with a parent, who up until a certain time was infinitely solicitous of a child needs and wants, saying "no". Eventually the church or mosque or temple teaches you about evil. In time we also learn that our parents are not quite perfect, and the world can be a chaotic and evil place. This is the indelible sentiment of Bob Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone"-that of a jejune young person coming into an anonymous and unfriendly world, with its seedy, grinning street characters who say, "Do you want to make a deal?".

Art and literature have long charted this quintessentially human journey from naivete and innocence to hard-earned maturity. This youthful encounter with the bewildering adult world has been represented in allegorical form by many beautiful films, and the very different movies capture this theme in surprisingly similar ways: *The Shining*, *Tumbbad*, *Beats of The Southern World*, and *Pan's Labyrinth*... Each film depicts a young person coming to terms with an alien reality, an ugly adult world that can only be mediated through myth, magic, and fantasy. Each depicts the stories one must tell oneself to cope with all that is scary and unknown, and they draw on a deep well of mythology to help their young characters navigate frightening new territory.

Guillermo del Toro's *Pan's Labyrinth* follows a similar pattern. It tells the story of a young girl Ofelia, to escape her morbid reality, she immerses herself in a mysterious demimonde in the forest, haunted by grotesque and fanciful creatures, that have little to do with the world of war. Advised by the faun(pan), who lives in the labyrinth, Ofelia tries to complete the tasks that will allow her to return to the underworld, where she, the lost princess Moenna, will be able to take her rightful place-far from the horrors of war and adolescence. It is a story about the capacity of the human imagination to help people escape, to find hope in even the most brutal reality. In the end, Ofelia comes in to direct conflict with her step-father and flees. She too lures the monster into a labyrinth, and although she meets her end at the hands of the fascist, he also doesn't make it out of the maze alive. After her murder, Ofelia is shown being welcomed into the magical underworld as a princess-not just as a fulfilment of her family, but in a vast and slightly scary new world, one that is far more foreboding than any simple imagining of paradise.



Fantasy films extensively feature children, and very often the narrative is a bildungsroman for the central characters, for example, the *Harry Potter* series (2001-2011) and most animated films. Horror films also have a time-tested affinity for child characters. *Children of the Damned* (1964), *The Exorcist* (1973) and *It* (2017) are just a few examples from Hollywood.

*Tumbbad*, the director, Anil Barve shares his thoughts on the film's unique concept, Indian cultural references, expertly crafted visual and music, and the absence of typical horror tropes. The film tells the story of Vinayak Rao and a tortured legacy of greed, which ultimately destroys his entire bloodline. In Hindu theology, greed is considered one of the 'six enemies of mind'. Vinayak's personal tale also follows the tumultuous timeline of modern India with the plot jumping from 1918 to 1933 before concluding in 1947. The story in a way deals with the inner demon of the characters and it concludes where the characters confront the reality of life beyond greed. Vinayak believes that the resources of the earth are for the men of the earth to uncover.

A method to investigate the mystery behind the thoughts and unconscious activity in the human mind can be analysed through the Psycho-analytic theory. The second chapter of this project discusses the Psycho-analytic theory, explains Freud's model of human consciousness. Sigmund Freud's theory suggests that human behaviour is influenced by unconscious memories, thoughts and urges. Freud famously designates the dream as the fulfilment of a wish, though this fulfilment always occurs in a disguised form. This theory also proposes that the psyche comprises three aspects: the id, ego and the superego. The film is not a

dream. But it is as close to as we come in waking life. The cinema is just as much a royal road to the unconscious as the dream.

The third chapter analyses the representation of childhood in the fantasy horror films: *Tumbbad* and *Pan's Labyrinth*. This study of the child in Spanish and Hollywood horror seeks to illuminate new understandings of Fantasy horror cinema and the value in understanding children as social actors. Childhood is an important stage in the process of growing up every person. It is the time when our dreaming thoughts, fairy tale, all our fantasy world dance around our mind. What skilfully captures, both through these films and with their words, are the unique qualities that children bring to narratives. Childhood is represented in the secinemas as a special time in life.

## Chapter One

### *Tumbbad And Pan's Labyrinth-An Analysis*

#### *Tumbbad*

There is nothing worse than a fallen god. There are limits to how corrupt and greedy a demon or corrupt person can be. Yet, a fallen god is not constrained by such morals. He is incomparably miserable. The movie, featuring Sohum Shah in the lead and set in the fictional village of Tumbbad, is a cautionary tale against greed conveyed through the mystery-thriller genre, with elements of horror, fantasy, allusions to Hindu mythology, and the Victorian literary cliché of *Madwoman in the Attic*. Bollywood horror movies frequently include elements like a haunted house that is cut off from human habitation, a curse from the past, an unfulfilled longing, a ghost, a witch, or some other supernatural being.

*Tumbbad*, a 2018 Bollywood production from Rahi Anil Barve and Anandh Gandhi, stands out in this generic tradition of clichés and succeeds in introducing a fresh horror aesthetic. It not only eschews the "jolt and shock tactics of Western horror movies" (Sakshi Dogra) by including ambient horror elements, but it also centres the story around a myth that the author himself conceptualised. According to *Tumbbad*, this is the myth of Hastar: The world was created by the Goddess of Prosperity, who gave birth to 16 crore gods and goddesses. The earth was her womb and she had large reserves of gold and grain. From this womb sprang her first born, her favourite and most cherished, Hastar.

Despite being a celestial entity, he had less than honourable aims. He was greedy. He wished to gain control over the goddess's wealth. While she let him to

steal all the gold, Hastar was destroyed and fragmented after being attacked by other Gods before stealing the food. Finally, his mother saved him by promising that he would never be worshipped and that his name would eventually be permanently forgotten. Hastar returned to his mother's womb where he slept for an eternity until Rao's family initiated his worship in order to satiate a perilous desire to obtain the same wealth that Hastar sought, thereby beginning a vicious circle of materialistic greed.

The 2010 documentary *History of Horror* by Mark Gatiss, which claimed that horror films "had a common concern with the British environment, its folklore, and its superstitions", is where the appeal of folk horror first emerged. The hypothesis of the Folk Horror Chain was later put forth by cinema historian Adam Scovell in his book *Folk Horror: Hours Dark and Things Weird* (2017), which listed the key components of folk horror as "landscape, solitude, distorted moral views, and Summoning or Happening" (Paciorek,2018).

*Tumbbad* takes place in a rural Maharashtrian village that is abandoned and cut off from the rest of the countryside, following a similar folk horror tradition. First Sarkar and his family, then his son Vinayak Rao, then a buddy named Raghav, and eventually Vinayak's son, one enters the village solely for the purpose of seeking for the treasures. The desire to obtain the gold from Hastar's (or later Hastar[s]) body takes place inside the Goddess' womb, which turns into the scene of terror. Only those who are able to control their greed, like Vinayak at first, are able to endure. Anyone who is bitten by Hastar will be cursed with immortality, insatiable greed, and unrestricted access to gold, just as Hastar was.

Hence, Hastar is a metaphor for greed, a poison that stings the human body if it lets him in. Hastar endures in his most hideous form, but his victims are transformed into hybrids of humans and demons, with human senses like hunger and pain remaining, but with desire and the intellect taking on the characteristics of avarice.

An important period of political and social transformation in India occurred between 1918 and 1947, which is when the narrative takes place. In parallel with India's ascent to independence, the mythology develops. The mythical concept of "fear" is analogous to the horrifying pre-colonial Indian feudal system, which was oppressive and patriarchal. In order to obtain a gold coin, or "an income," Vinayak's father, the "Sarkar," had to make his wife masturbate him. Sarkar is a lord and owner of a gigantic mansion in Tumbbad. For decades he's been unsuccessfully trying to find the location of the hidden treasure, the one that Hastar stole. Vinayak's mother has been his mistress for 12 years, hoping that she will be rewarded with one gold coin part of the Hastar statue.

A veiled critique of the class structure is also provided in the movie. In pre-colonial India, Konkanasth Brahmins like Sarkar's family exploited common men, and their tainted ties to the colonial authority and oppressive mentality towards women in the home combined to create the scary picture of India before independence. Intriguingly, moral compromise and modern political corruption have been intertwined with the factor of fear. A human must give Hastar food in order to call him, and this food must be produced using Brahmins' clean flour, as the movie emphasises. There are two uses for the flour. It has the power to reduce

Hastar to ashes when distributed as dust, but when combined with water and formed into doll-like objects, it becomes sustenance for ravenous Hastar.

Horror film franchises have always included creepy dolls like Annabelle, Talky Tina, and Chucky. The bizarre thing about the dough dolls, despite the fact that they have obvious eyes, eyelashes, red lips, and bleeding cheeks, is how much they resemble a human being, and even Hastar. The situation becomes much more horrifying when it is discovered that each dough doll summons one Hastar. In the mother's womb, the figure of Hastar (or figures), red beings with gold crowns on their heads, crawls and contends for a larger portion of their sustenance.

*Tumbbad* opens with a Gandhi quote, "The world has enough for everyone's needs, but not everyone's greed", and then tells us a story about a goddess who gave birth to all of creation, while also mothering an insatiable child called Hastar. The hideous appearance of the womb, which is meant to be a haven for a kid, is depicted. As any prospective victim enters the womb's domain, the camera concentrates on the pouring of enzymes and body fluids as well as the spasmodic breathing of the blood vessels. The victim experiences 'abjection' (Kristeva, 1982). The evil in the movie is not just Hastar, but rather multiple of his incarnations as represented by the character of "Sarkar(s)" through the generation. The concept of "liberation" from these monsters consequently becomes a central motif. In pre-colonial India, women sought freedom from their husbands, while common men sought freedom from the feudal system, the British government, and Hastar's victims sought freedom from their own lives.

The Hastar's bite rendered its victims incapable of dying and, if they weren't asleep, they were always hungry. They became cannibalistic when exposed

to the smell of human flesh, even that of their own family, and could only be subdued by calling on the name of Hastar. They were aware that this was a curse rather than a blessing, and that the only way to end it was to commit themselves by burning.

It was terrible when Vinayak last saw his grandma when he was a child because she tried to eat him alive. When Vinayak returned to Tumbbad after a period of time and both erupted in an evil chuckle at discovering his grandma alive. Since his need to keep the cursed alive to satisfy his "greed" overcame his childhood trauma, this was the turning point in Vinayak's transformation into a demon. An unsettling image of a huge tree that had grown on the grandmother looked like a mesh of umbilical cords connecting the unborn kid to its mother. Her backstory is that she found the hidden treasure when she was young. But she was attacked by Hastar and was cursed with eternal life without eternal youth. Like Hastar, she is always hungry, and when someone utters the phrase, "sleep, else Hastar will come", she goes to sleep. Vinayak's mother has been feeding the old woman for years as part of her quest for that single gold coin.

*Tumbbad* was a success when it was released in India, where horror films have a long but relatively limited history. This is perhaps because the plot is so uniquely Indian, steeped in the nation's past and particular traumas, and is so spooky, insistent, and concise. It shows an India that is in constant turmoil, grappling with new world orders.

"For me, the film was never just about Vinayak's personal quest. It was rather the journey of India, as we see it today" (Anil Barve)

The film starts when the Peshwai era is on its last legs. They ruled us for about Hundred years, and vanished. The three chapters of the story each contain a unique set of significant secrets and revelations, as well as a distinct type of horror. Based on the stories of Marathi horror writer Narayan Dharap — the title coming from Shripad Narayan Pendse's novel *Tumbadche Khot* — *Tumbbad* is the story of a boy who grows up obsessed with the temple's treasure. As he grows up, he finds a way to get it, coin by coin, lowering himself deeper into the forbidden abyss as he, like a storyteller, mines the myth.

Young brothers Vinayak and Sadashiv Rao resent poverty in the outlying town of Tumbbad in the first chapter, which is set in 1918 against the backdrop of Mahatma Gandhi's early uprisings against British rule. This chapter is about the generation of Vinayak's mother. when India was still feudal. She-mother as well as the country -is exploited, but they are happy to just get one gold coin. They are privately raised by a decrepit hermit named Sarkar, who owns a large, dilapidated mansion that is in their neighbourhood. Yet, he has never acknowledged them or his relationship with their mother (Jyoti Malshe), who has served as both his maid and mistress for many years.

Sarkar eventually dies of age, and Vinayak's mother inherits the mansion. However, she doesn't want anything to do with Tumbbad. She's got what she wants, the gold coin from Hastar's statue. She feels that would give them enough wealth to start a new modest life in another city. But Vinayak disagrees and feels they could inherit all the hidden treasure in the mansion.

Unfortunately, Sadashiv gets badly hurt after falling from a tree, forcing his mother to take him for help. She tells Vinayak he will have to feed his grandmother



that night. She also warns him that if the old woman wakes up, he should say the name “Hastar” to make her sleep. Meanwhile Sadashiv dies in the way to the Doctor. When Vinayak tries to feed her, the monstrous and ravenous old woman attacks and cuffs him to eat her, who eventually remembers Hastar's name and uses it to put her to sleep. As his mother comes back, she and Vinayak depart Tumbbad for Pune the following day. Despite his objections to staying and looking for the treasure, she convinces Vinayak to swear he will never go back to Tumbbad.

The story that introduces the movie claims that Tumbbad was cursed by the gods because of Vinayak's family, and that the region's constant rain is a manifestation of divine wrath. Throughout the movie, Barve uses a lot of strong, graphic visuals to depict the storms: Vinayak, his mother, and his brother are always drenched in mud and covered in plaster, whether they are at the Tumbbad mansion or huddled in their own shack. The family doesn't make any comments about the rain because it serves as the constant backdrop to their existence, yet they all appear chilly, diluted, and in danger of disintegrating completely.

Vinayak's desire for freedom and the resources to live however he pleases is quite understandable. Young Vinayak's quest for amassing gold remains insatiable as a tragedy forces the family to move to Poona. Vinayak returns to Tumbbad as an adult, still fuelled by his old quest. Fourteen years pass and a more-demanding Vinayak is introduced in the second chapter. The world at the time was struggling with imperialism's effects and the Second World War. Vinayak goes back to Tumbbad in an effort to end his miserable existence. He is warned by the elderly woman, that if he touches the treasure, he will be cursed with immortality

and transformed into a monster like her. She forewarned him about the disastrous outcome of claiming "everything" that is ancestor-related but in vain. In exchange for eliminating her pain, she adds, a well goes to the goddess' womb where Hastar resides. In keeping with his word, Vinayak sets her ablaze, killing her.

Hastar stole the goddess' wealth, but he could not take her grain. He wants flour since he has been hungry for years. In order to lure Hastar into the goddess' womb, Vinayak builds dough dolls and physically trains himself to climb up and down a long rope. Vinayak swipes at Hastar's loincloth carrying the gold while he is distracted with the food. Vinayak frequently uses the same technique to take dropped coins.

In order to settle a debt, he offers Raghav, an opium seller, and money lender, his first gold coin. Vinayak returns to Tumbbad to steal from Hastar whenever he needs more money. Vinayak accumulates fortune through time while Raghav experiences terrible times and needs money desperately to obtain an opium permit. Raghav openly wonders about the treasure rumoured to exist in the Tumbbad mansion while also questioning why Vinayak can only retrieve a few coins at a time. Raghav uses his widowed daughter-in-law to attempt to seduce Vinayak and keep him away from Tumbbad because he is aware that Vinayak obtains his gold from Tumbbad. Raghav intends to visit Tumbbad and take the treasure there in the interim. Unfortunately, Vinayak learns Raghav's scheme from his daughter-in-law. Raghav is tricked into entering Hastar's well by Vinayak after he follows him to the Tumbbad mansion. Raghav is brutally attacked by Hastar, who transforms him into a monster and causes him to mutate into the womb's walls. For Raghav's relief, Vinayak burns him alive.

The final chapter is about the third generation, Vinayak's children-who are not satisfied with their luxurious lifestyle. At the same time, India has gained independence and has embraced capitalism. Once Vinayak's son, Pandurang, is old enough, he begins training so that he can take over getting gold from Hastar. Vinayak takes Pandurang to the mansion to train him for the same purpose and is told not to bring the dough doll down. But he secretly brings a dough doll, and Hastar unexpectedly attacks. They barely manage to escape, and Vinayak chides his son for nearly getting them touched. Vinayak gives Pandurang a gold coin as a trophy, but Pandurang plans to sell it to make money.

Raghav's daughter-in-law eventually becomes Vinayak's mistress. Pandurang approaches her and offers her the gold. Vinayak becomes enraged and nearly chokes Pandurang to death, but the child tells Vinayak that they should steal Hastar's loincloth and buy a lot more time by taking multiple flour dough dolls and throwing them at Hastar one after the other. Vinayak is moved by his son's suggestion, and the two reconcile.

It's 1947, India is liberated from British colonial rule, and the mansion at Tumbbad is taken over by the newly formed Indian Government. Even though Vinayak has enough gold for a lifetime, he wants the loincloth filled with gold coins. Vinayak and his son make one last trip to the womb, armed with a plethora of flour dough dolls. However, the two of them become trapped in a tiny hemisphere of the flour circle protecting them inside the womb when separate Hastars appear for each one of those dolls. With no hope of escaping, Vinayak ties all the dolls on himself and climbs out.

All of the Hastars follow him out, and as they do, a secondary flour circle around the hatch disintegrates them all. When the coast is clear, Pandurang returns to the surface to find his father mutated into a monster outside the well. Vinayak offers him the stolen loincloth that he stole from Hastar, but Pandurang refuses to accept it. Pandurang sets Vinayak on fire and leaves, sobbing as he sees what his father has become.

*Tumbbad* bears the most similarity to the early European Gothic novels. The film has iconic similarity to Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* published in 1864. The character of Manfred bears stark similarity to Vinayak and is fed by greed and omens. Through the use of dark-tinted cinematography and nonstop rain in the village of Tumbbad, one can have a visceral experience with the supernatural. The never-ending rain symbolises nature's takeover of man's domain. A colonial tension looms in the background, describing the period as India's pre-independence era. *Tumbbad 2018* uses the Nature of man to strike another chord of terror. Vinayak in the knowledge of the treasure cannot put a reign to his greed; he is continually pulled back to the castle in hunger for more gold. He trains his son to the tactic of leeching gold from Hastar and eventually brings him to the castle. His blind greed passes itself on to his son; in his hubris, the same cursed God consumes him and turns him into a demon.

The Greek tragedy of *Oedipus Rex* has also been invoked to show the dire fall of the human condition. On earning a piece of gold coin, Vinayak's son takes to his father's mistress and even tries to lure her to himself. The eerie aspect of the film is that Hastar is not mentioned in Hindu mythology. The absence of Hastar

from mythology adds to the enigma of who he is. According to the story, Haster is a cursed demon/God who is the first son of the Goddess of Plenty.

No man can serve two masters for either he  
will hate the one, and love the other, or else  
he will hold to the one, and despise the other  
Ye cannot serve God and mammon

– – *Matthew 6:24*

Mammon represents wealth in the Bible. Mammon, interestingly, is the embodiment of Haster, the demon God of greed. Mammon is depicted in pre-Judeo culture as an entity clutching a gold-filled pouch. As a result of incorporating Greek heritage into eastern tradition, Haster becomes a more terrifying demon. In *Tumbbad*, the hanging demon is greed. Greed is carefully implanted in all of the film's characters.

### ***Pan's Labyrinth***

A dark scene, a panting child, and a stream of blood flowing from a dying girl: These images mark the opening of *Pan's Labyrinth*, a 2006 film written and directed by Guillermo del Toro. At its centre, *Pan's Labyrinth* is about dream as a system for idealism—an exploration of how a little sprat comprehends and adapts to Francoist Spain. The acclaimed director Guillermo del Toro is known for his ability to muddle the lines between the fantastical and the ordinary, blurring the distinction between fantastical creatures and common people. Wonderfully designed, rich in colours and tones, providing a unique atmosphere *Pan's Labyrinth* is a voyage of introspection, a journey of self-discovery, a fairy tale like no other, with reversed tropes and imaginative playfulness evident in its structure

and characterizations, but also a sort of an unbelievable bildungsroman—a formative story of a little girl's character development, symbolizing the importance of the individual's liberty and obligation to trust their heart and instincts, to find their own voice and make their own choices, especially at a time when there are vocal individuals leading regimes intent on taking away these freedoms and profiting from their subordinates' weak will and moral flexibility.

*Pan's Labyrinth* is set during the Spanish Civil War, in 1944 and it is about a young girl named Ofelia whose mother has just married a falangist military officer named Captain Vidal. She and her mother Carmen, who is pregnant, on a train, going to their new house, Captain Vidal's estate. Because he wants his son should be brought into the world in his presence, he overlooks the implications of carrying his family to the combat zone. Ofelia misses her own father, a tailor who died in the war, it's implied that Captain Vidal arranged his death. Vidal wants to promote a fascist Spain by putting an end to any opposition, including the group of Spaniards who battled against it and promoted establishing a state without government control.

Captain Vidal is a figure who symbolises the conflict between gender roles in the movie. In this movie, male superiority predominates. One can see that Vidal is a male with power over women. Vidal insults his new wife, Ofelia's mother Carmen, in various scenes. Ofelia concerns about this marriage and asks her mother, "Why do you have to get married?" (*Pan's Labyrinth*, 2006). She finds herself faced with a violent bully for a stepfather, knowing every day that her mother could die and leave her alone with him.

Ofelia is a straight-up escapist nerd, loaded with honesty and empathy, living most dynamically in a dreamland she has made, impacted by the fantasies she continually peruses. She uses books to escape her miserable reality. Ofelia's character is almost immediately shown as being one prone to curiosity and adventure upon her newly appointed step father's outpost as well as her new home. She shows these qualities by dropping her books and running after a praying mantis that leads her to the labyrinth.

She encounters a faun, a fantastical creature, who tells her that she is the reincarnation of a lost princess of the hidden world, and this princess had dreamt of being part of the human world, containing blue skies, soft breeze and sunshine. One day this princess escaped, traveling to this world of promise, but once in this new land finds herself suffering from cold, sickness and pain. Her memory was erased and no longer knew who she was or where she had come from. She eventually died and returns to the underworld through Ofelia's body.

Ofelia is guided by the mysterious faun in her journey to complete three tasks in order to return to her rightful place from so long ago, where her father, the king, waits for her before the moon is full. Beginning of a menstrual cycle, when her innocence will be lost and she will change into a woman, might be interpreted as the full moon. Blood and female reproductive organs are constantly or subtly, used throughout the film to portray the transition Ofelia faces as she becomes a woman alongside her quest into the underworld. This imagery also comes with the introduction to the faun's character as he comes across very creepy and vague with his description of exactly who he is and why he is so seemingly forward in his personal desire for her to be the princess.

“Hero’s journeys are often tales of initiation, where the threshold between childhood and adulthood is not as easily divided”(Lindsay 35)

However, Ofelia seems to have a pretty clear path as to when the crossover will begin as all she must do is follow the book’s instruction and become a princess. In a sense, the crossover is her rite of passage as she will become an adult by completing the tasks, and her coming of age. The next day Ofelia talks to Mercedes, the Captain’s handmaiden and a motherly figure to Ofelia during the film, about what happened the night before. She tells Mercedes about the fairies she encountered as well as the faun, of which Mercedes informs Ofelia that her mother had once told her to be wary of fauns.

Ofelia then goes into the woods as reads the book the faun gave her, seeing what her first task will be. It tells her a story about a dying fig tree that will come back to life if she kills the toad inside it by feeding it three magic stones. The toad will then die and she will be able to retrieve a golden key from its stomach. More symbolism used in this scene as Ofelia must disrobe, as going into the tree would certainly ruin her beautiful dress that her mother made for her. Later that night after completing her first task, she is once again greeted by fairy, she informs the fairy that she has retrieved the golden key and wants to return to the labyrinth. Still being fearless and staying true to her belief in a more wondrous world. The faun then gives Ofelia a stick of chalk for her next task and speaks promise of walking through “seven circular gardens of her palace” to which Ofelia replies with questions of how she can trust what he says to be true.

She does not carry out the task the next day and is then visited by the faun in her room. He questions her negligence and she tells him her mother is sick. The



faun then gives her a mandrake root to put under her mother's bed in a bowl of milk, and to give it two drops of blood each morning, more symbolism of blood being tied to life. This makes her trust the faun a bit more as the remedy begins to work. Then the faun gives her his three fairies to help her on the next task and tells her to avoid anything in the room when she arrives at her task location. Using the chalk, she was given draws a doorway on the wall to enter this alternate world to begin the next step in her quest. The doorway being more symbolism on her transition.

Ofelia arrives in the room where she is to open a lock and obtain her next quest item. She is presented with a monstrous paleman sitting at the table in front of the feast of fruits as well as paintings on the walls of the monster feeding on babies. This frightens her as Ofelia short of breath and turns away. The fairies fly to the walls with three small doors and instruct her to open the middle door with her golden key, however she makes the decision to disobey and unlock another door. She is disobedient yet again when she reaches for a grape on the table and fairies try to stop her from eating the fruit. She then consumes the grape, awaking the monster. The monster then gruesomely bites the heads off two of the fairies and chases Ofelia out of this demonic room. This scene depicts the multifaceted complexity of Ofelia's character. Her disobedience to the faun also exemplifies that she is not just a supporting character, but an individual who has the control of her own fate.

Ofelia's next encounter with the faun does not go so well as she confesses her act of disobedience and he replies that she will never return to her rightful place in the underworld kingdom. "Your spirit shall forever remain among the

humans, you shall age like them”(Pan’s *Labyrinth*,2006). Now faced with the consequences of her actions she is lost, much like a young adult in our society. She checks on the mandrake root that is aiding her mother, and the captain catch her doing so. He acts with rage and yelling, awaking Carmen. Ofelia cries to her mother and asking to “leave this place”, and her mother replies “you are getting older, soon you will see that life isn’t your fairy tales”(Pan’s *Labyrinth*). Telling her that the world is dark and cruel and that she needs to accept it for what it is and get over it. Carmen then throws the mandrake root into fire. The root screams and Carmen feels a sharp pain and begins going into labour, she then dies after giving birth, more symbolism of life and death, transition amongst the worlds. Whilst all of this is going on, Mercedes had been helping her brother, a rebel and enemy to captain Vidal. She had stolen some medical kits from the storage at the outpost to give her brother. When Mercedes is discovered, the captain ties her up in the storeroom, and torture her. The captain continuous to disregard her, and before he realizes it, she’s escaped using her dull kitchen knife to cut the ropes and stab him repeatedly. She slices his mouth open, permanently disfiguring his face. Even in the height of her rage Mercedes is still thinking of the welfare of Ofelia,who is her friend, surrogate child and ally.

Through all the turmoil taking place in the film at this point, Ofelia is visited again by the fairy and the faun. The faun tells her she will be given one last chance and asks her “Do you promise to do what I say? Will you do everything I tell you, without question?”. Ofelia nods yes to both questions with haste. She is instructed to bring her newly born brother to the labyrinth. She steals her brother from the captain’s quarters and Vidal chases her to the labyrinth but is lead to a

dead end, giving Ofelia time to talk with the faun. The faun orders Ofelia to hand her brother over to him because the portal to her underworld kingdom will only open if it receives “blood from an innocent, this is the final task”. She refuses to give up her brother to the faun, once again making her own decision. By this time captain Vidal has found Ofelia, he proceeds to take the baby and shoots her dead. Ofelia did, in fact however offer the blood of an innocent to the portal. Her own blood, still innocent as she never reached menstruation(the full moon to come), opened the portal and she was able to join her parents in the underworld. She claims her throne as princess aside her dead mother and father. She smiles as she takes her last breath in the physical world. Mercedes discovers Ofelia’s dead body after she and the rebels find and kill captain Vidal. “The mind is like an iceberg; it floats with one-seventh of its bulk over water” (Sigmund Freud)

## **Chapter Two**

### **Psycho-Analytic Theory**

The Psycho-analytic Theory is a web of entanglement and complexity with some basic concepts and principles reflecting personality, which is based on the notion that an individual gets motivated more by unseen forces that are controlled by the conscious and the rational thought. Personality is defined as the unique combination of patterns, tendencies and inclinations that influence behaviour, thought, motivation and emotion of a human being. The concept of psycho-analysis was first popularized by the famous psychologist, Sigmund Freud. Freud's legacy resides in his theory of human sexual development. His theories are based on his belief that the type of personality that an individual acquires in his or her adulthood is determined by his or her childhood experiences, and any disruptions or traumas in childhood may result in negative personality traits in adulthood. His theories involve the topographic model of the mind and structural model of personality. His creation of psychoanalysis was at once a theory of the human psyche, a therapy for the relief of its ills, and an optic for the interpretation of culture and society. Sigmund Freud's theories and work helped shape current views of dreams, childhood, personality, memory, sexuality and therapy.

Psycho-analytic theory was developed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in 1880s. It was based on the discovery made by Breuer, who studied a person who had a trauma in childhood, consequently affecting him during his adult life. According to this research, it was discovered that someone's personality is related to his or her childhood experiences. Freud states that it is through mechanical

terms that people's mental energy is released. Through various stages of child's development, a person changes his/her character and releases his/her mental energy.

He believes humans are driven by the pleasure principle, where sexual desires and aggressive behaviour are controlled by the reality principle, the so-called restrictions we follow to conform to proper behaviour. Consequently, our drive for unbridled pleasure is repressed by the reality principle, and becomes sublimated or buried in the unconscious. According to Freud, a large part of our thoughts, feelings and desires are unconscious, and the knowledge and the interpretation of the unconscious of the person play a very crucial role in psychoanalysis as it helps to get a true and deeper insight in to an individual's mind. Freud proposed that there exist three levels of awareness:

### **Consciousness**

According to Freud, the conscious mind is aware of the present perceptions, memories, thoughts, and feelings.

### **Preconscious**

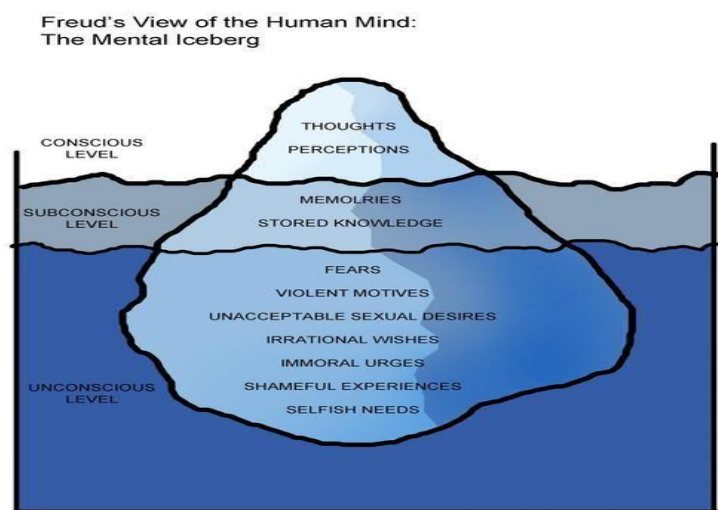
The preconscious is like a mental waiting room, in which thoughts remain until they "succeed in attracting the eye of the conscious" (Freud, 1924, p. 306). The Preconscious consists of anything that could potentially be brought into the conscious mind.

### **Unconsciousness**

One of the keystones in psycho-analytic theory is the concept of the unconscious, as Freud writes in his essay *Psychoanalysis* (1963). The unconscious mind refers to that part of the psyche that contains repressed ideas and images, as

well as primitive desires and impulses that have never been allowed to enter the conscious mind. Freud viewed the unconscious mind as a vital part of the individual. It is irrational, emotional, and has no concept of reality which is why its attempts to leak out must be inhibited. Content that is contained in the unconscious mind is generally deemed to be too anxiety-provoking to be allowed in consciousness and is maintained at an unconscious level where, according to Freud, it still manages to influence our behaviour. The unconscious mind comprises mental processes that are inaccessible to consciousness but that influence judgments, feelings, or behaviour (Wilson, 2002).

For Freud, the unconscious mind is the primary source of human behaviour. Like an iceberg, the important part of the mind is the part you cannot see.



Under this conscious mind, a preconscious mind carries the available memory. From this preconscious mind, a person can retrieve memories into the conscious mind. There is no dispute about the two layers of the mind. Freud's perception suggested that these two layers are only the smallest parts of the mind.

The larger part is the unconscious of the mind. All the things which are not easily available at a conscious level, such as our drives or instincts, memories, and emotions associated with trauma. Like an iceberg, the unconscious mind plays an important part of the personality. It plays as the repository of primitive wishes and impulses. These are mediated by the preconscious mind.

According to Freud there are three types of psyches in the human mind:

1. Id – Uncontrolled
2. Ego – repressed
3. Super Ego – authorities over id and ego

### **Id**

“The source of all the psychic energy” (Freud)

The id is the centre of our instincts, when a person is born, the id element of personality is in him/her. Based on the pleasure principle, id operates at the unconscious level. It is simply what would be considered as the primary component of a person's personality. Notable about this element is the fact that it uses the pleasure principle (Carver and Scheier, 2011).

### **Ego**

The Ego is “that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world” (Freud, 1923,25)

The ego component is all about the reality of life and it tends to express the Id element in the real world. During infancy, the ego develops from the id in individuals. The purpose of the ego is to satisfy the demands of the id in a very safe and socially acceptable way. The ego operates both in conscious and unconscious mind; it follows the reality principle in contrast to the id.

## **Superego**

“Super Ego is the other element that forms part of the personality” (Pervin, 1996).

Super Ego comprises of all the aspects that a person gained from the society or the parents and people around them. It is through this that a person learns what is deemed right and what is wrong. Judgment is developed from guidelines. The superego’s functions are to control id’s impulses, especially those which society forbids, such as sex and aggression.

Freud defined that these two types of ego as the realist and narcissist. One can define narcissist commonly as the person who is excessively self- centred or in other words love with themselves. But, in terms of psychology, a narcissist means that person is affiliated with the erotic attributes, selfishness, impulsive and in love of mirrors. Here, it is taken as condition normal for the personality development in the initial stages of childhood.

The id, ego, and superego are interlinked. According to Freud the mind can be seen to be in a permanent state of struggle due to the conflicting nature of the three layers of the psyche. This struggle, according to Freud, can be linked in to his ideas of repression.

## **Repression**

Repression is the forgetting or ignoring of past events that were traumatic in some way. These memories are pushed out of the conscious into unconscious. This process of repression is a non-conscious act, you cannot actively choose to do this. Memories cannot be banished from the mind, but they can be displaced. He stated that repression: “cannot arise until a sharp cleavage has occurred between



conscious and unconscious mental activity- that the essence of repression lies simply in turning something away and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious (Gay,1995, 569-70).

The desire seeking is the id, and the seeking is means to desire is the reality. Ego works on satisfying the desires sought by id and narcissistic ego desiring a mirrored object; since ego is linked to the beginning stage of narcissistic ego. Freud pointed out that ego's relationship is not reality but in acquiring the pleasure of fulfilling the desires. The realist ego is the mediator between id and reality where the narcissist has no such connection with reality.

Freudian theory of psychoanalysis brings in the Oedipal Crisis. Oedipal crisis can simply be put as psychological disorder where the person has sexual desire for the parent of opposite sex. Freud says that such kind of involvements happens with children of age between 3 to 5. This kind of desire can be repressed when the parent of the same sex as the child identifies it and helps the child passes through the stage without making it a traumatic experience rather in a loving relationship of parent and child, he gives an example of male child's affiliation to his mother. It is known that Sigmund Freud used sexual desires and needs in this theory as a primal explanation. Oedipal Crisis talks about the repression of the male child's unconscious sexual drive and the imaginary unity with the child's mother he points out that these types of desires from the narcissist union from the mother is repressed and must repudiate her to attain stability until he finds his own female.

### **Carl Jung: The Archetype and the Collective Unconscious (1959)**

Carl Jung was a student of Freud and worked with him in investigating the unconscious. Jung believed in a deeper layer of unconscious. Like Freud, he divided the psyche into three parts.

1. Ego- the conscious mind.
2. Personal conscious-holds our memories, including any we have suppressed.
3. Collective Conscious- is comprised of our inherited knowledge.

The third part, collective consciousness, was the most ground breaking component. According to Jung it contains all psychologically inherited knowledge, that we share as human beings. This refers to natural instincts that have unknowingly been passed down through the generations, knowledge that we are born with but are not directly conscious of. He believed that these inherited patterns structure our imagination and shape our mind (psyche).

In order to investigate the collective unconscious, Jung carried out enquiries that similar to Freud's centred on dreams, myths and souls.

#### **The Myth of the Hero**

Heroes, which are archetypes and manifestations of the collective consciousness, play an important role in Jungian thought. As one prominent Jungian, Joseph L Henderson (1964), notes:

The myths of the hero vary enormously in detail, but the more closely one examines them the more one sees that structurally they are very similar. They have, that is to say, a universal pattern. Over and over again one hears a tale describing a hero's miraculous but humble birth, his early proof of super human strength, his rapid rise to prominence or power, his triumphant struggle with the forces of evil,

his fallibility to the sin of pride, and his fall through betrayal or a heroic sacrifice that ends in his death.

### **Lacanian's Theory of Psychoanalysis**

It can be said that Lacan's theory on the psychoanalysis developed on many lacking points from Freud's theory and more importantly the shift in the focus from Freud's theory on sexual drive to a different subject and perspective – Language. Lacan uses linguistic model to explain the psychoanalytical theory and his own derivation of human psyche.

He justifies his focus on linguistic model for psychoanalysis and states three reason for choosing language

1. He says that the shift of focus to imaginary stage into symbolic stage is due to the mirror stage. Once the child enters the Symbolic Order the familial structures become the 'Law' – a Symbolic Law and the understanding of lacking in the child (he/she)
2. Entry in social order, experience in lack understanding the desire and repressing the same is the entry in language
3. Finally, the perception between the mirrored image and the self, here Lacan defines this mirror image as the illusion and a vacuum. And there can be no relation between the unified self and the subject of illusion

The unconscious mind controls the conscious mind of the person. The primitive instincts of the id very rarely give direct expression to the outside world. The ego always regulates and transforms the primitive instincts following the external world and superego. The ego aims to synchronize the demands of the three tyrannical masters: id, superego, and the external world. Therefore, the ego

becomes the battleground between the conscious and unconscious minds. Even the ego is an integral part of the id but it functions with modification to accommodate the needs of the external world. The inability of the ego to satisfy the demands of the id indicates the weakness of the ego and leads into the split of mind. Suppose the ego is to satisfy the demands of the id, it shows the strength of the ego. For satisfying the id, the primitive instincts give indirect expression through various dynamic processes. There are many defence mechanisms such as denial, fantasy, compensation, projection, reaction, formation, regression, repression, identification, sublimation, displacement, and dreams.

Defence mechanisms are unconscious activities of the mind. The person does not know it directly. They are different in different persons. This process is a normal one. When it goes beyond the limit, then it leads to abnormality. The primary intention of all these processes is to meet the demands of the id without any conflict with the outside world.

Freud proposed that the interactions between the three major components of the human mind develop through the five psychosexual stages of development: Oral, Anal, Phallic, Latency and Genital. In describing personality development and the psychosexual stages, Freud wanted to say that development is associated with releasing the culminating energy of the id as children grow. How the child deals with conflict and its resolution during these stages determines some childhood events that will shape his behaviour and experiences in adulthood. The child may get fixated at one stage if the needs or desires of the child are over gratified or are leading to frustration, at that particular age.

**1.0-2 years of age (Oral phase):** Early in the development, all of desires were oriented towards our lips and our mouth, which accepted food, milk, and anything else that could get our hands on. The first object of this stage was, the mother's breast, which could be transferred to auto-erotic objects (thumb-sucking). The mother thus logically became your first "love-object" already a displacement from the earlier object of desire (the breast).

**2.2-4 years of age (Anal Phase):** Following the oral phase, entered the sadistic-anal phase, which is split between active and passive impulses: the impulse to mastery on the one hand, which can easily become cruelty; the impulse to scopophilia (love of gazing), on the other hand. This phase was roughly coterminous with a new auto-erotic object: the rectal orifice (hence, the term "sadistic-anal phase

**3.4-7 years of age: (Phallic stage):** In the phallic phase, when the penis (or the clitoris, which, according to Freud, stands for the penis in the young girl) become your primary object-cathexis. In this stage, the child becomes fascinated with urination, which is experienced as pleasurable, both in its expulsion and retention. The trauma connected with this phase is that of castration, which makes this phase especially important for the resolution of the Oedipal Complex.

**4.7-12 years of age (Latency phase):** Next followed a long "latency period" during which your sexual development was more or less suspended and you concentrated on repressing and sublimating your earlier desires and thus learned to follow the reality-principle. During this phase, you gradually freed yourself from your parents or by asserting your independence.

**5.13 years of age onward (Genital Phase):** Your development over the latency period allowed you to enter the final genital phase. At this point, you learned to desire members of the opposite sex and to fulfil your instinct to procreate and thus ensure the survival of the human species.

According to Freud, people are simply actors in the drama of their own minds, pushed by desires, pulled by coincidence. Underneath the surface, our personality represents the power struggle going on deep within us.

### **Dreams**

“Dreams are the royal road to the unconscious” (Freud, 1900)

Freud believe that dreams play a significant role in analysing the unconscious of a person. Dreams are the dynamic process through which the ego maintains its strength. Therefore, the interpretation of dreams plays a significant role in the psychoanalysis method. For Freud, every dream is meaningful, no matter how nonsensical it seems or how little of it we remember. All dream elements are symbolic, but they have private meanings that can only be discovered through the dreamer’s associations. Dreams are understood to be the hallucinatory fulfilment of irrational wishes and particularly sexual wishes which have originated in our early childhood and have not been fully transformed into reaction formations or sublimations. These wishes are expressed as being fulfilled when our conscious control is weakened, as is the case in sleep.

“I must affirm that dreams really have a meaning and that a scientific procedure for interpreting them is possible” (Sigmund Freud)

Dreams fulfil the expressions of repressed experiences. The dream is the desire to fulfilling the activity that in an impossible indirect way. It is one of the

ways of providing an outlet for the repressed feelings and thoughts in the unconscious mind. The contents of the dreams are not the direct expressions of the repressed contents. The ego censors the repressed contents in the dream. To understand the unconscious mind, it is necessary to interpret the dream. Freud calls the contents of the dream as observed in the process of dreaming as manifest dreams. They express the conflicts and repressed feelings and thoughts, which are found in latent-dream. The task of transforming the manifest dream into a latent dream is known as dream interpretation.

In psycho-analytic theory, dreams represent wish fulfilment, unconscious desires, and conflicts. Wish fulfilment is the satisfaction of a desire through an involuntary thought process. One of the great cornerstones of Freud's work was *Interpretation of Dreams*, in which Freud identified wish fulfilment as a central dream function. It also made it easier for analysts to learn and understand people's personality well. The way a person behaves is entirely dependent on their experiences as they grew up as well as the environment one is brought up in. A healthy adult life can thus be achieved by successfully going through the early childhood experiences or psychosexual stages. Such are some of the things the theory talks about. In many cases, dreams express unresolved or badly resolved childhood conflicts. Freud posits that mental illness results from a faulty ego, one unable to accept the id-super ego push and pull. If the mind is unable to release those repressed desires through some outlet, then a person can develop a mental illness. Unconscious desire is then the core of our being. Desire irrigates us and includes that vital and sexual dimensions. The desires are universal, it's not just what you want; it's how much you want it.

Freud has explained that by nature, human is hedonistic. The individual has the tendency to arrange behaviours in a continuum in such a way that the behaviours may lead to desirable outcomes. The motivation of the individual is towards gratification or satisfaction and in other theories it is equated to happiness.

### **Cinema and Psychoanalysis**

The interaction of human minds with the environment they are surrounded which makes the human change in behaviour, such systematic study is psychology. Psychologists believe that cinemas that show the moving images on the screen to the people have deeper impact since the perception and the cognitive ability of human minds on seeing the moving image is much higher. The early researchers and studies made on psychoanalytical studies goes were subjected to experimental research in the fields of imagination, attention, memory and emotions. Later with research on the impacts of watching certain themes and genres like sci-fi, horrors, thriller created a ripple in the psychological current where the cognitive ability and the knowledge used to analyse the scenes in the brain. This kind of psychological activity that formed the spectator-screen relationship paved way for “psychological film theory.”

Psycho-analytic film theory primarily tries to work out how the unconscious supports the reception of film events, or how film and cinema trigger unconscious, irrational processes in the viewer and thus turn film watching into a pleasurable experience. It is a method to investigate the mystery behind the thoughts and unconscious activity in the human mind can be analysed through psychology. This thought process is associated with film studies to make psychoanalysis on films. Sigmund Freud, in 19th century brought forward the



psycho-analytical process on the films that are practised worldwide even today. Even though it is evident that psychoanalysis on the film started in 1930-40, but wasn't until 1970s that the psycho-analytical theory started taking shape in regard to the effects of cinema in mind. The two renowned individuals brought forward the psycho-analytical theory:

- Freudian Theory of Psychoanalysis
- Lacanian Theory of Psychoanalysis

Psycho-analytic film theory is a school of academic thought that evokes the concepts of psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. The theory is closely tied to critical theory, Marxist theory and apparatus theory. The theory is separated into two waves. The first wave occurred in the 1960s and 70s. The second wave became popular in the 1980s and 90s. The first, beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, focused on a formal critique of cinema's dissemination of ideology, and especially on the role of the cinematic apparatus in this process. The main figures of this first wave were Christian Metz, Jean-Louis Baudry, and Laura Mulvey. They took their primary inspiration from the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, and they most often read Lacan through the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser's account of subject formation.

The second wave of psycho-analytic film theory has also had its basis in Lacan's thought, though with a significantly different emphasis. Beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s, this manifestation of psycho-analytic film theory, which continues to remain productive even today, shifted the focus from cinema's ideological work to the relationship between cinema and a trauma that disrupts the functioning of ideology. In Lacan's terms, the terrain of psychoanalytic film theory

shifted from the axis of the symbolic order and the imaginary to that of the symbolic order and the real. Although psycho-analytic film theorists continue to discuss cinema's relationship to ideology, they have ceased looking for ideology in the cinematic apparatus itself and begun to look for it in filmic structure. Cinema remains a site for the dissemination of ideology, but it has also become a potential site of political and psychic disruption.

The main proponents of this second wave of psycho-analytic film theory are Joan Copjec and Slavoj Žižek. Though the latter has received much more recognition and has produced far more work, one could contend that Copjec's early work was more revolutionary, as it was her reading of Laura Mulvey's critique of the male gaze as a Foucaultian critique rather than as a Lacanian one that genuinely commenced the new epoch. According to the main figures of the second wave, the initial wave of psycho-analytic film theory failed to be psycho-analytic enough, and the result was a hodgepodge of Marxism and psychoanalysis that produced a straw position that anti-theorists such as David Bordwell could easily attack.

The initial aim of the second wave was to create an authentic Lacanian film theory that would approach the cinema with the complexity that it merited. Though there have been isolated works of film theory and criticism dealing with other psycho-analytic thinkers (such Carl Jung, Melanie Klein, or D. W. Winnicott), the primary source for both waves of psychoanalytic film theory have remained Jacques Lacan and, to a lesser extent, Sigmund Freud of psycho-analytic film theory.

## Chapter Three

### Representation Of Childhood In Fantasy-Horror Films: *Tumbbad*

#### And *Pan's Labyrinth*

##### *Tumbbad*

“Long ago man formed an ideal conception of omnipotence and omniscience which he embodied in his Gods. Whatever seemed unattainable to his desires or forbidden to him he attributed to these Gods... Now he has himself approached very near to realizing this ideal, he has nearly become a god himself” (Sigmund Freud).

An old woman is lulled into sleep by a threat classically reserved for children; ‘Sleep oh old lady, or the devil will be here’. There are underlayers of starving monsters and webby secret chambers, but no Alices or compassionate barn spiders. The labyrinths in the film open exclusively for brutes and testosterone-drenched men. Chief among these brutes is Vinayak Rao, a monomaniacal of early 1900s. *Tumbbad*, begins with a voiceover from Vinayak Rao; he is the protagonist narrating the legend of an immortal demon known as Hastar to his son, Pandurang. Hastar has long been considered the root of all evil, but after Vinayak finds a work around to the same, the greedy demon also becomes the secret to his riches. He is the key to his inner-most desires and a means of satiating Vinayak’s own greed. Thematically and visually, *Tumbbad* is reminiscent of *There Will Be Blood* by Paul Thomas Anderson. The protagonists in both movies share a penchant for sullyng themselves in dirt and blood. They pursue their ambition

relentlessly and attempt to get rid of their competition through vile and horrifyingly inhumane measures.

The film vaxes gloomy about the three phases of Vinayak Rao's life: from the time he is a boy in a haunted house to the period he becomes a father who is in two minds about haunting his own on boy. Each chapter explores the notion of desire as an heirloom. Throughout the film, we follow the journey of Vinayak and his quest to find the mysterious and mythical treasure of Tumbbad. Vinayak has been labelled as a 'greedy bastard' by those close to him including his own grandmother.

As a boy, Rao cracks the code to his ancestral gold at the precise instant that he loses his younger brother. He is too charged by the vision of treasure and far-off adventure to mourn his brother's death. Vinayak is a brother who acts unbrotherly, and later, as a father, someone who does unfatherly things. Vinayak Rao's quest for gold begins with him as a boy covered in wheat flour and it culminates in his using the flour as a bait to tame the otherworldly creature that guards his ancestral treasure. His relationship with his son is the most interesting dynamic in the film. In an awfully moving stretch of the story, the kid is shown to be getting physically ready to accompany his father on his treasure-digging trip. But Rao knows that it's not about physical readiness: He senses that the boy isn't greedy enough; that he takes after his mother and not him

"It's my only quality"; admits Vinayak proudly when accused of greed.

Vinayak is a man driven by insatiable lust and love for money – making him a fitting earthly avatar for Hastar, the favoured firstborn son of the Goddess of Prosperity, banished back to his mother's womb by his 160 million divine siblings

after stealing all her gold and trying to take her grain. As a boy growing up in the eternally rainy Western Indian village of Tumbbad, Vinayak had heard rumours that Hastar's treasure was buried somewhere beneath the mansion of his wealthy illegitimate father Sarkar. Hoping eventually to earn a gold coin from Sarkar, Vinayak's mother still 'services' the old man, and also looks after his great grandmother, a monstrous crone who mostly sleeps and is always hungry. After tragedy strikes, Vinayak promises, at his mother's insistence, never to return to Tumbbad – but the sight of that gold coin draws him back as an adult, ensuring that the curse of Hastar continues.

*Tumbbad* is a dark fairy tale, which tells of adventures of Vinayak Rao at a very tender age. The horrific origin of Vinayak's seemingly endless fortune, even as we witness him slowly transforming into the debauched patriarch Sarkar while his own young son Pandurang risks toeing the family line. It is effectively about the legacy of the villain. Inheritance is hardwork. Even when his son is born, Vinayak doesn't waste any time. He immediately anoints the new born with a coin from Hastar's treasury. This ushers in a new generation that will carry forth this legacy of greed and the callous, reckless hunger for riches and fortune.

Desire is an endless sickness in Rao's family. Greed already consumes the young boy Vinayak, the son of a widow who goes about her business in this house with anger and fright. She wants a gold coin from the mansion and then wants to escape. Vinayak wants all there is. Forced to leave his ancestral home after a horrific episode with Hastar in which he loses his young brother, Vinayak returns to Tumbbad as a young man.

In the second chapter, he is a predator and oppressor go back to his ancestry for gold as well as for validation as a man. His son is set to follow the same path. Consumed with greed, Vinayak is willing to plunge to any depths to get his hands on the treasure, constituting primarily of gold coins. Greed, being core to Vinayak's self, is not only limited to his desires for money but also spreads to his needs of the flesh. He transformed into an epitome of concentrated wealth.

Tumbbad explains that the problems experienced during Vinayak's adult life are as a direct result of the conflicts during their childhood experiences, which eventually determines his personality. The main content of information of this portion is feelings of pain and anxiety. However, though we may be unaware of these feelings, it is evident that they are also involved in controlling our behaviour (Beystehner, 2001). A child learns what he sees in his parents; in Vinayak's case, he wants to surpass his father's incapacity, and stake a glorious claim in his family's ancestry. The mother is a living symbol of a feudal system's exploitation- she tends to the sexual needs of an old, rich man for just enough to get by and land on which to live. Vinayak tries to extract the information about the treasure from his grandmother, showing early signs of greed – a disease, as treated by the film, that results in a painful, monstrous (non-) end. Later in life, an adult Vinayak goes back to his grandmother, who tells him that not everything one inherits should be claimed, but Vinayak unearths the Goddess' womb, and restarts the accursed cycle of greed.

The Final Chapter of the film starts with Vinayak's pubescent son, Pandurang imitating the drill of gathering gold coins from Hastar's loincloth and

climbing back to safety. The child is learning the work-skills of his father, without knowing what any of it means. Before his first trip to Tumbbad, he tells his mother that he will inform her of what lies at the end of that journey once he returns. The trip proves to be a rite of passage into manhood for Pandurang, where he earns one gold coin for himself. After his return, in typical masculine behaviour, he tells his mother to rather focus on her domestic duties. Proud of his manly achievements, he leaves his mother's lap to end up with his father's concubine. He tells her that he will marry her when he grows up, and all the wealth of the house will be theirs; and spends his salary to sleep with her.

This shocking portrayal of child sexuality is a topical nod to the pleasures that Vinayak, and thus also his son, thinks come with money. In another sequence, Vinayak takes his son to a brothel and gives him a stack of cash to spend. This blatant sexualization could have a reason in the manner that adults view children not as being in their own regard, but as adults-in-making; and their imitation of adulthood is seen as funny or mature, depending on the situation.

It is a parable in which the wrath of the tamed divine child seems weak against his unscrupulous, feudal opponent. The demons inside the protagonist Vinayak have the insidious power to wreck generation. Pandurang suggests to his father that they go one last time and retrieve the whole loincloth of Hastar instead of gathering a few coins. He wants to build on and expand his father's enterprise. Due to several unfortunate events, Vinayak has to sacrifice himself to protect his son, and is cursed like his grandmother.

Vinayak's obsession with the treasure of Tumbbad drives him to commit terrible acts, destroying the lives of those around him and ultimately leading to his own downfall. At the same time, *Tumbbad* is also a story of generational trauma and the cycle of abuse. Vinayak's father and grandmother both played a role in shaping his worldview and instilling him with a sense of entitlement and greed. This toxic legacy is passed down through the generation, leading to a cycle of abuse and exploitation that threatens to consume everyone in its path. Vinayak indulged in immoral behaviour with women, as did his little son. The trek to the Goddess' womb and the gruesome plan to steal the gold coins from Hastar's loincloth were the greatest "ambitions," almost like a job for Vinayak, who strictly "taught" his son Pandurang to "accomplish" what he did. "Greed" evolved into "ambition," "fatality" into a call for "courage".

Unlike *Hereditary*, *Tumbbad* ends on an optimistic note: the child forgoes the hereditary temptation and decides to forge his own path ahead. A child returning to his mother's womb upsets the course of events naturally, causes conflict, and raises the probability of a bad omen. The mother's womb, which is the height of comfort and safety for a child, transforms into a horrifying, cramped, and crimson-slobbering struggle between the child (Hastar) and his victims. The conflict here is not between the protagonist and the devil, as is customary in Bollywood horror movies, but rather between moral corruption and human reason.

### ***Pan's Labyrinth***

“Dreams enable us to suspend disbelief in order to live realistically within the fantastic, as though it were true.”



The 11-year-old little girl's fantasy takes stage in the mountains of fascist Spain at a military camp fighting against the rebels. Ofelia, the only child in the film retains her childhood innocence in direct contrast to her fascist regime surroundings. By turns beautiful and grotesque, *Pan's Labyrinth* is a complex portrait of the clash between Ofelia's fairy tale world, and that of the brutal adults around her. The film depicts the aftermath of the Spanish civil war through the eyes of Ofelia, an innocent child and magical realm she comes across in the woods. It is Ofelia's lack of a father figure, a rivalry between her and her unborn brother, and withering relationship with her mother that ultimately serve as the catalyst for her fantasies as well as her development into the adult community.

The young Ofelia, is in the latency period. She is at the onset of puberty. The family and social dynamic surrounding Ofelia could be seen as the catalyst for her phantasies. Carmen does not give Ofelia the full attention of her love that she should as her mother. Ofelia is neglected by her mother but she still loves her deeply and admires her beauty. Ofelia discovers 'provocation for beginning to criticize' her mother for 'being slighted' and 'not receiving the whole of her love'. This is the beginning of Ofelia's curiosity into alternate views and decisions; because of this she now has begun to doubt the decisions of her mother and seeks to find different paths and outcomes rather than just the ones her mother sets before her. This 'detaching oneself from one's family is a task that faces every young person.

Ofelia, a child with a wild imagination, attempt to complete the task, given to her by the Faun. Under the Faun's instruction Ofelia must retrieve a dagger from

within a tomb- like chamber without eating food on the table. Ofelia retrieves the dagger without taking a second look at the food, but on the way back the grapes entrance her. At the head of the table is a creature without eyeballs and large fold of skin indicating a very gluttonous person prior to his demise. Upon eating the grapes, the creature is awakened and attempts to eat Ofelia but she is able to escape. The creature represents the awakening of the id within Ofelia by succumbing to the impulse to eat the grapes.

Ofelia's father in this movie is an example of Lacan's imaginary father. The imaginary father is the image of the father from the child imagination. Her idealisation of him is projected through her phantasy creatures, such as the faun saying that Ofelia is 'daughter of the king' and 'your real father had us open portals all over the world to allow your return' (Del Toro 2006). This fantasy clearly shows that the image of her father is of an ideal father that will fight to save her. At the same time, Ofelia's conscious mind rejects Vidal as her surrogate father. Her unconscious mind creates fantasies that lead her to idealise her real father and give her hope that he is looking for her in another world as 'the absent father is a hole in the symbolic for the imagination to fill, a space for the exploration of the fantasy' (Thormann, 2008). Due to her world changing completely with the death of her father, a new step-father, a new brother and a new place to live, Ofelia 'retreats from the complex adult world in to fantasy and escapes into the books whose pages morph into illuminated medieval manuscripts, thus bringing to life the imaginative inheritance of the past' (Thormann 2008,180).

“The fantasies which aim at the absents of pain and feelings of pleasure not only provide an escape from reality, but they end up impacting on reality”(Freud 1930,16). This can be seen when Ofelia places a mandrake root under her mother’s bed as remedy for her pregnancy pains. Ofelia’s fantasies lead the faun to give Ofelia this mandrake root and to ‘each morning give it two drops of blood’(Del Toro 2006). The doctor started treatment just before Ofelia; this treatment helps Carmen to get better and helps Ofelia in believing the mandrake root is the palliative, rather than the doctor’s medicine. Once the disgusting mandrake root is discovered by Carmen, she exhausts herself in disciplining Ofelia, causing her to become ill again, leading Ofelia to believe that the removal of the mandrake root is the cause of her getting sick again.

Further to impacting on reality, the phantasies of Ofelia allow her, as a child, to become an active member of the adult community as she becomes the main carer and saviour for her new born brother, as she is freed from parental confinement and able to come into her own being. This ‘becoming’ is only possible due to the events that she experiences in childhood throughout the story. In the end, she chooses to give birth to herself as she wanted to be and thereby achieves immortality. Moreover, Ofelia’s creations could all be said to be the unconscious desiring of her parents. Ofelia not only phantasies directly about her father being a king of another world, she also creates the faun, which is much like a father figure to her, in guiding her through difficult situations, advising her own problems, disciplining and forgiving her.

The monsters of Ofelia's imaginations are the pale man and the toad. The monstrous toad, which is destroying the fig tree from the inside. Ofelia must enter the vaginal like entrance, into the womb like underbelly of the tree. This scene clearly represents Carmen as the tree, and the toad as the baby which is killing her. This representation of the baby is Ofelia's unconscious trying to claim back her mother for herself as 'she experiences sibling rivalry, competing with the unborn child for her mother's attention' (Thormann 2008,183). These imaginings are the work of Ofelia's unconscious cathartically expressing itself in her mind. These are the desires and the knowledge that doesn't know itself the core of which is fantasy.

The labyrinth in this film itself is symbolic in the movie. It shows Ofelia's desire to escape her current life and reality. She doesn't want to accept the captain as her father. Ofelia dislikes her stay at the mansion in the wood with Captain Vidal. She asks her mother to leave but refuses. She even asked Mercedes to take her away from that place. But the only escape she finds in the whole film is the Labyrinth, which itself is riddled with many mysteries and dangers. The chalk that was given to Ofelia by the Faun helps her create doors and entrances to wherever she wants. This also showed a deep desire of Ofelia's to escape her current environment. The chalk symbolizes her very desire of opening a door to where ever she wishes to escape to.

*Pan's Labyrinth* is about Ofelia developing her sense of self. She goes through many challenges physically and mentally, consciously and unconsciously, to achieve her final sense of self which comes at the price of her life. The main focus of the film on age is the ideas represented by children which gives the main

theme of innocence which is heavily reflected in the character of Ofelia who desires to escape the real world and finds strength from the fantasy world to become the saviour at the end of the film. Another way children are represented is through imagination which makes the audience question if Ofelia's ties to the fantasy world are real or purely fictional in her mind.

## Conclusion

While ocean may divide us, horror brings the haunts of countless upbringings together with harmonious understanding. Horror films always have been great demand for debate especially when it comes to Hollywood genre. Horror movies have created a space of creativity and experience of extreme suspense. The term horror is often thought of as the feeling of fear, shock and unease. The purpose of these films is to highlight unconscious fears, desire, urges, and primeval archetypes that are buried deep in our collective subconscious. Horror movies in Spanish do not belong to one singular ominous genre. Fantasy horror is a genre that combines horror and fantasy, includes magical elements, the supernatural or completely unreal imaginings. The scary-Spanish speaking movies consistently present a unique cultural interpretation of the beloved horror genre. Scary movies cover a wide array of themes, often inspired by folk superstitions or horrifying acts of human behaviour. When one analyses these two categories, one could easily come to a conclusion that both Hollywood and Spanish horror movies have its own characteristic features. Psychologically horror is defined as ‘the fear of some uncertain threat to existential nature and disgust over its potential aftermath.’ (Walters, 2004). The definition of cinematic horror is that it is an imaginary account designed to stimulate terror through the insinuate presence of supernatural abnormal forces.

The oldest and strongest human emotion is fear. It is rooted in people since time started. Faith and Religion were formed with the beginning of fear. The fear was mainly about hidden and concealed occurrence which people could not

explain. People assigned a character, human or inhuman, which they related with supernatural skills and unseen power, to every unexplainable occurrence. As a result, a wide range of representative characters was created, such as God, demons, ghosts, spirit, monsters or villains, since there was no limit to the human imagination.

The child is one of the most pivotal of modernity's symbolic constructs, around which central cultural institutions such as the family and the school, and even our very conception of the adult, revolve. Yet despite this ideological centrality, defining the child remains a fraught process. Childhood continues to be demarcated by characteristics such as innocence, naivety, cuteness, and vulnerability, which define the child in terms of its vacuity and lack of form in relation to the experienced, knowledgeable, rational, and powerful adult. In addition, these characteristics naturalize the child's subordination within a family unit and stringently institutionalized processes of socialization, while existing as remnants of formative ideologies of childhood established during the Enlightenment. The key manifestations of such notions can be seen in English Philosopher John Locke's famous assertion that the child is born a 'white paper' – a tabula rasa or blank slate – and is gradually filled with knowledge and experience on the journey towards adulthood (1996, xix; Balanzategui, J 6-24).

While the Romantic conception that 'childhood is the sleep of reason' (Rousseau, 2007, 80) remains central to contemporary assumptions about the child, it ultimately serves to position the child as an empty and somewhat unknowable vessel, within which anxieties and ambivalence constellate. As Spanish painter

Francisco Goya proclaims in a sinister amplification of Rousseau's assertion, 'the sleep of reason produces monsters' – the title of one of his most famously unsettling, gothic works. As a result of this slippage between romanticized, innocent emptiness and the eruption of monstrosity via this very lack of knowledge and reason, the child has long been a fixation of horror cinema. The first sustained cinematic vision of a truly monstrous child occurs in *The Bad Seed* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1956), which presents the murderous child as the vehicle through which a generic shift from family melodrama to horror plays out.

Uncanny child films anxiously consider the child's complex position as a foundational but ultimately deeply paradoxical cultural other, dramatizing the tensions inherent in childhood's conceptual constitution. The child can only exist in binary opposition to the adult, yet childhood also represents a past temporal stage of adulthood and is thus intimately connected to ideologies of adult identity.

The movie *Tumbbad*, is a fascinating exploration of the human desire for wealth and power, and the consequences of that desire. The character of Vinayak represents the corrupt and selfish nature of humanity, while the myth of Hastar symbolizes the dangers of greed and the destructive power of unchecked desire. The story starts with the scenes from Vinayak's past when he was a young child. Even as a child he never liked the lower status of his mother, who was a rich man's concubine. The mythological tales are yet other aspects which moulded Vinayak's psyche. Greed and desire are hanging demon in this film. The greed is born out of an inner sense of deprivation, here history repeats itself because human nature stays the same. Desperate to escape his life of poverty, Vinayak swipes at Hastar's



loincloth containing the gold. He regularly repeats the procedure to steal dropped coins. By the time we get to this last act of his life, Vinayak Rao is a lonely distrustful man whose success is shown to spawn even more paranoia. At the end of *Tumbbad*, Pandurang, the son of Vinayak shuts the door on a hereditary trait of greed.

While in *Pan's Labyrinth*, in contrary, Ofelia enters into another world of imagination. In her own death, Ofelia prevents herself from maturing into the totalitarian environment and becoming an apprentice to captain Vidal. By refusing to sacrifice her brother, Ofelia herself as “birthed” a generation that will one day grow up to overthrow fascism in Spain. In the afterlife, Ofelia is awarded her throne as princess of the underworld, symbolises the power she wielded in defiance to Vidal's corruption.

While being a subject of the present external to adult consciousness, the child is also something every adult once was, and is thus bound to teleological linear narratives of the adult self as the adult's origins and personal history. Furthermore, while childhood represents the past of the adult self, in the post-Freud era, this past psychic stage has also come to signify an ever-present but buried component of adult consciousness – almost equivalent with the unconscious – as is expressed in the popular idiom of the ‘inner child’. Thus, the child is simultaneously opposed to, the past of, and a part of, the adult. As critic Lacan stated in his essay on *The Mirror Stage*, childhood development is intricately connected to our discovery of self. Self here defined as the ability to recognise our physical body and its relationship with the world around us.

“The child is precisely who we are not and, in fact, never were. It is the act of adults looking back” (Bond Stockton 5). If we assume that children are innocent, then it means they are simultaneously inexperienced; one symbol of childhood innocence is a lack of sexuality or sexual desire. Lebeau argues sexual knowledge and sexuality are crucial in the distinction between adulthood and childhood “so much so, in fact, that the child who ‘knows’ sex can become the very symbol of a childhood lost” (108). In addition to sexual experience, demonstrations of violent behaviour are another area of experience that signals a loss of childhood innocence. While children’s animated films attempt to preserve the innocence of childhood by inserting adults to protect the children’s characters, live-action films do not have as strong of an allegiance towards that goal, especially in horror films. Because children are viewed as “in process,” they stand as a touchstone to the past, as well as a reproductive promise for the future.

The project revealed the assemblage of uncanny child films that emerged alongside and subsequent to the more culturally specific movies; *Tumbbad* and *Pan’s Labyrinth*. These children protagonists deal with issues of mythologized innocence, as well as parental presence versus personal action. From the harshest of realities, submission to a regime, and the resistance of the guerrillas, *Pan’s Labyrinth* transports us to the little girl’s most innocent fantasies. Ofelia in her journey discovers that adulthood brings an obligation to disobey and to trust her sense of what is right in the face of injustice. While in *Tumbbad*, the repressed desire and urge for searching the hidden treasure leads Vinayak into a corrupted adulthood and death. The increased production and commercial success of the children’s animated horror film subgenre elicits critical attention. The genre of

children's film is a difficult category to define by itself, and becomes increasingly more problematic to define as it interacts with the horror genre. Obviously, there is a children's film genre, but it remains unclear what the phrase "children's" film means. Cary Bazalgette and Terry Staples explore two possibilities for this term: "This term can mean simply the exhibition of films for a general audience containing some children; it can also mean the dedicated production of films for children" (*Unshrinking the Kids*, 1995, 92). Both of these definitions hinge on the word "children," which Bazalgette and Staples identify as people under age twelve. Undoubtedly, the number twelve is an arbitrary marker, but it does indicate that the term "child" is a concept difficult to define without contextualizing it in cinema. children's animated horror films have an even mix of adult and children's protagonists with some of the most critically acclaimed films starring children protagonist. The prominence of children protagonist in this subgenre is remarkable considering the emphasis our culture places on the innocence of childhood.

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**ELECTORAL BIOPIC AS AN IDEOLOGICAL POLITICAL  
PROPAGANDA: WITH REFERENCE FILMS *THACKERY*,  
*YATRA AND THALAIVII*.**

A Project Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of M.A in  
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**ANGADIKADAVU**

## **BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **Electoral Biopic as an Ideological Political Propaganda: with Reference Films *Thackery, Yatra and Thalaivii*** submitted to Kannur University in partial fulfillment of the requirement of M.A. Degree in English Language and Literature is a record of bonafide study and research work carried out by Nayana P B under my supervision and guidance and no part of this work has been presented earlier for the award of any degree, diploma, title or recognition.

**Fr. Jaison Anthikkat**

**Ms Amala Antony**

**Head of the Department**

**Research Guide**

## DECLARATION

I, Nayana P B hereby declare that this dissertation entitled **Electoral Biopic as an Ideological Political Propaganda: with Reference Films *Thackery, Yatra and Thalaivii***. Is a record of original work carried out by me for the award of M.A. Degree in English Language and Literature of Kannur University, and it has not been submitted to any university for the award of any degree or diploma.

**Angadikadavu**

**01-05-2023**

**Nayana P B**

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## **Introduction**

In a democratic country politics and its performance are essential. A central claim of democratic theory is that democracy induces governments to be responsive to the preference of the people. Political parties are endemic to democracy. However, they are not part of the formal definition of democracy; nor do the constitutions of most democracies dictate a role for parties. Indeed, in most countries parties operate in a realm little regulated by statutory law. legislative politics is unstable without parties. They hence legislators who want to get something done and who want their preferred policies to prevail will form parties. Far from an unfortunate consequence of human nature plus liberal freedoms, parties introduce effectiveness into democratic institutions.

The political parties selected different propaganda to canvas the votes. Election campaigns are the means by which candidates and political parties prepare and present their ideas and positions on issues to voters in the run-up to election day. Democratic elections require both an informed and free vote and a fair chance for candidates to garner support and motivate supporters to help them win office. Election campaigns are critical to achieving these goals. Elections that are truly competitive provide fair opportunities for candidates to convey their positions to citizens and compete for votes. Election campaigns provide an opportunity for candidates and political parties to get their message across to citizens and help voters make informed and informed decisions on election day. An election that ultimately reflects the will of citizens, any public funds allocated to electoral candida must be fair.

Decision-making processes about the allocation of these resources should be transparent so that participants and the general public can understand and trust the

results. With access to information about election campaigns, including the official campaign window and public budget allocations, parties and candidates can shape their campaign activities and understand what, if anything, is due them from the state. Access to election campaign enables candidates and civil society to verify that candidates have fair access to all public campaign resources provided in a given context, if any, including media and space for campaign events such as rallies. Where public media is allocated to contestants, then parties, candidates and citizens can consider whether the allocation process was credible and the resulting allocations, equitable

Early elections used traditional methods of campaigning, such as direct communication with the people in the form of rallies, and also indirect methods, such as print media. However, the election campaigns in India have changed significantly in recent years in terms of the strategies used. Political parties have experimented with many innovative campaign strategies over the past seven years, including social media platforms, digital rallies, lifelike appearances through holograms, and election biopics. Although many of these strategies have helped make the campaigns more inclusive and participatory, in which voters also have a say, unlike traditional campaigns, they have also created scope for opinion manipulation through careful orchestration of data.

The media is essential to democracy and democratic elections are impossible without the media. A free and fair election is not just about the freedom to vote and knowing how to vote, but also a participatory process in which voters engage in public debate and are provided with proper information about parties, politics, candidates and the electoral process themselves in order to be able to make well-founded decisions. In addition, that the media act as crucial watchdogs for democratic elections and ensure

the transparency of the process. In fact, a democratic election without media freedom or media freedom stifled would be a contradiction in terms.

According to Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, media is a tool of the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). Theory of Ideology focuses on two type of state apparatuses Ideological State Apparatus and Repressive State Apparatus. Althusser argued that the ISA uses media to reinforce existing power structures and ideologies. He believed that media could be used to shape the way people think and act, and it could be shapes people's behaviour. Media serves as a tool to maintain the status quo and to ensure that the existing power structure remains in place (Althusser 98).

Film is a most significant medium to influence the society, from its beginning as a novelty in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to its current status as a major informative and entertainment medium. Film have been used for a variety of purposes including artistic, political and educational efforts. They have also been used to shape public opinion, to explore social issues and to entertain.

General elections in 2019 are remarkable for the large-scale involvement of the media involved. In 2019 Election Commission had even issued special guidelines for campaigning using media. The candidates were directed to declare their social media spends along with other campaign related expenditures. Songs, counter songs, memes, jingles and videos took over all the available platforms. The leading political parties releasing biopic as well. There are large media houses conducting exit polls with the help of research agencies, psephologists and political analysts.

Film as a campaign tool. Films have often functioned as an instrument of propaganda given their exceptional facility to facsimile imageries by reconstructing historical events that give a flavour of authenticity. Although films are a source of

entertainment, they can distort societal perceptions by convincingly misrepresenting or omitting past events. This can make films both a compelling and an evocatively fickle medium. Politicians have long been aware of the powerful properties of cinema and have exploited this media tool to both rally and proselytize people with different opinions.

Now Indian cinema is no longer afraid to take sides. A number of political biopics such as *PM Narendra Modi*, *Thackeray* and *The Accidental Prime Minister* have been published in different languages. While *Thackeray* Bal Thackeray, the founder of Shiv Sena, the BJP's ally in Maharashtra, the inadvertent Prime Minister Manmohan idolized, ridiculed and slandered Singh, Gandhi and other members of the Congressparty. The trailer of *The Accidental Prime Minister* was shared by the BJP's twitter handle as riveting. In recent years, political parties have also increasingly used celebrities as force multipliers in their campaigns in order to increase public attractiveness. In return, media personalities benefit from political tutelage and protection. Dissident actors and filmmakers often face public protests and political harassment, and are forced to reshoot, delete, or apologize for scenes and commentary.

The states like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, Celebrities have often used their careers as platforms for socio-political messages and then voted in elections based on that image. However, films or celebrities have not explicitly endorsed political parties in their work in previous years. The recent film NTR *Kathanayakudu* featured the life of the former and late Chief Minister of Andhra NT Ramarao (NTR) and the role was played by his son Bala Krishna. The film aimed to stir up sentiment among the Telugus in order to sway votes unequivocally in favour of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) at a time when state elections are set to begin. Also in Tamil Nadu, a film *The IronLady* based on the late Prime Minister Jayalalithaa was planned.

Films used the tools of political parties that shape ideas, attitudes and social norms. They have a greater ability to influence opinion and disseminate ideas compared to other forms of media. Therefore, the sudden spate of political films and biopics and the timing of their release have raised questions about whether politicians are using the power of Bollywood and Indian cinema in general for political miles. Films are used to tell stories by bringing images and sound to life on a screen. It has been used to promote various political views and movements. The SMCR model (Source-Message-Channel-Receiver model) helps us understand how the messages are communicated and received by the audience. Filmmakers have recognized the power that film has and have harnessed it to bring stories about slavery, the past wars, violence and various societal issues.

Biographical films based on political figures are often seen as an ideological state apparatus, the film portray a certain ideology which usually in line with the political goals of leading political parties. The films *Thackery*, *Yatra*, and *Thalaivii* explore as a political tool. The biopics here used as a monitoring tool to track and analyse the ideologies and policies of political parties. It is also considered as a diachronic data about the political parties.

## **Chapter One**

### **Theoretical Frame Work of Ideology.**

“An ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices.”

(Lenin 112)

Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (1970) is an essay by the French Structuralist Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, it advances Althusser's theory of Ideology. Althusser's theory of ideology provides a language to explain the ubiquitous societal control of ideology. His framework further provides a systematic mechanism of cultural force and its perpetuation of hegemonic ideology. Louis Althusser builds on the work of Jacques Lacan to understand the way ideology functions in society.

The concept of ideology comes from Antoine Destutt de Tracy, but was originally introduced by Bacon; later, through flexible and complex development and history, it acquired multiple meanings. Marx is the first to reveal the essence of ideology. As the successor and developer of Marxist theory, Althusser conducted pioneering research on ideology based on Marx's theory of ideology, applying the theoretical method then emerging in the West, and the impact has been phenomenal and global.

#### **The Source and Course of the Thought of Althusser's Theory of Ideology**

Althusser's theory of ideology did not just appear out of thin air; it has its source and course of thought. In general, its source and course encompass four main aspects, namely Marx's theory of ideology, Bachelard's historical epistemology, Lacan's philosophy of mind and Gramsci's thought. Marx's theory of ideology. The leading origin of the thinking of Althusser's theory of ideology is Marx's theory of ideology.



Firstly, for Marx, ideology refers to various emotions, visions, thinking modes and views of life. Ideology is part of the ideal superstructure of the entire social structure and is basically limited to the social production and economic structure as well as to the superstructure of law and politics. Althusser holds that ideology is a representation of the imaginative relationships between an individual and their reality, just like Marx who believes that ideology is a coalition of reality and falsehood. Althusser's emphasis on the importance of ideology in the ideological system of the state apparatus is consistent with Marx's thinking.

Althusser's viewpoints about ideology and science are inspired by Bachelard's historical epistemology (Bachelard 98). Bachelard considers that science, rising from the fights against the conatus of human spirit, has two major characteristics. Firstly, synchronically speaking scientific cognition is not the opposite of knowledge, instead the opposite of the stubborn web of fallacy. Secondly diachronically speaking, there is no way that the history of science is a continuous process of knowledge accumulation, which has to be achieved through abandoning and replacing early-stage concepts. These basic viewpoints of Bachelard are clearly presented in Althusser's discourse about ideology and science.

Lacan's philosophy of mind is the most salient feature of Althusser's theory of ideology is the discourse on the concrete mechanism acting on individuals, namely the ideological theory of interpellation, which arises mainly from reference to Lacan's philosophy of mind. Lacan is the first to declare the death of I to be the subject of an individual. In Lacan's view, an individual's ego formation springs from a catabolic and forced self-identification. The first is the alienated identification of the mirror image, which is also the first step for the ego to become non-ego. The second is the killing of language to man in the symbolic phase, which means enslaving an individual to

endorse a symbol. As Lacan sees, social structure is currently symbolic. In this realm of symbolic order, man is governed by force, and human nature has become the sum total of each individual's symbolic calling relationships in his symbolic world. Such a pseudo-subjectivity theory is the fundamental basis of Althusser's critique of ideology.

Gramsci state that: The characteristic of Gramsci's thought and its influence on Althusser lies mainly in its emphasis on the existence of substance, which is strongly emphasized by Althusser. Gramsci established a formula: state = political society + civil society; In his view, the state is a lead in the armour of oppression. Therefore, if the proletarian revolution is to be successful, it must gain leadership in two respects, one political and the other cultural. Althusser greatly appreciates Gramsci's ingenuity, considering that he presented a new and surprising concept of the state. Thus, Althusser's theory of the ideological state apparatus is a conscious systematization of Gramsci's theory of civil society (Gramsci 78).

Althusser's cultural theory explains the structure and function of ideology. His thesis works from Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony. Originally, hegemony "referred to the way that one nation could exert ideological and social, rather than military or coercive, power over another" (Fiske, 1998; 310). In cultural theory, the term describes the dynamic by "which a dominant class wins the willing consent of the subordinate class to the system that ensures their subordination" (Fiske, 1998; 310). Consent is not static, but must be "won and rewon" (Fiske, 1998, 310), for courageous individuals may rebel and advocate alternative or oppositional ideologies, rather than hegemonic ones. Althusser's theory of ideology accounts for the manner in which ruling, or hegemonic, discourses and institutions perpetuate the necessary consent for their dominance.

Ideology is the powerful force behind the dominance of hegemonic institutions. Althusser defines ideology as an imaginary relation to the real relations of existence. He claims that the ideas of representations that “make up ideology do not have an ideal or spiritual existence, but a material existence” (Althusser, 1970, 296). This material existence is twofold. The representations that make up an ideology are based on the material world. Such representations exist among individuals who hold particular ideologies and their collective ideas and belief systems. Second, ideologies exist in apparatuses and their practices, which also have material existences.

Althusser moves away from the earlier Marxist understanding of ideology. In the earlier model, ideology was believed to create what was termed "false consciousness," a false understanding of the way the world functioned. Althusser explains that for Marx "Ideology is an imaginary construction whose status is exactly like the theoretical status of the dream among writers before Freud. For those writers, the dream was the purely imaginary, that is result of the 'day's residues'" (Lenin 108). Althusser, by contrast, approximates ideology to Lacan's understanding of "reality," the world we construct around us after our entrance into the symbolic order. For Althusser, as for Lacan, it is impossible to access the "Real conditions of existence" due to our reliance on language; however, through a rigorous “scientific” approach to society, economics, and history, come close to perceiving if not those "Real conditions" at least the ways that we are inscribed in ideology by complex processes of recognition.

Early on, Althusser had argued that ideology is a “system of representations” governed by rules that serve political ends. Ideology, in Althusser’s view at this time, was a matter of the unconscious, inescapable even by the dominant class. But with his publication of *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* in 1970, Althusser drastically changed his position on ideology. While he still viewed ideology as inescapable, he

also came to argue that it is realized in real actions and behaviours. Within this framework, Althusser introduces the concept of interpellation, otherwise known as “hailing.” Ideologies “call out” or “hail” people and offer a particular identity, which they accept as “natural” or “obvious.” In this way, the dominant class exerts a power over individuals that is quite different from abject force. Individuals are interpellated from the day that they are born—and perhaps even before, since parents and others conceive of the role and identity that their child will assume.

### **Interpellation**

Althusser considers ideology to be an important factor in terms of interpellation. Interpellation means giving identity to a person. According to him, there are two functions of interpellation-

1. recognition, and,
2. misrecognition.

Althusser’s viewpoint in summation about ideology and subject is the ideological interpellation subject. As Althusser puts it that “If it was not for the subject and for the concrete subject, there would be no ideology”, because on the one hand the existence of ideology is for the subject and on the other hand ideology needs the subject to exist, meaning that ideology exist upon the category and functions of the subject, and the category of the subject is an essential component of the total ideology. Althusser considers that ideology is forced upon people as an unconscious structure; it is a substantial existence, composed of a series of institutions and corresponding substantial practices. However, how does ideological state apparatus govern people? Althusser leads to the core of his theory of ideology, which is interpellating the individual as the subject. In the ideological interpellation, the subject is a component of ideology,

through which it cognizes itself. Then the real subject is Althusser believes that it is the relations of production, which is an absolute subject that relying on the ideological interpellation puts everyone in his position designated by social production as the executor and undertaker of the function of production of the relations of production (Althusser 1970,120).

The ideological state apparatuses like family, religious, institution, educational system, and media give us an identity. It is a truth that through this identity that we recognize each other. For example, we may recognize our friends in the street and shake hand with him that shows that we have recognized him. In different areas, there are different rituals to express recognition. With this concept of interpellation, Althusser implies that there is no inherent meaning in the individual. There are no individuals: only subjects, who come into being when they are hailed or interpellated by ideology. Instead, the subject exists only as he or she is recognized in a specific way that has a social structure as its referent. The subject is thus preceded by social forces, or always-already interpellated. This act of hailing the subject is effected by what Althusser terms Ideological State Apparatuses and Repressive State Apparatuses.

### **Reproduction of conditions of production**

In his essay, Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses, Louis Althusser demonstrates that in order to exist, a social formation is required to essentially, continuously and perpetually reproduce the productive forces (labour-power), the conditions of production and the relations of production. The reproduction of productive forces is ensured by the wage system which pays a minimum amount to the workers so that they appear to work day after day, thereby limiting their vertical mobility. The reproduction of the conditions of production and the reproduction of the

relations of production happens through the State Apparatuses which are insidious machinations controlled by the capitalist ruling ideology in the context of a class struggle to repress, exploit, extort and subjugate the ruled class.

Karl Marx said, every child knows that a social formation which did not reproduce the conditions of production at the same time as it produced would not last a year. The ultimate condition of production is therefore the reproduction of the condition. This may be simple or on an extended scale. Every social formation arises from a domination mode of production. The process of production sets to work the existing productive forces in and under definite relations of production. Every social formation must produce the conditions of its production at the same time as it produces, and in order to be able to produce. It must produce; the productive forces and the existing relations of production (Marx, 1867, 56).

Althusser asserts that how the conditions of means of production and productive forces are reproduced in the society. The reproduction of the productive forces is ensured by the wage system, which pays the working class a minimum wage to work every day and not to rise in status. The wages are not based on biological needs, but on the historical minimum.

On the other hand, the production conditions must also be reproduced. The conditions of production include machines, skills, raw materials, etc. The reproduction of the conditions of production and the relations of production is carried out by the state apparatuses controlled by the dominant ideology of the capitalist class. The capitalist class is the base and the working class is the superstructure. Capitalist class at the base controls the superstructure through two tools: Repressive state apparatuses and Ideological state apparatuses.

## **Repressive state apparatuses**

Repressive State Apparatus is a system or an apparatus that has the power to force you physically to behave, that can enforce behaviour directly. Althusser regards the State as a repressive apparatus which is used by the ruling class as a tool to suppress and dominate the working class. According to Althusser, the basic function of the Repressive State Apparatus is to intervene and act in favour of the ruling class by repressing the ruled class by violent and coercive means. It is a machine of repression that makes the ruling class to dominate over the working-class. RSA describe the mechanisms and institutions through which the state exerts its repressive power over individuals and groups. Althusser believes that the state relied on two types of apparatuses to maintain its power. Repressive State Apparatuses consists of those institutions and mechanisms that the state uses to maintain the law order, punish those who break the law, and repress any form of dissent. These institutions included the police, army, court, government, administration and prisons. The Repressive State Apparatuses is responsible for maintain the dominant ideology by using force and coercion and it does not allow dissenting voices to exist. It also maintains the existing power structure by using tools like surveillance, censorship, propaganda and violence. RSA not allows for the free expression of opposing views. The Repressive State Apparatuses is designed to maintain the status quo and uphold the interests of those in power and it is often used to silence opposition and suppress resistance. It explores the role of the state in maintaining social order. The repressive state apparatuses function as a unified entity. Whenever an individual or a group of individuals challenge the dominant ideology of the state, the latter uses repressive state apparatuses in order to stabilize the former. These apparatuses are always violent.

The Repressive State Apparatuses is designed to uphold the interests of those in ruling class or in power, which can lead to the suppression of minority groups, opposition and resistance. The use of RSA can create a sense of fear and intimidation in society, which can result in self – censorship and the reluctance to express dissenting views. This can ultimately lead to the stifling of creativity, innovation and progress. Furthermore, RSA can perpetuate inequality, injustice and discrimination by targeting particular groups based on race, class, gender or political beliefs. This can lead to the marginalization of these group, further perpetuating the existing power structure. The use of RSA has been criticized for violating human rights, as it may involve the use of torture, arbitrary arrest, and imprisonment without trial. This can be leads to loss of trust in the state and can have a negative impact on the relationship between the state and the citizens.

The features of Repressive State Apparatuses are;

monopoly of use of force; the state possesses a monopoly on the use of violence, meaning that it is the only legitimate body allowed to use physical force to maintain order. Surveillance and control; the state is able to control the activities of citizens through the use of surveillance technology such as cameras, wiretapping and other monitoring techniques. Censorship and propaganda are another feature, the government may use censorship either through state-controlled media or through laws that forbid the dissemination of certain kinds of information. They may also used propaganda to influence public opinion. The state may use intimidation tactics to discourage dissent and enforce compliance. This could include the use of physical violence, threats or physiological tactics such as public humiliation. The state has power to create, interpret and enforce laws that are designed to maintain stability and control. This includes the ability to punish those who break the law and the state has the



ability to deploy military and paramilitary forces to quell unrest or maintain order. This could include the use of police, special units, even military troops.

### **Ideological State Apparatuses**

Ideological state apparatuses function behind the shield in the form of morals and ethics. Ideological state apparatuses are quite different from the repressive state apparatuses as these are not violent. These institutions which generate ideologies which as individuals and groups internalize and act in accordance with. They include educational institutions, religious institutions, family, media outlets, trade unions, cultural groups, political groups, legal groups etc. In all ideological state apparatuses, the set of ideological discourses at work are always dominated by the ruling ideology., the educational institution is the core of ideological state apparatuses. In earlier times Church used to shape the minds of the people and today it is the school which makes the children learn morals and ethics. The students are taught the proper ways of behaviour, ways of talking, interacting, thinking and acting. Those who dominate become capitalists while others become workers. Ruling ideologies do not enjoy freedom in ideological state apparatuses. Thus, they form subjects.

All the state apparatus's function both by repression and by ideology, with the difference that the repressive state apparatus functions massively and predominantly by repression, whereas the ideological state apparatuses function massively by ideology. Whereas the repressive state apparatus constitutes an organized whole whose different parts are centralized beneath a commanding unity, that of a politics of class struggle applied by the political representatives of the ruling classes in possession of state power, the ISA are multiple, distinct, relatively autonomous and capable of proving an objective field to contradictions which express, in forms which may be

limited or extreme, effects of the clashes between the capitalistic class struggle and the proletarian class struggle as well as their subordinate forms. Since the unity of the repressive state apparatus is secured by its unified and centralized organizations under the leadership of the representatives of the classes in power executing the politics of the class struggle of the classes in power, the unity of the different ISA is secured, usually in contradictory forms by the ruling ideology, the ideology of the ruling class.

Althusser compares ideology to Freud's unconscious. In the same sense that Freud had stated that the unconscious was eternal he hypothesizes that ideology too is eternal due to its omnipresence. Therefore, ideology in general has no history. Althusser posits that it is not possible for a class to hold State power unless and until it exercises its hegemony (domination) over and in the ISA at the same time. The importance of ISAs is understood in the wake of class struggles because ISAs are not only a crucial stake in class struggle but they are also the site of class struggle. The resistances of the exploited classes are able to find means and opportunities to express themselves in the ISAs to overpower the dominant class. An oppressed class can end its oppression by overpowering the dominant/ruling class by utilizing the contradictions within the ISAs or by conquering combating positions in the ISAs during struggle.

The crux of Althusser's argument is the structure and functioning of "ideology". Althusser explains the structure and functioning of ideology by presenting two theses. Firstly, he posits that ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence. This distortion of reality is caused by material alienation and by the active imagination of oppressive individuals who base their domination and exploitation on the falsified representations of the world in order to enslave the relatively passive minds of the oppressed. Secondly, he posits that ideology always has a material existence in the form of concrete entities or apparatuses

(ISAs). Hence, an individual's belief in various ideologies is derived from the ideas of the individual who is a subject endowed with a consciousness that is defined by the ISAs. This falls consciousness inspires and instigates the subject to behave in certain ways, adopt certain attitudes and participate in certain regular practices which conform to the ideology within which he recognizes himself as a subject. The ideas of the subject are inscribed in the ritual practices based on the correct principles of that ideology. Hence, despite the imaginary distortion by ideology, a subject derives his beliefs from the ideas which become his material actions and practices governed by material rituals which are all defined by material ideological apparatus and derived from the same.

According to Althusser; features of ideology:

- Ideology represents the imagery relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.

The traditional way of thinking of ideology led Marxists to show how ideologies are false by pointing to the real world hidden by ideology for example, the real economic base for ideology. According to Althusser, by contrast, ideology does not reflect the real world but represents the imagery relationship of individuals to the real world; the thing ideology misrepresents is itself already at one remove from the real. In this, Althusser follows the Lacanian understanding of the imagery order, which is itself at one step removed from the Lacanian real. In other words, we are always within ideology because of our reliance on language to establish our reality; different ideologies are but different representations of our social and imagery reality not a representation of the real itself.

- Ideology has a material existence. It is in the Repressive State Apparatuses and hence controls their actions.

Althusser contends that ideology has a material existence because ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices" (Lenin 112). Ideology always manifests itself through actions, which are inserted into practices, for example, rituals, conventional behaviour, and so on. Indeed, Althusser goes so far as to adopt Pascal's formula for belief: "Pascal says more or less: 'Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe'" (Lenin 114). It is our performance of our relation to others and to social institutions that continually instantiates us as subjects.

- All ideology interpellates concrete individuals are concrete subjects.

The main purpose of ideology is constituting concrete individuals are subjects. So pervasive is ideology in its constitution of subjects that it forms our very reality and thus appears to us as true or obvious. Althusser gives the example of the 'hello' on a street: the rituals of ideological recognition guarantee for us that we are indeed concrete, individual, distinguishable and naturally irreplaceable. Through interpellation, individuals are turned into subjects. Althusser's example is the hail from a police officer: 'Hey, you there', Assuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a subject. The very fact that we do not recognize this interaction as ideological speaks to the power of ideology. what thus seems to take place outside ideology, in reality takes place in ideology. That is why those who are in ideology believe themselves by definition outside ideology: one of the effects of ideology is the practical degeneration of the ideological character of ideology by ideology: ideology never says, "I am ideological." (Lenin 118).

- Individuals are always-already subjects.

Although he presents his example of interpellation in a temporal form (I am interpellated and thus I become a subject, I enter ideology), Althusser makes it clear that the "becoming-subject" happens even before we are born. This proposition might seem paradoxical. Althusser admits; nevertheless, that an individual is always-already a subject, even before he is born, the plain reality, accessible to everyone and not a paradox at all. Even before the child is born, "it is certain in advance that it will bear its Father's Name, and will therefore have an identity and be irreplaceable. Before its birth, the child is therefore always-already a subject, appointed as a subject in and by the specific familial ideological configuration in which it is 'expected' once it has been conceived" (Lenin, 119).

- Ideology has no history.

Althusser claim that ideology is a structure, and as such is eternal, that is to be studied synchronically; this is why Althusser says that ideology has no history. He derives this idea of ideology as a structure from the Marxist idea that ideology is part of the superstructure, but he links the structure of ideology to the idea of the unconscious, from Freud and from Lacan. Because ideology is a structure, its contents will vary, you can fill it up with anything, but its form, like the structure of the unconscious, is always the same. And ideology works "unconsciously." Like language, ideology is a structure/system which we inhabit, which speaks us, but which gives us the illusion that in charge, that freely chose to believe the things.

### **Institutions of Ideological State Apparatuses**

Education is a powerful tool for the ideological state apparatuses. It is used to shape the minds of citizens in order to reinforce the state's ideologies and values.

Education systems can be used to control what is taught, how it is taught and overall objectives of curriculum. This allows the ISA to ensure the citizens are indoctrinated with the ideas and beliefs of the state and the ruling class. Education can also be used to promote the state's agenda and its interests in the international arena. It can be used to strengthen national identity and loyalty as well as to create a sense of patriotism and pride in one's country.

Religion is a complex ideological state apparatus, which functions to maintain and legitimize the power of certain social structures. Religion is a system of beliefs, rituals and doctrines that a particular group of people adhere to. This system is often used to legitimize the political and economic structure of a society and to reinforce existing power dynamics. Religion can also be used to control the behaviour of its adherents and to provide a sense of identity and community to its followers.

Family is an eloquent institution of ideological state apparatus. It serves to reinforce existing power structures and ideologies, as well as socialize children into dominant values and norms. Family is an important role of authority, representing a source of stability and continuity in the midst of social change. The family often serves as a base of support, providing economic, emotional and social security to its members based on some criteria. It is also a major site of socialization, teaching the ideas about gender roles, power dynamics and role of authority figures.

Politics is a tool utilized by ideological state apparatuses in order to further their goals. ISAs are composed of social and political institutions that attempt to shape and maintain the dominant beliefs and values of a society. Religious organizations, the education system, media outlets etc. through these institutions, political power is used to propagate certain ideologies and values and to suppress those that challenge or

oppose them. Politics is then used to advocate for or to resist, these ideologies and values.

The cultural groups help to shape public opinions. Through the cultural groups, states can promote specific beliefs and values that support the States's political agenda. These groups can be used to disseminate messages about the states policies, which can be used to reinforces the existing power dynamics or to challenge them. By creating and controlling these groups, state can influence the opinion of their citizens and create an environment that is more favourable to their own ideology.

Media is an institution for social change through the embellishment of different ideologies. Media outlets used by governments and other powerful institutions to disseminate specific political, economic and social ideologies that are intended to shape the beliefs and behaviours of citizens. Media can be used to manipulate public opinion and shape public discourse. Through media government can promote their own agenda and agenda of their allies, while marginalizing and discrediting opposing view. Media outlets like traditional media such as television, newspapers and radio and newer forms such as the internet, social media are the carriers of ideologies. Films are also the exponents of ideological state apparatuses.

## Chapter Two

### Political Biopics: An Analysis.

“A film dealing with the life, or portions of a life a figure usually historical figure, otherwise figure of some prominence”

(David L Smith and Thomas S. Freeman)

Media has an important function in imposing its thoughts to public by pretending as if it is independent of power. It also helps to maintain social control by formatting social thought according to the ideology of the ruling. In fact, public opinion is not the voice of society; it is the voice of power. It uses all the amenities for trying to format and check the community. According to Althusser (1971), as an ideological state apparatus, media binds society to sovereign power by will rather than pressure. In this perspective, newspapers, television, social media, films. Etc are play an important role as part of the media in shaping the provision of consent. In the last century, especially in developed countries which has been experienced great progress, it has been witnessed that media is used effectively as an ideological apparatus of power in terms of shaping the public opinion.

Jean-Louis Baudry's apparatus theory was an influential contribution to film studies in the 1970s. The theory combined Louis Althusser's idea of the ideology and ideological state apparatus with a psychoanalytic approach inspired by Freud. Althusser, "ideology" is defined as a representation of the imagery relationship of individual to their real conditions of existence. Imagery in Lacanian sense, as in the imaging function of the mirror that creates the illusion of self. According to Althusser, ideology hails individual as a subject. There is no ideology except by the subject and for subjects. Baudry applies Althusser's notion of the ideological apparatus to the



process of cinema. In his essay *Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus*.

The ideological mechanism at work in the cinema seems thus to be concentrated in the relationship between the camera and the subject. The question is whether the former will permit the latter to constitute and seize itself in a particular mode of specular reflection. Ultimately, the ‘contents’ of the image are of little importance so long as an identification remains possible. What emerges here is the specific function fulfilled by the cinema as support and instrument of ideology. It constitutes the ‘subject’ by the illusory delimitation of a central location — whether this be that of a god or of any other substitute. It is an apparatus destined to obtain a precise ideological effect, necessary to the dominant ideology creating a phantomization of the subject, it collaborates with a marked efficacy in the maintenance of idealism. repressed.

Thus, the cinema assumes the role played throughout Western history by various artistic formations. The ideology of representation as a principal axis orienting the notion of aesthetic creation and secularization, which organizes the mise-en-scene required to create the transcendental function form a singularly coherent system in the cinema. Everything happens as if, the subject himself being unable — and for a reason — to account for his own situation, it was necessary to substitute secondary organs, grafted on to replace his own defective ones, instruments or ideological formations capable of filling his function as subject. In fact, this substitution is only possible on the condition that the instrumentation itself be hidden or repressed.

The ideological function of the cinema resides in its hidden apparatus, which constructs the viewer as a transcendent subject and presents them with a dreamlike

“substitute” world in which this transcendent logic reigns supreme. Films are powerful tools for shaping ideas, attitudes, and social norms, with a greater ability to sway opinion and spread ideas than other forms of media. Unlike other forms of art, film has a sense of immediacy and the ability to create the illusion of reality. For these reasons, movies are frequently regarded as accurate representations of real life. This problem is exacerbated when films depict unknown cultures or places. Cinema and Politics and religion have frequently collided in India. Several actors have entered politics after leaving the film industry, and Indian films have also addressed social and political issues in plotlines, albeit implicitly and allegorically.

Films have often functioned as an instrument of propaganda given their exceptional facility to facsimile imageries by reconstructing historical events that give a flavour of authenticity. While being a source of entertainment, movies are able to skew social perceptions by convincingly misrepresenting or spinning bygone events. This can make films both a convincing but also an evocatively fickle medium. Politicians have long been aware of cinema's potent properties, and have exploited this media instrument to both rally and proselytize people with dissimilar opinions. Political films have hagiographies and dramatizations of significant policies, events and issues that can potentially influence elections seem to be in vogue the pre-poll season. Cinema and politics have often intertwined in India. Several actors have turned to politics post their film careers while Indian movies have also tackled social and political concerns in plotlines, albeit implicitly and allegorically.

As a genre, biopics are not of great importance in film studies. Because they often do not exhaust the possibilities of the medium. These films are also the means by which many people learn about the historical figure in question. This element also makes them prone to controversy. As with all narratives, this leaves room for one-sided

versions of the story. Studies in the United States have shown that more people probably get their history from movies and television than from reading about it. A biopic may include some fictional characters as well. However, there should be some effort to adhere to the known facts and to present its subjects and their careers with some accuracy. It also depicts the central character or characters as being influenced or responding to the times and circumstances in which they lived.

The element of public history makes the ideal tools for manipulating opinion during an election campaign. Many purists criticize biopics for their reliance on formula, their unoriginality and superficial treatment of people, and their predictable plot. They are also despised of their reckless mixing of fact and fiction, which ironically benefits politicians.

Three films *Thackery*, *Yatra* and *Thalaivii* can be analysed in detail to bring out the element of political propaganda inherent in these films. The films were attempts to influence votes during the election campaign, though the directors would deny it. The films masterfully use camera angles to create larger-than-life images of their respective heroes. There is little artistic merit, and the plot is driven by political propaganda.

### **Thackery**

*Thackery* belongs in the league of political biopics emerging in modern times. *Thackeray* is a 2019 Indian biographical film written and directed by Abhijit Panse and made simultaneously in Marathi and Hindi. It is based on the life of the Balasaheb Thackeray, the founder of the Indian political party Shiva Sena. The film stars Nawazuddin Siddiqui as Balasaheb Thackeray and Amritha Rao as act as his wife Meera Tai. With the help of prosthetic makeup and his ability to mimic body language,

Nawazuddin became the spitting image of the late political leader. *Thackeray's* story is a reflection of Balasaheb Thackeray's eventful life.

Maharashtra is one of the most important states in India due to its rich history and culture and also because it is home to Mumbai, the country's financial capital. And after independence, a number of prominent leaders shaped Indian politics, and the most senior of them was Balasaheb Thackeray. The man has amassed millions of followers who continue to worship and swear by him. So, a biopic about him is pretty ideal as it can make a great watch. Additionally, some of his actions and beliefs had been quite controversial and had provoked polarized views. *Thackeray the biopic*, promises to tell its story and address these sensitive issues as well.

The film begins in the late 60s, when Balasaheb Thackeray was a cartoonist at the Free Press Journal and it travels right through the 70s, 80s, 90s as he rises up the ranks of the world of politics. Balasaheb's entry into the Lucknow court is applaud worthy and will be well received by audiences. The first half of the film is very engaging, and the way the makers depict the sad state of Marathi-speaking people through animation is very unique. It's amusing, but it also has an impact. The editor of the journal is not satisfied with it as he creates cartoons of politician which affected the sale of his journal. He is asked to try something else but Balasaheb Thackeray quits his job.

The leader quit his job as a cartoonist at the Free Press Journal and fight for equality for Maharashtra in Mumbai. He sees that Marathi people don't have any respect and are made to do all odd works. With a few people, he starts to help the needy and gains respect. According to him, at that time Maharashtra was ruled by South Indians, Gujaratis and all other outsiders. He took it upon himself to empower the Marathi's and

fight for give them a livelihood and a better life in their own land. The first half has several scenes that stand out like Balasaheb helping a helpless landlord (Bachan Pachehra) in getting back his property, the violence that erupts when Morarji Desai (Rajesh Khera) lands in the city and the track of Krishna Desai (Sanjay Narvekar). To fight for the rights, he goes against the law and comes in the eye of politics.

Thackeray's firer speeches and uncompromising attitudes were instrumental in the rise of the Shiv Sena. He was not afraid to take on the powerful and he was willing to go to any lengths to protect the rights of the Marathi people. His fiery speeches and uncompromised attitudes won him respect from his followers. He was also revered by many of his followers, who regarded him as a messiah of the Marathi people.

He started his own political weekly called 'Marmik'. Through his cartoons and later speeches, he begins to inform Mumbai's sons that they must fight for their rights and not allow 'outsiders' to take control of the city. His speeches start to inspire Maharashtrians, and they begin to fight for their rights. In 1966, as his stature and popularity grow, and he begins to be addressed as Balasaheb, he establishes his own political party, the Shiv Sena. The party experiences many difficulties but gradually establishes itself. In the 1980s, however, Balasaheb's agenda shifts and he becomes pro-Hindutva. The Shiv Sainiks also played a role in the 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid, which resulted in riots and a widespread wave of shock across the country. After the Morarji Desai incident, Balasaheb is imprisoned, but no attempt is made to explain when he was released. Then the film is goes through Balasaheb bravely faces this crisis while also overcoming other obstacles.

After giving Marathi Manooos his equal rights, his only wish is that one day the Chief Minister of Maharashtra should be a Marathi Manooos. The movie tracks its

protagonists rise from a local treble shooter to the pinnacle of his party's success, victory in the 1995 assembly elections in Maharashtra. The film ends with an impactful monologue with the announcement of the sequel in the final being the icing on the cake.

The film *Thackeray* touches the historical events of during that period of time. The film tells the story of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 from the perspective of local village. It focuses on the lives of people affected by the uprising, including a local farmer who joins the rebellion and the British soldiers who are sent to put down the revolt. The film also mentioned the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 – 1931, led by Mahatma Gandhi. The Babri Masjid problem is a plot point in this film. The film makes several references to the events leading up to the demolition of the mosque in 1992. Thackeray is giving speeches and making appeals to his followers to protect the temple in Ajodhya. He is also seen taking a hard stance against the ruling government for allowing the mosque to stay in place. Ultimately, the film does not portray the actual incident of the Babri Masjid demolition, but it does show how the situation escalated and how it was used by political leaders to further their own agendas.

Shubhra Gupta, Indian Express film critic, in her review, wrote, "*Thackeray* is a Worshipful home video in the guise of a full-length feature film, in which everything is seen solely through the eyes of the man who started life as a testy, outspoken cartoonist and who, overcome by the 'unfairness' of 'Marathi mannos' having to deal with migrants in their home state Maharashtra, went on to form the Shiva Sena, a political party whose 'reactions against actions' helped changed the face of nation."

## **Yatra**

An Indian politician takes up a decision to go on a 900-mile walking as a part of his election campaign. *Yatra* is an emotional tribute to the former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, who served as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh from 2004 to 2009. It is an Indian biographical film; the film basically showcases how the journey that YSR undertook helped him emerge victories in election that ensued. Film revolves around a series of backstories from late Chief Minister Dr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy's 2003 padayatra, which proved to be a significant milestone in the history of Andhra Pradesh politics.

The film *Yatra* directed by Mahi V Raghav under 70MM entertainments banner and presented by Shiva Meka. *Yatra* was released worldwide in Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam on 2019. The film star Mamooty as YSR, the film also stars Suhasini Maniratnam, Jagapathi Babu, Sachin Khedekar, Ashrita Vemuganti among others. Director Mahi V Raghav evidently believed in the importance of telling the story of a politician who championed the cause of the common man through his policies, which endeared him to people from all political parties. The director's artistic passion shines through on screen, and the film delivers exactly what it promises.

The filmmaker agrees that it's important for stories based on real personalities to have a strong angle. "I don't want to call *Yatra* a biopic. I would rather say it's a story. I have taken the 2004 padayatra as the core plot and woven together a spectrum of stories encompassing a range of fascinating characters, played by Jagapathi Babu, Suhasini Maniratnam, Rao Ramesh and Ashrita Vemuganti, in *Yatra*," he says. He asserts that *Yatra* is not a propaganda film and is indeed a fascinating mix of fiction and reality. "Films that present the real-life story of an inspiring personality often follow a chronological trajectory. People usually try to pack too much in; hence they keep

jumping from one significant event to another. As a result, they invariably fall short and have to do too much fudging to engage the audience. I would say *Yatra* is a mix of reality and fiction. I strongly believe there can never be an honest biopic in the world,” reasons the director.

*Yatra* starts off with an attempt to establish the humanitarianism that YRS was renewed for. The film begins in Perivenular, when YSR is well known political leader. He is seen offering supported to a former opponent’s daughter in the upcoming by-election. He pledges his support to an election candidate against the wishes of the party's high -command. Not one to succumb to the dictations of the high command, YSR is pictured as a man who forever stood by his principles and who had his moral scruples intact. He establishes his authority through political savvy and skill, and he wins the election unanimously. Since then, he has been toying with the high command and getting into arguments with its representatives. After his party is out of power for two consecutive terms, he decides to embark on a padayatra to gain first-hand knowledge of the people's problems and needs, and to take serious steps to address them. Despite the fact that the high command despises his dominance, it is unable to ignore him due to his unrivalled popularity in the Rayalaseema region.

Dr. Y. S. Rajasekhar Reddy, Congress leader, decided to walk 1475 kilometres across the state in 68 days in a ‘Do or Die’ battle before the historic Andhra Pradesh State Assembly elections in 2004. The film highlights his journey which started in Chevella in Ranga Reddy District and ended in Ichchapuram in Srikakulam District. He meets different sections of people, listens to them, sees their plight, and observes the conditions and notes down all of them. He mentally stressed because of the problems faced by the farmers and lower-class people.



Farmers committed suicide; they exploited by the higher-class people. One of the incidents that, A farmer who has arrived with a truckload of tomatoes is distraught at how the prices have fell, and attempts to end his life, abandoning his young son amidst the crowd that has gathered around. It explores the that how the farmers of the country have been driven to misery and death, captured in truly remarkable frames by Sathyan Sooryan. The film also points that poverty the reason for the crimes, there is no situation to the common people to achieve good health care facilities. One at the hospital where a despondent mother, kaveri does the unthinkable to let her ailing daughter have a lifesaving surgery, which seem to have lost their spontaneity in the process of translation. She decided to handover her elder daughter to a servant. Another incident that a police man arrested for bribe, he take up the money for the education of his son. Through padayatra he is passing through the real life of common people in the country.

The political leader decided to change the circumstances. Using the backstories of the free power scheme, arogyasri, fee reimbursement scheme and minimum support price to farmers as a narrative, thispadayatra changes everything - Andhra Pradesh's political scenario as well as his life and shows us how he emerged victorious from the general elections and announced several policies that captured the hearts of many. Yatra offers brief snapshots of YSR's career and him getting elected as the Chief Minister for two consecutive times.

The director has explored the reasons behind YSR's political entry, his dream of becoming the greatest leader and his unwillingness to compromise on his principles. Procedurally and personally shifting between reality and fiction around an event, the film is far from a biographical drama that yields to the usual trappings of commercial

cinema. It's neither a biopic nor a propaganda film, but it makes a difference with an affectionate nostalgia.

YSR who was made the Andhra Congress Chief at the age of 34 by Indira Gandhi is known to be a self-made leader who was known to have worked in his own fashion regardless of what the high command's position was. Though there had been much speculation that he had been unhappy with the Congress leadership under Sonia Gandhi, YSR was a loyalist who chose to never confront the high command much. However, over the years, he emerged as a powerful regional player, eclipsing the party to a large extent in the state.

Historical elements of the film *Yatra* included: The beginning of YSR political career as an MLA in 1978. The film depicts the real – life journey of Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy as he undertook his famous Pada yatra across Andhra Pradesh in 2003. The film also highlights different schemes for the medical and health care. Then YSR's rise to power as the CM of Andhra Pradesh in 2004. The launch of the much-acclaimed 'Praja Patham' program in 2005. The water management program launched in 2006 called as 'Jala Yagnam'. The introduction of free electricity scheme for farmers in 2007. Then launched of the 'Rajiv Gruhakalpa' program in 2008. The film also mentions the birth of the separate state of Telangana in 2014.

Rajeev Masand CNN-IBN stated about the film; "*Yatra* is an interesting study of a man's journey to find himself. Mammooty gives a powerhouse performance, capturing both the inner and outer turmoil of the character. The film is well directed and has a grate score, making for compelling watch."

## **Thalaivii**

“Agar tum janta ko pyaar doge, toh wo bhi pyar denge.” This is a famous saying that MGR always tells Jayalalitha – “If you love people, the people will love you.”

*Thalaivii* (translated as "Lady Leader") is a 2021 Indian biographical drama film based on the life of Indian actress as well as politician J. Jayalalithaa. *Thalaivii* is an attempt to recreate former Tamil Nadu chief minister J. Jayalalithaa's turbulent and history-altering in politics, as highlighted by her relationship with the legendary M. G. Ramachandran. It all proceeds with the transformation of turning Jayalalithaa into Amma, the first Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Bollywood biopics, be they hagiographies or hatchet jobs, rarely get their act right. *Thalaivii* does nothing to change the scenario. It ties itself up in knots in trying to get the hang of six-time Tamil Nadu chief minister Jayalalithaa's life and times and craft a coherent tale. It hurtles around aimlessly - and futilely - in search of a plank that can hold its weight

As a quintessential Indian biographical drama, *Thalaivii* is laced with song-and-dance sequences and a lot of ‘dialogebaazi’. It is extremely focused on getting the look and accent of the characters right, and of course, transporting to the era in which the film is set. The actress Kangana Ranaut plays Jayalalithaa, Kangana Ranaut, a self-proclaimed rebel in real life against a male-propelled star system, plays a woman who, in the course of her eventful career, demolished gender barriers to hold her ground long enough to be able to take the reins of a state government and become an unquestioned leader of her people.

Arvind Swamy plays M. G. Ramachandran. Raj Arjun in the role of R. M. Veerappan. It is directed by A. L. Vijay and written by Madhan Karky (Tamil) and Rajat Arora both in Tamil and Hindi. The film was originally titled *Thalaivi* in Tamil

and Jaya in Hindi, but the makers later decided to release it in both languages as Thalaivi.

Throughout the film, the audience is given an insight into the different facets of Jayalalitha's life. Her humble beginning, her struggles, her successes and her ultimate transformation into an icon. The film also highlights her strong feminine traits, her courage and determination to succeed.

In 1989, Jayalalithaa, a member of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, questioned the current Prime Minister M. Karunanidhi about the allegations of corruption, arrests and eavesdropping against her and her party. She calls for his resignation and reaffirms the previous Prime Minister, M.G. Ramachandran, as someone who has truly served the people. However, the opposition questions her relationship with MGR, which leads to a brawl after Jaya is beaten. Some ruling party MLAs try to undress Jaya; Jaya compares herself to Draupadi and promises that she would not return to the session until she is appointed Chief Minister.

In 1965, MGR is at the pinnacle of his film career; producer R M Veerappan fires Saroja Devi and even burns any traces of her part in his next picture after she expresses affection for MGR, believing that MGR must remain celibate in order to maintain popular opinion of him as a "god." Jaya, at 16, is encouraged to act by her mother Sandhya, a former actress. Jaya takes over for Savitri, but her lack of enthusiasm is shown in her arrogance. Jaya softens her stance after realising her mother only wants her to succeed in her career and being moved by MGR's respect for a crew member injured on set. Because the film is a success, MGR and Jaya work on more projects together and grow closer. Veerappan tries to keep Jaya at bay once more, but she outwits him. Still, Jaya is hurt because she knows she is the other woman in the

eyes of the public, as MGR is married to Janaki. Jaya says she touches her hero as if she were hugging her mother, and she sees MGR as a protector like her father and brother. When MGR is shot in the neck and hospitalised, she realises she is not respected by a few people close to him. While MGR is recuperating, Veerappan hires another heroine for MGR's next film and offers Jaya a full and final settlement to end her continuous lead pairing with MGR. Jaya tries to discuss it with MGR, but he dismisses it, stating it is only about one film. In retaliation, Jaya praises MGR's competitor Sivaji Ganesan in a press conference and co-produces a hit film with him, while MGR's next picture is a fiasco. MGR apologises and offers her further roles in his films.

MGR enters politics with his friend Karunanidhi, but his film schedule interferes with his party duties, resulting in his dismissal. MGR sees Jaya to inform her that he has chosen politics over a career in cinema, and then departs with Veerappan. Meanwhile, Jaya is deeply affected by her mother Sandhya's death. She is seated next to MGR on a plane, curious as to why he was unable to attend her mother's burial. Jaya claims she can no longer be the other woman in his life and refuses to meet in secret to talk. MGR is again elected as Chief Minister, and Jaya is offered a role in a film in 1981 as an elder sister. Jaya, on the other hand, declines such offers. Jaya receives a stage performance at a government event in Madurai attended by MGR. He joins her backstage to talk about their past. By whistling, he expresses his appreciation for her performance in private and invites her to enter politics. However, she initially refuses because she dislikes politics.

Touched by the condition of girls and other children's education in schools, Jaya exposes the midday meal services under MGR's name by serving him the unhygienic food at his office. MGR inspects the mid-day meal service. He advises Jaya to take up

the mid-day meal service program for the state to which she agrees and forays into politics. She is fondly called “Amma” by locals. She markets the food scheme door to door and continues to partner with MGR, politically. Jaya handle the portfolio of education, also. Meanwhile, elections are around the corner and a saint is assassinated. Taking advantage of the situation, the opposition say the current political party has no man left as they are under Jaya's influence in the party. In a political speech on air pollution control, stones are thrown at her. To stop the throwing, she speaks out against MGR. However, she successfully changes the crowd's mind, points it out and gets the job of party propaganda secretary, eventually winning that district. Now she is sent to New Delhi as an MP to meet Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, but is blatantly forbidden from doing so.

In a session of Rajya Sabha, LK Advani asks the speaker to let Jaya speak about the situation in South India. An impressed Gandhi speaks boldly about the disregard for South India and the issue of power sharing from the Kalpakkam power project and lets them in. Jaya forms a contentious alliance with Congress that MGR heard over the news. Seen as a betrayal, Jaya was banned from the position of secretary by Veerappan while MGR is flown to the United States for treatment, causing a dire situation. Veerappan finds out that Indira Gandhi has been shot. However, Rajiv Gandhi calls Veerappan so that Jaya can promote the party during MGR's absence. The election campaign saves the party and it remains in force. Upon returning from the US, MGR and Rajiv Gandhi discuss how Jaya kept the ghost alive. Impressed again, MGR plans to meet Jaya for a dinner prepared at her home in 1987. Jaya waits for MGR overnight only to be told in the early hours of the morning that he is no longer there. After MGR's death, Veerappan wants MGR's wife Janaki to take responsibility for MGR's position,

but Janaki accepts her defeat and resigns from politics, saying Jaya has done more for the public. Thus, Karunanidhi takes power.

In 1990, a truck crashes into Jaya's car as part of a conspiracy against her and her assistant, Sasikala. Despite her situation, she manages to campaign. Sasikala gives Jaya a note during their campaign only to find out about Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. After the election campaign her party wins almost every seat. Eventually she re-enters the legislature as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and gets the respect she deserves.

Many social issues considered by Jayalalitha throughout her political career include gender inequality, caste discrimination and political corruption. Jayalalitha faced immense resistance on her path to power. The film depicts how she overcame these issues. As a female leader in a male dominant society, Jayalalitha had to face discrimination and sexism. Jayalalitha was a highly educated woman who excelled in many fields. She used her education and knowledge to her advantage in her political career. The rampant corruption and nepotism in the Tamil Nadu political system are depicted in the film.

Siddareddy in Jayalalitha's biopic *Thalaivii*, "There's so much enigma to her character. Despite fame, she had managed to keep her personal life a secret. Like *Mahanati*, people will certainly be interested to know about aspects that completed her life. Unlike NTR whose dramatic moments in his political career only comprised the Nadendla Bhaskar Rao episode and the year preceding his death, every phase of Jayalalitha's life had some controversy to it, be it her equation with Sasikala, MGR, Karunanidhi or the cases against her."

## **Chapter Three**

### **Political biopic as campaign tools.**

Political films have become an increasingly popular tool for political campaigns. As film technology has improved, movies in politics have become more effective and influential in conveying messages to voters. The biopics consisting under the theory of ideological state apparatuses. Political films allow candidates to showcase their values, ideas, and policies in an entertaining and persuasive visual medium. In today's world, political parties have begun to rely on the power of film to spread their message and influence voters. Historically, political campaigns have used television and radio ads. Still, over the past few decades, they have increasingly turned to movies as a powerful tool for creating an emotional connection with their audiences and mobilizing supporters.

Political parties use films in various ways to reach voters. The most obvious way is through documentaries that present their views on certain issues. For example, in 2016, the Democratic National Committee released a documentary about their presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, called *The Choice 2016*. This documentary highlighted her achievements and political positions to appeal to voters. Documentaries like this can be very compelling because they present facts in an engaging format that resonates with viewers. In addition to documentaries, some political parties also use feature films to influence public opinion. For example, during the 2020 election cycle, the Republican Party released a feature film called *Trump Card*, which portrays President Trump positively while portraying his opponent Joe Biden as ineffective and unrelated to modern life. This type of message is particularly effective because it



appeals to emotion rather than logic or fact, making it harder for viewers to ignore or refute your message.

According to political analyst Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay, who is certain that films are gradually being used as a “means of political canvassing”, the underlying idea might be for parties to increase their appeal among the public. “Movies definitely help you make headlines and, these days, there is an understanding in the political circles that if you are being talked about, you are actually scoring brownie points over the rival,” says Mukhopadhyay, who has also written the biography on PM Modi titled *Narendra Modi: The Man, The Times* (qtd in. Biswas).

According to investigative journalist Kseniya Kirillova, whose work focuses on analysing Russian propaganda, the Putin administration in Russia primarily uses television and social media, while films portray a positive image of the country and its army. A film called *Going Vertical* (titled *Three Seconds* in English) about a Russian Olympic sports victory over the US during the Cold War, for example, appears to have promoted Putin's idea of patriotic superiority ahead of the 2018 presidential elections. Nikita Mikhalkov, an Oscar winner known for his nationalist views, directed it.

To fully explicate filmic ideology and the ways in which film advances specific political positions, contemporary film theory insists on attending to cinematic form and narrative, as well as the ways in which the cinema apparatus transcodes social discourses and reproduces ideological effects. In this context, it is critical to recognise that film ideology is communicated through images, scenes, generic code, and the overall narrative. Even as right-wing forces obtain hegemony over political and institutional power, the system of knowledge and information dissemination has come to be subjugated under this brute control. The ideologically biased nature film

ensorship demonstrates an attempt to create cultural knowledge asymmetry, which leads to the formation of an uncritical and uninformed citizenry.

Given how deeply ingrained politics are in daily life in India, the history of critically acclaimed political biopics is not particularly rich. There have been intermittent releases like Gulzar's *Aandhi* (1975), supposedly based on former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi; Mani Ratnam's *Iruvar* (1997), which was inspired by actor and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MG Ramachandran (MGR); and Gnana Rajasekaran's Tamil film *Periyar* (2007) on politician-social activist Periyar EV Ramasamy, the father of Dravidian nationalism.

There have also been well-received political films, again scattered, including Amrit Nahata's *Kissa Kursi Ka* (1978) that was banned during the Emergency because it was believed to be a satire on the Indira Gandhi administration; Rahul Dholakia's *Parzania* (2007) based on the 2002 Gujarat riots that theatre-owners refused to screen fearing backlash; Sudhir Mishra's *Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi* (2005), which was set during the Emergency; and Anurag Kashyap's *Gulaal* (2009) about student politics in present-day Rajasthan.

The biopics about political leaders are being released in India just before the elections. The biopic film about Prime Minister Narendra Modi was released just days before the start of voting for India's general election. Even as India's Electoral Commission submitted a report to the Supreme Court on the alleged violation of the Model Code of Conduct by the release of the highly controversial biopic PM Narendra Modi, various questions were raised about the film medium's role in biased political propaganda. This is done against the background of recent even in the political context of India, where the relationship between politics and cinema has become even more

pronounced. Following the publication of *Uri: The Surgical Strike*, which dramatized a Modi-sanctioned military mission against Pakistan in 2016, the most recent publication was *The Accidental Prime Minister* an unflattering portrayal of former Congress-era Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. A biopic on Rahul Gandhi titled *My Name is Raga* was also released around the general election. While some have called it a parody, some users have also called it BJP propaganda. Along with biopics, films like *The Tashkent Files* are a prime example of the BJP's strong agenda targeting the opposition. The film explores the circumstances of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's death which allegorically congress leaders in Tashkent in 1965.

Movies that directly channel the leading party's positions, policies, and rhetoric have also grown in popularity in recent years. The biopics aimed to reinforce establishment ideology at a time when general elections are taking place. Watching these films reinforce the current establishment's superiority over factual information and cultural sensitivity. Many people were led astray by these films about the government and its policies, as well as the personalities of opposition leaders. The biopics portrays protagonist as an effective administrator and the greatest leader

Experts believe that filmmakers in India are developing similar relationships with the government. Rasheed Kidwai, a political journalist who has written a biography of Sonia Gandhi and whose recent book *Neta Abhineta* explore the relationship between Bollywood and the politics, believes that while filmmakers can capitalise on popular political sentiments, they must be cautious in making an open statement on contemporary political personalities, parties, or issues.

The political biopics used to canvas voters through the visualising the works and contributions of the parties. There are political agendas behind the films. Media has

established itself as the major communication platform for India's political parties ever since the 2014 elections. Youth participation in political discourses via SNS has increased. Media effectively connects with one-third of Indian voters. If the 2011 Census data is extrapolated to the upcoming 2019 election,' there could be 130 million first-time voters – most of them social media users. This electorate is currently being targeted aggressively by political parties, who hope these first-time voters become lifelong supporters.' The 2019 general election shifted paradigms in Indian politics. The more obvious shift was electoral: with the Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) becoming the first party in 35 years to return to power with an absolute majority that seemed to upend the conventional rules of Indian politics. The elections were also intimately connected to a second societal paradigm shift in India that happened between 2016 and 2019, which, in terms of its political impact, is comparatively less commented upon and is understudied.

During the period of general election 2019 the different leading parties released political biopics based on the historical events their parties passing through. In films try to make an emotional attachment, attraction, hope and effective canvassing to the voters, focusing on ideological incidents and plots. Different incidents and dialogues injecting the ideology to the society.

The movie *Thackeray*, Thackeray is depicted as a providential man for Marathi people, taking their defence. To contribute to this image, he is mostly shown as a flawless person, having answers to all questions asked to him, even ridiculing the lawyer during his judgment. Tiger's roar can even be heard each time he is saying kind of scathing words giving a surrealist impression. Thackeray is also shown having an open mind, especially with the Muslim community, giving them an opportunity to build a common society project. He is also letting a Muslim man praying at his own home.

Later on, the 1984 Bhiwandi riot episode is shown where a few Muslim Ashraf 44 men assault the Shiv Jayanti procession. This episode is called The Betrayal which leaves no doubt about who is the bad guy in the story. This part of the story is used to legitimate using violence against Muslims, seen afterwards in the rest of the film. Thus, Thackeray seems to combine major qualities, such as tolerance and being right all the time, using violence to build a strong hero image.

The film ends with a to be Continued note, meaning more clean-up is in the works. The film's creators understood that aggressive Hindutva will result in more votes in the 2019 election. It's interesting to wonder why this film was released in 2019. 30 years ago, Shiv Sena and BJP formed a coalition to hold parliamentary elections side by side in the state of Maharashtra. This political partnership lasted until 2018. In fact, Shiv Sena chose to cut ties with the BJP for a number of reasons and ran alone in the 2019 parliamentary elections. In such a context, Shiv Sena had to reactivate the aura around Bal Thackeray to reaffirm party identity as it was massively overshadowed by Narendra Modi's popularity. And this film could have been part of such a seduction, communication operation for electoral purposes. On the whole the film is well made but the content is explicit and deeply problematic as it relies on lies and portrays the Muslim community as violent people with whom no discussion is possible. It's a final judgment on this community that isn't even able to fight back.

*Yatra* offers brief snapshots of YSR's career and him getting elected as the Chief Minister for two consecutive times. YSR decides to set out on a padayatra, to get a first-hand experience of the people's problems and their needs, and take steps to address them in the earnest. Even though the party high command hates his dominance, it is unable to ignore him due to his unmatched popularity in the Rayalaseema region.

The film picturises the backstories of the free power scheme, arogyasri, fee reimbursement scheme and minimum support price to farmers as a narrative.

Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy's 2003 padayatra, make huge revolution in the mind of voters because the scene provides the idea of a good political leader, who is devoted his life to the society. Then the film explores the political agenda like canvassing the voters through visualise the schemes where the political parties launched. The plot moving to the suffering of people. The solutions of the suffering picturise through varies schemes lunched by YSR and the party. Rythu Bharosa Scheme to provide financial assistance of up to rupees 13000 to farmers every year. The film picturises the death of a child by improper treatment because of the financial crises of the family. After that incident YSR started the scheme 'Aarogyasri scheme' to provide health insurance coverage to the poor and vulnerable section of society. YSR' 'Cheyuthu Scheme' is to provide financial assistance to women from socially and economically backward sections of society. The also consider the situations of aged people and their suffering that is known as Pension Kanuka Scheme. All round social problems touch by the film.

The creators decided to release Yatra a few months before the parliamentary elections in Andhra Pradesh. While the release of Krish and Balakrishna's NTR biopic has been touted by much of the election propaganda, director Mahi reportedly said it was foolish to assume a film could influence the election. He also reportedly called the film a human drama and not a biopic. Prior to the film's release, Mahi also released a note citing YSR and NTR as both sons of soil. YSR's Padayatra is indeed a monumental moment in Andhra Pradesh politics. In 2003, Congress faced a crisis. YSR's idea of starting his padayatra turned the tables and eventually he set out to become the messiah of mankind. For a non-Telugu speaking audience, Yatra could serve as a handbook to

the events of 2003. But for Telugu speaking people, Yatra proves to be unimpressive as the film lacks any punch and fizzles out towards the end.

Film *Thalaivi* visualise the message of female empowerment and the film may be used to promote the political party that Jayalalitha belonged to, the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). In a session of Rajya Sabha, LK Advani asks the speaker to let Jaya speak about the situation in South India. An impressed Gandhi speaks boldly about the disregard for South India and the issue of power sharing from the Kalpakkam power project. It projected the accuracy and commitments of political parties. The Rajya Sabha members appreciate and consider the problems of Tamil Nādu. The film explores the midday meal scheme for school children in the state. The scheme provides this scheme to Government and aided schools on all working days. The scheme serves to encourage children from disadvantaged background to attend school regularly and complete their education.

Through the film the makers injected that, Jayalalitha better known as 'Amma'. She entered into politics in 1982 and quickly rose to become the first female Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. During her tenure as politician, she worked tirelessly to improve the standard of living for million of people especially women in Tamil Nadu. The film tries to attract voters through visualise the schemes and activities of party in the state. Implementation of various social welfare schemes and policies such as free electricity and water, free midday meal for school children, free health care and educational opportunities for women also launched the Amma Unavagam (Amma's canteen). The people of Tamil Nadu held Amma in high regard because of her dedication to the welfare of the state. It is hyperbolically visualised through the film. It is unconsciously remembering and canvassing new voters. The film released just before the 2021 Tamil Nadu Assembly election.

The most widespread means of mass media: film, promotional video, cartoon and TV broadcast, have become basic means of television, in the meantime being used as tools for political influence. If advertisement, broadcast or news may have a direct impact on citizen's consciousness related to this or that political issue, actor, party or event, films and cartoons have indirect and not immediate impact.

The psychological impact of film on individual, McLuhan defined film as a hot mass media device that fully captures the sense of sight and sound and can be identified with film heroes. The film's uniqueness is that it has the ability to affect lower levels of consciousness even to the subconscious, archetypal level. Cinematography, if programmed with precision, can be a successful means of propaganda. It actively generalizes the idealized illusion of worlds in the viewer's imagination. Depending on the conception of the author director, screenwriter, films can give the impression of fairness and moral superiority of a certain character, without taking into account the fact how the prototype of the given character was in reality.

But the most important feature of films that makes them useful as a propaganda tool is their ability to covertly and unnoticed affect people. The influence usually takes place in a sensual form from the consciously manageable field, which helps to avoid rational thinking the emergence of sensual resonance. Sensual resonance can be defined as creating a certain mood among a wide audience while at the same time disseminating certain ideas. It allows to bypass at a conscious level the psychological protections that try to protect against advertising, propaganda and any form of brainwashing. This is where sensuous resonance is necessary because its first rule is: One should influence the human being on a sensuous level, not on a conscious level.



To understand the impact of feature films on society from a political perspective, it is necessary to examine them in non-democratic and democratic regimes. If in a democratic social system, the presence of political actors or historical and political events in a film is the result of the choice of film companies in non-democratic regimes cinematography is one of the most influential tools of propaganda contributing to it to present the behaviour accepted and established by the ruling elite as the correct pattern of behaviour or canvassing the society.

## Conclusion

Election campaigning in India has changed forever. Although campaigning still includes elements of traditional campaigns such as organizing rallies, hoarding and home visits, there has been a bias in favour of media. Politicians have recognized the importance of data analysis in formulating electoral strategies. As a result, every major political party now has its own research team. These professional teams meticulously study grassroots trends and strategize for political parties. Even when political leaders have thirty or forty years of experience, these research teams have become an integral part of their campaigns. There is also the rise of a peculiar type of professionals known as political consultants. They were absent in traditional campaigns. They came to the scene only after the increasing dependence on data for campaigning.

Compared to social media, election biographies are more straightforward in political parties' propaganda. Despite being biographical films, they present a distorted story from the perspective of the protagonist, who is more often a political leader. Most of these films have no artistic value and serve only as campaign tools. In the Indian context, these films have elements of jingoism, a larger-than-life portrayal of the protagonist, and an almost total decimation of the opposition voices. They live up to the hero-worshipping element inherent in the cadres of many political parties and, through narrative means, provide a visually appealing and memorable reiteration of key campaign issues. The possibilities of the medium are hardly used and compensated by artificially incorporated dramatic content. The biopics *Thackeray*, *Yatra* and *Thalaivii* are example for that.

Political films are used to make a lasting impression on voters. They can be used to educate viewers about the platform and candidate policies without sounding

like an overly scripted campaign speech. By including images in the presentation, viewers will better understand the issues being discussed and the candidates' attitudes towards them. They allow candidates' personalities to shine through, allowing them to come across as authentic and relatable, rather than just another politician repeating a rehearsed script. Political films also connect candidates and potential voters emotionally by sharing significant moments from their lives or stories highlight their achievements.

This gives voters a more intimate look at candidates' identities beyond their resume or campaign promises. They can see what kind of person they are voting for instead of just ticking off the ballot boxes. In addition, political films can also fight negative press or highlight specific issues that may not get enough attention from the mainstream media. For example, let's say one candidate gets more positive press than another. They can create short videos that subtly focus on their strengths that discredit their opponents' positions or actions. These types of messages can help level the playing field during election season by giving each candidate equal attention in the eyes of voters, regardless of who gets more coverage from traditional news sources.

Films are a powerful tool for politicians because they can evoke an immediate emotional response from viewers - something that is difficult to achieve with other media. Films can help politicians gain support by presenting issues in a way that resonates with viewers. For example, a film about a struggling family can be used to illustrate the need for better economic policies, or a film about racism can be used to argue for civil rights reform. In addition to using film to convey messages, candidates also use it as part of their overall campaign strategy. They often include clips from popular films in their television advertisements or print materials to address the emotions associated with those films and to create positive associations between the

candidate and those emotions. Politicians also regularly hold screenings of feature films as fundraising events or invite celebrities associated with particular films to join them on the campaign trail.

Studies have shown that film has had a significant impact on voting behaviour over the years. A 2008 study found that when viewing clips from popular films alongside political advertisements, voters were more likely to recall information about the candidate than if they had viewed the ad alone. Another study showed that people who watched films with characters who fought against injustice were more likely to vote for socially progressive candidates than those without those characters.

The Opinions are influenced by the stimuli and discourse that surround us. Movies are a powerful tool to confirm and reinforce our existing beliefs or to present evidence to the contrary in order to change them. A recent study by Michelle C. Pautz, associate professor of political science at the University of Dayton, proves this hypothesis. dr Pautz put students at a college in the United States in focus groups to fill out a questionnaire about their views on government before and after watching the films' *Argo* and *Zero Dark Thirty*'. She found that after watching the films, 20 to 25 percent of participants had changed their minds and were generally positive about a variety of government issues. Their confidence in the government grew, as did their general optimism about the country's direction.

The youth, at an impressionable turning point in their lives, are more likely to respond to a call to action than their jaded and cynical older peers. As seen in the 2019 Lok Sabha election, the support of youth and first-time voters will be crucial to ensure the numbers in the House of Representatives are in favour. For this segment, the cinema is the most effective instrument of political mobilization. As vocal consumers

of multimedia information, the films can come across as shifting their allegiance to one side or the other especially to the neutral and undecided.

Films contribute to the political socialization of people particularly young adult and therefore what audiences see and how particular institutions are portrayed over time can be very significant. Hence, in an election year, politically charged films become crucial in attracting young volunteers to campaign and ensure that they vote as a bloc for a particular political party.

The usefulness to the parties concerned of using film as a tool to convey a political message is what psychologists call “groupthink”. The groupthink phenomenon states that your preconceived notions can be modified or further reinforced within large groups due to your desire for conformity. Political parties used to rely on cinema participation to spread their message/propaganda through political films, but now films can even be accessed through our mobile phones thanks to online platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime. Cinema's reach has increased exponentially, leading to political parties investing heavily in getting the right message across to the world of movie stars and movies.

Movies and movie stars are gradually becoming an indelible part of the democratic ecosystem in our country. This fact is clearly demonstrated by the increasing number of actors who regularly enter Parliament and in turn seek to support their party's narrative by making films that fit the party's agenda. Some of the politically inspired films turned out to be a smart bet for the producers, as not only did they please audiences and rake in big profits, but they also pleased the political masters and the films became really staged. A privilege of the ruling class, propaganda films

present a sanitized version of the truth and create a feel-good factor for maintaining political power. A biopic is considering as 'killing two birds with a stone'.

Chandigarh-based award-winning theatre personality, Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry, points out that biopics are merely propaganda films, with highly appropriate timings. "These are specifically agenda-driven. They definitely influence the masses and reassert the narrative, which the public has been served for the past five year". The political biopics are invisible weapon. The political parties used it at the right time to inject their ideologies and values. It unconsciously prepared the mindset of the voters especially the new voters. Politics one of the most important functions is communication with people, which is organized via information impulses. In the information age, it reaches people through different channels that are different and sometimes contradictory. Therefore, apart from the direct means of influence, cinematography is important as an indirect means of influence because the potential of its influence is greater and stronger than the potential of other channels known to the people.

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**IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN THE NOVEL *THE MINISTRY  
OF UTMOST HAPPINESS***

**A Project Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the  
Degree of M.A in English Language and Literature of Kannur**

**University**

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**2021- 2023**

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**DON BOSCO ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGE,**

**ANGADIKADAVU**

**BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **Identity Construction in the Novel *The Ministry Of Utmost Happiness*** submitted to Kannur University in partial fulfillment of the requirement of M.A. Degree in English Language and Literature is a record of bonafide study and research work carried out by **Sajaya Joy** under my supervision and guidance and no part of this work has been presented earlier for the award of any degree, diploma, title or recognition.

**Fr. Jaison Anthikkat****Mr.Sarath Krishnan****Head of the Department****Research Guide**

**DECLARATION**

I, **Sajaya Joy** hereby declare that this dissertation entitled **Identity Construction in the Novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*** is a record of original work carried out by me for the award of M.A. Degree in English Language and Literature of Kannur University, and it has not been submitted to any university for the award of any degree or diploma.

**Angadikadavu**

**Sajaya Joy**

**01-05-2023**

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## Introduction

This project tries to analyse the identity construction in the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* by Arundhati Roy. This is the second novel by Arundhati Roy published in 2017, twenty years after her debut novel *The God of Small Things*. Through this novel Roy depicts how the marginalized sections of the society construct their identity and what are the crises faced by these people in that society. In this project I mainly focus on the three marginalized sections like transgenders, Dalits, and women. This novel deals with many characters. And the story revolves around mainly two characters, Anjum, a transgender who was born in an orthodox Muslim family, leaves her house in order to find a space of her own in that society. Secondly, we can see Tilo, who is an architect, born with no past or history. But she establishes her own identity. By using the theories of feminism, subaltern studies, and queer theory I focus on the different types of identity crisis faced by these marginalized sections of the society.

This project aims to find out how the marginalized sections of the society portrayed in this particular novel and the different types of identity crisis faced by them especially by transgenders, Dalits, and women. It also analyses how these people in this novel construct their individual identity and what are the issues they have faced in their path of their identity construction.

The concept of “Identity” is elaborated in the work of a developmental psychologist Erik Erikson, who believed that the formation of identity was one of the most important parts of a person’s life. While developing a sense of identity Erikson did not believe that the formation and growth of identity were just confined to adolescence instead identity is something that shifts and grows throughout life as

people confront new challenges and tackle different experiences. Erikson coined the term identity crisis and believed that it was one of the most important conflicts people face in development. According to Erikson an identity crisis is a time of intensive analysis and exploration of different ways of looking at oneself.

While conducting this study, I have adopted some aspects of the queer theory to analyse the issues of transgender. Queer is used as an umbrella term to denote several identity groups within a particular community. A queer community may be made up of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bi sexual, transgender and so on. Besides sexuality queer is also used to describe particular gendered community made up of people who fall outside the society of male/female and masculine/feminine dichotomies. The protagonist of this novel and Anjum is a transgender. The transgender community faces so many difficulties in Indian society: they are denied proper education, health care needs and other human rights. Secondly, I deal with certain theoretical insights from feminism also to analyse the identity crises of the women characters. Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought. Women are defined and differentiated with reference to man and not with reference to her; she is incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. “He is the Subject, he is the absolute, she is the “Other” (Beauvoir<sup>26</sup>). Simone de Beauvoir links woman’s identity as Other and her fundamental alienation to her body—especially her reproductive capacity. In this novel Arundhati Roy portrays women characters like Tilo who has no history or past, and Revathy as a victim of patriarchal society. Thirdly, I have focused on the identity crisis faced by the Dalit society by using some of the aspects of subaltern theory. Antonio Gramsci coined the term subaltern to identify the cultural hegemony that excludes and displaces specific people and social groups from the socio-economic Institutions of society. Dalits are treated as lesser than animals in our society. They are discriminated

in every field of life and they are also considered as untouchables. The Identity of the Dalit is oppressed by the community and social evils. Arundhati Roy, in this novel, depicts identity crisis of the marginalised character Saddam Hussein. Hence, by following these theoretical insights, I hereby attempt to trace out 3 trajectory of identity construction of the marginalised sections of the society as exemplified by Roy in her recent novel.

Apart from this introduction and a brief conclusion, this project contains three chapters. The first chapter titled as “Theoretical Concerns” contains a detailed outlining of the theoretical frameworks like queer theory, subaltern and feminism theory which are used for this study. The second chapter titled as “critical analysis of the novel The Ministry of Utmost Happiness” deals with the different aspects of the novel in a critical point of view. And the third chapter titled as “identity construction in the novel The Ministry of Utmost Happiness” deals with the problems and identity crisis faced by the marginalized sections in the society.

Identity crisis is a relevant issue in our present-day society. India is a developing country. Our Indian constitution has granted some special privileges to marginalized sections of the Indian society. But these people never get any chance to develop their identity. They are always considered as others by the society. There are so many issues happening in India. Like transgenders, Dalits also cannot establish their own identity. They are always considered as untouchables. People only try to discourage them. Harassments and atrocities against women are continuously occurring in our society. Most of the women try to prove themselves but there are many criticisms and challenges in their path of identity construction. Every people have their own identity in a society. But the society is not providing opportunities for expressing their identities.



This introduction also contains a Review of Literature where I mainly elaborate the core contributors or scholars, whose research works have helped me to develop my project. I have extensively borrowed from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Arundhati Roy and others in shaping my ideas. In her real-life Roy is involved with many social works and through her writings she has tried to create awareness about the wrong happenings which can be traced in her writings for example, “The Doctor and The Saint” and in her books like, *Algebra of Infinite Justice*, *The End of An Imagination*. In these pieces she talks about the horrific sides of Hindu caste system, struggles of Dalits and about India’s nuclear test. Roy in her novels talks about ‘untouchables’ (Dalits), transgender, portrays minorities based on religion and war. In the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* Roy portrays the struggles of transgender community in Indian society. Javeed Ahmad Raina in his article “Transgender Marginalization and Exclusion: A Study of Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*” talks about transgender community in India and relates the sufferings with Anjum. He finds out that although they have been provided the voting right, they are still deprived of the basic rights. They have limited access to job, education, and health care facilities. On top of that, transgender has no access to public toilets in hospitals, prisons and in other public places, which illustrates the discrimination faced by this category.

All these issues are now a great concern to Indian society; hence I choose the topic related to India’s marginalized people to explore and explain the identity crisis faced by them and to acknowledge people through it. Additionally, in the essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak includes the problems of Indian culture. In it, she describes the circumstances surrounding the suicide of a young Bengali woman that indicates a failed attempt at self-representation. Because her attempt at “speaking” outside normal patriarchal channels was not understood or

supported, Spivak concluded that “the subaltern cannot speak (Spivak 104).” Also, by using the word ‘subaltern’ she portrays the minorities who are inferior to the other. Roy similarly shows the marginalized or in other words the subalterns who cannot stand for themselves, if they do so they are being shuttered and oppressed by the upper class like the cases of Velutha and Ammu in the novel *The God of Small Things*. Further, The article “A Study On Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry Of Utmost Happiness*” by Sushree Smita Raj, shows that Roy’s fiction *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, holds the unbearable truths of society such as wretched condition of minorities, humiliated life of transgenders, life of Naxals, rape and moreover the story is about the marginalized group of people who are victims of injustice, inequality and prejudice. Similarly, Javeed Ahmad Raina in the article “Transgender Marginalization and Exclusion: A Study of Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*” shows the difficult life of Transgender in Indian society keeping the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* scattered to that. Further, another book has played an important role to develop my thesis that is, *Transgender voices: Beyond Woman and Men* by Lori B Girshick. It portrays how the society does not accept transgender as they are different from the stereotyped gender norms. Further, it depicts the two transitions of their life, one is social and the other is physical, both of the transition is difficult for them. All these secondary resources have helped me to develop my points about identity crisis faced by the marginalized sections of Indian society.

Though many studies have been conducted on this particular work, nobody has attempted the analysis of marginalized sections’ identity construction in this particular work. So, it is a new attempt to understand the identity construction of marginalized sections who are being portrayed in this novel.

## Chapter One

### Theoretical Concerns

Erik Homburger Erikson was a German American developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst who coined the term identity crisis. He described identity as involving a subjective feeling of self-sameness and continuity over time. For Erikson identity can be defined in three ways; self-identity, social identity, and role identity. Self-identity is how you identify with your personal characteristics, social identity is how you identify with a group and role identity is how you identify with a particular social role. From past to present identity is a complex issue for people especially for marginalised section. Most of the people are struggling to form their own identity in this society. Identity mainly raises two questions “who are you” and “what does it mean to be who are you”. Identity involves the personal experience, memories and some qualities that differentiate us from others. There are many factors like society, family, ethnicity, race, culture, location, opportunities, media, self-expressions and life experience which are contributing to the formation of identity. Psychologists assume that identity formation is a matter of finding oneself by matching one’s talents and potentials with available social roles.

Identity is socially and culturally constructed thing. Social identity is the self that is shown to others. Social identity is the part of the self that is defined by one’s group memberships. Social identity theory was formulated by social psychologist Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s. Identity becomes more important than one’s identity as an individual. The theory also specifies the ways in which social identity can influence intergroup behaviour. Social identity is not the same as self-idea since identity contains components that are socially noticeable and publicly overt gestures of oneself. Sex and identity are parts of social identity. Culture is a characterizing

highlight of an individual's identity, adding to how they see themselves and the gatherings with which they recognize. Their very own individual's comprehension and other's characters create from birth and are formed by the qualities and perspectives pervasive at home and in the surrounding community. Culture refers to the customs, practices, languages, values and world views that define social groups such as those based on ethnicity, region, or common interests? Cultural identity is important for people's sense of self and how they relate to others. cultural identity is an important contributor to people's wellbeing. Identifying with a particular culture gives people feelings of belonging and security. It also provides people with access to social networks which provide support and shared values and aspiration. These can help break down barriers and build a sense of trust between people -a phenomenon sometimes referred to as social capital -although excessively strong cultural identity has also been linked with positive outcomes in areas such as health and education. Identity has two important features: continuity and contrast. Continuity means that people can count on you to be the same person tomorrow as you are today. Obviously, people change but many important aspects of social identity remain relatively stable such as gender, surname, language and ethnicity. Contrast means that your social identity

Differentiates you from other people. An identity is what makes you unique in the eyes of others. Identity develops over time through relations with others. For many people, the development of identity follows a period of experimentation, but for others it happens more easily by adopting readymade social roles. There are periods in life when some people undergo identity crisis and have to redefine their social identities. Erickson coined the phrase identity crisis meaning the feeling of anxiety that accompany efforts to define or redefine one's own individuality and social reputation. For most people the process of going through an identity crisis is an important and

memorable phase of life. Psychologist Roy Baumeister suggests that there are two distinct type of identity crisis that is, identity deficit and identity conflict (Baumeister 408). Identity deficit arises when a person has not formed an adequate identity and thus has trouble making major decisions because he or she has no inner foundation. Identity deficits often occur when a person discards old values or goals. By rejecting old believes and assumptions creates a void or an identity deficit, which is accompanied by feelings of emptiness and uncertainty. Such feelings prompt people to search for new believes, for new values and goals. People who are trying to fill this identity deficit may try on new belief systems, explore new relationships and investigate new ideas and values. People in identity deficit are particularly vulnerable to the propaganda of various groups. They are often very curious about other belief system and are easily influenced by others. This is because of their feelings of emptiness and their search for ew values and ideas. As Baumeister points out, recruiters for cults are often done to people who are undergoing identity deficit crisis.

The stage of psychosocial development in which identity crisis may occur is called the identity cohesion versus role confusion. During this stage adolescents are faced with physical growth, sexual maturity and integrating ideas of themselves and what others think of them. Adolescents therefore form their self-image and endure the task of resolving the crisis of their basic ego identity. Successful resolution of the crisis depends on one's progress through previous developmental stages centring on issues such as trust, autonomy, and initiative.

James Marcia is another influential theorist who expanded upon Erikson's concept of identity crisis and identity confusion. His underlying work was published during the 1960s nevertheless his theories continue to be defied as per late research findings. In spite of the fact that Marcia's theory initially conceptualised identity

advancement in terms of a progressive, formative pattern, his theory has subsequently gotten more descriptive and all out, characterising, and recognising specific configurations of identity investigation and responsibility. Marcia's theory descriptively categorises four primary concerns or stations along the continuum of identity advancement. These stations are points to describe altogether different identity conditions going from a diffuse and uncertain individual identity to a precisely characterised and exceptionally specific individual identity. Similar to Erikson Marcia accepted that specific situations and events (called "crisis") serve as a catalyst inciting development along this continuum and through the various identity statuses. This crisis makes inward struggle and enthusiastic disturbance, in this manner causing adolescents to look at and question their values, beliefs and goals. As they investigate additional opportunities, they may frame new beliefs, receive various values, and settle on various choices. As per Marcia's theory this formative crisis at last cause adolescents to foster a progressively more not worthy obligation to a specific individual identity by means of the process of identity exploration prompted by formative crisis.

Indian society is male dominated. Normally people approve two genders male and female. Because of that, gender is a criterion to determine the identity of a person. In the case of transgenders, they are the sexual minorities of the society and they are not even treated like other dominant groups. The word, 'transgender' appeared in the title of a small but influential pamphlet by Leslie Feinberg, "Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come", published in 1992. The term transgender is associated with a gender identity that rejects the socially constructed gender. Transgenders are also known as third gender. They are individuals who transgress their gender and can be identified as 'queer'. Queer theory is a field of post structuralist critical theory that emerged out of Feminism and Gender Studies in the 1990s. Most

commonly queer used as an umbrella term for the sexual minorities like the third gender, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender. By the view of queer theory all identities are socially constructed. It challenges the typical traditional binary division. The term queer theory is coined by Teresa de Lauretis. Several writers such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Judith Butler, Adrienne Rich and Diana Fuss have positioned the queer and queer theory in the light of culturally marginal sexual self-identifications. In 1991 feminist film critic, Theresa de Lauretis edited a special issue of the journal *Difference* under the title “Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities”. The issue contained essays on a diverse array of cultural representations and manifestations of same sex desire. In their book, *Saint Foucault* and David Hamperin also refrain from pinning down the term queer, arguing instead that:

Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate and dominant. There is nothing particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without ban essence. “Queer” then demarcates not positivity but a possibility whose precise extent and heterogenous scope cannot in principle be delimited in advance.

(62) Identity crisis is the major issue faced by these transgenders. They denied their rights and equality in the society. They are referred to as ‘other’. Othering is a process of differentiation or demarcation that draws a line between less powerful and more powerful. Gender expression is the external representation of one’s gender identity, usually expressed through feminine or masculine behaviours and signals such as clothing hair, movement, and voice or body characteristics. There is a great diversity in how an individual express his/her gender identity. Gender is most commonly thought about in binary terms as male or female. But not all men and women fit into these terms. Transgender people feel that their gender differs from the sex they were labelled

at the time of their birth. Being transgender or having a non-binary gender identity is just a variation of human condition. Susan Stryker defines it in *Transgender History* as:

Gender identity: Each person has a subjective sense of it with a particular gender category; this is one's gender identity. For most people there is a sense of congruence between the category one has been assigned to and trained in, and what one considers oneself to be. Transgender people demonstrate that this is not always the case that is possible to form a sense of oneself as not like other members of the gender one has been assigned to or to think of one as properly belonging to another gender category (13).

“Queer Theory” is not synonymous with gender theory, nor even with the overlapping fields of gay and lesbian studies, but does share many of their concerns with normative definition. Queer theory's main project is exploring the contesting categorization of gender and sexuality; identities are not fixed and cannot be categorised and labelled. Queer theory said that there is an interval between what the subject “does” or what the subject “is”. It provides scholars, activists and others with ways of thinking and talking about identity beyond simple binaries, especially in fighting homophobia and transphobia (unreasoned fear and hatred toward homosexuals, transsexuality and transgender people, respectively.) In the last two decades the focus of the queer Indian Research has been on linguistic or literary critical analysis to show the representation of gender transposition in Indian socio-cultural discourse. Queer theory often serves as a framework to study transvestitism, drag performances, the disparity between desire and gender hermaphroditism and gender identity disorder and gender corrective surgery.

Identity formation is one of the most complex tasks performed by women in a patriarchal society since history. Because women are the second sex and also referred



to as 'other' in our society, traditionally there are some typical roles assigned to them by men. Victorian society given only two images to women: one is 'angel' and the other is 'monster'. For women breaking these images and coming out to form her own identity is difficult. But now a days women show the courage to challenge the patriarchal notions of the society and forming identities. Feminism is the movement argues for equality and rights of women. Feminism is an interdisciplinary approach to issues of equality and equity based on gender, gender expression, gender identity, sex and sexuality understood through social theories and political activism. Historically, feminism has evolved from the critical evaluation of inequality between the sexes to a more nuanced focus on the social and performative constructions of gender and sexuality. Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical or philosophical fields. It encompasses work in a variety of disciplines, anthropology, sociology, economics, women studies, literary criticism, art history, psychoanalysis, philosophy. Feminist theory aims to understand gender inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relations and sexuality.

Radical feminism is a perspective within feminism that calls for a radical recording of society in which male supremacy is eliminated in all social and economic contexts, while recognising that women's experiences are also affected by other social divisions such as in race, class, and sexual orientation. The ideology and movement emerged in the 1960s. Radical feminists view society as a fundamentally a patriarch and oppressive to women. Radical feminists seek to abolish the patriarchy as one front in a struggle to liberate everyone from an unjust society by challenging existing social norms and institutions. This struggle includes opposing the sexual objectification of women, raising public awareness about such issues as rape and violence against women, challenging the concept of gender roles, and challenging what radical feminists

see as a racialized and gendered capitalism that characterizes the United States and many other countries. According to Shulamith Firestone in “The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for feminist movement, not just the elimination of male privilege but of the sex distinction itself: genital differences between human beings would no longer matter culturally”. While radical feminists believe that differences in genitalia and secondary sex characteristics should not matter culturally or politically, they also maintain that women’s special role in reproduction should be recognized and accommodated without penalty in the workplace, and some have argued compensation should be offered for this socially essential work.

Early radical feminism, arising with the second wave feminism in the 1960s typically viewed patriarchy as a “transhistorical phenomenon “prior to or deeper than other sources of oppression, “not only the oldest and most universal form of domination but the primary form” and the model for all others. Later politics derived from radical feminism ranged from cultural feminism to more syncretic politics that placed issues class, economics etc. on a par with patriarchy as source of oppression. Radical feminist argues that because of patriarchy, women have come to be viewed as the “other” to the male norm, and as such have been systematically oppressed and marginalized. They further assert that men as a class benefit from the systematic oppression of women. Patriarchal theory is not defined by a belief that all men always benefit from oppression of all women. Rather, it maintains that the primary element of patriarchy is a relationship of dominance, where one party is dominant and exploits the other for the benefit of the former. Radical feminists believe that men (as a class) use social systems and other methods of control to keep women (as well as non-dominant men) suppressed. Radical feminists seek to abolish patriarchy by challenging existing social

norms and institutions, and believe that eliminating patriarchy will liberate everyone from an unjust society.

Radical feminist theory is premised on the understanding of social relationships in terms of gender oppression. Radical feminists do not deny the importance of liberal reforms in improving the status of women, particularly efforts directed to protecting the rights of the victims such as rape shield laws or, in the international context, the re understanding of rape as torture. Rather they argue that the reformist program is far too limited. Liberal reforms are premised on the protection of liberty rights, of both victim and accused. To the extent that such even – handed protection of rights presumes a background of equality radical critics argue, it both reflects and perpetuates gender domination in society. Far more sweeping reforms are needed instead.

Because women must live and survive in conditions of oppression, moreover silence or passivity cannot be taken as consent. Instead, the law must insist upon the woman's active consent and on her having the space within the which to give such consent. Along these lines, Lois Pineau has proposed a model of communicative sexuality, on which the sex is presumed to be undesired on the part of the woman unless she affirmatively communicates her desire for it. Stephan Schulhofer has argued that just as affirmative consent is required for medical treatment or the appropriation of property, and an ambiguous non answer will not suffice in these circumstances, so too affirmative consent should be required for sexual entry into a woman's body. These proposals regard liberal reforms that either expand the notion of force or change the standards of proof for non – consent as perpetuating assumptions about the sexual role of a woman as passive and accepting, perhaps secretly and stereotypically desiring sex even if she does not say so. They urge the law instead to presume that the sex is unwanted unless it is the subject of explicit consent. They reject suggestions that

woman should be regarded as complicit in their own rapes for behaviour such as wearing seductive clothing, going to bars, or accepting rides, because such judgements impose burdens on women that are not imposed on men.

The topic of the self has long been salient in feminist philosophy, for it is pivotal to questions about personal identity, the body, sociality, and agency that feminism must address. Simone De Beauvoir's provocative declaration, "He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other", signals the central importance of the self for feminism. To be the Other is to be a non-subject, a non-agent – in short, a mere thing. Women's selfhood has been systematically subordinated or even outright denied by law, customary practice, and cultural stereotypes. Throughout history, women have been identified either as inferior versions of men or as their direct opposite, characterized through their perceived differences from men; in both cases, women have been denigrated on the basis of these views. Since women have been cast as lesser forms of the masculine individual, the paradigm of the self that has gained ascendancy in western philosophy and US, popular culture is derived from a masculine prototype. Feminists contend that the experience of predominantly white and heterosexual, mostly economically advantaged men who have wielded social, economic and political power and who have dominated the arts, literature, media, the scholarship have been taken as universal and ideal. As a result, feminists have argued that the self is not only a metaphysical issue for philosophy but one that is also ethical, epistemological, social and political.

Besides these two marginalised sections Dalits are always treated in the same way. Like women and transgender Dalits are categorised into the group of 'other'. They are treated as untouchables and considered as the lowest section in our society. Nobody want to be inferior or subservient under others. But unfortunately, the identity of Dalits

was oppressed by higher community and social evils. This way of treating a person or a group differently because of their caste, skin colour, sex and sexuality is known as Discrimination. Every revolution in this world is a response towards discrimination. According to the hierarchy of the Indian caste system Brahmins are higher caste and Dalits, Adivasis and Tribals are the downtrodden community. They were treated as untouchables and subjected to a lot of humiliation because of their caste. This ill treatment faced by Dalit community leads to the Dalit movements. Dalit movement in India comes up with their struggle for identity and carving for equal status in the society for all the castes and subcastes According to the subaltern perspective, Dalits are marginalized sections under the domination of higher caste people. Historically India is a caste based hierarchical society. The subaltern perspective stands for understanding the society through conditions of subordination of people belonging to different class, caste, gender, age, race etc. It seeks to present an alternate image of society through the view point of masses usually unrepresented. It seeks to restore a balance by highlighting the role of the masses against the elites in political and social movements. It treats peasants, tribal and other marginalized sections of the society as the makers of their own history. The Gramscian term subaltern means subordinate group. The major proponents of subaltern perspective in India are BR Ambedkar, David Hardiman, Ranajit Guha among others. They have tried to incorporate the views of the weaker section in the writings on Indian society. In post-colonial studies and in critical theory the term subaltern designates and identifies the colonial populations who are socially, politically, and geographically excluded from the hierarchy of power of an imperial colony and for the metropolitan homeland of an empire.

Antonio Gramsci coined the term to identify the cultural hegemony that excludes and displace specific people and social groups from the socio – economic institutions of

society, in order to deny their agency and voices in colonial politics. The term “subaltern” in this context is an allusion to the work of Italian Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). The term’s semantic range has evolved from its first usage by Ranajit Guha, following Gramsci, to refer solely to peasants who had not been integrated into the industrial capitalist system. It now refers to any person or group of inferior rank or station, whether because of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion. A key movement in postcolonial studies was the 1980 intervention of the subaltern studies group. Within “subaltern studies”, a term first used by Ranajit Guha, the word “subaltern” stand as “a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way” (Preface” 35). Subaltern studies analyse the “binary relationship” of the subaltern and ruling classes, and thus, and thus studies the interplay of dominance and subordination in colonial systems, most notably India, though the methods of the movement have since been applied to other nations, spaces, and historical moments. Subaltern studies as a whole aim to uncover the histories of groups that within the colonial and nationalist archives went largely shunted to the margins or undocumented all together. Turning towards popular accounts of public history and memory in order to combat what Guha terms as “elitism”, the subaltern studies group’s primary focus was and is to recover, examine, and privilege the agency of the underclass within the networks of capitalism, colonialism, and nationalism.

The concept of the “subaltern” gained increased prominence and currency with Gayatri Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” which was a commentary on the work of the Subaltern Studies Group, questioning and exposing their patronizing attitude. Contradictory to the stereotyping tendencies found in Said’s Orientalism and other texts, which presume the colonial oppression as monolithic, Spivak adapts Derridean

deconstructive techniques to point out the different forms of subject formations and “othering”. Much of Spivak’s ideas are informed by her interactions with ‘the Subaltern Studies Group, including Ranajit Guha Dipesh Chakrabarty. Spivak suggests that is impossible to recover the voice of the subaltern, hinting at the unimaginable extent of colonial repression and its historical intersection with patriarchy which he illustrates with particular reference to colonial debates on widow immolation in India. As observed by scholars like Lata Mani, in colonial discussions on the practice of Sati, the Indian widow is absent as a subject and that subject is denied a space of speak from. She therefore suggests that such intellectuals adapt Gramscian maxim – “pessimism, of the intellect, optimism of the will” – by combining the philosophical scepticism about recovering the subaltern agency with a political commitment of representing the marginalized. The effectively warns the postcolonial critics against homogenizing and romanticizing the subaltern subject.

In spite of queer theory’s advances in understanding sexual identity and oppression and in providing a voice for political challenge, many transgenders express dissatisfaction with the purely social constructivist assumption about gender identities that are inherent in queer theory. As Hausman argued queer theory as applied to transgenders individuals may still promote gender – role stereotyping by seeming to accept gender categories, even as it attempts to queer (destabilize) them. Although queer theory may accept feminine males and masculine females, as well as a plurality of gender identities, in nevertheless builds on the assumptions of the male versus female gender categories. So transgender theory and identity crisis issue provides comprehensive and integrated framework for understanding and empowering individuals with multiple, intersectional oppressed identities.

## Chapter Two

### Critical Analysis of the Novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* a 2017 novel by Arundhati Roy, follows the interconnected lives of several characters against the backdrop of contemporary India. The novel skips backwards and forwards in time freely, often pauses for detours into the stories of minor characters and includes several texts within the main text. At heart, however the novel consists of two main narrative threads, one of which is centered in Delhi, and the other is in Kashmir.

Arundhati Roy's first novel was published in 1997. *The God of Small Things* tells the devastating story of twins Rahel and Estha and in doing so, examines India's caste system, its history and social mores. It explores the ways in which the 'Untouchable' caste is derogated and ostracised from society, and the consequences of breaching the caste's longstanding codes. The narrative deftly illustrates how the personal is indeed political, and her writing style is searing in its beauty, delivering weighty truths about neglected societies. She was even awarded Booker prize for this novel.

*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is a curious beast: baggy, bewilderingly overpopulated with characters, frequently achronological, written in an often careless and haphazard style and yet capable of breathtakingly composed and powerful interludes. The idea that the personal is political and vice versa informs its every sentence, but it also interrogates that assumption, examining its contours and consequences. The novel opens with Aftab, a hermaphrodite born in Old Delhi. When



Aftab reaches puberty, he elects for gender reassignment surgery and becomes Anjum, a glamorous, affectionate woman. The 18-year-old Anjum then falls in with the residents of the so-called ‘Khwabgah,’ meaning ‘House of Dreams.’ Many of the residents of the Khwabgah are either hermaphrodites or transsexuals. Anjum remains with the Khwabgah for 30 years, during which time she raise a little girl named Zainab. However, at the age of 46 years old, Anjum survives a massacre in Ahmedabad and leaves the Khabgah in order to move into a cemetery ten minutes away. There, Anjum transforms the cemetery into a guest house, called ‘Jannat’ (or Paradise) Guest House, and creates Jannat Funeral Services. Jannat Guest House becomes home to other marginalized and persecuted characters like herself. One day, a baby is found at an old observatory in Delhi where various activists gather.

Anjum falls in love with the child, and when she disappears, tracks the baby to the house of the woman who has taken her. The narrative then shifts towards focusing on this woman, whose name is S. Tilottama—or Tilo, for short. Like Anjum’s story, Tilo’s story is told through the thirdperson. However, two of the men who loved her during their college days—an old bureaucrat nicknamed “Garson Hobart” and a mainstream journalist named Naga who becomes her husband—also provide their first-person account of the impression she made. Tilo is dark-skinned and intelligent; in university, she is close with an architecture student from Kashmir, named Musa Yeswi.

As the story unravels, the reader learns that Musa and Tilo reconnected after university and after the death of his wife Arifa and their daughter, Miss Jebeen. In the mid-to late-1990s, Musa becomes involved with the Kashmiri separatist, or freedom, movement that calls for the Muslim-majority region called Kashmir to break from Hindu-majority India. Musa and his friend, Commander Gulrez, attract the attention of Indian bureaucrats, including the vicious Major Amrik Singh who is known for his

ruthless torture tactics. Although Musa escapes, Tilo is watching as they murder Gulrez. Upon her release, a shaken Tilo marries Naga for protection and security. Fourteen years later, Tilo divorces Naga and rents an apartment from the old friend she knows as Garson Hobart. Initially excited by her reappearance in his life, ‘Garson Hobart’ is dismayed to see that she has disappeared once again. It is revealed that Tilo is the woman who stole the baby from the observatory; she has given the baby the name, Miss Jebeen the Second, in honor of Musa’s slain daughter. Tilo is invited, and agrees, to go live with Anjum at the Jannat Guest House.

The narrative jumps back in time once again to give the full details of the deaths of Arifa and Miss Jebeen (the First). They are shot and killed by soldiers amid the violence of 1990s Kashmir. After their deaths, Amrik Singh tries to ply Musa with a gift, but he cannot be bought; he goes undercover. More details are given regarding the night on which Commander Gulrez dies, and it is revealed that when Tilo leaves Kashmir and marries Naga, she is pregnant with Musa’s child. She decides to terminate the pregnancy. Back in the present, the residents of Jannat Guest House celebrate Zainab’s marriage to Saddam, a resident.

One day, a letter arrives written by the mother of Miss Jebeen the Second. The mother, Comrade Maase Revathy, is a dedicated Communist. She conceived the child through rape. Although she cannot care for her, Revathy reveals in her letter that she named her daughter Udaya. The residents of Jannat Guest House agree to name the baby Miss Udaya Jebeen. Meanwhile, the character known as Garson Hobart has been reading through Tilo’s many documents; he realizes that his opinions about Kashmir have changed. One day, Musa walks into Tilo’s apartment, where he is staying. The two talk, and Musa warns that, “One day Kashmir will make India self-destruct” (440). In the final chapter, Musa joins Tilo at Jannat Guest House for a night. Tilo

eventually hears word that Musa has died in the fight for Kashmiri freedom. In the last scene, Anjum takes Miss Udaya Jebeen for a walk around Delhi while a small dung beetle watches over the world.

The abacus of information capsules suggests that *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is intended primarily for an audience that is global, if not just the West. But unlike *Americanah* or *Twelve Killings*, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* lacks the creativity and subtlety needed to turn issues and themes into an engaging literary masterpiece.

The storyline manages to hold our sympathy but the drama cannot hold within it the multiple political and emotional surgeries the author wants to conduct. From brutal casteism to neoliberal fantasies, from the Emergency to Gujarat's pogrom, from queer politics to Ghalib's grave, from the Narmada Bachao Andolan to Dantewada – there is just simply too much going on. The lengthy pamphlets and letters Roy inserts in the hands of Azad Bharti, are little more than direct reportage from capitalism, socialism, casteism, colourism, to our fragmented nation and its wartime sexual violence and crimes. This lack of focus causes the novel to end up being literal, not literary, swinging between the imperatives of a history teacher and tour guide, dragging under its own weight.

The novel is fragmented and unwieldy and is short on cohesiveness and conciseness. It is not one novel, rather it is a mix of two novels; one dealing with the hijra community and the depressed class, and the second with the issue of terrorism in Kashmir. Even the third short narrative focussing on a woman Naxalite is sought to be linked loosely towards the end. Instances like the entry of Azad Bhartiya in the early part of the novel is tenuously related to the main storyline. His presence in the end to

locate the Naxalite mother of Miss Jebeen, the Second is equally an add-on, not integral to the structure of the story. The long letters written by Bhartiya or Revathy are meant to fill pages just like the notes left behind by Tilo that cover pages 245-61 and the repetitive memoranda or reports of police stations. Also, unnecessary details of the illness of Tilo's mother could have been avoided without doing any harm to the narrative.

According to Roy's worldview, which, to say the least, is dystopic. Even though history of post-independence India comprises of numerous events and developments, Roy is selective and chooses the ones that show the ugly and the rotten side of the body politic. When she takes up the issue of militancy in Kashmir, she describes the negative developments in great detail in this unwieldy narrative. So far as positive features are concerned, she mentions in passing only, so that the overall impact is one of despondency and frustration. Her selection includes the state of emergency imposed in India, the insurgency that rocked Punjab, the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, the Union Carbide Gas Tragedy, Gujrat riots of 2002, anti-Dalit events, 9/11, Maoist insurgency, displacement of people due to the building of dams and other issues which were espoused by her as an activist. Chapter 3 captioned 'The Nativity' refers to the birth of a new India in ironic undertone. The drive to make the unnamed city beautiful meant removing the villages and unauthorized colonies – Roy's pet topic since the Narmada Bachao Andolan days. "Thousands of beggars were rounded up and held in stockades before being shipped out of the city in batches. Their contractors had to pay good money to ship them back in" (99).

It looks like a take on Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* that deals with the emergency regime in India and its impact on the slum dwellers. Roy's novel mentions that 3000 people died on the streets last year! The people evacuated are settled on the

city's outskirts "in the bright swamp rightly compacted with refuse and colorful plastic bags, where the air was chemical and the water poisonous. Clouds of mosquitoes rose from thick green ponds" (100). So much for the new India! Roy's major focus is the situation in Kashmir. She has had to admit that insurgency has played havoc with the tourism business in Kashmir. She knows that the meaning of Azadi for the terrorists is Islamization 'Azadi ka matlabkya [What's the meaning of freedom?]: la ilahailallah" (374) they enforce their 'protocol' about women's dress even on Tilo This is "stupidification, idiotification...First Azadi, Then Annihilation. That's the pattern" says Musa (371). The question that Roy fails to answer is why does Musa stick to terrorism? And why is he projected as an idealist hero in the novel? Even in situations, where the hand of the terrorists is clearly seen, Roy tries to look the other way. In Kashmir, the terrorists use every trick to befool people and to incite them against the army and the government. The novel notes an incident in which an empty duffel bag was touted as the body of a killed Kashmiri and buried in the presence of thousands of people.

The present novel deserves comment both with regard to its theme as also the narrative style. Taking up style here, one must note Roy has used the fictional form to comment on recent history which is intertwined with politics. History and fiction share a mutual and important relationship since from the very beginning. Many writers have done it before, and of all the literary masters, Shakespeare is one brilliant example, whose numerous historical plays use history "not merely as a source of material for writing plays, but also for providing insight into the history and politics of his times".

He is the best when it comes to commenting in a pure literary and indirect manner on current political situation. But of course, a novelist of Roy's ilk hardly calls for that comparison. Another stalwart John Dryden used his poetic art in *Absalom and*

*Achitophel* with the overt aim to advance the prospects of the king Charles II who was embroiled in a feud with the parliament over the question of his successor. Dryden's verse poem was thoroughly political, yet it was a brilliant witty artistic piece that is enjoyed till this day. In Indian English Fiction category, we come across some brilliant examples of the use of recent history in novels. Salman Rushdie uses it in an artistic garb of magic realism in his novels like *The Midnight's Children* which brought him the Best of Booker. Shashi Tharoor has made a balanced appraisal of all sides to the Babri dispute in his novel *Riot*.

When it comes to using historical material for fiction, one has to choose from among several versions or create one's own version to fill the gaps convincingly and carrying the potential to advance the writer's point of view. One such concrete way is to use actual newspaper clippings or copies of official record to buttress one's point. In *Lajja*, Taslima Nasreen makes more than adequate use of actual newspaper reports.

In *The Hungry Tide*, Amitav Ghosh has given the real-life characters in his note at the end of the novel. These lend credence to the fictional episodes and characters. In *Such a Long Journey*, author Rohinton Mistry creates a replica of the real-life Nagarwala which almost conforms to reality. In contrast, Roy's acknowledgements do not show any such link, either to a character or even to a single memorandum or diary entry of which there is a surfeit in the novel.

The core issues that demand examination and re-defining are the following: (i) common man's views on third gendered, (ii) people the politics of the subcontinent, (iii) the equation between religion and terrorism, and (iv) the terrorists' claim to human rights. In an article published long back in *The Guardian*, Roy had said, "I spoke about

justice for the people of Kashmir who live under one of the most brutal military occupations in the world” (Roy 57).

Putting a question mark on legitimacy is untenable in a democratic set-up despite its various flaws (and which system is bereft of it?). The bogey of violation of human rights is often raised by the terrorists when they are at the receiving end in a judicial forum. The chief plank of the writer’s protest is the issue of human rights on which she takes an idealist stand. The issue of reconciling the ends of human rights with control of violent extremism is indeed challenging. The moot question is whether one, who openly flouts the human rights of peaceful innocent people by killing them like mosquitoes is entitled to appeal for safeguarding his human rights. “It is always easy for extremists to exploit democratic freedoms with the aim of destroying democracy” (196). In the case of subversion supported by an outside state, and for the mistake of treating a state’s terrorist as freedom fighter, the states must adopt the clear principle that one democracy’s terrorist is another democracy’s terrorist.

There is an element of puzzlement or even bewilderment when Roy tries to comprehend the mind of the common people. Ordinary people crave for peace and security so that they can earn their livelihood and bring up their families. So, when the government offers them hope to start own business and offers cheap loans from banks, they can hardly withhold the temptation to secure monetary benefits where they can.

But it is not to the taste of the newly-turned militant Musa: “We were fighting and dying in our thousands for Azadi, and at the same time we were trying to secure cheap loans from the very government we were fighting. We’re a valley of idiots and schizophrenics, and we are fighting for the freedom to be idiotic and...”(359), says Musa. The comment made by a young critic seems pertinent that the writer probably

did not want to write the book: *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* looks like a tome, feels like an epitaph, and seems to be born out of a pregnancy that author-activist didn't quite want.

Between *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, Roy published five volumes of nonfiction, all of them in support of political causes: anti-nuclear campaigns, environmentalism, land rights, and anti-globalization. To demand political change is to endorse the logic of cause and effect; Anjum's traumatization isn't inevitable but the consequence of an intolerance that Roy clearly believes can be stemmed. Perhaps Roy, raised by a Syrian Christian feminist in a culture infused with Hindu cyclicalism, feels that this tension between activism and fatalism defines her work. She wouldn't be the only crusader to grapple with the dispiriting knowledge that injustice can't be conclusively defeated, that she can't save everyone.

Even the New Testament says that the poor will always be with us. But if the scrambled chronologies of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* are meant to communicate this paradox—that we must go on fighting for change even as we accept that we can never entirely win—the effect is merely confusing, and doubly so for readers unfamiliar with recent Indian politics.

Even so, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* remains a deeply rewarding work, if you can let the novel wash over you rather than try to force it into shape. First, there is Roy's justly lauded prose style, which manages to be lush without pretence or affectation: a wispy man with a prayer cap striped like a bee's bottom. Specific images in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*—like a crow tangled in a nearly invisible kite string, dangling in midair and circled by distressed, cawing comrades—wedge themselves in the mind like memories of lived experience.



Then there is Roy's humor, which ranges from the fond— her depictions of the soap-operatic life within the Khwabgah—to an irony so pitch-dark it's barely detectable: The chief detention and torture center in Kashmir is a commandeered movie theater where prisoners are checked in at the former concession stand, under advertisements for Cadbury bars and popsicles.

Sometimes Roy's sequence-swapping works beautifully. Two particularly strong chapters are narrated by a former college friend of Tilo's, now an Indian intelligence officer with a drinking problem. Like a Graham Greene hero, he delivers his own jaded take on Tilo's history as he sorts through a cache of documents, she abandoned in the flat he rented to her. One of the papers is a "Psycho-Social Evaluation" written by a California social worker on behalf of a middle-age Indian couple seeking asylum in the U.S.

The wife relates a heart-rending tale of being terrorized and tortured by Kashmiri police and suffering post-traumatic stress disorder in California, where she believes Muslim terrorists have tracked her family down. The narrator reviews this account with an amused cynicism that seems inhuman. Only later is it revealed that the husband is the novel's chief villain and that the tortures his wife relates as part of her own past have actually been stolen from the lives of his victims. The reader has been played, just like the American social worker.

Even the main character Anjum has got many similarities between Mona Ahammed long. Back in 2001, the noted photographer Dayanita Singh, who has recently concluded her phenomenally successful exhibition Museum Bhavan, had chronicled through photographs slices of Mona Ahmed's life. The book *Myself Mona Ahmed*, which is categorized as a mix of photobook, biography, autobiography and

fiction, presents to the world Mona, the unique eunuch from Old Delhi with whom Dayanita had developed a friendship more than a decade ago. Mona Ahmed was born in Old Delhi in 1937, and was initially mistaken to be a boy by her parents. Roy's Anjum, who hails from Shahjahanabad in Old Delhi, shares the same backstory.

Although in the excerpt we are only aware of her mother's reaction, it is quite evident that both her parents, who were keen on having a boy after giving birth to three daughters, were similarly disappointed when they realised Anjum was an outlier. Moreover, other biographical details, eccentricities, and the inimitable charisma of Mona's personality find an echo in Anjum's story, whether it is her love for animals, exclusion from family and the eunuch community, or simply, her life among the dead. Mona Ahmed's life has been well documented in photographs, articles and films. Over the years she has emerged as an icon of sorts for the Third Gender. To tell a story of a person whose stories have been already told is a challenge that not many established authors will dare to take up, especially when making a much-anticipated comeback after 20 years. If indeed the excerpt is a true representation of the entire book, the success of her novel will ultimately rest on Arundhati Roy's ability to turn Mona Ahmed's life into Anjum's story. Therefore, the promise *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* will be met when the plot matches Roy's prowess with words, and when instead of merely developing, the story begins to grow and assumes a life of its own.

*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is a difficult, long book, requiring a second read from many. But its nuances and complexities, its poetic language and narratives are remarkable. Because of its exploration of the connection between the personal and the political, it showcases the human faces of the collective the human faces of not just individuals from a given community, often easily accomplished in novels, but of the mass, of those whose narratives are often shown simply as political upheavals and

disruptions, rather than the human force that exists behind them. As a result, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, with all its merits and flaws, insists on centring on humanity.

Transgender phenomena may be “postmodern” (Sally Hines, transforming gender, 33) to the extent that they are imagined to point beyond contemporary modernity, but transgender critical theory is technically postmodern, in one narrow use of that term, to the extent that it takes aim at the modernist epistemology that treats gender merely as a social, linguistic, or subjective representation of an objectively knowable material sex. Epistemological concerns lie at the heart of transgender critique, and motivate a great deal of the transgender struggle for social justice. Transgender phenomena, in short, point the way to a different understanding of how bodies mean, how representation works, and what counts as legitimate knowledge. These philosophical issues have material consequences for the quality of transgender lives. In the modern base-and-superstructure epistemic paradigm, sex is considered the stable referential anchor that supports, and is made known by, the signs of gender that reflect it. This is a specific instance of what cultural critic Frederic Jameson called a mirror theory of knowledge, in which representation consists of the reproduction for subjectivity of objectivity assumed to lay outside it.

Transgender studies encourage a person to think and practice outside a number of boxes. An awareness of how language and the pathologizing of socially constructed differences reify arbitrary categories removes the onus on those who do not fit these social category boxes. Transgender theory’s emphasis on embodiment and lived experiences suggests that empowerment can come from reading others’ and creating one’s own transcendent narratives outside these boxes; thus, empowerment is derived from the mind and body dynamically working together to transcend social constructs of

gender or any other social category. Transgender theory provides a comprehensive and integrated framework for understanding and empowering individuals with multiple, intersectional oppressed identities. There are numerous possible future applications of transgender theory in studying the nature of oppressed social identities and developing appropriate interventions for personal and political empowerment. Future research should address the applicability of transgender theory to understanding how coalitions can be formed between transgenders and nontrans gender women. Second, the implications of transgender theory for conducting intersectional research should be explored. Finally, transgender theory may provide feminism with a means of reconciling long-standing debates about how the nature of gender informs resistance to gender oppression. A transgender study more accustomed to differences of race, location and class, as well as to differences within gender, would provide a better view into the making of this world we all inhabit, and enable a powerful critical rereading of contemporary (post)modernity in all its complexity.

## Chapter Three

### **Identity Construction In The Novel *The Ministry Of Utmost Happiness***

*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* deals with the identity issues of the marginalized sections of the Indian society. I mainly analyse the identity crisis of three groups: Transgenders, Women, and Dalits. These groups are always treated as 'other'. India is a caste based and male dominated society where people are categorised into different groups. They are always considered as subordinate groups. For them identity formation is a complex task. Oppression and discrimination are the major problems faced by these three groups. In the middle of this they are struggling to create their identity.

*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* revolves around mainly two characters Anjum and Tilo. Besides these two characters Roy introduces many characters. Story begins and ends at the same place - GRAVEYARD. Roy's portrayal of characters also gives the real picture of India after independence, social and political conflicts during that time. Identity formation of these three marginalized sections is always a challenging task. Be a Transgender, Woman, or a Dalit they are discriminated from the mainstream section of the society. They are powerless. Their identity construction is essential in this society. Through this novel Roy not only portrays the identity crisis of these people but also explores how they construct their identity.

At first, this novel tries to explore how Roy portrays the identity crisis in the life of a transgender and how she creates a space of her own in that society. Normally human beings are included in two sexes, male and female. So, transgenders are always excluded from this heteronormative society. Because they are the sexual minorities in

our society, they are denied access to education, health and public places. Hence, they are deprived by their families too. They are also devoid of social, economic and political equality in the society. One of the major characters of the novel is Aftab also known as Anjum, a transgender woman who faces the similar situation that is faced by a transgender in our society. Anjum was born in an orthodox Muslim family as the daughter of Mulaqat Ali and Jahanara Begum. She was born as intersex but first gendered as a boy by her mother. In her childhood she has an interest in music.

Nevertheless, she gives up her studies and music when other students begin to tease her. At the same time her mother hides her identity from her father for five years. After a few years she leaves her house and finds a place in Kwabagh – the house of dreams. It was the house constructed for Hijra people. She lived there according to the rules of that house and through a surgery she became a woman. She became a mother by the adoption of a child named Zainab. After thirty years she left from Kwabagh and found a place in graveyard. There she began a funeral service for poor people. On the path of her identity construction, she faced a lot of crises because of being a transgender.

Anjum was the fourth of five children born to Mulaqat Ali and Jahanara Begum. The first three children are girls. So Anjum's parents expected and waited for a baby boy. So, they decided that if their baby was a boy, they would name him as Aftab. Unfortunately, that child was an intersex. Then her mother realised that truth she was terrified of her own child "her first reaction was to feel her heart construct and her bones turn to ash" (Roy 7). There is a stereotypical society that will accept only two genders, male and female. So born as an intersex is a difficult thing to accept for her mother and also for her family. She fears the truth and hides her child's identity from her husband and family for five years. Jahanara Begum thinks that:

In Urdu the only she knew all things, not just living things-carpets, clothes, books pens, musical instruments-had a gender. Everything was either masculine or feminine man nor woman. Everything except her baby. Yes of course she knew there was a word these like him-Hijra. Two words actually Hijra and Kinnar. But two words do not make a language (Roy 8).

Anjum's mother is very anxious about her child's future. It is about whether she will have recognition or status in the society or she will be abandoned. These are the questions raised by him because of that first few years Jahanara Begum presented her child as a boy to her husband and others. Family realised his taste in music and they send him to Ustad Hameed Khan, an outstanding young musician to study music. He had a sweet, true singing voice. At first people were amused and encouraged him. But soon after she began to face teasing and snickering from other children. They teased him like: "He is a she. He is not a He or a she. He is a He and a she. She -He, He - She Hee !Hee! Hee! "(12).

At this stage Aftab recognised the crisis that she wanted to face in her whole life. Because of her sex she began to be teased by others. Being born as a transgender or other sexual minorities is not a fault. It is naturally happened one. But our conventional patriarchal society has never been ready to accept these people. He is devoid of feminine or masculine identity. When the teasing of the classmates becomes intolerable, he becomes forced to quit his musical class. Here the society is the cause of the fate of this transgender. They lose the opportunity to get education. His identity is always questioned by the society. The lack of identity has trapped him in the house.

After five years Jahanara Begum revealed the truth to her husband. It was a shock for him. He saved money for the gender change surgery for his son. In addition to this he

talked about the stories of Mongol ancestors with the aim of making him a male. On the contrary of his father's aspirations, he is very much attracted to women characters.

Mulaqat Ali's decisions show the denial of the freedom of an individual. Here Aftab lost the right to choose his own life. They consulted Dr Nabi. According to him "a hijra is a female trapped in a male body" (Roy 16). Male is always the decision maker. Like a cobweb, they trapped the life of others. Hijra is a term utilized in South Asia-specifically, in India-to allude to transwomen (male-to-female transgender or transsexual individual) In different spaces of India, transsexual individuals are otherwise called Aravani, Aruvani or Jagappa.

In South Asia, numerous hijras live in obvious and organized all-hijra networks, driven by a master. These people groups have supported themselves over ages by "embracing" little fellows who are dismissed, or escaped, by their groups of origin. Many works as sex workers for endurance. The word "hijra" is an Urdu-Hindustani word got from the Semitic Arabic root *h-j-r* in its feeling of "leaving one's clan and has been borrowed into Hindi.

The Indian use has customarily been converted into English as "eunuch" or "bisexual". Notwithstanding, overall hijras are born with normally male physiology, a couple having been born with intersex varieties. Some Hijras go through an inception ceremony into the hijra local area called nirwaan, which alludes to the expulsion of the penis, scrotum and gonads. Aftab is a hijra. But she didn't get any recognition in her family or even from her society. This novel is not a story of the pathetic situation of the marginalized sections. Along with their struggles Roy also portrays the rising of these people. In the middle of identity crisis Aftab has showed the courage to live her house. She enters the new house named 'Kwabagh'. This is referred as the house of dreams. That house is a place for dreaming for many people who are excluded from the society



as well as from their family. For Aftab “it was the only place in his world where he felt the air made a way for him” (19). In Kwabagh he met many people like her. Nimmo Gorakhpuri, was the first real friend of Aftab asked about the intention of God to make Hijras. She herself found the answer: It was an experiment. He decided to create something, a living creature that is incapable of happiness. So, he made us (Roy 23).

Every creature in this world has the right to be happy. But the intervention of one over other makes some people unhappy. Survival is the greatest problem of everyone. For a hijra war is inside. But in the case of others war is outside. Hijra's body itself makes the war. It will never settle down. For Aftab, Kwabagh was the happiest place more than her house. At the age of fifteen, the rules and rituals at kwabagh formally made him a member of the hijra community.

At the age of 14 he started to understand her words. He grew tall and muscular, hairy. In a panic he tried to remove the hair on his face and body with Bunrol – burn ointment that made dark patches on his skin. He plucked his eyebrows. He developed Adams Apple. His voice broke. He was repelled by it. He grew white. He tried to transform himself as a woman. Kwabagh gave her a new identity. In kwabagh she dressed like a woman. But her new identity as a hijra was not accepted by her family. Her father Mulaqat felt ashamed to meet her and he cut all ties with his son. However, she used to meet his mother at HazratShahal. She was excluded from her family. All Hijras in our society faces the same situation in their life. Alienation is a major crisis that they face in our society. They were alienated from family, society and even in their dreams.

Kwabagh was another universe for Aftab. There he changed his name to Anjum and became disciple of Ustad Kulsoom Bi. Anjum was finally able to dress in the

clothes she longed to wear. She learned to communicate with the signature spread – fingered Hijra clap. Anjum enjoyed her life as a hijra. Meanwhile she became Delhi's most famous hijra. She was interviewed by NGO's and journalists. Anjum celebrated her eighteenth Birthday. Hijras from all over the city came there.

For the first time in her life Anjum wore a sari, with a backless choli. That night she dreamed she was a new bride on her wedding night. She wore a red disco sari. She awoke distressed to find that her sexual pleasure had expressed itself into her beautiful new garment like a man's. It wasn't the first time this had happened, but for some reason, perhaps because of the sari, the humiliation she felt had never been so intense. She sat in the courtyard and howled like a wolf, hitting herself on her head and between her legs, screaming with self-inflicted pain. She felt humiliated and howled like a wolf, hitting herself on her head and between her legs screaming with self-inflicted pain (23).

Ustad Kulsoom Bi managed to console her. In Kulsoom Bi's view hijra meant a body in which the holy soul lives. Anjum had to undergo a surgery to remove her male part and to enhance her existing vagina. Still motherhood was something they longed to attain, but remained as a forever dream. The adoption of a child was a major event in the life of Anjum. She picked up a girl who was abandoned in a street and treated her as her own daughter. She named her as Zainab and Zainab called her as mummy. Everyone in the haveli quenched their desire for a child through Zainab. The adoption of a child gives her the identity of a mother.

For a woman being a mother is a dream or desire. But for a transgender this dream is remained as unfulfilled. Anjum always tried to make her child happy. So, she tells bedtime stories based on her own life. She didn't like to share her motherhood of

Zainab with other members of Kwabagh. Anjum was ready to suffer anything for her daughter. Discovering Zainab's love for animals she gifts her a baby goat.

Roy also gives attention to the mental trauma of transgenders. When Zainab affected by malaria, she was very much worried about Zainab. For improving her health condition, she decided to visit Shrine of Hazarat Gharib Nawaz in Ajmer, but that was the time when Hindu -Muslim religious riot take place. She resolves to make the trip with 25 Zakir Mian – an old friend of her father. But he was killed by them. There was a belief that killing Hijras are bad luck. So Anjum spent her life in a refugee camp for three months. Saffron forced her to chant Gayathri mantras. She was mentally and physically tortured. After three months she returned to Kwabagh. The absence of Anjum made Zainab to call Saeeda as Mummy.

It made Anjum jealous. But the experiences of these three months changed Anjum very much. She tried to make Zainab like a boy. She teaches Gayathri mantras to her. Anjum thinks it will help her to escape from the challenging situations like she faces in her life. Transformation of Zainab to a boy was aroused a conflict in Kwabagh. It was against the rules of that house because there was a rumour about Hijras that they capture and castrate young boys. This conflict makes Anjum to take another decision. It forced her to find a life of her own.

After thirty years of life in Kwabagh Anjum decided to leave. It was a new beginning for her because none of the other women were willing to follow her. They were afraid to break the boundaries. In Kwabagh there were some rules for them. If they would break the rules and come out of it, they think it will badly affect their lives. Society never gives a space for them.

On the contrary Anjum showed the courage to come out of it and she herself finds a place in the graveyard. Usually people have a belief that “killing Hijras brings bad luck”. It helps her to live without any fear. Without any protection or care from others she begins her new life in a grave yard which was the place where her ancestors were buried. This was the stage Anjum really finds herself and constructs her place in that society. But the memories of Gujarat saffron pareekatshaunt her for long time. She conquered that struggles and again presents herself as a woman. She invited people there. She made a house for herself. Zainab’s visits make her happy.

When authorities challenge Anjum’s right to live in the graveyard, she protests, saying she isn’t living there—she is dying there. The officers, who fear being cursed by a Hijra, leave her alone, allowing her to stay there for a small fee. Over the course of the novel, Anjum changes her presentation of gender to reflect her overall wellbeing. Her presentation as a male when she first arrives in the graveyard is a reflection of her grief and trauma, whereas her gradual return to presenting as female reflects her slow but deliberate healing process as she begins to work through the trauma she suffered at Gujarat. The detail about the authorities charging Anjum a small fee to live in the graveyard speaks to the commonality of corruption among the Indian authorities—Anjum, and presumably anyone else, is able to get around the law, as long as she pays.

At first there were no visitors for Anjum at Kwabagh. With time, Anjum’s home grows and grows. Imam Ziauddin eventually moves in permanently, and Anjum builds rooms over the graves of several of her relatives nearby. What’s more, her house starts functioning as a guesthouse—obviously, not too many people are interested in spending the night in the graveyard, and Anjum won’t let in just anyone, so business isn’t exactly booming. But still, her house and the community she forms around it slowly grow. She names the guest house Jannat, meaning “paradise.” The advantage of

this guest house was that unlike every other neighbourhood in the city, it suffered no power cuts. “This was because Anjum stole her electricity from the mortuary, where the corpses required round-the-clock refrigeration”, (68).

Anjum keeps the TV on day and night, learning much about modern politics. Anjum’s Jannat Guest house was a place of life for many abandoned poor people. She got permanent guests. By the help of them she begins a funeral service for poor people. Anjum’s identity transformation is a crucial event in this novel. From a transgender to a transexual she played the role of a mother to Zainab first and then for Miss Jebeen. Being a hijra she became the shelter for many people. Her house was for the abandoned people.

This novel portrays the identity issues of women. Like other marginalized sections, women since past to present considered as the subordinate group in this patriarchal society. Men are the subjects; women is treated as an object. They are identified as the second sex. The plexus of patriarchal society is composed of the stereotypes that favour the supremacy of male over female. They are the victims of gender discrimination. Now a days, women are harassed and raped brutally.

Women always try to vocalise their pain but they are muted. They are segregated from the social and national mainstream and their contribution is never rewarded. They live with the feeling of inferiority complex and endure the agony of discrimination and identity crisis. Women oppression and identity crisis can be seen in the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* through the description of women characters like Tilo and Revathy. By these two characters Roy explores the status of women in Indian society. They live with a broken and mutilated identity. They are treated as slaves to gratify the desire of men in Indian society. Victorian Literature

gives two images for the description of women like angel and monster. Angel is the image welcomed by the patriarchal society. Angels never question patriarchy. They only have the responsibilities of household jobs and care of their children. More than this they have no social, economic or political identity. On the other hand, responding women are described as monsters.

Tilo, one of the major characters of this novel, is portrayed as a mysterious dark skinned south Indian woman contrary to the Indian typical woman, who seemingly has no past, no caste, and no family. But she is highly independent and secretive character. Through this character Roy portrays how a woman constructs her own identity in a patriarchal society.

Tilo was a third-year student of architecture. She was introduced herself as Tilotamma. She was born with no past or history. So, she tries to evade the questions about her family from others. According to the view of the society a woman's identity is her family, she is always known with reference to three 28 identities related to men in her whole life like daughter of ...., wife of .... and mother of ... Normally these are the identities given by the society to a woman. But in the case of Tilo she was born with no identity. Because Tilo's mother Maryam Ipe was a Syrian Christian, she has a love affair with a man who belongs to the untouchable caste. Before her marriage she was impregnated by him. She gave birth to a child and gave up that child in an orphanage. She tried to adopt her child after few months but her family disowned her. So, she remained unmarried. To support herself she started a small kindergarten school. But she never publicly admitted Tilo as her daughter.

On the contrary to other woman in the Indian society, Tilo wore white cotton pyjamas and a hideous printed oversized man's shirt that didn't seem to belong to her.

The only jewellery she wore was a broad silver ring on a long, ink-stained middle finger and silver toe-ring. She smoked Ganesh beedies she kept in a scarlet Dunhill cigaret packet. Tilo is a girl abandoned by her mother. She was a student of architecture and she paid her fees by working in architect's office as a draughtswoman after college hours and during holidays. There were no one came looking for her. She never went home for her holidays. She lived in a slum because she cannot afford hostels. She only gets a meagre salary. She upgraded herself from the slum and rented a ramshackle room for others. Tilo's journey from an orphan to an independent girl also shows the identity crisis of a girl in our society. Tilo always likes to be independent. But after some years she was getting married to Naga, her classmate and a journalist. There were three people who fell in love with her. But she was only attracted to Musa, a Kashmiri militant. After college days they were separated. When Tilo needs a cover, she was ready to marry Naga. After her mother's death she decided to leave Naga.

Tilo's mother Maryam always keeps a distance from her daughter for the sake of social norms. But these approaches of Maryam also made an effect upon Tilo's decisions throughout her life. For instance, Tilo loved only one man, Musa. But Musa and Tilo were never married. He married a Kashmiri woman. He eventually had a daughter. But he lost his family during a separatist clash in Kashmir. The losing of his family was another point of meeting with Tilo after a long time. They involved in a close relationship and she became pregnant. It was the time she got married to Naga. So, she aborted her child from a public hospital without any help of others in order to avoid the same plight of her will happen to her child. This was a brave decision by Tilo in her life.

She worried that the little human she produced would have to negotiate the same ocean full of strange and dangerous fish that she had had to in her

relationship with her mother. She did not trust that she would be a better parent than Maryam Ipe. Her clear-eyed assessment of herself was that she'd be a far worse one. She did not wish to inflict herself on a child. And she did not wish to inflict a replication of herself on the world (Roy 391).

Tilo's life was an encounter with many things. She made fight to live in this society. She involved in a close encounter with Indian security forces in Kashmir where she faced harrowing and humiliating experiences from a female interrogator that left her traumatized. Interrogation centre was described as: Tilo's life was an encounter with many things. She made fight to live in this society. She involved in a close encounter with Indian security forces in Kashmir where she faced harrowing and humiliating experiences from a female interrogator that left her traumatized. Interrogation centre was described as: Tilo's life was an encounter with many things. She made fight to live in this society. She involved in a close encounter with Indian security forces in Kashmir where she faced harrowing and humiliating experiences from a female interrogator that left her traumatized. Interrogation centre was described as:

It was an independent structure-an unremarkable, long, rectangular room whose primary feature was its stench. The smell of urine, and sweat was overlaid by the sick sweet smell of old blood. Though the sign the door said Interrogation Centre, it was in truth a torture centre. In Kashmir 'interrogation' was not a real category. There was 'questioning', which meant a few slaps and 30 kicks, and 'Interrogation', which meant torture. The room had only one door and windows (380).

This was the incident that led Tilo to get married to Naga. Even though she tried to found protection and solace from Naga, that brought them into marriage. During the



Kashmir days she was categorised as a terrorist. Tilo as a woman faces so many crises in her life. She kidnapped an abandoned baby from Jantarmantar. When the chance presented itself “she had no idea why she of all people, who never wanted children, had picked up the baby and run. But now it was. Her part in the story had been written. But not by her” (Roy 263). It was a willful act by Tilo which shows her attempt to correct the humiliation and pain never being acknowledged by her own mother.

It is not necessarily a biological maternal instinct that compels Tilo to take that girl but, rather a volition to spare child an uncertain, unprotected, unloved future. On the sake of her love towards Musa she named this girl as Miss Jebeen Second, name of Musa’s daughter. Tilo and her daughter finally get asylum in Jannat Guest of Anjum. “For the first time in her life, Tilo felt that her body had enough room to accommodate all its organs... instincts told her that she may finally have found a home for the Rest of Her life (Roy 310) At Jannat House Tilo worked as a teacher for poor children which demonstrates her commitment to justice and inclusion. It was a new beginning to her.

Parents in the neighbourhood flocked to enrol their children in the classes Tilo held at Jannat Guest House. Her pupils called her Tilo Madam and sometimes Ustaniji (Teacher in Urdu). Although she missed the morning singing by the children from the school opposite her apartment, she didn’t teach her own pupils to sing ‘We shall overcome’ in any language, because as he was not sure that Overcoming was anywhere on anyone’s horizon. (Roy 396) Parents in the neighbourhood flocked to enrol their children in the classes Tilo held at Jannat Guest House. Her pupils called her Tilo Madam and sometimes Ustaniji (Teacher in Urdu). Although she missed the morning singing by the children from the school opposite her apartment, she didn’t teach her own pupils to sing

‘We shall overcome’ in any language, because as he was not sure that Overcoming was anywhere on anyone’s horizon (Roy 396).

In addition to the character of Tilo in the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, Roy depicts a revolutionary character Revathy, who plays an activist role but in her life time she survives being a woman and faces several caste problems. Revathy is the woman who works for the Communist party of India (Maoist). In her letter to Dr. Azad Bhartiya, she expresses her sorrow about Indian culture that makes her suffer though her whole life and makes her belong to a minority. In her letter she states that: “As you know we are banned, underground people, and this letter you can call as underground of underground” (417). These words reveal the plight of an Indian woman who is doubly marginalised under patriarchy and caste system. They have no voice to respond. But here Revathy showed the courage to write a letter for her daughter Udaya (Miss Jebeen Second). She left her child in Delhi because she doesn’t want to suffer that child like her.

Revathi belongs to Settibalija caste. It is a backward caste. Her father was an army man, her mother is Indumathi. Revathi’s father was a cruel man, and on the occasion of the marriage with Indumathi he demanded more dowry. After the marriage her mother suffered much. “Immediately after marriage Father developed some perversion and sadism. He wanted mother to wear short dresses and do ballroom dancing. When she refused, he cut her with blades and complained she was not satisfying him” (418).

In a patriarchal society Man is the subject. Woman is considered as the other and she is only for man’s sexual purpose. Gangoli in his article states, “In spite of these rights, women’s position in Indian society is highly variable, and depends to a large

extent on class and caste” (Gangoli 102). Their torture does not end even after all these. Revathy’s father used to come to her grandfather’s home at night and torture her mother every night, “he would torture her, cut her and send her back” (419).

Then again, her mother got pregnant but her father sent her mother back and married another woman. It is noticed significantly that women in the lower-middle class society rarely get any chance to speak. Her mother could not take any stand for her own right because she belongs to a lower caste and class where her words for justice will never be counted. Even though her mother has no voice to ask for justice, she is given a narrative voice by Roy in her fiction. Furthermore, Revathy, being a female communist party member, has to suffer a lot. She works for the Communist party as an activist where police hate them mostly because they are women. Revathy was studious but she was denied admission in Medical College due to the lack of money to pay fees. So, she joined government Degree College. She was a revolutionist. “Maximum hatred police had for women workers” (Roy 420). She describes how the women are being tortured by the police after they got caught and killed.

Comrade Nirmalakka when she was killed, they ripped her stomach and took out everything. Comrade Laxmi also had to undergo similar brutality. They were not simply killed, but cut, and removed eyes. For her there was big protest. This is both physical and psychological torture. It portrays the average life of Indian women who are being tortured both mentally and physically by their husbands and cannot get any support to stop being suppressed. Without any identity they are suffering under the men.

Revathy’s life was a whole tragedy. As a comrade she helped the poor people especially Adivasis in forest. But the government wanted to vacate Adivasis from the forests in order to make steel township and mining. She helped those people with food,

toothbrushes, malaria medicines, and bullets. One day she was caught by some police. She was brutally raped. They said “Now you go and marry someone. Settle down quietly. But first we will give you some marriage experience. They kept burning me and cutting me. But I am not crying at all. ‘Why don’t you scream? Your great leaders will come and save you. You people don’t scream?’ The one man forced open my mouth and one man put his penis in my mouth. I could not breathe. I thought I would die” (423).

As woman and a comrade, she faced the most brutal rape by men. It was because she was a woman. The men assigned only one 33 roles to woman that is the role of a wife of a man. Instead of becoming a wife or mother she became a comrade for poor people. But this rape gifted a child to her. She named her as Udaya. “In Telugu it means sunrise” (417).

In contrast to other women, she was ready to respond. She formed ‘Revathy Atyachara Vyathireka Committee’- Committee against Revathi’s rape. She left her child in a forest with the hope that she will be secured by someone. Revathy never wanted her child to suffer like her. And finally, she killed herself by a gun. Here Roy depicts the transformation of women characters from a patriarchal notion. Revathy showed the courage to respond against the atrocities. She didn’t subject her life to man’s decisions. Revathy’s act is the beginning of new generation women without fearing the patriarchy and through Udaya she wished to form a new woman – the name also indicates the rising of women. The identity crisis of Dalits in our society as portrayed by Roy in this novel Dalits are mainly termed as subaltern. They are deprived of the main stream section of our society. So being a dalit they only get the identity of untouchables. Identity formation of Dalits is very complex in a caste-based society. In God’s eyes everybody is equally constructed. But people themselves categorize into

different groups. So, each human being is identified with this group. It played a major role in the determination of their identity. In a caste-based society lower class is under the domination of upper-class.

*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is also exploring the identity issues of Dalits in Indian society through the characterization of Saddam Hussein. His real name is Dayachand. He was born into a family of Chamars-skinners-in a village called Badshahpur in the state of Haryana. Their hereditary profession is to collect the carcass of a cow. For them getting other jobs is difficult. Their identity is trapped in their caste. They can be only known by the name of their castes.

Roy says inequality is the most common accepted social problem in South Asia, particularly in India. One of the significant characters in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is Saddam, a friend of Anjum as well as a Dalit who becomes an example of caste inequality. The issue of “Untouchability” as well as the question of subaltern arose with the entrance of Saddam as the social structure permits him to express limitedly. Saddam in this fiction can be considered as the fictional representation of the subaltern. He lacks artistic articulation of a fictional character except some limited details like “literate, pleasant-looking man in good health (75)

Saddam as a subaltern has no identity so he had to change his name from “Dayachand” to” Saddam Hussein and his constant struggle to be fixed in a job indicates how subalterns are socially and economically deprived. These struggles make him to take a job in a mortuary. “The Hindu doctors who were required to post-mortem thought of themselves as upper class and would not touch dead bodies for fear of being polluted’ (72). Chamars can do this without fear of being polluted. Dalits are

always devoided from all white-collar jobs. Caste is the only thing that determines their identity and whole life.

The men who actually handled the cadavers and performed the post-mortems were employed as cleaners and belonged to a cast of sweepers and leather workers who used to be called chamars. The doctors would stand at a distance with handkerchiefs masking their noses and shout instructions to the staff about where incisions were to be made and what was to be done with the viscera and the organs(73).

After getting fired from the job of mortuary he searched for many jobs. He worked as a helper in a shop, bus conductor, selling newspapers etc. In order to get job, he again changed his name to Dayachand. His changing of names symbolises the identity crisis of a person. Saddam was a man waiting for killing someone. This is because of the bad incident happened in his life. One day he became the “part of the mob” and this agitated mob killed Saddam’s father in charge of “cow-slaughter”. For a child, this incident was a physical and mental torture.

He witnessed his father’s death. At the same time, he also involved in the murder of his father. It is because of he is being a low caste. They have no right to respond or live like others. Dalits are living inside socially constructed boundaries. The irony is that even a cow’s life is more important than a Dalit’s life. Though inartistic description, this very detail can well picture the enduring form of social norm of caste system. After his father’s death his mother became ill and died. He dropped out of school. Meanwhile he stole some money of uncle and reached Delhi in order to become independent. According to Saddam “I had only one ambition- I wanted to kill that bastard Sehrawat” (89). Being a Dalit, he showed the courage to take revenge upon

who caused the murder of his father. He was inspired by Saddam Hussein. He describes:

When I first saw the video of hanging of Saddam Hussein, I didn't know anything about him, but I was so impressed by the courage and and dignity of that man in the face of death. When I got my first mobile phone, asked the shopkeeper to find that video and download it for me. I watched it again and again. I wanted to like him. I decided to become a Muslim and take his name. I felt it would give me the courage to do what I had to and face the consequences, like him (90).

But his arrival at Jannat House was a new beginning in his life. He became a member of that house and also involved Anjum's funeral service for poor people. His love towards Zainab 36 was a another turning point of his life. At that time, he gives up his revenge because he knows that 'My people have risen at another place of the novel, similar incident took place again. Roy acclaimed the real circumstance saying "they accuse you of eating beef and then take over your house and your land and send you to a refugee camp. It's all about property, not cows" (402). From this statement, it is clear that the benefit of this kind of oppressive incident directly goes to patent holding corporates placing subalterns at the risk of being immigrant or refugee. Against this process they have nothing to do or say as the social construction does not allow them to speak. up' (405). At that time Dalits begin to react against the discriminations of upper caste people. At another place of the novel, similar incident took place again. Roy acclaimed the real circumstance saying "they accuse you of eating beef and then take over your house and your land and send you to a refugee camp. It's all about property, not cows" (402). From this statement, it is clear that the benefit of this kind of oppressive incident directly goes to patent holding corporates placing subalterns at the

risk of being immigrant or refugee. Against this process they have nothing to do or say as the social construction does not allow them to speak.

Additionally, the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* starts with the attempts at self-discovery of a Delhi Hijra but her circle slowly expands by including other interesting characters including a charming young Dalit man, curiously named Saddam Hussain. In the first place, Dalit (untouchables) are one of the main issues that the author projects in her novel. Saddam Hussain has to hide his identity of being a Hindu mortuary worker for his safety. Anjum refers to him as ‘Chamar’, after knowing about his origin. Anjum used the word Chamar not Dalit, the more modern and accepted term for those that Hindus considered to be ‘untouchable’, in the same spirit in which she refused to refer to herself as anything other than Hijra” (85)

The ‘upper caste’ farmers used to call them ‘Chamars’ to collect the carcass of the dead cow. The ‘upper caste farmers’ cannot pollute themselves by touching the carcass. “The top of the caste pyramid is considered pure and has plenty of entitlements. The bottom is considered polluted and has no entitlements but plenty of duties” (Ambedkar 15).

The statement is real in a society like Indian, where the lower caste (bottom) is considered polluted but is assigned with many duties imposed upon them by the Upper caste (top) people.

However, after Saddam and his father finish the work, to pass the road they had to pay the station house officer but for some reason that officer charged triple amount of money on that day. They could not manage to pay him as much as he charged and so he arrested them on the charge of “cow slaughter”. “People have beaten them and killed them for this reason. “Everybody watched. Nobody stopped them” (89). It is very common phenomenon in India that people are being executed for



'killing cows. "If they die here-not if, when they die- they'll say you killed them and that will be the end of all of you" (Roy 402). Roy by stating this portrays that, in India people do not even justify that whether the accused person really killed the cow or not, rather they immediately get in to the action (killing/beating) for hurting their holy creature (cow). Roy skillfully portrays the marginalized of society by individually focusing on important issues to create awareness.

Roy's description of the character Saddam is the exact example of identity crisis of a dalit in Indian society. But life with Anjum at Jannat Guest house changed his life a lot. He gives up his revenge and wishes to start a family life with Zainab. It was because of the awareness that Dalits will rise. Their identity will change. Roy ends this novel with a hope of the rise of marginalized sections. Identity formation is a continuous process. According to Roy in this novel these people are continuously struggling to create a space of their own in this society.

## Conclusion

Identity crisis is a major problem faced by the marginalized sections of our society. From past to present these people are under the domination of someone. They are also neglected from the mainstream section of our society. Everyone in their whole life is trying to form their identities. Family, society, caste etc. are the major components that control us to create our identities. In the case of marginalized sections their identities are already formed and stigmatized even before their birth. Now a days, we can see the rise of these people. Their perspectives began to change.

In the novel, Roy raises the questions about the identity of the marginalized sections of the society especially transgenders, women, and Dalits. In a patriarchal caste-based society, identity construction is a difficult thing. Indian society is based on mainly three things. It is patriarchy, gender, and caste. Male and female are the only two genders accepted by the society. Hence, an intersex faces many problems. Most of the time, they are not treated as third gender. In a patriarchal society woman is considered as second sex. So, the construction of the identity of woman is a challenging task. On the other hand, our society is caste based where being a lower cast creates so many problems in the construction of own identity.

Anjum is one of the major characters of this novel who is born as an intersex. Through this character Roy portrayed how a transgender is excluded from a family and also from a society. She and her friends are separated from the society and lived in a house called Kwabagh where she finds their own rules and regulations. But they are always treated differently from a man or woman. From the life at Kwabagh she got the identity of most famous hijra in India. But she lost the identity as the daughter of her parents. Hijras always are blamed for castrating young boys.

Being a hijra is something lower to other marginalized sections like women or Dalits. But here Roy creates an identity to these three groups through 39 a transgender. Anjum fights and survives in this world. She enjoys the role of a mother, and a sister; and finally, she became the shelter for many poor people. Her crisis makes her a bold character. Apart from living with the stigma of identity she made a place of her own in a graveyard. Graveyard is a place of 'death or 'ending' but for Anjum it was a place for new beginning. There she lived like a human who is helpful for others. Roy's portrayal of Anjum is symbol of the rising of Hijras. Now a days, Hijras are involved in many professions. They begin to show the courage to come out of the traditional notions and begin to be known as the third gender.

Secondly, I explored how Roy constructed the identity of a woman in the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. In this novel Tilo' and Revathy are the two female characters who struggled with forming their identities. Women identity is always controversial. Because when we examine the history of women, they are never treated equal to men. They only get the identity of a mother, housewife and daughter. They are sexual object to satisfy the aspirations of men. Feminism is not against men but it is demanding for the equality of women. At present these movements got approval and women are begin to form their own identities in the society.

At present women empowerment get more prominence. In this novel Tilo is an independent secretive woman. She is born without no past but she become an architect. Through daily efforts she upgraded herself from a slum. She never gets any care or love from her mother. At first, she was against the marriage. She wants to live without any responsibilities. But the cruel treatment of the society forced her to get married. Tilo' is a victim of the patriarchal society. She loved a person named Musa. But she cannot marry him. Finally, her journey reached at Anjum's Jannat Guest house and she also

saved an abandoned girl and named her as Miss Jebeen Second in the sake of her love towards Musa. She was strong, independent woman different from the typical Indian women. She like to lead her life in accordance with her aspirations.

Revathi was a comrade and rape victim. She portrayed as a strong, courageous woman. She showed the courage to respond against the violence. But she was raped by some police men, through that she got pregnant and give birth to a girl child. Here Tilo, Miss Jebeen Second (Udaya) Revathi and her mother are facing the trauma of identity crisis. Like Tilo, Udaya born without a father. She was the victim of patriarchal society. Tilo has a mother, but she never ready to accept her as daughter, Because of the traditional notion of the society. Society never gives an identity to a girl without a father or mother. As well as she was blamed for pregnancy before marriage. Man is the subject. He is the authority. But woman is object. She is under the domination of man. Revathy's mother was facing the dilemma of identity crisis, she was only treated as a sexual object. After this she was abandoned by her husband and he got another marriage. On the other hand, if a woman behaves like this she will be surely blamed by men. But in the case of men there are no problems regarding their identity.

Women are always banned from the main stream section of the society, In Roy's view she is also banned from graveyard or the funeral procession. Apart from that women are always under an identity crisis. But now a days she took initiative to come out the house and work like men. At present there were many women reached at high positions and got deputation. But their identity formation is not completed. It is a continuous process.

Arundhati Roy' also questions the identity of a Dalit. Through the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* Saddam Hussein points out the plight of a Dalit. He

belongs to Chamars caste, their profession is to collect cow carcass for upper-class people. So, he is the lower class of the society and considered as untouchable by upper caste. Saddam is portrayed as a character whose main aim of life is to kill his father's killers. His original name was Dayachand, but being a Dalit, he lost his father, lost his whole family, his revenge upon his father's murderers changed his identity to a Muslim terrorist like Saddam Hussein.

The hijras trace their origins back to the religious era of the deity Ram. As told in the Ramayana epic, just before his sojourn into the wilderness, Ram instructed all men and women who had come to see him off to return to their village. The hijras, being neither men nor women stayed at Ram's point of departure until his return years later. Upon seeing their devotion, Ram blessed them and promised them the right to rule during the final age of mankind. As religion is a major aspect of Indian culture, much of the hijra's history is based off the Indian polytheistic religious era. As religion is of great importance to the hijra, this event historically marked their first interaction with the gods. But the lives of transgenders aren't secure in our society. Transgender community represent highly marginalised portion of Indian population, frequently experiencing discrimination social isolation and harm. Through this project I try to trace out the life of transgenders in India and the problems faced by them in the society. A transgender is the main character in the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* written by Arundhati Roy. As an Indian writing a novel about Indian life, I took this novel to portray the life of transgender in India. Transgender theory encourages a researcher to think and practice outside a number of boxes. Transgender theory's emphasis on embodiment and lived experiences suggests that empowerment can come from reading others and creating one's own transcendent narratives outside these boxes; thus, empowerment is derived from the mind and body dynamically working together to transcend social constructs of gender of any other category. Transgender theory provides a comprehensive and integrated framework for understanding and empowering individuals with multiple, intersectional oppressed identities. There are numerous possible future applications of transgender theory in studying the nature of

oppressed social identities and developing appropriate interventions for personal and political empowerment. In India transgender community represent the most voice suppressed group. A common misconception is that homosexuality and transgender are the same thing. We consider most of the transgenders as gays or hijiras. Transgender individuals have just as much right as any cisgender person. Society must stop treating Transgender as a simple trend or statement and realize that some people are just born in bodies that truly do not reflect who they are on the inside. They are often considered as unworthy to live in the society and rejected in direct or indirect entry in public places like hospitals, hotel, shopping malls, even in public toilets. Unwanted attention is given to their presence and People do not behave or act normal in their presence or with them. Associating them with child nabbing is another main misleading tendency in the society. Another main problem faced by the transgender group is most of them have to leave their house when they are identified as a transgender. From that instant they start to experience negligence and they have to avoid everywhere in the society. In most of the developed countries transgenders are considered as a common people and they enjoys all the freedom that a citizen enjoys. But in India life of transgender's are just like a prison and they have got regulations in each and every place. This makes them more suppressed groups

Throughout his life he struggled to form an identity or to get a job. Often, he changed his name to get a job. Changing names signifies the lack of identity of a person. His changing identity to Saddam Hussein denotes that being a Dalit he cannot do anything. His caste never gives him a place in this society like others. It is a revelation that lower class always is treated like slaves. For being treated like others, or to fulfil his ambitions, a transformation is necessary for Saddam. It is not only the plight of Saddam, but also the plight of his whole community.

Throughout the novel Roy not only describes the identity crisis of the marginalized sections, but also details how they have constructed their identity. On the contrary to the previous notion regarding transgenders, women and Dalits, here they are

coming out of the shackles of the traditional society, and they are trying to form their identities. All these groups have constructed their identities with the help of Anjum at graveyard. Normally graveyard is a place of dying but for these people it is the place of beginning. Identity formation is a continuous process and the novelist has given a serious consideration of this issue in this work.

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