

Graphing the Chambers of Darkness: A Psychoanalytic Study of Hegemonic
Masculinity in K.G. George's *Irakal* and Dileesh Pothan's *Joji*

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Certificate

Certified that this is a bonafide report of the project entitled *Graphing the Chambers of Darkness: A Psychoanalytic Study of Hegemonic Masculinity in K.G. George's Irakal and Dileesh Pothan's Joji* by Soorya Sreekumar (Register No. 200021001005) for the fulfillment of the requirement for the Bachelor of Arts degree in English Language and Literature under Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam during the year 2020-2023.

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Declaration

I, Soorya Sreekumar, hereby affirm that the dissertation titled *Graphing the Chambers of Darkness: A Psychoanalytic Study of Hegemonic Masculinity in K.G. George's Irakal and Dileesh Pothan's Joji* is a genuine record of work done by me under the guidance of Miss Athira Manoharan, Guest Faculty, Post Graduate Department of English, Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara and has not been submitted previously for the award of any degree or diploma.

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Chapter 1

An Interrogation into the History of Indian Cinema

Digital media and motion picture surpass the limitations faced by mediums of creative expression like writing and painting. It can transform the crudest stories into mind blowing auditory-visual experience. From the black and white single frame exhibited by Lumiere brothers, it has grown in humungous proportion, bewitching audience from across continents with its beauty.

With the debut of Dadasaheb Phalke's silent film "Raja Harishchandra" in 1913, the Indian Cinema got established in the early 1900s. Since then, it has expanded into a global cultural and economic force, both in India and elsewhere. The film industries of other nations have been significantly impacted by Indian cinema, which has a large international following. Now as we look into the Malayalam film industry, we see that it has been producing some of the best contents for a long time ,but comparing mollywood to that of other industries in India it took a long time to get recognition. When J.C. Daniel's silent movie "Vigathakumaran" was released in 1928, the business officially got underway. Since then, it has created a number of noteworthy films and established a reputation for crafting experimental and socially sensitive film(magikindia).

Production of a film is to looked upon as a combined synthesis of experiences, knowledge and wisdom of the director as well as its other members. Before we move on to the nuances of a particular movie in hand, its important to understand filmatography of the particular director, for he plays the role of an author in movie production . The project has taken into consideration two

malayalm movies which are separated by the cycle of time of but united by the similarity of theme. They are KG George's *Irakal* and Dileesh Pothan's *Joji*.

The acclaimed Indian director K G George primarily produced films in the Malayalam language. He was born on October 16, 1945, in Kerala, and died on August 14, 2011. He was regarded as one of the founders of the Indian Parallel Cinema movement, which attempted to create films with social significance and stimulating ideas. K G George began his career in the film business as an assistant director. With the 1976 movie "Swapnadanam," he made his directorial debut and was appreciated by critics of many kind . He continued to direct numerous other films, each of which focused on a distinct genre.

In his films, K G George, a director who had a keen knowledge of human emotions, was able to highlight the details of human behaviour. He was renowned for getting outstanding performances out of his actors. His films were praised for their superb technical work, creative storylines, and potent social critique. K G George received the National Film Award for Best Director in 1987 and several other awards including the Stare awards and Life time achievement awards (malayalachalachithram).

Dileesh Pothan with his contributions to Malayalam cinema has taken our industry into a whole different level. In the Malayalam cinema industry, Dileesh Pothan is a well-known director who has had a big impact. He began his career in the movie as an actor, but after the 2016 release of his debut film, "Maheshinte Prathikaaram," he rose to recognition as a filmmaker.

Dileesh Pothan has a distinctive storytelling approach that is noted for its realism and simplicity. He has a talent for depicting interpersonal interactions of us humans, and his films frequently deal with everyday life and its complexity (IMDb).

Both *Joji* and *Irakal*, have been critically acclaimed for their story and performances. *Joji* revolves around the character Joji, played by Fahad Fasil, who in the beginning of the movie is a clear depiction of a lazy youngster but towards the end turns into a murderer of his own family for his own good. While *Irakal* revolves around yet another youngster named Baby, played by Ganesh Kumar, has an entirely different plot, because here Baby is not someone who suddenly develops abnormalities in his behaviour but from the beginning shows certain gestures which make it clear to the audience that something is wrong with him.

Both movies were analysed in different ways by many critics. It is not difficult to point out the similarities in characters, background settings and plot of these movies. As we look into them in detail and make a much more detailed study we find that though they are similar in many ways, there are many conjunctions which make them unique.

While *Irakal* focusses on Baby and his actions, making it clear for the audience the reasons behind his mental health issues, *Joji* gives a better view on how greed and hunger for power can make people do horrible things. Thus, one thing to be noted here is that though there are structural similarities between them, the movies portray two different aspects of human psyche.

The aim of this project is to prove that how the male characters of the movies lose their 'masculinity' under their father figure. In *Irakal* Mathukutty, a wealthy father character played by Thilakan, isn't worried about anything but money and power. Though he knows his family atmosphere, still he is not concerned about it. Baby, along with his drunkard brother who tries to

rebel against his father, is unable and lazy to find his own ways. His elder brother Koshi a violent, and his sister Annie, a nymphomaniac depict humans who are victims of paternal hegemony. They don't have a free life of their own nor are they ready to find out a way ,thus leading a life under their father

Now when it comes to *Joji*, we see that Joji and his two brothers are living a life very much dependent upon their father Kuttapan , played by Sunny yet another dominant father figure. Joji along with his younger brother Jaison and his wife Bincy is in need of money and a life of freedom but are reluctant to find their own ways thus clinging to the power of Kuttapan. But Kuttapan's elder son Jomon is an exception to this behaviour. As we all know there are certain aspects of behavioral patterns set for women and men by the society, and we as humans are required to follow these aspects in order to be part of the society. But as we come across these movies we understand that such a pattern doesn't work in here.

In the case of *Irakal*, we see that Mathews is someone who is involved in illegal businesses and someone who doesn't have any emotional attachment to the family. Throughout the movie the meek mother figure is a depicts a helpless woman being a victim of her families doings. We see that it is only the mother who wishes for happiness in the family, all the other members lack any sort of emotional attachment with the family. At the end while Mathews shoots his own son he comes to the realisation that his lack of concern lead to all this pathos and still the patriarch continues to retain the patriarchal figure.

Joji gives a vision much less subtle regarding the societal pattern of dominance , where the father dominates and rest of them are nearly slaves to him. This way of living itself could be the reason that leads Joji into violence. Also this movie is set in the Covid lockdown time, and there are many instances of Joji attending his online classes and everybody being at home. The

period of lockdown wasn't easy for anyone and many cases of mental health issues were reported during that time, thus there is no wonder that Dileesh Pothan chose this time to depict the inner trauma that we humans went through during this time.

Joji as well as *Irakal* portrays young minds, who under lack of love and concern resorts to actions which they think will bring peace and happiness to them. They wish to come over the dominance of their father figure. Though Baby is portrayed as an enigma, his actions makes it clear to the audience that he is unconsciously trying to gain everything that he lacks

With the help of Raewyn Connell's Gender Order Theory, we will get a more deep knowledge regarding how the male characters of movies in hand are feminized. Eventhough both Baby and Joji try to restablize this hegemony, at the end all their actions leads to their own deaths. Both films explore topics of family, society, and human nature while having an original plot and intriguing characters. The benchmark for psychological thrillers was set by the classic Malayalam film *Irakal* whereas *Joji* is a contemporary perspective on family drama and crime that questions conventional ideas of morality and social expectations.

Both KG George and Dileesh Pothan has done a great job in the portrayal of unknown aspects of human psyche. *Irakal* is a 1985 movie while *Joji* 2021 movie, and it is notable that how unique their movies stand out from each other. The following chapters of the project discuss these movies in detail with the help of Raewyn Connell's theory.

Therefore, let us presume that under the patriarch of Mathews and Kuttappan their son characters lose their dignity and identity as a man. The societal concept of a 'manly' figure doesn't suit them as in here it is their father who possess such kind of a conventional manliness over them. It is also important to note how Malayalam movies are progressing in terms of its realistic depiction

of human emotions. Though both these movies have a great difference in the time periods in which they were released, they do not lack essence of realism in it.

Chapter 2

Understanding the Concepts of Hegemonic Masculinity

Humans go through varied emotions and psychological changes in their daily lives , and it is difficult to trace these changes in a single glance. Earlier, people were never bothered or were ignorant about psychological changes as mental health was not something that was considered important as physical health. Still there are people around us who haven't accepted mental health issues as a severe issue to be addressed . When someone look physically fit we call them healthy, but we fail to look into their inner side. Daily reports of people committing suicides leaves people in shock especially if the one who committed it is a wealthy and fit person. We have come to know more about human psyche through movies, novels, articles and so on. They have made an impact on us and currently people have begun to consider ones mental health as something to be discussed.

Here, we have undertaken the analysis of two movies *Irakal* by KG George and *Joji* by Dileesh Pothan, which explore the human psyche from its darker sides. The two main characters of the movie, Baby and Joji, seems to be completely harmless from their outward appearances. They are silent observers of each and everyone around them but none of them notice their changes, which itself is their advantage in committing murders. While Baby is someone who shows mental abnormalities from the beginning and is a victim to his father's power , Joji seems to be meek in the beginning and rises up as he murders his own father. The one thing similar about them is that they are youngsters who do not wish to earn a life of their own with own efforts. As the movie begins we see Baby strangling one of his juniors as part of ragging and Joji

on the other hand is leading a life of lethargy, and we see him being punished by his father as he sleeps in his room.

Baby doesn't hate his father in particular but at the end he points his gun towards him whereas Joji hates his father from the beginning, which leads to the murder. While Baby commits murders out of his fantasies and being annoyed by the family atmosphere, Joji does it for money and power. Now as we take the case of other sons, we find that they are also leading a life as slaves under the power of their father. They don't wish to establish a life of their own but want a life of independence with their father's wealth.

Therefore, it is important to note that the male characters lack the masculine features created by the society, and accept a feminine role of being slaves to the dominance of their father, again according to the societal concept, in order for their survival. One of the most significant theories in the area of gender and masculinity studies is that of Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell. It has had a significant influence on the field of gender studies and is as well as adopted by a variety of other academic disciplines. *Masculinities* by Connell was first published in 1995 and has since been translated into five different languages. Since its initial release, its influence has grown, and a second English edition was published in 2005. R.W. Connell's Gender Order Theory, can be applied in here to get a deeper knowledge of things. So its important to know more about the theory and the ways in which it can be applied in this context. Socially constructed notions of masculinity and femininity are attached to specific genders in society. Masculinity are those qualities and ideas attributed to the male section of the society while femininity those attributed to female section. So how can we say that the male characters are feminized?

As we have mentioned earlier, there are certain qualities and ideas attributed to both of them. For example, females are said to be sensitive, caring, loving, compromising, and most importantly they are not expected by the society to live independently. According to the societal point of view it's completely fine for a woman to live under the dominance of man, who is the breadwinner of the family. On the other hand, a man who is jobless and isn't the breadwinner of the family is considered as non-manly, for manliness can only be achieved, according to the society, by earning and working hard for the sake of the family. So here it is clear that the father's are the ones who possess the qualities of manliness and others are feminized.

Gender Order Theory of R.W. Connell, consists of a division between hegemonic masculinity and non-hegemonic masculinity. Raewyn Connell, also known as R.W. Connell and Robert W. Connell, is a sociologist from Australia. She rose to prominence as a New Left scholar in Australia. She is presently a Professor Emeritus at the University of Sydney, and she is well-known for her work on hegemonic masculinity and southern thought. Connell is a transgender lady and almost all of her previous work was published under the gender-neutral pen name "R. W. Connell" until the second edition of *Masculinities* in 2005. Since 2006, all of her work has been published under the pen name Raewyn Connell. She has also written on transgender people.

Hegemonic masculinity is a component of R. W. Connell's gender order theory in Gender Studies, which acknowledges a variety of masculinities that differ over time, in society, culture, and the person. Hegemonic masculinity is described as a practice that supports men's dominance in society, justifies the subordination of other men and women, as well as other marginalised aspects of what it means to be a man. Hegemonic masculinity is a theory that aims to explain how and why men continue to hold dominating social roles over women and other

gender identities that are seen as “feminine” in a certain society (Wedgwood Theory of Masculinity pp.3).

Now when it comes to Non -hegemonic masculinity, that is to say, there isn't a single universally applicable definition of what it means to be a man that applies to all cultures, time periods, social classes, age groups, races, and sexual orientations. Instead, there is a diverse range of male identities and methods of being men in human communities.

According to Connell, a key concern for gender theory is the interplay between the body and gender. She contends that gender is the result of repeated definitions and interpretations of the human body's sexual and reproductive capabilities. Femininities and masculinities are the various outcomes of these continuing definitions and interpretations and they have an impact on bodies, affect personalities, and influence institutions, culture, and society.

Gender includes both males and females. Gender studies have sometimes employed the concept of sex roles, and occasionally have viewed men and women as simple categories. However, viewing gender as a system of social relations is the most best approach towards gender studies. Masculinities are social practice patterns connected with men's status in any society's system of gender relations. Bodily difference is not a stable predictor of gender patterns; but then, it serves as a reference point in gender practice (Demetriou Theory and Society pp.34).

According to a recent research the following are the key findings: There are numerous masculinities ; there are masculinity hierarchies, which define a “hegemonic” pattern for a specific society.

In both the movies what we are able to see is the dominant role of hegemonic masculinity, that is, the father figures hegemonic masculinity over his family leads to rebellion. This can operate in humans in different ways. Now as we take the case of these movies we see that such a feminine attitude of son characters are seen in their surface level attitude as well as in their psyche. Clinging onto wealthy man itself is feminine way for survival according to the society. So here we see that they are under his dominance and the society doesn't view it as something wrong or unnatural.

So far we discussed about gender theory, now let us look into the way in which such a gender order is internalized by the marginalised. When a person adopts another person's views or behaviours, internalisation takes place. The Oedipus complex is resolved when a boy identifies with his father and subsequently internalises his father's gender identity. This is an essential component of Freud's psychodynamic theory of gender development. Similar to how a girl overcomes the Electra complex, doing so involves internalising her mother's gender identity.

Thus, its important to note that gender isn't something that evolves from around you but also from internalising several aspects from father and mother. Gender theory is something that can also be connected to Psychoanalytic theory, as gendering also requires internalisation. So the other male characters in the movie are unconsciously accepting the role of being vulnerable.

We see that the both Joji as well as Baby is restablizing their father figures hegemony, but fails in the end. Dominance over the other is a typical feature of masculinity while being meek and dependent is feature of femininity. Those men do not own the masculine features are also considered to possess the feminine qualities and they too will be under the dominance of the one who possess masculinity.

Though Connell's theory on hegemonic masculinity was widely accepted still there arose a number of criticism towards it. A number of scholars, argued that the idea of hegemonic masculinity is founded on an inadequate philosophy of the topic as it does not place enough emphasis on masculinity and its discussions. She argues that the employment of toxic behaviours like physical violence, which may lead to strengthen men's authority over women in Western society, is a key component of hegemonic masculinity.

Therefore, its important to understand the gender theory and the role it plays in shaping the mentality of a section of the society. Here, through the comparison of the movies we intend to provide a much better view on the psychological aspects of gendering.

Chapter 3

Observing the First Dark Movie in Malayalam

This chapter of the project focuses on KG George's *Irakal*, a 1985 movie dealing with darker sides of human psyche. As mentioned earlier in the introductory chapter of the project, *Irakal* has been considered as the first dark movie in Malayalam, and the reason is clear from the plot itself.

The title of the movie means victims, but the question is, who are the victims here? As we look into each character we find that everyone is a victim of someone's actions. Let us analyze Baby, the central character of the movie, who silently watches his family and knows each of them more than anybody else. Baby first appears in the movie's opening scene, where he strangles his junior with an electric wire for no particular reasons. He is inside his hostel room, doing certain things which are completely abnormal. We come to know that he has got some mental health issues from the first scene itself. The goal of the movie is to explain "why his behaviour is like that" (syngrafi). His house and the surrounding area serve as the basis for that. We can infer after a brief period of time alone that he comes from a troubled household.

Other family members include his father Mathews, a drug dealer brother, a drunken brother and his wife, a sister who visits occasionally following an argument with her husband, a sobbing mother, a bedridden grandfather, and two of Mathews' employees. Apart from his Grandfather, the only person with whom he spends time in that house, he doesn't have any kind of connection with other family members.

Most of the time, he stays alone in his room or wanders outside. When we learn more about his family, we understand his sluggish involvement in family problems and disinterest towards them. Everyone associated with this family is a victim in some way or the other. Baby is the victim of his father's dominant behaviour in particular. We can infer that he formerly idolised his father from the way the movie begins. He is subtly alluding to his father's mentality when he tells a friend that "I don't like anything offered to me, I like to extort from others"(George 1:30:41) at one point, but this thing eventually evolves into hatred.

Baby's father Mathew plays a dominant role in the life of his children. They are under the money power of their father and are mostly meek in front of their him. Mathew is someone who doesn't even consider about the happiness of his family. All he cares about is money and power which is the main reason behind the unhappy atmosphere among the family. We see an unknown dictatorship quality in their father figure. Another important instance in the movie is when Baby visits the priest , there he opens up saying that there is no presence of love in his family and he doesn't know the reason why he feels that way.

Baby also has an affair with a village girl named Nirmala. Young Nirmala keeps him engaged and even makes love to him in full view under the cover of coffee plants. Despite her affection for Baby, she is well aware of their caste and class differences. Balan, a proprietor of a nearby shop, proposes to Nirmala, and she cuts any contact with Baby. Balan is strangled to death. He then attempts to murder Raghavan, a rubber tapper and Baby's friend, when he comes to know that after Balan's demise Nirmala is going to get married to him. But this time he fails. The tinge obsessive possessiveness of Baby is quite evident from the instances, and this might be because the lack of love from his family. The murder of Unnuni, their servant, might be because

he doesn't like his married sister having an affair with him. The characters which Baby murders through out the film are not harmful nor are they creating in threat to him, but he believes that he is gaining something from all these murders.

The implications of pronounced violence in *Baby* is set in the background of conventional masculine stereotype, represented in the father figure, the study of which is the object of this project. Mathews or Mathukutty, the patriarch of the family, is a Syrian Christian rubber baron who built his empire through various businesses, including marijuana and hooch . His family comprises of his wife, the only character with an emotional attachment to the family, his three sons ; Koshi, Sunny along with his wife Roslin and Baby , a bedridden father and his employee Unnuni. He has a daughter too, Annie a nymphomaniac, who frequently visits home due to her fights with her husband. Later we come to know that she has an affair with Unnuni as well. Annie has a daughter, but except in one scene we don't see Annie having any kind of motherly affection for her daughter. We see that Mathews is someone who is much involved in his work that he isn't bothered about anything else. The reputation of the family is a big deal for him and that is the main reason why he decides to solve Baby's issue at college. Similarly the scene where Annie's husband is beat by elder son Koshi, because he doesn't want to live with his wife any longer due to her affairs , we see that Mathews takes the side of his daughter. None of the son characters are against the father nor do they try to bribe him of his wealth. But the thing is they are not ready to make s living of their own. They wish to lead a peaceful life under their father's power though they do not find happiness in it.

So Baby's mental illness could be a result of the dysfunctional family in which he lives. From the time being a kid he must have been ignored and lack of concern could be one of the main reason for his changes in behaviour. From the beginning itself it is clear to the readers that

Baby isn't acting in a normal manner, which means he might have developed this from a very young age. Another important thing is that not even a single person is concerned about the silent changes in behaviour. Therefore, lack of attention, care, and concern may have taken him into doing such strange things.

Baby's bonding with his father is another important aspect of the movie to be discussed, because in the end Baby points his gun towards his father. It is Sunny, his younger brother, who finds out about the incident that took place at Baby's College. The student he ragged had been admitted at hospital in critical condition and a case was charged against Baby for attempt to murder. Baby is questioned regarding his actions but none of them takes this seriously. Like we mentioned earlier the first thing Mathews did was to make him safe. We cannot completely deny the fact that he is not concerned about Baby, still as a father he fails in understanding what his son has been going through. The fight between Sunny and Baby due to his aggressiveness leads to Koshi striking him. While all this take place Mathews stands like an audience which itself is a clear indication of dysfunctional family.

Sunny and his wife doesn't wish to lead such a life, Sunny is unable to find out his own way and that might be the reason he has turned into drunkard. Koshi on the other hand support his father in illegal businesses and is a ruthless one among the three. From the way of their lives itself it is clear that although the family is under the control of Mathews. Yet as a father he hasn't guided his children.

Raghavan is the only person with whom Baby has a sort of attachment. In the beginning they are good friends but at the end as Raghavan decides to marry Nirmala he decides to kill him and fortunately he escapes. It was from his statement to police everyone comes to know that Balan's demise was also a murder. Realising the fact that this time he will be caught Baby goes

to the warehouse and makes an attempt to suicide. In the climax scene as he returns back home with his gun, Mathews being helpless shoots him to the death. After doing this we can see Mathews sitting silently in his chair while the whole family is in shock. This reaction from Mathews could be from his realisation that he failed as a father.

Mathews has been considering his younger, Baby, as a curse because he has been spending gross amount of money on him for his education as well as for the issues that he had creating lately. Mathews being the one in power could have made a difference in the family . His greed for wealth and power made him an unsuccessful family man. Baby while talking to the Bishop tells him that “none of them in the family has got love for each other and so I don’t love anyone”(George 38:24). This dialogue makes it clear to the audience his family too played a vital role in turning him to strange being. Instances where he fantasies about death tell us that he finds pleasure in killing. Mathew’s bedridden father is regarded least important by the family members, but he is concerned about the family and keeps on asking for everyone. When the movie ends he comes to the scene on his own in a wheelchair and silently stares at Baby’s dead body. As we have mentioned earlier, the only person with whom Baby shares a bond in the family is his grandfather. Though no background story regarding the old father, still we can presume that he was gentle towards his children.

The presence of these many male characters doesn’t diminish Mathews power over anyone. The gun pointing towards him is actually pointing towards his apathy. Baby doesn’t intentionally mean to rebel against his father instead he kills people for his own peace of mind.

Therefore, it is wholly evident that the male characters under the patriarch Mathews weren’t able to come out and do things of their own. They were controlled by his power and authority . Baby made an exception to this by rebelling unconsciously against his family and

particularly his father figure. In comparison with *Joji*, here the movie ends with providing a moment of realisation to the audience.

Chapter 4

Deep Insight into the Malayalam Adaptation of Macbeth

In this chapter we will be discussing about Dileesh Pothan's *Joji*, 2021 movie, and the ways in which it depicts the darker sides of humans psyche. This movie was largely criticised for its similarity to the former movie in terms of characters, setting etc. When we undertake a deeper study into the movie we come to know that, though there are similar features still it stands out in terms of many aspects which we will be discussing here.

Joji is in many ways different from Baby, as he starts murdering people for money and power. Also the movie officials have declared that the movie was inspired from William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Joji, is an engineering dropout and a lazy fellow who in the beginning of the movie is harmless. All he needs is freedom from his father's dominance but is not ready to work for that. Joji and his family lives nearby a plantation and the story takes place in Covid ridden Kerala. As we discussed in *Irakal*, the family in *Joji* also leads a fearful life under powerful their father, Kuttapan.

His three grown sons still act like whiny boys around him, despite a stroke that made him bedridden. Joji has got no such particular connection with any of his family members except Bincy, his brother's wife, who is also hoping for a better future were she is free. While his brothers are actively involved in many aspects of the estate and business, Joji spends most of his time in his room and taking care of the horse. However, he reveals an unexpectedly powerful side when his father becomes ill and begs for his share only to be brutally abused by him.

Joji's connection with Bincy is something to be discussed of, because even after knowing Joji motive of murdering his own father by changing the medicines ,still she doesn't stop him from doing it instead she hides it from everyone and acts very normal on Kuttapan's death.

The scene in which Bincy asks Joji to put on a mask and come for the funeral we see that both the characters are happy about the death of their father, as finally they have gained freedom. Jomon , Kuttapan's elder son, is the only one who has got respect and love for his father. Also when Jomon finds out that Joji was behind the murder of their father ,Joji has got no hesitation in committing another ,that is to kill his brother. From hiding the gun which he got from Jomon's son, burning away the evidences of the murder and threatening Bincy we come to know the dark side of Joji's character.

According to reports, the plot was inspired by Macbeth's basic structure. If any parallels can be established between the two, it is that in both, the "hero" engages in activity that sets off a chain of events that goes out of his control and force him to act worse again and again. The bishop in the story is not in good terms with Joji's family due to Jomon's rebellious behaviour. Jomon's actions constantly create a mess, which scares Joji as people start becoming suspicious about Kuttapan's death (IMDb).

Jomon bursts fire crackers on the funeral of his father because his father doesn't wanted a sad demise. This brings out suspicion in people as well as the bishop, who hates Jomon.

Joji's decision to kill Jomon is not just because of him finding out the truth but also due to the fear that his actions will lead to an investigation on Kuttapan's death. As the movie moves into its climax Joji makes an allegation on the society for his actions. Though at first we find it difficult to accept, to a certain level society plays a dominant role in making an individuals life

hell. But in the case of Joji we can't blame the society for his doings, as it was his psychic temptations which lead him to do such horrible crimes.

Its important to discuss about the father son relationship in the movie. First let us look into Joji's relationship with his father. We see that they don't share any emotional or loving attachment to each other. Joji has been considered as a good for nothing guy by his father and is often ridiculed by Kuttapan. Kuttapan had built his own empire with his hardwork and he expects his sons to follow his way of life. Among the three his eldest son Jomon is shown as someone who has love and attachment toward his father. We see that Jomon, though he too is living under his father's power, he has respect for him. Also he is divorcee living with father along with Jomon's teenage son Popy.

He has always been a helping hand to his father and did everything for his fast recovery. Scenes wherein he asks the priest to stop the prayer as it discomforts Kuttapan, the decision to do a surgery ;which fortunately helps him partially gain back his strength and being mentally disturbed by his father's death makes it clear to audience the attachment he has for his father.

Jaison and his wife Bincy are not so happy with their lives. We see Bincy spending most of her time in the kitchen and always involved in household chores. They wish to lead a better life but is waiting for Kuttapan to give them their shares. When Kuttapan is recovered from his paralyzed stage there is a sequence were Jaison ,prompted by Bincy, asks him money to buy a new house in town . Here he is ridiculed by Kuttapan and signing the cheque indicates his power being regained . Bincy and Jaison are fed up with their lives and this is evidently seen when Bincy takes out her frustration towards Joji and silently weeps thinking about her condition.

We see that Joji shares a bond with Bincy and Poppy. It was when Bincy speaks out about her condition Joji decides to stand for her and it was at this time Kuttapan chokes him with his left hand. This moment makes Joji realize the fact that he should get rid of his father otherwise he won't be having a peaceful life. As we discussed earlier he proceeds to change the medication of Kuttapan with similar looking pills which gradually leads to his death.

Why was Bincy supporting Joji in committing this murder ?

The answer is for this is clear from the way she has been depicted throughout the movie. Bincy is equally involved in the murder of Kuttapan because if she had made a move Joji would have stopped this. But instead she remain silent, which is an unspoken way of telling him to continue whatever he was doing. She too wanted a better life but lack of assets and money made her as well as her husband in control of Kuttapan.

Rumours regarding the death of Kuttapan spreads out and eventually Jomon is upset as people start saying that someone from the his family committed the murder. Sudhi, a neighbour who makes explosives, starts telling others about the apathetic walking of Joji when Bincy called out for help when Kuttapan's death. On confronting Sudhi it becomes clear to Jomon that it was Joji who had committed the murder of his own father. Being helpless and understanding that he will be caught he shoots his brother with air gun and later throws an explosive towards which eventually leads to his death.

Now things get out of hand and this time even Bincy fears that Joji would be behind all this pathos. Popy was the first to find out that it was Joji being the murderer of his father. The point were even Bincy is threatened by him gives chills to the audience as the wanting for power

and wealth have turned him completely out of control. The movie ends with Joji killing himself and swearing on the society for whatever he did.

Though Joji couldn't come up to power still after the death of his father we see a sort of peacefulness and stage of power being gained by him. Which is a reestablishment of his father's masculinity . Joji being the one solving the disputes, speaking for everyone etc suggest the voice he finally accomplished.

Under the patriarch of Kuttapan none of the family members are able to lead a life of their own style. The male characters here are as equally meek to their father just like the character Bincy. The one who leads his family presumes the role of a man according to the society while the ones living under his control presume the role of a woman, because being meek and in control are signs of being feminine according to the society.

While the father figure in the movie represents an example of hegemonic masculinity, Joji represents an example non-hegemonic masculinity . The reason is that Joji is someone who doesn't possess any such masculine features created by the society. Joji by the murder of his father tried to bring back his masculinity and prove it to everyone but in the end he fails .

The movie is set in the Covid lockdown time which was a traumatic time for many. Being locked in their homes , losing jobs, and having no contact with the outside world was a period of struggle for many. The movie being set in such an atmosphere makes it even more interesting as people are able to relate to the situation. Through the characters, Kuttapan and Joji, the movie gives us a clear idea about how one dominates and the other tries to rebel.

Here, it was the frustration of being ridiculed by his father and the constant insult from him a reason for his rebellious nature which eventually led him to do things to get rid of his

own father. In the case of Joji it was not so difficult to commit the murder as he had no such emotional attachment with his father. The shift in his behaviour shows us that his mind has been going through a lot and is not in a good condition.

As the movie ends it places the audience in a confusing stage as Joji blames the society for everything he did. To an extent society plays a role in making people do things which they never wanted but it was not just the society in the case of Joji.

Chapter 5

Interpreting the Aim of the Project

So far we discussed about the movie and the theory we are going to use in order to prove the aim of this project . “Psychoanalytic Study On Hegemonic Masculinity” through the comparison of *Irakal* and *Joji* is made possible through Raewyn Connell’s “Gender Order Theory”. No boundaries can be set to understand a particular work in literature. As we know theories are interconnected , so is Psychoanalytic theory as well as Gender Studies.

Under the patriarch of Mathews and Kuttapan how are the other male characters feminized, is our first concern regarding the project. Both *Irakal* by K. G. George and *Joji* by Dileesh Pothan provide a fascinating depiction of hegemonic masculinity and its effects on both the individual and social levels. It would be interesting to compare and contrast the two films from a psychoanalytic standpoint.

Hegemonic masculinity describes the predominant kind of masculinity that society values and promotes. Strength, aggression, and control are some of its defining characteristics, and it frequently involves the subordination of women and other marginalised groups. Hegemonic masculinity fosters toxic behaviours and unreasonable expectations, which can be harmful to both men and women.

The patriarchal family in *Irakal* is led by Mathews, a violent and dominating father figure, who is represented by Thilakan. The complicated interactions among family members are examined, as are the effects of toxic masculinity. Many hegemonic masculinity characteristics,

such as a need for control and violence, are displayed in the character of Mathews. His activities have a significant impact on his children's lives, who are all attempting to define themselves while living under his control. Baby is an exception to all his expectations, which is why he considers him as a curse born to destroy everything. The eldest son Koshi is a replica of Mathews, it is through him we see that position of the father figure is being continued. He has a power over the family in comparison to Sunny and Baby.

However, *Joji* introduces the role of Joji, played by Fahadh Faasil, who represents a distinct type of hegemonic masculinity. He is portrayed as a man who struggles to earn his family's respect and who is weak and lazy. He is outdone by his wealthier brothers and powerless to challenge his father Kuttapan, played by Sunny. Joji's desire to live up to conventional standards of masculinity, which include being powerful and successful monetarily, influences his behaviour.

Hegemonic masculinity and its impact on people and families are critiqued in both movies. While *Irakal* focuses on the negative effects of controlling and violent behaviour, *Joji* emphasises the negative effects of toxic masculinity on men who do not fit into social norms. The films demonstrate how the pressure to uphold traditional gender roles can result in sadness, frustration, and a sense of abandonment. The role of patriarchy in the family is not something that takes place with the conscious involvement of people. Instead such conventional orders and patterns are actually in the minds of each individual. Mathew's family is being lead by Mathews because he is the only with monetary power while his sons are not ready to go with their own lives. Thus, naturally Mathews becomes the patriarch of the family. Now as we take the case of Kuttapan's family we see that here too the rest of the family members, especially the male members ,finds their comfort space in the shadow of their father. So its important to note that,

here the hegemonic masculine features are not attributed to the father with the conscious decision of others, but through his power and actions he becomes the patriarch.

So far we discussed about the presence of masculinity in the movies which is depicted through the father figures. Now let us look into the male characters who doesn't possess such masculinity. It is Baby and Joji making an exception and accepting the feminine role of being in control, as per the society's conception. One main reason for their mental abnormalities could be the family atmosphere. None of the family members tried to understand what they were going through in their solitude. Making them feel worthless and weak had a huge impact on them.

The pressure to conform to the traditional gender roles can make people do things out of their sanity. This is even more evident in Joji's case, as he couldn't find a voice of his own under the pressure of his father. This pressure made him understand the value of money and only monetary power can help him gain identity. Baby on the other hand doesn't wish for power or money but is helpless in the condition of the family .

Society expects men to be powerful, emotionless, dominating and satisfy the needs of others in the family. If he isn't able to do any of these then he will not be a man according to the society's perception. So here the father figures want their sons to be masculine just like them and is not ready to accept their differences as a human. Mathew isn't realising that his youngest son is severely in need of help as his mind is getting out of control. Kuttapan on the other hand treats Joji more like his slave. The elder brothers on the other hand are part of the conventional order as they are ready to take up the business of their father and so there are not in need of help from others. The contrast between hegemonic and non -hegemonic masculinity makes both the movies more interesting to the audience and makes us realise the fact that being part of a dysfunctional family can have significant effects on individuals. These movies emphasise the need for society

to acknowledge and combat the negative consequences of hegemonic masculinity and to support more inclusive and diverse forms of masculinity that permit a range of gender and identity expressions.

As we analyse both the movies, we see that male characters in the movie are under the patriarch Mathews and Kuttapan. Under their money power their family finds it difficult to lead a life of freedom. They are being meek in front of their father figures because they know that despite of their wanting for freedom, still the only way for their survival is their father's. For survival they are sacrificing their freedom but within their minds wishes to lead a life of happiness and peacefulness.

Baby and Joji are the only characters who expresses their frustration from leading a life with no love, happiness and freedom, which thus leads them to finding solutions through murders. While Baby is going through mental abnormalities from the beginning, Joji develops such psychic deviations as the plot progresses. Therefore under the patriarch of their father the rest of the characters lose their masculine characteristics, created by the society, and meekly submit themselves towards his dominance.

In general, a psychoanalytic analysis of hegemonic masculinity implies that this type of masculinity is influenced by social and cultural influences and has its roots in unconscious impulses and desires. It can be helpful to develop methods for opposing and changing this dominant form of masculinity as well as promoting more inclusive forms of gender identity and expression by understanding the psychological factors that drive hegemonic masculinity.

While others are marginalised by the dominant the need to come out of this and restablize the order also increases in the individual. And this will lead people to find out ways, the ways to could even include murdering the one in power. That is exactly what we are able to see in these movies.

Therefore, we come to the conclusion that hegemonic masculinity and its psychological impact on people can pressurize individuals to become a part of the conventional order. Baby's need for affection is evident from his affair with Nirmala. Nirmala is the only person who treats him well and as an individual with feelings. His connection with grandfather can also be read in similar way. Joji has frequent conversation with Bincy and Poppy, there are the only ones who value his voice in the family. But in the verge of being caught they are even ready to murder any of them. The desire to gain something in life took them into a darker world.

In the power of their father the other male members are also marginalised, which is clear from many instances were they wish to lead a better life. This marginalisation takes a toll on Baby and Joji an not in other members. Being the younger ones and going through mental agony they find it difficult to get along with others. Even though they are the ones who commit the murders, still when we have a deeper understanding on behalf of their situation we come to the conclusion that its not just their fault. Ignorance felt by both of them plays a crucial role in their characters.

Both the directors are successful in their depiction of the impact that hegemonic masculinity has on an individual's mind. Thus, its important to wipe out such illogical conception of the society regarding males and females. The pressure that each individual has to go through in order to fit into the conventional order is clearly seen in Baby and Joji along with the other male characters. The age old belief that men and women should act in a particular

manner can bring toxic masculinity into existence. A set of actions and attitudes that are typically associated with masculinity yet are harmful to both men and women are referred to as toxic masculinity. Aggression, domination and emotional suppression are some of these behaviours and attitudes. So its important bring an end to such kind of masculinity which restricts the freedom and voice of others.

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