

**APPLICATION OF QUEST THEORY AND SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IN ENGLISH
AND MALAYALAM FILMS**

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Declaration

I do hereby declare that the project “Application of quest theory and search for identity in English and Malayalam films” is the record of genuine research work done by me under the guidance of Ms. Mary Sooria, department of English, St Paul’s college, Kalamassery.

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Certificate

This is to clarify that the project work “Application of quest theory and search for identity in English and Malayalam films” is a record of the original work carried out by Aakash Mathew under the supervision and guidance of Ms. Mary Sooria, department of English, St Paul’s College, Kalamassery.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the years many great films have come from the west and the east. All these portray different ideas and themes. The west has their own ideas and culture that is different from the culture of the east. Films are one of the best mediums to portray the culture and heritage of a nation. Films can be viewed in many perspectives and sometimes the audience may come up with conclusions that even the director would had never thought of. It is an open space free for interpretation. Film has many genres like action, drama, comedy, romantic etc. Film is the best medium to create a concrete image into people's minds as it is both visual and audible. Watching a film is sometimes better than reading a book.

The movie, *The Pursuit of Happyness* is an English film that shows us the life in the western part of the world and the movie *Carbon* which shows us the life in the eastern part of the world. Both these movies are totally different from each other in almost every aspect and they show the lives of people in the west and the east. The only similarity that can be seen is that both of the main characters of the film are on a quest to find happiness and money. The protagonist of the western film is Chris who is searching for happiness and the protagonist of the eastern film is Siby, who searches for a lost treasure. Both these men are on a quest to find something that will give their life meaning. They are also searching for themselves. At the beginning of the story, both of these have no identity and are not sure about what it is they have to do in order to be successful. The western man is looking for a job whereas the eastern man is looking for a treasure that he heard of which is said to be hidden in a forest.

There can be no similarities in both these films as they portray two people who are from different parts of the world and from different cultural backgrounds. But the only similarity that can be seen in these two films is in the action of the main character. When viewed in terms of

quest theory and search for identity we are able to see similarities in these two films. Both of the main characters of these films behave in an almost similar manner. This could be seen even in terms of psychology where these characters can be said to be having an identity crisis. The search for identity is also taken up in psychological studies as a search for the self, how one yearns to find out who he truly is or what his true purpose is. This is a desire that is in everyone and not everyone is able to fulfil it. Most of the people don't go after things like this and are happy the way they are. But there are some who think that they can do more and go out looking for it. The two films taken here show these characteristics. Chris could just sell his scanners and live in a normal way, but he didn't want that. He wanted a lot of happiness in his life so he decides to be a stockbroker and works hard for it despite many oppositions from people. Siby too could have gone for a day job and lived a mediocre life but he wanted more and so went out looking for that treasure. They were two men who knew they could be more than what they were.

A quest is an adventurous journey undergone by the main character or protagonist of a story. The protagonist usually meets with and overcomes a series of obstacles, returning in the end with the benefits of knowledge and experience of his quest. There are several elements to a quest in literature. There must be a protagonist, a stated reason to go for a quest, challenges along the journey and sometimes the real reason for the quest-which is disclosed later on during the quest. A quest can be heroic like that seen in fairy tales or it can be intellectual. The search may be for something that is not physical but intellectual. The quest serves as the plot for the work.

'Identity' refers to "the collective aspect of the set of characteristics by which a thing is definitely recognizable or known", in other words, what makes a person unique or distinctive. Everyone has an identity. It is what sets us apart from others. Some people do not know who

they really are and those people are said to be lacking an identity. The two main characters of these two films are in this situation. They do not know what they are really supposed to do. They don't know who they really are and do all sorts of odd things until they find their true calling.

These two movies may seem different in all aspects but when we see them in terms of the quest theory and search for identity, we find that there are more similarities than we thought. The themes and plots are completely different but the idea has a connection. The protagonist of both these films undergoes the same experiences in different ways that ultimately lead them to the same goal that is happiness.

Chapter 1

Quest theory and Search for Identity

The search for identity in literature has been a topic that has been viewed indifferent ways by many authors and film makers. Our earliest authors celebrated literary characters who were separated from family, ancestry, and the past to head west. It became a celebration of the westward movement and the explorers who left their families and ancestral pasts to pursue their dreams out west.

‘Identity’ refers to “the collective aspect of the set of characteristics by which a thing is definitely recognizable or known”, in other words, what makes a person unique or distinctive. Identity as a theme can be a problematic concept because of the creation of characters with unfathomable qualities by the authors. Writers will often construct a character with a false identity; villains such as in Shakespeare’s Iago for instance.

A person’s identity can be determined by their self-conception as well as their social presentation. How they behave in society, their social relations help in understanding the identity of the character. The readers or viewers should keep a keen eye on this and should be able to make the right judgements about the character identity. Thus, it is important as a reader or viewer to contemplate the contextual background of a literary work because it is this that determines what would have influenced the norms of behaviour and therefore, a strong indication of why an author would construct their characters in the way that they do. Furthermore, the construction of identity may be influenced by other factors like stereotypical views of a character’s gender or culture, for instance, the writers often choose to complicate their plot lines by transforming a character’s identity over the course of the text. Identity is a strong premise in many liter works, mainly because a writer must create different identities to achieve an interesting character.

Across several forms of literature, the theme of identity is prominent because characters work as the basis to a text and help in shaping the plot. The awareness of the character's true self is essential to achieve self-actualization. What drives a character into change maybe conflict between a person or a group and another person or group, or natural forces.

People can try to change or modify their identity but it cannot be done. Their real identities will be revealed at some point of time. *How the Garcia girls lost their accents* by Julia Alvarez and *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Wakatsuki are two remarkable books that depict the identity theme. They both have to deal with people that have tried to alter or change their identities in order to be accepted by society.

Identity is very important to every character. The meaning of words and actions reflect to the person's identity. There are many debates going on regarding whether it is ontological or metaphysical. Sex and gender are both formations of identifying a person. Additionally, sex was acquired from birth with "biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women" (World Health Organisation,2016). A Characters identity is often judged by the way the person looks. Hair colour, height, eye colour, skin tone is part of a person's identity, but there are more complex factors that makes a person who he is.

In literature, identity is important and is viewed in mainly two ways. First, the writers have a personal identity, which influence their thought and the way in which they view the world. For example, Margaret Atwood is Canadian; Alice Walker is African American. Atwood's *the handmaid's tale* (1985) and Walker's *the color purple* (1982) have some similarities because their authors have the same gender and the difference between them arises because they do not share ethnic or national roots. Second, the characters that are created by the writers may or may not express their creator's worldview. In James Sallis novel featuring Lew Griffin, writer and character have different identities. Sallis is white whereas Griffin is black.

Writers have always expressed their identities in their work, but the development of psychological theories of personality in the twentieth century provided the writers with new concepts about how identities are shaped. Psychiatrists and psychologists such as Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Erik Erikson, and Abraham Maslow created concepts that altered the way in which modern literature is written and judged. For psychologist's identity is a set of behaviours', emotions, and thought patterns that are unique to an individual. Identity is usually established by late adolescence or early adulthood. Identity is shaped by sexual preferences, religious beliefs, childhood experience, ethnicity, culture, and biology.

Once the central character figures out what he is supposed to do he faces some obstacles which help him grow stronger and motivates him to success. The writer portrays many heart melting scenes in order to show that his character has undergone rigorous trials that has affected his mind and way of thinking. The protagonist will then start behaving in a more frustrated and angry manner. He might even act rudely to those he loves the most, thus showing that he has hit rock bottom. The central character will finally find what he is looking for after he goes in search for it. He sets out on a quest to find what he desires.

A quest is an adventurous journey undergone by the main character or protagonist of a story. The protagonist usually meets with and overcomes a series of obstacles, returning in the end with the benefits of knowledge and experience of his quest. There are several elements to a quest in literature. There must be a protagonist, a stated reason to go for a quest, challenges along the journey and sometimes the real reason for the quest-which is disclosed later on during the quest. A quest can be heroic like that seen in fairy tales or it can be intellectual. The search maybe for something that is not physical but intellectual. The quest serves as the plot for the work. The whole storyline develops around the journey undergone by the protagonist. The aspect of travel allows the writer to showcase many different and exotic locations and cultures. Some writers devise arbitrary quests for items without any importance beyond being the objective of

the quest. These items are known as MacGuffins, which is sometimes merely used to compare quests and is not always a derogatory term.

Quest for self is an important theme in literature. The attempts to understand self is predominant in literature as well as in life. Many literary works start out with the main character not knowing what he is supposed to do. He knows what he wants, but doesn't know how to achieve it. After a lot of struggling and suffering, he finds his true calling and then goes on to lead a better life. Once he realizes his true self, he manages to keep up with things going on around him. Perhaps all human activities are centred on these endeavour's to coming in terms with the self. A quest is usually seen in fictions and fairy tales where the hero goes in search for some object. There are also other things that people go in search for that are not physical like happiness, love, peace etc. Quest theory advocates the journey the protagonist undergoes in order to find that which gives him a sense of satisfaction. In life as well as in literature, people go on a quest to get what they want. It may not be a physical journey containing difficult obstacles. Everyone has a quest of their own, they take it and achieve their desires and realize their true self and identity.

A quest that all of us go on at some point in our lives is the quest for happiness. There is no purpose to life if misery and unhappiness rule and the daily routine consists of drudgery and pain that are not sustained by any relevance or meaning. Each generation embarks on the same quest as if all past teachings might not have had enough meaning and as if the answers only wait for us in the future. Happiness seems to be right there in front of us but it is constantly moving, thus making us chase after it. Human beings have to struggle hard in order to achieve it all the time. Happiness is what gives life meaning and that is why all human beings go in search of it.

Happiness is found whereas identity and self are discovered or realized. These things don't just simply come to us; we have to go in search of them and at some point, in the journey

we will be able to achieve them. Sociology is one of the rare sciences that have many explanations for identity. Due to the arguable totalistic nature of sociology, some sociological processes see identity as the result of a collectivist process. So, the identity becomes the offspring of the culture. As said earlier, culture is one of the factors that help shape the identity of a character. Stets and Burke (2000) believe that identity formation begins with a self-categorization in which individuals realize the roles that they are expected from them. After incorporating their selves with these identities, the interaction with other identities begin. With this interaction, identities start recognizing the other identities as occupants with social roles just like themselves, which leads to the formation of a constructive relationship. The relationship need not be necessarily positive, but a self-merging one. In simple terms it means that the self with its new identity starts learning to be the individual that his or her group wants him or her to be. This would mean that the nature of the group decides the new identity of the individual. If for example, the individual is trying to incorporate himself into a group of criminals, then he would find ways to alter his identity in order to justify and internalize the way of lie of that group. In most works of literature, the central character will be put in many social situations and we see changes in him. Individuals have multiple identities that are based on roles they perform and groups to which they belong and are hierarchically arranged to organize and motivate actions in social structures. The concept of identity has three pillars: the person, the role, and the group. Personal identity refers to the sense of self which is built over time.

Film is an ideal form to show the myths of time and space with its composition, freeze frames, tracking shots, montage, and other evocative stylistic techniques. Because of these meaningful techniques, film is especially effective in exploring the theme of search for identity. Film has always played a powerful role in creating a sense of identity. We are able to relate to the person sitting next to us at the theatre, who laughs at the same moment as you. While watching the film we are able to place ourselves in the shoes of the central character and would

want to know what happens there. Films provide a splendid place for study of culture and identity, as they encapsulate cultural norms and patterns in a form that can be studied and re-studied in close detail. Films provide us with a different perspective which enables us see before our own eyes the changes in the identity of the character as he is put in different social settings and how he finds his true self after a lot of hardship and suffrage.

Film is a valuable tool for young people whose identities are still being shaped and forged. It can act as a window into the wider world, and offers contexts and points of view that might otherwise be closed to them. Watching a film from another part of the world can provide insights into other cultures in a moving and immediate way, and when seeing characters on screen that one can identify with can help generate empathy among peers and promote group interaction. Similarly, looking at how one's own country's films culture has changed over the years and responded to different events can be effective in helping develop cultural understanding. Films have become a major form of cultural expression and the both reflect and influence the attitude of the people, representing their tensions, anxieties, hopes and desires. Films have more impact in shaping of identity than any other form of literature.

CHAPTER 2

The Pursuit of Happyness: The western view

The 2006 film *The Pursuit of Happyness* directed by Gabriele Muccino is a good example to show a different approach to quest theory and search for identity. It is an American autobiographical drama film based on the entrepreneur Chris Gardner's nearly one-year struggle being homeless. The plot revolves around the troubles and challenges faced by the protagonist. The film features Will Smith as Gardner, a homeless salesman. Smith's son Jaden Smith co-stars, making his film debut as Gardner's son, Christopher Jr. The Screen play by Steven Conrad is based on the best-selling memoir written by Gardner with Quincy Troupe. The film was released on December 25, 2006.

The unusual spelling of the film's title originated from a mural that Gardner sees on the wall outside the day care facility his son attends. It is not a mistake, but done intentionally. Gardener complains to the owner of the day-care that "happiness" is spelled incorrectly as "happyness". He demands that it be changed but the owner does not do anything.

In 1981, a salesman by the name Chris Gardner invests his life savings in portable bone density scanners, which he demonstrates to doctors and pitches as a handy quantum leap over standard x-rays. The scanners play a vital role in his life. He has to sell at least 3 scanners a month to pay his bills. He is able to sell all the scanners but the time lag between each sale and his growing financial problems lead him to homelessness. His wife, Linda, works as a waitress and is forced to work double shifts in order to make ends meet. The reason why it was difficult to sell those scanners was because they only produce a slightly better image than an x-ray but for a much higher price. Linda is not able to cope with the situation and ultimately leaves Gardner but still cares for her son.

Gardner is a very smart and intelligent man. He meets Jay Twistle, a manager for Dean Witter Reynold and impresses him by solving the Rubik's cube during a taxi ride. Jay leaves the cab without paying and Gardner is asked to pay. He lacks the money so decides to run. He runs to a BART station and boards a train but loses one of the scanners on the way. His new relationship with Jay earns him a chance to be an intern stockbroker. In order to postpone getting evicted he paints the apartment. While painting, two cops come to arrest him for not paying his numerous parking tickets. He spends the night in jail and is released by morning. He runs straight to Dean Witter's to attend the interview. He is still in his shabby clothes but manages to impress the interviewers and gets selected as one of the twenty interns competing for a paid position as a stockbroker. Linda is not pleased to hear that Gardner is an unpaid intern. She decides to go to New York because she might get a job at her sister's boyfriend's new restaurant. Gardner bluntly says that she is incapable of taking care of Christopher, so she agrees to leave Christopher with his dad. He is further set back when his bank account is garnished by the IRS for unpaid income taxes. He is left with \$21.33 and also get evicted for not being able to pay rent. Gardner and his son are forced to spend the night in a restroom at a BART station. If he manages to procure enough cash, they spend the night at a hotel, else at a homeless shelter. Later he finds the scanner that he lost at the BART station, repairs it and sells it thus, completing the sales of all the scanners. Gardner is at a disadvantage as he has to leave early from the office or he'll have to spend the night outdoors or in a restroom. So, in order to maximize his client contacts and profit, he develops a number of ways to make phone sales more efficiently, including reaching out to potential high-value customers, defying protocol. One sympathetic prospect who is a high-level pension fund manager takes Chris and Christopher to a San Francisco 49ers game at Candlestick park. He meets some other high-profile people at that game and gets their business cards. Throughout his struggles he never reveals his lowly circumstances to anyone, even going so far as to lend \$5 to his boss for cab fare, a sum that he couldn't afford at that time. Gardner is called

into a meeting with his bosses after concluding his six-month internship. In order to break the ice, Gardner jokes that he is wearing a shirt as it is his last day and thought to dress for the occasion. The manager Martin Frohm smiles and says that he should wear another one tomorrow as it will be his first day, letting him know that he has secured the full-time position and gives him his \$5 back as promised. Gardner shakes their hands, fighting back the tears and runs to his son's day care to embrace Christopher. As they walk down the street joking with each other, the real Chris Gardner passes them in a business suit. The epilogue reveals that Gardner went on to establish his own multimillion-dollar brokerage firm.

The movie is all about Gardner's quest for happiness. He wants to have a happy life with his wife and son, so he invests all his life savings in portable bone density scanners. He didn't know what he was supposed to do, so he invests in those scanners. Gardner is really smart but doesn't know what his true calling is. At that moment he doesn't know who he is. All he knows is that he has to sell those scanners to make payments. The whole story revolves around the journey made by him day by day to sell those scanners. In those travels he found what his true calling was. He sees a guy coming out of a red sports car and the only thing going through Chris's mind is how happy that guy looks. He asks the guy what he does for a living and he replies that he is a stockbroker. At that moment Chris knew what he was supposed to do. He was on the right path. He realised his true identity and decided to pursue it. His quest for happiness started from there.

After being selected as one of the 20 interns, he finds out that he would be working for Dean Witter for free for six months. He faced a serious problem there. After telling his wife about this, she discouraged him. At that moment he had an identity crisis. He was not sure whether he should pursue this career. He had two options in front of him. He could try sell the scanners and live in poverty or he could take a risk and do the internship hoping to get a job as a stockbroker. After giving it a lot of thought, he decided to go forward with the internship. His

wife of the opinion that he should go for some work that would pay him something. At this point he has no identity. He's just another guy trying to find who he is. So, in a way he is searching for happiness as well as for himself. There were times when he began questioning his decision of choosing the internship. After getting evicted and losing all the money he had to the income tax, he was forced to sleep at a restroom in a BART station. The journey seeking happiness is always filled with difficulties. All the bad experiences will ultimately show you the path to happiness. In a typical quest, the directors are able to show us various locations. Here, the locations shown are those of San Francisco. The BART station, the subways, the restaurant's, small apartments, the streets and the different people who have different ethnicity and lifestyle.

After he becomes homeless, we see a change in Chris's behaviour. It is clearly defined that during the search for identity, the central character will behave in a manner that is totally different from the one he had in the beginning. In the beginning, Chris is a cool-headed easy-going guy. But later we see that he becomes a hot head, getting angry at every little thing. He even shouts at his son, something he had never done before. He becomes someone who he does not wish to be. With everything going on around him, he feels totally lost, thus lacking any identity. He no longer has time on his side. He's always in a rush and in the middle of all this, he has a 5-year-old son to take care of. The obvious changes in a character that undergoes an identity crisis is seen here. He behaves rudely to the person he loves the most [Christopher]. After his wife leaves him, Chris is relieved that now he only needs to worry about his son. He thought that he could manage it and didn't think that he would have to call Linda for any help. In a way, he doesn't know who he wants in his life, other than his son. He is forced to call Linda to take care of Christopher in many occasions. He has no idea what choices to make and what choices will be right. Letting his wife leave at that moment was a bad decision. The only bit character he shows at the time he was struggling was pride. But that went away when he had to call Linda for help in taking care of Christopher. Throughout the film we see that Chris never

asks anybody for money. His pride is the only thing that he has. He didn't have the money to go to the 49ers game but still tells the fund manager that he will be going to the game and that he's got seats way up in the stadium. The man offers to take Chris and his son with them to watch the game in the box. His pride really saved him there as it was through this game that he was able to meet some rich people thus expanding his clientele which got him the job as a stockbroker. He also lends \$5 to his boss as cab fare, a sum he couldn't afford at that time. He does not refuse to give it as he didn't want his boss to know about his financial status. His pride made him give that money as he didn't want to be seen as a poor homeless person.

Chris's quest for happiness took him to different places and made him meet different people. Somewhere along that journey he realised that sadness comes to you, but happiness doesn't. You have to go in search for it and will have to take many risks, but in the end it will be worth it. Chris had to go through a lot, including spending a night in prison. Throughout the film we see that he is determined to succeed in his quest for happiness, and through that quest he is able to find himself. In his journey to find happiness he discovers that it is always right in front of you. All you have to do is take that extra step. He found a brief moment of happiness when he took Christopher to the park one evening. He realised that happiness can be found even in the littlest of things. His quest for happiness taught him that it is something that will always challenge your understanding of yourself. All his suffering and pain lead to that moment where he felt true happiness, something that he never wanted to lose. In the last scene where Gardner and Christopher are walking down the street, we see the real Chris Gardner walking past them. As he walks past them, he looks back at them with a smile. That smile reflects his remembrance of the events that occurred in his life which led to his success. His search for happiness gave him an identity, which he was lacking and what he needed the most. After completing his quest for happiness, we are able to see a shift in Chris's behaviour, he loses his hot headedness and is no more in a hurry. After overcoming the identity crisis Chris becomes more confident and even

says that he lost the business card of one of the high-level fund managers. He has now attained a valuable identity that has changed his life for the better. He later went on to start his own brokerage firm and never had to worry about money again. After his boss tells him that he has secured the job, he runs to his son and hugs him, and in that moment, he feels a divine happiness that he cherishes even today. He was a nobody who became a somebody by achieving an identity. His quest for happiness is truly inspirational and empowering. The whole story is based on his travels and the things he has to do to achieve happiness. The film is very well shot and the scenes showing his desperation are very well captured.

Through this film we see a man who makes a wrong decision by investing all his money in the wrong business and thus being homeless. He struggles to sell his scanners and raise his son. He becomes homeless and struggles to find a place to stay at night. He has no identity and is in search of happiness, and in that search, he finds an opportunity to become a stockbroker. After going through a lot of hardship, he gets the job and also an identity. Happiness then comes to him. His biggest mistake paves the way for the brightest possible future he could ever have.

CHAPTER 3

Carbon: The eastern view

The 2018 Malayalam film “Carbon” directed by Venu Isac, starring Fahad Faasil and Mamta Mohandas depicts a quest for success and happiness. The film revolves around the life of Siby [played by Fahad Faasil], a young man who wants to be rich but is not willing to do any hard work for it. He wants to get rich quick and devices various schemes which all fail him. All these schemes are legally and morally dubious. He is well aware that the society sees him as loser, a layabout and a fraud, but he is unshaken by their judging eyes and believes that someday he will make his millions. This movie depicts the typical mindset of most of the youth who want to get rich quick and in doing so fall in the wrong company and creates problems that can’t be solved easily.

It is often unclear in the film whether we are watching reality or one of Siby’s crazy dreams, whether a character really exists or not. While watching the film we keep thinking whether all of this is just Siby’s imagination, all the while remembering what professor Dumbledore tells Harry Potter as the curtains come down on JK Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the deathly hallows*: “Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on Earth should that mean that it is not real?”. Many interpretations of the film can be made as it does not mean just one thing. There’s a lot of things happening and the scenes in the jungle are very well shot portraying the natural beauty to its fullest.

The full title of the film is *Carbon: Ashes and diamonds*. From this title we ask ourselves the question will you allow the challenges in life to reduce us to ashes or will you face and overcome those challenges and shine like a diamond. If we look at this film from this view point, then this story is about Siby’s journey to find himself as it is to find an ancient hoard of gold. In

the beginning we see that Siby is a self-centred selfish person who only cares for himself and doesn't even bother about others and their lives. He doesn't even think about his family and how their lives are. He only thinks about his life and how he can earn big money without doing much work. He goes off for days and doesn't tell anyone where he is or what he is doing. He doesn't even answer his parents call. We find that Siby is a self-centred character with no identity. He wants to make a name for himself but doesn't know how, and tries to do some fraud businesses to get rich but all his schemes fail him. This is a film that is exasperatingly, fascinatingly open to interpretation at all levels. We become thrilled and curious at every step. There are many scenes that we cannot completely understand and we begin to wonder whether it is real or just one of Siby's crazy imaginations.

The first half of the film mainly shows Siby's kookiness combined with non-conformism and the effect of his shady affairs on his friends and parents. As the film begin, we get to know that Siby is in possession of a rare and valuable gem. He is trying to sell and finds a buyer. He keeps a very low profile till he meets the buyer, and does not respond to any of his friends or family. It is only after he meets the buyer, do we get to know that he does not have the gem with him. It is with an acquaintance of his and that man does not wish to sell this through Siby. After a long discussion Siby gives the details of his acquaintance in exchange for ten thousand rupees. After that we see him meet his friends and family and we see all of them asking him the same question. "Why can't you go for some work and earn some money?". He responds by saying that if he goes for some small job then he'll be doing that itself for the rest of his life and that his life would be filled with poverty and hunger. Here we see a man who is going in a direction different from that of the Indian society. Traditionally, a person studies, gets a job, marries and looks after his family. Here there is a change. Siby wants to get rich by doing some big business deals and does not follow the traditional Indian ways. He then tries to sell an elephant that is again not his. Here is where the confusion starts. After seeing the elephant, Siby leaves. He is confronted by

the elephant's caretaker who says that there was no elephant there and that the woman who owns the elephant is mad. Siby gets confused and walks away. He is then asked by one of his contacts to go and check out an old palace in the middle of the jungle. His investors are looking to turn it into a resort and Siby is sent there to see what can be done. He meets Balan Pillai [the caretaker] and spends a few nights there. The electricity bill hasn't been paid in a long time, so there is no electricity there and at night it is pitch black. It is here that he meets Sameera, an adventurous girl who calls herself "jungle junkie". She is an explorer and visits the palace often. She doesn't sleep indoors and invites Siby to sleep outside. He reluctantly agrees and finds it hard to sleep. Every noise that is heard scares him, but they don't bother Sameera who is fast asleep then.

It is from here that the film takes a turn. Siby find about an old legend about a treasure that is hidden in the forest. That forest happens to be where he is now. Balan Pillai tells him that according to the legend, a hundred and one plates full of gold was hidden somewhere in the forest by Tippu Sultan. Siby thinks of this as an opportunity to get rich and finds out all that he can of this legend. The people there are afraid to talk about it because many people have gone in search of the treasure, but never came back. He meets Stalin, a tribal who knows the forest like the back of his palm. He encourages Siby to go into the forest and that he will guide them through there. Siby hides his true motive and says that he wants to see the jungle. He is accompanied by Sameera, Stalin and Kannan, a village boy recruited by Stalin to carry stuff. Siby tries to push Stalin to Thalakaani [the place where the treasure is said to be hidden]. But Stalin is afraid to go there as it is said that many of their ancestors were beheaded there and if you go there, you might not come back alive. But Stalin does not tell them he is scared, instead shows them places that he shows other people whom he has taken into the forest. By this time Siby reveals his true intension and everybody agrees with him.

They reach a bear cave and Siby is afraid to go near it. As they move forward Kannan says that he cannot go beyond a certain point as it is forbidden for his people. Sameera stays

back with him and Siby and Stalin move forward. Stalin is reluctant to go as he is scared and in order to go back, he provokes a wild elephant and it starts chasing them. They split up and Siby spends the night alone in fear. He then reaches back to the camp site and sees that Stalin had made it there earlier. All of them decide to drop the mission as they were running low on supplies. But Siby was not willing to go back empty handed. He tells them that he will join them later and goes on to look for the treasure. Sameera makes a reference to Paulo Coelho's *Alchemist* and says that the treasure might be at the first place they started. They leave Siby in the forest and head back. Siby drinks filthy water and eats mushrooms as he is out of supplies. He slowly begins to lose his mind and starts seeing things. He sees the elephant's caretaker in the forest and also Sameera. He climbs a tree to pluck some berries but falls down and is then hanging on the edge of a cliff. Here, he is pulled up by Sameera who reminds him of the Alchemist. He struggles a lot in the forest and decides to go back. He visits the bear cave that he was afraid of at first. He goes in comes out from another side. At this point he is severely dehydrated and exhausted. He falls down on the ground and it begins to rain. As we watch the water flow, we see gold coins along its trail. Siby finds the treasure.

Throughout the film we see a man on a quest to find a treasure and his true identity. This film shows the application of quest theory and search for identity in Malayalam literature. The story is focused on the central Character Siby who is in search of a lost treasure. He hears the legend of the soldiers who lost the treasure in the forest and he immediately decide to go in search for it. Till then his life had no meaning or purpose. He finds his calling after hearing that tale and decides to pursue it. It's not always that life's moments of truth or hints of destiny reveal themselves clean and clear, but when they do, we know we are on the right track in our life. This is what happened to Siby. He got a hint of destiny. He knew that this is what he needed to do to be who he really was and to achieve his aim of becoming rich. For him, his aim [to get rich] is the top most priority, how he achieves it does not matter to him. He gets the golden opportunity

to pursue his aim and he goes for it. He was well aware of the risks that were involved in the quest, but he knew that he had to take some risks in order to succeed in life. In the first half of the film we see him as a person who has no identity. He has no idea who he really is or what he was supposed to do. His life takes a huge turn when he enters the forest. After hearing about the legend of the treasure lost in the forest, he turns into a new man. He hated the idea of going into the forest and sleeping outdoors at first, after hearing the tale, he became a nature lover and wanted to explore the forest and sleep outside.

Once they set out into the forest, we see a big change in the film. The whole mood of the movie changes and we get excited to see what happens next. The film is set in the Kerala Tamil Nadu border. The location is exotic and beautiful. In a quest we often see beautiful locations and exotic places. The shots are beautifully taken portraying the forests natural beauty and displaying the wide varieties of locations in Kerala. More of wide-angle shots are taken to showcase the beauty of the jungle. The director has done all that he can to bring out the beauty of the forests of Kerala. As Siby enters the forest, we see changes in his character that leads to the formation of his identity. At first, he finds it difficult to cope with everything happening around him but later adjusts to it. He used to be a very lazy man, so he finds walking up hills very difficult. Sameera points this out and asks him to do more physical activities. Siby gets impatient along the way as they were walking for days but still haven't reached their destination. Stalin assures him that they are close. By this time Siby has changed into a nature lover who is able to cope with the situation and compels everyone to keep moving. Here we see a change in the behaviour of the central character. The once selfish and self-centred guy is now the exact opposite. After they split up, we see Siby promising Sameera that they will split the loot if they find it and that everyone will get their share. He has slowly started to change. After discovering the bear cave, Siby was scared and went away from it. In the beginning he was afraid to sleep outside but we find that he spends a night alone in the forest with a wild elephant on the loose. He became a brave man after that

night and gained the confidence to search for the treasure alone. After Sameera, Stalin and Kannan head back, Siby goes out to look for the treasure. The motivation for this was finding a sword handle which he believes was used by one of Tipu's soldiers. On finding that sword handle we again see a change in his behaviour. We see him smiling. On finding that handle his greed had awakened. It is partly that greed that gave him the courage to go look for the treasure on his own. After going out alone, he completely loses himself and all he knows is that some way or the other he has to survive. He drinks filthy water and eats pretty much anything he was able to get his hands on. He faces an identity crisis at this point. He has no idea what to do or where to go. His greed and ego don't allow him to go back without finding the treasure. He has no idea who he is at this point. He starts doing things that the real Siby would never do. From the first part of the film it is clear that he is a lazy person. He also seems to be a hygienic person in the beginning. As we move towards the climax, we see him eating raw mushrooms and drinking filthy water. He does everything he needs to survive in that wilderness. Here he becomes a new man. He falls to the ground completely exhausted and dehydrated. He then thinks about the past and realises what a bad son he was, what a bad friend he was, what a bad brother he was.

The change in Siby's character occurs inside the forest. He comes out of the forest as a new man, with a strong identity. He asks a driver to take him across the border to Kerala. He comes out of the forest and reaches Tamil Nadu. The driver says that it will be expensive and it is at this time we find out that Siby has gold on him. He shows the driver a gold coin and asks him if that would be accepted. His smile at the end tells a thousand words. That smile proves that he is a changed man who has faced all the odds and has made it. He has found the lost treasure all by himself and that has changed his life forever. He had to go through a lot to get that treasure but he has done it and that experience has changed him. He knows that he will be able to live the life he has been dreaming of. As he came to the end of his quest, he has gained an identity and has also made a fortune. He has found happiness. Siby goes in to the forest as a man without

an identity and comes out as a totally different man. He found himself in that jungle and has become one with his true self. He has seen the good and bad in him through the experiences the jungle had given him. He realised the value of his family while spending the nights alone in the jungle. He realised the value of friends when Sameera, Stalin and Kannan left him. He had the option to go with them but he chose not to. He realised what a selfish and greedy man he was while spending the night in the forest all alone. He had time to reflect on his past and the jungle atmosphere made him see clear the wrongs he had done to himself and others. He comes out as a totally different man who has got his priorities in order. He found the way to reach his dream and when he achieved it, he became a new man.

CONCLUSION

The two films taken here show how quest theory and search for identity are applied in the west and the east. In the film *the pursuit of happiness* we see western culture and their ideals and lifestyles which is contradictory to that shown in the film *carbon* which represents the east. These two films are completely different from each other in all aspects but they do have some similarities. The only similarity we see is in the behaviours of the central characters. They both start out as ordinary people who have no identity. They face an identity crisis and, in the end, become extraordinary people through the experiences that they have gone through. We see that the both of them suffer a lot and do things that we never thought they would do. We see that Chris gets mad at his son and shouts at him. While watching the film we know that Chris loves his son more than anything and we never expect a behaviour like this from him. On the contrary, we see Siby drinking filthy water and eating raw mushrooms to survive. We know that he is a very hygienic person in the beginning. The two characters are more similar than they are different. It is the situation that they are in that differentiates them.

Chris is located in San Francisco, a city. The only danger that he faces is being homeless with a five-year-old son. He has financial problems and we also see that the income tax robs him of the little money that he has got. Being without a roof over your head and without any money bring a change in Chris's behaviour. He is surrounded by the city life where expenses are high. You have to pay for everything and it was not possible to obtain anything for free. He had barely enough money to get food. But his main problem was shelter. He and his son were forced to sleep in the bathroom of a BART station. As for Siby, he is in the exact opposite situation. He is in a jungle with no supplies or shelter. But for one thing, the jungle is better as there is no concept of money there. We don't have to pay for anything there. And if you are familiar with

the jungle, then all that you need will be obtained from the jungle. For Siby, having a roof over his head was not the concern. He just wanted to find that gold and get out of there. He faced real dangers there with wild animals that were lurking in the dark. He was all alone in the dark with nothing to protect him from the animals and the cold. He didn't know the forest well so, he had no idea where to look for food and water. So, he eats what he sees in front of him and that is mushrooms and he find a puddle with filthy water and drinks that. Chris had his son to take of while Siby had no one but himself to look after.

Through these two films we see that the western man wants to work hard and earn money while the eastern man goes behind myths and legends to get rich. Although the eastern man suffers more and is forced to live in extreme conditions and fight his own fears in the darkness. They show how a quest is carried out in the west and the east. In the west we see an intellectual quest without much physical hurdles and in the east, we see a very physical quest [It is not that there aren't movies with heroic quest in the western films, it is only because of the selected film]. The main characters of both these films show the basic characteristics that are portrayed in search for identity and quest theory. Both these characters face an identity crisis at some point of their journey and realise what they have to do in order to be who they really are. This is a common scene in both these films. The identity crisis leads to the formation of their true identity.

There is also a big cultural difference that is clearly evident. The western man is more civilised. This can be proved just by looking at Chris's dressing style. But the east has more culture and tradition as seen when Siby enter the forest. Both these films show how a man can change who he is when put in an environment that can challenge them both physically and mentally. These movies portray the same theme in a sense but in different ways and in different styles. In the end of both these films we see that in the end they both find happiness. They both find the treasure that they were looking for. Chris finds his dream job that leads him to be a

millionaire and Siby finds the gold that he was craving for and he too becomes rich. We see the both of them smiling at the end of the film. Their smile is a proof that they had made it. They both show us that happiness doesn't come looking for us, instead we have to go looking for it and, in that journey, we will find our true selves and that will lead the way to happiness. For both these characters, happiness came after a lot of suffering. Both these characters showed great will power in the circumstances that proved to be the turning point of their lives. If they had turned back then their future would have been totally different. If Chris had decided to follow his wife's advice and get a job that would pay him for the work he does, then his life would not be filled with the happiness that it is filled with today. If Siby decided to leave the search and go back with his friends, then he too would have had a different life that might not be filled with happiness. But they both decided to follow their hearts and went on with what they thought was the best thing for them, and in the end, it was clear that they made the right decision.

The search for identity is clearly portrayed in both these movies. They both start out not knowing who they really are or what they were supposed to do. They both see an opportunity and decide to take it and that is what changed their lives. Chris finds the job that he thinks will get him out of all his troubles and make him happy and he goes on to pursue it, thereby finding his true self. Siby hears about the legend of the gold and decides to go looking for it and despite everyone's advice to turn back, he still moved forward and found the treasure and through that he found himself. They both realised their true selves and that led them to happiness thereby fulfilling their quest for happiness. Through this quest theory is also portrayed.

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