

the notebook



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A Journal by the
Students of M.A. Literature
Jyoti Nivas College Autonomous

THE NOTEBOOK
A Journal by the Students of
M.A. Literature



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Our Motto: Let Your Light Shine

***Our Vision: Communion, Excellence, Service and
relevance***

***Our Mission: To Turn Out Intellectually Enlightened,
Morally Upright, Spiritually Oriented, Socially Committed
& Emotionally Balanced Young Persons***

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The Eighteenth Issue of

The Notebook is dedicated to

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Message (Vol. 18)

"No author dislikes to be edited as much as he dislikes not to be published."

- Russell Lynes

The Notebook is the effort to impart an artistic urge and potential in students who would otherwise be nonchalant in spite of possessing the expertise to write. To enliven Russell Lynes's saying, the journal strives to make students utilize and enhance their skills in writing and editing, thus, giving them an occasion to engage in research thereby preparing them for higher levels of academia. The students explore literary areas of their choice, shaping their wisdom and reflective capability which comes to us in the form of this journal.

I am sure that the 18th edition of The Notebook is the continued effort of the staff and students of the Department of English, to articulate their experiences in written form. In the last two years, the MA students have put in enormous work to make research an important part of their academic life. Initial hitches met with few affronts did not diminish their spirit and zeal, for they gradually emerged as winners in their own style. That is what makes them unique. After much research, the pieces of their story were put together and that is what the college will treasure for years to come, as they live on in the golden pages of The Notebook. I take this opportunity to thank our staff members, for patiently guiding our students in their preliminary years of research and giving them the joy of seeing their written ideas take shape.

I hope our students will continue to learn and grow in the world of research carving a niche for themselves. I want to thank and congratulate Suhani Thakur, Aparna BS, Kriti Kaushik, C.T. Jumaanah Ilhaam the student editors and Dr. Prakrithi H.N., faculty in charge of editing and compiling The NoteBook Vol. 18. It is my pleasure to pen my thoughts. I do so, with much zeal and delight, for they are my hope and in them I see a new world taking shape, a new era of writers emerging with a desire to conquer it all. I am sure each of us has a dream, a worthy goal and is willing to work for it. Life is a journey not a destination, in other words, life is meant to find one's specific purpose, nurturing innate talent and making dreams come alive.

In this discovery, each moment, each day you possess will look different. That's the exact core of life's mission. The lesson is in accepting the journey you are on and enjoying it. This applies to all stages in life and so we give it our all to embrace life in its entirety. Carry on illuminating this exhilarating, undying and infinite potential within you, as you step out into the world.

“Let your Lights Shine”

May God Bless You

Dr. Sr. Lalitha Thomas

Director, Jyoti Nivas College Autonomous

Volume 18: Foreword

“Literature is the most agreeable way of ignoring life”

- Fernando Pessoa

This line cannot be truer; to dive into a book is to enter another world altogether. Each piece of literature takes you on a journey unique to itself. To read and truly understand literature is a pleasure known only to a fortunate few. It endows one with knowledge that can seldom be acquired elsewhere.

It is our great privilege as students of English literature to study a subject as intriguing as literature. The MA English syllabus prescribed to us by the Department of English, Jyoti Nivas College Autonomous offers a collection of variegated English literary texts from across eras, cultural and geographical spaces. Moreover, the quality tutoring we obtain from our professors aids us to analyse texts in more detail. Such constant stimulation encourages us to be more mindful of the diverse cultures, histories and changing ideologies around the globe. We learn to narrate, read, question and answer.

A cardinal part of our course is research methodology. Research papers are important for a student pursuing literature to enhance their critical evaluation, reasoning skills, and detail-orientation. To share knowledge about an area of study one is passionate about, becomes a way for the reader to discover a new perspective that the latter may not have considered before.

Hence, it becomes knowledge worth sharing. “Research is seeing what everybody else has seen and thinking what nobody had thought” said Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, the Hungarian pharmacologist and Nobel laureate. These words capture in short, the dominant purpose of research.

“Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues but the parent of all others” Marcus Tullius Cicero. The creation of this literary journal would not have been possible if it were not for Dr. Sr. Lalitha Thomas, principal of Jyoti Nivas College. Sister has been an inspiration and a beacon of light for all of us. It would be incomplete, if we do not thank our faculty members from the Department of English, Dr Roopa Philip, Dr Prakrithi H N, Dr Preetha Vasana and Dr Fathima M for being the brilliant professors they are. It is the knowledge they have passed on to us over the past months that we apply our creative and literary sensibilities which has sharpened our analytical and editing ability. We would like to extend our special gratitude to Dr Prakrithi H N, faculty in charge of The Notebook, for her constant support and encouragement, which helped in shaping our abilities. Likewise, we show our love for our classmates who have shared their relevant ideologies on various literary fields through their papers, all which have been weaved into this journal.

The Notebook is the compilation of different perspectives and thoughts from our classmates which take the form of research papers and articles. The Notebook is a reality because of the enthusiasm and hard work of our fellow students.

Suhani Thakur

Aparna BS

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Violence Inflicted By the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (1958) In Manipur

Rotika Haobam I MA

One general definition of violence is “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either result in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (WHO 2002,5). Any living thing cannot run away from the grip of violence. It has been the nature of life. As long as the difference between the binary of superior and inferior exists, the impact of violence will be felt by everyone.

Manipur is a small state in northeast India, which is mostly ignored by mainstream India, and suffers heavenly at the hands of violence. Manipur is in the northeastern part of the country. It is bordered by the Indian states of Nagaland to the north, Assam to the west, Mizoram to the southwest, and Myanmar to the south and east. Like other northeastern states, it is largely isolated from the rest of India.

The earliest recorded history of the Manipur region dates back to around 900 CE. The beginning of Manipur’s more recent history dates from 1762 when Raja Jai Singh concluded a treaty with the British to repel an invasion of the Burmese from Myanmar. Further communication was minimal until 1824 when the British were again requested to expel the Burmese. Disputed successions were a continual source of political turmoil until Chura Chand, a five-year-old member of the ruling family, was nominated Raja in 1891. For the next eight years, the administration was under British supervision; slavery and forced labour were abolished, and roads were constructed.

In 1907 the government was assumed by the raja and the durbar, or council, whose vice president was a member of the Indian Civil Service. Subsequently, the administration was transferred to the raja, and the vice president of the durbar became its president. After an uprising of the Kuki hill tribe in 1917, a new system of governance was adopted; the region was divided into three subdivisions, each headed by an officer from the neighbouring government Assam.

With the accession of Manipur to India in 1947, the political agency exercised by Assam was abolished. Two years later Manipur became a union territory governed by a chief commissioner and an elected territorial council. In 1969 the office of the chief commissioner was replaced by that of lieutenant governor, whose status was changed to the governor when Manipur became a constituent state of the Indian union on January 21, 1972.

After having witnessed the indiscriminate abuse of law, many people of the Northeast have been demanding its revocation for a long time. Laws are not only aimed at stopping terrorism but are used effectively by state agents to abuse human rights. These laws include the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act (TADA), Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, etc.

The violence inflicted by the AFSPA, in 1958, was first introduced in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and the act was later extended to Jammu and Kashmir in July 1990. The AFSPA, like many other controversial laws, has a colonial origin. It first came as an ordinance against the backdrop of the Quit India movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1942. Under Nehru, AFSPA was enacted with more powers for security forces.

- Section 4a of the AFSPA allows “any commissioned officer, warrant officer, non-commissioned officer or any other person of equivalent rank in the armed forces” to fire “even to the causing of death”. Upon any person acting in contravention of any law and order, any person carrying weapons or anything capable of being used as a weapon, and to prohibit the assembly of more than five people.
- Section 4c of the act allows armed police personnel to arrest without warrant and with any necessary force “any person who has committed a cognizable offence”.
- Section 4d allows armed forces personnel to enter and search premises without a warrant to make any such arrest.
- Section 5 provides that the arrested person be handed over to the police with the ‘least possible delay’.
- Section 6 prohibits prosecutions of any person concerning anything done in the exercise of the powers conferred by the law.

The AFSPA applies to any area declared ‘disturbed’ by the government of India or a state government and is to be reviewed every six months.

This act was widely criticised by national and international human rights agencies. When the United Nations Human Rights Committee questioned the validity of AFSPA in 1991 under Indian Law and in light of Article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Indian government harped on the fact that it was necessary to prevent the secession of the Northeastern states. Most of the states were forcefully made a part of the Indian Republic after 1947 by signing various agreements with a view to their strategic significance. The Northeast states could never be fully integrated with the Indian mainstream due to vast differences in social structure, culture, languages, facial

features, and geographical remoteness. Furthermore, the government has been more or less indifferent toward the economic and social development of this region. The 2001 India Human Development Report revealed that during 1991-98, the figures for ‘rapes’ in the northeast went up from 601 to 1001; ‘molestation’ from 415 to 849; ‘kidnapping’ and ‘abduction’ from 1005 to 1288.

AFSPA Controversy

It makes no distinction between a peaceful gathering of five or more people and a berserk mob. So, even innocents, who have no role in creating a situation that results in that region being called ‘disturbed’, also come under the purview of the law. The law also states that ‘no persecution can be initiated against an officer without the previous sanctions of the central government’. The decision of the government to declare a particular area disturbed cannot be challenged in a court of law. The Right to Life is violated by section 4c of the AFSPA, which fails to protect against arbitrary arrest by allowing soldiers to arrest anyone merely on suspicion that a ‘cognizable offence’ has already taken place or is likely to take place in the future. The Right to Remedy is violated by section 6 of the AFSPA. This section of the AFSPA prohibits even the state governments from initiating legal proceedings against the armed forces on behalf of their population without the consent of the central government.

Raghu Leishangthem’s “Poets Do Not Hold Guns” speaks for those who do not want to bring changes with force. In this poem, he says those poets are not ready to hold guns. If at all he is forced to hold a gun then:-

“Surely he would turn it
Into a fluorescence of flowers.
He would make sit

The butterflies of words
At the mouth of the guns.

His heart is soft as a petal
He has never hence
A mind for a gun”

The poet believes that artists are not born to wage a war against society. Their job is very different. They are not harsh with anybody nor can they take up arms. Their only weapon is a pen and only beautiful verse will come out from their thoughts. Therefore, the poet is requesting not to hand over the gun to the poet. He is the type of poet to glorify nature. He depicts the problems which confront people from day to day.

Aftermath of AFSPA in Manipur

Sections of Manipur were declared disturbed areas after the 1958 adoption of the AFSPA, and the entire state of Manipur was brought under the act on September 8, 1980. Human rights violations by

security forces engaged in counter-insurgency operations in Manipur have occurred with depressing regularity over the last 5 decades. Torture which includes beating, electric shocks, and simulated drowning is common. Arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial executions continued. It is alleged that 1,528 people including 31 women and 98 children have been killed in the name of ‘encounters’ with militants by security forces between 1979 and 2012. Phurailatpam Brajamukini’s poem “What To Do” translated by Salam Tomba gives typical pictures of how civilians are living in Manipur society. It says:-

“Underneath the Kanglei water

No fish could live safe and peaceful

On the banks marked by vigil eyes

Holding long in the hand to kill”.

Here the poet brings out the idea of not being safe even in the motherland, where the people are compared with fish. Manipur is not a safe place to survive because the water is contaminated and polluted with human blood. People are hovering with the ‘vigil eyes’ to catch the fish and kill them. As a result of fighting against the inhuman act of AFSPA, many insurgency groups emerged. The earliest to date was the Naga ‘freedom movement’ which began under the leadership of Az Phizo, since the independence of India.

In subsequent periods, Assam witnessed the violent insurgent activities of the Ulfa which began as a reaction against the Bangladeshi immigration to the state. Manipur and Tripura had been heavily affected by the insurgent activities. In Manipur, starting with the setup

of the United Nation Liberation Front (UNLF) by Samarendra Singh in 1964 and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) by Bireshwar in 1978. Along with these, numerous insurgent groups exacerbate the atmosphere of unrest in the state with frequent acts of violence, murder, extortion, drug business, and so on. The news of killing a person in the name of fake encounters, gives way to the freedom to kill anyone without a warrant.

The killing of people reached a point where it became daily news, where it was not a big deal. Everyone accepts their fate and carries on with their life. The idea of feeling safe near the armed forces was never there. The intra-India hegemony is one of the major causes of outrage for the militants. The militant group takes course to various violent means such as bomb blasts, murder, kidnapping of common people, ambushes to police, army camps, and so on.

Responding to the act of the insurgent groups and their activities, the Central government deployed armed forces in the region to counter the insurgent groups. The Central government, to maintain its sovereignty, employs various ideologies and repressive state apparatuses to combat the insurgency. The Government justifies the presence of the armed forces on the pretext of preserving the country's unity and integrity.

Among the many contemporary narratives of violence, this paper will study the narrative of the Manipuri feature film "Wanted Linthoi". Under the direction of screenplay writer Rajen Leishangthem, in 2011. The kidnapping of innocent people in the name of being connected with the insurgency group without proper evidence and killing of them in the name of "encounter".

This movie brings out the subversion of a young Manipuri girl against injustice and acts of violence. The protagonist Linthoi's partner was killed by the armed forces of Manipur. He finds a gun inside a bag that was given to him by a stranger (asking him to take the bag with him)

whilst returning home. While confused with the behaviour of the stranger, the police arrived at the spot and captured him without a warrant. Having the gun with him becomes a reason for the police to capture him without proper investigation. The police concluded that he was part of the insurgency group and therefore, he was killed. The police justify their action by saying that it is a necessary act to prevent harmful incidents in society.

During the period between 2000 and 2012, many innocent lives were puppets in the hands of the Armed forces and the Insurgency group.

Robin Ngangom's poem "Native Land" portrays his beloved homeland Manipur in its present situation of military-ridden plight. The violence that emanates from the insurgent activities in the land becomes a part of the everyday experiences of common people which no longer inspires awe in them. The poem is written with bombs and bullets, murder and bloodshed that violence does not stir him anymore; rather he becomes indifferent to violence:

[.....] "Six shot dead, twenty-five

Houses razed, sixteen beheaded with hands tied

Behind the backs inside a church [.....]

As the days crumbled, and the victors

And their victims grew in number,

I hardened inside my thickening hide,

Until I lost my tenuous humanity".

The Armed forces considered the insurgency group to be the enemy of the society while the Insurgency group considered the Armed forces as the enemy of the state. Within this conflict, innocent lives suffered and they were used as tools by both sides to demand and get their fulfilment.

Linthoi being a woman at first can't handle the situation because there is no way she can get justice for the killing of her lover. Linthoi even chooses to end her life. But being born in Manipur, a land known for the strength of women fighting against the injustice of society, Linthoi chose to fight the armed forces. The violence inflicted owing to the conflict between the Armed forces and Insurgency groups, led many people in Manipur into widowhood, parents to losing children, and many children as orphans. Manipur becomes a land full of cries and blood.

Laishram Samarendra's poem "There's No Time" exposes the loss of humanity in the face of lurking death. The speaker is fleeing from his village which is under attack either by the insurgent militias or by the Indian Army. He is carrying a little rice with him. "To feed the children", but as soon as the firing begins he considers it profitable to save his own life and leave the children behind.

Linthoi chose to be part of the insurgent group, bringing her a new identity, a power to fight injustice. Incidents like random bomb blasts are very common in places with lots of people. The government blames this action on the insurgency groups, and at the same time, the insurgency groups blame the government.

Throwing the blame on each other, the death of innocent lives are taken for granted. The local newspaper was filled with the news of people dying or being found dead. The dying of the people reached the highest peak when most citizens did not make a big deal about the situation.

Another poem “The Woes of a Hand-grenade about to Burst” by Rajkumar Bhubosana, depicts the anxiety-stricken civilians of Manipur. In the recent past till the present day, Manipur has seen a lot of bloodshed and frequent bomb blasts which is taken as a common occurrence. The first thing a civilian notices in the newspaper is bombing in innumerable locations, how many were killed in firing, and so on. This situation is beautifully captured by the poet... “when thrown with the pin unplugged/ jubilant like one stepping into the world for the first time/ a hand grenade about to burst/ becomes perplexed/ when it falls amidst the humans”. In these four lines, the poet shares his fears and apprehension about what will happen if the unplugged grenade is going to bust. This mental state of mind is the same for almost all the people living in the state. The poet is worried that the grenade falls on busy streets for almost all the people living in the state. The poet is worried that if the grenade falls on a busy street the number of families is going to be destroyed instantly. The poet’s worry is beyond the physical death that is going to bring about.

He says:

“What will take the place of the spring season

What kind of new shoots will be made to sprout?”

Manipur is a patriarchal society yet known for the strength of women all over the world. During the time of British rule, Manipuri women fought two wars against the British Rajas. Here in the contemporary also, women come out to fight injustice. Like Linthoi choosing her way of fighting, in one such incident in Manipur in JULY 2012, an organization of widows and mothers of those killed in “encounter” with security forces, the Extra Judicial Execution Victim Families Association, Manipur was formed. Neena Ningombam as secretary. Neena’s husband Michael was killed on Nov 4, 2008, by a Manipur police commando who branded him a terrorist.

Linthoi helps families by giving financial aid to those affected by the conflict. No matter how much she subverts the power, Linthoi doesn't get justice and in the end, she dies at the hands of the Armed Forces. Like Linthoi, many fight for justice without getting it. Manipuri has long campaigned for the repeal of the AFSPA, a few engaging in acts of desperation including self-immolation and stripping naked in front of an army camp.

Irom Sharmila, a human rights activist, has been on a fast until death since 2000, kept alive by being force-fed by doctors while in judicial custody.

People condemn the militants because of their immoral and violent means which are scrutinized with scepticism. The militant who was often hailed at first as "freedom fighter", have lost their popular support over time. The growing atrocities directed among common people like mass murder, bombing, and extortion. Kidnapping and blackmailing, by the militants, consolidated their images as villains.

The Assamese poet Shimanta Bhattacharya portrays the stoic resignation of people to acts of violence in the poem "Between Bomb Blast". It is "silence" or meaningless ritual that fills the uncanny gap between bomb blasts. The people are so used to violence and bloodbaths that the slaughtering of innocent lives does not concern them any longer:-

"After the explosion, the silence blithely

Resurrects itself. There is no report of casualties.

People are so used to being blown to bits these days.

Prayers shiver down sodden wicks on Diwali (49)".

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Re-imagining the Folk Tradition of Onapottan from the Malabar Region of Kerala

Aishwarya Varghese II MA

Onam is a festival celebrated by everyone in Kerala regardless of religion, caste and class. The reason behind this was the rule of King Mahabali whose remarkable sense of governing a state brought a massive change in the state of Kerala culturally, economically and politically. Kerala is believed to be the most prosperous during the reign of King Mahabali. He treated everyone equally, there was no discrimination based on race, class or caste, everyone was allowed to visit the king and the king visited and helped everybody who was in need. King Mahabali was an Asura king who thought positively and worked towards the prosperity of the state and the welfare of society.

Asuras in Hindu mythology are bad characters, they usually have a negative connotation for they are constructed as evil figures of society who need to be conquered. However, Hindu mythological stories themselves challenge such absolutism. Lord Krishna is termed as Asura many times in Rigveda. Rigveda primarily worships Lord Indra, One-third of the hymns present in Rigveda is sung in the worship of Lord Indra. Rigveda, being the oldest of Chaturvedas and one of the oldest scriptures in the world demarcates the conflict between the Aryans and the Dravidians, also known as the original inhabitants. Lord Indra is the Aryan God and Lord Krishna is the representation of the Dravidian community. According to the varna system, the first three varnas i.e. Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishyas are supposed to have been descendants of Aryans whereas the Shudras and the Atishudras are termed as Dravidians who are not included in the Aryan

community and therefore many times are called as people belonging to the Asura clan. Lord Krishna comes from the Yadava clan, his name was Krishna Vasudeva Yadava. The major profession that Yadavas follow is that of Cattle rearing, Lord Krishna in the Hindu mythological texts is known as “Gwala” which means a cattle farmer. The Yadava belong to the Shudra community and therefore are also non-Aryans. The brahmanisation of Lord Krishna by the knowledge-holding Brahmins through Puranas and Bhagwat Gita. Lord Krishna who is termed Asura and an enemy of Lord Indra in the Rigveda is called “God” in the Bhagwat Gita, Lord of truth, light, knowledge and humility.

Similarly, Mahabali becomes a legendary figure for his people in Kerala. It is believed that King Mahabali made Kerala so beautiful that it was close to becoming as beautiful as heaven itself. This is also the cultural reason behind the tagline of Kerala tourism which is; “Kerala: God’s own country”.

The construction of Kerala as the most beautiful place like heaven itself became a threat to the Gods and therefore Lord Vishnu disguises himself as a poor Brahmin named Vamanan and tricks King Mahabali to fulfil his need for a small piece of land, land that would equal to three steps of the Brahmin. King was so generous that he approved of the wishes of the needy. As soon as the Vamanan got the king’s approval, he expanded himself into the size of cosmic proportions. In his first step, he covers the earth. With his second step, he covers the skies. Later, he asks Mahabali, what to cover with his third step. The King realizes that this Brahmin is not an ordinary man but a man with powers, therefore the king being a generous man thought of his people and the welfare of the society and requested the Vamanan to keep his third step on King’s head. King is pushed into “Patala” (hell) and Lord Vishnu reveals himself. Moved by King’s generosity, Lord Vishnu blesses him with the boon of visiting his people every year but with

the condition that he must not speak to the people. Therefore, the arrival of Mahabali means the most prosperous time of the year and that marks the celebration of Onam which is also called the festival of harvest for the arrival of Mahabali, which also means the arrival of prosperity. India is an agrarian society, agriculture, farming and land becomes an important means of achieving prosperity for the further development of the society.

The story of Mahabali acts as a warning to the non-Aryan communities and tries to suggest that anybody outside the Aryan community taking the position of the Aryans shall be doomed to the nether world. There have been several attempts made to Brahmanise King Mahabali also known as Rajabali in many Puranic tales and call him a God but all the attempts in declaring him as an Aryan saviour figure have resulted in utter failure. Nevertheless, the brahmanisation of King Mahabali has been done through the portrayal of Mahabali in the cultural enactments and the mythological picturization of Mahabali during the storytelling sessions held during the season of Onam in Kerala. He is always shown as this king who wears the typical Kerala cultural costume of white “mundu” bordered with gold and he is shown as someone who is very fair in complexion.

The Kerala costume widely known to be off-white and golden in colour itself is an Aryan re-imagination to show the supremacy and royalty which they acquired. Till the 20th Century, people other than the Namboothiris and the Nairs were not allowed to wear this attire as it was supposedly royal and royalty is not something to be held by the ones who belong to the lowest strata of the society.

Lord Krishna being a dark-skinned man is often constructed blue and brahmanised in other ways. The conflict between the Aryan sect and the Dravidian sect is similar to the colonizer and the colonized, the same way the colonizer called the colonized, savage and uncivilized,

the original inhabitants of the subcontinent otherwise called the Dravidians were also called Uncivilized and savage by the Aryans for the Dravidians were said to be meat eaters. Dravidians being the dark race and less knowledgeable in terms of reading and writing were therefore also termed as Asuras by the Aryans. This is why the tribals and the Dalit figures, many times alluded to Asuras which is not just discriminatory but humiliating too. Brahmanism might not be practised today after many revolutions and Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar's hard work to bring forth the reality of Dalit communities to the political forum of India through the Indian constitution. But it is practised in many other ways, few of which are listed above.

Onam is celebrated in different ways in different parts of Kerala. One way through which the Malayalis celebrate Onam is by practising their customs and belief systems. One of the ways in which the people of Malabar celebrate Onam is through the presentation of a character named Onapottan. Onapottan is perhaps the only figure which does not Brahmanise the figure of Mahabali.

Onapottan is a folk character who is speech impaired. A speech-impaired person is colloquially termed "Pottan" in Malayalam and since Onapottan is a speech-impaired person who visits during the festival of Onam, he is called Onapottan. This character is seen as a representation of King Mahabali who was allowed to visit his people once a year but not allowed to speak with them. There are two reasons for this, first one was the fear of Gods that a demon would overpower them and the other one is the fear of spreading knowledge about Patala; hell. The knowledge of hell is limited only to those who are inhabitants of hell, it is not to be told to anyone.

Since the Puranic times, knowledge is kept away from the common people and there are few works of literature in ancient India which focus on the tales concerned with Patala, therefore it would not come

off as a surprise that the demon king Mahabali was not allowed to speak with his people which reflects the idea that he must not reveal the realities present in the nether world of Yama also known as Yamaloka. Onapottan is the only folk character in Kerala who focuses on this particular aspect of speech impairment that was given to King Mahabali along with the boon of visiting his land and his people once every year which is celebrated as the festival of harvest in Kerala, widely known as Onam.

Carnavalesque elements in the folk culture of Onapottan:

“Rabelais and His World” a literary work published in 1965 by the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, gives detailed information on the carnivalesque theory which deals with the inversions of power and control for a brief period. For Bakhtin, Carnival stands for folk laughter and folk humour, it embodies popular folk-based culture which is defined by its irreverent antipathy to its official and hierarchical structures of everyday non-carnival life. Bakhtin claims that in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance a ‘boundless world of humorous form and manifestations opposed the official and serious tone of mediaeval ecclesiastical feudal culture’. He characterizes carnival as the people’s second life, organized based on laughter, insisting that the laughter which gave form to carnival rituals freed them ‘completely from ecclesiastical and religious dogmatism’. Carnival laughter is for Bakhtin an assertion of freedom, its function is to bring about a temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and the established order. Bakhtin argues that the laws, prohibitions and restrictions that determine the structure and order of ordinary, that is non-carnival and he contends that what is suspended first of all is hierarchical structure and all the forms of terror, reverence, piety and etiquette connected with it that is, everything resulting from socio-hierarchical inequality or any other form of inequality among people. It is the suspension of social and behavioural codes that generate the

atmosphere of joyful relativity characteristic of a carnival sense of the world by allowing free and familiar contact among people who in the normal course of things are divided by as Bakhtin writes “impenetrable hierarchical barriers”.

The carnivalesque theory also talks about the representation of eccentricity through laughter which allows the carnival celebrators to express their repressed desire through their eccentric behaviour. It helps them to release their anxieties and frustration that were caused due to the unethical oppression that they had to suffer in society by the ones who hold power. This eccentricity reverses power for a temporary period.

The folk culture of Onapottan in the Malabar region of Kerala can be analyzed through the carnivalesque theory. Onapottan is a folk character who is played by the tribal people of Kerala. Tribal communities fall under the subaltern category. “Can the Subaltern speak?”, an essay by Gayatri Spivak explains in detail the mistreatment of the Subaltern and how their voices are shunned by the classist and casteist society. Tribal communities more often than not are ignored by the mainstream powerful people around the world. India being a caste-conscious country follows the trail of ostracizing the tribals. The culture of Onapottan becomes a temporary form of celebration which gives power to the tribal community of the Malabar region, especially the Malaya community, for the character comes from the Malaya tribe of Northern Kerala. Onapottan is considered an auspicious figure who visits everyone’s house regardless of class or caste and blesses each member of the family. His blessings are believed to bring prosperity and joy to the family and society.

The Malaya tribe is also known as Malayan community. Malayan means a man who lives on mountains and hills. According to KIRTADS (Kerala Institute for Research, Training and Development

Studies), the primary income resource of the Malayan tribe is through natural resources. The land is their source of income. They are mainly landless but, the ones who have a little land give their land on lease and work there as land labourers. Traditionally they are exorcists, spirit dancers and mendicants. They majorly follow Hinduism and believe in Tribal deities like Kummatti, Rakhtha Chamundi, Mauthappan, Gulikan etc are worshipped by them. It is believed that they get the energy for the art of spirit dancing and exorcism through these deities. This is one of the major reasons that the Malaya Tribe is the only tribe which performs the folk form of Onapottan which is a part of the traditional folk dance art form called Theyyam. Malaya Tribe is culturally known to be a tribe that could heal the sufferings of people through their prayers and Tantric practices. Onapottan is therefore called a Godly figure who has the ability to bring happiness and prosperity to the families of those who have been suffering from diseases or have been going through a hard time because of internal family issues or economic issues.

A tribal figure from being deemed as “impure” becomes a powerful figure who acquires the ability to bring happiness and prosperity through his blessings to the families of those who are higher in terms of the social strata and caste. Onapottan is considered to be an ally of God for he is believed to fulfil the wishes of people during Onam, he is called as God himself too, he is called as Oneshwaran, meaning God of Onam. Tribals are pushed out of the Varna system and they are restricted to performing certain rituals which can only be done by “upper-caste” people. But the culture of Onapottan reverses power and gives the tribals an opportunity to express their repressed ideologies and emotions through Onapottan which mirrors the theory of Bakhtin, i.e. the Carnavalesque theory.

The character of Onapottan reconstructs the tribal identity through costume and make-up. Although Mahabali was a king and had a royal

costume, Onapottan, despite being a representation of the King Mahabali does not imitate Mahabali in costume and make-up. Instead, it could be noticed that there are similarities between the Theyyam and Onapottan, both of them use natural and organic costumes and make-up. There are lots of natural elements seen in the physical structurization of Onapottan. The make-up is made out of red mud and natural colours obtained from flowers, especially hibiscus and others. The long beard of Onapottan is made out of palmyra leaves and the headgear is made out of wooden materials. Onapottan holds a bell and an “Olakuda” (Natural umbrella made out of bamboo and palm leaves. He comes along with two other people, one of whom holds a drum and the other holds a cymbal. The cymbal and drums also known as Chenda in the colloquial Malayalam language are reflections of tribal culture.

Drums and cymbals are important tribal musical instruments across indigenous communities. Music plays a very important role in connecting communities to mother earth. Tribal communities use music on occasions of festivities, marriage, childbirth, funerals and merely for the gift of existence. They believe in celebrating the creation of life through music. Music unites them and for many the beats of drums represent the heartbeat of Mother Earth which is why drum is given a feminine gender. Tribal communities believe in celebrating every moment of their life, may it be harvest season, festival or even death for that matter. They like to be united through music and be joyful every time through these musical celebrations. The musical instruments of tribes are mostly very loud to show their unity and happiness for their mere existence on earth, unlike the modern or rather Western musical instruments like piano, violin, harp, cello etc which appear to be wailing to the listeners. As Gabriel Okara, the famous Nigerian poet describes in his poem “Piano and Drums”, The drums that celebrate the joy of unity have been suppressed by the

wailing and lonely sound of Western Piano. In India, the drums and cymbals have become a symbol of Tribal music culture. Folk songs of India are known for their uniquely constructed music and the stories behind the folk culture. Onapottan's dance is also a celebration of the unison of people from all castes, classes and religions despite being a very Hindu-oriented festival.

Onapottan is given rice and money in return for blessings and he is known for dancing in the courtyards of every house which makes the ritual even more auspicious. This dance reflects the "eccentricity" as stated by Bakhtin in his carnivalesque theory. The dance becomes an expression of his repressed desires for a short period.

The reiteration of social hierarchies in the culture of Onapottan:

While the character of Onapottan does have the elements of Carnavalesque theory and uplifts the socially downtrodden, it also reiterates some of the casteist customs and beliefs. This proves that the carnivalesque theory seems to be applicable only on the surface while the customs that are performed in the Onapottan culture are all very casteist for they repeat the casteist ideology in the performance and practice of this Onapottan figure during Onam.

During Onam, in many parts of Kerala, the character of Mahabali is enacted by many people, majorly upper caste and upper class. This is where people wear royal attire and laugh along with the masses and have the Onasadya, Onam Platter with everyone. Mahabali's laugh is one of the major aspects of the enactment of King Mahabali because that showcases the joyous atmosphere of Kerala during the reign of Mahabali. This can arouse an argument that Onapottan being a representation of King Mahabali does not laugh or sit along with the masses for the actual Onam celebration. This alludes to the way the

privileged caste treats the underprivileged where the “lower” castes are not allowed to eat with the “upper” caste or live with the “upper” caste because the social union of the “upper” caste and the “lower” castes would defile the sanctity and purity of the “upper castes”. Onapottan is instead given either money or rice as a form of alms which designates Onapottan as a mere pauper who needs the upper socially uplifted section to help him. When the other Mahabali representations enjoy the Onam celebration with others, Onapottan is not even allowed to enter the houses, rather the family members come out of the houses and Onapottan blesses each one of them, dances in the courtyard of the house and leaves which restates casteist ideology of considering the downtrodden caste of the society as impure.

Kerala is a high-casteist society with a very tragic history of casteism. The Atishudras of Kerala were not allowed to walk on the streets of the Brahmins especially the Namboothiri, The Dalits like the Paraya community were not allowed to walk in the daylight or appear in front of Namboothiris for that will ruin the day of Namboothiri and make him impure. Dalits used to have identity markers that would show that they belong to a certain caste and they had to make a certain noise or give some signal while walking in public so that it works as an indicator to the higher caste people in the society that a Dalit is going by the road so that the higher caste become aware of their presence and save themselves from being impure for the sight of Dalits would make them impure. This very same practice can be seen in the portrayal of Onapottan too as he is a voiceless character who comes along with a bell to indicate that he is arriving and makes the people aware of his presence. People come out of their houses to seek his blessings listening to the ring of his bell yet he is not allowed to enter the houses.

The character of Onapottan has powers and it subverts the casteist ideologies but at the same time, the nuanced detailing of Onapottan’s

portrayal describes the reassertion of caste ideologies that were prevalent in Kerala and therefore the concept that the carnivalesque theory seems to work only on the surface in the case of Onapottan stands true.

Conclusion

The culture of Onapottan is very precious to the Malaya community of the Malabar region of Kerala. Not just for the Malaya community but also for the people of Malabar as they wait enthusiastically for his arrival to celebrate the most auspicious festival; Onam. The person who plays the character of Onapottan has to prepare himself to play the character of Onapottan during Onam by practising abstinence from speech, non-vegetarian food, fried food or even oily food with masalas. He has to eat boiled food for 10 days before the festival of Onam. This abstinence is also called Vruta in Malayalam. The person decking up as Onapottan has to abstain from a mundane lifestyle and observe fast and pray to God.

Onapottan's culture subverts a lot of discriminatory practices and provides a space for the subaltern to express themselves. It gives the Malaya tribe a chance to participate in religious rituals which otherwise are frowned upon. Although there is a reassertion of caste ideology in the practice of Onapottan, the larger picture of the culture of Onapottan satisfies the needs of the subaltern as the cultural practice gives them power, power of being called the God for Onapottan is also called Oneshwaran which means 'God of Onam' where he becomes the central figure of the Onam celebration. This reversal of power is enjoyed by people of all castes and religions of Kerala.

At present, the culture of Onapottan is confined to the villages of Kozhikode, and Kannur districts of Kerala and many artists who

perform Onapottan's character fear this decline of Onapottan's culture as the decline of this culture will erase their cultural identity. In many villages, Onapottan's ritual has now been commercialized as being a very precious and spiritual ritual. People play this character without following the ten day vrutha or abstinence just for the sake of money making which denigrates the purity of this art form. The folk culture of Onapottan is therefore on the verge of being completely erased from Kerala but the artists from the Malaya community have not lost their hopes as they try to retrieve this folk form by passing the knowledge of this artform down to the coming generations. The art form is a form of respecting the tribal culture while celebrating the arrival of King Mahabali which unites people from all backgrounds therefore the existence of this folk form is important and a need for the people in the Malabar region of Kerala.

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Peeling Back the Layers: Deconstructing the Techniques of A Clockwork Orange

Celeste Charles I MA

"Clockwork Orange," directed by Stanley Kubrick, presents a post-modern reimagining of Anthony Burgess' novel. The narrative unfolds within a dystopian backdrop, characterized by eroded morals, the rise of totalitarian regimes, and a fragmented nation. At the centre of this tale is Alex, the protagonist, who embodies this fractured existence. Alex is a delinquent with sociopathic tendencies, yet he also possesses intellectual depth. Accompanied by his group of friends, known as the droogs, he navigates this distorted reality.

Breaking the fourth wall from the outset, the film has Alex address the camera, inviting the audience to step into his perspective. The narrative hence picks up an autodiegetic fashion of telling. The story commences in a milk bar adorned with provocative female sculptures and figures that exude milk for a penny. This milk is laced with substances that amplify neurotic behaviours. The symbolism of milk, often associated with innocence and youth, intersects with the milk bar concept popular among Western youth in the 1950s and 60s. However, the purity of this symbol is tainted by explicit enhancements and sexual elements within the bar, symbolic of a corruption of both milk and adolescence. The film frequently employs phallic symbols and sculptures, hinting at the erosion of desire and individuality, reducing it to a mechanistic notion (the "in and out," as Alex terms it). It heavily objectifies women, featuring surreal art throughout, even in Alex's bedroom. This dehumanizes women, depicting them as fantastical yet detached objects. Subsequently, the film delves into a sequence involving reckless road rides, gang conflicts, and acts of harassment and coercion perpetrated against an elderly couple residing on the outskirts of the city. There is also an amalgamation of archaic and

modern language, where terms like "thou" and "eunuch" coexist within the same sentence, mirroring the eclectic language, behaviours, and attire symbolic of the contemporary youth subculture and the cycles of delinquency that emerged during the 1950s. This fusion highlights the interplay between previous generations' influences and the imperative to shoulder accountability for Alex and his droogs.

Another captivating technique arises with the use of moving images while the stationary car serves as a backdrop (back projection). This artistic selection harkens back to Hollywood's predecessors. In contrast to the typical allure of such sequences for their dangerous and youthful charm, Kubrick takes a different route, transforming it into slapstick humour infused with chaos. He challenges viewers to intimately partake in Alex's delight as he inflicts pain and havoc, implicating them in the activity and voyeurism. This sets Kubrick apart from conventional delinquent-themed movies that often deliver alluring yet didactic narratives, conveniently illustrating punishments and corrective measures while sidestepping an exploration into the psychosis of such transgressions and morality.

Kubrick, too, educates, but he achieves it by immersing the audience in both Alex's perspective and an active role as voyeurs to the crimes. This dynamic becomes clearer in the scene where the elderly author's wife is lifted and twirled, with the camera itself mirroring the movement. The scene depicts the rush Alex and his friends gain from such an activity nevertheless the audience cannot share it without sharing a certain moral culpability, a sense of guilt and repulsion that keeps them from enjoying it.

Music assumes a pivotal role within the film's narrative. Alex is sentenced to a 14-year term in a correctional facility, guilty of the murder of an art collector. Inside the facility, he is subjected to behavioural therapy via the Ludivico method. This technique

systematically conditions Alex by inducing discomfort upon exposure to violent stimuli. Notably, Alex has always been an enthusiast of classical music, particularly Beethoven's compositions. However, the incorporation of Beethoven's 9th Symphony, synchronized with abhorrent Nazi imagery, tarnishes his prior enjoyment. This association links the music with violence and triggers a nauseating response, subjecting the scientific approach to scrutiny.

This notion is borrowed from Ivan Pavlov's behavioural investigations and his experiments involving primates (Intertextuality). What this process strips from Alex is his capacity for autonomous choice, rendering his comprehension of morality as mechanical. The totalitarian regime's pursuit of control manifests through a strategy that manipulates the psyche and its moral fabric, superseding notions of goodwill. The regime's primary concern is with outcomes, aiming to quell deviance while remaining indifferent to individual emotions. In this light, the state, in its apathy, parallels Alex and turns itself into nothing lesser than a criminal and sociopath. This theme crystallizes during a scene where Alex engages with a doctor, expressing his love for Beethoven and the desire to safeguard it from ruin. However, his plea is met with indifference, as an inadvertent consequence deemed fitting for his transgressions.

Employing surreal tactics, the film tests the malleability of a transformed Alex, who has been reshaped in the process. These examinations push him to extremes, from boot-licking to the allure of a nude woman, all staged theatrically. The individual is positioned as the focal point, a puppet manipulated by the institution and its sinister schemes. Stripped of self-will and identity, he becomes a conduit for producing depoliticized, indistinguishable entities, obedient to the state's whims.

Returning to ordinary life poses fresh challenges. His family disowns him, while the society he once defied and exploited now seeks vengeance through his suffering. Former friends subject him to abuse, and the writer he victimized recognizes him, utilizing him as a tool for exposing government falsehoods and exacting vengeance. The writer achieves this by capturing Alex and laying bare the music that tormented him, eventually prompting Alex to leap from a window. Although he survives, news of the method's failure spreads rapidly.

Consequently, the state resorts to bribing Alex and reversing the treatment. The film concludes with the line "I was cured all right," coupled with a provocative image of Alex engaging in fornication with a woman, applauded by onlookers. This finale underscores the ephemeral nature of such methodologies, spotlighting that human emotions cannot be commodified or manipulated in the service of a consumerist, capitalist agenda without yielding consequences.

In essence, the film challenges prevailing morality, probing the intricacies of psychological barriers and their origins. It unveils the inherent cycle of predatory actions and exposes the state's dubious gains through such methods, serving as a commentary on the manipulative potential and consequences of such scientific endeavours.

To conclude, the analysis of "Clockwork Orange" through the lens of deconstruction theory reveals the intricate layers of meaning and interpretation within the film. Through its narrative structure, symbolism, and cinematic techniques, the movie dissects established norms and challenges society using a dystopian narrative.

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Narratives of Sikkim: Exploring the Nature of the Yeti, a Folkloric Animal

Dichenla Pradhan I MA

The state of Sikkim comprises three major communities; The Lepchas, the Bhutias and the Nepalis. The close connection between the tribes from these communities and the environment is evident in their traditional practices, including their reverence for mountains (specifically Mount Kanchenjunga and the Himalayan range), rivers, and forests. They have a rich oral tradition with folk songs and stories that reflect their unique worldview and cultural beliefs. Within their folklore, the figure of the Yeti is predominantly present as a manifestation of the community's psyche. The Yeti is a half-man, half-monkey figure that some see as their protector, while others see it as the one who punishes.

Yeti in Folktales and Myths: Creation Myth:

The Bhutia community of Sikkim was originally made up of people from Tibet who migrated to Sikkim. According to one of their myths, Humans were born in the snow-clad mountains of the Himalayas, which were once inhabited by Sinmo, a female rock ogress who was an incarnation of the Buddhist deity Drolma. She met a monkey who was an incarnation of another deity, Chenrizig. They mated to produce six children who were hybrids of monkeys and humans and later evolved to become more human. Legend says that the ones who did not evolve completely still reside in the mountain ranges. They are what the people living close to these mountains call yetis.

Yeti as Protectors:

One of the folktales of Sikkim depicts a caring yeti who formed a deep bond with Sangwa Dorje, a monk who was meditating. The yeti provided food, water, and guidance, even becoming his Buddhist disciple. When the yeti passed away, Sangwa Dorje kept its scalp and a yeti hand at Pangboche Gumpa, the monastery he founded. For centuries, the Drogon lamas, successors to Sangwa Dorje, paraded the yeti scalp in a fertility ritual to bless the village.

Yeti as shrine attendants:

Another Buddhist tale recounts the story of how a group of yetis, in the dark of night, when all humans were asleep, would maintain the village monastery. Each night they would arrive to clean and refill the offering bowls and the butter lamps, and they would return before any human would awaken.

Yeti in Ceremonies:

Dumche, a Buddhist ceremony, requires a person to play the role of a Gyamakag, who represents a yeti. The role of the Gyamakag is to scare away evil spirits and negative forces from the community.

The grateful yeti:

In this legend, a Tibetan Buddhist yogi encountered a crippled yeti in the mountains. Despite the potential danger, the yogi decided to help the creature by removing a splinter from its infected foot. Both the yeti and the yogi experienced miraculous healing after the encounter. The yogi, who was suffering from crippling gout, was cured by the act of kindness towards the yeti. The yeti showed gratitude by bringing a dead tiger as a gift, and the yogi later offered the tiger's skin to his monastery for ritual purposes.

Yeti as a bad omen:

The yeti is also regarded as a harbinger of misfortune in local beliefs. As the guardians of the mountains, the local deities bestow blessings upon the community for virtuous conduct and administer punishments for wrongdoing. When displeased, they may send the yeti as a means to enforce good behaviour by causing illness, poverty, and other hardships. Therefore, the sighting of a yeti is often interpreted as an indication that something has gone awry and that the deity is dissatisfied.

Alan Dundes, in his essay *Folklore as a Mirror of Culture*, talks about how folklore is a reflection of the community's cultural beliefs, values, and practices. It illustrates how folklore serves as a mirror through which we can gain insights into a culture's collective identity and its social, moral, and symbolic dimensions. Indeed, by examining the stories and legends surrounding the yeti, we can uncover the manifestation of the community's repressed desires and fears. The depiction of the yeti as a protector or guardian figure reflects the community's inherent need for protection from various aspects of life. The yeti's association with protection resonates strongly with the religious beliefs of the community, particularly Buddhism. Buddhism, with its emphasis on compassion and the pursuit of enlightenment, provides a framework through which individuals seek solace, guidance, and protection from the challenges of existence. The figure of the yeti, as a mythical being intertwined with the community's religious beliefs, represents a bridge between the tangible and intangible realms. It symbolises a force that can mediate between the human world and the divine or spiritual realm, thereby offering protection and assistance to those who adhere to the tenets of Buddhism. Moreover, the yeti's connection to Buddhism highlights the cultural and spiritual significance of the creature within the community.

Buddhism, with its deep-rooted presence in the region, influences the collective consciousness and values of the community. Thus, the portrayal of the yeti as a guardian figure aligns with the community's spiritual yearnings and their desire for a benevolent force that safeguards them from harm. Additionally, the association between the yeti and Buddhism underscores the blending of folklore and religion. Folklore often serves as a means to express and reinforce religious beliefs and practices within a community. The stories and legends surrounding the yeti, while rooted in local folklore, are interwoven with the religious worldview and cultural fabric shaped by Buddhism.

The tribal people, deeply connected to nature and reliant on its resources for their livelihood, may harbour a fear of the consequences that come with interfering too much with the natural order. The yeti, often depicted as a creature of the wilderness and the mountains, embodies the untamed and mysterious aspects of nature. Its presence as a harbinger of misfortune suggests a cautionary message about the potential consequences of disrupting or disrespecting the natural world. For the tribal communities, which rely on the bounty of nature for sustenance and survival, the fear of nature being harmed or disturbed by excessive human intervention is a valid concern. The encroachment of modern technology, industrialization, and deforestation may be seen as a threat to the delicate balance of the ecosystem, consequently endangering their way of life. The stories of the yeti as a punishment from local deities for wrongdoings or as an enforcer of good behaviour reflect the community's belief in a reciprocal relationship with nature. They express a belief that if they violate the natural order or fail to honour the sacredness of the environment, they will incur the wrath of divine forces manifested through the figure of the yeti. This fear of disrupting the harmony of nature can be seen as a form of environmental consciousness born out of a close and symbiotic relationship with the natural world. The yeti

serves as a cautionary symbol, reminding the community to maintain a respectful and harmonious coexistence with nature and highlighting the potential consequences of neglect or abuse.

When examining the diverse depictions of the yeti, we can interpret them as emerging from the collective psyche of the community, blending elements of both the id and the ego. The contrasting narratives that portray the yeti as a benevolent and caring figure who helps mankind versus a violent and punishing figure can be seen as representations of the ego and the id, respectively. In Freudian psychology, the ego represents the conscious mind and mediates between the instinctual desires of the id and external reality. It operates within the framework of societal norms and seeks to find a balance between individual needs and the expectations of the community. The stories that depict the yeti as a benevolent and caring figure align with the ego, as they emphasise the community's desire for protection, assistance, and the preservation of social harmony. These narratives reflect the community's recognition of the need for cooperation, compassion, and maintaining positive relationships within their social framework. On the other hand, the id represents the unconscious and instinctual drives within an individual. It is driven by basic desires and primal instincts, and it seeks immediate gratification. The stories that portray the yeti as a violent and punishing figure align with the id, as they tap into primal fears and anxieties and the potential consequences of transgressing social or moral boundaries. These narratives may reflect the community's repressed desires, the fear of chaos, or the need for self-restraint to avoid negative consequences. The contrasting depictions of the yeti as both a benevolent figure representing the ego and a punishing figure representing the id highlight the dynamic interplay between the conscious and unconscious aspects of the community's psyche. They reflect the complex nature of human

psychology and the tension between societal expectations and innate desires.

The yeti can be seen as representing the collective unconscious of the community, a concept introduced by psychologist Carl Jung. The collective unconscious refers to the shared reservoir of inherited symbols, archetypes, and experiences that are present in the depths of the human psyche. The yeti, with its mythical and enigmatic nature, taps into deep-seated archetypal images and universal themes that are part of the collective unconscious. It embodies the primal, mysterious, and untamed aspects of human existence. As such, the stories and beliefs surrounding the yeti reflect the community's shared symbols, fears, and desires that are deeply rooted in their cultural and historical experiences. The collective unconscious contains archetypes, which are universal patterns and symbols that are inherited and reside within the human psyche. These archetypes emerge in myths, legends, and folklore, and the yeti can be seen as an archetype itself. It represents the archetypes of the wild, the unknown, and the untamed forces of nature. The yeti's presence in stories and cultural narratives allows the community to connect with these primordial energies and tap into a shared understanding of their significance.

Furthermore, the collective unconscious also contains the wisdom and knowledge acquired by previous generations. It represents the collective experiences, values, and beliefs that are passed down through generations. The yeti, as a manifestation of the collective unconscious, carries within itself ancestral memories of the community. Its portrayal as a guardian, protector, or punisher reflects the community's collective wisdom and understanding of its relationship with the natural world and the spiritual realms.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the stories and folklore surrounding the yeti among the Lepcha tribe and other Himalayan communities offer a glimpse into their cultural beliefs, values, and fears. The yeti represents a blend of the id and the ego, reflecting the community's desires for protection and harmony, as well as their fears of transgression and the consequences of disrupting the natural order. It also symbolises the collective unconscious of the community, tapping into shared archetypal images and ancestral wisdom. The association of the yeti with Buddhism underscores the blending of folklore and religion, highlighting the spiritual significance within the community. Overall, the yeti serves as a mirror of the community's culture, revealing their close connection with nature, their environmental consciousness, and the intricate interplay between individual desires and societal expectations.

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Oral narratives collected from people in the state of Sikkim

Writing on the Pokhran Nuclear Tests of India: A Critical Study of Amitav Ghosh's "Countdown"

Variyata Vyas II MA

'Countdown' is a non-fiction writing by Amitav Ghosh. Initially, a small part of the book was published in 1998 by some of the publications such as New Yorker, Himal, and Ananda Bazar Patrika. The book was officially published in 1999 exactly a year after India did its second successful nuclear test in 1998 after the Pokhran test of 1974. The research paper will explore how Ghosh's writing gives a counter-narrative to the entire glorification of nuclear weapons which are more for the status quo than for the security of the country. Ghosh's perspective towards nuclear weapons and the kind of journalists, researchers, activists, and officials he meets during the writing of this book is far more different than the image of nuclear weapons which you might see in A.P.J Abdul Kalam's "Wings of Fire". The research paper will also delve deep into Ghosh's argument on nuclear weapons similar to what Amartya Sen argues in his long essay, "India and The Bomb". While we have so many arguments for and against the use and manufacturing of nuclear weapons, what does this hold for the state of nuclear weapons in today's world of rising insecurities between nations and the crisis of climate change? The research paper argues how "Countdown" becomes one of the ethical texts to look back to while we see growing concerns about nuclear war on an international level. It also analyses the political influences within and without the country and the opinions of researchers, journalists, locals, officials, and Ghosh himself, to approach the scope of accidental usage of nuclear weapons in the country or even around the world. When we read about Brahmastra in Indian mythology it felt like a far-fetched

thing to imagine unless maybe the day when India had its nuclear testing in 1974 and later in 1998 which was hugely celebrated by some people in the country. Who knew this imagination of Brahmastra would come true in the form of these mass destructive weapons such as nuclear weapons?

Likewise, who would have thought in Japan that a nuclear bomb would come knocking on their door thrown by a country which pretends to be the peacemaker at the international level? The whole possibility of how and when nuclear weapons can be 'used' is so unpredictable which gives rise to what Amartya Sen calls in his text "India and the Bomb" as 'accidental usage' of nuclear weapons. Moreover, the debates on whether or not nuclear weapons are of any safety to any country or it is just another breakthrough into serious trouble, is what Ghosh points out in "Countdown".

The "Countdown" gives us several ambiguous answers on the usage and development of nuclear weapons in India and Pakistan. But one thing it mentions is that it is a show of power to the world ingrained in the deep insecurities of India as well as Pakistan. India and Pakistan have always been disputing without any scope of finding common ground. But is it really 'India' and 'Pakistan' or just the people in power in both nations who are out for enmity to one another? We see it coming out in the novel in the form of the writer talking to the people of both the countries expressing their concerns for one another as both the nations' governments continue to fight. We see how the writer himself goes through an experience where his assumptions and stereotypes about Pakistan collapse as he meets the Pakistani people and comes to realise how everything is so alike India there.

Kashmir is indeed the central link between the long dispute between India and Pakistan. Both countries' insecurities have led them to escape to nuclear power as a means of asserting their power and

identity. But what is this kind of power which shatters the very idea of humanity and keeps a kind of destructive weapon to threaten and even to be threatened?

Ghosh argues whether or not the successful testing of the nuclear weapon would secure the security of India. However, he makes us notice the point that this security might be a "delayed war" or a kind of a null space where both enemy countries are at a standstill for no one will use the nuclear weapon before the enemy. It is almost a case where even if you attempt to use it, your country is on a death note and even if you do not, your country is still on a death note. Let us look at what is happening in Russia and Ukraine. Even with Russia's indirect speeches which threaten a nuclear war, it is unable to use it because it knows if they lead the nuclear war, the nuclear attack from other countries supporting Ukraine will also come to hit Russia. Therefore, using nuclear weapons is like checkmate in chess. Moreover, as Ghosh writes, times and circumstances during the war are hasty and unpredictable. So does Amartya Sen who says with Pakistan's favouritism to the ideology of Jihad which demands the annihilation of everyone who is unlike them, there is a possibility of the nuclear weapons being used driven by rage and aggressive emotions without being given a rational thought. Ghosh makes it clear in his writing that a country cannot use nuclear weapons without hurting its citizens.

On the other hand, Ghosh also reflects on the point that where the nuclear weapon is seen as a glorious show of power and achievement, and none of it secures a nation's safety but during times of war a nation with a nuclear power has an upper hand, and if both the enemy nations are nuclear powers like India and Pakistan the situation is either good diplomatism or straight away war and destruction.

Something similar happened in 1962 which is popularly known as the Cuban Missile Crisis, where, the then Soviet Union and America came

close to a nuclear war, but a good diplomatic strategy saved the day as both countries came to a neutral settlement. However, Ghosh's text argues why we even need these fatalistic weapons and to what extent using or even creating these weapons is ethical for the human race.

Asma Jahangir, the Pakistani social activist, expresses when Ghosh interviews her that after the 1998 nuclear testing by India, Pakistan could have reacted in a humanitarian manner rather than building its missiles. According to her, that was the perfect opportunity for Pakistan to undermine and challenge India on ethical grounds for destructive nuclear testing. Asma Jahangir is one of many Pakistanis who felt the Pakistani government could have chosen to not become a part of a nuclear ideology and should have campaigned strongly against India for the testing.

Ghosh's book appropriately illustrates how people in power or the governing political parties with their dragged vote banks come to fulfil their selfish means which are also connected to nuclear power. In India, during the 1998 testings in Pokhran, the BJP was in power and despite the resistance from people toward nuclear weapons, the attempt to become a nuclear power continued and was successful. George Fernandes is one of the classic cases where Ghosh exposes how politics and power and the struggle to survive in politics let people change their opinions and views and within a blink of an eye make the person what he or she was exactly against.

With the ideological shift from liberalism to joining a religious party that supported nuclear weapons, George Fernandes who was one of the critics of nuclearization eventually was forced to join the BJP for his survival in the game of politics. It is a case where the influence of people in power is so strong that it even forces people of different mindsets to compromise with their opinions to become a part of a crowd that they would rather hate.

Ghosh, initially, in the book seems to take an objective stance where he neither seems to agree with the nuclear testing nor does he seem to disagree with it. He adopts a reporting style to write the book, but Ghosh's storytelling skills still underlie the novel. Ghosh started writing the book three months after the nuclear tests of 1998 both in India and Pakistan.

“Countdown” is a perfect example of a book which illustrates the underlying vulnerability of developing nations like Pakistan and India who in their attempt to answer back to nuclear superpowers like America, Russia, China, etc end up deepening the political and social crisis within their own country and amongst one another. There is a deep struggle and fight for security and what Chandan Mitra, a journalist whom Ghosh interviews calls India's nuclear testing as a ‘self-assertion’ of their identities. This is to dismantle the view of the developed nations who did not see developing nations as capable of any such scientific achievement and quite made sure through treaties like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to prevent the developing nations from forming any kind of nuclear armaments.

Ghosh pointed out the further hypocrisy of the developed nations in calling out India and Pakistan for choosing to do the nuclear testing and thus becoming nuclear powers. In their interview with the writer, K. Subrahmanyam, the mastermind behind India's nuclear policies, Chandan Mitra, an Indian Oxford historian, and Qazi-Hussain-Ahmed, leader of Pakistan's principal religious party, all of them express the need to answer back to the developed nations, self-assert their countries' power through the medium of nuclear weapons. This is not just the view of some important people in Pakistan and India but also the local ordinary people who saw nuclear testing as a huge achievement for their countries. On the other hand, we have perspectives of people such as Ram Vilas Paswan, a Dalit activist, and Asma Jehangir, a Pakistani activist who expressed their huge

discontent with the nuclear testing and revealed some of the important selfish politics hiding beneath the mask of 'self-assertion' and that India now being a 'global power'.

It is not a thing of astonishment that India's ruling party BJP for a long time had the development of nuclear power in their manifesto which was fulfilled when Atal Vihari Vajpayee came into power in 1998. However, this entire argument of India now becoming a global power or 'self-asserting' its power and pride is something which is also interestingly conveyed by Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in his memoir 'Wings of Fire'; this argument has chosen to ignore the counter-narrative to the hazardous consequences of nuclear weapons starting right from their making and testing.

Ghosh takes us back to the very first nuclear testing by India in the Pokhran district of Rajasthan in 1974. The first nuclear operation popularly known as the 'Smiling Buddha' was indeed smiling for the one who gave it the name and the ones who celebrated it from the safe comforts of their homes. Ghosh highlights the very ignorance of the country to see what the 1974 nuclear tests did to the nearby villages of Pokhran where several people lived peacefully only to one day be displaced from their homes for a cause they probably had no idea about. While some people in the country celebrated, the inhabitants of the Khetolai village in Rajasthan were displaced with very little compensation and witnessed the destruction of their lands, properties, and cattle and constant fear of radioactivity. The effects of the nuclear tests have for generations and to this day impacted the inhabitants of Khetolai whereas Ghosh writes no one ever knew what the term 'cancer' meant. The village constantly reported cases of cancer, tumours, skin diseases, cattle being born with deformed and displaced body parts, etc.

To this day, the village of Khetoloi is a place of visit for people interested to see where the nuclear tests happened but not a place of concern for the government to open any healthcare centres in the area despite the villagers' continuous asking for it. Ghosh leads us to ask questions such as if developing nuclear weapons is a collective cause then why do the people in power choose to turn a blind eye to the difficulties faced by a group of people whose lifestyles were completely deteriorated and disturbed by the testing? This ever-capitalist nature of developmental projects had always unfairly bashed and destroyed the lives of indigenous people and places, forcing them to lead their lives on small government compensations or ending up in slums of big cities.

Another interesting aspect Ghosh brings to our attention is that villagers of Khetolai belonged to a religious sect called the Bishnois who saw the killing of trees and animals as a sin. Thereby, it paves the way for us to argue that even though a lot of indigenous tribes who have learned to lead their lives balanced with the safety of their environment are the first ones to face the consequences of aggressive capitalism which rarely brings any good to them but the people in the cities.

However, Ghosh never directly mentions nuclear weapons in the light of rising capitalism as his argument is mainly focused on the dominant internal socio-political crisis within and without countries, India and Pakistan. But, during these times when few countries are globally showing their inclination as well as their hesitation to use nuclear weapons, it becomes important for us to closely consider the aspect of aggressive capitalism which includes the large investments by governments in the country's defence equipment meanwhile focusing less on innovative environmentally conscious projects which would help the world in fighting climate change. This leads us to consider the opinions conveyed by some of the activists Ghosh interviewed,

especially Asma Jehangir and Ram Vilas Paswan who question what the government called a 'national interest'.

Dalit activist and former Railway Minister, Ram Vilas Paswan's argument perceives nuclear tests as being more of the party's interest rather than the collective. The absurdity of calling the tests a 'national interest' makes more sense to us when he brings our attention to the jutting issues of poverty, lack of education, losses due to floods, etc. in India. If we look back to the history of 1998 in India, we see that it was a time when the country witnessed heavy floods in the states of Assam, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Bihar. The lack of resources and facilities during this time led even to the international appeal for providing the victims of the flood with relief funds. Thereby, Paswan challenging the government on the note of improper allocation of resources seems considerable.

In Paswan's own words--"And this in a country, where ordinary citizens don't have food to eat. Where villages are being washed away in floods. Where prices are touching the skies. Of the country's six hundred thousand villages, one-third don't have arrangements for safe drinking water. Fifty percent of our people live below the poverty line. For the price of a single battle tank, we could open one hundred primary schools. But what we do instead is that every year we spend thirty-five thousand crores of rupees on armaments."

Unlike the nuclear strategist K. Subrahmanyam, Paswan's concern is not on how India is gonna represent itself globally and rise high in status through 'nuclear' means but Paswan's concern is how India is gonna represent itself from within and how the government is going to solve the hanging internal issues of inflation, poverty, education and many more. While for some it was India representing itself as an equal by establishing itself as a nuclear power, for others it was more important to consider other issues, and most importantly the hazards

of nuclear testing and how it could affect India's relations with its neighbouring countries.

When we come to Pakistani activist Asma Jehangir's argument on nuclear weapons we see a similar situation. Jehangir is concerned that even despite so many debts and the crisis of poverty, the Pakistani government chose to do the nuclear tests which involved a huge sum of money. Her argument, like Paswan's, is humanitarian in the sense that she hoped Pakistan could have taken 'a moral high ground' and had not reacted to the tests. When looking closely at what she says this situation could have been one of the classic chances for Pakistan to represent itself as a non-violent nation who would rather lead protests against nuclear weapons than launch one. Meanwhile, the Gandhian India of a non-violent philosophy gives in to the acquiring of the most dangerous weapons in the world.

Interestingly, by giving an Indian context she says "It's not the ordinary woman living in a village in Bihar whose voice is going to be heard, who is going to say, for God's sake I don't want this nuclear bomb, I want my cow and milk for my children. She is nowhere, she doesn't figure anywhere. It worries me. It really worries me."

This is where Jehangir's argument meets Paswan's as they both speak for the marginalized. Both the activists in their arguments expressed the concern of the marginalized not being heard, and not being given a voice in this far-stretched expensive business of nuclear weapons which is decided upon by few people in power. This is where Ghosh leads us to question nuclear testing as something so-called the 'national interest'.

On the other hand, we are also forced to contemplate the fact that if five nations around us are carriers of nuclear armaments then why should not India and Pakistan? Dr. Abdul Kalam in his memoir 'Wings of Fire' answers the question of a student who asks him what is his

take on Amartya Sen's criticism of the Pokhran bombings of 1998. Abdul Kalam then replies that if someone has to do protests against nuclear weapons they must go do campaigns outside the White House for the United States keeps on increasing its nuclear power and so do the other nations including Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom. In such a scenario how can India choose to be vulnerable to these nations and not be a player? That's what Kalam conveys.

If we put this view parallel to the views of Asma Jehangir and Vilas Paswan, we come to a bitter realization that as postcolonial nations compete with the developed nations who piled their treasury through slavery and imperialism, led to two great wars, and even responsible for aggressive capitalism; India and Pakistan as post-colonial nations are stuck in a cycle where they have to become like the developed nations in order to answer them back.

The very fact that the Treaty of Nuclear Non-Proliferation allowed the five nations to keep their nuclear powers and at the same prevented the developing nations from having their nuclear weapons could have been a trigger for Indian intellectuals and politicians to show their resistance to the developed nations by doing exactly what they were thought to not be capable of doing and second, prevented from doing at all.

Moreover, to prove one's superiority one always needs someone as the 'other'. It seems something like that between India and Pakistan which Ghosh tried to express. One example here could be considered which Ghosh also gives is the conflict regarding the Siachen Glacier which is a continuous debate between India and Pakistan. In November 1992 (the year of Babri Masjid's Demolition in December) India and Pakistan were finally close to signing a peaceful agreement about the Saichen glacier. However, India backed out because it was the time of elections and the ruling government did not mean to cut down its

image by backing out from the Siachen glacier which they feared might be seen as a cowardly act. It was also a critical period where the Indian National Congress started being overshadowed by the BJP as the latter party gained huge support from Hindu religious conservatives. Here, the government needed the show of India-Pakistan enmity to use it in favour of gaining a vote bank.

Therefore, even though India and Pakistan might have any scope of being at peace with one another the long historical hostility between India and Pakistan remains and with the issue of Kashmir, Jihadism, growing religious fanaticism in both countries, a threat to minorities, and different foreign policies India and Pakistan are like non-identical twins of one another.

However, Ghosh tries to unify India and Pakistan. When he visits Indian soldiers mostly of a north Indian background serving in the Siachen Glacier, one of the soldiers reflects that they have more in common with their Pakistani counterparts than the Bengalis and South Indians of their own country. Ghosh also shares his own experience of visiting Pakistan for the first time and having all his stereotypes about Pakistan breaking for he felt in terms of space and people it seemed no different than India. Similarly, he describes a few of his Pakistani counterparts who visited India and felt awed at realizing everyone treated them well and somehow everyone seemed to know all about Pakistan without even visiting it.

What becomes a concern here comes to us through Ghosh's argument that even though the local people of India and Pakistan are not so at war with each other as the people in power in both countries who refuse to resolve issues. While India wants to have control over Kashmir, Pakistan desires Kashmir for the water resources as well as its claim that it is a Muslim-majority area, therefore, must belong to Pakistan.

As readers, we wonder why Ghosh chose to narrate so many socio-political details involving India and Pakistan. Here is where we try to place Ghosh's argument in today's times and disputes between India and Pakistan. Now that both the countries are nuclear powers with growing disputes over Kashmir which seems to have no end at all, and worst of all the rising threat of religious fanaticism in both countries won't there be a chance of a nuclear race to establish power or even a scope of a nuclear war between the two countries?

Rationality and wit could cease in war and with such strong enmity as India and Pakistan which are getting worse in getting their disputes solved, there is no certainty that nuclear war will not be initiated. However, none of the countries could launch a nuclear strike without putting their citizens on a death note. As Ghosh writes – “the targets the rulers have in mind for these weapons are, in the end, none other than their people.”

These disputes between countries over resources, lands, and cities plus the development of nuclear weapons and armaments are things which could be taken into consideration while discussing the issue of climate change and capitalism. Capitalism increases the gap between the rich and the poor and promotes a kind of materialism unconscious of resources and environment, and here the gainers are the powerful while the losers are the workers or the exploited. Excessive capitalism has been giving height to the scarcity of resources which is why countries go to war with one another and a kind of solution becomes a challenge. As India and Pakistan both head to the means of capitalism which also means investing more and more funds on defence weapons rather than investing funds to solve the internal conflicts within their own country, hence the increasing amount of scarcity which again increases the chances of the two countries going on a war with one another. Wars are destructive to not just human beings but also to the environment. Moreover, the use of nuclear weapons or even nuclear

testing ends up causing a lot of harm to the environment in just one go leading to a rise in heat levels and excessive radiation which would pave the way for a climate catastrophe. The recent floods both in India and Pakistan are another example of climate change to be considered as both the floods whether in India or Pakistan led to a lack of relief funds and scarcity of resources. In contemporary times, we also see this in the light of Dr Arun Mitra's report on COP27 which expressed that nuclearization and war had now become one of the biggest obstacles in our way to fight the crisis of climate change and if not soon paid heed to humanity would come to a painful end.

Moreover, even though the concept of capitalism, and nuclear weapons flow from the West, it's on the developing countries whether or not to use their nuclear powers so extensively to display their power and resistance against the developed nations.

To conclude, it will not be fair to just call the development of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan the mimicry of the West, it is more than that. Moreover, while in India it was more status-driven, in Pakistan nuclear weapons were a sudden reaction to the Indian nuclear tests of 1998 where Pakistan would have feared a future nuclear race being started by India. However, it is important to consider that both countries have their share of critics of nuclear weapons who had thought from a more humanitarian perspective and did not consider answering back to the developed nation in their language of nuclear weapons.

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A Parallel study of Trauma in soldiers during War as depicted in *Insensibility* and *At Night All Blood is Black*

T Sruthi MA- II

World War I, also known as the Great War, took place between 1914 to 1918. It included nations from across the globe subsequently resulting in social, political and economic changes. Several varied factors could be traced that led to the war considered to be one of the deadliest destruction of nations in history. Some of the factors included the rise of military forces and weaponry in European nations. Across the same borders, there was a burgeoning sensibility of imperialism and nationalism. The European nations competed for colonies and major alliances were formed. The central powers included Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Bulgaria which fought against the allied powers of Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Romania, Canada, Japan and the US.

The impact of the war resulted in the death of millions of soldiers and civilians. “What began as a relatively small conflict in southeast Europe became a war between European empires. Britain and its Empire’s entry into the war made this a truly global conflict fought on a geographical scale like never seen before. Fighting occurred not only on the Western Front but in Eastern and Southeast Europe, Africa and the Middle East.” (“The First World War”). Thus, the repercussions of the war were huge. While a greater understanding of the impact of such war and conflicts are studied upon the lines of the nation, economy and society, what is usually left out is the implications and impacts of all these upon the soldiers who participate in these events.

This research paper aims to look at the implications of war centred around soldiers and how it leads to their psychological breakdown and repeated conditioning of their minds to inculcate inhumane nature to kill and win the war. It is usually also assumed about the nature of soldiers as being naturally inhumane and lacking any amount of sensibility. Although it becomes important to understand the psychological trauma that they go through under the pressures of a pogrom and a tyrannical state. “History clearly shows that the traumatic effects of war on soldiers were either discounted or not understood well enough to treat in any effective way. This lack of understanding and treatment continued with the Korean and post-Korean war era, and to some extent through the Vietnam and post-Vietnam war era.” (Komaridis).

Trauma can be defined as an emotional response to an event that a person finds threatening or harmful at either the physical or emotional level, or both. Trauma can be of different types such as acute trauma, chronic trauma and complex trauma. Each represents traumas as a result of a single stressful event; physical, sexual, emotional abuse and intergenerational trauma respectively. This research paper would look at trauma from a psychological lens and through the context of war. “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.” (Balaey).

Traumatic experiences also end up in a condition where the memories of those events keep lurking back and forth in the mind, making it difficult for the memories and trauma to be forgotten. There is also the concept of the paradoxical nature of trauma which talks about the absence of trauma in the conscious mind but exists in the unconscious mind. In trauma studies, one of the important aspects that is looked upon, especially in the realm of representing it through writings is the unrepresentable nature of trauma. Here the question of how trauma

could be easily represented in words comes in. It shows the impossibility of the representation of trauma at the mere linguistic level. This also resonates with the writing of or about traumatic experiences as sometimes carrying a fragmented narrative.

“At Night All Blood Is Black” is a novel published by David Diop in 2018. It is set in the context of the First World War wherein the Senegalese soldiers fight against the Germans through the French War. The story is narrated from the point of view of a Senegalese soldier and how he lives his way through the course of war. We see the dilemma that he goes through concerning his decisions, the present and past lurking in his mind and the mental disturbances that he largely goes through which makes his other soldier mates see him as a savage and a demm. “Insensibility”, a poem written by the English poet and soldier Wilfred Owen portrays his own experiences as a soldier-officer. He wrote this poem in 1918 as a response to the killings that he witnessed of the soldiers around him. The poem brings in the actual picture of what goes behind war and the politics leading to it. By writing about the true nature of war with its many episodes of bloodshed, slaughter and mental impact of this all on the soldiers, he also transgresses the usual narratives or writings on war that were centred on the glorification of the same.

Both texts centred on the context of World War 1 give a similar perspective of the harsher sides and glimpses of war from the participating soldiers themselves. Though written in different eras under the context of the same war, both texts could be studied through similar lenses of associating the traumatic repercussions of dying people around the soldiers. Through these writings, one also gets to understand the larger politics of war in terms of how the authorities and officials constantly pressurise these soldiers to keep away any kind of emotions and rather focus only on the destruction of the target enemy even at the cost of the loss of their inmates. The poem becomes

a direct response to the writer's comment on the ills of war and what it does to those participating in it. The novel in similar terms through the narrative of a soldier in war also shows the transition of the soldier from doing his duty to becoming completely disturbed and propagating further killings as an act of personal revenge.

War poetry in this initial phase was usually written in association with glorifying war. It was only gradually that it started becoming a genre in itself which focused on the actual picture of war full of harsher realities. War poetry became an act of questioning the identity of a nation and its governing body. Such poetry started creating awareness among civilians. The writings also became ways to represent the voices of the demised soldier. In *Insensibility*, Owen talks about the insensitive nature that the soldiers imbibe in them which is what makes them devoid of any kind of sadness even after knowing that soon they might be killed. Owen brings in the fact of how the soldiers are well prepared by the state to become like such and die for the cause of the state and nation.

The poem further describes the ground realities of the soldiers wherein they end up walking on the skulls of their group of soldiers, their brothers. The poet then goes on to compare the deceasing of the soldiers with that of a withering flower. It symbolises the life of soldiers as very short and subject to dying quickly. The flower symbol here also becomes representative of the glorification of war which was hitherto followed in writing which the poet is questioning. Owen also exposes the treatment of soldiers as mere commodities whom nobody cares about. Their value is upheld by the state only when they are in action, but after that, nobody remembers them. The insensitivity in soldiers also comes through their continued witnessing of bloodshed which makes them insensitive to death altogether. The hapless start in the end also suggests the helplessness of the soldiers. For everything

that they do, it is only distress that comes out as a result. The poem questions the entire idea of war itself.

The trauma in the novel, “At Night All Blood Is Black” could be seen through the elements of language itself, wherein the character Alfa Ndiaye who goes through the traumatic experiences around him keeps repeating his story of guilt about letting his friend die out of pain and not killing him instantly on his repeated request. It shows how the memory of such instances keeps coming back to his mind making him inescapable of the trauma. “You’d have to be mad to obey Captain Armand when he whistled for the attack, knowing there’s almost no chance you’ll come home alive. God’s truth, you’d have to be crazy to drag yourself screaming out of the belly of the earth.” (Diop 33). Through the lens of the poem “Insensibility”, this again shows how the soldiers are subject to being insensitive to killings and death.

The traumatic experience of Alfa is carried right towards the end. The amount of inhumanity that embodies him makes him no less than cruel even by the end. He even ends up raping and killing the nurse Francois. He also ends up accommodating a dual identity onto himself by associating himself and his friend as embodying one body and spirit together. His actions are all the result of the events he repeatedly went through in war which made him inhumane. Through such descriptions of war and what it does to the human psyche, both Owen and Diop question the ills of war and how inhumane it makes the people participating in it. Both texts bring in the true nature of the implications of war and expose its resulting impact through psychological trauma and a hazy approach to life due to its aftermath on the human mind.

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Concept of Death and Acceptance in ‘Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows’

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The Harry Potter series is composed by a gem of an author – J. K. Rowling. Her extensive and excellent work in the field of children’s literature has earned her the fame of the bestselling author and many such accolades in the field of writing. The most famous and loved creation of J. K. Rowling is undoubtedly the Harry Potter series. The first instalment of the book— ‘Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone’ was published by Bloomsbury in June 1997. Despite being rejected by publishing houses 12 times, the book made its final stop at the Bloomsbury publication. The book broke all records and bagged prizes such as the ‘Nestles Smarties Book Prize’, the *British Book Award for the ‘Children’s Book of the Year’* and such. The demand and popularity of the book was ever-rising and the next instalment – ‘Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets’ found its way into the market. The record-breaking popularity of the book allowed it to establish a formidable ground in the bookers market and the series is complete with a total of seven books with the last book being divided into two parts. The series is well-loved throughout the globe with its eye-catching imagery and intense plot lines. In this series, Rowling makes a major contribution to the sphere of children’s literature. The story is character-intensive and plot-themed, the excellent showcase of demography and the good versus evil plot allow it to stand out even in terms of children's literature.

The story can be conceived in a very aggressive manner as well due to the existence of a grim reality like death and torture portrayed throughout the storyline. The fact that Rowling has used such intense emotions to display the evil and Deathly characters of the series highlights an important aspect that is unlike many other stories, fairy tales or narrations. The theme of death and the acceptance that follows the reality of it is a constant factor in all the books. However, this theme intensifies in the final instalment of the series— ‘Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows’. The very title of the last book hints at the gruesome reality of the characters built up in the story so far. The message conveyed through this form is very practical and philosophical at the same time, from Harry’s birth to Harry’s death, a complete cycle of acceptance and reality is portrayed through the mystical veneration of ‘death’. The book, although popular and regarded as children’s literature, carries deep and intense theories of life, ironically conveyed through ‘death’.

The research methodology used for this paper is basic qualitative research. Since the topic entitles the research of a particular theme the category of qualitative research will fall under Thematic Analysis. The exploration of broad themes and specifications with coding and examining will encompass the overall research.

The magical development of J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series is a story weaved in 7 consecutive books with the 7th book being divided into two parts due to its lengthy disposition. This paper focuses on the final book – ‘Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows’ where the journey of Harry Potter meets its climax. Now, ‘of age’ Harry, leaves Hogwarts, on the run with his two closest friends to find the hocruxes and destroy them, to finish off Voldemort once and for all. The entire plethora of this journey is based on the conjugation of death and acceptance which is beautifully wrapped under the visage of a good versus evil plot. The story that begins in ‘Harry Potter and the

Philosopher's Stone', witnesses twists and turns, and unimaginable adventures that unfold a very profoundly grave idea of the institution of life and death. The last book also entails the concept of story within a story which happens to be the tale of the Three Brothers from 'The Tales of Beedle the Bard'. Rowling has brilliantly inscribed the flow of the story with the two tales becoming one, and the latter, determining the flow of the first. This is a very unique take on the climax where scattered pieces of puzzles are put together and brought to an epic end. The popularity of the series has broken numerous records and has a ground-breaking rating of 4.7 on Goodreads (and various other readers' sites). The genius of Rowling who paved the childhood of many a child, has become a legend in its entirety while having acquired the title of the best children's novel to date.

The final book of J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series – 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows', has the word 'death' inscribed in its very title. The atmosphere that the title sets is dark, foreshadowing the Death and deaths to come. The book starts off with Harry's disappearance from Hogwarts and his being moved to a safe location from the Durley's house at Privet Drive. This is the part where Harry comes to terms with the concept of horcruxes and that he must destroy them all, to kill Voldemort. The existence of these horcruxes is the result of Voldemort's mad desire to attain immortality. In accordance with the crux of this research paper, it is important to understand and analyse the desire of Voldemort, and his unquenchable thirst for eternal life. All through the 7 books, we see Voldemort trying to eternalize himself, choosing to 'live'. He has an unimaginable desire to go on living which in turn suggests that he fears dying. Voldemort, the very incarnation of death, is afraid of death itself. He refuses to accept the fact that all life must come to an end. To achieve his goal of living forever, he continues to dwell in darker and cruller ways to remain alive, at all costs. It was said in the books that no other human

was able to split their soul into more than two pieces before, but Voldemort manages to split it into seven which is a malevolent, yet monstrous feat. It is ironic that the more Voldemort tried to stay away from the touch of death, the more death-like and heinous he became.

Almost resembling a creature from the pits of hell, with his dark cloak, pale skin, raspy and wispy voice, disfigured head and slits for a nose, snake-like in essence.

The constant deaths from the beginning of the final book to the end, all serve a purpose to demonstrate a particular message to the readers. On a profound level, the development of one's life through the progression of death has been embodied in the book 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows'. This book has the highest headcount for the number of people having died in the novel as compared to any of its counterparts. This also suggests the reality of life as we grow up as individuals, the number of people around us diminishes and we eventually come to terms with the gravity of death in our lives. Similar to us humans, who grow older and experience death and despair around us (as compared to when we are kids), Harry faces the multiple deaths of his comrades, in contrast to the previous books. The book starts off with two important deaths, one of Professor Moody and the other of Hedwig. The death of Mad-Eye Moody, who was an exceptional wizard and a warrior who had fought against many a dark wizard (and was the Professor for the Defence against the Dark Arts), unfortunately, falls under the hands of these very Dark Arts users. This is a rather ironic yet unsurprising outcome, just as the saying goes, 'the swimmer dies of drowning'. The death of Moody is a warning forecasted by Rowling that Death is not kind, and it will come to even the most competent and experienced. The many accomplishments would matter not when faced with death. The second traumatic death is of Hedwig, Harry's pet owl who dies of a stray curse. The death of Hedwig is an unexpected loss to the suffering Harry and symbolises

the end of his childhood. Rowling teaches the readers that Death isn't fair and can come at any time. The uncertainty that it possesses is what makes it crueler and more fearsome. All these deaths confine Harry, who is unable to process the outcome of walking out alone without Moody, Hedwig, Sirius and Dumbledore to guide him and console him. The story takes a turn when the third death comes into play. The death of Dobby is a game changer as it finally depicts the complete death of innocence and frailty. This enables Harry to be able to control his mind, be able to administer his will, and peek into the mind of Voldemort which in turn helps him locate all the hocruxes and put them to an end.

The concept of dividing one's soul into pieces through horrifying acts of murder became the foundation for the existence of hocruxes. The seven hocruxes substantiated the death of seven people who were murdered in cold blood by Voldemort for him to achieve immortality. His inability to accept death was the start of the entire cycle which eventually ended when Harry accepted death. The title – 'Deathly Hallows' referred to an old tale of 'Three Brothers' where the three met Death on a bridge and were granted a thing each. The eldest asked for the strongest and the most powerful wand to ever exist which could kill anyone who stands in his way. The second asked for a way to bring back the dead for he mourned for his late lover, and so he was granted a stone to resurrect the dead. The third, being the smartest, asked for a way to hide from death to which death grants his own invisibility cloak. As a result of their desires, the eldest is killed in his sleep for his wand known as the elder wand, the second commits suicide because the resurrection stone is unable to completely bring back the dead to life, it only brings ghosts. The third, however, hides away from death for a long time, until he is ready to embrace it by himself. The story suggested that the one who possessed all three would become the master of death and would be able to control when he died. The story

at the end does lead to Harry possessing all three items of Deathly Hallows which was the reason why he was able to survive through the killing curse. He mastered death for in the end he discarded the three items and embraced death as an old friend. His acceptance was the key to his survival and Voldemort's end. It was also very clever of Rowling to depict Death as a living entity, thereby exaggerating the

idea of how many people fear death, and think of ways of running from it and escaping it. Despite their futile resistance, death eventually comes to take one home. What people fail to understand is that fearing death and worrying about it is not worth the trouble. The fulfilment of life through living it while making all the beautiful bonds and relationships along the way is more important so that in the end one can leave without any regrets. It is necessary to understand that the quest for the Hallows is not about never dying but being able to die on your own terms.

Conclusion

The research concludes that the engraved theme of death and acceptance is thoroughly plastered all throughout the Harry Potter series, even more so in the final book- 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows'. The growth of Harry from a little boy to a teenager who faces death without even a flinch, rallies across the book. The final realisation that death is not something to be pondered over, and over-thought about, but a journey to walk while cruising through life, while accepting all that comes your way. Most importantly, to understand that love and friendship are better, more fulfilling and rewarding things to spend time on. The development of Harry and the various characters throughout the book is Rowling's way of introducing reality

into fiction and producing artwork worth millions of children's dreams.

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Romanticization of the Toxic Hero through the lens of popular romantic movies: A critical study of *500 Days of Summer*

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“American Psychological Association (APA) released guidelines on working with men and boys, and specifically how to deal with those who adhere to notions of ‘traditional masculinity’. The APA defined traditional masculinity as ‘marked by stoicism, competitiveness, dominance and aggression [which] is, on the whole, harmful’ (Pappas, 2019), characterising it as adherence to a series of gendered attitudes, manifest more frequently in behaviours by men. This, they suggested, was actively damaging to both others (violence, transphobic, misogynistic, homophobic or racist bullying, sexual assault or harassment) and the people themselves who subscribe to such gendered constructs (excessive drinking, physical injuries from fighting, steroids, body dysmorphia, drug-taking, inability to express emotions). These recommendations were subsequently branded as guidelines on ‘toxic masculinity’” (Sam de Boise (2019) Editorial: is masculinity toxic? NORMA, 14:3, 147-151, DOI: 10.1080/18902138.2019.1654742).

Toxic masculinity is something that has been popularised in patriarchal society through various ways. One such way is through the narration that we find in movies. In the past when such behaviours and attitudes were not criticised and often seen as desirable by both men and women, the representation of toxic masculinity and heroes were shown quite overtly. But, over the past few years with development in psychological studies, feminism, the correlation between violence and toxic masculinity, gender studies and so on, such obvious and open

portrayal of toxic heroes has seen a considerable decrease. Though we cannot be completely at ease with this fact because now the narratives are constructed as such that they are covert and insidious, implying to the fact that we subconsciously still incline ourselves to this culture that we are at the same time trying to do away with. This covert way, if not equally, seems even more frightening than the past. Because, since it is not obvious, we do not understand where to draw the factor to criticise such works, or if we are reading ‘too much’ into it, while our unconscious and subconscious mind are constantly being affected by the portrayal of the toxic hero that exists at the subliminal narration of the movie.

This has given us generations that have romanticised such men. As we are all aware of the mass consumption of popular movies, it should not come off as a shock on how this has led to turning a blind eye on such behaviours. Even though we have the awareness in us, even though we recognise these behaviours we constantly shirk away from the realisation and eventually from taking any action.

“*500 Days of Summer*” is a popular romance movie starring Joseph Gordon Levitt, Tom Hansen and Zoey Deschanel, as Summer, directed by Marc Webb and was first released on January 17th, 2009. This movie is narrated by an unnamed narrator and in the initial part of the movie we are made aware that “this is not a love story.” This movie breaks our expectations about romantic movies where the heroine always acts coy but eventually falls deeply in love with the hero, it also tells us not to expect a ‘happily-ever-after.’ In the very beginning of the movie, we are introduced to Tom, who is breaking plates over a breakup with Summer, he then needs Rachel, a twelve-year-old to calm him down and later takes emotional advice from her. Through this we know that Tom is an emotionally immature man, who does not know how to cope with his emotions healthily. But when we look at him from a general human perspective, Tom is a ‘nice’ man. He is

good at his job, has a healthy relationship with people around him, is not a Casanova who cheats and plays with many women and many other qualities we have socially established as 'good men.' While Summer on the contrast is not the 'ideal' construct of what is socially established as 'good women.' For instance, she is very assertive, she does not believe in compromising and settling down, goes after what she wants, does not believe in romantic relationships and so on. Meaning, she is not submissive, not what society has established as a 'good' woman.

Our sympathies aligning with, or such movies evoking sympathy in the audience for such toxic heroes, has more to do with the gender discriminations that control the camera's lens, its narration, and visuals.

“...the way film reflects, reveals, and even plays on the straight, socially established interpretation of sexual difference which controls images, erotic ways of looking and spectacle.” (Laura Mulvey, 803) Tom believes in what we know as 'love at first sight', the eternal, destined and fated partner. Believing in it is one level of it, but what Hansen does in the movie is, impose this idea not just on himself but also on Summer. And instead of taking the loss of a relationship and moving on in life, he adamantly holds onto it, let us this affects his professional and personal life. He deifies Summer, keeps her at a pedestal and while many see nothing wrong in this, this blurs reality and his perception of that reality. He becomes delusional, creates an image of Summer in his mind that meets his perceptions and assumptions about her, he does this to justify his idea of what is real. While many may romanticise this kind of love, it becomes problematic because deifying someone comes at the cost of neglecting the real, flawed, and humane side of an individual. Tom narrates an encounter he had with Summer inside the elevator, before their relationship started:

‘Tom: it’s off, me and Summer’ (when they were not dating and hardly knew each other) He says this based on a conversation he had with Summer about her weekend.

Tom: Hey, Summer. How was your weekend?

Summer: it was good Tom: can you believe that sh**?

His friends: I am sorry, what sh**?

Tom: She said, ‘it was good’ , emphasizing the ‘good.’ She said she spent the weekend having sex with some guy she met at the gym. (500 Days of Summer) At the same time, the movie gives very less to zero screen time to the fights they had while they were in a relationship, focussing much time on all the supposedly “good times”. These fights were also brought into question by Summer, while Tom was just focussing on the “good times.” While many of us may think that small fights are common in any relationship, what we are never told is whether these fights were small or huge fights, fights that might indicate an unhealthy relationship. The fact that Tom dismisses all such fights and chooses to turn a blind-eye to the problems that exists in their relationship, and also disregards Summer’s concern over their fights while she tries to bring them up, also says much about how he wasn’t ready to accept the flaws in his reality, while being preoccupied with the constructed image he had of their relationship. We also need to stress on how

Summer had made it noticeably clear at the very start of their relationship that she ‘was not looking for anything serious’, to which Tom agrees. Which does not go down as he had expected, he fell in love with her which he had no control over but keeping in mind what they had agreed upon, he could have tried to deal with the situation in

a more rational way. Tom on the other hand wanted Summer. He needed Summer, he believed that everything in his life will be fine when he meets the one, and for him Summer was ‘The One.’

“This is a story of Boy Meets Girl. The boy, Tom Hanson of Margate, N.J., grew up believing that he would never truly be happy until the day he met The One... Tom meets Summer on January 8th. He knows almost immediately she is who he has been searching for.” (500 Days of Summer)

We see how Tom has in his mind already established, even without any interaction with Summer that she is ‘The One’ for him. How he thinks about achieving his happiness through external validation, letting someone else take responsibility for his happiness rather than trying to introspect and find his own happiness. This simply implies how he is a selfish, egotistical man who thinks that others exist to fulfil his dreams, and become a source of his happiness. All the while ignoring how this is hampering someone else’s happiness. We also should know through these lines, the romantic expectations of Tom, and since Summer had pointed out her expectations he could have chosen to walk away, not pursue this any longer but instead he clings on to the false hope that he has established and deludes himself into believing that his happily ever after is with Summer. But he also instantly feels the same way when he meets Spring for the first time.

When Summer and Tom visit IKEA they roleplay as husband and wife. This scene builds our expectations on a possible married future that they might have. By now, we have already forgotten, or conveniently chosen to forget about the intro and how “this is not a love story.” When leaving IKEA, we see a quote plastered on the wall “We don’t make fancy quality, we make true everyday quality” (500 Days of Summer). Thus, reinforcing the belief of permanence over

flimsy, temporary things. Which furthers our eagerness and hope that this love story will have a happy ending.

When Summer is telling about her previous lovers to Tom, the images that we see, or are portrayed is through his perception of them. So, while the experience is Summer's, the visuals that we see are constructed through Tom's point of view, even when he has not known any of them. This is like appropriating Summer's experience, to create an image that fits into his imagination, or creating a profile of her that fits his preconceived idea about her.

The movie also plays with the contrast of past and present, the past where they are happy and together and a present where they have separated, and Tom is trying to get her back. How each activity that they enjoyed together had a visual of happiness, theatres filled with couples, on the other hand the present is dark, not a single person in the theatre besides him. The movie being played has a sad tone to it, where Tom pictures himself playing the role. His grief and suffering are once again being reinforced through this mirroring of himself with the character in the movie, and loneliness through the empty theatre. The part where, in the past he was responsible for, or did well in writing romantic, valentine day cards, he is at present responsible for writing funeral cards. The constant focus of his loneliness, his grief, how this separation has shattered his life makes him look pitiful and owing to our humane instinct of feeling sympathy and compassion towards the pitiful, our sympathies towards Tom are reinforced.

When he is going through his breakup, everyone around him sympathises with him. They all put the blame on Summer, how Tom "deserved better." So, this leads to us, the audience looking at Tom from the point of view of those surrounding him. Leading to us developing the same feelings towards him that is developed or narrated through those characters.

The subliminal narrative in psychology means, “existing or operating below the threshold of consciousness; being or employing stimuli insufficiently intense to produce a discrete sensation but often being or designed to be intense enough to influence the mental processes or the behaviour of the individual” (Thesaurus.com). There are many factors, visuals, lyrics, that are constantly being portrayed in the background that influence our understanding and eventually the flow of our emotions. The song “*Please, please, please Let Me Get What I Want*” by *The Smiths*, that plays in the background when Tom is staring at Summer:

[“Good times for a change. See, the luck I have had can make a good man turn bad.](#) So please, please, please. Let me, let me, let me. Let me get what I want this time” (500 Days of Summer)

So, while on the surface it narrates a story of how this movie is about an unsuccessful romance, at the subliminal level it evokes in the viewers emotions of romantic expectations through the internal focalisation of Tom, the construct of different scenes, verbal(songs) and non-verbal elements. Though we are well-informed about the ending, this being a story that is not a love story we still find ourselves sympathising with Tom and putting the blame on Summer.

He also constantly shirks away from the realisation that it is not Summer’s fault that they broke up, that it was him who placed wrong expectations on someone who clearly told him she will not be able to reciprocate those feelings. But these facts are given lesser importance because the narration is not Summer’s and the focalising character is Tom and therefore, we are only able to see what he sees, what he wants us to see. The entire narration of the movie can therefore be considered unreliable and structured in his favour. The only time we can see objectively is when the third person narrator comes for small instances, for instance in the beginning to introduce the characters, to

expose the contrast between Tom's expectations and reality using a split-screen, where one screen presents the expectations and another the reality. Here, the screen displaying his expectations fades away at the disclosure of reality where Summer is already engaged to someone. His life is filled with the love for buildings and architecture, and suddenly all the buildings and architecture become blank pages.

Later we are presented with the usual trope of a lovesick man, indulging himself in alcohol, locking himself up, throwing tantrums, disregarding others and so on. But we see this not as a problem, but rather a coping mechanism to a broken heart that needs to heal. And this trope has been much romanticised in popular culture.

He chooses to acknowledge how partial his memory has been only when the twelve-year-old Rachel asks him to look back. It is only then that he chooses to see all the factors that led to them falling apart. But this memory only traces how Summer was the one at fault. We need to acknowledge that memory is very subjective, we choose to remember things that we want to while conveniently forgetting other details. Therefore, through his memory we are once again led to witness his innocence and love. He also does not try to accept how emotions are very subjective and vary from person to person. Just because he does not understand someone's emotion, does not make their feelings less real. We see this when he confronts Summer about her marriage.

Tom adamantly holds onto the image of his ideal lover even through the very end of the movie. He still has not learnt how to face the fact that an assumption of things cannot be reality. His idea of love and that he had finally, in Spring found "the one" is encouraged by the fact that his favourite spot also happens to be her favourite spot, and that both have the same perspective about that place. The narration in the end is taken over by the third person narrator, but where the narration

digresses and gives us our conventional ‘happy ending’ is when the narrator is narrating something and Tom acts completely opposite to it. To the narrator Tom has learnt his lesson, and he thinks of this encounter as just a ‘coincidence’, but Tom seems to still believe in ‘fate’ and therefore moves away from the very narration of the narrator. Finally, in the end he meets Spring, and we are led to believe that he has finally found his happily ever after and we are happy for him, without ever because Tom has still not learnt from his experience and this relationship may also go down the same path.

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Blatant Misogyny and Gender Stereotyping In Video Games. Exposure or Trouble for Children and Adolescents?

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In 1977, Behaviorism bowed its head to Social Learning Theory, to Albert Bandura and his Bobo Doll experiment. While the Behavioral Theorists focused purely on behaviour as the sole influencer of learning shaped through reward and punishment, Bandura's famous experiment conducted on children, added much more to this foundational theory. It was revealed that the cognitive aspect of the mind in learning social behaviour, simply through observation, is also a major method through which children and adolescents gauge, and more importantly, imitate. If children can learn aggression and non-aggression plainly by watching, then one can safely assume it to be true of other influencers like behavioural traits, beliefs and ideologies present in their environs.

Among these influencers, unquestionably so, is the discernible influence of mass media. Kevin O'Rourke in his article 'Social Learning Theory and Mass Communication' (2006), lucidly states the highly influential role the media plays, across age groups. Additionally, it states that the societal and behavioural models depicted, strongly affect human behaviour, far more intensely than we can imagine. This research article is solely focused on delving into the realm of video games.

Grant Tavinor in his essay, 'Definition of Video Games' (2008), proposes to define a video game, from the point of view of the academic field of Game Studies. It is as follows,

“X is a video game if it is an artefact in a digital visual medium, is intended primarily as an object of entertainment, and is intended to provide such entertainment through the employment of one or both of the following modes of engagement: rule-bound gameplay or interactive fiction.” (11)

Tavinor also expresses the usage of ‘kinetic narratives’, where the audience engages directly with the game’s narrative, consequently where their actions and choices lead to a punishment or a reward, ergo conditioning one to what the ‘right choices’ are. In many ways, these video games are virtual depictions of our world. Assuming this world is one where only the rules of the game apply and not those of the real world would be false thinking.

A simulation it may be, but it is after all begotten from the fingertips of an individual of the real world, and subsequently, the foreseeable invasion of real-world social models, beliefs, traditions and mores into the virtual. Misogyny and gender stereotyping are just two among the many that are a part of this invasion.

Britannica indicates misogyny as a product of patriarchy and has defined it thus,

“Misogyny, hatred or prejudice against women, typically exhibited by men.”

What one must keep in mind however is that after the fourth-wave-feminism (21st century), misogyny became transposable with sexism, albeit its more specific origins as ‘violent acts towards women’. Feminist thought views the existence of misogyny (conscious and unconscious) as an immediate consequence of gender roles, gender stereotypes and the means of enforcing them by society (men and women both), which, attempts to condition individuals (men and

women both) that one gender is always secondary and therefore must occupy roles to support the primary, that is to say, man.

The OHCHR Research and Right to Development Division of the United Nations published 'Gender Stereotypes and Stereotyping and Women's Rights (2014) and stated in it, is a definition of gender stereotyping,

“Gender stereotyping is the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men.”

The work proceeds to elaborate that gender stereotypes and stereotyping are debilitating to an individual when the ability to expound on their capacity and make choices, is curtailed. Not just negative, but even seemingly benign stereotypes are detrimental to growth. If this is to be said of adults who view life more rationally and with experience already gained, what then of impressionable children?

A cursory glance through Google Play Store (a platform curated specifically for online applications) under the category 'games for children' provides one with a long list, where the platform roughly categorizes all makeover, dressing, cooking and nurturing themed games (to name a few), as 'games for girls'. While the action-packed, violent, superhero and automotive games are 'games for boys'. Gender stereotyping therefore begins from the second an online application store is accessed. To cater content for children, and to provide some semblance of censorship, an easily overlooked option is provided in the guise of the 'for children' section replete with some 'educational' games and some for plain entertainment.

The problem, one must note, arises firstly from games that are easily accessible simply by scrolling and downloading any game irrespective of age restrictions (provided as mere recommendations). Secondly,

from the fact that age restrictions seem to be decided only on the presence of overt depictions of sex, gore and horror (which are rated 16+). Thirdly, other problematic influencers (overt or covert) go unacknowledged and completely glossed over. Lastly, the increasing frequency of unregulated advertisements (of products, mass media and other applications) within these ‘age appropriate’ games, where it is uncommon to be interrupted by repeated advertisements of an undeniably ‘adult’ dating application using ‘sex appeal’ to lure users.

Steeped in overt misogyny and negative gender stereotypes is ‘Make Girlfriend’ by ygnn rated as a 12+ game. A fairly simple game in terms of graphics and concerning basic left and right toggle movement, thereby controlling a female character, as she jogs to collect or pass through certain items placed along the path. Issues arise with the title itself, which calls the user to openly objectify the woman’s body and ‘make’ what they deem fit for themselves as the ideal girlfriend. Therefore literally building a body for her, giving the user very specific aspects they can change like her body mass, chest size, waist and posterior, skin colour, hairstyle and even what she wears. Not that different from makeover games right? Well, the devil is in the details.

Level one doesn’t immediately reveal what the narrative setting is. But with the end of this level and the start of the proceeding ones, the story setting can be pieced together as basic, albeit highly problematic on various points. The users are apparently ‘building’ these women (each level has a new girlfriend) for a stereotypically masculine man who holds power (with a red suit, tie, pulled back hair, well built and tattooed) and who waits for these women at the finish line and then guides them to various elements of his house to take up specific roles. These roles all pertain to providing some form of service, entertainment or pleasure to the man, thereby reinforcing their secondary role as women.

The house has four sections (the music room, bed and bath, dance room and the pool) and each has elements that the man must unlock using the game's currency. How does he earn this currency? By taking it from the women who collect it on their run down the path. Once unlocked, each woman is assigned to an element, for example, playing the violin, lying in bed, bathing in the bathtub, frolicking in the pool, dancing on the dance floor, etc. Each woman is also assigned a 'love metre' that reduces if not given attention by the man. He must then equally divide his attention among them, by either playing the instruments or dancing with them, engaging in coitus or kissing in the bathtub. The man is allowed 360-degree toggle freedom around the house while the women only have left and right. Moreover, once they enter the house, they are not allowed any movement, and all control is relinquished to the man.

The portrayal of the women is most concerning, as they begin the jog with nothing but red innerwear (not even hair on their bald heads). Along the path are placed either hamburgers or cucumbers, the former adding to her body mass while the latter deducting from it, thereby controlling her overall body mass. Hairstyle and colour are chosen by being similarly placed on the path. Skin colour, posterior and chest sizes are dictated by walking through archways that showcase these features. Fair and dark are the only two choices for skin tone, wide and medium for the posterior, while chest sizes are either large or very large. When the buttock size is chosen, a dismembered hand appears and spanks it twice before disappearing. The chest size, when chosen, causes the woman to turn around (all while running) and two spherical fruits appear (oranges, melons, etc.) which fuse with her chest and make them larger. Just before the finish line, each level has the option of choosing from one of two outfits, but these are adult costumes (like a cat, or a bunny rabbit) or lingerie, skimpy and sensuous. Finally received by the man and their roles of servitude, as their final goal.

Reinforcements of what the misogynistic society believes is the ‘right choice’ and the ‘wrong choice’ on the basis of gender stereotypes is more than evident in the game ‘Make a Happy Baby’ by inQueen, rated as 16+. Not as, on the nose, as ‘Make Girlfriend’, this game uses more subtle albeit unmistakable use of gender stereotypes. The title and the short trailer that comes with the game, immediately reveals that the protagonists are majorly women. Gender stereotypes dictate that she must be a good mother in order to fulfil her purpose as a woman. This role-playing game (RPG) is divided into stages, with each stage following a different storyline, and only two storylines among the first seven have male protagonists, but with a catch that will be elaborated upon later.

Stage one has but one, very important goal that the female character must accomplish in order to attain her dreams in life...make a ‘Handsome Baby’ (the stage’s title). Implying that the woman can only attain success or have some identity solely through her ‘handsome’ son, as “...the mother of a handsome actor in the future.” The realization of this dream happens only when the ‘right choice’ of marrying the handsome man and then getting rid of him is picked by the user.

The game constantly puts forth binaries of the right and wrong type of woman,

Examples: In stage five (‘Beloved Witch Girl’), the user must choose to make her either a powerful dark witch (not dependent on men), who stands over the bodies of ‘scum men’, or, to make her a nurturing witch where she is ‘the light of life’. The prior is the typical archetype of a ‘fallen woman’ while the latter is the ‘angel of the house’, and we see the game reinforcing that the latter is the ‘right choice’. Furthermore, the ‘Beloved Witch Girl’ becomes ‘beloved’ to the witch (an independent and powerful woman) hating society, only when she

saves the men. In stage four ('My Family's Secret'), the 'right choice' a woman should make after having an affair is to pass it off as her husband's child (for a woman's honour and a man's ego is everything). Moreover, aborting is portrayed as the worst choice for the result would be, "I lost all: my husband, boyfriend and baby too. I'll never be able to get pregnant again!" A woman seems to have no other role but that of a wife, girlfriend or mother.

It also dictates what stereotypical roles, characteristics and attributes are expected of women.

Examples: In stage seven ('Princess Girl'), a father wants to raise his daughter as a princess, just so she can marry a prince and therefore attain what every girl is supposed to want, a happily-ever-after. If the daughter wishes to be a knight and trained in the same, then it is 'bad' for the child where the end is simply with the father feeling "sorry for her". On the contrary, elegance is deemed the 'right' choice. The child wearing a cat costume on her twelfth birthday is disgraced by society, "Shameless girl, attracting so much attention.", while at the same time having her become a maid at the palace to attract the prince (the game claims "Being cute is also a sin"). The father has a very obviously disappointed reaction to the daughter choosing manual labour. His reaction is, "If it is fun, that's fine. But ...a miner..." Similarly in stage two ('Single Mother'), it is wrong if the mother engages in gambling instead of listening to classical music while pregnant. Moreover, it is also wrong for her to choose to date, and must instead choose to work for her baby's future.

While a majority of the focus is on women, the few appearances men do make, are also riddled with stereotypes,

Examples: In stage three ('Idol Dream'), a woman wishes to become an 'idol mom', and again needs a man. She has two choices, either a handsome man with no money or a rich 'ugly' man. The 'right' option

turns out to be the rich man as he can easily pay for plastic surgery to be conducted on the child. We see the constant reinforcement that in order for a man to be desirable, he must either have stereotypically good looks or be financially successful. In stage four ('My Family's Secret'), the husband is typically shown as short-tempered, and to immediately fly into a rage. If the husband does not want the child, then he is shown to either abandon his wife by blaming her for the abortion, or, the wife must force him to have the child. So as to conclude, the mother alone has a say in deciding, while the father has none. He is reduced to merely being the donor of the sperm. The husbands (even in other stages) are repeatedly depicted as abandoning their families when faced with conflict (like fathering an ugly child). As stated previously, only two stages (six and seven) have the user play the role of a man, who seems to be in charge of raising a child. Are they shown as nurturing? Quite on the contrary, stage seven ('Princess Girl'), shows the father 'training' the daughter to get married to the prince, while stage six portrays the man as the saviour figure of an orphaned girl. They are doing their duty as 'men'.

Conclusion

Virtual reality is majorly influenced by the real world, its people, its stereotypes and social models. In turn, these become influencers to those who engage with it. Issues arise when problematic content, overt or covert (as a result of improper and lax age restrictions and censorship), lands into the palms of those easily influenced. To further this, are the methods the video games use to advocate what they claim is 'right and wrong', considering this is also a space where people act out hidden desires that they may not in the real world.

As stated earlier, gender stereotypes are harmful when they are debilitating to the growth or furthering the capacities of an individual. Both games depict negative gender stereotypes for men and women,

restricting them to roles dictated by a misogynistic society. Where ‘Make a Happy Baby’ (16+) suggests that men must earn well, adhere to duty, or conversely depicted as having the tendency to abandon their families over the first breath of conflict (like fathering an ‘ugly’ child). Women must be nurturing, and elegant with marriage as the ultimate goal, but also shown as calculative and petty. Misogyny, seen overtly in ‘Make Girlfriend’ (12+), is nothing but a man ‘building’ and ‘collecting’ women for an apparent harem, replete with suggestive imagery. Not to mention the inappropriate advertisements that pop up every now and then during the game.

Social Learning Theory suggests the mimicry of children and absorption of adolescents, as the way they grow and try to fit in the world around them. Overtly present ideas, models and beliefs and their repetition in the media they engage with undoubtedly have a lasting impact on their psyche. Further concerning is the tendency of video games to ‘reward’ the ‘right’ choices, which in truth are harmful stereotypes rooted in misogyny, thereby, ticking all four of Bandura’s components of observational learning: Attention, Retention, Reproduction and Motivation. As freely available games with the sole aim of having as many ‘downloads’ as possible, such applications are seen to adhere to and further dominant discourses of the real world, namely patriarchy and its many forms. The developers also use ‘sex appeal’ as an easy trap to further their own capitalist interests.

While virtual reality provides an escape or a space to engage in socially repressed behaviour, the consumers of these problematic games seem to be anyone who has an internet connection with no regard for appropriate censorship. Therefore, they may well be deemed as ‘trouble’ to the healthy social development of a child or adolescent and definitely not ‘exposure’. One can only hope that such platforms are more thorough when it comes to content creation and age restrictions, with regard to children and adolescents.

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Exploring the Theme of Dysfunctional Family in the Novel “Mo Dao Zhu Shi”

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A “Dysfunctional family” is defined as a family in which members are unable to express themselves and achieve close relationships or communicate properly with the other members of the family. This implies that relationships within dysfunctional families influence communication, emotional safety/vulnerability, and occasionally physical safety of the person involved. There are a variety of reasons for a family to become dysfunctional, addiction, abuse, neglect, personality disorders, toxic parenting, high-conflict home environment, emotional manipulation, etc. Within this cycle of abuse, there are certain roles assigned to each of the individuals, the Scapegoat, the Hero, the Mascot, the Caretaker, the Lost Child, and the Golden Child. These Families operate like a systematic machine, where each family member plays a specific role that keeps the machine on. Here, all the roles have their pattern to follow, and people adhering to these roles end up continuing the dysfunctional cycle.

“Mo Dao Zu Shi,” also known as “Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation” is a popular Chinese novel written by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu (MXTX). It has a total of four volumes in its original web novel form, the novel was later adapted into an animated series, a live-action drama (The Untamed), and a manhua (Chinese comic). The story has elements of fantasy, Chinese cultivation, and paranormal mystery. Though the novel was initially a web novel, it has many important themes that deal with the social structure of a community, some of the themes are friendship, loyalty, redemption\ forgiveness, self-discovery, love, and sacrifice. However, one of the most essential

elements found in the book is about morality and ethics, identity, right v\ wrong, prejudice and discrimination, and power and corruption.

The story focuses on the central character Wei Wuxian, who is a talented cultivator from the famed Yunmeng Jiang Sect, he is known for his mischievous personality and unorthodox method of cultivation. He is a cheerful teen with immense talent in the field of talisman, known to help his shidi or people in need. However, his journey takes a gloomy turn when he is tangled in a conspiracy that leads to his death. Sixteen years later, Wei Wuxian unexpectedly resurrects into the body of a person named Mo Xuanyu, who seeks revenge against his abusive family. With his new identity, Wei Wuxian navigates the cultivation world which has grown into a complicated web of scheming, paranormal mysteries, and a chain of personal grudges.

Wie Wuxian's character can be deemed to be the character of a misjudged and complex hero. This can be seen through the portrayal of his multi-layered characteristics, which is a combination of multiple archetypes. Wei Wuxian's morally ambiguous decisions, his willingness to sacrifice himself for the sake of others, and for the sake of justice, his unconventional method of problem-solving, his rouge behaviour, his growth and redemption as a protagonist. Due to these various aspects, Wei Wuxian becomes a multi-layered hero with his extravagant yet mysterious personality in the novel.

The dysfunctional aspect of the Jiang family can be traced back to events that unfold throughout the story and a combination of multiple factors. The main root of this cyclical abuse can be traced back to the relationship of the leaders of the Jiang sect, Jiang Fengmian and the lady of the sect, his wife Yu Ziyuan. Both the sect leaders are unable to communicate their feelings, because of which a series of miscommunication ensues.

“Improper communication leads to false assumptions, feeling you can read their minds, or always jumping to conclusions.”

The lady of the sect has a misconception that Jiang Fengmain is in love with Wie Wuxian’s mother, Cangse Sanren, who is a disciple of a famous immortal, Baoshan Sanren. However, this is just a false and baseless accusation and a case of trust issues on her part. So, when her husband ‘adopts’ Wie Wuxian she has issue with it since she was not consulted about it, as previously mentioned both the parties have severe instances of miscommunication among them.

“When her husband brought Wei Wuxian back to Lotus Pier after the death of his parents, Yu Ziyuan became frustrated with what she perceived as Jiang Fengmian's favouritism of Wei Wuxian over Jiang Cheng.”

The madam of the sect has unachievable standards set for her children, she compares them to other peers and berates them for not achieving those standards. “She placed heavy pressure on Jiang Cheng to surpass Wei Wuxian in cultivation and frequently verbally and physically abused both of them.” Her usual target as stated above is Wie Wuxian, who in this aspect plays the role of the ‘scapegoat’ according to psychology “The person in the ‘scapegoat’ role is the identified ‘problem’ and is usually blamed for all the family’s issues, whether they are the problem or not. This role is typically (although not always) held by one of the children.” Furthermore, Wie Wuxian is not a ‘scapegoat’ just to please her mentally but is also her personal ‘dummy.’ Madam Yu’s spiritual tool ‘Zidan’ is an ‘A’ class spiritual tool used only for disciples or people who have committed dreadful crime, however, Wie Wuxian is its frequent visitor, just because the madam despises him. The lady has no remorse against using an ‘a’ grade spiritual tool on a teenager, just because she holds a grudge against his dead parents.

Another factor for this cycle to continue is because of Jiang Cheng, Wie Wuxian's 'brother' who in this case plays the role of the 'hero.'

The 'hero' justifies these abusive patterns as something to be overlooked and is under the false pretence that the family is 'perfectly normal.' Jiang Cheng's insecurities are a significant force behind the dysfunctional cycle, the portrayal of his character and his relationships with others can be seen as a reason for rift to occur between him and Wie Wuxian in the later part of the story. These insecurities contribute to his strained relationship with Wei Wuxian and shape his actions and behaviour throughout the story.

Jiang Cheng usually berates Wie Wuxian for his 'saviour' tendencies, one of the major factors of this endeavour can be seen right after the fall of 'Lotus Pier' where Jiang Cheng strangles Wie Wuxian and blames him for the downfall of the sect. Though he was heavy with grief and loss this became no reason for him to hurt Wie Wuxian, who at the time was also grieving the death of his clanmates. Jiang Cheng's insecurities manifest in his aggressive behaviour which throughout the novel has been labelled as 'love' or 'concern' by his sister, Jiang Yanli, he inherits his mother's temperament and is in foul mood most of the time, but his behaviour has been overlooked as he is the heir to one of the major clans in the cultivation world.

Jiang Yanli, as mentioned above, acts as a peacemaker between her brothers' and takes up the role of the 'caregiver' or 'caretaker.' She is present mostly on the side-lines, primarily, catering emotional support to the other characters (mainly her siblings) rather than participating actively in shaping the story.

"These individual attempts to keep everyone in the family as calm and happy as possible, even if it covers up deeper issues and dysfunction. While this helps the family to operate on a daily basis, it ends up preventing the family from healing and functioning in a healthier

way.” Jiang Yanli’s solution to all these abusive patterns is to make soup, she refuses to see the dysfunctional aspects of her family and continues to keep herself in the dark despite all the evidence of the dysfunctional situation. Jiang Yanli's character is mostly defined by her role within her family and the relationships she has with her brothers. She is often depicted as a self-sacrificing lady who is supportive of her family, but this overshadows her individuality and her independence. Thus, her characteristics are not explored in-depth, any character development is driven by her relationships with others around her, rather than her own personal goals and aspirations.

The haggard relationships and conflicts within the Jiang family causes mental imbalance and emotional turmoil for Wei Wuxian, this emotional strain affects Wei Wuxian's emotional well-being and contributes to his internal struggles. Mainly, the tension between him and Jiang Cheng, creates a sense of isolation and alienation, which manifests itself in the form of miscommunication and dubious judgement. Thus, creating a rift between them, this also plays a vital role in the narration as these series of misconceptions lead to the death of the main character, Wei Wuxian.

Although the imbalance in the family is very evident, this might not be the case for a native Chinese reader who has the knowledge of a sect and their nature. Since the text has a strong base of ancient Chinese culture, the international readers who have no knowledge of this aspect look at the text in a contemporary gaze with modern psychology to help them understand the characters and the narrative. However, by doing so, the reader shrugs off the foundation of the text which is set in ancient orthodox China, their customs, and rules. If the readers do look at the text in this gaze, we will see a stark contrast between the treatment of Wei Wuxian.

The relationship between Madam Yu and Wie Wuxian would make much more sense in the traditional context. Wie Wuxian's father, Wie Changze was the trusted assistant of Jiang Fengmian. At that point, in orthodox China the servant has no freedom and will to choose, yet Wie Changze eloped with his wife, Cangse Sanren. Thus, making Wie Wuxian accountable for his actions.

“In feudal China, the position of a servant was low because he/she had lost the freedom and right. The servant title could only be removed if the owner made an official announcement with paper and seal. The son of a servant would be a servant too.”

Hence, the abuse towards Wie Wuxian can be seen in a different light altogether. However, this does not accurately justify the abuse done to him.

Because of his exploitative upbringing, Wie Wuxian's mental health suffers a great deal throughout the novel. Wei Wuxian carries a heavy burden of guilt; he often feels a sense of alienation and loneliness particularly dedicated to the relationships within his family and the cultivation world. His accumulation of trauma, guilt, and loneliness takes a toll on his mental health, which leads to him experiencing anxiety and depression prior to his death, this becomes an important factor as his decision-making skills are heavily relied on his self-doubt and self-worth issues.

While Wie Wuxian's journey is filled with hardships, challenges and personal growth, he finds resolution and happiness by the end of the story. He finds love, acceptance and a sense of belonging within his family; his partner Lan Wangji and their adopted son Lan Sizhui.

Glossary:

Shidi: Young disciple or junior male schoolmate.

Cultivation: A Taoist concept by which humans can extend their lifespan and gain supernatural powers.

Demonic Cultivation: The utilization of resentful energy from dead humans.

Sect: A religious body consisting of members having similar beliefs.

Clan: A group of people tracing descent from a common ancestor.

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The Portrayal of Women in Manipuri Music Videos

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Music videos are meant for entertainment but the message or the meaning is often neglected. The music, sound effects, actor, actress, costume, vocal, makeup, and choreography give value but the lyrics or the dialogue is not given much importance. The Manipuri music video is different from the film music video. The music video has more viewers, actors, actresses and singers. Usually, the duration of the music video is five to six minutes, and the lyrics are usually written by the singer themselves or by a lyricist. There are different languages in Manipur and each language has its own music video, but the Meitei language is the majority language in Manipur. Therefore, music videos in the Meitei language are the majority.

Laura Mulvey points out the patriarchal nature of the gaze in her seminal essay “*Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*”. In the music video *Ho Leisabi*, the male audience got pleasure by looking at the actress Nicky. Her action invites a male audience, the camera angles oozes male gaze- close-up shots that focus on Nicky’s hips and the way she walks attract the male audience. She is portrayed from a male perspective and completely objectified. There are different portrayals of women as well in Manipuri media. There are resisting, submissive, bold figures in the music video. In the music video *Eigi Mukta Oijage* the lyrics goes like this Male vocal: Phajabi leirang nahakse eigi mukta oijage thamoi mamal kayano hendok nabu pithok k sana nabu kupura nangi hakchang pumbado lupa yomura nangi ningba thungnaba

Translation: Hey! Beautiful lady be mine for once. What is the price of love? I will give you more than that. Shall I cover your entire body with gold or silver to fulfil your desire?

Female vocal: Ahh! Waihe nangsū phajana wai tagena tabani taba ngamdre sel piraga nungshibabu leiba yabra koitan tanaraga thamoī huba yabra sana gi showroom da lengbiruro apamba nupi ama sabiruro.

Translation: Ahh! You are too much. I can't listen anymore. I wonder if you thought love can be bought with money or wealth. If you think that way. You can go to the gold showroom and customise your own women's design that is made of gold. The female figure is commodified, but she resists. The female tone is more assertive, and the male tone is enjoyable. He sounds like he admires her but in the process, she is objectified. The male perspective desires for a woman who is beautiful enough to be adorned with ornaments. She is meant to be a trophy-like figure, good enough to be presented as the man's possession. She is not silent or agreeing with what he said, instead she replies in an assertive tone. She knows she is not merely a beauty to be decorated with ornaments and that she wants something beyond the superficial things that the man is offering. In this song, the woman keeps responding to whatever the man says. She acts or responds with an attitude of superiority. She is not shy to talk to the man or not to someone who always says 'yes' to whatever the man says.

In the music video *Moi Tamo*, there is this line where the female says I will make the in-laws fulfil their desire by doing the house whole course and be 'good housewife.' There is this ideology where women are designated to be so-called good homemakers. They wanted to stay and do the housework and take care of the children, but they do not even know what they want, they just follow the rules that are set by their in-laws and their husbands. They are satisfied by naming themselves as 'good housewives.' This false sense of pride is instigated as a result of internalised patriarchy that women are subjected to, through years of conditioning. This music video is famous in Manipur, especially the lines. During the Corona lockdown

days, this line was trending in social media platforms like Instagram, where girls used to dress up and act like homemakers along with this music.

The song *Kanagi Ex* no which means “Whose ex.”

Lyrics: Eina koiriba nupi se fashion di yamna hei. A wuba khudingmak mangonda ngaonarido. Eina d chaothokcharido magi magun da. Eina koibadaga leme khanjaridooo. Mamaikhak nanba oirmi. Phijol na kuplamba unsa gi manung d. Oirami second hand. Khutsa yam changami. Shijinaba yadraba. Expiry ni mal lamba.

Kananabu koiramba no asuk thina charamba. Pambi hatamshidabu akhuiba potse palamba. Eigini hyba saruk phoahek thamlamda.

Translation: My girlfriend is highly fashionable. People admire her looks. I feel proud because of that but it is only the looks that are covered by the cloth. When the dress is removed, it is second-hand, people have used it many times and cannot be used anymore. Beautiful tree with dried-up fruits. Nothing is left for me.

This song was sung by a male singer. It was problematic but the singer seems to enjoy the lyrics. In this song, women are seen as sexual objects and described as used products that the male persona cannot use anymore. He himself wrote the lyrics and he wrote many other songs which are similar to this. Deeming questionable character tags to women after a failed relationship is a common act by men. This act is deep rooted in patriarchy. A woman who shows the courage to end a relationship is slut-shamed and bestowed with all kinds of adjectives that implies her promiscuity. It shows the fragility of toxic masculinity in men. Meanwhile, in the comment section there are men commenting and enjoying the lyrics, some of them even finding it ‘relatable.’

Contrary to this lazy and shallow portrayal of women, there are women who are courageous enough to protect against the consequences.

Manipuri women are often compared with the flower Leibaklei. Though the flower looks soft, it can grow under any circumstances, whether there is a storm or in scorching summer the flower will bloom, and nobody can trample it. Therefore, the flower's courage is compared to Manipuri women. Back then there were two women's wars. The first women's war broke out in 1904 which was against the British and it was a response to an order by the colonial authorities to send Manipuri men to the Kabow Valley to fetch timber for rebuilding the then Police Agent's bungalow. They are protecting their helpless husbands. The second women's war broke out in 1939 which was a response to the export of rice during WW II. When it comes to the Thangjam Manorama incident, Manipuri women protest against AFSPA. People often say *meitei nupi gi thouna* which means the courage of Meitei women. Courageous women are not seen in any popular music. Instead, music video often shows women as sexual object, women are commodified by a male singer.

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