

June 2018

VOL. 10, No. 1

ISSN 0975 – 6302

TJES

TERESIAN JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

A Peer Reviewed International Journal



Published by

Department of English and Centre for Research

St. Teresa's College (Autonomous) Ernakulam, Kerala, Kochi - 682 011

(Affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala)

email : teresianjournals@gmail.com

Teresian Journal of English Studies

A peer reviewed international journal on English language and cultural studies

June 2018

© St. Teresa's College (Autonomous) Ernakulam

ISSN 0975 – 6302

Subscription Rates:-

	Individual	Institution
Life Membership	₹ 5000/- (\$ 100)	₹ 7000/- (\$ 110)
10 years	₹ 2500/- (\$ 50)	₹ 3600/- (\$ 60)
5 years	₹ 1250/- (\$ 25)	₹ 1800/- (\$ 35)
Annual [1 issue]	₹ 300/- (\$ 7)	₹ 400/- (\$ 8)

US \$ 3 per year should be added towards air-mail surcharge.

Edited by Dr Celine E. Printed by the Principal. Published by the Principal on behalf of St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam, Cochin - 682 011, Kerala, India. Printed at Green Offset Printing Press, Ernakulam, Cochin - 682 018, Kerala, India and Published at St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam, Cochin - 682 011.

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The Editor
TJES, Teresian Journal of English Studies
Department of English and Centre for Research
St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam, Kochi - 682 011, S. India
(Affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala)
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Statement about ownership and other particulars about the newspaper - **Teresian Journal of English Studies** - to be published in June issue of the journal every year.

FORM IV

Place of Publication : St. Teresa's College,
Ernakulam - 682 011.

Periodicity of its publication : Yearly

Printer's Name : Principal

Nationality : Indian

Address : St. Teresa's College,
Ernakulam - 682 011.

Publisher's Name : Principal

Nationality : Indian

Address : St. Teresa's College,
Ernakulam - 682 011.

Editor's Name : Dr. Celine E.

Nationality : Indian

Address : St. Teresa's College,
Ernakulam - 682 011.

Owner's Name : St. Teresa's College,
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Between Messianism and Nihilism: A Biopolitical Reading of Kafka's *The Trial* and *The Metamorphosis*

Bismi Vijayan

The concept of biopolitics has become prominent in the academic, social and political life of people in the twenty first century. Biopolitics is the descriptive term adopted by social theory to designate the complex strategies or mechanisms through which human life processes are managed under regimes of authority over knowledge, power, and the processes of subjectification. It is concerned with population as a political and scientific problem, and as a biological issue of the exercise of power. In processes of subjectification, people are treated as a species or a population rather than as individuals. Biopolitics legitimizes control mechanisms as attempts to optimize the majority population's health and well-being while constructing simultaneously a sub-race of unruly, unproductive bodies against which the majority requires securitising. Consequently, biopolitics continues to hold a significant role in modern forms of governance and modes of subjectification. This article is an attempt to read Franz Kafka's *The Trial* and *The Metamorphosis* as fictional counterpoints to biopolitics especially with reference the ideas of Giorgio Agamben and Michael Foucault. The concepts such as power, sovereignty, biopower, state of exception, homo sacer, mechanism and nihilism will be analysed in these works of Kafka.

Franz Kafka is one of the iconic figures of modern world literature. As he spent much of his life in the iron grip of Austrian-Hungarian Empire, he was well aware of how a government controls its constituents on the basis of fear and intimidation. In Kafka's view, the legal system is a tangled and bureaucratic institution developed for the advanced will of the state, not for the common people. The oppressive, bizarre, illogical and nightmarish qualities of his literary production are termed as 'Kafkaesque'. In a Kafkaesque world, people are utterly helpless and frustrated in front of the authority. Most of the protagonists of Kafka

live in the Kafkaesque reality as they are isolated and unaware of how they entered this maze. The elected authority figures of judges, officials, and politicians seem above their reach. They repeatedly struggle with the absurd judgement by the unknown bureaucratic system. Major works of Kafka are filled with the themes like archetypes, the labyrinths of bureaucracy and physical and psychological brutality.

In *The Trial*, Kafka exposes the nightmarish judicial landscape which is frighteningly similar to the real life happenings throughout the turbulent twentieth century. This novel stands as the foremost example of the inscribed body in its strict sense in modern literature. The presence of the court of justice and its invisible force is felt throughout the work. Kafka illustrates how an unaccountable and inaccessible legal system ultimately destroys the notion of justice in society.

Joseph K., the chief clerk of a bank was arrested on his thirtieth birthday by an unstated or undefined authority. The crime which is committed by him is revealed neither to him nor to the reader until the end of the novel. The opening sentence of the novel establishes the atmosphere of strangeness and confusion, "Someone must have been telling lies about Joseph K., he knew he had done nothing wrong but, one morning he was arrested" (1). This denotes that a mere lie about Joseph K. was enough to warrant his arrest and it also throws light on the unfair and biased judicial system . . . It creates an impression that there is corruption within both the society and judiciary. The underlying paradox is that a law is formulated with the intention of ensuring justice but in reality what happens is its manipulation and injustice is the final outcome.

There is an unknown bureaucratic power exerted over K. during the time of his arrest onwards. Here the court system extends its power into the biological life of the protagonist. His life seems to spiral out of control by an incomprehensible power and he is struggling to understand what is going on. Midway through the trial K. learns that the bureaucracy has already identified him as guilty. Yet the identity of the bureaucrat is not revealed.

It was much more important to him to get a clear of his position, but he could not think clearly why these people were here... K. was living in a free country, after all everywhere was at peace, all laws are decent and were upheld, who was it who dared accost him in his own home?. (3)

In order to understand his arrest, K. continuously seeks entrance to the court. But his admittance was rejected. He is unable either to enter into the mysteries of the law or to exit from its sphere of strong influence. This paradoxical situation is addressed by Giorgio Agamben as the State of exception in his work *Homo Sacer*. In Agamben's opinion, sovereign power is simultaneously included in the law as law giver and excluded as an individual in the state of exception. But he is not a subject to the Law's authority. This situation of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion can be applied on understanding of the sovereignty of the Law.

Joseph K. is living like a homo sacer in the society after his arrest. According to Agamben, homo sacer is an individual, who is a symmetric opposite of the sovereign, may be "killed, but not sacrificed" (*Homo Sacer* 60). The sacred man is the one whom the people have judged on account of a crime. It is not allowed to sacrifice this man, yet if he is killed it will not be considered as homicide. Agamben noted in his *Homo Sacer*, "if someone kills the one who is sacred according to the plebiscite, it will not be considered homicide."(15) He could be killed by anyone because he is not included in the Law. It is an expression of barelife. Joseph K. is physically free to move but his actions are under the control of the authority. It doesn't allow him to go out of its limits. In the end of the novel *Joseph K.*, the protagonist was killed outside the Law by two unknown persons. So he is killed not sacrificed.

The power is subsumed under the banner of sovereignty. The sovereign court is the only authority which can be held responsible for all events that has happened in his life. Kafka makes clear that K. is murdered by inimical exercise of power that issues from the power holding authority. Joseph's inability to locate the law was the major problem that is reflected in the aporia of sovereignty as justice- law

power. He is unable to protest because the system controls every aspect of his life. In *Franz Kafka; Modern Novelists*, Ronald Speirs and Beatrice Sandberg states, “The violence Joseph K. feels, witnesses and is subject to during the year of his trial is simply the most palpable expression of the power which pervades all relationships, both within the court and outside it” (82).

Joseph K. was reduced to “bare life” by being deprived of all human rights. He realised that the judicial system that dominates him seems to be entirely inhuman. He has come to learn that the judicial system is a bureaucratic morass in which documents are kept secret or misplaced entirely. The whole system is based against the defendants. Joseph is extremely tired and he realises that he must play a more decisive role in his own trial. Joseph’s bewildering entanglement with the legal bureaucracy has paralysed him in every aspect of his life.

Joseph becomes a target not only for human institutions, but also for the divine ones as well. The prison chaplain at the cathedral talks about his trial, and he informs him regarding the multiple gatekeepers guarding the way to the law. The priest remarks that the court wanted nothing from the person. It receives him when he comes and allows him to go when he wants to go. This status of being in force without signifying is seen as the illustration of Agamben’s notion of state of exception.

On Joseph K.’s thirty first birthday, two men brought him to a quarry on the outskirts of the town and executed him. The last words of Joseph were, “Like a dog.” It seemed as if his shame would live on after him. Joseph had to accept his fate with passivity. His struggle against the law’s absurdities has come to an end. It is a kind of sovereign ban, a condition where the law applies to the human subject, “In a no longer applying, and holds him in its ban in abandoning him outside itself” (Agamben 10).

The Trial puts the reader in a strange stance vis-à-vis the law, justice and sovereignty. Kafka reveals the law as a kind of Messiah in the sense that law’s messianism will save Joseph K. from the trial and the final punishment. Here law is immanently connected with messianism.

Agamben explains it in his *Homo Sacer*, “From the juridico-political perspective, messianism is therefore a theory of the state of exception—except for the fact that in messianism there is no authority in force to proclaim the state of exception: instead there is the Messiah to subvert its power” (58).

“In the Cathedral”, which is a parable a priest told Joseph K. could be taken as an instance of common people’s relationship with the law and thereby to politics more generally. The protagonist of the parable is known as ‘the man from the country’ who was forced to wait before the gate of the law till the end of his life. The only purpose of the gate keeper seems to be bar the man’s way and keeps him sitting on a stool just before the gate. The man from the country is an exact representative of the protagonist of the novel, Joseph K.

The Messiah is the figure through which the great monotheistic religions sought to master the problem of law. The Messiah’s arrival signifies the fulfilment and the complete consummation of Law in various religions like Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Law plays the role of the saviour or messiah. Kafka does not mention justice here. Justice is what is promised by law and its possibility is what keeps people obedient, patient and helpful. In the face of the law, both Joseph K. and the man from the country had spent their whole life waiting for justice that never arrived. They are rendered as obedient subjects and subordinate to and reflective of an absolute, sovereign authority. Yet it never arrives, the idea of justice does not seem to leave the practice of law itself unaffected. Indeed the law is said to be a figure of messiah that keeps their expectation to attain justice. Both of them never get access to law in its righteous and fullest sense and it permeates their lives nonetheless.

Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* is another celebrated work which can also be analysed within the framework of biopolitics. Gregor Samsa, a travelling salesman is the protagonist of the story. One day he wakes up in his bed to find himself transformed into a giant insect. The starting sentence introduces Gregor’s metamorphosis as an ordinary event, “one morning, upon awakening from agitated dreams, Gregor

Samsa found himself, in his bed, transformed into a monstrous vermin”(1). The change has occurred without any particular reason. This creates a feel that the world in the story is inherently purposeless and random, rather than rational and ordered.

There is an unknown power with the capacity to control human bodies. The protagonist and any other characters would never try to find out why or how he transformed into a bug. Like Joseph K. accepts his unreasonable arrest, Gregor Samsa also accepts the metamorphosis as an unfortunate incident and doesn't get upset about it. After his transformation, he continues to think about the normal subjects like the financial situation of his family and his own physical comfort. But his ability to think and act like other human beings has been impaired by his metamorphosis.

Gregor was trapped in his job by his responsibility to his family. His need for freedom from the restrictive demands of work is expressed in his metamorphosis by means of his escape. This escape fails to provide freedom, instead of that he was incarcerated by his family members within his own room. When he works, he is enslaved by his job. When he doesn't work, he is enslaved by his family. Ultimately he is a slave leading a "bare life".

Gregor spent his days and nights almost without sleeping. Sometimes he thought that the next time they opened the door he would take the business of the family in hand, just exactly as he had done before...but they were all inaccessible to him, and he was glad when they went away. And then he wasn't in the mood to worry about family, but instead was filled with rage at how they neglected him. (30)

The barelife holds a liminal position between the inside and outside the law, between life and death, and resides in a place outside the symbolic order that structures a society. However such a life is not completely severed from society but retained as its biological basis. In *The Metamorphosis*, barelife and its relation to sovereign power is depicted in various facets. It also shows how barelife changes into a metamorphic being through Gregor.

The over exertion of power over life is the major reason behind his both physical and mental transformation. The hegemony of power exists in social system in the form of values, beliefs, attitudes and morality. Human body is taken as a product of technological process of biopolitics such as manipulation, transformation and alteration. Gregor's transformation limits his liberty both of choice and movement. He can no longer move around as he pleases and therefore has no option but to remain in his room most of the time.

No plea of Gregor's helped, no plea was even understood; however humbly he might turn his head, his father merely stamped his feet more forcefully. He drove Gregor on, as if there were no obstacle...his father gave him a hard shove, which was truly his salvation, and bleeding profusely, he flew far into his room. (45)

The defying of authority against his will seems as if his resistance is defined through power. Gregor's mind follows his insect body in its descent into the insect-hood. As his body is more powerful than his mind, the behaviours and preferences of Gregor are fully based on his physical shape. Gregor loses direction in life since he cannot work anymore and realises that he is no longer a productive part of society. The bug body of Gregor symbolises his struggle against the oppressive power both in the home and the work place. At last, he dies as a scapegoat for humanity.

In this work, Kafka uses an allegorical technique to compare Gregor's sacrifices to those of Jesus or Messiah in the Bible. Ultimately both Gregor and Jesus sacrifice their lives for their loved ones, despite betrayal. Kafka uses this biblical allegory in order to impose a messianic figure on Gregor. In the Bible, God sacrifices his only son and allows Jesus to live amongst sinful people in human form. Jesus treats the common people's illnesses and performs miracles. Beyond all, he cares for them and loves them. Jesus is selfless and endlessly devotes himself to helping and serving others and ensuring that they will have a better life by showing them "the way" to God. Jesus sacrifices his life in heaven to come to Earth and help his people.

Gregor is almost imprisoned in his room after the metamorphosis. Even in the transformed state as a bug, he stays with his family with deep emotion and love. His affection for his family results in his conviction that he must disappear in order to bring back happiness and peace. At last Gregor sacrifices his life and dies at night to save his family from hardship. He loves them unconditionally like the messiah loved his people and does not criticise them for betraying and mistreating him. Gregor's final sacrifice of his life for his family is the best example of the messianic features his character has. Gregor's sacrifices are shown to be Christ-like especially the horrible treatment that he receives from others, their betrayal and his selfless actions and eventual death.

The messianic teleology can be founded in nothingness or nihilism because it cannot be foreseen whether the Messiah will come or not. Nihilism is an essential aspect of Kafka's parables and novels which endures the condition of emotional distress in his characters who feel estranged, misunderstood or rejected by others. The nihilism which Kafka portrays in his nightmarish stories was, to him, the quintessence of the whole human condition. The protagonists Joseph K. and Gregor Samsa in *The Trial* and *The Metamorphosis* respectively are hopelessly caught, not only in a mechanism of their own contriving but also in a network of incidents which may lead to the gravest of consequences.

Nihilism results in estrangement and to the extent that Kafka deals with this basic calamity, he deals with eminently existential themes. Both Joseph K. and Gregor Samsa are lonely because they are caught midway between the notions of good and evil whose scope they cannot determine and their contradiction that they cannot resolve. They are isolated to the point where meaningful communication fails them. They are confronted with a question of their identity and they cannot give a clear-cut answer and both of them stand between the threshold of nihilism and hopefulness. There is nobody else within the fictions to which these protagonists can communicate their fate; they tend to reflect on their own problems over and over again.

The incompressible bureaucratic power and absurd laws are the major reasons that make Kafkan characters repeatedly in a bizarre, existential and nihilistic world. Both Joseph K. and Gregor Samsa finally realised that their existence has no meaning or purpose and this leads them into terrible silence. Kafka expresses a world that is filled with chaotic incidents. Nihilism results in the absence of the messiah whose existence seems mysterious as well as anonymous. Kafka's works has been so effective that the term "Kafkaesque" has become a common vocabulary that applies to a state controlled by an authority beyond the reach of law, dominated by an immense and labyrinthine bureaucracy.

Kafkaesque reality is reappearing in today's world in different ways. The application of various kinds of biopolitical technologies leads the individual to a helpless, frustrated, drained and nihilistic situation. Kafka's ideas seem no less relevant today as it did a century ago. The presence of biopolitics in the lives of people in the contemporary society can be studied through Kafkan characters.

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Performance to Parody: Drag as a medium of Gender Subversion

Swetha Mohan

The first question we usually ask new parents is; “Is it a girl or a boy?” The right answer to that is; “we don’t know, it hasn’t told us yet”.

(Bornstein *Gender Outlaw: Men Women and the Rest of Us*)

Heteronormativity within our society has a significant impact on how we come to view or understand gender identity. The above-mentioned quote by Kate Bornstein is an example for this and it can be analyzed in two different ways. Gender binary coupled with essentialism reduces gender identity to either male or female. The spectrum of gender identity residing in between these two categorizes is intentionally ignored. Heteronormative society has presented a prewritten “script”, a predetermined regulatory norm (Butler *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity*) which is considered acceptable. The prewritten script caters to the traditional gender binary only, thereby creating marginalization and stigmatization of all those groups who belong to the gender non-confirming category. Sex and gender are considered biological and natural by the heteronormative society. Gender acts as a manipulative force that alters the perception of a human being carefully implanting specific norms in his belief systems so that he would always remain within the borders of socially acceptable behaviour. This brings us to the second part of the analysis; the fixity of gender often curtails freedom of an individual to choose their own gender. This is mainly because sex and gender are seen as sharing a natural biological connection. If one is born with a penis then he belongs to the male category, if it is with breasts and a vagina, then the female category. This established innate connection between gender and sex is not only malicious but also autocratic, needless to say that these laws negate the existence of the individuals born with both sex organs. Heteronormative system reduces the freedom of a person to

decide what their gender identity is. Gender identity is reduced to two slots there by forcing the subjects to remain within the borders of acceptable gender performances. The essentializing nature of gender is one of the major concerns of gender studies. The origin of this essentializing nature is from gender binaries itself. This leads to a greater evil more than one that meets the eye. The origin of stereotypes and gender performative acts is from the essentialism of gender. Women are often seen as submissive, docile, reserved and nice, where men are categorized as aggressive, authoritative, powerful, strong and active. Gender starts to create definitive “acts” or “performance” for both sexes that are considered appropriate to the society. This relationship between gender and these performative acts of gender is like a two way street, one reinforces the existence of the other. We often relate a gender category to the way they dress, talk and walk at the same time these acts are created by the gender category itself. This results in the obsessive need of a person to label and categorize another human based on the way they perform these acts. Gender binaries can be broken down by accepting the bare truth that gender is a social construction and it has nothing natural or innate about it.

The naturalization of gender leads to greater evils like hate and stigmatization of the LGBTQ community bordering on physical abuse. Viewing gender as a social construct rather than a natural entity, allows us to deconstruct the very foundations of gender and alter the realm of gender into something less rigid and more accepting. The idea of gender should not be seen as airtight compartments, neither should it be seen as binaries. Gender should be comprehended as a series of acts or performances that are socially and culturally constructed and reinforced. Gender is not something that one is; it is something that one “does”. So it is “doing” rather than “being”. This is what is known as “doing” gender. Doing gender is a term introduced by Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman in their essay “Doing Gender”. According to the duo, gender is an “accomplishment” (127). Gender is the end result or accomplishment of certain acts where the performing or “doing” precedes the existence of a natural body prior to existence.

“Naturalness” is a discursive construct of heteronormative society. Gender is not a natural phenomenon. The naturalness claim in relation

to gender has been reigning over from the beginning of time. This is reinforced by creation of the body as a “mute facticity” (*Gender Trouble* 129). Butler deconstructs this notion as she believes there is no natural body that pre exist its cultural inscription. All bodies are gendered from the beginning of its cultural and social existence. Sex as well as gender is performativity inscribed by the body. Unlike traditional concepts of gender, Butler considers gender as a set of acts that is in tune with dominant societal norms. These performances produce a series of effect that in turn reinforces the gender it is performing. Gender thus is a process, a set of repeated acts in a strict regulatory frame (56). Gender should not be mistaken as taking up of a role; it is more complex than that. While performing we tend to act as if we are performing an “essential truth”, an internal reality, something that is natural or true about us. This is again highly dangerous, as gender here is seen as something natural with an essential truth, and the performative part is ignored. Gender should and must be seen as a performance, a practice that lacks any essential truth. If gender is a practice, a set of performances, then it will be possible to reinscribe gender in ways to accentuate its fictitiousness. There by the subject will be able to break the heterosexual norm standing within its discourse itself. This process demands certain factors from the subject starting with the “taking up of agency” by the subject; this is where the concept of Drag comes into play. If gender is seen as a spectrum of colours, then the subject will have agency to choose from these nuances of gender spectrum. There is an imminent fear in the society about breaking of gender binaries, this irrational fear arises from truth that, if gender turns fluid it will become very difficult to categorize and control it. This fear metamorphoses in the form of hate, violence and marginalization of the gender non-confirming groups. Judith Butler in her *Gender Trouble* identifies gender as a complex phenomena caught in a web of identity and performativity. All gender performances are a form of parody, but some performances are more parodic than others for specific reasons. As an example for such subversive gender performances, Butler introduces the concept of Drag.

Drag, the popularized American version of third gender allows a significant break in the heteronormative gender guidelines. The term

“Drag Queen” occurred in Polari, a subset of English slang that was popularized by some gay communities in the early part of the 20th century. Its first recorded use is to refer to actors dressed in women’s clothing’s from 1870’s. It is also suggested that the etymological roots of drag is from 19th-century theatre slang, from the sensation of long skirts trailing on the floor. In Renaissance plays we can see the practice of cross-dressing and gender transgression which indicated that the idea of gender was not considered biologically stable even back then. Drag commonly refers to the practice of temporarily adopting cross-gender attire and mannerisms for the purpose of entertainment, but it can include a wide range of gender performance both offstage and onstage. The method and intent behind drag vary depending on the sexuality, gender, race class and location of performers. While some performers emphasize its sheer entertainment value, drag has also been used as a strategy for navigating restrictive gender constraints in everyday life, and as a tactic for enacting in-your-face political protests. Drag challenges the commonly held notions about the stability and concrete nature of both gender and sexuality. Drag Queens act as catalysts in the subversion of established gender notions through popular media, by highlighting the disjunction between the body of the performer and the gender that is being performed. Parodic performances such as drag effectively reveal the imitative nature of all gender identities. While it might be easy to dismiss drag shows as farcical entertainment, what is conveyed through these comedic expressions are often political, used as political critique and may be indicative of social values. Drag breaks the natural, binary nature of gender and sexuality systems. Drag Queen suggests that specific gender performances are nothing more than an illusion that requires time and effort to produce. Drag acts as a mirror held up against our own misconceptions about gender and sexuality. They bring into light the artificiality of all gender performances, primarily the much celebrated heterosexual performance. Butler identifies gender as parody, of course every gender performances are parodic, but some are more parodic than other for specific reasons. Butler distinguishes between normal parodic parody which reinforces traditional gender norms and subversive parodic parody which subverts these gender norms. As an example for such subversive gender

performances, Butler introduces the concept of Drag. Drag, allows a significant break in the heteronormative gender guidelines. Drag embodies a gender performance that does not conceal their genealogy. Drags subvert the law by standing inside the discourse itself. They reinscribe their gender and reinforce this reinscription through repetition there by breaking gender binaries. Gender should be seen as a spectrum of colours, where the subject has the power to choose. Drag is a mirror held up against gender bias; the community reminds the world that gender is a construction that demands time and effort to produce. Through their exaggerated make up, elaborated hairdos and dramatic costumes they show us how gender is really constructed. Through their drag performances they teach us how one performs one's gender. This is how the gender performance of drag is more parodic and different from other performances. This makes the gender performance of drags a subversive parody. Thus it is essential to clearly distinguish and explain what a subversive parody is constituted of. Even though Butler does not clearly state what a subversive parody constitutes of, it is hinted that materialization of a subversive parody depends upon the product of these parodic repetitions (183). That is whether the product reinforces the existing gender binaries or it subverts gender itself by accentuating its constructedness. Butler has presented an intensive analysis on drag performance as a subversive gender parody.

There are numerous challenges one faces while one tries to academically document a gender non-confirming group like the drag community. Primarily, many of the drag personals reject being categorized as they believe categorization leads to curtailing of their individual freedom and being defined based on the perspective of others. Moreover categorization leads to naturalization, essentialism and hegemony of one group over the other, resulting in marginalization and stigmatization. Above all, each drag individual believes in creating a unique gender identity, personal identity and sexuality that cannot be duplicated or reduced into typical categorization slots. This is one of the greatest challenges while studying this specific area. Each drag persona is its own unique category. While studying such a group which rejects all sorts of categorization it is quite difficult to do justice to their identity and embark on an objective research which demands

categorization as a scientific method to certain extent. Secondly, one must not mistake all drag performances as subversive parodies. Some of these drags in fact do reinforce the existing traditional stereotypes. As Butler puts it, “all parody by itself is not subversive” (179), thus it is very important to distinguish between ordinary parody and subversive parody.

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The Spectre of Rajan: Locating the Presence of Power in the Absence of the Body

Lakshmi K. Babu

The period of National Emergency in India (26 June 1975-21 March 1977) is one of the most controversial histories of the independent nation that left behind many irreparable wounds. Declared by the then President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed on the demand of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, it bestowed upon the latter the power to rule by decree, to suspend elections and civil liberties. According to Leslie Derfler, the early stages of Emergency were appreciated by the public for a few reasons. Government offices became disciplined and started functioning punctually. Prices fell and shortages of commodities decreased. There was absence of strikes and marches, and trains and buses ran on time. The Billboards carrying the image of Mrs. Gandhi shouted, “The Leader’s Right, the Future’s Bright,” and “She Stands Between Chaos and Order” (Derfler 178). Externally, everything continued in harmony. There was no violence on roads because thousands of students, politicians, journalist and lawyers were dragged out of their homes and were put behind bars. Arrests were made without prior notice on college campuses targeting students and faculty who had connections with the Naxalite movement. By August, the foreign press reported that at least 10,000 political prisoners were being held. The Right to information and the Right to voice opinion were suppressed in order to countersign the influence of the State. On 27 June 1975, *The Indian Express* printed a blank column on its editorial section to mark its resistance. Magazines and journals like *Janata*, *Frontier*, *Tughlak*, *Swarjya*, *Himmat*, *Seminar*, *Neerikshak*, *Freedom First*, *Sadhana* were all censored and banned from publication. Nayantara Sehgal, talks about the crisis India faced:

We are not faced with a political issue in a normal political situation. We are faced with a dictatorship which has ruthlessly demonstrated its policies and intentions. . . . The emergency has made it clear,

if any clarity was needed, what kind of government we are dealing with in its naked disregard of democratic functioning and human rights. . . .(Sehgal 13)

In the essay, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus”, the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser scrutinizes how the State controls and functions in order to essentially continue the production and reproduction of labour power. Althusser distinguishes between the two main ‘apparatuses’ that function differently yet complimenting each other. Though they are structured in different ways they are implemented for the same reasons. The Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) function in the form of families, schools and churches, that play in the private domain of the society to reinforce the decree of the dominant class. According to Althusser, the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) presents itself

. . . as a *centralized* corps that is *consciously and directly led* from a *single centre*. . . . At the head of the Repressive State Apparatus, then, is *the real chief of state*. Under his direct orders is *the government* . . . the administration, the army, the police, the judiciary, the courts, the prisons, and so on. When it comes to repression, of course, there is a division of labour among these different ‘corps’, which are merely members, and repression is exercised in different or even very different forms by them. . . . We may therefore say that the Repressive State Apparatus comprises an organic whole, because it is organized/ unified under a single leadership: that of the political representatives of the class in power. (Althusser 135-36)

Professor T. V. Eachara Varier was born on October 28, 1921 in Trichur district of Kerala. He was a member of the Cochin Prajamandalam political party that had active participation in the Indian Independence struggle. He was also a language professor at St. Thomas College, Maharaja’s College (Ernakulam) and Chittor Government College. His son, P. Rajan, a student at Regional Engineering College, Calicut, was arrested by the Kerala police on March 1, 1976 from the college premises, and since then went missing. The very next

day after Rajan's disappearance Prof. Varier began his odyssey in search of his son and to bring justice to his memory. Prof. Varier recorded his painful journey in his memoir, *Oru Achante Ormakkurippukal* that received the Kerala Sahitya Academy Award. It was translated into English under the title *Memories of a Father* by Neelan and was published by the Asian Human Rights Commission. In the chapter, "Kakkayam Camp", Prof. Varier recounts how Rajan was arrested from his college premises.

On March 1 the police went to the Chathamangalam Engineering College to arrest the so-called culprits. The 'D Zone' youth festival of the Calicut University had been held at Farooke College. Rajan was an active participant at that youth festival, and was in Farooke College all through the night on February 28, when the Kayanna police station attack had occurred. He came back to the Engineering College hostel early the next morning, and was immediately nabbed by the police. The police could easily have checked Rajan's whereabouts on February 28 by enquiring at Farooke College. All the students and teachers who came back from Farooke College were witnesses to this. But the police didn't ask any one of them. They were not truly interested in finding out who was behind the police station attack and how many had participated. Without complying with any legal formalities they simply took Rajan first to Calicut and then to Kakkayam. (Neelan 21)

Prof. Varier describes the activities in the camp as an "experiment" that was "undemocratic and heartless" (21) under the leadership of the then Deputy Inspector General, Mr. Jayaram Padikkal, to see if the power of an iron fist could destroy the intellectual honesty and sense of justice of a generation. Prof. Varier's text breaks the halo of the façade called democracy that every Indian holds close to heart since independence. In the chapter, "When the Law of the Land is Sacrificed," he condemns the judicial system of India for pitilessly breaking the old dictum that says "even if thousands of culprits escape, not even a single innocent person should be punished" (23).

Some who were with Rajan at Kakkayam Police Camp knew the truth that Rajan had expired while he was being interrogated by the police. In the 21 May 2017 edition of the *Mathrubhumi* weekly, many individuals shared their experiences on the Emergency period. Among them was Mr. Kanangotu Rajan, who claimed that he witnessed Rajan being murdered. In the section entitled, “Rajane kollunathu njan neril kandu,” (“I witnessed Rajan getting killed”; my trans., 104) K. Rajan recalls the days he was treated as bait for police brutality. He narrates the excruciating pain he underwent during *wruttal* (a brutal practice whereby an iron log is rolled with pressure by policemen standing on either sides of the body of the victim). P. Rajan remembers how Rajan writhed in pain when policemen Velayudhan, Pulikodan Narayanan, Bheeraan, Jayarajan and Lawrence practiced *wruttal* on his body, and how the room was filled with deafening silence when they suspected that something had happened to Rajan when he stopped his cry. Rajan’s body was then shifted to another room after which a police jeep started and every policeman left the camp. K. Rajan was released on 24 March 1977 from Kannur Central jail along with the people arrested under MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act). Like all the others who went through a similar experience, K. Rajan also spent the rest of his life psychologically broken.

In Kerala, two strong political parties paused helplessly during the time of Emergency: Indian National Congress and Communist Party of India (CPI). Even though C. Achutha Menon was in his second term of being the Chief Minister of Kerala, the then home minister K. Karunakaran became the center of administration authorized by the Prime Minister. The committee consisting of the Chief Minister, home minister and other important ministers to review the arrest and detention of people never assembled. The reports regarding the assembly election did not have Chief Minister in the picture as it was signed by the home minister and sent directly to the Central government by the Public Relations Director.

The Italian political philosopher Giorgio Agamben’s long research into the power of sovereignty as condition of law, politics, humanity and the subject resulted in his book, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and*

Bare Life. In his writings, Agamben tries to decipher what materializes when all the rules that govern human conduct are seemingly stripped away. He puts his attention on the concept of 'bare life,' which is a human undressed of all his defining characteristics and exposed to what he terms as the structure of exception that constitutes the modern-day biopower. The heights of modern day biopolitics funds itself on 'bare life' but this can also be traced back to Classical Greek and Roman law. Agamben argues that the ruler in the Western society controls the right over life and death. Here, life itself becomes the subject of control. Agamben uses the term *form-of-life*, a neologism to describe what he envisions as a potential emancipatory notion of life. This underlines the impossibility of separating *zoe* from *bios*. In *form-of-life* it is impossible to single out the brute fact of living from the specific form life takes.

Each behavior and each form of human living is never prescribed by a specific biological vocation, nor is it assigned by whatever necessity; instead, no matter how customary, repeated, and socially compulsory, it always retains the character of a possibility; that is, it always puts at stake living itself. That is why human beings — as beings of power who can do or not do, succeed or fail, lose themselves or find themselves — are the only beings for whom happiness is always at stake in their living, the only beings whose life is irremediably and painfully assigned to happiness. But this immediately constitutes the form-of-life as political life. . . [The state is a community instituted for the sake of the living and the well living of men in it]. (Agamben 4)

Agamben says, the *form-of-life* is only a dream. At present we are living in a condition where individual lives are irretrievably caught in the sovereign ban which is a situation in which individuals can be potentially reduced to bare life. Even the thought processes, which are traditionally believed to have autonomous control, are conditioned the way that the sovereign decides. An individual may have 'n' number of identities, but each one of them is schooled by the system.

In Ancient Rome, "The Law of the Ten Tables" that summarized the Roman law suggested that when a child is born into a family the

head of the household, i.e. the father, had the right to either accept the child, or kill it (James, "Ancient Rome"). Parents could beat or kill their children any time in the name of this impunity. If any of the sons misbehaved the head can also banish him anytime. Nobody could question this authority as power was given and life was sacrificed for the sake of something understood to be good (James, "Ancient Rome"). Here, Agamben points to the fact that life can be defined in terms of death, rather than life. Agamben uses the Father/Sovereign in the ancient household as a metaphor to suggest the foundations of the power of the State. The State comes to the power of the Sovereign, and like the Father, the State has the power to take away life. Accordingly he says, "life originally appears in law only as the counterpart of a power that threatens death. But what is valid for the pater's right of life and death is even more valid for sovereign power (*imperium*), of which the former constitutes the originary cell" (Agamben, "Form-of-Life" 5).

In the third chapter of Agamben's *State of Exception*, he discusses the institution of *Iustitium* in Roman law which is similar to the modern day *Ausnahmezustand* (*State of exception*). When a situation endangers the Roman Republic, the Senate would issue a *senatusconsultum ultimum* (the final decree of the Senate) by which the consuls (board of advisors with highest judicial power) are called upon along with the praetor (Roman magistrates ranking below the consuls) and the tribunes of the people, and in extreme cases, all the citizens, to take law in their hands and do whatever was necessary for the salvation of the state (*rem publicam defendant, operamque dent ne quid respublica detrimenti capiat*, or Let them defend the state, and see to it that no harm come to the state) (Agamben 41). An emergency situation like a war, insurrection or civil war could lead to the proclamation of *aniustitium*. The term *iustitium* literally means "standstill" or "suspension of law: or a situation" where the law stands still just like the sun does in solstice (41). The essential congruity between the state of exception and sovereignty was recognized by the German jurist and political theorist, Carl Schmitt. Agamben builds on Schmitt's *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, explores and expands on how the state of exception suspends law for the preservation of juridical order, and how it blurs the distinction between legal and

illegal, state and law, public and private, law and violence, life and norm, and criminal and lawful. According to Schmitt the sovereign is the one who decides on the exception. No matter how effectively the bureaucratic machinery functions in a democratic state, it can always be set aside by the sovereign during an exceptional set of circumstance like a war, internal clashes, natural catastrophe or a terrorist attack or in short, a state of Emergency. “The state of exception is not a dictatorship (whether constitutional or unconstitutional, commissarial or sovereign) but a space devoid of law, a zone of anomie in which all legal determinations—and above all the very distinction between public and private—are deactivated” (Agamben, *State of Exception* 50).

State of exception is not a law that comes into force at turbulent times but a suspension of the juridical order itself. Agamben theorizes how the state of exception can be both inside and outside the juridical order. The state of exception constitutes a point of imbalance between public law and political statement. Agamben quotes Alessandro Fontana, the state of exception is the “ambiguous, uncertain, borderline fringe, at the intersection of the legal and the political” (1).

The law that employs the exception sanctions the suspension of the law itself. In *Homosacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Agamben calls this as the “Paradox of Sovereignty” (15). The state of exception exemplifies the inclusion and captures a space that is neither inside not outside. The sovereign can stand outside the normally valid juridical order, and yet belong to it. It can also decide upon the suspension of the constitution. “*Being-outside, and yet belonging*”, the sovereign is ‘outside’ does not mean that it does not have any function in the law (Agamben 35). The sovereign is in contact with the law in the logic that it is capable of suspending it. Agamben writes that the state of exception, an in-between condition, is both inside and outside with qualities of inclusion and exclusion. It is a “threshold, or a zone of indifference, where the inside and outside do not exclude each other but rather blur with each other” (Agamben, *State of Exception* 23).

When the Emergency was lifted, Prof. Varier filed the Writ of Habeas Corpus, *Professor T.V. Eachara Varrier v. Secretary to the Ministry*

of Home Affairs and Others in the Kerala High Court. The Writ of Habeas Corpus (Article 226, Constitution of India) is a legal recourse, filed by an individual or corporation, addressed to another individual or official body who has kept a person under unlawful detention or custody, to produce the latter at the court to examine whether the detention was lawful or not. The writ became a phenomenal subject of discussion not only in the state, but also in the country. Three questions surfaced in the court, “(a) Whether Sri Rajan was taken into police custody on 01.03.1976?, (b) Whether Rajan is in police custody at the moment?, (c) What relief the court should grant in the circumstances of the case and against whom?” (Neelan 85). The first respondent was Mr. NarayanaSwamy, the Home Secretary to the Government of Kerala and the second was Mr. V.N. Rajan, the Inspector General of Police. The petitioner had also moved to implead the fourth and fifth respondents, Minister of Home Affairs Sri. Karunakaran, and the District Superintendent of Police respectively. It was evident that all the information on Rajan’s arrest and man missing report were forged. The respondents to Prof Varier’s case consisted of the Home Minister Sri. Karunakaran, Home Secretary Sri Narayana Swamy, Inspector General of Police Mr. V.N. Rajan, Deputy Inspector of Police Mr. Jayaram Padikkal, and District Superintendent of Police (Calicut) Mr. Lakshmana. All these representative of the State machinery and the government had submitted counter affidavits at the Court stating that Rajan was not taken into custody. According to the Inspector General, the police had received information about Rajan’s alliance with the Naxalites and him sheltering the extremists on questioning a student, Muraleedharan. But he also added that when the information reached him, “the police could not locate him as, by that time he had made himself scarce” (82). The District Superintendent of Police stated that he had questioned the Principal of Regional Engineering College Sri Vahabudeen, the Chief Warden of Rajan’s hostel Mr Srinivasan and few others related to the case and found no evidence to prove that Rajan had been arrested. He also declared that Rajan was not arrested in connection of Crime no. 19 of 1976 of Kayanna Police Station (83).

Prof. Varier had aligned an army of witnesses along with him to demand justice for his son. The list included prosecution witness no.1

Prof. Vahabudeen who produced copies of written reports given by the acting Chief warden on Rajan and Joseph Chali's arrest, and registered letters sent on the same day to the parents of both the students. Prosecution witness no. 2 was a final year student who was present in the hostel when Rajan was taken by the police. Witness no. 3 was the watchman Narayanan Nair, who was on duty from 10 P.M on 29.02.1976 to 6 A.M. on 01.03.1976. He stated that the police had made enquires for Rajan who was in room no. 144 of the D Hostel. Balasubramonian, witness no. 4, was a part time sweeper in the college. According to him he had seen two police vans in front of the D Hostel when he began his duty at 06:30 A.M on 01.03.1976. He mentioned spotting Detective Inspector of Crime Branch Sri. Sreedharan, Police Constable Raghavan Nair, and the driver of the vehicle of Crime Branch. He had also seen Rajan and Chali inside the van that was proceeding to a nearby lodge (90). Similarly there were witnesses who saw Rajan inside the police van at Chathamangalam. Prosecution witness no. 9, K. Rajan voiced what happened to Rajan after he reached the Kakkayam camp. K. Rajan was arrested by the Crime Branch Police on 28.02.1976 under the impression that he had alliance with the Naxalites. He told the Court that he had seen Rajan being tortured by six policemen, one of whom he recognized as Sub Inspector Pulikkodan Narayanan on 02.03.1976 at Kakkayam Travellers Bungalow. He also stated that the same policemen had carried P. Rajan away when he fell unconscious. When the pamphlets distributed by Prof. Varier on Rajan's missing began to gain popular appeal Sri Karunakaran had to admit the detention of Rajan and explain the latter association with a banned organization during his speech at Mala constituency during the Assembly elections. Prosecution witnesses no.'s 10 and 11 were people who heard Sri. Karunakaran's speech at the 'samapana rally'(94).

In the chapter titled, "Moves Against the Case", Prof. Varier accounts the discourse generated by the media on the incident after the Emergency was lifted and the case reached the court. When the case progressed and became a focal point in newspapers it scared the people and agencies who supported the Emergency. Within four days after which the case was filed, the *Malayala Manorama* published a malicious editorial against Rajan. Prof. Varier had written a reply to

it but the attempt was rejected. But the very next day, *Desabhimani*, published the reply (42). After the news of habeas corpus writ broke out, a satirical magazine *Asadhu*, which had Mr. Jesudas, as its editor, wrote an article praising the efforts of Prof. Varier and critiqued those who tortured Rajan. But after two days the same person wrote a slanderous article against Rajan. Two newspapers which were the mouthpiece of two prominent parties, *Veeekshanam* of Congress and *Janayugam*, of Communist Party of India respectively, reprinted the article in their editorial. According to Prof. Varier, Mr. Appukuttan Vallikkunnu of *Desabhimani*, had waged a war for the struggle of democracy and human rights through a series title, “Kakkayam Camp Kadhaparayunnu” (“Kakkayam Camp Narratives”) which gave an inside story of the Rajan case (69). Therefore, among the media, there were serious voices that functioned for the rights of the citizens while informing the truth behind Emergency and police brutality. And there were plots from the ones in power that intended to subdue the trauma of a generation and upheld Emergency as the right measure when the country was in crisis. Prof. Varier in the chapter, “Remembering the Emergency”, recalls the clause of Right to Life declared by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This clause deals with rules to be followed during an arrest and specifics the rights of the person arrested. “It clearly instructs that the person arrested should be brought before the court within 24 hours of arrest, and subjected to medical examination at least once within 48 hours of arrest. If the authorities had obeyed these rules, Rajan’s case and others like it would never have happened” (61).

Analyzing Rajan’s experience is relevant at present as India has sunken into a state of decentralized Emergency. The center still holds the power but has distributed its machinery among the local sovereignty. The local goons, Hindutwa brigade, honour killings, love jihad, gourakshaks have found a rationale for violence to take power in their hands. This group claim to be the law, the norm and the center. They generate a self-interpreted and robust discourse on patriotism and antinationalism, and target all those who do not surrender to the norm. These framed narratives point to social engineering. Their discourse is predatory because it asserts that all ‘anti-nationalists’ are

against the ethos of the country, and points the merits and demerits of taking the side of the norm and 'the other' to the uninformed people. Most often the citizen is made to decide at gunpoint or under similar threats. A culture of fear is instilled in the mind of the citizens by invading their private spaces while 'othering' all those who do not subscribe to the norm. This is an escalating threat because life itself is in danger. The murders of Govind Pansare, M.M. Kalburgi, Narendra Dabolkar and Gauri Lankesh clearly attest to this fact. The death of these intellectuals symbolizes the death of democracy itself. Their political murders are efforts to murder dissident voices that roar against the unruly establishment. Perhaps democracy is at present the best option for a country like India. But it cannot be a mask for trumpeting violence and inhumanity. A healthy democracy will tolerate pluralism whether it is in the form of ethnicities, cultures and opinions. It will foster the best values of secularism, heterogeneity and tolerance against the climate of hate and violence of sectarian divisions. This is the idyllic picture of India that the makers of the Constitution had promised.

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Literary Geography: Projection of Memory and Space

Midhila Jos

Studies on memory have gained prominence in the contemporary age of Auto-modernity, perhaps due to the inordinate importance given to technology that is capable of storing even the minutest of details. These studies are quite political in orientation as there are multiple discourses generated about particular events and most often the memory that is stored and repeated depends on one's community, religion or nationality. Studying spatial politics in relation to shifting horizons of memory becomes crucial in an age that has started to foreground the idea that nations are the product of imagination and political maps are lines that can be easily redrawn.

Henri Lefebvre said "any search for space in literary texts will find it everywhere and in every guise: enclosed, described, projected, dreamt of, speculated about" (Lefebvre 15). The two concepts of space and place are interrelated but they each carry distinct meanings. It was thought that space is transformed into place as it becomes more familiar, intimate and valuable. The sense of place emerges through a massive complexity of socio-cultural structures and relations, behavior and practices, language and political discourses. It is a product of natural forces and the power of imagination. Literary texts are quite often a mixture of narration; description and place or space is what occupies the descriptive passages.

Edward Casey was skeptical of the importance given to place in literature; he said that place is relegated to a minor issue in literature because literature engages in narrative rather than description. We as readers have often read stories that began with "once upon a time" not "once upon a place". For a long time space was thought of as the background in a literary text, but in the present age there is an ongoing endeavor to foreground space and to focus specifically on those texts

in which spatiality is focused on. The debate between the relative importance accorded to temporality and spatiality in fiction has existed for a long time. Earlier it was felt that a linear chronology of time was mandatory in narratives. One of the major characteristics of fiction in the modernist phase was a deliberate disruption of such temporality. The traditional idea of plot and narration was completely disrupted by the techniques used by the novelists in the modern period. By deliberately disrupting conventional notions of time the novelists had begun to focus on spatiality.

Space as manifesting itself as an integral part of the narrative can be seen in many texts that are located in Fort Cochin. Fort Cochin lies towards the Southern end of Kerala, encased in the sparkling beauty of the Arabian Sea and the lakes that meander through this land made it an ideal destination for settlement. This terrain was ruled by three European powers in succession, from 1500 to 1663 by the Portuguese, the Dutch from 1663 to 1795 and the British from 1795 to 1947. Old Cochin was also settled by the Jews, the Arabs and the Chinese who left a lasting influence.

The map is one of the most powerful and effective means by which humans make sense of their place in the world and Fort Cochin quite evocatively displays the politics of cartography. Cartography is not unlike literature in some ways, just as the way a map offers a representation that is partly based on imagination of space in which we find ourselves, literature also functions as a form of mapping, offering its readers descriptions of places, situating them in a kind of imaginary space, and providing points of reference. Literature like mapping helps readers get a sense of the different worlds in which others live. Literature provides a way of mapping the spaces; real or imagined, in the author's experience. Completely apart from those many literary works which include actual maps, the stories frequently perform the function of maps.

The notion of identity is unquestionably linked with place as the lived experiences in a particular are seen as fundamental in providing a locus of identity and sense of belonging among those who inhabit

it, though in the age of quick communications and fast modes of travel the earlier understanding of space has undergone a vast change identity remains closely linked with the place of one's birth or upbringing. The terrain of Fort Cochin and the icons associated with its multiculturalism foreground the notion that places must be understood both as flexibly constructed by people through their own attachments and narrative productions of self. Here, place is understood as having a continued relevance for, and a dynamic relationship with, individual and collective identity.

Domination by the Dutch and the British, and the moving of the royal family, had created a three-settlement conglomerate of Mattancherry, Fort Cochin and Ernakulam. Of these, Mattancherry is the oldest, as it was a trade center. A large variety of people from different parts of the Indian subcontinent moved to Mattancherry to develop trade, their settlements distinct, with their own places of worship and linguistic and cultural links to their places of origin. They are the Konkinis, Gujaratis and the Tamilians.

When it came to the landscape, colonialism was about transformation. Just as colonial knowledge sought to order the world in taxonomy of the known, the engineers of the colonial landscape sought to order the colonies into a knowable pattern. Colonial landscapes were ordered, sanitized, made amenable to regulation, and structured to enhance the flow of economic activities. Thus, these landscapes did not simply reflect colonial aspirations but were also both consciously and unconsciously used as social technology, as strategies of power to incorporate, categorize, discipline, control and reform the inhabitants of the city, town or plantation. It was therefore intended that the use of buildings and the urban form itself would start affecting the nature of native populations.

If one attempts to read Fort Cochin as a text then it is inevitable that the architecture be treated as the semiotic element that produces a discourse of the past. The various structures that mark the landscape narrate the events of the past and hint at the multiple power structures that claimed the land. It also offers an insight into the multiple cultures

that had an impact on the place. A close perusal of such landscapes reveals certain commonalities. The places of worship especially churches are important, but in Fort Cochin due to the presence of the Jew traders there are synagogues as well.

With the emergence of Cochin, especially Fort Cochin, as a prime destination in the international tourist map, a glut of travel guides and coffee table books have started coming out. In keeping with its projected image of a tourist site that provides a sumptuous feast of colonial vestiges, these are usually bland reproductions of popular historical narratives that faithfully glorify the city's imperial legacy. There must be surely something singular about Fort Cochin that drives writers to come up frequently with a book inspired by the place. Something is in the air, something in the setting, something in the people, something in the tales, something that is missed by the superficial glance. The locale has been a dramatic setting of thrillers, a fabled backdrop to historical fiction, delightful material for illustrated books, and of course offers unalloyed matter for history. While some writers revel in its past, others are fascinated by its remnants; while some celebrate the mixed demography and the consequent lingua franca - a typical Fort Cochin lingo - others are captivated by its visual appeal. Whatever be the reason, the romance of the writer with Fort Cochin seems unabated.

N. S. Madhavan, one of the most powerful voices in contemporary Malayalam fiction, is a multifaceted personality, who is famous as a short fiction writer, novelist, football columnist and a travel writer. Madhavan enjoys a wide readership in Malayalam. After thirty-three years as a writer, Madhavan published his debut novel in 2003 as *Lanthan Batheriyile Luthiniyakal*, translated as *Litanies of the Dutch Battery* in 2010. It was well received by Malayalam readers and has been reprinted many times. The novel is about life on an imaginary island in the Cochin backwaters, named after a 17th-century battery (bathery in Malayalam) of five cannons installed on its promontory by the Dutch (Lanthans in Malayalam).

Fiction makes use of geographical terrains in different ways. Sometimes fictional landscapes are created and sometimes the narrative

is set in an existing landscape. Authors use the geographic perspective when crafting narratives. The relationship between people and their natural and constructed environments is often a key part of a story's plot or setting. The setting is not merely a background in such cases rather space is foregrounded in such narratives and the ethos of the locale permeates the text. There are multiple elements, which make up a place in a narrative and every writer's approach will be different depending on their style and what they are trying to achieve.

There are several layers to the way locations are perceived. First there's the writer's relationship with the place (and time) they choose – usually they know it well enough or have put in the work and research necessary to make it seem real. Then there are the characters and their relationship to their environment. Kantian philosophy regards time and space as the two fundamental categories that structure human experience. Narratives are widely recognized as the discourses of human experience yet most definitions, by characterizing stories as the representation of a sequence of events, foreground time at the expense of space. Events, however, are changes of state that affect individuated existents, which are themselves bodies that both occupy space and are situated in space. Representations of space are not necessarily narratives, for example, geographical maps, landscape paintings, etc. But all narratives imply a world with spatial extension.

In contemporary literature the real-world space that serves as context and referent to narrative texts has gained importance. The area of Fort Cochin is unique as it contains the cultural icons and practices of various countries and the locale itself can be read as a text where time and space meet.

Parishkara Vijayam (Victory of Reform), written by Variyath Chori Peter, and published in 1906 by Cochin Union Press, is the first Malayalam novel to portray the life of Latin Catholics in Cochin. As the title would suggest, it was written with the specific intention of achieving community reforms. Written in the tongue of the region, the novel provides a vivid portrait of the life at the time. However, it did not inspire a successor for a long period until Ponjikkara Rafi, towards the middle of the last

century, came up with *Swargadoothan (Heaven's Messenger)*. It remains out of print in Malayalam and is seldom mentioned in academic discourses as well, while many second rate novels of the same era are still talked about for their 'revolutionary merit'. Rafi's other novels—*Paapikal (The Sinners)*, *Oro Pro Nobis (Pray for Us)*, *KanayileKalyanam (Marriage at Cana)*—also are based on the region, though his later novels focus more on cultural documentation.

Both the Progressive Writers Movement post independence and the high modernity movement inspired by European existentialism in the seventies did not feature significant works that had foregrounded Cochin as the locale. The notable exception in this regard is the short stories of Victor Lenous, arguably the most stylish writer of urban male angst and loneliness in Malayalam. In a career spanning twenty years from 1972 to 1992, Victor wrote only twelve short stories, almost all of them based on the city of Ernakulam, while most of his contemporaries had preferred Delhi as the city for their rootless heroes lost to the debauchery of existential pathos. Victor was least interested in exploring the historical dimensions of Cochin, focusing instead on weaving into the beguilingly laced fabric of his stories, with a distinctly minimalist sophistication, the urban ethos of modern Ernakulam, which at the time was still evolving into the globalised metro it was to later become. His sleek stories also present the first, and perhaps still the finest, instance in Malayalam of investigating the aesthetic possibilities of crime and underworld. Though they have gone to achieve cult status — especially since his death in 1992 — the stories remain largely obscure in the domain of mainstream literature.

Portuguese, Dutch and English – of Fort Cochin in Kerala and juxtaposes them to a postcolonial present, conjured up through a plethora of things from the times. The appearance of these objects is often accompanied by a historical gloss – almost in the future anterior – which anticipates the time of the novel's composition when the fictional world has slid into a recent, affectively charged past. Interestingly, the relationship foregrounded between the legibility of objects and public histories has the effect of anchoring the novel in a sense of the local and at the same time eroding the specificities of

the place by assimilating them into larger narratives of circulation: of things, ideas and people.

Santa and the Scribes: The Making of Fort Cochin by E. P. Unny that was recently released takes readers through the crossover histories of half a millennium with 135 caricatures and related commentary. Unny writes it as “pack all of this and a million mosquitoes into one square mile and you have Fort Cochin.” The place has a visual coherence. It has many histories and surprisingly no feudal baggage. History is extended politics and being a political cartoonist it has excited him the most. The book is a visual journey through centuries of Portuguese, Dutch and British heritage to the distilled present day life. Little Lisbon, Homely Holland, Mini England, Karl Marx ... such chapters, describe the past and the present through chronicles of legendary characters. The rain trees of Fort Cochin that seem to charm every visitor have caught Unny’s fancy too. Unlike Unny, George Thundiparambil is from Fort Cochin. His book *Maya* published in 2008 has Kapri, the cigar-chewing, hat donning spirit of Fort Cochin as its hero. “Fort Cochin is a cultural meeting point and that’s why people are attracted to it. It was the first European settlement in Asia. Not only from an Indian point of view but from a global point too Fort Cochin was very significant” says George. He stresses further that it is the layered history of the place that gives its singularity. “The story of Kapri is Fort Cochin lore. I have seen cigars at his shrine, where people light candles”. George who was inspired to fictionalize this story based on local belief and sourced it from a booklet *Kaprikathagal* written by a person named Aziz from Mattancherry. George set his screenplay “Kozhikode to Cochin” in Fort Cochin too. In *Maya*, the climax is reached on the fictitious 500th anniversary celebrations of Vasco Da Gama’s arrival on the shores of Fort Cochin. The kidnapped heroine is rescued by Kapri, the friendly ghost who finds lost things and souls. While Unny combines drawing with chronicles, Madhavan weaves Fort Cochin into his story about an imaginary place with five Dutch canons on its promontory and George spins a riveting fast-paced story out of prevalent popular lore.

Tanya Abraham, a freelance writer from Fort Cochin, says that she was so often queried about the history and stories of the place that

she decided to compile them into a book. Her slim volume *Fort Cochin-History and Untold Stories* are handed-down tales and vignettes that are a part of traveller's guide tales to authentic researched matter. Between a guide book and a pocket book that caters to travellers and carries with it the romance of the place is Meena Divakar's *Post Code 1*. It is a quick compilation of photos and related story of places and people of Fort Cochin. Most writers doing research on the place invariably reach out for K.L. Bernard's *History of Fort Cochin*. Though some of it is contested history but it is a book most referred to, says K. J. Sohan, a history buff and former mayor from Fort Cochin. With each writer deriving something unique for themselves from Fort Cochin the place continues to be their muse.

History lingers in the air in Fort Cochin, as you walk its cobbled streets and tree-lined lanes, past the cafes and bistros. The oldest fishing village in Kerala, the Portuguese ruled here from 1503 to 1682, followed by the Dutch till 1795, and then the British until the year India became independent. If you stand in the middle of Parade Ground, the square around which Fort Cochin is built, in one direction you can see David Hall, a bungalow built by the Dutch in the late 17th century, and in another direction, Cochin Club, an institution once exclusively meant for British men. Rooted at the same spot, if you turn, there's St. Francis Church, the oldest European church in India housing the gravestone of the explorer Vasco de Gama.

Architecture isn't the only remnant of the past here. The 500 years of migration have left the 4.5 square kilometre area of Old Cochin, the collective name given to Fort Cochin and the adjacent Mattancherry, with a deep sense of multiculturalism. At least 32 communities live here, speaking at least 16 languages.

Place, as has been suggested, is a central feature of literature in so far as it places a writer's work within a specific location. William Zinsser takes a similar position when he states that "every human event happens somewhere, and the reader wants to know what that 'somewhere' is" (88). Some examples of the use of place in literature are novels, biographies, narratives, and short stories. Place serves a

function in that it puts the reader where the writer intends him or her to be mentally, and this information gives the reader some insight into the history, the terrain, the people, the customs of a community, and so forth.

Both the narratives are intricately linked to the place and the narrative would not be the same if the locale were different. Therefore the reader needs some idea about the culture and the peculiarities of the geographical terrain to fully comprehend the text. The terrain of Fort Cochin and the icons associated with its multiculturalism foreground the notion that places must be understood both as flexibly constructed by people through their own attachments and narrative productions of self.

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Decoding Repression and Resistance in the Kashmir Vale of Terror: A Close Reading of Basharat Peer's *Curfewed Night*

Lakshmi Priya B.

Nyla Ali Khan has made an observation regarding the predicament of Kashmir thus:

The once paradisiacal region coveted by kings and mystics alike, albeit for different reasons, where snow – covered peaks majestically tower over flowing rivers and streams bordered by lilies gently swaying to the cadences of the gentle breeze, by a quirk of fate, has become a valley of guns and unmarked graves. (211)

State formation and nation-building always share traumatized narratives that later become coded and rewritten as history. And this is very often immortalized as myths that eulogises nation formation. Kashmir has been captive, during the past sixty years in the making of the myths of origin of India and Pakistan. The terms border and Line of Control pervade every discourse on Kashmir. And the reason behind this is that Kashmiris have been encapsulated and engulfed by these terms ever since India was envisioned as a nation.

To the experts and professionals who occupy the higher rungs of the state apparatus, the main issues in Kashmir centres on national interest, strategic significance, territorial contest and security implications. And for them trauma and suffering are just vestiges. Only the ordinary Kashmiris relate the problem of Kashmir as the central reality of the land. It has to do with survival, clash of death machines and the collapse of social ethics and the pain of communities and families who live there.

The impact of religion, manipulations in the boundaries of nationhood and political strategies adopted by the rulers for their monetary benefits have unleashed brutal and terrible violence into the

land of Kashmir. This has shattered and mutilated the lives of innocent Kashmiris inflicting sheer trauma into their lives. The embarrassing reality in which Kashmir thrives is one of Indian and Pakistani dominance. It is marked by the overwhelming presence of paramilitary troops, barbed wire and invasive searches, bodily frisking, dispossessed youths trained in Pakistani training camps unleashing a reign of misguided terror, custodial killings in detention centres and women wailing on streets in order to get a glimpse of their husbands and sons, and *burqa*-clad women living in fear of being victims of assaults on their self respect under the pretext of religious conflicts and national uprisings. The insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir, has extracted an enormous price from the people of the state. It has snatched away democratic and human rights from Kashmiris.

This paper attempts to closely examine Basharat Peer's *Curfewed Night*, in order to decode and interrogate the Kashmiri political and cultural landscape, the erosion of cultural syncretism, the ever-increasing dominance of religious fundamentalism, the muted voices of victimized women who were subjected to brutal atrocities by Indian paramilitary forces and Pakistan-sponsored insurgents in the light of nation formation. Along with this, special thrust is given to the emergence of changing narratives due to the denial of freedom of expression of the media in Kashmir.

Retracing a few lines from *Rising Kashmir*,

Journalists in Kashmir have been walking on the razor's edge. By virtue of having to report their own conflict they have faced arbitrary detentions and physical intimidation at the hands of state and non- State actors. While Security forces and intelligence agencies would haul them for covering militant groups' activities, the militant groups expected journalists to promote the separatist cause. During this risky tight rope walk many of our colleagues fell to bullets that came from both sides. (02)

In Kashmir, freedom of expression is completely denied in its true essence. Kashmiri journalists have been undergoing physical harassment and verbal or written directives from government respectively to

manipulate and slant coverage in a certain way favourable to either of them. If journalists go against the grain, they would be assaulted by militant groups. Over the years journalists and media professionals have been massively attacked as well as killed by different anti national elements. Journalists have been living under covert gun points. The ones who continue with their professional ethics would be sacked off. In order to enjoy their freedom of expression a few of the journalists resorted to something known as narrative journalism that would encompass the inclusion of journalism, where a writer follows a subject or theme for a long period of time (weeks or months) and details an individual's experiences from a deeply personal perspective. It could be categorized as creative non-fiction wherein the writers could share sincere and true accounts of the traumatic lives of the ordinary people. And this entitles the writers to speak on behalf of the Kashmiri consciousness.

One such journalist is Basharat Peer who could be regarded as a harbinger of this literary venture. Peer's *Curfewed Night* is both a memoir and a creative nonfictional work that unravels the traumatic lives of Kashmiris, driven by the religious divisions and border conflicts which ultimately transformed Kashmir, once a paradise into a corpse littered vale of terror and unrest.

Basharat Peer spends much time in his book, *Curfewed Night*, detailing the subterfuge, deceit, inhumanity and sheer cruelty that have characterized the behaviour of the Indian and Pakistan states, the former claiming to be the world's largest democracy committed to global peace and Gandhian values, the latter continuously and noisily claiming to be an upholder of Islamic virtues. The traumatic lives of the Kashmiris who have been living in a state of limbo since 1990, is an outcome of the shrewd strategies behind nation formation and border zones. The people of Kashmir have been struggling hard to translate themselves from passive recipients of violence into subjects who are capable enough to recognize that they can exercise agency and take control of their destinies. The confluence of religious nationalism, secular nationalism and ethnic nationalism create the complexity of the Kashmir issue.

Basharat Peer observes :

The line of control did not run through 576 kilometres of militarized mountains. It ran through our souls, our hearts, and our minds. It ran through everything a Kashmiri, an Indian and Pakistani said, wrote and did. It ran through the fingers of editors writing newspaper and magazine editorials, it ran through the eyes of reporters, it ran through the reels of Bollywood coming to life in dark theatres, it ran through the whispers of lovers. And it ran through our grief, our anger, our tears and our silences. (249)

The novel *Curfewed Night* in its true essence unravels the traumatic lives of Kashmiris and the brutal torture that they underwent both mentally and physically, which the newspapers and magazines failed to narrate. Newspapers would give in huge bold red letters the statistical data regarding death tolls in various encounters, without mentioning the actual plight of Kashmiris. The reality- the terror struck Kashmiri, surrounded by an AK – 47 ready to be fired, as soon he or she steps out of the house - is always swallowed by the journalists in the newspaper articles. Peer thus resorted to writing non-fictional yet creative works which narrated the traumatic lives of Kashmiris in a curfew bound atmosphere.

Throughout the work, Peer makes the readers peruse the highly sensitive Kashmir conflict and the reasons for its emergence, not on a historical basis, but from a Kashmiri's psychological perspective. So, the conflict is not just as a tussle between India and Pakistan regarding the accession of Kashmir but it is a conflict between the sense of belonging and identity of the Kashmiris. They are living in a state of limbo. Peer puts forward a number of questions: Who are Kashmiris? What is their identity? Do they belong to India or Pakistan or are they just Kashmiris belonging to neither of the two? Why has this happened? Can't there be a solution to this? Peer explains this from the Kashmiri perspective, deliberating on the psychological and a prejudiced impact the conflict has unleashed in their minds.

Peer mentions yet another factor behind the composition of the work, which is "a sense of shame" that overcame him every time he

walked into a Delhi book shop,” that almost nothing was available in English on the struggle he had grown up with. He describes it thus:

People from almost every conflict zone had told their stories: Palestinians, Israelis, Bosnians, Kurds, Tibetans, Lebanese and many more. I felt the absence of our own telling, the unwritten books about the Kashmiri experience. I had to find the words to save memory from the callous varnish of time. I knew I had to write. (98)

He realized that Kashmir has to be the text and subtext of his writing. With this sole intention, he began composing the saga of curfewed nights in the vale of Kashmir that was devouring the lives of Kashmiris. Peer presents a highly unbiased writing especially as he had witnessed these conflicts. Being a Kashmiri, born and brought up in Anantnag, Kashmir Valley, he could write with authority on the life of the Kashmiris.

The book *Curfewed Night* begins, unraveling the years before the struggle and invites the readers into a peaceful mountain paradise, Kashmir, where the slow rhythms of village life make up one's existence: “Paddy fields are green in early summer and golden by autumn. In winter there is nothing but an expanse of pure, white snow covering the mountains, the valley and the roofs of brick houses...” (Peer 1). In spite of this chilled and frozen state, life still exists in all its vigour:

My younger brother Wajahat and I made snowmen using pieces of charcoal for their eyes. And when our mother was busy with some household chore and grandfather was away, we rushed to the roof, broke icicles off it mixed them with a concoction of milk and sugar stolen from the kitchen and ate our homemade ice creams. (Peer 1)

Spring was the season of green mountains and meadows, blushing snow and an expanse of yellow mustard flowers in the fields around the villages. Kashmiri mornings are full of activity. Peer describes Kashmiri mornings onomatopoeically. But this serenity and liveliness is merely a glassy surface, hiding a quagmire beneath. The peaceful

and joyful life, in all its splendour, in the Kashmir Valley underwent an unexpected startle due to the events of insurgency. In January 1990, insurgency erupted in the Kashmir Valley; it quickly overflowed into Jammu with terrorist infiltrations across the LoC. The insurgency was based on the Kashmiri demand for “Azadi!”. The revolt was led by the JKLF, which had gradually extended its influence from Pakistan’s Kashmir into India’s Jammu and Kashmir. Very soon all the insurgents were from within the Kashmir Valley:

Busloads of Kashmiri youth went to border towns and crossed over to Pakistan and Pakistan administered- Kashmir for arms training. They returned as militants carrying Kalashnikovs, hand grenades, light machine guns and rocket launchers issued by Pakistan. (Peer 19)

They were financed, supplied and trained by Pakistan’s Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). “Yasin Malik, who led the militants of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, had been one of those arrested and tortured by polling agents. The bottled up resentment against Indian rule and the treatment of Kashmiris erupted like a volcano. Hundreds were arrested after the Indian troops opened fire on pro-independence Kashmiri protesters.

The slogan “*Khoonkabadlakhon se hi hoga* (Peer 16)” began resonating in the Kashmir Valley. Across Kashmir, on the walls of houses or shop shutters vibrant messages began to be graffitied. The universal slogan found on almost every street, across the valley is: ‘Go India Go Back;’ ‘Blood will be avenged’. The JKLF’s declared objective was to win *azadi* for Jammu and Kashmir thus resorting to Kashmiris the dignity they felt had been compromised by India’s rule over their land. Thus, many of Kashmir’s youth were persuaded to develop the notion that since all other methods of achieving freedom had failed; violence was their only recourse. But after the initial euphoria in successfully paralyzing government in Jammu and Kashmir and particularly in the valley at the start of 1990s, the movement quickly dissipated into a struggle for domination among different groups. What had begun as an ethnic conflict was given a religious identity by the ISI, which

prompted religiously oriented groups. The JKLF too acquired a religious leaning, even though the party's manifesto had sought to build on the original secular foundations of the National Conference. The *Hizb-ul-Mujahedden*, a militant wing of the radical *Jama'at-i-Islam*, whose agenda was Kashmir's accession to Pakistan, sought to marginalize the JKLF. Though the JKLF philosophy then was and has remained supposedly secular, the Kashmiri Pandits, a minuscule minority of Hindus in Kashmir Valley, became the principal targets of terrorists from both the JKLF and the *Hiz-ul-Mujahedeen*.

This violence sparked the emigration of nearly the entire Pandit community from the valley into a diaspora spreading from Jammu into different parts of India and for the well heeled, even as far as the U.S:

On the first day of the school as I sat in the classroom, I was struck by some empty chairs. 'They have left,' someone said. Five of our Kashmiri Pandit classmates were not there. Along with killing hundreds of pro-India Muslims ranging from political activists to suspected informers for Indian intelligence, the militants killed hundreds of Pandits on similar grounds, or without reason. The deaths had scared the Pandits and they left the Valley by March 1990 for Jammu, Delhi and various other Indian cities and towns. (Peer 22)

Peer's portrayal of Kashmir and the armed conflicts stir a few thought provoking questions - Why were the Kashmiris against Indian Paramilitary and Armed Forces? Secondly, why did young boys, with the support of their parents cross the borders and go to Pakistan, to get trained as militants under the name of Jihadi? "War Till Victory" and slogans of *Aazadi* has been graffitied everywhere in Kashmir, even in the lives of Kashmiris – this statement would lead us to the answer to the above questions. They believed that the Indian armed forces came to Kashmir not to support them, but subjugate them. Kashmiris whose faith rested on this notion saw India as an enemy nation having nothing to do with Kashmir. Such a notion was passed on from one generation to the next. So protests against Indian army were rampant and in order to suppress the violent mob, army often opened fire. And this was the

case in the Gawkadal Bridge massacre; the first massacre in the Kashmir valley. The cruelty of paramilitary forces on the innocent men and women, shatter the positive inclinations that at least a few Kashmiris had towards India. Thus the word '*Azadi*' resonated throughout the villages.

The second perspective arises as an extension of the above notion. Militant groups used Islam for mobilisation; images from Islamic history had been borrowed and words like martyrdom and jihad were thrown around. By 1993 – 94, Islamist militant groups had gained the upper hand in the separatist militancy and Kashmiri nationalist groups like pro-independence JKLIF had become defunct, surrendered and adopted the politics of non-violent protest. Pakistan played a key role in creating a rift. Pakistan turned towards its old-time supporter in Kashmir: the *Jamaat-e-Islami*, Jammu and Kashmir, a right wing politico-religious organisation. Jamaat men suddenly became all-powerful because of their influence in the militant group, which had immense support from Pakistan and sought Kashmir's accession to the country. This Jamaat soon became *Hizbul Mujahideen*. As there were more and more protests, holy war or jihad emerged under the pretext of Islam religion. Pakistan seemed to take advantage of this growing resentment among Kashmiris by introducing militancy for their material gains. Pakistan was waging its own 'proxy war' in Kashmir, not only by supporting the militants by giving them arms but also by allowing them to train in their territory. They supplied material and financial support without which the movement would have been easier for the Indian army to suppress. From Peer's account, it is evident that in the beginning parents felt proud to send their sons to PoK for militant training only to return to wage war against India. This stirred interests in young boys of thirteen years to join various militant groups. Peer thus brings out the reason why young Kashmiri boys resorted to militancy by citing his own fascination towards militancy:

Someone would have seen a militant and he would tell us how the militant styled his hair, what clothes and shoes he wore, and how many days he said it would take for freedom. The best story was about the magical Kalashnikov... 'We call it Kalashnikov and Indians

call it AK – 47,' the militant said. From then on we all carried our cricket bats inside our pherans, in imitation and preparation. (Peer 47)

Like his friends Peer too wanted to join the militant group JKLF, at the age of fourteen. But educated men like Peer's grandfather and father had a contrary view. Peer's father asked him:

... read and think about it for a few years and then decide for yourself. At that I will not say that u should or should not join any group. Rebellions were held by educated men. And men like Gandhi, Nehru led rebellions but none of them used guns but they changed history. So if you want to do something for Kashmir, I would say you should read.

Peer seems to express gratitude to his parents for guiding him in the right path as most of his friends died in encounters and some brutally injured having fallen prey to the vicious militancy.

Liberty or freedom of movement is something that every man enjoys but a Kashmiri is forbidden. As soon as a Kashmiri steps out of his house he is soon surrounded by AK-47 guns held by either the militants or the soldiers. New phrases like frisking, crackdown, bunker, search, identity card, arrest and torture became integral part of their life. "The bodily frisking, the proof of identity, the rude questions, which had seemed humiliating earlier were routine now, like brushing your teeth" (Peer 214). School children have to give their school bags and even their lunch boxes to the soldiers for search procedures. Life in Kashmir is just like a bubble that would burst any moment. There was no security for anyone's life, because at any moment we could confront a bunker or a truck or perhaps a hamlet blasting with a bombastic boom.

With the passage of each day, the conflict intensified. Fear and chaos ruled Kashmir. Fathers wished they had daughters instead of sons as their sons were killed every day. Mothers prayed for the safety of their daughters. People dreaded knocks on their doors at night. Graveyards began to spring up everywhere and market places were

scarred with charred buildings. People always talked about border and crossing the border; it had become an obsession, an invisible presence Border! Line of Control.

Peer then shows us through the deeply touching stories of mothers, young women, sons, poets, militants the complexities that are inevitably involved, refraining from presenting a Manichean picture of Muslims versus Hindus or Islamic fundamentalist versus secularists. Each story mentioned in book, is representative of what happened to thousands of families and Kashmiris in general. The story of the young boy Tariq, is one such an incident, implicitly suggesting the life of Kashmiri youth who resort to militancy. Tariq crossed the border and went to Pakistan with the intention of becoming a guerrilla. Many youngsters who went in this fashion failed to return. But Tariq returned home after his arms training in Pakistan. Homecomings for militants were short lived. Tariq became a staunch militant working against India and in a raid conducted on August 14th, 1992, he was killed by soldiers in his hideout.

Peer narrates the gravity of fear and paranoia that engulfs the lives of those individuals who have encountered militant attacks. This is explored through the mine blast incident and night militant attack episodes. A mine blast was targeted at Peer's parents, it was very close and fortunately they escaped. Peer's father was very much scared and later lived with a great degree of fear. He hardly travelled anywhere. Sometime, their car drove over an empty tetra packet of a mango drink lying on the road as the packet burst, Peer's father ducked under his seat, his hand covering his head fearing that it is a mine blast. The latter episode narrates the story of Ghulam Nabi, who did small time road repair jobs on contract for the local government. One night, he and his daughter Mubeena, walked towards the cowshed adjoining their courtyard. A stern voice called out, ' Ghulam Nabi? ' Militants were pointing guns at them and one of them spoke that there were allegations against Nabi for working for the National Conference. They asked Nabi to go with them. Mubeena was quick to realize that if her father went with the militants he might not return. She flung the lantern, that she was holding, into a militant's face and pushed her father to run. They ran and hid inside a neighbour's house. The militants fired a few shots

in the air and banged at Nabi's door. Nabi was so terrified that he refused to move out of the house. Every time someone knocked on the door or the phone rang, he jumped. "I feel they are looking for me," he often muttered. Due to the severe depression that afflicted him, he was advised to take anti – depression drugs. "His hair and beard had turned white; his blue eyes still had a paranoid look about them, as if someone was watching him" (Peer 79).

He also narrates the pathetic plight of women, who were ill-treated by militants as well as Indian armed forces, incorporating some of the case studies of reports that were filed in the police stations. Peer presents the brutality of the militants, and also the atrocities inflicted on young women by Indian paramilitary forces by citing the heart rending story of the rape of a pristine young bride, MubeenaBano of LissarChowgam, on her way to her marital home. While on her way to her husband's home along with his entourage of *baratis*, the virginal bride was horrendously violated by a bestial group of paramilitary personnel. The groom, Malik, and some members of his entourage were brutally shot at without provocation at Bodhasgam crossing. This brutality is described by Peer quoting the poet, Farooq Nazaki :

Mothers wash the blood stained apparel of grooms

On stream banks,

Bridal wear burns to ash,

Bridesmaids cry

And Jhelum flows.

And another real incident that Peer has portrayed is that of a young girl who was psychologically shattered during a sectarian violence. She was admitted in the hospital for treatment and when the doctor asks her father to open a window of the ward, "*Khol do*", she immediately drops her pants. She has been repeatedly raped and associates the phrase "*khol do*" with the rapist's command to undress. Under the pretext of frisking and interrogating the local men who were allegedly insurgents or soldiers raided the village and humiliated women. Militants violated women as a part of their protest. While the author

is deeply critical of the Indian state and its heavy - handed security apparatus which has subjected Kashmiris to an almost routine humiliation of identity parades, body searches and an unpleasant volley of questions, yet he is also able to tease out the humane side of the men in uniform. Peer vividly recounts his run in with an army man in Srinagar, the argument that followed and the latter's sudden transformation when he realizes that they studied in the same university and had common friends. Before taking leave the army man says "I was a different man before I joined the force and came to Kashmir" (Peer 239).

Firing on protesters, arrests, disappearances, custodial killings, kidnappings, assassinations are the order of the day in torture dominated Kashmir. Peer draws our attention to the torture camps that prevailed in every nook and corner of Kashmir Valley. Papa - 2 was the most infamous torture centre run by the Indian forces in Kashmir. Hundreds who were taken to Papa - 2 did not return. Those who returned were wrecks. The detention cum torture centre was closed down in the late nineties. Basharat narrates the story of some of the survivors from the Papa - 2. From the narration of some such survivors like Shafi, Anzar, a description of what Papa - 2 is detailed in the book. The imprisoned militants were thrown into small, stinky room where smears of blood blemished the white washed walls. Every man had a coarse, black blanket for bedding. The blankets were full of lice. A corner of the room was their toilet. The prisoners defecated and urinated into polythene bags in that corner; they then threw the bags into a dustbin. Every time a man had to use the 'toilet', two others held a blanket like a curtain to give him some privacy. During the interrogation, the prisoners or militants were made to stare at very bright bulbs and the lights burnt their eyes. Some of them began to lose their eyesight. This was done with most young boy militants as well. It destroyed many lives.

Peer also points out the seamy side of this, which is, the JKLF and Separatist leaders live in big houses and drive big cars bought from the money that came for the movement. And they are not willing to help those who sacrificed and destroyed their lives for the cause. The survivors were full of hatred and anger towards these leaders. Shafi

remarks, “ The JKLF leaders cannot even imagine what being tortured is like. We were used for their benefits and we became sheer scape goats in their hands.” (Peer 146) The Kashmiris who were made militants by these militant groups, began to realize that their lives were stark. These sufferers being deformed and crippled right from very young age began to condemn the hollowness of the Azadi Movements formulated by the militant groups.

Peer’s narration decodes Kashmiri consciousness and the work *Curfewed Night* acts as a mouth piece of Kashmiriyat or Kashmiri identity. He discusses the life of Kashmiris in its original state devoid of any manipulation, there by speaks for them in order to express what the Kashmiris really desire. Being a Kashmiri himself and having undergone the traumatic experiences of insurgency, Peer is indomitable in his narration of events in the memoir. This endows him an agency to speak on behalf of the repressed Kashmiris. He ends the book with a note of hope, closing with the introduction of a new bridge across the LoC. Kashmiris, from both side of the divide across this physical and metaphorical bridge, greeting each other with rousing welcomes. He is highly optimistic and chooses to cherish the words ‘historic’ and ‘hope’ in this context so as to have fruition of his dream of fulfilling the demand of the Kashmiris. Kashmiris demand a different life a peaceful one as Fahad Shah has remarked in his book, *Of Occupation from Resistance : Writings Kashmir*:

... a life where the land one belongs to, exists as a nation on the map of the world; where one does not live and die with an uncertain identity. A life where there are no bunkers, no checkpoints and no barriers of coiled razor wires; where one is not greeted by gun – wielding soldiers on the way to school; where parents are not humiliated every day; where tiffin boxes and school bags are not searched for weapons; and where one is not thrown into the shadows of despair and frustration. (70)

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The Concept of Power: A Reading of Vijay Tendulkar's Select Plays

Hanna James

The concept of power plays a decisive position in modern society. All forms of societies function according to different agencies of power. With the challenging of existing power structures in society, there is a huge demand for the social inclusion of women, working class, people of colour, ethnic and sexual minorities, indigenous people and aborigines who have traditionally been excluded from the main strata of society. These marginalized groups attempt to seek a better position by raising their voices against social disparities. Apart from treating them as mere subjects of power, they are considered to be the agents who can drive out new possibilities to advance their strengths. Michael Foucault comments in his article "Afterword: The Subject and Power", "A society without power relations can only be an abstraction" (343). Thus the power relations in a society play a central part in the dominant hegemonic group as there exists a strong relationship between them. Power and Knowledge, the two interlinking terms proposed by Michael Foucault plays a pivotal role in modern society. The formation of power plays a decisive role in generating knowledge. Michael Foucault talks about the epistemic contexts in which these bodies of knowledge become intelligible and authoritative. He further explains that "To live in a society is in any event; to live in such a way that some can act on the actions of others" (343). The exchange of the power relations creates a superior class that has authority and a class that is subjected to authority. The concept of power emerges within particular institutions. This non-external nature of power leads to formation of resistance. The point of resistance is thus present across the entire power network. Like power, resistance employs various tactics and strategies.

This study explores the Foucauldian model of power politics based on power, resistance, and knowledge by focusing on the two plays of Vijay Tendulkar. This is also an attempt to listen to the voice of the

voiceless that are trapped under the powerful class based hierarchy. Thus the plays of Vijay Tendulkar make the reader explore new discourses as well as challenge the reader to arrive at the secret intricacies of the text.

Kamala a play written by Vijay Tendulkar narrates the story of a Delhi based journalist Jaisingh Jhadav who wields unbelievable power over both the media and members of his family. In the beginning of the play, Jaisingh Jhadav represents himself as a powerful and sensational journalist who sacrifices anything for his fame and success. That is the reason why he brought Kamala an Adivasi tribal woman from her native place, so that her story narrated by Jaisingh Jhadav reflects the reality of flesh trade and degradation of women in India. For Jaisingh Jhadav, it was a matter of getting professional success not an act of kindness. He appears at first on the stage as dead tired due to the journey. But he seems to be very excited about the fruit of his successful journey. He makes a call to his friends and says:

JASINGH. Hello Jaspalji, main Jaisingh bol raye. I've just come back. Mission accomplished. Yes brought her with me! ...What time have you fixed the press conference? That's wonderful. Is everything ready? Excellent! They can still prosecute me? Let them proceed. That's all make a nice front page item. Even more publicity. (9)

The above mentioned dialogue truly reflects his character. His lust for fame showcases the present day culture. He treats Kamala as a mere object for pleasure not a subject to communicate with. By exposing the tribal woman, he unveils his true intention of attaining fame in the media. Kamala is just a tool for his success as a journalist. But for Kamala, Jaisingh Jhadav is a God like figure who rescues her from her tormenters and she herself considers him as her master.

Jaisingh Jhadav also appears as a troublemaker in his own personal life. He emerges as a traditional husband who tamed his wife Saritha using the strict codes of patriarchy. For Jaisingh Jhadav, Saritha is an object that provides physical enjoyment, social companionship and domestic comfort. As a journalist, he holds a series of discussions

regarding the social inequality of women. But in his personal life, he is an embodiment of patriarchy. Hence in this play, Jaisingh Jhadav emerges as a powerful figure in the lives of Saritha and Kamala. He seems to know the truth and as these women are ignorant regarding the reason for the degeneration happening in their lives. This is how the concept of power subordinates them.

Michael Foucault points out the importance of the relation between concepts and statements as he says in the article written by Joseph Rouse titled “Power and Knowledge” as , “What questions and procedures were relevant to assess the credibility of those statements that were taken seriously”(93). Here Jaisingh Jhadav is taken seriously and his statements are accepted as important because of the power attached to him as a man who is capable of ruling Saritha and Kamala. Here these women are kept away from knowledge that exists in the society and they are unable to understand the real implications of the actions and events happening around them. In Michael Foucault’s opinion “the complex strategical situation in a particular society is determined by the heterogeneous elements aligning or conflicting with each other” (Rouse *The Cambridge Companion* 93). The different and diverse elements contribute to the rise of Jaisingh Jhadav in the power ladder of the society. The hopelessness of the victims, patriarchal domination, lack of financial security and exploitative conditions urges the victims to hope to for a saviour and they see Jadhav in the role of a saviour. In the beginning of the play, Saritha meekly surrenders before the more knowledgeable Jaisingh Jhadav. As Foucault stresses on the interrelated dynamics of knowledge and power, Jaisingh Jhadav serves as the epitome of superior knowledge among the family members and thus ensures a higher position in the hierarchy of the power structure. On one occasion Jaisingh Jhadav fires Saritha when she delays calling Kamala to his room. He says:

J AISINGH. Wake her up.

S ARITHA. She is only just off to sleep

J AISINGH. Never mind. Wake her up and send her here.
I want to talk to her

[Saritha stands where she is for a moment]

What did I just say? Can't you here?

[Saritha goes off the stage]. (18- 19)

Thus from the above dialogue, it is clear that the condition of Saritha is in a deteriorated position. Here the patriarchal ideology serves as a symbol of power in the life of Saritha.

Traditional ideas about marriage are a huge obstacle in a woman's life. The notion of marriage is often romanticized and this conceals the real anxiety and suppression of woman. Saritha's life underwent a huge transformation after her marriage. Her need for space is exploited by the superior nature of Jaisingh Jhadav. As Kate Millet in her famous work *The Sexual Politics* defines marriage as a "means of emotional manipulation of the woman by the men" (37). Here the power of patriarchal ideology subordinates Saritha as she was not able to come out of the shell of patriarchy. The context of patriarchal ideology becomes more complex in relation to women's sexuality. Michael Foucault challenges the traditional explanation of the history of sexuality in terms of subordination and offers a way of thinking about sexuality in relation to power mechanism. According to Michael Foucault in his *History of Sexuality*, "Sexuality must not be seen as a drive but as an especially dense transfer point of relations of power" (Foucault 103). Here the concept of power and knowledge comes directly into a heterosexual relationship based on dominance and subordination. In order to prove this statement, there is an incident in which Jaisingh Jhadav forces Saritha to have a sexual relationship in spite of her unwillingness. As he says:

J AISINGH. You must tell me. I must know. Don't I have the right to have my wife when I feel like it?

[Exits Saritha towards the kitchen]

J AISINGH. Saritha!

[Slamming his feet into his hand] The bitch! [Stands for a while. Then swallows the rest of his drink at a gulp and goes upstairs].
(32)

From the above dialogue it is clear that he is trying to control Saritha by verbal abuse. For him, it is an act of disciplinary mechanism so that he can tune her for his selfish motives.

Michael Foucault argues in his famous work *History of Sexuality: The Will of Knowledge* that “in order to understand what power relations are about...we should investigate the forms of resistance” (329). Foucault argues resistance as an essential outcome of power that which leads to the question of, how power becomes productive?. The analysis of power relations existing in the play *Kamala* leads us to the nature of resistance in the character. As Shanta Gokhale, a senior theatre critic, historian, playwright, and director writes in *National School of Drama Journal* as:

In some of Vijay Tendulkar plays he presents women in pairs. They are quite different from each other in behavioural traits, class and characters. But underneath these superficial differences they resemble each other in the ultimate truth of being commanded by men. In *Kamala* the educated, self assured Saritha realizes...because of an innocent question asked by scared, illiterate village woman Kamala-How much did the village woman pay for you?. (Gokhale 14)

Thus a sudden revelation happens when she internalizes the feelings of the hapless Kamala and Saritha herself sees her own image in Kamala. Saritha is the only character that shows strong resistance to patriarchy as she expresses her objection against the male centered world. She shows the first sign of resistance as her unwillingness to satisfy the physical desires of her husband. After the conversation that she had with Kamala, she is clear that the role of woman in a society is to please her family and to bear children. In this play Jaisingh Jhadav's wife considers herself as a slave, whose sole purpose is to please her master. But later, she refuses to go with Jaisingh Jhadav for the party. This serves as a second sign of revolt. Her conversation with Khakasaheb, the uncle of Saritha truly reflects her revelation about the superior nature and hypocrisy of her husband. Like Kamala she considers herself as an object bought by her husband. The people who are subjected to power should

resist it. In this play Saritha is able to resist the chauvinistic attitude of her husband to an extent; at least she is able to express her indignation towards the way she is treated. In spite of this marginalized condition Saritha emerges as a powerful figure when Jaisingh Jhadav is sacked from the job. It is entirely her own decision and choice to stay with her husband in his problematic situation. Saritha in this play proves that no victim position is constant and people keep changing their positions. She breaks all the traditional beliefs of patriarchy and leads an authentic, independent life true to her identity.

Sakharam Binder a three-act play written by Vijay Tendulkar shows out the conflict and confrontation between the three individuals in a society. By depicting the character of Sakharam Binder, Tendulkar tries to expose the presence of masochistic character in the lower middle class male. In this play, the main protagonist Sakharam Binder displays an unusual and strange behaviour. He rejects the institution of marriage and treats every woman as an object of pleasure thus shows a powerful embodiment of masculinity.

Michael Foucault's concept of 'Governmentality' ensures the effective generation of power over an individual. The concept of Governmentality in relation to power centres on three aspects such as the relationship between self and domination, the constitution of subject for the formation of state and the difference between power and domination. In this play Sakharam Binder arises as a strong epitome of powerful patriarchy among other members in his family. Laxmi, Sakharam wife is a typical Indian woman who meekly subjects to the terms and conditions of Sakharam Binder. Sakharam treats Laxmi as a mere object for pleasure and exploits her both physically and emotionally. In spite of her exploitative condition, Laxmi treats Sakharam as her husband and tries to fulfil all his desires. In the beginning of the play, Sakharam shows his supreme attitude to Laxmi when she comes to his house. He tries to overpower Laxmi as he considers himself as the master of his house. Sakharam orders Laxmi to not look up to any stranger and insists her to cover her head when people make a visit to his house. As he says:

SAKHARAM. Maybe I'm a rascal, a womanizer, a pauper, why maybe? I am all that. And I drink. But I must be respected in my own house. I am the master here. You agree to this. (126)

Thus from the above dialogue it is clear that the anger and frustration of Sakharam highlights his superior nature over his wife. The body of an individual is directly exposed to the external surroundings in which the power is inscribed on their body through specific practices and political forces. Sakharam tunes Laxmi to behave according to his way of life by saying that she should live as a docile individual and behave in a polite manner. In the first act of the play, there is an incident in which Sakharam Binder beats Laxmi with his belt as Laxmi opposes Dawood, a Muslim friend of Sakharam from performing pooja on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi. Here Sakharam's violent behaviour is related to his physical lust for Laxmi as he considers Laxmi as fragile and silent individual locks under the patriarchy. By beating his wife, Sakharam fulfils his ego as being the master of his house. This is how the concept of self and domination works throughout the play. When Laxmi worries about her physical condition, Sakharam forces Laxmi to laugh in front of him. As he says:

SAKHARAM. Now laugh. Are you going to laugh or not?

LAXMI. No.

SAKHARAM. Are you or aren't you?

LAXMI. My whole body is throbbing with pain. Such gnawing pain. You'd think my flesh was on fire.

SAKHARAM. So what? You have to laugh. You hear me? My orders must be obeyed in this house. What I say goes. Are you going to laugh? or shall I throw you out? Shall I? Come on, get up

LAXMI. Let me go. Oh, God! Oh my God. (145)

Thus he treats Laxmi as a subject of domination.

The mind and body of a person plays a prominent role in generating power over the individual. The dualistic aspect of an individual is separate in nature as the body is the crude container of

the mind. The emotions and feelings generated from the mind create an impact on the individual's life. In this play, the character Laxmi is passive in nature as she is deserted by her first husband because she was not able to give birth to a child for him. But when she finds Sakharam Binder, she performs her duty as a devoted wife by wearing mangalsutra. Thus her mind and body function as subordinate to Sakharam Binder. But Champa, the sixth wife of Sakharam Binder displays a behaviour pattern that is contrasted to that of compares to Laxmi's. She abandons her lecherous and impotent husband and finds shelter in Sakharam's house. As an alcoholic, she satisfies the sensual desires of Sakharam Binder by controlling him. There is an incident in the second act of the play when, Sakharam forces Champa to have a physical pleasures but she resists against his action. She says:

CHAMPA. I am warning you. Don't trouble me.

SAKHARAM. In this house what I say goes, see? You have got to do what I say. My orders in this house to be obeyed. I can turn nasty otherwise. I'll thrash the life out of you. There's no stopping me.

CHAMPA. Go out there. I've work to do.

SAKHARAM. Champa!

CHAMPA. Listen to me. Don't trouble me so. (171)

Thus from the above dialogue, it is clear that the character Champa is an arrogant woman who rebels against the male dominated society. She does not accept the traditional concept of patriarchal subjection. She also develops an immoral relationship with Dawood in order to satisfy her lust. Here Champa posses a strong emotional power over Sakharm Binder.

There is no pre- determined subject who is subjected to a given social order. But several conditions force the individuals to become a subject by obeying certain rules and orders. In the beginning of the play, Sakharam pretends to be the saviour of every woman who is abandoned by her husband. The power that he exerts over his subject is similar to the religiouspower that Michael Foucault refers to as having

evolved in the modern times from Christian institutions. But Sakharam twists his salvation oriented plans which lead the lives of Laxmi and Champa to a false paradise. In short, it is a perverted form of pastoral power that is showcased in Sakharam *Binder*. The salvation that Sakharam promises them turns out to be a hopeless situation. They feel that Sakharam should take care of them but it turns out to be an illusion. Thus the coextensive and continuous form of power reveals the truth about them in reality. In the second act of the play, there is a transfer of power from Sakharam to Champa. As an arrogant woman, she revolts against the traditional set of beliefs and neglects all household activities. In the last act, the power again shifts from Champa to the hands of Laxmi as she helps Sakharam to bury the dead body of Champa in spite of Sakharam's weak emotional condition.

Freedom and power are not mutually exclusive as freedom does not vanish wherever power is exercised. This freedom is there for both Laxmi and Champa so they are free to leave from the custody of Sakharam *Binder*. In the first act of the play, Laxmi leaves Sakharam *Binder* as she is unable to adjust with Sakharam's hot temper and excessive demands. She says to Sakharam:

LAXMI. My life's not that worthless. You think my mother carried me in her womb for nine whole months just to have me kill myself in a breath? Maybe I'm homeless now, but I come from a good family. My father used to be a Munsif. (147)

From the above dialogue it is clear that Laxmi is able to reveal her suppressed condition. But her attempt to leave Sakharam is pointless as her misfortune brings her back to Sakharam's house. He has not completely forgotten the insulting words of Laxmi as she showered on him at the time of her departure. Thus as a matter of revenge, Sakharam causes several physical harassment to Laxmi. Thus Vijay Tendulkar exposes the hypocrisy, jealousy, masochism, and lust of the middle class male by presenting Sakharam *Binder* as the main character.

Hence through his plays, Vijay Tendulkar creates a shocking sensibility for the conservative audience by projecting the stark realities

of life. As a socially concerned writer, Tendulkar's play discusses the individuals' struggle for existence and quest for liberation in a realistic way. Almost all the protagonist of his plays lives a kind of meaningless and purposeless life as they are free to make their own choices. Thus his plays can be read in the background of Foucauldian power politics.

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Literature Re-mapped: Dissemination of Cultural Capital at Kochi-Muziris Biennale

Arathi Kaimal B.

The Kochi Muziris Biennale (KMB) is an artists' initiative, by the Kochi Biennale Foundation (KBF) that has been transforming Kochi and its nearby islands into an art carnival since its inception in December 2012. Once in every two years, KMB brings together an assembly of artists of international renown to communicate their philosophies and art as well interact in a unique space that also hosts the creator, critic and the reader at the same place. At *Forming in the Pupil of an Eye*, the third edition that commenced on 12th December 2016, curator Sudarshan Shetty's focus was on a meditation of space and the multiplicities of perceptions in order to assimilate the world in all its myriad complexities. In an unprecedented effort Shetty had allowed the permeation of literature into the exhibition space in a vaster than usual volume. The predominance of the artists who use language as their primary tool of expression and the functions that their hypertexts performed at KMB are the primary concerns of this study.

The incorporation of literary works into exhibition spheres, such as the Kochi Muziris Biennale (KMB), becomes a multi-disciplinary commentary as well as a meditation on different representational media and the functions of intertextuality, adaptation, and translation. For instance, Sergio Chejfec's *Dissemination of a Novel* serves multifaceted purposes – a reflection on art and representational practices, challenges conventional restraints on modes of literary narration and adds to the inherent heterotopic nature of the locale/space that it occupies. Sharmishtha Mohanty's *I Make New the Song of Old* undermines the defences for mono-medial expressions while Raul Zurita's *Sea of Pain* reaffirms the extent of impact of poetry when coupled with theatrical and immersive conceptual art mechanisms.

Every text has within it the elements to create a new text. This aspect is manipulated by the literary artists at Kochi Muziris Biennale

2016 while appropriating their literature to the setting of a gallery space. KMB's efforts in adaptation are different and unique because of the incorporation of multiple media in the discourse generation, while preserving the original nuances of the hypotext. The result is an open ended text that permits an opportunity for the readers to make their own performance. The hypertexts that one encounters at KMB, such as the *Dissemination of a Novel* by Sergio Chejfec (translated into English by Margaret Carson) and *The Tears of Taj Mahal* by Ouyang Jiyanghe, along with the installations by Sharmistha Mohanty, Raul Zurita and Aleš Šteger, perform multiple functions in their adapted incarnations.

Although 'adaptation' is a familiar term for contemporary Indian society owing to the voracious movie adaptations and biopics spewed out through the many Film Industries across the sub-continent, unlike popular trend the direction of movement in adaptation had not always been from literature to visual media. Painters and poets were always receptive to each other's art. At Kochi Muziris Biennale (KMB) this interdisciplinary nature of discourse and knowledge generation is made use of and fused together through collaborations. At Kochi Muziris Biennale (KMB) the selected works are seen to be adaptations from literature to the form of exhibits – from one particular mode into an assembly of multiple modes. This is what makes the installations by Sergio Chejfec, Sharmistha Mohanty, Raul Zurita and Ouyang Jiyanghe uniquely significant to literary tradition; all of whom are primarily authors and all of their featured installations, primarily literary/textual in nature.

Chejfec's novel is written on walls, Jiyanghe's poem is calligraphy is on cloth while Mohanty's poem reaches us through a collaboration of multiple media. What happens here is a unique case of adaptation from folio form into modes appropriate for a gallery space – a formal and conceptual reinterpretation of literary production through multi-modal collaborations.

In Sharmistha Mohanty's work the room and the location as seen from within the room augment the reception of meaning projected in her poems. Mohanty's poem *I Make New the Song Born of Old* was written

and presented to the audience in a room at Aspinwall House. The room had a single window facing the waters and was entirely painted black. The verses appear on the arched window, flowing down horizontally, in sync with Mohanty's recital in the background (refer fig.1). "Poetry being a form of literature, I never imagined it could share the same space as a work of art. When I saw ... Sharmistha Mohanty's space, I was just amazed at the different elements inside the room that related to her poetry," observed author Anita Nair (*newindianexpress.com*).

Expansiveness is the theme of her poem and the elements in the room all add up to it. The wide room houses the strands of her verses that seem to flow down from the walls, framing the view of the waters through the window. There is convergence of artistic practices – auditory, visual, and the literary text in a way that it mirrors the entire Biennale. Conceptually Mohanty's work alternates between time and space. According to the *Guide A-Z*, "Mohanty intends for you to use the language she presents to you orient yourself within space so you can materially experience her work outside the page" (361). The artist here brings together multiple media and orchestrates it into perfection to bring about a heightened and unique visceral experience.

Along with maximum fidelity, such practices of adaptation also offer added advantages of multimedial representation. In the new form, the new text is universal and non-limiting with respect to cultural/linguistic/temporal/genre/topical differences thereby opening up a reading from within and without. There is a simultaneous awareness of the local, universal, ethereal and the earthly. As Foucault states in his work *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias*,

There also exist, and this is probably true for all cultures and all civilizations, real and effective spaces which are outlined in the very institution of society, but which constitute a sort of counter arrangement, of effectively realized utopia, in which all the real arrangements, all the other real arrangements that can be found within society, are at one and the same time represented, challenged, and overturned: a sort of place that lies outside all places and yet is actually localizable. In contrast to the utopias,

these places which are absolutely other with respect to all the arrangements that they reflect and of which they speak might be described as heterotopias. (333)

Kochi itself then becomes a heterotopia in the sense that it presents to us pockets of spaces within itself that are constantly at odds with each other in comparison to its surrounding landscape and cultures, such that it is literally “a sort of place that lies outside all places and yet is actually localizable” (Foucault 333). There are references to multiple places, cultures and ages at Kochi owing to the remnants of all of its history. A walk through Kochi and its nearby islands thus becomes a walk through a cultural history museum unlike any other. Kochi is in a problematic continuum with opposing sites of a contemporary utility within itself, becoming a breathing, thriving, evolving museum. Into this background a self-consciously heterotopic exhibition space is being set up, for promoting contemporary art practices while preserving and celebrating Kochi’s own socio-cultural layering, thus normalising an otherwise heterogeneously complicated space.

Chejfec’s novel although deals with the experiences particular to a Latin American culture, it becomes universal at KMB 2016 because of its meditations on functions of artistic practices. It becomes an extension of Kochi’s own multiplicity. The collaboration here is with the translator and the calligraphers who hand painted the text on the walls thereby accentuating the role of language and scripting. Jinaghe’s calligraphy in Chinese script is almost illegible and incomprehensible to a non-native viewer. Yet the collaboration with the translator and the allusion to Taj Mahal in the title are pointers that direct the viewer to the universality of the literature adapted into the exhibit. Universality is at its peak in the case of Ales Steger’s *Pyramid of the Exiled Poets*. The familiarity with the particular verses recited inside the pyramid is not a pre-requisite for the basic understanding of the emotion that triggered such an exhibit. The Pyramid is also meant for all exiled poets and one may add all artists who were and are debarred for their sensibility and aesthetics. In *Pyramid of Exiled Poets*, the makeshift pyramid references to an imaginary space that could become a reverential tomb

for the exiled poets. The structure that loomed at the centre of Aspinwall House, the heart of KMB, as a symbolic resting place for all the artists who were wronged against mimicked the Egyptian burial pyramids. This exhibit then singlehandedly embodies the multiple ideas of Heterotopia postulated by Foucault, when the actual sociocultural geography of Kochi is juxtaposed with all the 'spaces' signified by Steger.

Chinese poet Ouyang Jiyanghe's poem itself is about occupying spaces that are open, yet closed; inhabited yet deserted at the same time. Spread out on cloth along with a title that alludes to Taj Mahal the work is relocated in Biennale. Jiyanghe, known as one of the 'Five Masters from Sichuan', is a poet and prominent critic of music, art, and literature. His installation titled *Tears of Taj Mahal* (2016) is a calligraphic version of his poem inscribed on hanging scrolls and draped across the room at Pepper House Café and Art Gallery, Kochi. This piece is a translation and a re-contextualisation that delights not only in its poetic essence, but in its complexity also. It is a reflection on translation and refraction on art, language, paper and ink itself. As the scrolls with Chinese calligraphy hangs across the room, an English translation of the poem *Key to Sunday* by Austin Woerner is projected on the floor adjacent to it



Fig.1. Jiyanghe's installation '*Tears of Taj Mahal* (2016) along with the translated poem projected on the floor.

The text's positioning in a gallery space and the viewer's apprehension in itself is a reading of it. Our frame of expectation is not the same as when we encounter a book of poems in a folio format. There is untranslatability to this text that pushes us to search for a key to decipher its meaning. The poem itself is about places that are crowded and uninhabited at the same time and the allusion to Taj Mahal's tears is something closer home than a remote Chinese sensibility.

In *Dissemination of a Novel*, the spatial aspect is reimagined. The primary space of Chejfec's novel is the Andean foothills in Venezuela. In its installation form, the primary space is Kochi – its setting. The writings on Kochi's walls are in a way inscribing on the walls of Kochi's cultural psyche. The locations of the writings and the novelty in the novel's presentation strike the viewer hard, effecting an initiation into reading culture as well as a reflection on artistic and literary methodologies. The texts of the novel appear in the unlikeliest of places – compound walls of Municipal Buildings, inner and outer walls of the Biennale venues scattered across Kochi, and even on the outer wall of urinals. The long room filled with water, a miniature replica of the Mediterranean Sea that became the grave of so many Syrian refugees in September 2015, in Zurita's installation is yet again a spatial appropriation.

Some adaptational strategies demand that we *show* or *tell* stories, but in others, we *interact with* them. The verbal transitivity of showing and telling had to be replaced by the prepositional engagement of “with” that signals something as physical and kinetic as it is cognitive and emotional (Hutcheon, Linda xx). *Dissemination of a Novel* by Sergio Chejfec, occupying majority of the space in KMB 2016, is an installation spread across the various venues and streets of Kochi, featuring excerpts from his novel *Baroni: A Journey*. The eighty eight chapter novel, originally in Spanish, *Baroni: un viaje* (2007) is about the life of Rafaela Baroni, a Venezuelan artist, foreseer, mid-wife, sculptor, poet, and a nurse, considered as a living legend in her home country for her death experiences. Documenting his own journeys in meeting with her, the narrative is anchored in experiences, ranging from that of Raphaela

Baroni, Chejfec himself, and the reader. Drawing attention to the multiple sensory experiences peculiar to the location, the reader's journey through the novel becomes a unique exploration of the landscape, culture, and the general sense of the Latin American locale as much as it is a familiarisation with Rafaela Baroni. *Dissemination of a Novel* is layered with significations that are literary, artistic, and even philosophical. The reader is greeted by a piece from the novel at each turn at different venues and for a linear reading of the novel, the journey through the venues would take a course of its own. One has to physically navigate Kochi's multicultural landscape to try and make sense of a story set in an Andean village. Primarily what the installation does is liberate the words from its enclosure - the book/text thereby dislocating narrative from its traditional format. At the Biennale, *Baroni: A Journey* thus becomes an Ergodic literature. "It is a familiar textual artefact (a novel) that is nevertheless in a new format" describes the *GuideA-Z* for *Forming in the Pupil of an Eye* (359). The novel in its exhibit avatar is as much meditative of art practices as in its book form. By having the text hand painted by local calligraphers in Sans Serif onto white washed walls, the singular authority of the author figure is also being thwarted. There are now multiple 'writers' for the text - the author of the original text in Spanish, the translator, and the calligraphers.

Raul Zurita's *The Sea of Pain* is also one such installation. Zurita draws on the Syrian Refugee crisis and the tragic mishap at the Mediterranean Sea in September 2015. *The Sea of Pain* requires us to wade through the cold water in the long rectangular room to reach the poem on the end wall. A dedication to Galip Kurdi, one of the casualties of the Syrian war, the artist is in a quest to understand the crises of war and sensitise it to the passive viewers across the world. The viewers are no more mere receptors but very active participants who must play their role in order for the literature to unfold unto them. Although a cybertext or a hypertext novel are the ones usually considered as Ergodic literature, the installations by Chejfec and Zurita does qualify for the mode. They do not permit the reader to be stationary perceivers in tranquil contemplation. Instead they drag readers out of their study and into the streets and waters to experience the word fully. The text is not independent of its environment and society and therefore its

reading also needs to be in context. In this sense, installations, literary or otherwise, are a more apt form of Ergodic texts because of the physical involvement that it demands. In the installation form aided by multi-modal collaborations, the word gains clarity, concreteness, and augments its impact. Kochi becomes a perfect platform for a sort of cultural expo for the world at large because of the high influx of International audience as well as artists as part of KMB.

The one-on-one interaction between a book and a reader has always been a highly personal action. Nobody comes out to read a book. People 'retire' to read a book. The authors and poets who are part of *Forming in the Pupil of an Eye* seem to be liberating the relationship between word/text and people from its private space. Unlike the traditional usage of 'word' in an exhibition space and art galleries, here it is not a mere concept note, a sign board or a description. It is the force that grounds everything to meaning and anchorage against straying into abstraction despite the inherent abstraction of the word itself. There is an attempt at requiting humanity with the word and freeing the word/text from its exclusivity in society. There seemed to be an urgency with which words demand to be heard from all over Kochi, shaking people up, as if it were a reminder as of the glorious times when the very same 'word' moved mountains. Spelling the way to freedom and rights; it toppled structures of power, faith, injustices and held the baton for liberation movements. Of late it seems to have been passing right through humanity. But here at Biennale, there is an attempt at making its visions seen, its depth felt and its voice heard again, in the literal sense.

The retirement into a secluded space of one's own in order to give undivided attention to the words on page allowed it to stimulate imagination permitting the reader to see and feel with their mind's senses. This usually results in multiple images of the same incident as visualised by the many readers because after all language is slippery and words are abstract entities. The installation, on the contrary fills this gap preventing an otherwise unavoidable taking away from the experience. The pressure on the word is slightly lesser. Yet, this does not take away from the element of multiple reading.

By painting the walls with a narrative, where usually people are familiar with encountering movie posters, political manifestation, advertisements or even some lewd graffiti, the novel is now occupying a part of our everyday world. The installations at an exhibition such as those that feature at KMB constitute a more egalitarian utility. They are not merely placements of art in gallery spaces to be appreciated by connoisseurs. They are laid out in a public set up amid a gathering of creators, critics, and readers.

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Poem

Dr. Sr. Vinitha

English Going

It's all the Lord' doing
None can fathom the mysteries
unfolding before us
daily, hourly and infinitely.

Fifty golden years before
in a remote clime was born-
A rustic girl, whose pen now
describes the glories of
One who was born with her
In the history pages of an
urban clime, where the
Light of Knowledge dispels
the dark lines of ignorance.

The native tongue was under the chains
of imperialism, an imposed
tongue lisped a few 'a's and 'b's.
And gained fluency to read
Shakespeare, Milton and Donne.
The ungrilled corridors of STC
Then resounded with the
unbridled speech of the rulers
That slowly seeped into the
Living stream of higher education

Woman heard the clarion note
of the invitation blown by the
Daughters of a dauntless mother
Who left the world, leaving her
cherished unfulfilled dream,
A seed in the mired field of
Antagonism and bigotry
Edinburgh returned Beatrice
Steered the ship,
Higher learning ignited
Burning zeal in younger generation
Oh! Then the English tongue
Dominated every sphere
Poetry, speech, drama
Short stories, club and slip
All in English hands
English teachers then were
The ruling passion of campus beauties

Every went they sacrificed
The common good was their motive
The later climbers, climbed up higher,
The English veterans smoothed their way.

Till reduced to the last place of
Contempt and callous sneer
All the burden still was theirs'
Not a space for them to breathe
Twenty people huddled in a corner
When their peers reveled in space
Like the mighty swollen Rhinos

Shakespeare's gone and Milton
limping, English standard blown and flown
IT and globalization
Tied the senses to the machine
Communication, communication
English now is communication.
Where is the beauty?
Where is the pleasure?
Of the reading, stories gone
World is now hemmed in connection
Of a thousand wavelengths
Charming us ...
Airtel, idea, Vodafone, Docomo
BSNL connects us to the English tongue
Let us learn now the new tongue
Speeding on with no spell
No gram, no dram, no poe

Fellows mine let us learn
To multiflex for this is the
Mausam of multiplicity
Let us awake to the new reality
Of IT, multi, muddy life.....

English Activities Update

CFRDE

(The following format with the appended questions may kindly be used, if necessary.)

Blind Peer Review Report

To be forwarded to the Author/s

Issue: June, 2017

Research Paper No. 1

*Title of the Paper: “Between Messianism and Nihilism: A Biopolitical Reading of Kafka’s *The Trial* and *The Metamorphosis*”*

[I. Introductory paragraph/ sentence about the main theme of the paper, (as specified in the Abstract):]

*E.g. The research paper attempts to explore Franz Kafka’s *The Trial* and *The Metamorphosis* as fictional counterpoints to biopolitics especially with reference the ideas of Giorgio Agamben and Michael Foucault. The concepts such as power, sovereignty, biopower, state of exception, homo sacer, mechanism and nihilism are analysed*

[II. Reviewer's comment on any two or three key aspects of the paper: (The twenty-five sample questions attached may be used, if necessary).]

The paper has built on the existing ideas related to the topic and options for further research are left open. The arguments are well thought out and arranged in a logical manner. The language used is clear and free from errors.

[III. Reviewer's suggestions for changes/corrections to be made by the author/s, if any.] NIL

The paper is recommended for publication in the present form

[IV. The Report may conclude with a statement:]

E.g. (In the light of the above facts,) the research paper is:

- recommended for publication in the present form.
- recommended for publication after suggested corrections are made.
- not recommended for publication in the present form on the above grounds.

English Activities Update

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Blind Peer Review Report

To be forwarded to the Author/s

Issue: June, 2017

Research Paper No. 2

Title of the Paper: “Performance to Parody: Drag as a Medium of Gender Subversion”

[I. Introductory paragraph/ sentence about the main theme of the paper, (as specified in the Abstract):]

E.g. The research paper attempts to explore/ address/ bring under study/analysis/ transgender crisis in a heteronormative society where an individual is forced to remain within the borders of gender binaries and prewritten script for gender identity which limits freedom of an individual to choose their own gender and how these rules ignore gender nonconforming category

[II. Reviewer's comment on any two or three key aspects of the paper: (The twenty-five sample questions attached may be used, if necessary).]

Is the text structured/ organised in a logical sequence and paragraphed appropriately?

[III. Reviewer's suggestions for changes/corrections to be made by the author/s, if any.] Slight reordering of the line of arguments would make the article more effective.

Works cited section is insufficient for such a research article. The author is advised to substantiate arguments with theoretical resources associated with the area.

[IV. The Report may conclude with a statement:]

E.g. (In the light of the above facts,) the research paper is:

- recommended for publication after suggested corrections are made.

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Blind Peer Review Report

To be forwarded to the Author/s

Issue: June, 2017

Research Paper No. 3

Title of the Paper: “The Spectre of Rajan: Locating the Presence of Power in the Absence of the Body”

[I. Introductory paragraph/ sentence about the main theme of the paper, (as specified in the Abstract):]

*E.g. The research paper attempts to analyse the case of a missing person Rajan during the period of National Emergency that was declared in India using Giorgio Agamben's notion of the Homo Sacer. Agamben tries to decipher what materializes when all the rules that govern human conduct are seemingly stripped away. The concept of 'bare life,' is a human undressed of all his defining characteristics and exposed to what he terms as the structure of exception that constitutes the modern-day biopower. Agamben uses the term *form-of-life*, a neologism to describe what he envisions as a potential emancipatory notion of life. This underlines the impossibility of separating *zoe* from *bios*. In *form-of-life* it is impossible to single out the brute fact of living from the specific form life takes.*

[II. Reviewer's comment on any two or three key aspects of the paper: (The twenty-five sample questions attached may be used, if necessary).]

The author has clearly defined and developed a research question. The paper has succeeded in addressing the social, cultural and political aspects of a particular event that occurred in Kerala. The paper has opened possibilities for further research.

[III. Reviewer's suggestions for changes/corrections to be made by the author/s, if any.] NIL

The paper is recommended for publication in the present form

[IV. The Report may conclude with a statement:]

E.g. (In the light of the above facts,) the research paper is:

- recommended for publication in the present form.
- recommended for publication after suggested corrections are made.
- not recommended for publication in the present form on the above grounds.

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Blind Peer Review Report

To be forwarded to the Author/s

Issue: June, 2017

Research Paper No. 4

Title of the Paper: “Literary Geography: Projection of Memory and Space”

[I. Introductory paragraph/ sentence about the main theme of the paper, (as specified in the Abstract):]

E.g. The research paper tries to study space as manifesting itself as an integral part of narratives. The notion of space strongly influences many texts that are located in Fort Cochin. Fort Cochin lies towards the Southern end of Kerala, encased in the sparkling beauty of the Arabian Sea and the lakes that meander through this land made it an ideal destination for settlement. Studies on memory have gained prominence and these studies are quite political in orientation as there are multiple discourses generated about particular events and most often the memory that is stored and repeated depends on one's community, religion or nationality.

[II. Reviewer's comment on any two or three key aspects of the paper: (The twenty-five sample questions attached may be used, if necessary).]

The paper has brought under its purview key theoretical developments in the field. The paper has been developed within the theoretical framework of spatial studies. Research had been done on the cultural and social experiences of the space chosen for a study.

[III. Reviewer's suggestions for changes/corrections to be made by the author/s, if any.] NIL

The research paper is recommended for publication in the present form

[IV. The Report may conclude with a statement:]

E.g. (In the light of the above facts,) the research paper is:

- recommended for publication in the present form.
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Blind Peer Review Report

To be forwarded to the Author/s

Issue: June, 2017

Research Paper No. 5

Title of the Paper: “Decoding Repression and Resistance in the Kashmir Vale of Terror: A Close Reading of Basharat Peer's Curfewed Night”

[I. Introductory paragraph/ sentence about the main theme of the paper, (as specified in the Abstract):]

E.g. This paper attempts a close analysis of Basharat Peer's *Curfewed Night*, in order to decode and interrogate the Kashmiri political and cultural landscape, the erosion of cultural syncretism, the ever-increasing dominance of religious fundamentalism, the muted voices of victimized women who were subjected to brutal atrocities by Indian paramilitary forces, Pakistan-sponsored insurgents in the light of nation formation.

[II. Reviewer's comment on any two or three key aspects of the paper: (The twenty-five sample questions attached may be used, if necessary).]

The conceptual issues connected to the field of enquiry are addressed. The study is situated within its cultural, historical, social and literary contexts. The narratives related to Kashmir are placed within the chosen theoretical framework.

[III. Reviewer's suggestions for changes/corrections to be made by the author/s, if any.] NIL

The research paper is recommended for publication in the present form.

[IV. The Report may conclude with a statement:]

E.g. (In the light of the above facts,) the research paper is:

- recommended for publication in the present form.
- recommended for publication after suggested corrections are made.
- not recommended for publication in the present form on the above grounds.

English Activities Update

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(The following format with the appended questions may kindly be used, if necessary.)

Blind Peer Review Report

To be forwarded to the Author/s

Issue: June, 2017

Research Paper No. 6

Title of the Paper: “The Concept Of Power: A Reading Of Vijay Tendulkar's Select Plays”

[I. Introductory paragraph/ sentence about the main theme of the paper,
(as specified in the Abstract):]

E.g. This paper explores the Foucauldian model of power politics based on power, resistance, and knowledge by focusing on the two plays of Vijay Tendulkar. This is also an attempt to listen to the voice of the voiceless that are trapped under the powerful class based hierarchy. Marginalized groups attempt to seek a better position by raising their voices against social disparities. Apart from treating them as mere subjects of power, they are considered to be the agents who can drive out new possibilities to advance their strengths.

[II. Reviewer's comment on any two or three key aspects of the paper:
(The twenty-five sample questions attached may be used, if necessary).]

The abstract has provides a clear overview of the paper. The language used is clear and almost free from errors. The author of the paper has utilized existing ideas related to the topic and has succeed in framing it within the chosen theoretical perspective.

[III. Reviewer's suggestions for changes/corrections to be made by the author/s, if any.] **NIL**

The paper is recommended for publication in the present form.

[IV. The Report may conclude with a statement:]

E.g. (In the light of the above facts,) the research paper is:

- recommendedfor publication in the present form.
- recommendedfor publication after suggested corrections are made.
- not recommended for publication in the present form on the above grounds.

English Activities Update

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(The following format with the appended questions may kindly be used, if necessary.)

Blind Peer Review Report

To be forwarded to the Author/s

Issue: June, 2017

Research Paper No. 7

Title of the Paper: “Literature Re-mapped: Dissemination of Cultural Capital at Kochi-Muziris Biennale”

[I. Introductory paragraph/ sentence about the main theme of the paper, (as specified in the Abstract):]

E.g. The research paper attempts to explore the incorporation of literary works into exhibition spheres, such as the Kochi Muziris Biennale (KMB) thus becoming a multi-disciplinary commentary as well as a meditation on different representational media and the functions of intertextuality, adaptation, and translation. For instance, Sergio Chejfec's Dissemination of a Novel serves multifaceted purposes - a reflection on art and representational practices, challenges conventional restraints on modes of literary narration and adds to the inherent heterotopic nature of the locale/space that it occupies

[II. Reviewer's comment on any two or three key aspects of the paper: (The twenty-five sample questions attached may be used, if necessary).]

The paper has been able to analyse the topic chosen within the specific theoretical framework. The paper has been able to situate the spatial and cultural practices in a commendable manner. The title is apt and the abstract gives a comprehensive overview of the paper

[III. Reviewer's suggestions for changes/corrections to be made by the author/s, if any.]

[IV. The Report may conclude with a statement:]

E.g. (In the light of the above facts,) the research paper is:

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