

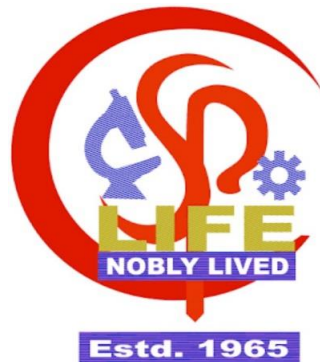
# VISUAL DIALOGUE

A Comparison of Literature and Literature Influenced Work of Art  
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In partial fulfillment of the award of the Degree of  
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English Language and Literature

**EZACH A. KARAL**

Register Number: 170021017773

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Department of English

St. Paul's College

Kalamassery

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## Declaration

do hereby declare that this report of project work is a record of genuine research work done by me under the supervision and guidance of Ms. Mary Sooria, Assistant Professor, Department of English, St. Paul's College, Kalamassery.

EZACH A. KARAL

# Certificate

This is to certify that the project work VISUAL DIALOGUE; A Comparison of Literature and Literature Influenced Work of Art is a record of original work carried out by Ezach A. Karal under the supervision and guidance of Ms. Mary Sooria, Assistant Professor, Department of English, St. Paul's College, Kalamassery.

Dr. Salia Rex  
Head of the Department  
Department of English  
St. Paul's College,  
Kalamassery

Faculty Guide  
Ms. Mary Sooria  
Assistant Professor  
Department of English  
St. Paul's College,  
Kalamassery

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EZACH A. KARAL

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## Evolution of Language and Literature

“According to Ducasse aesthetic art has been characterized as the ‘conscious objectification of ones feeling’. He distinguishes it from fine art, which produce something beautiful. But art is merely conscious objective, self-expression critically controlled objectification of self. “Strictly speaking, Picture, statues, are not art but work of art; and art is not a quality discernible in in them but an activity of man- the activity namely, of which such things are products. “It also involves the language or expression of feeling. Like the art of putting our meaning into words art is putting of a feeling into an object created giving a concrete shape to the feeling leading to the contemplation” (Peter14).

Many may pause a while hearing the question, do art and literature have any connection with each other. Because there is an ever-growing confusion from ancient times onwards. Though ancient theoretical treatise discusses about the different art forms none of them clearly categorizes art together with it. Bharata-Muni who wrote the theoretical treatise *Natyashastra* on Indian performing arts, include theatre, ‘dance, acting, and music’ (45), but art is not mentioned with them.

This project aims to establish the connection between both painting and literature and tries to look after the capability both the mediums have in helping their spectators to derive the desired meaning or more out of it. The words penned down inspires artist has resulted in great paintings and work of art world around and sometimes being used as the reference matter to create them or as the pure total base of it.

“Indian authorities admit architecture, music and poetry alone to be fine arts, for they alone have independent being” (*What is Aesthetics?* 9). Even though aesthetics studies, all modes of art

- music, literature, theatre, dance, film, painting, sculpture, architecture, landscape design and town planning. The art whether it is useful art or fine art, whenever it appeals to aesthetic taste is studied by Aesthetics. On the other hand, according to western philosophy “architecture, music, poetry, sculpture and painting are recognized to be fine arts by Hegel (9). These ambiguities are enough for a man to be paused mum before this question, that whether art and literature have any connections each other. Then it becomes necessary to go back to the origin of both the language and art of pre historic time to analyses these in their raw form.

Communication has existed in various forms since man appeared on Earth. The methods, however, consisted of a disorganized set of signs that could have different meanings to each human using them. “It wasn’t until three million years after man’s debut, around the year 30,000 B.C.E, that communication began to take on an intentional, manufactured format. The most well-known form of primitive communication is cave paintings. The artistic endeavours were created by a species of man that appeared around 130,000 B.C.E, the homo sapiens. Pigments were then used to create depictions of primitive life on the cave walls. The most popular theory states that the depictions were used as a manual for instructing others what animals were safe to eat”.

Hence it becomes clear that before language cave paintings were used to communicate and to pass vital information in between themselves and to the generation to come. Here lies the idea and beginning of art, emerging as visual dialogue. And it is after a long-time language gets into the proper written form as we use today. And in the formation of these language also have the influence of pictures. Taking into consideration the pictorial languages formed such as, Egyptian hieroglyphs now not in scene, and traditional Chinese language could be found influenced by visuals in nature as well as other objects we find all around. “Although there are several claims

about the origin of hieroglyphs, one of the more convincing view claims it derived from rock pictures produced by prehistoric hunting communities living in the desert west of the Nile especially during c. 3200 – 3000 BCE.”<sup>4</sup>

“Early human ventured deep within a cave, where sound reverberated off the walls. Perhaps by either speaking or walking, they generated the sound reminiscent of a hoof. To represent this

sound, they drew a hoofed animal. They would have been using the same skills that prompted the earlier development of language. Cave art was made in acoustic “hot spots” because early humans were converting acoustic sounds into drawings.”

Cognitive mechanisms necessary for the development of cave and rock art are likely to be analogous to those employed in the expression of the symbolic thinking required for language,” Essentially, the cognitive functions needed to transfer acoustic sounds to pictures are the same cognitive functions needed in language”<sup>5</sup>.

Whether or not this art would have shaped how language further developed is speculative” In this sense, cave and rock [art] would represent a modality of linguistic expression, “Like the art of putting our meaning into words art is putting of a feeling into an object created giving a concrete shape to the feeling leading to the contemplation” (Peter 14).

“The birth of Chinese characters: is said to be the oldest writing system among the East Asian scripts, and is the only one to have arisen *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), as there is no evidence of any other fully developed writing systems in East Asia that could have influenced the formation of Chinese characters before it was discovered. Furthermore, Chinese characters likely developed from pictogram, which are stylized illustrations depicting objects or actions, and eventually became ideograms that represent abstract ideas, often as a result of combining different



characters to form new compound words”. Even when the language is said to have developed from out of nothing visuals or pictures found to be the base of it forming some alphabets of this language. Which is in a way becomes the graphical representation, the simplest form of representing the picture has become an alphabet to denote that particular object. (illustration 1). There for it could be concluded that there do exist a connection between the language from its very beginning onwards which becomes more obvious in the evolution of Chinese language.

During ancient times in order to express one’s feelings there had only a valve and the faculty of picturizing them. But even when the communication systems well established also, art and its importance never fade away, it may be because of its universal nature which transcend the limits of regional boundaries. A work of art could be understood and easily comprehended by any individual on this earth. Which will speak through the visual dialogue.

It could be concluded that the evolution of language is closely related to cave paintings which is said to be the rudimentary form of paintings. And it in turn proved the capacity of paintings to include wider meanings to it. From this point of view this project looks at literature and literature inspired painting and how it picturizes the written word. Which speak to the spectator even more things the word may not.

The first chapter of the present project contain comparative literary theory which wide opens the gate of comparison of literature with any form of artistic expression, along with taking into consideration artistic strategies used, myth, forms, social and religious movements and trends.

The second chapter deals with the painting ‘The creation of Adam’ and its comparison with the Biblical account of creation in Genesis chapter 1:26 and chapter 2:7, which is a part the ceiling frescoes of the Sistine chapel by the great artist, sculptor, painter, architect, and poet Michelangelo. He was the “second son of his father Ludovico Buonarroti, born on March 6, 1475 in Caprese a village near Arezzo”<sup>6</sup>(Paris10). His father “send him to the workshop, *the bottega* of Domenico and Davide Ghirlandaio, the “Florentine masters highly reputable workshop. It is known for certain that from here Michelangelo learned highly exacting fresco technique because the work shop was occupied with the fresco series of Florentine church Santa Maria Novella”. Statue of David and the Pieta are the other signatures of this great artist in the field of sculpture.

It was “on May 8,1508, he had signed the contract with Pope Julius II, assuring him a fee of 3000 ducts”. “The scaffold was 65 feet high and needed a 50 feet wide bridging which enable Michelangelo to paint the middle section of the vault either sitting or lying down” (84). The greatness of the work and the effort put by the artist could be understood from the detail preparatory studies and cartoons. At last when he completed the work in October 1512 after four years. He had painted in toto “1200 square meters with approximately 300 figures” (90) which are not similar to one another. Along with complexity the great iconographic program includes under lying meanings involved in it.

Third chapter encompasses the comparison of the painting *Hamasadamayanti* (Damayanti and swan) compared with the lyrics taken from *Nalacharitham Aattakkatha* by Unnayi Warriar. He was a poet, writer, scholar, dramatist who lived in Kerala, India during the latter part of the 18th century. The work is divided into four days with each part designed in such a way as to be presented as an independent performance.

*Hamsadamayanthi* was painted by Raja Ravi Varma who was very fond of epic narratives. “He was born to Ezhumavil Neelakantan Bhattatiripad and Uma Ambabayi Thampuratty in 1848 on April 29”<sup>7</sup>. He was a keen observer of the surroundings from childhood onwards, and that observation and its accuracy reflected in his drawings. “Those who came to the palace for various purpose, such as trade and other purpose were always subjected to deep analysis and observation, as well as animals. “The images imprinted deep in his mind became charcoal sketches in the wall of the palace. He was also taught religious songs that praised goddesses whom his mother used to explain with meanings appearance of each character with head to foot in total, those which stuck in mind of young Ravi Varma may decor the wall of palace.

He was also too fond of epic stories as well as the history. The greatness of Raja Ravi Varma could be seen from the effort he took to master the oil painting even though he had only a little professional guidance. “Ravi Varma took many efforts to make these paintings and the aesthetic appeal in his people. Anyone at any time had freedom to enter his workshop where he pursued painting with lending an ear to listen epic narratives being read out. He respected their corrections and made changes accordingly” (57).

In these paintings as mentioned above could be understood that they have made a written literary piece as the base of the work. But what is intended to derive by comparing is the difference that comes to the foreground while representation. And this is an effort to seek that difference and nuances it created in the interpretive endeavour of both the forms and to prove the relation that

both these work of arts having and at the same time establish the visual dialogue that stands upright in painting equal or sometimes a step high in painting.

The painting and literature are different in their own way and both express the ideas in their own way deep. But the visual dialogue may stand out due to the way it brings ideas to the spectators because “art provides with direct expression of meanings cannot be translated into ordinary language” (Peter 8). The artist enlarges and unifies the quality of preserver ‘s experience by the way of his imagination in wholesome manner.



(Illustration)

## Comparative Theory of Literature

“Initial concern of comparative literature is to compare one author with another, one literature with another, the literature of one period with that of another, one literary genre with another, literature itself with the other

- William Posnett

Comparative literature is defined as an interdisciplinary field whose practitioners study literature across national borders, across time periods, across languages, across genres, across boundaries between literature and the other arts (music, painting, dance, film, etc.) philosophy, history, social sciences, religion on the other. In brief, it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression.

“The word 'comparative' derived from Latin *comparativus*, from *comparare* is an observation or judgment of similarities or dissimilarities between two or more branches of science or subjects of study such as comparative literature, comparative religion, comparative language and so on” (Sahin 6). Over the period of time, the approaches and perspectives of this discipline have undergone many changes. “Comparative literature as a branch of study is a discipline to juxtapose different literatures across cultures and languages. Over the period of time, the approaches and perspectives of this discipline have undergone many changes. Ever since its outset, the eminent scholars have tried to define comparative literature each with their own perspectives.

Comparative literature aims at studying different literatures crossing the spheres of one particular country. In particular context, ‘it tries to establish the relationship between literature on one hand and other areas of knowledge, customs and beliefs on the other hand’. Rapid growth of

science and technology has brought different countries very close and this has resulted in an increasing curiosity to discover those aspects of literary art practiced all over the globe which on account of their similarities and differences can be treated as the fundamentals of literary art in general. The term 'comparative literature' came into being early in the Nineteenth century when the discourse of national literatures came to the fore. Previously, in eighteenth century, no proper sense of comparative literature was prevalent and the scholars loosely tried to define and interconnect languages and disciplines. Rather than discipline, comparative literature should be simply a method of approaching literatures.

“Comparative Literature is defined as the examination and analysis of the relationships and similarities of the literatures of different people and nations. The comparative study of literature is compared with the comparative study of religions. We see little evidence of it before the 19th century. ‘Weltliteratur’, the term coined by Goethe, means approximately, literature that is of all nations and people, and which, by a reciprocal exchange of ideas, mediates between nations and helps to enrich the spirit of ‘World Literature’. Comparative literature is also seen as a discipline that can transcend the frontiers of single language and national literatures. For a comparatist, any literature is basically a literature that has to be studied with reference to other literatures, generally on a bi- or monolingual or national basis. All these definitions indicate that comparative literature was initially understood as something that had evolved towards the attempting of a kind of universal literature. In other words, it was an ideal practice where literature was understood as something that transcended all values and barriers. “In brief, Comparative literature, is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression” (Block). Initially, European and Euro-American literature were

considered as 'world literature'. However, later the expression 'world literature' represented broader views.

What comparative literature means today is very different from previous discourses in global context. Cultural studies take us on reconsideration or redefinition of the term of comparative literature. Today boundaries of comparative literature have been expended by comparative cultural studies. Comparative literature is a key opening all doors beyond the national, cultural, linguistic, historical, social or political boundaries, when we turn our attentions to world literature, we recognize echoes of a masterpiece on our literature or a work of the other nations' literatures as translations and imitations, frequently by second-rate authors, or to the prehistory of a masterpiece, the migrations and the spread of its themes and forms."

"Traditionally too, Asian, African, and Middle Eastern literatures were long relegated to the rubric of Area Studies. The European literatures were understood as both aesthetically autonomous and expressive of the "national genius," while texts from the non-West were read more from an ethnographic, historical, or anthropological perspective than as works of literature in their own right. The field of Comparative Literature also endeavours, then, to overcome this division between "the West" and "the Rest" by combining the formal rigor of European literary studies with the interdisciplinary reach of area studies". As the doctrine says all higher knowledge is gained by comparison, and rests on comparison. The comparative theory of literature will embrace many works at the same time. So, each work that is being analysed should be known to the comparatist in order have a successful comparison. Therefor certain aspects are very essential in making: that is first find and take a source, theme, myths, forms, artistic strategies, social and religious trends into consideration. The comparatist with his critical approach and investigations

will find out the similarities and dissimilarities of the work that is under taken for the purpose of comparison. The comparative theory comes to its successful run only when every work that is being compared are observed in toto considering them from top to bottom the theme, myth behind, form, and artistic strategies.

“Myths in ancient civilizations are known only by virtue of the fact that they became part of a written tradition. In principle, the sort of relationship that exists between myth and literature exists also with respect to the other arts. In the case of architecture, sculpture and painting archaeological discoveries confirm the primacy of mythical representations. Among the earliest known three-dimensional objects built by human beings are prehistoric megalithic and sepulchral structures. Mythological details cannot actually be discerned, but it is generally believed that such structures express mythological concerns and that mythical images dictated the shape. An especially intriguing example is the stone circle at Stonehenge in southern England. Axes of this construction are aligned with significant risings and settings of the sun and moon, but the idea that the circle was built for a religious purpose must remain likely rather than certain”.

For a work to be analysed and interpreted either of literature or art, the background that underline the work should be studied and understood in detail. So, it becomes important to lend an ear to the theme of a work to be understood. It is the main idea or an underlying meaning of a work, as well as the form, myth, and the artistic strategies and also three influential forces affecting the study of comparative literature aesthetic: social, religious and historical factors on move.



In art, theme is usually about life, society or human nature, but can be any other subject. Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a work. Themes are usually implied rather than explicitly stated.

Literary form—"the organization, arrangement, or framework of a literary work; the manner or style of constructing, arranging, and coordinating the parts of a composition for a pleasing or effective result. In literature a form mentions the category to which it belongs such as novel, novella, poem, sonnet, story or short story. A form is an artist's way of using elements of art, principles of design, and medium.

Artistic strategy is a compact word stand for all the techniques and ornamental elements added to a work by the creator to make the work aesthetical pleasing and audience attractive. In literature, we may come across the different type of narration styles and literary devices used. when it comes to the case of art it may be the way he organizes the picture the size, colures used, space, way of composition and so on, will fall under this term making it really an umbrella term.

"Size" refers to the scale of the painting itself as well as the scale of proportions within the painting's elements. The relationship between objects can also unknowingly disrupt a viewer's perception and enjoyment. "For instance, an apple that is larger than an elephant is not natural. Less dramatically, we expect someone's eyes, lips, and nose to have a particular balance in size. On many levels, size is one of the biggest considerations for any artist. "Colour" (or hue) is at the heart of every painting. It is arguably the most important element because it sets the tone for how viewers feel about the work. It can, for instance, be warm and inviting or cold and stark. Either way, colour can set the mood for a piece. There are endless ways that painters can play with colour"

Space (or volume) is another crucial element in any art and it can be used to great effect in paintings. When talking about space in art, “it is about balancing positive and negative space. Positive space is the subject itself while the negative space is the area of a painting around it. Artists can play with a balance between these two spaces to further influence how viewers interpret their work”.

“Composition is the arrangement of the painting. Where you place the subject, how the background elements support it, and every little piece that you add to the canvas becomes part of the composition also include unity, balance, movement, rhythm, focus, contrast, pattern, and proportion” (Boddy-Evans).

The effect of society and religion on a work is of great concern in the serious evaluation of a work, because social and religious factors is having an effect which is not at all trivial. Concerning society, it is believed that the literary work is a product of a society in which it is created while it naturally inherits some of its features from its producer and the society at the same time. So, the inherited features in society will use some powers over the society leading to the influence of its content and structure. “Lanson in Bastide states that: the artist cannot escape the dictatorship of his society unless he seeks help from the public who are supportive of him.”(qtd .in Mehraban et al 165-166) Thus, it is observable that the creator of no literary work can do his job individually and the society is always present in his mind and supervises him”.

“In the same way religion is having an effect on both the art and literature. The religion and the power originated from it is one other factor influencing the formation of art and literature.

Religion has two applications regarding artistic creation. “Firstly, by determining prohibitions and limits it specifies the boundaries of art performance. Secondly, through

the dogmatic principles of its own it specifies the genres, styles, and methods of art presentation” .... In other words, religion is against imaging and destroys non-religious arts. It also draws new policies and determines dos and don'ts.... Prohibitions in the Quran stopped Arabs from their growth-oriented nature of all arts, this is a reality. Thus, religion with its prohibitions and orders and with its quiescence principles and mysticism influences art and if we do not consider these sociological elements and don't emphasize their importance we will most probably, understand nothing and will not form successful outcome” ...<sup>15</sup>

The historical forces give importance upon the study of literature through the historical angle. It has already been stated that comparative literature in today's age of globalization, has an important role since it gives the scope of studying more than one literature. In the Indian context comparative literature is of great value. It will perhaps be needless to say that Indian literature is a fine synthesis of different regional literatures. It is therefore, comparative study of different literatures can be of great help in understanding the essence of regional literatures, as well as the other artistic genres connected with it. especially the connection between the written works of literature and the pictorial representation of it, would stop at the deeper meanings both share hand in hand or the independent meaning each work possess.



## VISUAL DIALOGUE I

“Until you have seen Sistine chapel ,you have no adequate conception of what man is capable of accomplishing .One hears and reads of so many grate and worthy people, but hear, above one’s head and before one’s eyes, is living evidence of what one man has done”.

-Goethe (qtd .in Paris 84)

The Creation of Adam is an iconic work created by the genius painter Michelangelo in the year 1511. Among the many amazing artistic creation that crowd the ceiling of Sistine chapel, the creation of Adam surely stands out. It is regarded as the quintessential expression of Renaissance art and one of the finest Renaissance paintings of the 15th and 16th centuries. Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni also known as Michelangelo is one of the greatest Italian Renaissance sculptor, painter, architect, and poet who exerted an unparalleled influence on the development of Western art. Michelangelo was considered as the greatest living artist in his lifetime, and ever since then he has been held to be one of the greatest artists of all time. A number of his works in painting, sculpture, and architecture rank among the most famous in existence. His work demonstrated a blend of psychological insight, physical realism and intensity never seen before. His contemporaries recognized his extraordinary talent, and Michelangelo received commissions from some of the wealthiest and powerful men of his day, including popes and others affiliated with the Catholic Church.

*The Creation of Adam* is placed next to ‘*The creation of Eve*’. *The Creation of Adam* is the fourth scene in the chronological order of the Genesis fresco narrative, but was one of the last main panels to be completed. One of the most famous religious paintings on the ceiling, it appears in the large field of the vault of the sixth bay, between the triangular spandrels. The picture illustrates

the Book of Genesis story of God breathing life into Adam, the first human being. Michelangelo began painting *The Creation of Adam*, commencing the west half of the ceiling, in October 1511. After a fourteen-month break from painting, he had been able to see the first half of the ceiling from the ground and realized his method had to be slightly altered. Because the ceiling of the chapel is over sixty-five feet above the floor, the earlier figures were difficult to see. On this second half, the figures would become taller and the compositions would be less complex making them easier to see from the ground.

Genesis 2:7 says “And the LORD God formed Man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”<sup>17</sup> and such, artists often showed God forming Adam as an artist would, or with a ray or breath going from God’s mouth to Adam’s nostrils. In many depictions before, God and Adam are both placed on the ground. On the Sistine Chapel ceiling, Michelangelo showed something different. Starting with Adam, and working from left to right, Michelangelo created the scene of God giving life to Adam in manner unlike any that had been made before.

The composition goes like this, a white bearded man depicts God, who is wrapped in a thin rosy cloak and Adam is at the lower left. God outstretches his right arm to give life from his finger into the first man. Adam the first creation naked on the left and shown as a lounging figure stretches his left arm and poses to mirror God. God as an elderly figure in the right surrounded by angels together with a female figure close to God inside the protective circle of his hand and a young child in touch with his left hand.

In the Holy Bible there are two accounts of narration, spread in chapter one and two. As per the first account of narration Genesis chapter 1:26 “Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind

in our image, according to our likeness” (1). The second account of narration in chapter 2:7 states “then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being” (2). The painting though not the exact narration of the scripture, that is to say in a more explicit way; an ordinary reader may imagine and expect while he read this passage only God who moulded a structure from ground out of soil and breath to it, to form the first human being and to have life. The other figures may not be there in his imagination until he is exposed to the visual assistance of this painting or any other visuals. Even if he has, it is sure that it won't be a free-floating Godly figure, also women in the protective enclosure of the God and the child who is in touch with his left hand. So, considering the written description and comparing it with that of the painting it is clear that these extra figures and the style of composition are the mental work and imagination of the artist himself. “For the genuine work of art arises and completes in the mind of artist himself.” (Peter12). Thus, those meanings that left for the embrace of the readers analysis by scripture are painted in detail.

“The work of art is a product of ideal or mental construction of the artist” (10). Together with it when the detail study of the topic or theme gets added a work of art becomes the evergreen signature and magnum opus of its creator.

The narration about the creation of man in the scripture and its connection with the painting is very obvious. The scripture Genesis chapter 1:26 mentions “let us' make humankind in 'our image' and 'likeness” points out the presence of some more figures besides God, with the use of the word “let us” and “our image”, in the first account of narration, it can be noted that the artist does it from his imagination, abiding in theological doctrines of St. Bonaventura and St. Augustine that are “adduced” to have influenced the painting creation of Adam which “leaves some divergence in the interpretive endeavour”(Paris 87) Which might have helped him to decide who

should be placed with God, as the written word points presence of more than one figure using these words. He represents, God surrounded by angels and encircled by a nebulous form. The form is supported by angels who fly without wings and in order to give a floating feeling Michelangelo has given the effect of air current passing through.

Another nuance that the scripture put forth is the word “likeness”, Michelangelo leave not this aspect too in his painting. It is clear that Adam is in a lounging pose relaxing on his foreshorten right hand stretching his left hand not fully mirrors God. His body is concave which finds parallel to that of God echoes the form of God’s body which is in convex posture inside the nebulous form. This very correspondence brought to the painting seems to reflect the very idea written in scripture that is God created ‘humankind in his image and likeness’. These aspects once again prove the undoubtable position of painting shoulder to shoulder with literature as a visual dialogue.

Chapter 2:7 suggest “man was created from the dust” and when compared with the painting, it lacks the clarity at a single glance that is this aspect may not be found in the painting. Corresponding to the scripture, it should be an act of emerging from life less dust to a being, as far as the imagination of an ordinary man is concerned. We see a God who prepare a mouldid out of dust to create the first man in Bible. Instead the artist had portrayed the dream image according to his understanding and what he knew by discussing with the doctors and theologians of the church.

Painting represent Adam as fully matured man with muscular body equal to that of God. But the idea that the man was taken from the dust is also finds a space in illustration. Adam who wait for god is not yet risen from the ground and having major half of his body in contact with the ground. Adam is in relaxing pose on his right hand foreshortened, and his head sunken within his shoulders.



Both the artists as well as writers used to have many techniques to highlight what they intent to convey. Considering the narration of creation as well as the painting it is easy to figure out it, which in a great deal contribute to the interpretive endeavour. What we see in painting is the fingers about to meet! or fall into a confusion whether it already happened? and that really owing to the interpretive endeavour and fulfil the intended participation of the viewer in the work. Where it blooms alike with literary text, matching the interpretation of the bible. In Holy Bible like text, it comes mostly in the form of word play hiding many nuances behind, the usage and the selected vocabulary. Which religious text put forth for the contemplation or pause reading of the reader.

The first five books of the Holy Bible were originally written in Hebrew and it has used the word ‘Adam’ to mention the first human being. The name Adam was formed from the Hebrew word “*adamaha*” “the ground.” (Guinness 22). Delving into the scripture, playing with etymology and giving wide and wider meanings to the written word, like these already come across. The meaning blooms in a single word Adam which lead to its etymology as “*adamaha*” point meaningfully to the dust from which human arose. The usage of word formed, which in the raw text in Hebrew equals God to a potter who work in clay. “Thus, the human was an earthling whose existence was tied to the soil” (22) from which he came. So, use of this word emphasis the origin of man from the dust through the hands of God. And these etymologies used in these scriptures gives opportunities in spiritual realm and to go some more deep into it.

“Adam” is used as the same in its English translation also. The Book of Genesis use this wordplay to reveal the special aspects of this meaning. The ‘Hebrew word for man was Adam,’ the same word is used as the name for the first human being. “One and the same word may give different kinds of meaning and represent a number of different things, provided the definite

characteristics which those things all share” (Peter10). Hence it can be interpreted that Michelangelo’s dream imaging of Adam, almost laying on the ground in a relaxed pose, could be seen as the example of artistic strategies getting rolled both in the literature piece of art as well as in the painting. The transfiguration of the written word into visual dialogue can be witnessed. When we pass reading through the lines; “and he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and then the man became a living being,” some may imagine the picture of God breath to his nostrils mouth to mouth closer as if we do something to a man struggling to retain his life or else the figure of god blowing air current of life on him. Since the painting standout from portraying word by word it gives room for many possible interpretations.

The picture gives space for extra reading rather than that of the scripture. The Adam in the picture is seen in a lounging pose even when the Godly figure seem to have stretched his hand full and is in an attempt to reach to his creation to transfer the spark of life. But on the other side Adam is still in the relaxed pose not showing any interest to reach to his creator, who represent the ultimate inner attitude, human lassitude represented by Adam's aura of slothfulness that is always found common in all the human beings when it is interpreted in a spiritual realm, and also the women and child is interpreted as mother Mary and child as Jesus Christ.

Each and everything that is depicted above is also having their own reason both in scripture and painting, why they are represented so, considering the artistic ornaments working behind each form of work, as scripture used etymology to generate under lying meanings. It could not be brought under a perfect synchronized word as literary devices, but could drag under a vague term artistic strategy. Where as in the painting it is performed using the adjustment the artist makes brilliantly with the core elements in painting, such as space, size, colour, composition and time. The word “composition is an umbrella term it concerned with arrangement of painting. The term

brings under the elements of composition. Such as unity, balance, movement, rhythm, focus, contrast, pattern, and proportion” (Boddy-Evans).

The artist has preserved a place of focus for highlighting the main theme of this painting. By positioning God on the right and the Adam on the left he brought the fingers of both God and Adam in the centre of the painting through a brilliant composition. Since it is in the centre it becomes the first point of attraction, which is the major theme of the painting. Because considering the painting this single touch of God is going to install life in his creation. The brilliance of his mind is revealed here because not these figures nor fingers becomes the focus but the small gap between the Adam and God, the short slit between their fingers. Which makes the work more dynamic and impressive, and also portrays his mastery and genius. Hence the focus, central theme of the scripture and the painting becomes one even though it is different in approach but equal in a common idea the intersession and presence of God in creation, but the painting seem to have rendering space for many possible interpretations and inner meaning rather than the scriptures and self-elevated into a position of visual dialogue.

By adjusting the space artist could do change things better. In order to give importance to something, the volume of the negative space get increased or decreased accordingly and that of positive space vice versa. ‘The positive space in a painting is the object and negative are the background’. In creation of Adam, figure of God and Adam is enlarged to dominate in the painting. He painted the series of ceiling paintings including “the creation of Adam” after last judgement. “Michelangelo was acquiring increasing technical and representational mastery; he reduced the number of figures, increased their size, to give the composition more clarity” (Paris 89).

The colour used for the body of God and the Adam is same, there is a significance in this similarity, which he purposefully brought about to substantiate the scripture which says man was created in the “image and likeness of God”. It is assumed so because taking as a whole, ceiling painted in Sistine chapel “God appear in total five scenes”(90), and only in one painting that is in ‘the creation of Adam’ alone the God found major part of his hand and legs out of his clothing. And it seems to be the brilliance of the artist to convey the thought through such a composition. In all other paintings in the frescos of Sistine chapel God appears covered fully in a rosy clothing. Balance of an art work is important to have the aesthetic appeal in this painting could see the Adam painted in the left and God figure on the right, to balance the picture and to keep the rhythm of it. Michelangelo have used the faculty of these artistic ornaments successfully in the painting. Each of them is used to arrange in a way to lead the movement of viewers eye according to the priority he decides.

The painting *creation of Adam* is seeming to have incorporated many a fold meaning than the scripture which tells about the same account of creation. The paintings and drawings could communicate spectator more, than the written script does. Due to its universality it is being easily recognized than any account of prose writing. It is because of this, there happened the evolution of painting or drawings many a more than years before the evolution of language. The power of imagination or the visual representation is much more times effective. And it blooms before us a visual dialogue that convers a diverse meaning.



## VISUAL DIALOGUE II

“Raja Ravi Varma an artist cousin of king of Travancore, was a pioneer of modern and one of the first to paint in the grand European style using oil on canvas. Raja Ravi Varma was known for his portraits of Indian women, divinities and Mythological characters from the Indian epics, such as, Sita, Shakuntala, Nala and Damayanti, and Hindu icons such as Lakshmi and Saraswathi, Ravi Varma introduce studio painting into the modern Indian art scene. The way Ravi Varma treated the silken folds cloth worn by his subjects the embroidery, and the jewellery that gleamed on them, created a phenomenal demand for his grand portraits” (Ratna 69).

His paintings can be classified into three categories – portraits, portrait-based compositions and theatrical compositions based on myths and legends. It is the third category of paintings for which Raja Ravi Varma is most renowned. Through his paintings, he gave an insight of the famous mythological stories to those who were not fortunate enough to hear or read them.

“Treatment of the female figure can tell us plenty about Ravi Varma’s approach to painting. His female subjects were inspired by both the aristocratic ladies who posed for him in the studio. “His heroines became ideal national prototypes, consciously representing a pan-Indian type” (Cooksey). “It may be due the tour he had all around in Indian before committing this work. In order to picturize these figures that no one yet have not seen, need to be presented in a way matching to the attires that having a traditional touch. “In India each and every state moreover each cast and clan had their own dress codes which he was trying to explore through his tour, but the all traces of that culture and dressing styles were evaporated due to the intervention of Mughal dynasty which came to rule and retain for a reasonable period of time in India”(Pushparaj 74)

“Narrative art was nothing new to India. But illusionist painting as a vehicle for story telling by presenting a ‘frozen moment was a Western invention.” These are the stylistic elements that Ravi Varma mastered on canvas before delving into the system of mass production.

A good example of this is the regal *Hamsadamyanti*, which was painted for the Trivandrum Palace in 1899 and is on display at the Sri Chaitra Art Gallery in Trivandrum. This painting describes scene from the Vanna Parva book of the Mahabharata, in which Damayanti is told about the virtues and accomplishments of Nala by a swan, but the work which influenced him most is said to be the *Nalacharitham Aattakkatha* by Unnayi Warriar. *Nalacharitham Aattakadhha* is divided to perform in consecutive four days. The scene which the Swan appears belongs to the first day. The painting is happened to have inspired from the “act three of first day”. Ravi Varma painted several stages of Damayanti’s story, but this depiction of Damayanti is thought of by contemporary critiques to be “the most beautiful and idealized” of his women.

“To bring Damayanti to canvas he sought the help of beautiful young south Indian women as a model” (Pushparaj 144). Depiction of these situation into painting Ravi Varma never tried to imitate what the verse said but made it a base only to have the outline. Because what he was trying is to bring reality merge with it. The lines which suggest the beauty of the swan could be read as follows from the poetry. The swan by appearance made little attractive in his depiction. Seeing Swan descend from the sky, Damayanti exclaims: “is this lightning itself down to earth? Does the Milky Way descend to Earth? Or is it a gold swan that flies down?” (“മിന്നൽക്കൊടിയിറങ്ങിമന്നിലേവരികയോ/വിധുമണ്ഡലമിറങ്ങിക്കിതിയിലേപോരികേയോ?/സ്വർണ്ണവർണ്ണമാമനംപറന്നിങ്ങുവരികേയോ./കണ്ണുകൾക്കിതുനല്ല പീയൂഷത്വരികേയോ?”;my trans;91).The critiques analyse to find the age of the women represented in the painting is far different in anatomy and elder in age, she is actually a virgin who just attained puberty as per the

description of source text, that the swan address her as ‘lass’; “you lass, queen (head) of ladies with beautiful eyes”. (“കാതരമിഴിമാർമുലിമാലികേദമ/സഹോദരി,നിനക്കുബാലികേ”; my trans.;92) because the marriage of Damayanti is being commenced at the puberty. And it is the freedom that artist takes for granted in picturing her as more matured one than that of poem.

Written script may fail some times to portray the beauty of its character, even if it tries, without comparing with the beauty of some similar beautiful objects or beauty that he thinks that is familiar to the reader is to be used to compare, it is a literary technique. But in case of painting it represents directly in to canvas and the universality make it alike understood what the artist means by it. The poem points at other objects of beauty to describe Damayanti’s fairness “moonlight bright figure, blinking eyed” “പൂർണ്ണന്ദുവദനേ, കാതരനയേനേ”; my trans.;92)

There is also another feature that could be pointed out that even though the poet knew her as a lady of aristocratic birth none of her external feature or her external appearance is mentioned by him wearing any ornaments such as earrings, chains or anklets. But in the painting, it becomes the just opposite. “Ravi Varma gave importance to the appearance of Damayanti more focus. She is represented as wearing varied ornaments of gold and of the beads. Because he was giving importance to external props more in his pictures. He believed that his painting will be easily understood by the viewers” (Pushparaj 70), and the ornaments and dress they wore will make the task easy among his subjects. Gold jewellery is most popular among South Indian women. In southern part of India, gold is considered auspicious and a status symbol. India and jewellery, jewellery and Indian women - the terms are linked inherently

The mythical swan had swung across her pond the Louts pad caught in its feet having been strung up the pillar as it settled atop the same. Damayanti trade down the steps leading to the



pond in order to greet the irresistibly charming creature. She pauses right before the swan and gaze at it with greatest wonder, her stance pensive yet, care free in terms of worldly concerns. The swan is about to close its pristine feathers around its slight body. Note how the twin pillars add balance and wholeness to the entire creation. This is also an imagination of the artist.

Several aspects of Indian culture life are profoundly intertwined with plants -religion, traditional medicinal practices, rituals and festivals. These aspects of culture have in turn, influenced the use of Botanical themes by artist and designers. “Plant motifs are seen across a range of Raja Ravi Varma’s paintings. He used floral and vegetal motifs in a myriad of ways – as elements within the main subject matter, as part of the environment he depicted and as decorative element worn by the women, he frequently portrayed”.

Ravi Varma paintings express great meanings through the flowers that become the part of scene especially that becomes closely connected to main character or characters who becomes the centre of attraction. As we have mentioned the Lotus on the side of swan and hanging on its legs point toward the Godly status that it have because the swan is depicted as a bird that comes from heaven and in the poetry, also it says that, he came from Brahma to teach women of Nala palace the art of walking *annanada*.” Abiding in city of Nala, as the command of one who born in lotus/ teach lotus eyed one’s art of walking “നളനഗരവാഴുന്നുഞാൻ നളിനജന്മവചസഃനളിനമിശിമാർക്കല്ലാം നസപരിപ്പാൻ” ....; my trans;.92)

The same, botanical motif is seen in the bun of the main character Damayanti. A rose that decorate her hair in the picture and the flower “roses is used by Ravi Varma in his paintings to represent the courtship as well as the acceptance”. So, through the painting he was communicating

the status of Damayanti which is clearly stated in poem, he never loses that point too in his painting. The poem one of her maid address her as “*Bhimy*” which means daughter of king Bhima. So, in words it is clear that she is of aristocratic birth Ravi Varma was bringing this to the painting through adding the floral motif of rose in the bun of her hair which also show the love and affection that she was having for Nala.

“Much of Damayanti’s beauty in this painting comes from the radiance of her gold and red south Indian sari wrapped around her body, and the physicality of her weight on the stone steps. His strength was bringing the deities and mythological characters into the earthly realm, painting them in settings and clothing from the world he knew” (Cooksey 15). “Gods and goddesses, he “visualized as princes, set them into the marvellous palaces the painter as accustomed to,” and therefore grounded them in reality”. He paid attention to the aesthetic elements of Indians in different regions, including physiognomy, costume and jewellery that he thought to be most appropriate for grounding subjects in reality. The sari worn by the Damayanti in his picture is notable as we see in his every picture of Raja Ravi Varma. The gleaming ornaments and sari are the peculiarities of his paintings. As mentioned earlier it represents the culture. Here the Damayanti’s portrayal could be identified as a south Indian lady.

“While the choice of women as subjects in representational forms had been a dominant aspect of Western visual culture, Varma gave them a mythical rendition and textured his ‘Indian’ flavour with these. In an attempt to blend ‘Indian’ ethos with a primarily ‘Western’ conception, Varma incorporated an Indian code of costumes, gestures, actions and feelings.

“Her attire is distinguished, almost regal, the gold booties sparkling in the outdoor light. the intricately brocaded border of the blouse, a similar tint of pink as rose in her bun. Her jet-black

tresses have been parted in middle, as has traditionally be the norm, and gathered in a plump bun resting on the nape of her softly shadowed neck. Effect of Indian tour he had before he painted these picture as well as the effort put in to cherish his painting with the tint of this traditional ornaments through which he made these traditional characters close to the Indian culture of that time and more realistic. “For one who born an brought up in Kerala have seen only the minimal clothing style, in white. So, obviously he had the confusion in assigning puranic characters a dress code. But the broad view which he obtained during the Indian tour influenced and helped a lot finalizing a dress code in puranic epic paintings” (Menon 161).

Analysing the painting we could see artistic strategies on move. As discussed in the previous chapter the same finds application in this analysis too. The colour that is used in the other painting is light brown and its different variations. The saree in red is used to highlight showing clearly the folds, which add glory to the artists talent in painting. And since the negative space is painted in light colour the main characters positive space that is, subjects of the pictorial representation swan and the Damayanti could be placed under the focus of the spectator. Shapes find a main role in this picture, prominent is the geometric shape. The pilers which included in the composition gives balance and boldness to the entire composition

Composition could be found safe in the hands of artist. Beauty of the women figure Damayanti is more good and pleasing in this standing posture and the swan if placed in the ground the total balance, rhythm would have been lost as well as the placing of swan on the ground or in pond must have divided the focus of the spectators and may roam around without giving the intended effect. That is, what the artist tries to show is the picture of Damayanti indulge in conversation with swan deep inside mesmerized in love towards Nala. And so, the encounter could be intense and effective only when they are placed in same level face to face. By doing so the artist

could able to catch hold of viewers focus in the picture. The beauty of nature brought in that is the groves surrounding her home roll into the distance in the background, adding to the depth of the composition. Hence the positive space is well focused and the negative space is well balanced to support the positive space resulting in vibrant composition. Together with the artistic strategies employed in each work comparative literature also analyse the effect these literature works or work of art makes in society.

“Digging out the influence he made in society is really drastic. It was in 1936 only low caste Hindu population in Kerala got freedom to enter in temple without any barriers to restrict. But long before that itself paintings of Ravi Varma pictures had its brake through in to the prayer rooms of Hindu population despite of difference as low or high caste, High palace to hut” (Menon 162). “Painting of Ravi Varma had used as formula for many Indian films”. “Phalke said that; in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century he had a detail study of Ravi Varma paintings to direct the film Harishchandra” (qtd. in Menon 162)

Varma’s paintings present a rich context for understanding the use of plants in art and design in India. An enquiry into the botanical themes portrayed in Varma’s paintings was initiated in 2018 ‘as part of the pedagogy with the Botanical project. So, the Ravi Varma paintings had wide range of influence upon the culture and life style of India. Both as reflecting historic record of Indian culture as well as moulding wheel of new fashion and culture. Even today Ravi Varma painting stands out new in style and grandeur challenging the test of time.

## Future Dialogue

Cave paintings or drawings was the beginning of communication in prehistoric time and it was the rudimentary form of communication existed among the early human beings. Later developed the writing script that influenced by the cave art. But the relevance of art as medium of communication never fade away. In long run both influenced each sometimes literature more the painting. It is notable that the literature itself at times use the aid of visual imageries to convey the meaning they intended to convey to the readers. Because in imagination the visual make clear and vivid the idea they intended to communicate. So, it is clear a strong unlimited power of communication resides in paintings.

The paintings that already dealt with was proving the power both the mediums had especially that the paintings. “The Creation of Adam” was based on two or three biblical quotation but when it came to the canvas it was holding great meanings in it even that the scripture didn’t. But the same time it never failed to incorporate the meanings which the scripture encompassed. The same peculiarity of painting being repeated in “Hamans Damayanti” in which painting in detail, portray Damayanti and the details about her as it is in the poem. Hence analysing these paintings former that represent the Italian renaissance and latter that used for the first-time western oil painting together point towards the ability of painting that evolved right from the prehistoric period onwards, as language of communication a mute visual dialogue.

Analysing this relation between written dialogue in detail it becomes relevant in this age of digitalization. In the pre historic time its self-drawings were good medium for communication, it was informative without the barriers of language and speech. The prehistoric art could be recognised even by the modern man even if he is a beginner and little informed and poor in

knowledge about the ancient civilization and their situation, it is the old ancient language that time always make the so-called modern man confused unable to decipher the meaning of it.

Even then there occurred the evolution of written script. It may be because that everyone could not draw them and also may be because of the time it takes. So, sometimes in a situation where it never takes much time to draw pictures it may become the language of the future.

Because “like the art of putting our meaning into words art is putting of a feeling into an object created giving a concrete shape to the feeling leading to the contemplation” (Peter 14). If in a single picture or pictures you could draw all your emotions there it becomes a visual dialogue. As the writing is formed from the pictograms, in this world which rely heavily on the use of electronic devices such as smartphones and tablets. In more explicit way a disintegration may happen, the graphic symbols that is used by young generation which include the emotions using facial expressions in the form of graphic symbols, and even have the function of communicating concepts and ideas such as the weather, feelings, appreciation, note of thanks may result in reverse fashion resulting in language. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century even if we are progressing towards in this digital age in reverse, we have in some way almost partially gone back to using pictograms, the visual dialogue.

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