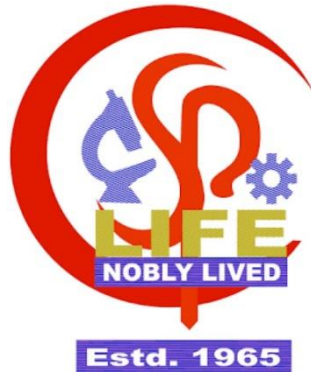


**Reading Deepa Nishanth's Ottamarappeyuth
as a Gynocritic Work**

*Project submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University Kottayam, in
partial fulfillment of the award of the Degree of Bachelor of
Arts in English Language and Literature*

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Sixth Semester

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2017-2020

Declaration

I 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 Mr. Binilkumar.M.R, Assistant Professor, Department of English, St.Paul's College, Kalamassery.

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Certificate

This is to certify that the project work Reading Deepa Nishant's *Ottamarappeyuth*, as a gynocritic work is a record of original work carried out by ROBIN.K.JOHNSON under the supervision and guidance of Mr Binilkumar.M.R Assistant Professor, Department of English, St.Paul's College, Kalamassery.

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Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Mr.Binilkumar. M.R for the firm support to go on with this this project under his guidance. This project would not have taken its present form and shape without his timely intervention, supervision, and inspiring appreciation.. I thank Dr. Salia Rex, Head of Department of English and all my teachers, friends and librarian for being a pharos of light all along the way to my success.

ROBIN.K.JOHNSON

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Introduction

“Now we are free to come and go as we please, not in sorrow but in laughter.”

- Elaine Showalter

Radical changes have occurred and is still happening in the lives of women since the past few decades. Female sexuality began to be discussed in the open spaces, single parenting is getting accepted, and women have started to explore new areas in profession and entrepreneurship. But the profession and personal life of women have been distorted by the constraints of capitalism, patriarchy and have fallen far short of liberation. So there is still as much to fight for.

The issue of women’s liberation has been debated in relation with every great social movement. In the nineteenth century, the women’s emancipation movement took its birth from the movement to abolish slavery. The worldwide uprising against colonialism in the twentieth century also influenced women’s liberation. And finally, women’s freedom is currently associated with the clashes among various classes in the society. As Germaine Greer points out, “21st century women’s liberation has to fight to change the world and to end the class society which created oppression and exploitation in the first place” (Greer 340). The awareness regarding class equality gave rise to the idea of gender parity and has thus become the current area of discussion among the women liberationists.

The U.N. lists promoting gender equality and empowering women as its third Millennium Development Goal (MDG) recognizes that this goal is both an important objective in itself and central to achieving the seven other goals, including the fourth and fifth MDGs to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health. However, the proper implementation of the desired actions that would satisfy gender equality is the need of the hour. To galvanize these efforts, the U.N. set the third MDG to eliminate gender disparity

in primary and secondary education by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015. Though India missed the 2005 deadline, the country has recently sped up its progress and the gender parity index for Gross Enrolment Ratios in primary and secondary education has risen. According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation report, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the primary level was 83.8 in 1990-91 and it increased to 95.7 in 2000-01 and to 116 in 2010- 11. For the middle/upper primary level, the GER was 66.7 in 1990-91 which declined to 58.6 in 2000-01 and then gradually increased to 85.5 in 2010-11. However, the female to male ratio in education has been steadily improving over the years. In primary education, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) has gone up from 0.76 in 1990-91 to 1.01 in 2010-11 and in secondary education from 0.60 in 1990-91 to 0.88 in 2010-11 (“Gross Enrolment Ratio and Gender Parity Index”).

The term feminism describes political, cultural, and economic movements that aim to establish equal rights and legal protections for women. Over time, feminist activists have campaigned for issues such as women’s legal rights, especially in regard to contracts, property, and voting; body integrity and autonomy; abortion and reproductive rights, including contraception and prenatal care; protection from domestic violence, sexual harassment, and rape; workplace rights, including maternity leave and equal pay; and against all forms of discrimination women encounter. Feminist history can be divided into three waves.

The first feminist wave began in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; the second in the 1960s and 1970s; and the third extends from the 1990s to the present. Feminist theory emerged from these feminist movements. It is manifested in a variety of disciplines such as feminist geography, feminist history and feminist literary criticism. The first wave refers mainly to the women's suffrage movements of the nineteenth and

early twentieth centuries. These movements were mainly concerned with women's right to vote. The second wave propagated the ideas and actions associated with the women's liberation movement beginning in the 1960s which campaigned for legal and social rights for women. The third wave was a continuation and a reaction to the perceived failures of second-wave feminism, and began in the 1990s.

First-wave feminism promoted equal contract and property rights for women, opposing ownership of married women by their husbands. By the late nineteenth century, feminist activism was primarily focused on the right to vote. American first-wave feminism ended with passage of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution in 1919, granting women voting rights.

Prominent schools of thought which evolved as a part of feminism have contributed abundantly to modern feminist literary criticism. Second Wave Feminism is largely associated with Phallogocentric criticism and Gynocriticism. Phallogocentric criticism refers to the practice of reading the work of male authors from a feminist perspective. Such re-readings of canonized writers were popular at the start of the second wave of the feminist movement. Simone de Beauvoir pioneered this critical approach in her influential book *The Second Sex*. It was possible through such an interpretation to expose "a pattern of female subordination", which reflected not merely the bias of individual writers, but attitudes towards women deeply entrenched in the patriarchal system.

Elaine Showalter pioneered gynocriticism with her book *A Literature of Their Own* (1977). Gynocriticism involves three major aspects. The first is the examination of female writers and their place in literary history. The second is the consideration of the treatment of female characters in books by both male and female writers. The third and most important aspect of gynocriticism is the discovery and exploration of a canon of literature written by women. Gynocriticism seeks to appropriate a female literary

tradition. In Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own*, she proposes the following three phases of women's writing:

“The ‘Feminine’ Phase: In the feminine phase, female writers tried to adhere to male values, writing as men, and usually did not enter into debate regarding women's place in society. Female writers often employed male pseudonyms during this period. The ‘Feminist’ Phase: In the feminist phase, the central theme of works by female writers was the criticism of the role of women in society and the oppression of women. The ‘Female’ Phase: During the ‘female’ phase, women writers were no longer trying to prove the legitimacy of a woman's perspective. Rather, it was assumed that the works of a women writer were authentic and valid. The female phase lacked the anger and combative consciousness of the feminist phase.”

The difference in women's literature from that of the males' is its first step towards the liquidization of patriarchal ideologies. The concept of the ‘other’ is as primordial as consciousness itself. “In most primitive communities, one finds the expression of a duality, that of the self and the other” (Beauvoir 16). Sartre argues that, “there is a conflict at the most basic level of human consciousness as each individual seeks domination by asserting himself as subject and the other as object” (Bryson 152). In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir says that man has successfully relegated woman to the status of the permanent other. The woman is excluded from the realm of true humanity and she never becomes an equal and so never a threat (171). Simone de Beauvoir had done a lot of studies on women and she presents her thesis in *The Second Sex*.

The important hurdles to a woman are not biological, political, legal or economical; instead, it is the outlook of the society regarding femininity that chains her.. Celebration of femininity by the patriarchal culture is actually a subjugation of female

autonomy. As Beauvoir reflects in her celebrated phrase, “One is not born but rather becomes a woman” (Beauvoir 295). The term “woman” connotes the qualities of a woman, which the society attributes to a female. She should be obedient, patient and servile in her behavior towards others. The moment a woman does something different, society would either call her bad or mad. Therefore, in order to disrupt the supremacy of the patriarchal culture, the distinction between a male and female should not transcend the biological premises.

It is high time that the patriarchal culture ceased to exist for the all-round development of women. The world is currently experiencing a global gender revolution. Women are finding their true voices and are using them. But no one can afford to ignore the dormant social and economic power that lies within those voices. Diminishing the importance of women means failing to make use of humankind’s full potential. In the early 21st century, millennial Indian women launched a radically new kind of feminist politics that had not been seen before. Inspired by a vocabulary of rights and protest used by the youth across the world, such as “Occupy Wall Street” and the “Arab Spring”, they initiated a series of social media campaigns against the culture of sexual violence. By bringing the discourse of freedom, sexuality, choice, and desire into the public realm in the streets and through social media this agitation forced the government to expand its legal definitions of rape, introducing harsher punishment for rapists and criminalizing stalking and voyeurism. The patriarchal culture considers a woman as an object. The word ‘*Charak*’, for instance, is used in Malayalam to refer to a woman as a commodity to be used sexually. Such derogatory terms have been used by society for the objectification of women. Sara Joseph strongly disapproves of the so-called ‘fashion’ in the dressing trends observed in women. It is a part of the patriarchal culture, where women are forced to dress appropriately to look beautiful and thereby become mere objects of pleasure for

others. At the same time, the male dominated society would also encourage the woman to preserve her femininity.

After ages of struggle, feminism in literature has reached a point where women could express her memories, dreams, opinions and views freely. If one examines the history of Malayalam literature, one could infer that the women writings in Malayalam marked its presence only towards the end of the nineteenth century or early twentieth century. The developments in the twentieth century and the twenty-first century have been phenomenal.

This project titled “Reading Deepa Nishanth’s *Ottamarappeyuth*, as a gynocritic work” is an attempt to do a gynocritic reading of the book *Ottamarappeyuth* by twenty-first century malayalam writer Deepa Nishanth. The project is divided into three chapters. The first chapter talks about the theory of gynocriticism and its historical significance in literature. The second chapter traces the growth and impacts of gynocriticism in Malayalam literature. It also delves on the literary life of the Malayalam feminist author Deepa Nishanth and her works, particularly *Ottamarappeyuth*. This chapter examines the empathetical observations made by the author about other women around her. The third chapter puts the light upon the personal experiences of the writer as a woman, as a social activist, college lecturer and a critic. This project therefore explores the possibility of gynocritic reading in Deepa Nishanth’s *Ottamarappeyuth*.

Chapter 1

The Historical Progression of Gynocriticism

Gynocriticism, or gynocritics, is the study of women's writing. Derived from the Greek word 'gyne' meaning woman, the term gynocritics was coined by Elaine Showalter in her essay *Towards a Feminist Poetics* (1979), where it is referred to as a form of feminist literary criticism that is concerned with women as writers as opposed to women as readers – the feminist critique of male writers. Gynocriticism emerges in the context of the second feminist wave's recognition of sexual difference and the specificity of women's writing. Establishing the historical study of women writers as a legitimate field of academic inquiry, it developed to encompass a broad range of methodologies of reading women's writing. In *Women's Time, Women's Space: Writing the History of Feminist Criticism* (1984), Showalter pairs gynocritics with Alice Jardine's 'neologism *gynesis*', defined as "the putting into discourse of 'woman'" (Jardine 58), to meet the challenges of post-structuralism and developing trends in feminist critical theory. Widely used in the 1990s, the terms have fallen somewhat in disuse at the beginning of the twenty-first century, presumably because the project of gynocriticism is viewed as flawed. The practice of critically assessing writing by women authors (and the theorization of this practice), however, is well anchored in the departments of literature and cultural studies worldwide and continues to be at the forefront of feminist literary scholarship.

Gynocriticism starts as a radical move to focus on female culture. Concentrating on the difference of women's writing from men's writing. Gynocriticism takes gender as a constituent social category and studies women writers as a distinct literary tradition and (sub) culture. This move constitutes a break with earlier literary critical practice, which tended to view women writers either as honorary men or as isolated exceptions. Instead,

what gynocriticism sought to do was “to construct a female framework for the analysis of women’s literature, to develop new models based on the study of female experience, rather than to adapt male models and theories” (Showalter 28). Early examples of works on gynocriticism are Patricia Meyer Spack’s *The Female Imagination* (1975), Ellen Moer’s *Literary Women* (1976), Elaine Showalter’s *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (1977), and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination* (1979). Providing analyses and interpretations of individual writers and works these gynocritical works explore the specificity of women’s writing, inquiring into imagery, tropes, themes, and genres; recurring patterns and distinguishing structures; factors inhibiting or facilitating female creativity; and the problem of a language specific to women.

Gynocriticism raises the issue of canons – of a mainstream/male literary canon. Also, it focuses on the canon’s blindness to gender, of women’s writing’s relationship to this of a dialectic between male and female canons. And it promotes the need for a female canon or several - as well as its own practices of inclusion/exclusion. Countering a “tradition of silence,” gynocriticism is linked to feminist efforts to get women into print, with the search for women writers and the recovery of lost texts, the teaching of courses about women’s writing, and the establishment of feminist publishing houses and of feminist lists within existing ones. In the 1980s and 1990s, it diversified into “multiple gynocriticisms” (Friedman 96), identifying traditions of women’s writing on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, or sexual orientation. The gynocritical project to focus on the difference of women’s writing is criticized for being caught up in biological determinism.

By privileging gender above other categories, gynocriticism adopted an essentialist stance at odds with insights into the constructed nature of gender and the

intersectional concepts of identity and subjectivity. Critics have pointed out that “even pluralized gynocriticisms... require a unitary foil of male writing” (Friedman 22). By focusing on women writers, gynocriticism of necessity asserts the primacy of sexual difference. Taking gender as its principle of selection, it also marginalizes other aspects of the writer’s identity, seeing them as mere “variables” subsumed under gender. Critics have also taken gynocriticism to task for seemingly limiting feminist criticism of women’s writing to “sympathetic, identity seeking approaches” (Moi 75). They have challenged its notion of text, suggesting it is conceived as a “transparent medium” that gives direct access to an unproblematized notion of “female experience” (Moi 76) and assumes an “unbroken continuity between ‘life’ and ‘text’” (Jacobus 138). Others have sought to defend gynocriticism against such accusations, arguing that its focus on tropes belies the assumption of an unmediated account of women’s experience. Elaine Showalter’s *Theory of Gynocriticism* presents her views on feminist critical philosophy and the corresponding practice of such an innovative approach in literary feminism. It reflects upon her critical ordination and practice, and recognizes the credibility and after effect of both among contemporary authors, critics and readers. Theory of gynocriticism investigates whether Showalter’s critical approach is an analysis of women writing in a patriarchal culture, or a development of a feminist aesthetics. It looks into what makes her feminist criticism best and most importantly characterized, and her literary framework for the analysis of women’s literature.

However, from the 1970s onwards, most feminist critics reject the genderless mind, finding that the "imagination" cannot evade the conscious or unconscious structures of gender. Gender, it could be said, is a part of that culture-determination which oates says serves as inspiration, Such a position emphasizes "the impossibility of separating the imagination from a socially, sexually, and historically positioned self."(richard.s142).

This movement of thought allowed for a feminist critique as critics attacked the meaning of sexual difference in a patriarchal society/ideology. Images of male-wrought representations of women (stereotypes and exclusions) came under fire, as was the "division, oppression, inequality, [and] interiorized inferiority for women"

The female experience, then, began to take on positive affirmations. The female aesthetics arose, expressing a unique female consciousness and a feminine tradition in literature as it celebrated an intuitive female approach in the interpretation of women's texts. It "spoke of a vanished nation, a lost motherland; of female vernacular or Mother Tongue; and of a powerful but neglected women's culture"("Feminist Theory:An Overview").

Writers like Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson, emerging out of the Victorian period and influenced by its writings were perhaps the first women to recognize this. In "Professions for Women," Woolf discusses how a woman writer seeks within herself "the pools, the depths, the dark places where the largest fish slumber," inevitably colliding against her own sexuality to confront "something about the body, about the passions."

Gynocritics, which developed shoulder-to-shoulder with the female aesthetics, attempted to resolve some of these problems, by agreeing that women's literature lay as the central concern for feminist criticism, but "rejected the concept of an essential female identity and style." One branch of gynocriticism sought to revise Freudian structures and take the edge off of an adversarial methodology of criticism. These critics emphasized a Pre-Oedipal phase wherein the daughter's bond to her mother inscribes the key factor in gender identity. Matriarchal values desolve intergenerational conflicts and build upon a female tradition of literature rather than the struggle of Oedipus and Lais at the crossroads.

Poststructuralism eventually influenced the course of feminist theory with the idea of a motherless as well as fatherless text. The female experience, as it relates to texts, only occurs in the feminine subjectivity of the reading process. "Gynesis" or "gynetic disruptions" occur in texts when the reader explores "the textual consequences and representations of 'the feminine.'" These considerations or interruptions in the discourse indicate a consideration or interruption of the patriarchal system.

Last and the most recent are the developments of an overarching gender theory, which considers gender, both male and female, as a social construction upon biological differences. Gender theory proposes to explore "ideological inscription and the literary effects of the sex/gender system" and open up the literary theory stage and brings questions of masculinity into feminist theory. Also, taking gender as a fundamental analytic category drives feminist criticism from the margin to the center, though there are risks depoliticizing the study of women.

Chapter 2

Gynocriticism in Malayalam Literature Until *Ottamarapyeuth*

It is important to have a better understanding about the history and development of women's writing in Malayalam literature before analyzing a literary work from it. As a discursive practice, women's writing is among the wider cultural context of patriarchy and its structural manifestations. Despite the varying specificity of content under different modes of production, patriarchy can be described in terms of the dominance of the male and a corresponding marginalization of women. Women's writing is important as a response to patriarchal relations within patriarchy itself. It may provide a unique record of the systems which shape and contain the life stories of women.

Women can identify women's writing as a struggle "which involves both dominant perceptions of social reality and the resistances to it". In this sense, women's writings are significant documents in the analysis of women's spaces, which demonstrate the making and remaking of these spaces while recording their resistances to the outside world. Feminist historiography, while deconstructing dominant ways of writing women's history, considers women's writing itself to be history writing. Two terms are used in relation to the subject: women-writing and women's writing. Women's writing refers simply to writings by women. Women-writing usually denotes the phenomenon of women's writing and its emergence as a new discipline within women's studies.

Women's writing emerged in India as a new subject of research and critical studies in the 1980s as a result of the feminist movement and as a consequence of growing interest in feminist historiography. Women's writing in Malayalam is a category of Malayalam literary works that runs against social hierarchies in Kerala. It comprises women's fiction, poetry, and short stories and has a remarkable history in Malayalam literature. Women's literary writing in Malayalam is part of a tradition of resistance and

contributes to the women's cause through the merging of the public and the private spheres. The '*pennezhuthu*' category is its most decisive and controversial form, changing the historiography of women's writing in India and the images of certain writers and writing trends. Some of the most significant female authors in Malayalam literature are K. Saraswathi Amma, Lalithambika Antharjanam, Ashitha, Rajalakshmi and Madhavikutty (Kamala Das), best known for their narration of "woman's space".

In Kerala, women from most of the dominant communities, who had access to education, started writing by the second half of the nineteenth century. They wrote in journals and magazines in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. There were several magazines including *Keraliya Suguna Bodhini* (1886), *Sarada* (1904), *Lakshmibai* (1905), *Mahilaratnam* (1916), *Mahila* (1921), *Sahodari* (1925), *Mahilamandiram* (1927), *Malayalam Anika* (1931), and *Street* (1933). Most of the journals carried articles written by women on issues such as health, education, child rearing, family, etc. All these writings, which basically followed the writings of some male reformers, reflected the attempt to create a model Malayali woman by mixing tradition and modernity in appropriate quantities. The image that was being constructed across communities and identities consisted largely of an ideal middle class woman who was educated, homely and suitable for a modern educated man. These attempts could be viewed as early attempts at bringing 'private' issues into 'public' notice.

Prose was used efficiently and frequently by women writers such as Lalithambika Antharjanam (1909–1985) and K. Saraswathi Amma (1919–1975), although there were writers such as Mary John Thottam or Sister Mary Benigna (1901–1985), Kadathanattu Madhavi Amma (1909–1999), and Balamani Amma (1909–2004) who wrote in verse. For most of these women writers, education functioned more as an indirect means of access to the public sphere rather than a means merely to read and write. Unlike the

earlier women-writers who wrote in Sanskrit, women who had access to modern education expressed their own experiences in their mother tongue, i.e., Malayalam..

While considering the realm of Malayalam literature in the twenty-first century, there is a long list of women writers who have contributed exceptionally. K. R Meera, Priya.S, Sara Joseph, etc. are examples. Deepa Nishanth is a prominent writer among them. A professor and writer of Malayalam, she is noted and appreciated for her memoirs and literary reviews. She is also known for her social media engagement. Her published works include two reviews and a compilation of three memoirs. Her book *Kunnolamundallo Bhoothakalakkulir* has been published in many editions. She had won several notable awards such as the CB Kumar Award, Short Story Award, Women's Commission, Short Story Award- Basheer Memorial Award, UAE Beeran Memorial Award etc.

The book *Ottamarappeyuth* is Deepa Nishanth's third memoir. It deals with the physical, social and mental slavery of a woman. It also revolves around the theme of social realism. It tells how much a woman is concerned for her society and its matters. The author is very much concerned about the patriarchal ties upon her. The memoir dwells on how women are chained by the patriarchy even in the modern era. Kerala is one of the most literate states in India. It is also among the most developed , but when we consider the words of Gandhi, "Home life is entirely the sphere of woman and therefore in domestic affairs, in the upbringing and education of children women ought to have more knowledge. Unless courses of instruction are based on a discriminating appreciation of these basic principles, the fullest life of man and woman cannot be developed" (*Harijan*). It says, we should together try hard to come across the social barriers which limit our women. That is the aim of gynocriticism. And that is the real enlightenment, this

era needs. Then this book reveals the barriers of our societies' developments. It totally depends upon the ways we deal with our women.

In *Ottamarappeyuth*, Deepa is very much bothered with the orthodox views of critical malayalees. The thoughts about society and their views have a great effect all through a woman's life. Her decisions on matters such as marriage, love and friendship are influenced by the discourse of the society. She can't isolate her memories from the things happening around her. She is critically analyzing the news reports and incidents coming out about women every day. She says to herself that she is trying to find herself from the broken mirrors (Nishanth 5-6). This enquiry hints to the theoretical aspect of gynocriticism.

The book *Ottamarappeythu* shows a female writer who influences her readers through her narrative style. While reading, the reader, irrespective of his/ her gender, associates himself/herself as a woman, since the memoir deals with matters regarding women and her issues. The book requires a total feminist reading. Here the woman is the writer, reader and the reading must be done from a woman's point of view. The commonness of women's experiences and situations they go through makes her writing an independent. As her work is wholly about women, her experiences and observations turn into a gynocritic work. In this work she delves into male issues as well, but only from a feminine point of view. As per Deepa's observation women are much more emotional and sensitive. It deals with social and personal matters faced by a woman. It tells about the commonness of experiences dealt by women in all the spheres in her life. All these aspects give a gynocritic reading for this book. The book is divided into thirteen chapters which deal with the personal feelings and observations of the author. It is sometimes the voice of consciousness of the author.

Four among the thirteen chapters of the book portrays the observations made by Deepa on several women around her. Among them some are their views on several news reports of the current times. Deepa observes the case of Rehnas, a rape victim, Shakkeela, a half porn actress, Neenu Chacko, victim of an arrogant murder and the case of a ten year old girl, who got abused in a movie hall at Malappuram.

A part of Shakkeela's biography is quoted here by Deepa, which turns to be a question towards our celebrated moralities and the orthodox moral views of Malayalees. Deepa analyses the truth that our attitudes make a difference in judging others. She infers that society categorizes the concept of good and bad for the individual. Life itself becomes her enemy. She becomes alone even in a crowd. Sometimes she loses her voice. No one then tries to understand her. All starts to keep some distance towards her. And her love and emotional attachment towards her fellow beings are manipulated at times..

When it comes to the case of Rehnas, Deepa tells about the urges of society to make women a victim and close her inside the cage of sympathy. Rehnas PP is a survivor. Moreover, she is a woman of grit who dodged every lemon that life threw at her, to reach heights that normal people couldn't dream of. A victim of severe sexual abuse who was strong enough to reveal her name and face, she is now the winner of Vanitha Ratna Award conferred by the Women and Child Development department, to outstanding women from various segments of society. By citing the life of Rehnas, Deepa here criticizes the society which tries to steal the identity of women subject (Nishanth 109-111).

Then the book looks upon the news of child abuse that came out through newspapers on 18th April 2018. A ten year old girl got abused by her mother's friend in a movie theater near Edappal in Malappuram. In the light of this news report Deepa analyses the credibility of our morality and humanity. When human becomes an animal it

is women who pays a lot for it. It is her hope in her men which lost in issues like this. In this situation she tend to use the words of Osho which says all men are seducers and all are seducing carcasses. While observing the issues of others she also refers her own personal experiences which mold her, a, women feminist, social activist and a writer.

Chapter 3

Interpreting *Ottamarappeythu* & the Author's Personal Experiences

Being a memoir, *Ottamarappeythu* is a collection of the author's own experiences. But she portrays those moments in different perspectives. Deepa says "my experiences are not my alone my childhood worries, romance, hope, friendship, pain, all these are common for the most. And that commonness makes as to stand together"(deepa 5-6). The narrative takes the point of view of an ordinary woman, a wife, a mother, and other stages of a woman's life. She says her memories are not her own, according to her this commonness brings more readers to her work.

Then the author says about a man who lost his son. Throughout the narrative, the author has tried to empathize with the people she came across.. In accordance with Gloria Steinem's words, "A feminist is anyone who recognizes equality and full humanity of women and men" (Steinem), we can infer Deepa Nishanth as a critical feminist. Here Deepa finds herself as mirror of womanhood who is able to cry with the crying ones. And she finds that women is the one who is able to understand the emotional feelings of man with all its completeness, as a woman is the inhabitant of sorrows and tears. She is the one very much able to identify the feelings of crying ones. The author tries to analyze a female face even in the crying man. At the time of sorrows all becomes alone. The women are also like that. In most of the moments in life she is alone and it is the friendship which is her most colorful dream. With the feelings and sorrows inside her, she is able to console others in the hardships of their life . In the second chapter of book *Ottamarappeyuth* Deepa found herself crying on behalf of the sorrows of her colleague. Then she says "not death but life is pain, in the depth of that pains every living being burns" (Deepa 25-35).

In Ottamarapeyhtu, Deepa Nishanth also makes a special mention about parents, particularly mothers of mentally disabled children and their inner conflicts. The author calls those parents by using the term '*deivathinu vishvasamulla chilar*' which means the ones who gained the beliefs of almighty. Deepa portrays several incidents which say about the ignorance of society. Even in those ignorances a mother or a woman comes to care them. While watching a mentally disabled child and his mother going out from a bus author asks to herself "whether a mother could sleep by forgetting about her child"(46). Even when society ignores these children, mothers always put their love and care upon them. For her their handicap is not a real handicap and they are not disabled. She finds that they are the real lovable ones. She sheds light upon how much a mother is concerned with the abilities and disabilities of her child. She says "God knows the women are most believable ones, so he faithfully gives the children of his heaven into her hands" (36-47). At the same time she speaks about the believability of motherhood. The mother herself becomes a metaphor of love and belief. As per Deepa's views a child becomes more safe in the hands of a mother as a bird in the nest. As the book progresses she shares about a great danger of this era, according to her it is the loss of belief in each other.

The memoir becomes perfectly autobiographical when Deepa talks about her marriage with Nishanth. She remembers the days when she had to suffer to marry the one she loved by shattering the norms and customs of the society she lived. She was isolated from her parents when her love relationship was revealed. However, ultimately she succeeds and marries him. These personal thoughts eventually widen and delve into the interference of society in the lives of women and their relationships. She infers that love, even in the twenty-first century, is still trapped in the chains of orthodoxy. The author analyses that this society is not even set for any lovers. Deepa tries to recap the

events occurred in her own life in the days of her romance. She then says "who believes her, who hears her, the silences and marginalisations pains her more than all. She then draws new maps of tears on her pages.....but who cares....she is a sinned one. She is the one who loved someone"(Deepa49-50). This shows how much women suffer to attain their love from her family and the society.

Ottamarapeythu also puts into its frame the people who are mostly ignored by the common folk. This is where she talks about one of her uncles who is a drunkard. He remains unnoticed and neglected. The author, as with others in the narrative, empathizes with him. As the women are also outside the frames of concern, she can easily understand the feelings of people who are sent outside the frames because of many reasons. While all the people around misbehave to that drunkard uncle Deepa says "I feel pity on that man and I could understand him more than all..."(Nishant 66). Deepa Nishanth, therefore, attempts to find the reflection of the feminine side in every person she meets.

Ottamarapeythu can also be subjected to a Dalit reading since it speaks about the matters of the marginalized. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar points out, "The outcast is a byproduct of the caste system. There will be outcasts so long as there are castes. Nothing can emancipate the outcast except the destruction of the caste system" (Ambedkar). It comes through the words of her uncle who is a drunkard. He says "most poets speak about the beautiful birds but they simply avoid the crows". Like Ambedkar here Deepa tries to criticize the marginalisation on cast. For that she utilizes words and works of poets like Changampuzha, Kumaran Asahan, Vailoppilly etc, as literature is the mirror and voice of ages. He finds that these avoided crows are the purest and most useful ones. Ambedkar juxtaposes his religion and caste with the image of a crow. Ambedkar's

remarks and observations can be used to interpret the marginalization in Deepa Nishant's work.

This brings us somewhere to the history of feminism. The beginning of feminism was marked with movements against slavery and racism. In Kerala also the movements for gender equality got a base from the movements against caste discriminations and other practices. In all cases mostly the women are oppressed ones. In this background Deepa tends us to read the lines about caste discrimination in the light of gender inequalities

Author analyzes the power of words and poetry which transforms society all the time. Deepa Nishanth speaks about the evergreen memories of women which she keeps inside her heart all over her life. Those memories are very much important to her as they are the part of her life. "Men mostly forget things and other people as time passes. But women never forget the people who come into her life and give her any sort of memories" (68-75).

Then Deepa tells about the importance a woman gives to the ones who come to her life. She also tells here that how much someone's death affects her life as a woman. Even though the man named Dr.M.B.Sunilkumar was not much familiar to her she is very much sad in his death. After the death of Sunil Deepa says "the words shivered and then after I can't read his words, as it may have the cold of death... but the survival becomes true here only through the skill of forgetting" (Nishanth 91). It talks about how women see the people who are coming to her life and how much she cares about them.

The tenth chapter is the birth of a mother. This chapter can be read in parallel with Sashi Deshpande's essay "Learning to Be a Mother" which talks about the adjustments made by a woman before giving birth to her child. Deepa delves into her own experiences as a mother. She remembers the occurrences in the hospital on the days of pregnancy. She tells about the pains, adjustments she made and also how her life got reformed.

Deepa Nishanth ponders on the idea of loneliness and avoidance faced by a woman as she observes her grandmother. Deepa says "the one who heard our voices now sent as away, they may go away by ignoring us. At the old age we may also suffer by lacking a listener"(nishanth119). They served their family for a long period and now at the old age they became a burden for them. No one is ready to understand them or to find some time to spend with them. This chapter reminds about the story "Oormayude Njerambukal" by K. R. Meera, which also discusses the old age problems faced by women.

Towards the end, the book speaks about the adjustments the woman makes in her life for a happy family life. In the essay "The problem that has no name" Betty Friedan says the same thing. That's about the problems of women which is really unknown to herself. Here Deepa is compelled to give up her own passions and to take decisions according to the wishes of her partner. She says that even though she is a college lecturer she is making such a lot of adjustments, then what will be the matter of ordinary women. The identity of women is lost somewhere inside her home. She is compelled to give up all her happiness and fun for the sake of others. For her more than herself the family and relationships are important. Sometimes, that becomes a burden to her. In Kerala, most women are not so happy, but the truth is that they don't know what their problem is.

Deepa also tells about how the places she dwelt in affected her in her life. She talks about her college life and how much she was in affection with the college, class and department. Even some places take her mind and she feels very much affection to that places and the people living there (92-102). Thus the whole book *Ottamarappeythu* deals with the issues concerned with women in Kerala. As it raises many issues, sometimes it becomes a feminist voice, raised by a feminist. All the twelve chapters share the issues of

women inside the home and society. It as a whole is the experiences and observations of a woman, mostly about women. And it is a better example for a gynocritic work. As it provides a gynocritic point of view in writing and reading, it can be turned as a complete gynocritic work of 21st century literature .

Conclusion

To summarise, gynocriticism is an the idea of re-examining history, particularly literature in history, in light of a better understanding of women. Because of historical gender bias, women have typically been disregarded and their works maligned. In light of the cultural views of women, gynocriticism attempts to go back and examine the true cultural impact of female authors and historical figures to understand both what they truly accomplished and how they were oppressed in the process. Theories of gynocriticism got its prominence in 1960s and 70s. By the end of 90s, use of this term decreased to an extend. And then after all came together under the term feminism and somewhere under the vast category of genderstudies. Feminist critique represents women as reader with woman as the consumer of male produced literaturewhile gynocritics represent women as writer with woman as the producer of textual meaning with the literature by women. Thus both has differences, and so gynocriticism becomes a need of era in which women fights for their needs and to overcome their sufferings. Deepa Nishanth's Ottamarappeythu can be read as a gynocritic work in twenty-first century Malayalam literature. As the book itself is the collection of experiences memories and observations of an author who is a critical feminist, the whole book has got a feminine reading. Ottamarappeyuthu is a work in which a women wrote her memories of herself and others frombher own perspective .Deepa Nishanth gathers the major issues faced by women under a single narrative.. The narrative style of the memoir enable the readers to empatize with its character with a femnistic manner. At the same time, in some parts of the text, the author avoids the distinction of gender and tries to observe her fellows as humans, irrespective of their sex. . Even though she is writing her own experiences and memories she is also concerned with current affairs and news reports about women. The book also tries to criticize our approaches towards women in several cases as in the biography of half porn actress

Shakkeela. Then it deals with the classical thoughts of motherhood and how it got a change in today's social order. Even when she tells about changing social and mental patterns, she is very much concerned of the greatness of motherhood and her own concern about her children. She tells about love and family life. It deals with the adjustments made by women in their life to get happiness and she also tells how much the women is suffering in the society for attaining their love and needs. Here she quotes the incident of Kevin and Neenu which has got a great news values in these days. Then she tells about the abuses taking place in society against women and children by men. She also talks about the changing parental thoughts. Observing the news report about the child abuse that took place in a movie theatre in Malappuram, she recalls us to rethink about our own homes and society. The question she puts forward is whether our children and women are safe in today's society.

The next thing she discusses is about the crises faced by women. Among them most important one is identity crisis, which is the matter of study for years. This book deals with problems faced by women in childhood, adulthood, old age and all through the life. As this book totally deals with women and their issues, it can be called a gynocritic work in all its aspects.

Here the author speaks about her own matters and also about others around her. She observes several news reports and incidents happening these days. Somewhere she finds the commonness of issues faced by women all over. It also tells us about the timelessness of these issues. Here Deepa could express things in several aspects. It's the peculiarity of women to see things in different point of views at a time. Deepa see things in the point of view of an ordinary woman and at the same time an educated college lecturer.

To conclude, in an era of feminist uprisings like wcc, metoo etc., it is important to produce works that requires a gynocritic reading. There are many works in Malayalam literature that adheres to this notion. The works of Deepa Nishanth becomes prominent in this context. She has expressed the inner feelings of a women in its totality in her signature work Ottamarappeyuth. By discussing the issues faced by 'humans' primarily from a women's perspective, her work agrees with Showalter's description of a new literature construct that intends to create a female framework for the analysis of women's literature. Literature thereby becomes a medium to address the issues of the contemporary women of the twenty first century.

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