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**Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women**

(Deemed to be University) Estd. u/s 3 of UGC Act 1956, Category 'A' by MHRD  
Re-accredited with A++ Grade by NAAC, CDPA 3.65/A, Category I by UGC  
Coimbatore - 641 043, Tamil Nadu, India

**Appendix L2**

**(Item No 5 of Check List) Details of Research Publications**

S.No	Article	Journal	Other Details Vol/No/Page No/ Year	Published in UGC- CARE / Scopus Indexed/ Web of Science
1	Intersecting Anthropologies: A Comparative Study of Cultural Oppression and Trauma in Nooru Simhasanangal and Celestial Bodies	Malayalam Literay Survey	Vol.44, issue. 1, Jan-Mar, 2024 pp. 71-78	UGC-CARE
2	Transforming Perceptions - Redefining the concept of motherhood in the books 'Women Dreaming' and 'Celestial Bodies'	Malayalam Literay Survey	Acceptance given for the forthcoming issue, July- September 2024	UGC-CARE

\*Proof of list of Journals from Internet to be attached along with copies of reprints.

Scholar : Kavita  
Supervisor : S. Kalamani  
25/09/2024

The scholar Miss. Kavitha, P.K (ITPHENP003) has published/got acceptance in the following journal:

Checked By:  
A. Vijaya Lakshmi  
25/09/2024  
HoD/Dean of Respective School

1. Malayalam literasy Survey - indexed in UGC care list Group I  
from January 2021 to present.  
This may be considered.

J. J. Pillai  
25.09.2024  
Asst. Librarian.

# **MALAYALAM LITERARY SURVEY**

2024 January-March

A quarterly journal of Kerala Sahitya Akademi



**Kerala Sahitya Akademi**  
Thrissur, Kerala



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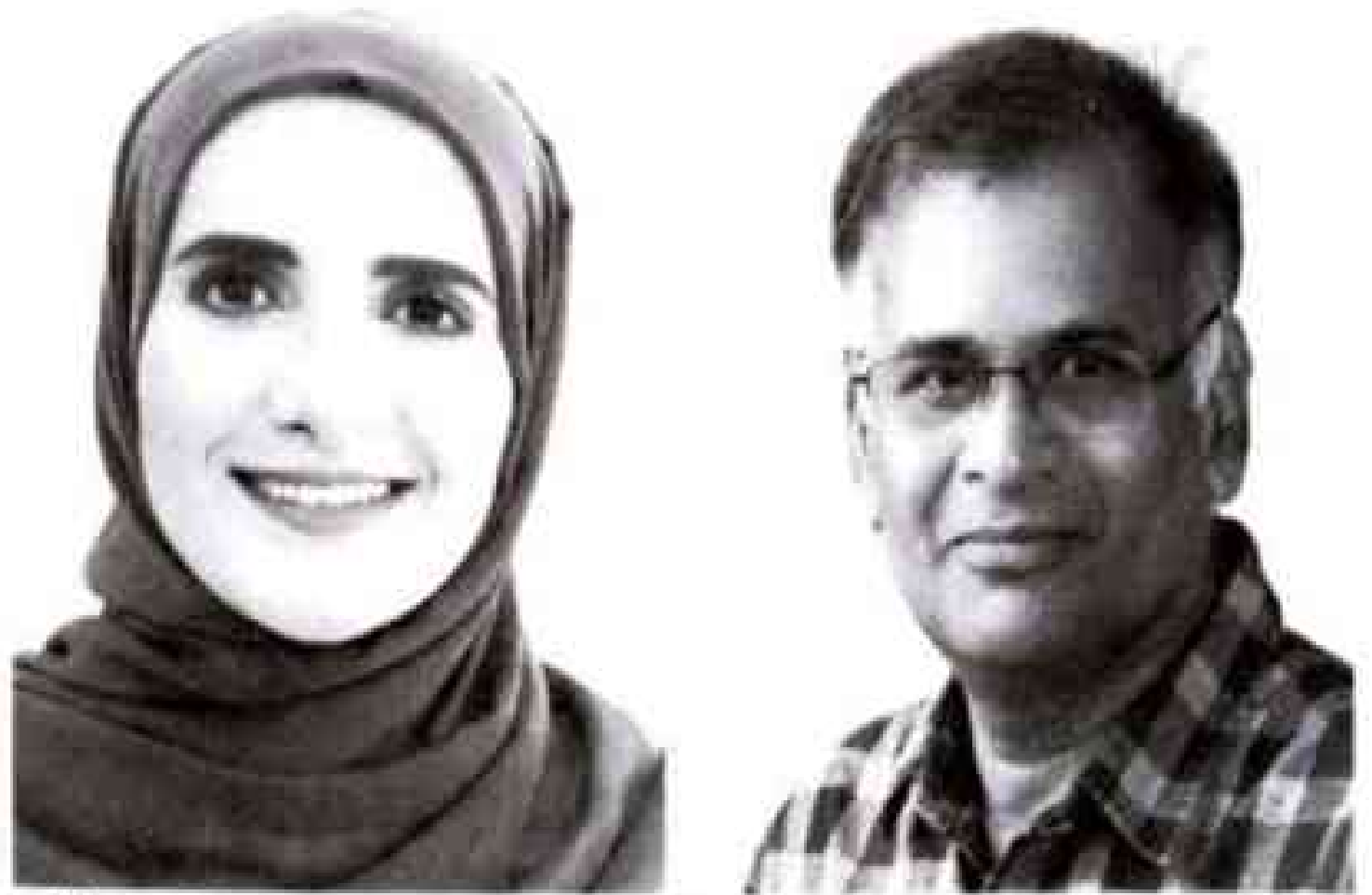
- 71 **Intersecting Anthropologies:  
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# Intersecting Anthropologies

A Comparative Study of  
Cultural Oppression and Trauma  
in *Nooru Simhasanangal*  
and *Celestial Bodies*

**Kavitha P.K.,  
Dr S. Kalamani**

**B** Jeyamohan is a writer who has always wielded his pen to voice the existence of the oppressed and the subjugated. Though he is prolific in Tamil, his works in Malayalam are not many. However, his Malayalam novel *Nooru Simhasanangal* disturbed the consciousness of the intelligentsia as it addressed the psychological trauma of the marginalised poignantly. Dharmapalan, the protagonist of the novel *Nooru Simhasanangal*, is an educated youth and an IAS officer. He is from Nayaadi Caste, a Dalit community and suffers humiliation and neglect in his career and social life because of his caste. He is insulted by his seniors; his juniors never took instructions from him, and they ridiculed him at every opportunity they came across.



*Jokha Alharathi and B. Jeyamohan*

The bitter experiences wound him mentally, and the resultant trauma leads to an identity crisis. He even begins to think that he should not have been educated. He yearns for a carefree, nayaadi life without any etiquette and expectations. His mental agony increases with every traumatic experience he has with society. Nayaadis are people who belong to the margins, scavengers or beggars, as they were never hired for any other work. They are the most hated untouchables belonging to the Dalit community. Dharmapalan got an education as a sponsor adopted him, and despite his struggles, he even rose to become an IAS officer by dint of his hard work. He lived with a hurt ego at his workplace and home. His colleagues never hesitated to abuse him, establishing that he got into civil service only on the basis of reservations given to his community.

Dharmapalan's mother is a memorable character in the novel. She is so crude, uncultured and without any pretences; a perfect depiction of a mother from the slums. She does not hide her hunger and eats the rotten food from the garbage heartily. She eats to her heart's content and makes a parcel of the decayed food for her son. This is her everyday life, like any other Nayaadi woman. Her expositions may make the reader tremble, but it is the stark reality. The author delineates her character

as not ready to stay in Dharmapalan's sophisticated home as she finds comfort only in the life of the streets. She is disturbed that her son is wearing a shirt and pants and even dares to sit on a chair. She wants to escape and camouflage herself in the underground world of filth, hunger and despair as she is accustomed to such a life. She wants to snatch her son away from the world she fears. Even Dharmapalan, at times, feels that such a life is much better than compromising his dignity and allowing himself to be humiliated by others in the name of his caste. The trauma faced by Dharmapalan thus becomes a haunting paranoia, which ostracises him from the cultured society. Unlike his mother, who has mentally accepted her community's rat-like existence, the educated Dharmapalan pulsated with the awareness of discrimination and injustice he faces at every juncture of life. His mother is scared of people and society and is traumatised by hunger, poverty and indignation. Her predicament affected her cognitive behaviour and intelligence in such a way that the rotten food became an obsession with her, much to the disgust of her daughter-in-law. She cannot live every day in a civilised community and eat fresh food. Dharmapalan tries to change her as he has the means to provide food for her now, but she resists his attempts and quivers with fear. She finds it impossible to break away from her usual way of life and eventually sinks deep into the quagmire of the periphery. Similar instances of shared identity and discrimination can be found in contemporary Arab women's writings in English, though in a different cultural context.

*Celestial Bodies* is a novel by Jokha Alharathi in Arabic, translated into English by Marilyn Booth. It is about Oman's fast-changing political, social, economic and cultural life. The novel is a classic in its representation of slavery and individual trauma. This Man Booker International 2019 Prize winner novel presents the enticing world of dunes, desert life, Arab cuisine, culture, Bedouin women, their mesmerising lifestyle, affluent Arab family lives and customs. Though the novel centres around the lives of two generations of wealthy Arab families, we get a throbbing picture of slaves and their desperate lives. Though slavery was abolished in the year 1948 by the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the illegal slave trade continued, and the illegal agents transported slaves from Africa to the Middle East and West Asia. Merchant Sulayman, a significant character in *Celestial Bodies*, traded in dates and made a fortune out of his business. He

also traded slaves illegally under the pretext of his dates' business. He held some slaves to run his household. Slave men and women thronged his place, where they were abused cruelly. Women were sexually abused and bore children. They grew up and added to his pack of servants. Thus, a slave community developed within a few decades, and Merchant Sulayman held his claim and monopoly over them. Even on his deathbed, he cried out to his son Abdallah to tie -up and punish Sanjar, his beloved slave woman Zarifa's son, who had left the village of al-Awafi without his permission. The lives of slaves were traumatised, and they led an animal-like life, facing discrimination of all sorts without any licence or record of their existence.

Maneen is another character in the novel who experiences trauma of a different nature. Maneen, the old slave, used to sit on a large rock in front of the opening to his mud house. He was miserably weak, and when someone passed by his house, he used to moan, "Give Maneen a few grains of rice, just a little handful! Pass him a bite of something sweet!"( 68). Maneen's son, Zayid, and Abdallah, Merchant Sulayman's son, were classmates. Maneen never budged from his place on the rock and kept begging for some Vimto, a beverage to wet his throat. Maneen had a rough patch of life earlier, and he repeated that story whenever memories haunted him. Once, al-Awafi had to face a terrifying flood, and his house was flooded with water. The rich and the poor were equally affected by the flood. People died of hunger as no food was available. The rain had destroyed all their dates. Many of them became mentally deranged as they could not find a remedy for the problem. Then, Merchant Sulayman supported them and gave them food, which they all could eat and drink at his house. Soon, they realised that there was nothing in his storeroom either. Again, there was poverty and a lack of food. From then on, Maneen

became a little delirious, and food became an obsession with him. He went on begging for food at the top of his voice, much to the disgust of others.

Maneen's son Zayid grew up with Abdallah and later joined the army. In a few years, Maneen's crumbling mud brick house was replaced by a reinforced concrete home with three bedrooms and a sitting room. Zayid flourished in life, and he rebuilt the house and filled it with large sacks of rice and sugar and sealed tins of the best local sweets for his father. Though he returned to al-Awafi less frequently, he always brought crates of fruit and bottles of Vimto. However, Maneen never abandoned the small rock on which he always sat. His eyesight failed, and his hair had gone completely white. He was still in his tattered clothes and cried out to the passersby for food. This infuriated the army officer's son, and they often had fights about Maneen still sitting out in the cold, in his tattered clothes, on the small rock. He had enough food at home, and his son was mad that Maneen continued to beg for food. People could hear Maneen protesting that he could not see any longer, and he liked sitting by the roadside. He also said that he was asking for food because it was an assurance of his identity and existence. He wanted to communicate with his neighbours and live among children and their games. His son could not understand him and kept on shouting at Maneen. He had become weak, and his voice calling out to strangers for food had become feeble. When Zayid was in al-Awafi, he was silent and never came out of the house. Maneen joined zar exorcisms, walking over hot coals and revelled screaming as he pleased. He also started drinking to escape the trauma he experienced. He kept shouting at his door: "Poor Maneen! Wretched Maneen! Give him a bite of bread, give him half a cigarette! Give him a woman even if it's only filthy Hafiza" (72). It was hard for Maneen to stay alive with memories of hunger and the pangs related to starvation. He couldn't stop himself from begging for food. The trauma had taken a toll on his character and behaviour. One day, Maneen was found shot dead by a bullet when he returned home late after a zar exorcism, all drunk. Zayid, his son, was not seen thereafter in al-Awafi.

Memories of food are not only associated with nostalgia but are highly traumatising. Maneen had to live with hunger all his life as a slave. Much has been written about the multifaceted significance of food and eating from an anthropological and sociological perspective and trauma related to post-memory. Food becomes a

memory work and memories of eating adversely affect an individual who is deprived of food. He would carry the resultant trauma as personal or trans-generational, and the depravity is likely to be passed over to the next generation. Various strands of research on food as a means of remembering or making sense of the past can be extrapolated using this novel. Food is a highly politicised and exploited commodity like a weapon. The dreadful hunger experienced during war or a natural calamity, or even starvation and then finally having a chance to eat may become entangled in memory. The sharing of food with loved ones becomes a source of fear and happiness. Similarly, It is Maneen's method of overcoming the trauma that lies dormant in his mind. Holocaust survivors who had to face starvation never wasted food. Maneen, after the dreadful famine and flood, sought to procure every morsel he could get by begging, even though he had stacks of rice at his house. The begging is a result of psychological trauma he was going through and was unable to get out of.

Compared to other Eastern countries, Oman may be free perhaps from holocaust or war trauma, trauma due to civil war or repressive forces of the government; these external factors contribute to the production of trauma, but citizens were not devoid of psychological trauma that haunted them because of slavery and social practices, superstitious beliefs and patriarchy. It is this world of the psyche, the troubled areas, and the rough patches that Alharthi explores in her novel *Celestial Bodies*.

Thus, both novels highlight the characters who behave abnormally from a worldly perspective, but they remain traumatised in their own way. An indelible mark had been etched on their psyche by the cruelty of the people in the premises they lived, and all the reserves that protected their minds from the impact of trauma were mercilessly

broken. The mind as an organism, according to Freud, in his seminal work *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, contains outer and inner layers, with the outer layer having a “protective shield” against harmful external stimuli. (25). However, when “fright” occurs, that is “the state a person gets into when he has run into danger without being prepared for it.” The lack of anxiety coupled with the external stimuli causes neurosis” (36). Anxiety acts as a protection mechanism against traumatic neurosis, but unexpected fright carries no defence. The external stimuli rupture the barrier and enter the inner psyche without adequate internal defence. He writes: “We describe as ‘traumatic’ any excitation from outside which is powerful enough to break through the protective shield...with a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli”. (33). Trauma is imagined as both an external agent that shocks the unprepared system and an internal defence action against overstimulation.

Traumatic neurosis is marked by the “compulsion to repeat” the memory of the painful event with the hopes of mastering the unpleasant feeling (18). The dreams of the traumatised patient repeat the experience as a way to “master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of traumatic neurosis” (37). Freud conveys that a patient cannot remember the whole of what is repressed in him, and what he cannot remember may be precisely the essential part of it.” Hence, the patient “is obliged to repeat the repressed material as a contemporary event instead of remembering it as something belonging to the past” (19).

Sigmund Freud, Cathy Caruth, and Soshanna Felman are some of the pioneers who interpreted literary trauma theory as a reflection of trauma experienced by people in their real lives. Literary trauma theories thus serve as a yardstick to measure and create awareness about the extent of trauma undergone by the underprivileged people who lived in the peripheries, unheard and suppressed. Writers like Jokha Alharthi from Oman and B. Jeyamohan from India, though separated by Geo-political boundaries, thus stand united in giving voice to the voiceless of humanity. As we examine humanity from a vantage point, we find it crouching to make a burgeoning leap to technological evolution and empowerment in the 21st century; nevertheless, the advancements remain futile without appropriate social enlightenment and altruistic benevolence.

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# MALAYALAM LITERARY SURVEY

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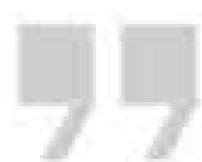


# Transforming Perceptions

Redefining the Concept of Motherhood in Women, Dreaming, and Celestial Bodies

**Kavitha P.K. & Dr. S. Kalamani**

Salma is a writer who has always wielded her pen to voice the existence of the oppressed and subjugated women. Her writings disturb the consciousness of the intelligentsia as they address the injustice meted out to marginalised women in families and their psychological trauma poignantly. With lyrical prose and raw emotional depth, she delves into the intricacies of womanhood, unearthing their struggles, aspirations, and resilience through her characters. Her bold and courageous approach to storytelling provokes thought, fostering empathy and understanding of the myriad challenges faced by women in contemporary society. In Manamiyankal, Salma adeptly introduces characters from the Islamic community, weaving the lives of women from two distinct families. Meena Kan-



Trauma is imagined as both an external agent that shocks the unprepared system and an internal action of defence against overstimulation.



dasamy is a powerful translator who has rendered this Tamil novel into English by the name *Women, Dreaming*.

The story whirls around Subaida, her daughter Parveen, and her daughter-in-law Mehrunnisa. Parveen was sent back to her parental home by her in-laws, demanding the pending dowry of a car promised to them in marriage. This act serves as a smokescreen to conceal the impotence of Parveen's husband, Raheem. Parveen, though ready to accept him as he is, suggests that they consult a doctor to solve this issue. Her husband's ego gets badly hurt at this, and he does not hesitate to hurl abuses at her. The family then manipulates to chuck her out, stamping her as barren. Through this narrative thread, Salma confronts the pervasive issue of marital discord and societal pressures surrounding dowry while also shedding

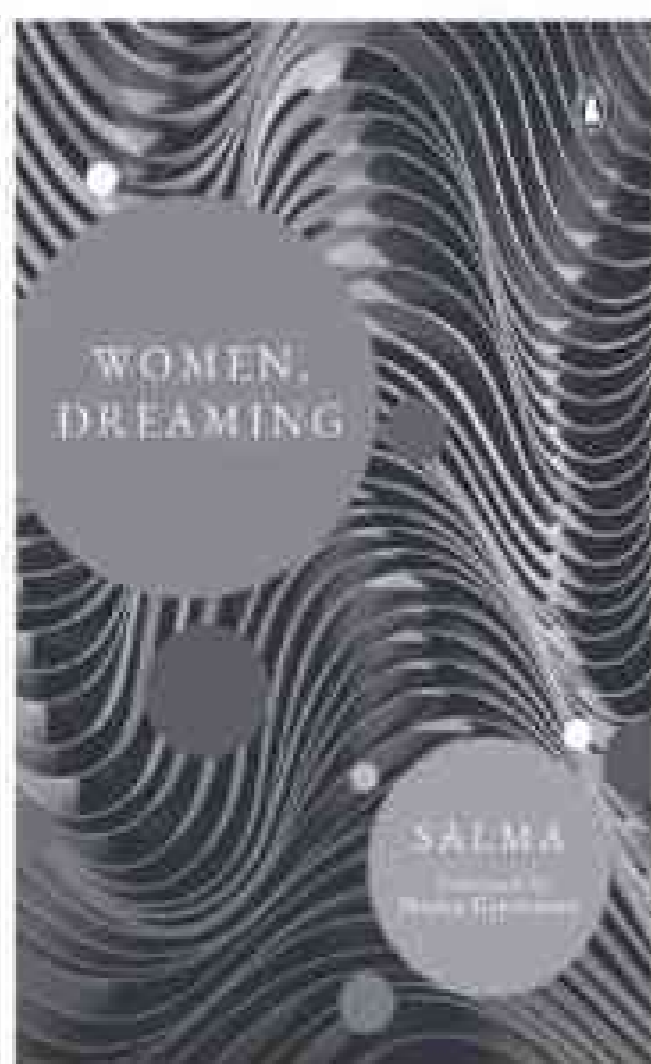
light on the deeper, often concealed mental trauma faced by women within traditional patriarchal structures. Parveen, who is in the prime of her age, is dejected and frustrated at her unmet physical and mental needs and finds herself unwelcome at her own house by a strict brother who stubbornly held on to the traditional beliefs and customs of religion that denied freedom to women. Even Subaida, her mother deemed it best for Parveen to stay with her blind aunt Amina, who lived across the street all alone. Parveen is forced to a traumatic existence, under the strict surveillance of her brother, denied all the pleasures of conjugal life. Amina, her seventy-two-year-old maternal aunt, identified herself with the pain and trauma of Parveen, as she was unmarried because of her blindness, and she knew quite well about the pangs of the body. Parveen's story epitomises the complexities of womanhood in the face of societal expectations and familial obligations, offering a poignant reflection on the intersections of gender, power, and deception within the context of marriage and family dynamics. In parallel to Parveen's plight, Salma intricately weaves another tale within *Manamiyankal*, portraying the tumultuous journey of Meharunnisa, Subaida's daughter-in-law.

Parveen's brother, Hasan, a devout Muslim, decides to go for a second marriage, which infuriates his wife, Meharunnisa. Subaida too dissuades her son from going for a second marriage. However, Hasan, an austere Muslim who preached and practiced Hadith, believed in his right to marry several times. He said that the scriptures allowed him to do that. Mehar, who could not tolerate the injustice, files a case of divorce against Hasan. She leaves his house with her children in tow. Hasan could not tolerate her audacity of divorcing him and harasses her. The incident devastates Mehar, and she seeks refuge with her mother, Asiya. Faced with betrayal and heartache, Mehar is traumatised and recollects the pain and hardships she had to endure as a wife, who had married him at the age of 15. Her anguish deepens as she recalls the relentless cycle of suffering. The burden of raising their children amid adversity weighed heavily on her shoulders, exacerbated by the toll on her health from numerous abortions. Despite her pleas, Hasan used to adamantly refuse to use contraceptives, and Mehar had to abort her pregnancy several times. Old memories of marriage and the continuous struggle to provide for her children in dire circumstances only intensify her despair, leaving her feeling utterly shattered and overwhelmed. She is led to the verge of a mental breakdown when Hasan parades his second wife in his car, driving

past her house several times a day. Seismic repercussions reverberate through the family as Mehar decides to remarry due to her familial pressure. Consumed by rage and desperation, Hasan tries to avenge Mehar. Meanwhile their children Sajida and Asharaf bear witness to the fragmentation of their dreams. Their pain runs deep as they grapple with the harsh realities of their parents' broken marriage and the upheaval it brought to their lives. In a drastic move, Hasan decides to separate Meharunnisa from her children, citing his custodial rights as their father. The wrenching separation from her children shatters Mehar, and she is unable to find her solace in her new marriage.

The narrative poignantly captures the anguish and trauma of children separated from their parents, the anguish of not seeing one's child, the financial constraints, and the barriers imposed by society and religion on women like Meharunnisa, Parveen, Subaida, Amina, and several others like them. Through their struggles, Salma paints a vivid portrait of the pain and injustice endured by women in navigating societal expectations and familial dynamics, highlighting their trauma and the resilience and determination with which they propel themselves forward despite the odds stacked against them. Trauma inflicted on their minds scalds them for life.

Physically, trauma can leave lasting marks on a woman's body and mind, manifesting as chronic health issues, psychosomatic symptoms, and changes in posture and movement patterns. The toll of trauma leads to conditions like anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Furthermore, trauma can alter a woman's emotional responses and coping mechanisms, often resulting in heightened reactivity, hypervigilance, or emotional numbing. The changes in speech pattern and behaviour affect her social life and interpersonal dynamics to a great extent. (Caruth 125) Salma has amalgamated the anguish and trauma



of women, especially mothers, in her novel, and the theme reverberates with that of the lives of Arab women portrayed by Jokha Alharthi in her work, *Celestial Bodies*.

*Celestial Bodies*, a novel written by Jokha Alharthi in Arabic and translated into English by Marilyn Booth, is about the fast-changing political, social, economic, and cultural life of Oman. The novel is a classic in its representation of individual trauma. Like the writer Salma from India, Jokha Alharthi depicts the pathetic lives of women in wedlock in the Arab country of the Sultanate of Oman. The Man Booker Prize International 2019 winner novel presents the enticing world of sand dunes, desert life, Arab cuisine, culture, Bedouin women, their mesmerising lifestyle, affluent Arab family lives, and customs.

The book revolves around the stories of three sisters, Mayya, Asma, and Khawla, and their mother, Salima. Jokha Alharthi exhibits her mastery by the novel's innovative narrative style, magical realism, and the picturization of trauma. The book recounts the tale of an Omani family spread over three generations, moulded by the fast socio-economic changes and the modified outlook of people since Oman's rise as an oil-rich nation in the 1960s. The book provides a richly imagined, engaging, and poetic insight into a society in transition and represents previously obscured societies with all their vulnerabilities. The novel examines the encounters of three generations of families, from the twentieth century and extending to modern times, a period of exceptional social and geopolitical change. While centred around the lives of three sisters, the book delves into the intricate tapestry of domestic life in the Middle East, offering vivid descriptions of age-old customs and traditions. It is not a mere domestic narrative but ensembles the lives and traumas of the characters in all their clarity. Nestled in the village of al-Awafion on the outskirts of Muscat, the narrative offers a panoramic glimpse into an unfamiliar culture, painting a rich and immersive portrait of life in the region, unknown to the West and to certain other parts of the globe. It picturises the woes and experiences of women, especially mothers, and their trauma, which remain universal.

Women characters in the novel are portrayed as strong ones and are not stereotypes. Alharthi shows how their expectations get torpedoed despite the earnest efforts they make in life. The story develops in a typical style, with the main focus on marriage and childbirth. The matchmaking of Mayya the seamstress, Asma the

reader, and Khawla the beauty becomes the crux of the novel. However, finding appropriate husbands for the ladies 'formed only a small framework of the book. Their mother, Salima, is the central character of the novel who prays ardently to get her children married and tries her best to save their marriages. The novel is written in a historical perspective, like many other fictions of the Arabic world. Historical novels have developed as a major sub-genre in Arab-Anglophone literature. At the heart of 'Celestial Bodies' is an affluent Omani family keen on maintaining the traditions and customs with a little acceptance of modified social behavior. Even though they try to accept the fast-changing social world, they cannot shake themselves free from the complexities and entanglements of the hierarchical master-slave dynamics of the past. The influence of an all-powerful, male-dominated system on dependents is distinct, and sufferings, confrontations, and revolts surface as it tries to usurp subsequent generations.

Three daughters exemplify the society's reaction towards the concept of perfect femininity, in a time of swift socio-economic transformation. Mayya, the oldest daughter agrees to obey the decisions taken in her family and accepts the wedding proposal of the son of a rich merchant. She burns with pain as she voluntarily gives up her love for a boy in the neighborhood and marries Abdallah, son of merchant Sulayman. Though she got married she is not able to love her husband. The second daughter Asma, a voracious reader of classics and religious texts seeks education, then marries an artist, who is the son of emigrated Issa, a relative of theirs. He had emigrated to Egypt and set up his family at Cairo. However, he couldn't continue to live in Egypt for long due to his identity crisis at a foreign nation and had returned to Oman. Therefore, that relationship too was acceptable as per social norms. The third daughter Khawla waited for her cousin Nasir, who was in Canada. He was her childhood sweetheart and

had promised that he would marry only her. She married him satisfying all societal norms and quenches the questions of society. However, all their lives are turbulent, without much peace at heart conveying the message of impermanence of social institutions like marriages. Nasir had come back as he had completely run out of funds in Canada. He accepted and married Khawla only because of his inheritance issue. His mother had insisted in her will that he can have his share of property only if he tied knot with Khawla.

Nasir thus wed Khawla not out of love but for Khawla, he was her dream come true. Nasir had settled down in Canada with his girlfriend in Montreal. He did not disclose the news of his wedding to his girlfriend and lead a double life. For ten years, Nasir frequented Oman and left Khawla pregnant every time he visited. Nasir kept on abandoning her for long, but Khawla could not accept the truth. She knew that there was something Nasir held on to in Canada, something so dear to him. The thought tormented her throughout her life and it aggravated with his occasional visits to her. When she was on the verge of cutting him off from her life, he would come and be a husband to her again. The visits made the wounds refuse to heal. Her painful life was exemplary; an epitome of the greatest sort of sacrifice, even the rudeness of her husband who wrapped himself up always in long telephone conversations at night couldn't break it. He even dared to hang a photo of his girlfriend on his car ring, pushing a dagger through Khawla's heart. He bought fancy clothes from Canada but it never fitted his children as he was not aware how old they were. Her mother and sisters rebuked her for this kind of tolerance but Khawla persisted to remain in that torment believing that he would come back home someday. Nasir finally returned to her when his girlfriend ditched him throwing him out of the house at Montreal. He settled himself and began to know his wife and children. The trauma that Khawla had been experiencing the past decades took a new turn as she asked for divorce from Nasir. Though he had come to stay with her permanently, she could not forget the past. All of the past neglect shown by Nasir to her and her breach of self-respect had made her to relive the experience of being abandoned day by day until Nasir made his appearance once in two years. Nasir was her fascination from childhood and she had envisaged an ideal man in him. In reality, Nasir was much different without any emotional intimacy with Khawla.

When she decided to divorce Nasir to put an end to her emotional trauma, Nasir had turned into a gentleman, ready to serve her. But all his sweetness, his respect or loyalty was beyond her consciousness. It was at this point that she decided to divorce Nasir for the past crimes done to her. Now everything had become ordered in her life. Her eldest daughter was engaged to an engineer and the youngest at high school. She had finally attained peace with herself, coming to terms with the tormenting trauma that had followed her for a decade. She couldn't bear him anymore. When Nasir pleaded her to forgive him, Khawla couldn't as she had lost her prime years of life thinking about him.

Khawla would have forgiven him had he given a speck of attention to her in the past years. She remembered that she never even got a letter from him, she was a single mother who had to shoulder all the responsibilities of raising their children. She had been stretched to such limits of loneliness and trauma that she searched for him even in her dreams. The trauma she faced had made her emotionally bereft and hence she was not ready to accept any of his entreaties later.

Khawla of *Celestial bodies* is comparable to Meharunnisa of *Women Dreaming*. Both of them are unable to gather any support from the society. Both of them are traumatized mothers who try to escape from the realm of family life and from their own identity crisis as they swim opposite the current.

Salima, another character in the novel *Celestial bodies* is Khawla's mother. She had to face tragedies like the death of her two sons. She was a fighter who tried her best to bring up her children Mayya, Asma and Khawla. Most tragically, her husband Azzan cheated on her and denied her the intimacy she craved from him. Her experiences in life become traumatic when she unwittingly begins to associate her memories with her present life. Mayya's daughter London, reminded her of

her sons, Mohammed, who died as an infant and Hammad, who died as a toddler. The trauma created by death is psychological and it often turns into depression. *Celestial Bodies* of Jokha Alharthi depicts the trauma of individuals founded on their own lives and experiences, opening it to new interpretations and expositions. The book holds a mirror to contemporary Arab politics and social life as well. It provides a richly imagined and poetic insight into a society in transition after the Arab Spring and sheds light on the lives of previously obscured sections of society. The novel unravels the history and people of modern Oman, their perplexities and responses to life in a subtle canvas.

Thus, both the novels highlight the characters who behave courageously from a worldly perspective but they remain traumatised in their own way. An indelible mark had been etched on their psyche by the cruelty of the people whom they loved most ardently and all the reserves that protected their mind from the impact of trauma were mercilessly broken. The mind is an organism, elucidates Freud, in his seminal work *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* that contains outer and inner layers with the outer layer having a “protective shield” against harmful external stimuli. (25). However, when “fright” occurs, that is “the state a person gets into when he has run into danger without being prepared for it.” The lack of anxiety coupled with the external stimuli causes neurosis” (36). Anxiety acts as a protection mechanism against traumatic neurosis but unexpected fright carries no defence. The external stimuli rupture the barrier and enter the inner psyche without adequate internal defence. He writes: “We describe as ‘traumatic’ any excitation from outside which is powerful enough to break through the protective shield...with a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli”. (33). Trauma is imagined as both an external agent that shocks the unprepared system and an internal action of defence against over stimulation.

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Sigmund Freud, Cathy Caruth, Soshanna Felman are some of the stalwarts who interpreted literary trauma theory as a reflection of trauma experienced by people in their real lives. Literary trauma theories thus serve as a yardstick to measure and create awareness about the extent of trauma undergone by the underprivileged women who lived in the peripheries, unheard and suppressed. Writers like Jokha Alharthi from Oman and Salma from Tamil Nadu India, though separated by Geo-political boundaries, stand united in giving voice to the voiceless of humanity. As we examine humanity at large from a vantage point, we find it crouching to make a burgeoning leap to technological evolution, nevertheless, these advancements would remain futile, without appropriate social enlightenment and altruistic benevolence towards women in particular. It is also exasperating to find that women are traumatised mostly by the people in whose premises they lived, constraining her identity and preventing her from active participation in taking up social responsibilities.

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