

**Challenging the Homo Sacer: A Study of Subversive Mobility in *Churuli*  
and *Kammattipaadam***



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partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of MASTER OF  
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “**Challenging the Homo Sacer: A Study of Subversive Mobility in *Churuli and Kammattipaadam***“, is a record of bona fide work done by me under the supervision of Dr Priya K. Nair, Assistant Professor, Department of English for the degree of M.Phil in English Language and Literature and that no part of the dissertation has been presented earlier for the award of any degree, diploma or any other similar title of recognition.

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## CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this dissertation titled, “Challenging the Homo Sacer: A Study of Subversive Mobility in *Churuli* and *Kammattipaadam*”, submitted to St Teresa’s College (Autonomous), affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, in partial fulfilment of the award of M.Phil degree in English Language and Literature is a bona fide work carried out by Raichel Dominic under my supervision and guidance.



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## CONTENTS

Introduction	1-7
Chapter 1 Space and Mobility	8-22
Chapter 2 An Exploration of Uneven Mobilities	23-47
Chapter 3 Homo Sacer on Being an Exception	48-63
Conclusion	64-66
Bibliography	68-72

## Introduction

The human race has always given importance to ontological studies through epistemological processes. There were constant shifts of focus with moving periods of time. At first, it was time and history. Later space has also come into prominence where all three are interdependent as per the sayings of Michel Foucault. In an interview about space power and knowledge, he provided the following message,

it seems to me that the formation of discourses and the genealogy of knowledge need to be analysed, not in terms of types of consciousness, modes of perception and forms of ideology, but in terms of tactics and strategies of power...I would like to study...the history of the fortress, the 'campaign', the 'movement', the colony, the territory. Geography must indeed necessarily lie at the heart of my concerns. (*Power/Knowledge* 77)

Based on this, we could identify that all of these are interdependent like a rhizome. However, the main focus here is on space as it was welcomed recently in comparison with the rest. Within spatial studies, there is a tendency to see space as immobile. In such cases, they are studied in isolation. Mobility is a recent addition to the study of space. Doreen Massey sees space as

indeed a product of interrelations, then it must be predicate upon the existence of plurality. Multiplicity and space as co-constitutive...we recognize space as always under construction. Precisely because space on this reading is a product of relations-between, relations which are necessarily embedded material practices

which have to be carried out, it is always in the process of being made. It is never finished; never closed. (*For Space* 9)

John Urry also concurs with the opinion of Massey. The opinion of Urry can be substantiated by his following words, "space is a set of relations between entities and is not a substance" (*Social Relations and Spatial Structures* 25). This is the idea that leads to the formation of the concept of mobile sociology and sociology beyond societies.

It is at this juncture that mobility studies came to the forefront. Movement or mobility is an essential underlying condition for the existence of space, objects, living beings and power. It provokes us to see the world in a new way which makes it all the more important to use this new mobility approach to study the already existing mobile and immobile systems. Mobility research is never done in isolation because mobilities have histories. It utilises historical and current methodologies of mobility and by doing so the research analyses the continuities, connections, relations, gaps and breaks which have caused to form the current mobile systems in this world. Furthermore, it does not encourage the sedentary perspective that we have of the nation, state, societies and individuals. The study of mobility shows that the motions in the functioning of a social institution, its infrastructure, practices and discourses are shaped by mobility regimes.

Mobility regimes decide who, how and what can stay back, resist, stick around or move and with what conditions and clauses. These regimes have the capacity to influence individuals, groups of people, actions and meaning in our world. They would in turn become a model for a new set of practices and resources. Therefore, the study of mobility plays a major role in understanding society and solving its problems. Zygmunt Bauman

in his work *Globalization: The Human Consequences* argues that "mobility climbs to the rank of the uppermost among coveted values - and that freedom to move, perpetually a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, fast becomes the main stratifying factor of our late-modern or postmodern times" (2). This is because the freedom to move otherwise considered as motility shows how privileged or unprivileged a person, space or society can be in this world. The mobility approach opens up a new arena of research especially because of this change in perspective. Mobility research diverts the idea of power in the existing society by adding new dimensions to it. For instance, in the study, the unequal distributions and the injustices created in the world will be viewed through the prism of network capital and accessibility. It simplifies the reasons for the inequality of power and existence making it easier to create efficient solutions for the problems around the world. Most of the mobility research has taken place while keeping western societies in mind. The concept of mobility research in India is unheard of except for transport-related studies. However, in reality, mobility studies go beyond the boundaries of transport and automobility.

The western studies of mobilities were able to exhibit various insights regarding the root cause of injustice in various fields. However, the scenario in India is quite different from the west. There are a lot of other factors which affect the existence of a person or an entity. For instance, caste is a dividing force in India. Whereas in the west, it may be non-existent. Furthermore, mobility research has not ventured much into India's way of living and its space. The previous research on the mobility approach in connection with the Indian context has touched upon areas like gender, transport, disability, poverty and automobility. That is why it is important to study our society through this approach



as the differences between the west and the third-world countries are enormously varied. As a result, we cannot blindly follow the theories made on the basis of the west for a study on the mobile and immobile systems of India. Yet we can make use of it to understand the workings of the same systems in India and create solutions to our problems appropriately. In addition, attention should be drawn to the fact that any mobility research has not been conducted on Malayalam cinemas to date.

Malayalam films can be considered the current champion of cinema in the Indian film industry. The new wave happening in the Malayalam film industry is able to bring about storms in the industry. On one side, there exists the Bollywood film industry which tends to stick to mainstream commercial ideas for a box office hit. On the other side, there are Malayalam films which portray the human reality to its bones. Lijo Jose Pellissery can be seen as one of the most influential filmmakers in the Malayalam film industry. He is also one of the pioneers of the new age cinemas as he has created multiple films with very specific art values like *Ee Ma Yu*, *Amen*, *Churuli*, *Jallikatu*, *Angamali Diaries* etc. He has been bestowed with multiple awards as the best director for the films *Jallikattu* and *Ee Ma Yu*. Every movie of his has been critically acclaimed for being unconventional. *Churuli* is one of the recent releases by Pellissery and therefore can be seen as an untouched fertile land of possibilities. Rajeev Ravi is also one of the pioneers of the new-age cinema. He has received the award for best cinematographer for the film *Liar's Dice*. *Kammattipaadam* is one of the critically acclaimed works of Ravi which was released in the year 2016. The movie was seen as a site of Dalit literature. However, the mobility aspect of the film has not been explored till the present day. The above-mentioned films are seen as commercial movies with art content.

Therefore, the study has been narrowed to a familiar society by opting for two Malayalam movies namely Rajiv Ravi's *Kammattipaadam* and Lijo Jose Pellisery's *Churuli* as my primary sources. The movie, *Kammattipaadam*, portrays the life of the slum dwellers at the place called Kammatipaadam. It shows the horrible life of people where even their land is forcibly taken away from them. Violence is a main aspect of the movie. Similarly, Lijo Jose's *Churuli* also exhibits violence but in a normalised manner. *Churuli*, also shows the life of the people in a maze-like village called Churuli which is far from the mainstream accessible places. The movie provides a lot of importance to this particular maze-like space as the message intended is also achieved because of the same space and its characteristics. These characteristics are studied in connection with mobility and accessibility. The same goes for the movie *Kammattipaadam*, in which spaces and people depicted will be studied based on motility and mobility. The concepts used in this research, to reflect on these movies would include motility, network capital, accessibility, rhizome, homo sacer, unequal distribution mobilities and mobility justice, subversive mobilities and performativity.

Furthermore, the power discourses in relation to mobilities and immobilities are not something that has been focused upon in the Indian context. The unequal distributions of mobilities are the main cause of injustice. Therefore, the limitation of the previous research is that it has not gone beyond the connecting link of transport and automobility. As a result, the research will depict how motility describes our existence, survival and identity. In addition, it would also portray how different mobilities could make a positive change in our lives. This will be carried out by identifying such cases from the selected movies. The outcome of the research is going to showcase us multiple ways to challenge

the identity of a homosacer and the process that needs to be undergone in order to increase the accessibility to people who are considered as homosacers. The research also seeks to address the unequal mobilities and immobilities in the selected films to determine the relationship between power and uneven mobilities in connection with the people, resources and existing knowledge. It analyses the differences between the mainland and the inland mobilities and immobilities. This helps in establishing and identifying solutions to problems like the existence of homo sacer and the uneven distribution of mobilities.

In addition, the research aims to use the works of Mimi Sheller, John Urry, Doreen Massey, Georg Simmel, Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, Mikhail Bakhtin, Peter Merriman, Giorgio Agamben, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari as the tools of analysis. Furthermore, the infrastructure of mobility systems and its relational movements will be analysed to find common outcomes from the selected four films. All of these would be analysed using concepts or tools such as network capital, mobility regimes, accessibility, motility, homosacer, mobility justice, rhizome and performativity. Furthermore, there will be a comparison based on the inside and outside concepts in terms of people, space and geography.

The dissertation aims to study the mobilities depicted in the primary sources to identify its relations with the idea of homo sacer and the state of exception while keeping in mind the rhizomatic workings of mobilities in space. In order to realize the envisioned purposes, a total of three chapters have been formed to explore the outcomes. The first

chapter is titled “Space and Mobility”. It focuses on the connection between space and mobility and strives to find the history of spatial turn and mobility turn. It also demonstrates the contributions in mobilities research which aids in the identification and analysis of the relations between different mobilities. The second chapter titled “An Exploration of Uneven Mobilities” offers a profound examination of the multiple movements presented in the primary sources and their intrinsic reasons and relations. The movements are exposed using a holistic approach based on interconnected ideas. Finally, the third chapter explores the formulated relations along the lines of homo sacer and their state of exception. The idea is reflected in its title, “Homo Sacer on Being a State of Exception”. It is followed by a conclusion which records different mobilities, spaces and means by which individuals can be emancipated from the position of being in a state of exception.

# Chapter 1

## Space and Mobility

Space is "a boundless, three-dimensional extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction" (*Britannica*). Space and mobility are interdependent to an extent that one can't exist without another. This chapter examines the relationship between space and mobility. In addition, it also seeks to trace the history from spatial turn to mobility turn. This chapter incorporates the contributions of the pioneers and the influencers of these turns. Subsequently, it also explores the evolution of the new mobilities paradigm and its role and importance in the future.

Henry Lefebvre can be seen as one of the pioneers of the so-called spatial turn. As in those times, space was still not something that was included in social anthropology. Lefebvre through his seminal work, *Le Production de l'espace* which was translated as *The Production of Space* in 1991, provided a much ought to be given platform for space. He defines space as an object or a process through which social interactions occur. Most importantly, he gives emphasis on the idea of production of space. Lefebvre suggests that human beings are the lead cause for the creation of space, social relations, values and practices.

He mentions three essential elements for the production of space in his seminal work. Spatial practices, representations of space and spaces of representation are three mentioned elements in the work. These elements eventually refer to the perceived, conceived and lived space respectively. Furthermore, based on the account of Lefebvre,

"It is reasonable to assume that spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces contribute in different ways to the production of space according to their qualities and attributes, according to the society or mode of production in question, and according to the historical period" (46).

That is why we must admit that production is an irrevocable part of his work concerning space. However, along with the prominence of production, he unknowingly gives way to the arrival of mobility turn. This mainly happens by exploring the circulation or mobility of people, products, power and information in controlling the production of space. It is highly likely for Doreen Massey to be influenced by these thoughts as he studies space as a set of relations. It is an undeniable fact that Lefebvre was of great influence to Massey whose ideologies lead to the formation of his seminal work *Spatial Divisions of Labour*. It became a site of influence as it explored the to-and-fro motion of capital which resulted in the geographical deposition of different forms in each place. It led to the idea of relational analysis of space. This is why Massey sees space as a result of interrelations which is always under construction.

In turn, these ideas have highly influenced John Urry and Derek Gregory's text, *Social Relations and Spatial Structures* where they have rendered geographical and sociological aspects of space. John Urry is especially notable when it comes to mobility turn as he analysed the to-and-fro motion of people within a place, in his book called *The Tourist Gaze* which was published in 1990. He also examines numerous mobilities and their consequences in terms of spatiality through a book he has co-authored with Scott Lash, known as *Economies of Signs and Space* in the year 1994. His emphasis on the movement of people and interrelations in the idealisation of space ultimately lead to the

idea of mobile sociology in his work *Sociology Beyond Society: Mobilities for the Twenty First Century*. This is the point where the spatial turn of Urry became parallel with the mobility turn. The publications in the late '90s provide evidence of it.

For instance, the ideas of Georg Simmel on space would provide evidence for the parallelity with the mobility turn as his seminal work, *Simmel on Culture* was published in 1997. Space is not only being created by the ongoing social interactions but becomes a site which creates such social interactions. George Simmel concurs with this description of space as he contemplates the various aspects of space. According to Simmel, mobility is the last aspect added to space theory in addition to other aspects such as spatial boundaries, fixity, proximity and distance. Fixity and mobility are interconnected as mobility produces fixity of a space. In fact, fixity, boundaries, proximity and exclusivities happen because of mobilities. Therefore, it is not just Urry who gave prominence to mobility during the late 90s. There were many feminist contributions to the currently discussed mobility turn.

Feminist contributions helped to view the political, economic and cultural aspects of society through a multifaceted approach, especially by including spatial forms of race, gender and sexuality. It begins in the 1960s with the emergence of second-wave feminism which critiqued the gendered division of labour and the uneven opportunities to enter the labour market in the United States giving way to studies concerning gender and mobility. By the late 1970s, it became a broader part of feminist critique where it accepts that geography affects the formation of genders and gender relations. As result, a totally big literature was formed on the basis of feminist geography. The developments in the first years of this feminist approach dealt with the regional employment amendments and

the economic policies. The gender relations within a social relationship tend to have different articulations based on changing regions. As a result, there will be no single all-encompassing representation of gender issues as gender relations in different regions have varied and distinct discourses.

Similarly, the impacts run the opposite way as well. This is mainly because gender involves itself with the formation of geography. After the division of labour, geographies of fear and violence can be considered as the second crucial field in feminist erudition. Robin Law concurs with the same ideology in *Beyond 'Women and Transport': Towards New Geographies of Gender and Daily Mobility* where he identifies two parallel thoughts in the field of transport, travel, human and urban geography. The former would be solution-oriented transport research while the latter would be feminist geography which is linked to developments of feminist theories. In the bifurcation of fields, the researchers see a parallel between the relationship between gender and mobility. This led to the parallelism between the idea that movement shapes gender and gender shapes movement. All of this is pointing toward the interdependency of every factor that affects or effects mobility.

Nevertheless, feminist theories can't be considered the sole reason for the foregrounding of mobility. This is mainly because feminists tend to identify mobility within a patriarchal system. However, post the millennium turn, the contributions of geographers, transport or travel researchers and architectural studies in connection with sociology paved the way for the new mobilities turn called as the new mobilities paradigm. Before it, there were many misunderstandings regarding mobility studies, as people tend to see it just as a way to explain different mobilities. However, the new



mobility paradigm was able to change these misconceptions and take it further into a multidimensional field of knowledge.

Eventually, freedom to move became an essential differentiating factor of the contemporary time which is evidently recorded in Zygmunt Bauman's *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. In this work he argues that "Mobility climbs to the rank of the uppermost among coveted values...and the freedom to move, perpetually a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, fast becomes the main stratifying factor of our late-modern or postmodern time" (2). In addition, his other work known as *Liquid Modernity* and John Urry's *Sociology Beyond Societies* helped to register mobility as a key concept in sociology. It is to be noted that these works appeared in the year 2000 and therefore marked a beginning of a new age or paradigm in every sense.

It is worth mentioning that the term new mobilities paradigm was first used by Mimi Sheller and John Urry. The concept first appeared in the journal *Environment and Planning A* as *The New Mobilities Paradigm*. It emphasized the concepts of blurring boundaries, spatial crossing and going beyond the convention social framework by fostering mobility as a foundational pillar. It is quite obvious to conclude that these concepts mentioned here would have been a great influence in the formation of theories of post-humanism. Later, appeared the work of Tim Cresswell known as *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* which exhibited an amalgamation of new paradigm mobilities along with cultural geographical development. Cresswell was not the only contributor who explored this emerging mobilities turn. In fact, Peter Adey and Peter Merriman have contributed to the same field with their works *Aerial Life: Spaces, Mobilities, Affects* and *Mobility, Space and Culture* respectively.

Furthermore, there are numerous opinions about the new mobilities paradigm. One among them is that of an urban political geographer named Andrew E G Jonas. In his article named *Rethinking Mobility at the Urban-Transportation-Geography Nexus*, he claims that "The 'new mobilities paradigm' in social and cultural studies is transforming the ways in which scholars think about space—especially urban space.... Relational thinking about cities disrupts an overly containerized view of urban space and opens up new vistas for examining cities and their wider social relationships, connections, and flows" (Cidell and Prytherch 281).

As a result, it has greatly influenced various fields including relational space, migrations studies, architecture, cultural geography, automobility and transport studies. The new paradigm helped to explain the complex rhizomatic relationship between community and transport. Consequently, it has expanded spatial thinking by connecting it to cultural studies and sociology and not just political geography and economy. This has led to the formation of advanced forms of cultural analysis in spatial thinking and also new ways of applied research on policies and practices. Most importantly, it has helped to understand the cause of uneven spatial domains.

Mimi Sheller explores this very concept and its relations through the idea of mobility justice. She elaborates on the relationships extensively through various works she has published. Some of them were a result of her independent effort while others were through collaboration with theorists like John Urry. Subsequently, they have further developed concepts of mobility via collaborations while including areas like automobility, aero mobility, network capital, social mobilities, and mobile processes or methodologies.

According to the critics, there is always extra emphasis on the northern parts of the globe in comparison with the southern parts. Even though Sheller focuses her study on the southern American part called the Caribbean, it is not enough to represent the southern part of the world. This becomes one of the main reasons why we should touch upon the untouched Global South in terms of mobilities. Since this area has already been expanded by practitioners, it makes it easier to draw upon their instances in a totally distinct social setup. However, they are conscious of the existence of uneven mobilities all around the world. It remains a constant factor in our world as it shapes our motility and dwelling. Tim Cresswell in his article named *Mobilities III: Moving On*, claims how mobility is an inevitable factor in the world through the wordings mentioned here,

People, animals and things continue to move in unexpected and largely unregulated ways. Wherever there is mobility there will always be turbulence. In the three years I have been writing this report, mobilities research has grown in significance...One piece of evidence for this is one of the strongest calls yet for an interdisciplinary approach which clearly and unapologetically centres mobility, becoming and process in the explanation of social and cultural phenomena (719).

This thought process can be substantiated by Peter Merriman's opinion on mobility.

As result, Cresswell mentions what he understood from the works of Merriman as the following, "that mobility may be all that there is and that perhaps it is time to do away with time, space and time-space as unnecessary fictions" (719). Even though this may seem like an exaggerated statement, it has some truth when seen in connection with the recent developments of non-representational theories and materialism. Every entity and

its relation can be explained along with the exploration of its cause and effect through mobility or its lack of mobility which is called immobility. It is moreover clear that, for the overwhelming majority, a mobilities viewpoint has required a more profound hypothetical and strategic change that connotes an advance farthest from an ontological and epistemological strategic sedentarism. In addition, quite a bit of these new improvements had much to do with extensive movements of digital communication and less to do with transportation development. This too separates the mobilities worldview from the first age of the spatial turn.

According to the perspective of Sheller, similar to spatial turn the new mobilities worldview tests the concept of space as a container for social cycles. Hence, brings a dynamic continuous creation of space into social hypotheses across various fields of research. Furthermore, it challenges other disciplinary containers while enlarging the circles of interest, interference and creative induction in geographers, anthropologists, sociologists, designers, architects, scholars of media and many more.

Urry draws on the modes of thinking and research involved in the formation of a new mobilities worldview. The first mode of thinking includes the examination of the spot of movement within the very structure and workings of social organization and its social practices. Based on microspecion, it is an assessment of those foundations and practices which structure an individual's life. In addition, multiplex and rhizomatic mobilities remain a precondition for all. Mobilities rely upon various sorts of material objects including bodies which are racialized, impaired, fragile, matured, gendered, lumpy and migrating. This suggests that movement is uneven and dependent on temporality, spatiality and materiality. In short, mobility theory suggests that social space

can be investigated as a place where bodies participated in the mundane aspects of life and their social practices which might include walking, going to work, cooking food, meeting, travelling, crossing the border etc.

The second approach is with the awakening of a new paradigm where the theory of space explores five distinct modes of mobilities and their intersections which caused the formation of social practices, spatial practices and its infrastructures otherwise mentioned as institutions. According to Urry, these five modes are identified as corporeal movements of people, of objects, imaginative movement of images across print and social media, virtual movement surpassing topographical and social distance using digital media and network availability and communicative movement between people as messages through texts, telephone, fax, letters, smartphones, cell phone, transmit, telegraph etc. Urry mentions them as the "five interdependent mobilities" (*Mobilities* 47). Furthermore, he quotes that "This new paradigm by contrast emphasizes the complex assemblage between these different mobilities that may make and contingently maintain social connections across varied and multiple distances... It focuses upon the interconnections between these five mobilities, as well as the discourses that may prioritize one or other such mobility" (48).

Therefore, there is no existence of unadulterated travel as such because it is situated in coordination with the spatial and social, practices and establishments. The third approach can be seen as a sequence of the former especially because the modes mentioned above make way for research to grasp a variety of distinct movements and spatial practices, along with the relevant mobility regimes. Sheller provides an account of

various mobile methods in her article *From Spatial Turn to Mobilities Turn* in which she claims that

Mobile methods are qualitative, quantitative, visual, and experimental. Some mobile methods that have been recently deployed include walk-alongs, longitudinal studies of migrants, shadowing, virtual ethnographies, mobile positioning studies, visual studies of digital images, studies of stillness and waiting, social network analysis, biosensing of emotions on the move, and various kinds of textual, sound and visual diaries that respondents keep while 'on the move' (7).

These contributions provided new reflections on the socio-political-economic discourse emphasized by the spatial turn. This in turn leads to a more intimate microspecification of the mundane relations in everyday life. However, like many fields of research, there are a few shortcomings to this mode of research. According to Merriman, the limitation of this way of thinking is the lack of historical methodologies in the related research.

Furthermore, with the fourth juncture, there exists a presence of a complicated assemblage of multiple movements and moorings. All mobility systems function with the help of infrastructures that are sedentary in nature. These infrastructures are persistent to many changes that take place over time. As a result, they tend to last longer than necessary. The infrastructures in automobile systems are made to last and are not easy to bring changes into both mobile and immobile route ways and assemblages of the system. For instance, car culture, petrol pumps, vehicles, roads and forms of governance.

Such mobility systems have given way to the formation of uneven developments with the globalisation of transport systems and capitalism. However, it is not true to conclude that the outcomes of the mobility turn are only seen in built places like railways, roads and infrastructures concerning automobility. Thus, the fourth paradigm exhibits its effects on three spaces mentioned by Lefebvre in his work, *The Production of Space*. It includes the spatial practice, the representation of space and the representational space which refers to perceived space, conceived space and lived space respectively.

The fifth paradigm accentuates the process where social practices emerge from unintended outcomes, originating from the manner in which individuals use, enhance and consolidate different framework and their spatialities. The social practices mentioned here refer to the mobilities and immobilities arising out of disasters. As a result, these disaster leads to unequal spatial structures, especially during emergency mobilities. Here we see a merging of complexity theory with a new mobility paradigm. Humans do not have much agency in the formation of chaos and catastrophe. Therefore, we see a less obvious battle of agency between agents and the cycle of spatial structuration, as much is no longer in our grasp.

The sixth approach in the new mobilities worldview engages in the examination of various inter-crossing organizations, relations, streams and courses which are certainly not in fixity. It proposes the urgency to project the dynamic and continuous production of space by the means of mundane social practices into a social hypothesis. Every nook and corner is connected in a rhizomatic manner that there is no possibility of isolation. The idea of network capital is developed in this stage. Network capital can be seen as the capital required for movement. It remains a precondition for motility.

For instance, money, and relevant documents like passport and visa are few among the network capital which is required for movement. They are primarily seen as financial capital. In addition to it, there are social capital and cultural capital as well. The education and the professional standing of a person are qualities accumulated under cultural capital. Whereas, social capital refers to the capability to use social relations from family, work, business, security and bank. Moreover, physical capabilities like apt clothing, shoes, vehicles and health are considered to be a part of network capital.

The above-mentioned capacities are all forms of capital and uneven distribution of the network capital leads to uneven mobility. Racial segregation and aggression, gender inequality, sexual harassment, misogyny, sexual harassment, lack of inclusivity and good transport are all the after-effects of uneven mobility. The numerous categories of network capital produce their discourse in terms of power and hierarchy.

Finally, after all this, one can state that the world has neither become more mobile than any other time in recent memory nor has it attained enlarged freedom of mobility. There is an existence of discourse which suggests mobility as freedom. However, the discourse on coerced mobility counters the discourse of mobility as freedom. It is worthy to note that a person's freedom is always at the cost of blocking another's freedom. There is a saying that one's freedom stops at the beginning of another's nose. In turn. Liberalism inevitably aims for an uneven distribution of freedom of mobility. Mobilities are always followed, controlled, inconsistent and under observation mainly due to the rising power of massive mobile data. As mentioned earlier, mobility can be coerced and therefore it is not accurate to conclude that network capital is directly proportional to mobility. The major cause of it points to the fact that it is often people with high network capital who



coerces mobility out of people. For example, a highly influential person can make a person move towards a particular place or away from it.

Efficiency is always linked with time and cost. It goes the same for distance covered or movement. As a means of increasing efficiency, there is always a tendency to minimize the frictions that happen in movement or while covering distance. The frictions of distance are reduced by the means of innovations in the field of transportation, automobility and communications which makes life easier for humans. David Harvey suggests that "The reduction in the cost and time of movement of commodities, people (labor power), money and information through what Marx called 'the annihilation of space through time' is a basic law of capital accumulation. It has a notable presence within the historical geography of capitalism and underpins the production of uneven geographical development in many ways" (*Spaces of Global Capitalism* 90). It indicates that frictions often happen on large scales. Therefore, scales and mobilities are interconnected and face numerous modes of struggle. Subsequently, these struggles of movement and mobility justice became the key concepts in mobility research.

Currently, fossil fuels are considered one of the cores which facilitate mobility. Fossil fuels have been the major source for four in five of the ongoing energy provisions in the world. The oil products are cheap and convenient to store and use and therefore are globally supplied. In effect, the use of fossil fuels in the twentieth century completely globalised and mobilised the society. These globally supplied sources of energy used in transport and automobility are truly limited. As a result, the prices are in direct proportion with the shortages of energy. Therein, occurs an economic crisis based on the increase in demand and the shortage of supply in the economy for mobility purposes.

Apart from that, the usage of fossil fuels is the main cause of the increase in emissions of carbon dioxide. It has increased rapidly in the twenty-first century, Consequently, numerous climate-oriented global meets have occurred in history to tackle global warming by reducing carbon emissions. This calls for the reduction of the use of transport energy and in turn mobility. It drives to seek new mode of movement which produces fewer carbon emissions. For example, post car, electronic vehicles, walking, sharing transportation, biking, usage of carpool and public transportation, and use of renewable energy are practices that promoted low carbon emission. These practices indicate a large-scale space and time-based rebuilding of mobile lives, systems and mobility regimes.

Moreover, the economic crises and urban crises force us to shift from the traditional ideas of cities, transportation, automobility and mobile lives in itself. The focus shifts towards new innovations and discoveries in technology and new sets of socio-technological frameworks and the mobile social practices that come along with it. Sheller provides examples for such practices and systems which include," new fuel systems for cars, vans, and buses; new materials for constructing 'car' bodies; smart vehicles and 'smart-card' technology; deprivatizing cars through city-wide car-sharing, cooperative car clubs, and smart car-hire schemes; street and neighborhood redesign" (*From Spatial Turn to Mobilities Turn* 10). Consequently, all these practices and innovations lead to the overthrowing of carbon capital by digital capital.

Even in the age of digital capital, there are a series of crises that are created because of exorbitant mobility. One such crisis emanates from a spatial strategy called offshoring. The practices of offshoring are designed to evade regulations, making it hard

to locate and regulate. The new century marks a significant series of crises. Therefore, the new mobilities paradigm needs to undergo a change while grasping the emergencies in the crisis to create a further new mobilities paradigm. John Urry claims this ideology in an interview with Peter Adey and David Bissel where he says, "I think there will develop a 'post-mobilities' mobilities paradigm which will be much more resource based" (*Mobilities, Meetings and Futures* 3). There always exists a need for respatializing the future world with the advancement of a series of crises. This is why mobility researches play an important role in discussing both the present and the future. Therefore, its possibilities are undeniable.

Thus, in essence, according to Sheller, "theorizations of the production of space... and the emergence of relational understanding of space and spatial process... led...[to] the emergence of the new mobilities paradigm around the turn of millennium. However, the mobilities paradigm departs from the earlier tradition... because of... transdisciplinary... focus of the spatial turn" (*From Spatial Turn to Mobilities Turn* 3). Nevertheless, the mobilities paradigm is always a part of the spatial turn. The only distinction that surfaced is that the new mobilities paradigm has facilitated the advancement of the spatial turn. This transpired the recently developed methodologies and interdisciplinary research which have touched upon both applied and artistic fields.

Mobility research never foregrounds mobility by cutting off its connection with the spatial ideologies but rather views it as a rhizomatic concept that relates everything to each other. Thus, it facilitates the process of rebuilding the world for a better future.

## Chapter 2

### An Exploration of Uneven Mobilities

The second chapter focuses on unearthing the interconnected relations of mobile lives, social practices, mobility systems, and regimes. These relations will be uncovered on the basis of the two primary sources upon which the research will take place. The first section is aiming to explore the uneven mobilities included in the primary sources, The identification of uneven mobilities is highly likely to be linked with network capital and mobility justice. According to Mimi Sheller who is considered one of the foundational contributors to interdisciplinary mobility research, “Motility, or the potential for movement, depends on what Elliott and Urry call ‘network capital’ ...Network capital is a combination of capacities to be mobile” (*Mobility Justice* 34).

Thus, the first aim is to find the network capital and its extensions present in the two chosen films. Firstly, in the movie *Churuli*, a primary categorisation of people is attainable. The people can be mainly divided into inlanders and outlanders. The relationship between the former and the latter can shift in an opposite direction at any time based on the perspective of the viewer. For example, the outlanders could be seen as outsiders and the inlanders could be seen as the insiders or the natives. The relationship may vary based on exclusivity and inclusivity. In the film *Churuli*, the entry of two police officers who were in disguise was portrayed as clear outsiders. Yet there is the blurring of boundaries that happens by sharing and living the life of the villagers. Before the merge, both the sections were portrayed to have disparate network capitals. However, with the merge, the network capital of the two policemen became equal to that of the native at one

point. It is at this juncture that we realise that the network capital that they are used to has become invalid in their present condition. In order to achieve accuracy, let's individually examine the network capital of the people in the movie *Churuli*.

There are two policemen named Shajivan and Antony who are the outlanders. Shajivan is a police constable whereas Antony is an Assistant commissioner. Shajivan and Antony are fake names these officers used to go undercover to the village called Churuli. At the beginning of the film, Antony is shown to have an upper hand over Shajivan because of the title and status that comes along with it. However, the moment he crosses the bridge which connects to the village Churuli, his powers seem to be of no use. Moreover, it does not show any effect on the inlanders. Both policemen are humbled by the inlanders with their use of abusive language and their way of living. Thus, his social and cultural capital is of no value once they cross the bridge.

In addition, the film captures a dynamic shift between the position of Antony and Shajivan. Shajivan who usually acts in accordance with Antony openly started taking initiative in leading the way. Shajivan acted as a hero in a situation of gory battle with a wild animal. In the meantime, Antony turned out to be a coward. Thus, the network capital gained by Shajivan in the village was certainly more than what Antony has achieved. As a result, Shajivan started moving freely around the village. Furthermore, he also explored Churuli at night even when no one was around or with him. He saw unnatural and mystical figures moving around the place which was probably unknown to his partner. The movie clearly shows Shajivan moving more than Antony. Therefore, the rate of mobility is high for Shajivan in comparison with Antony. This is possible through amassing network capital. For instance, the killing of the wild animal at night, and also

the act of leading Antony out of the woods when they were lost, gained him the approval of the shooter who now believes, Shajivan is a heroic person who can face and handle things on his own. It is the social and cultural capital which has gained him control.

However, it is unlikely to conclude that Antony never tried to attain control or power. Being submissive, friendly and carefree with natives was his way of surviving in a place not known to him. Nevertheless, not being able to move freely because of an accident in the jungle provided him with a disadvantage over Shajivan in the case of both network capital and mobility. In the beginning, both these men seem to be at disadvantage because of their lack of social capital in the new place that they have arrived. Unlike the natives, they do not know the land so well and do not have many connections with people. Even when they think that they have improved and carry enough network capital like the guns, titles, status and authority to catch the goon that they intend to arrest, they are nothing but lost in the maze of Churuli. Their connections and capitals are an illusion that the natives allow them to have.

The incident where a gun is taken out to scare the native can be noted as an instance to illustrate the power of the material capital in subordinating people. Similarly, the abusive and derogatory words that they use in their language also work as capital which has the power to submit or subordinate people. The abusive language of the inhabitants can be considered as cultural capital. The moment from which the two policemen have crossed the bridge and acquainted with the place and people to the moment they have settled, we have seen an array of swear words and derogatory words used by all the inhabitants, including the newly arrived men, to gain power over each other.

Joy is another character around which the story plays upon as the two police officers have come to the village Churuli to arrest the wanted criminal named Joy Mayiladumkunnu. Joy has committed murder, poaching and sexual abuse of a young boy. In the movie, it is shown that he is paralysed. However, the surreal switch that happened between Shajivan and Joy indicates that Shajivan has done the same things as Joy and there is not much distinction between what they have done. This concept tends to blur the boundaries by merging them as one. Consequently, in terms of mobility, the paths that Joy and Shajivan followed are no different from each other. It suggests that Shajivan has attained the same level of network capital and mobility as Joy. All of this evidence proposes the idea that he has become the criminal whom they have come to arrest for. It also reasons with why Shajivan seems to suddenly be acquainted with the space in Churuli, including the paths, jungle and the surreal alien-like entities he sees at night.

Moreover, with the idea of surrealism, there exists an idea of an enchantress who controls or rather puts the inhabitants in a trance which stops anyone from escaping Churuli whether they stay dead or alive. However, if we see the actions of people as their own will and not something that happens under a spell or coercion, one could explore the unrestrained living of the people. It suggests how uprooted they are from the conventional forms of state control. There are many incidents which showcase these unrestrained acts of living. Each incident depicts the extent to which people are uprooted from conventional thoughts of ethics and morality.

The character who is the owner of the toddy shop goes by numerous names. For some he is Karia and for some, he is Philip or Ittichen. His real name is a mystery. This is the same for all the inhabitants as they go by different names. For instance, Joy

Mayiladumkunnu also goes by the name Biju in Churuli. Similarly, there exists another Joy whose original name is Joy Mayiladumpara but he goes by the name Thankan. It proposes the idea of multiple identities. This is where Antony's dialogues come in with clues on the inhabitant's identity. Antony speaks about not having a name on the voter's list or ration card. This goes the same for Philip because of his numerous names or identity. This can be substantiated by Antony's statement when he mentioned that he recognized Ittichen or Philip from a previous case where he lost his chit fund business and ran away from the problems and their consequences to inhabit Churuli. This suggests that Ittichen and his family have undergone major migration to end up in a place which is so distant from the city that it is even difficult to access. Thus, he is in constant movement. This is not just applicable in his past but also in present.

The toddy shop that he runs also requires constant movement for its smooth functioning. All the raw materials are received from other inhabitants in Churuli. For instance, we see him collecting liquor from a neighbour named Monichan for which he and Shajivan walked through the jungle to reach the toddy shop. In addition, the film also depicts that they do not have a butcher as such however, there exists a shooter from whom Ittichen gets his meat for the shop. As a result, he serves the meat of wild animals which are caught through poaching. Consequently, the main source of income for the shooter is poaching and the existence of the toddy shop. Therefore, the lives of all the inhabitants constitute various mobilities for different purposes. As a result, his whole existence is non-conventional, just like every other inhabitant of that place. The toddy shop is a striking site at which we see this non-conventionality, as it is a cite of



infrastructure which connects all the inhabitants and exercises a form of power. Mainly it is a spot through which most of the information flow happens.

In addition, it becomes a source of income and point of entertainment for all. The irony here is that the same cite becomes a place of worship. The word 'cite' is used to mention the actual site of infrastructure to evoke a form of authority entrusted in the Toddy shop. To illustrate Ittichen converts his toddy shop into a church, in order to conduct his daughter's holy communion. All the locals, including men, women and children participated in the mass. Every one of them wore white clothes except for the two policemen. This scene demarcates between the inlanders and the outlanders. It is especially evident in that particular scene. Subsequently, this sight of infrastructure facilitates various mobilities in the film because everyone intersects at this point.

Simultaneously the bridge depicted in the movie which connects the land called Churuli and the pathway that leads up to it is of great significance. The jeep driver, Sajin plays an important role in its significance. The pathway, roads and bridge that lead up to Churuli are some of the hardest routes to drive. Moreover, no one really knows the exact route except for the insider. Sajin plays the main role in connecting the inhabitants to the outside and also the outlander to the inside. It is of much prominence to note that only he knows how to drive and handle the jeep in extremely dangerous situations, probably because he has got used to it. Mostly because of the scarcity of drivers and inaccessibility, people seldom go to church. The only scope for movement between inside and outside is for work and also is based on the needs of locals which bring up new opportunities. However, the latter does not come that often. The eminent danger in the route and also the lack of accessibility leads to an enormous decline in surveillance.

The idea of surveillance is seen to be brought up by Michel Foucault with his concept of Panopticism. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault refers to Jeremy Bentham's design for a prison named Panopticon. This is the model for the modern state that relies on internalization of values and self-regulation. Bentham's plan built these non-communicative prison cells around a central tower in a way that the guards were able to see the prisoners without any exception while the guards remain invisible to the prisoners. It does not matter if the guards are there or not but what matters is that the prisoners always thought that the guards were there. In this way, the prisoners regulate themselves rather than being controlled by physical violence and coercion. They become their own guards to a great extent. Thus, according to Foucault's reading Panopticon is seen as producing subjects who regulate themselves, rather than be intimidated into conformity by physical force and maltreatment.

The major effect of the Panopticon is to induce a state of consciousness and permanent visibility in a person that assures the automatic functioning of power. As Bentham, Foucault contemplated the same system being adapted to other places to ensure regulation and control. Classes, schools, and exam halls are just some of the examples of the same. Normalization and surveillance constitute two of the main forms of disciplinary power. Surveillance is mostly set up in public places as a means of control. In most cases, the state receives a lot of profit out of it. For example, the two states of India, Karnataka and Kerala have set up cameras in most of the pathways. Consequently, anyone who may not follow the rules on road will be fined according to the regulations. This form of control and surveillance provides crores of profit to each state.

Considering the fictional village Churuli, it is evident that it is located in Kerala. There are two main reasons which can be pointed out in the movie to prove the same. Firstly, because the inhabitants speak Malayalam. Secondly, because of the arrival of two Kerala policemen in search of a notorious criminal. In addition, one of the police officers named Shajivan, speaks of bringing the culprit to the court of Idikood which is located in Kerala.

In a state full of surveillance, it is worthy to note the reasons behind the non-surveillance in the discussed piece of land. Firstly, Churuli is inaccessible to everyone unless and until there is an insider who helps to show the way and cross the bridge. Secondly, the roads, routes and pathways are fully manmade without any intervention from the state. As a result, it is difficult for an outsider to spot the place. Thirdly, these roads are extremely dangerous and the same goes for the bridge. It takes great courage even for Sajin who is a jeep driver to drive through the rocky roads and the dilapidated bridge. Finally, all of these give rise to a lack of accessibility. The government may not put up any surveillance due to the above-mentioned reasons. Furthermore, it could also be because there are fewer families inhabiting Churuli. However, there is one reason that can be induced out of the lack of surveillance and that is the lack of interest in general. Churuli does not have any basic facilities or infrastructures of a village which is under a state. There is no existence of public transport which eventually points towards the lack of accessibility. It does not have a police station, a hospital, or basic infrastructures which may facilitate mobility.

The film portrays that they received electricity only one and half years ago. All of these suggest the lack of interest of the state towards Churuli and people living in that

particular space and therefore has no surveillance at all. It is true that because of this there is less to-and-fro mobility in the margins. However, because of the same lack of surveillance, the inhabitants are able to live a truly unrestrained life. They are able to move and do anything without any restrictions especially because no one cares if anyone lives or not. In a conventional city or a village, it is certainly not the same as such, unstrained movements do not happen. According to the traditional way of thinking one's freedom stop at the point where it inconveniences another person. This happens especially because of surveillance. In such places, people tend to regulate themselves by normalizing regulations. They take it as a normal way of living. The two policemen, their actions and mobilities are restricted at first. They were self-regulating themselves based on their habit of living. Once they realised that there exist no surveillance or regulation in Churuli, they started doing what they considered as heinous and evil. For example, Shajivan ended up poaching a wild animal sexually assaulting a male child and murdering a person named Kodagan. It is to be noted that these were the same type of crimes because of which they came to arrest Joy. Similarly, Antony started to enjoy the unrestrained way of living he gets in Churuli. He is able to enjoy liquor, the meat of wild animals and women who are available for prostitution. In such living conditions, Antony does not want to go back to his job. It is clearly depicted in the scene where he voices out statements of similar content which are full of ecstasy.

Furthermore, there also exists a narration of people being in a trance because of some strange chant of the enchantress. There are numerous scenes in which we see a spiralling of the picture in the mise-en-scene. In addition, people tend to slowly blink their eyes as in affirmation. All of these scenes are marked by a prominent eerie sound

which is played in the background in every one of such scenes. According to the plot explanation generated by *This is Barry*, it is the enchantress which is controlling the minds of the locals and including that of Shajivan, as he has been to Churuli before. This stream of thought is substantiated by the outspoken doubts of the locals. Most of the characters in the film including the jeep driver Sajivan, Pengal Thanka, Ittichen, the grandmother, the drunkard, Kodugan and the betrayer have voiced their suspicions of having seen Shajivan before. Shajivan has always denied such allegations. This ultimately suggests that he has been to Churuli before. However, it is quite difficult to prove that their activities are just an effect of the spell cast by the enchantress as there are two sides to this type of discourse. On one side, it could chiefly be a consequence of the existence of an enchantress. Whereas on the other side it could totally be a defence mechanism to rationalize themselves. They may be attributing their negative actions to another entity to logically justify themselves. If there is an existence of an enchantress, their actions will be not of theirs but of the spell caster. It suggests that the magical realism and the surrealism brought in by the idea of an enchantress is a way of normalizing the reality portrayed in the movie which would be otherwise termed as completely unrealistic according to society. On the flip side, it could also be something that was made up to live an unrestrained life

Additionally, Lijo Pellissery in one of his interviews mentioned the reasons why he portrays unrestrained characters in movies. He openly admits that there exists a lot of violence in his movies including his pioneer's work as he has the liberty to portray what he wants. In reality, such violence may not be appropriate or feasible. However, all of it is possible in films. Therefore, it seems like the enchantress is only an entity that adds to

the existence of such portrayals. Most importantly, by giving power to external factors, the control is being taken from human beings, and therefore, is not making people responsible for their actions. In all history we see changes happening through humans taking charge of their life. Whether it produces negative outcomes or positive outcomes, humans are ultimately the master of their destinies.

This is similar in the movie *Kammattipadam* as well. The characters tend to create their own path no matter how gruesome the situations are. The mobilities that involve in their forward path are highly influenced by the social conditions, space and their own intentions and desires in moving forward. In the case of the movie *Kammattipadam*, the paths of the characters are regulated by marginality and to what extent it exists in the society. Subsequently, this is a movie which explores the marginalized lives of the Dalit community. In addition, it also discloses the functioning of other backward classes and the upper classes. This movie based on the storyline can be seen as a revenge play. It indicates a consistent tug of war between the two sets of people mainly between the marginalized and the upper class. As a result, they tend to take revenge on each other every time to an extent that the ending indicates a cycle of past patterns and events.

A detailed examination of the mobility helps to divide the different characters into two sets. They are the marginalized characters and the privileged characters. The former can be subdivided into yet another set of categories. There exists an undeniable variation between the utterly marginalized clan and the other backward classes. In the modern-day scenario, they are categorized as Scheduled caste or Tribe and other backwards classes respectively. The former is considered to be at the bottom of the strata which is even lower than the other backward classes. Ganga, Balan, Anita and the rest of their family

and brethren are of the Pulaya community which comes under the former category whereas Krishnan and his other friends Abu, Majeed and all of their families belong to the latter category.

In contrast, the land mafia members mostly belong to the Syrian Christians and Hindus with an upper caste title in their names. Surendran who is otherwise called 'Ashan', Mathai who is the right hand of Surendran, and Johnny who is termed as the Liquor lord are all characters who showcase the lives of a privileged community.

It is important to note that some of the characters are predominantly better at driving vehicles than the rest. The characters use varied vehicles for mobility based on their situations and conditions. Similarly, the extent of the marginality in the lives of people also affects their conditions, situations and their means of mobility. In a way, everything is interconnected to each other. The movie in the beginning shows the mafia lords giving Balan a bike to ride so that he could be of good use to them. Subsequently, Balan also gives Ganga, Krishna and all his friends access to the vehicle that he rides whether it is a car, bike or lorry. They have been given equal access to vehicles by Balan at this juncture of life. However, it may not be true to conclude that they have been given equal opportunities, especially with the existence of a split within the lower classes. The movie exhibits the talent of Krishnan in driving different vehicles during varied periods of his life. Nevertheless, the visual of Krishna's first ride demonstrates a significant difference between the two communities. In the scene, Krishnan is noticed to have a knack for riding the bike whereas Ganga seemed to lack in it. It could be one of the reasons why the rest of the visuals tend to exhibit Krishnan as the driver and Ganga as the

passenger or the co-passenger. An initiative to seek the reasons behind such disparity would lead to the unveiling of uneven distribution of network capitals in their lives.

A flair or a knack for any skill is never an innate talent but an acquired talent. This is especially true for riding a bike and driving a car or lorry. Krishnan's flair for riding the bike, in the beginning, suggests that he had some sort of access to vehicles which Ganga did not have. It could just be about being familiar with the usage of cycles or other vehicles. The movie also shows the fact that Krishnan and his family had migrated to Kammattipadam when he was still a child. In addition, he also has extended family in Madras which is revealed when he informs his family about eloping with Anita to his uncle's home in Madras. This can be considered as a social capital which Krishnan has over others. Despite being a person of an Ezhava community, he still has some social and cultural capital which makes him better than Ganga in the movie. Therefore, it is quite obvious to conclude that he is able to take charge of his life because of the same leverage he has as a person of Ezhava caste and the opportunities that he has been bestowed with because of the same. It is certainly more than that of the Dalit community.

Being able to drive or ride is thematically representing the ability to take charge of his life. There is a statement in the movie which points out that Krishnan will not become a better person as long as he is in Kammattipaadam. As a result, he needs to escape from here to have a good life which turned out to be true to an extent and he accepts it. In the same scene, Krishna recalls Anita telling him that a person will turn out to be good if he has an intention to be a good person, no matter where he stays. He also refutes this ideology in the subsequent moment by stating that none of them was able to break loose from their existing life. The retrospection upon which he shed some light



tends to point that either the space or the people in their life have never let him mend his ways and be a better person. The main point here is that Krishnan had an option to leave while the others did not have one.

Therefore, it is rational to point out the fact that Krishnan is a hero because of the advantages he has over others. The advantages mentioned in here composite the network capital that includes social capital, cultural capital, financial capital and any other physical capital. Krishnan's homestead is different from that of Ganga. The roads to Krishnan's house are wider than that of Ganga. Similarly, Krishnan also has more land around his home that can be considered as his own. Ganga lives in a slum-like area. Anita, the cousin of Ganga also lives in the same compound as Ganga but in a different house which looks almost similar to Ganga's in terms of its structure.

Moreover, the people who were forced to sell their land to the land mafia were of Pulaya community. They are undoubtedly the brethren of Ganga. They can be considered to be an extended family of Balan and Ganga. Thus, it was never Krishnan's relatives who were forced to evacuate their land. Krishnan is the inevitable hero in this movie and the director consciously has attached with him qualities that would emancipate him into the hero. For example, his looks, skin colour, caste, driving skills, survival skills and sensitivity towards the feminine make him the perfect marginalized hero. However, it is to be noted that to avail all of these advantages, the director created the hero by making Krishna a tad bit superior to the other main protagonists since birth. Furthermore, only by putting him in a slightly upper caste can he attain the mobilities and the network which will provide him with the qualities of a hero.

The most striking aspect in the movie which provides for such disparity is the language difference between Krishna and the likes of Ganga. Ganga and his brother use a lot of curse words and swear words in their day-to-day life. The abusive language used in here is also a means of subordinating the other. The evidence in the movie Churuli also proves the same. Additionally, the movie showcases multiple pieces of evidence for abusive language being a means of subordination. For instance, every time there is a fight scene between Balan and Jose or any member of the Porkkumkoodu gang, Balan uses an array of swear words and cuss words to show off his power and subordinate them. One may think that every time Balan uses such bad words, he may be doing it to provoke the opposition. However, he uses it to reassure himself that the opposition is nothing but the cuss words that he tends to label them with, which in turn assures his superiority over others. This is exactly why Balan uses such words against anyone who criticizes him or opposes him in general.

Similarly, Ganga also uses verbally abusive language as a measure to lower the status of the opposition and to submit them. Being a member of Pulaya community and as Balan's brother, Ganga talks and performs in the same manner as everyone else and maybe even a bit worse. Their language for them is a means of emancipation, however from the outside it shows a lack of culture. The latter point of view is substantiated through the language used by Balan's mother when she saw her newly brought daughter-in-law in front of her house. The language and the contents mentioned by his mother are similar to what Krishnan's sister, Savita spoke about Anita, who is of Pulaya community. Both the women spoke along the line of women reducing their children or brother by showing their body parts. The caste of Anita and Rosamma are different yet get the same

treatment as the othered women. Thus, women are always an entity which is doubly oppressed. Their lack of mobility clearly expositions this fact. No matter what their positions are in society, they are never treated the same. They do not receive the same mobilities or network capital as their male counterparts. As a result, they are not fully in charge of their lives. Their lives and decisions always get varied based on their family and loved ones, until they are financially independent. This is the realization that Anita's life put forwards in this movie.

There is one person who does not seem to take charge of his life and that is Ganga. This view is substantiated by a lack of ability to lead any mobilities. Ganga is always in the passenger seat and along with that he never seems to attain the driving skills whether the vehicle is a four-wheeler or a two-wheeler. Even in the climax, Ganga is not shown to be driving any vehicle. This lack has strongly affected his mobility and his survival. It is only with the help of Krishnan that Ganga is able to migrate or escape whenever he is in trouble. Therefore, the only way he challenged the unjust system all by himself is through violence alone. As a consequence of his identity as a member Pulaya community or as an extremely marginalized person, he tends to have way less network capital than Krishnan. This is the main reason why he is always looked down by others, especially when he is compared with Krishnan. Ganga has an extremely dark skin colour which also represents the extremes of marginality. The director used the stereotypical dark-skinned people for casting to express this ideology. In addition, Ganga was always termed as the one who does not deserve Anita.

Ganga's lack of sensitivity is the crucial aspect which made everyone reject the idea of Anita and Ganga as a couple. The lack of sensitivity is caused by his family.

Firstly, his family only have one female in it, that is his mother. As women are doubly oppressed it is inevitable for Ganga to grow up, learning the same pattern that is shown in the family. Secondly, there exists Anita's family which provides an example of how women were treated in their family. The fact that Anita is mostly silent and obedient in front of her family exposes extreme patriarchy because of which they are not even able to express their opinions freely. However, in comparison with Anita, Savitri who is Krishnan's sister seems to have no problem voicing her opinions to anyone. It is evident from the taunts she gives to his brother and Anita. Thus, Krishnan has been brought up in a family where he believes everyone has a right to express their thoughts freely. Ganga has probably not seen such attitudes in his family and that may be the reason for his condescending behaviour towards Anita. Additionally, woman emancipation is not a strong suit here mainly because the director focuses on portraying the history that presupposes the formation of Ernakulam city.

In *Kammatipaadam*, Ganga lacks the cultural capital which provides him with the advantage that makes him survive. In other words, because of his lack of capabilities, he has been seen as a waste. This unspoken idea becomes a clear echo in the ending when Surendran who is seen as the master speaks out that "The city does not need Ganga. He is only a waste...he is a mad dog" (Ravi 02:45:11- 02:45:30). The idea of Ganga being less than Krishnan is unconsciously proposed by Krishnan when he accepts that they are stray dogs. However, the disparity is evident as Krishnan who is played by Dulquer Salman uses a different word of choice to unify everyone. Here, 'stray dogs' is the word used by Krishnan whereas Surendran uses the word, 'mad dog'. Thus, by accepting the fact that Krishnan and his friends are similar to stray dogs, he unconsciously accepts the idea that

Ganga is a mad dog along with being a stray dog. In addition, Krishnan states that “Stray dogs don’t have owners but they care for each other. We stand together even in death” (02:45:41- 02:45:49). This statement provides evidence as to why he killed Surendran. Thus, the film caters more for the bond of friendship than romantic love despite the lack of the other side.

The relationship between Anita and Krishnan did not last because of the lack of movement toward each other as it was not always the same as it was in the beginning. Moreover, from a particular point onwards, Krishnan’s mobility towards both Anita and Ganga became close to zero. In the beginning, the movement toward Anita was slightly more than usual. Later, Anita also reciprocates his feelings by coming toward Krishnan in moments of his need. At a particular juncture, their mobility toward each other was almost proportional. However, the lack of mobility toward each other certainly ruined their relationship.

The straining of Krishnan’s relationship with his family can also be traced to incidents and mobilities that happened after his release from jail. Despite being stuck in jail for a considerable amount of time, Ganga’s movement toward Krishnan certainly fixed their friendship. Similarly, it is also Krishnan’s arrival at Kammattipaadam in search of Ganga which disclosed the true value of friendship between them. Nonetheless, it is important to note that Krishnan’s interference is caused by Ganga’s initiative to network with him. Likewise, an acquisition of a new pathway tends to isolate the person from the rest of the networks. For example, Krishnan left his father alone and left with Ganga as he was relieved from jail. Furthermore, he reached his family home only after catching up with all his friends. There already exists an idea within the family that his

friendships are spoiling his life. Consequently, the late arrival along with the pre-existent prejudice only created more rift between Krishnan and his family. This rift is noticeable as the movie exposes only a little movement among the family members towards each other.

Krishnan spends most of his time with his friends and moves along with them. Balan posits the figure of an elder brother to him and all his friends including Abu, Majeed and Ganga. However, Balan is originally the elder brother of Ganga. Therefore, Balan acquires all the attributes that Ganga has which include his language, skin colour, family and caste. Unlike Ganga, Balan was known to be a man of honour after his death. It was admitted by the man who unknowingly aided in the murder of Balan. The reason behind the differences in opinions is because of the courage Balan showcased in making himself a self-made man. In addition, his added years of experience and mobilities aided in the formation of such a strong man. Nevertheless, it turned into an illusion. Like many, he was used as a puppet by the upper-class land mafia for their own gains and finally threw him out when he became an obstacle. Up until the end, Balan had more network capital than Ganga which aided in taking charge of his own life.

Balan and Ganga had a similar ending mainly because of their marginality. Johnny looked down on Balan to the extent that he thought its absolutely fine to kill Balan as revenge for the slap Balan gave him. Meanwhile, Johnny would have hesitated to do the same if the person in opposition was of an upper-class origin. Similarly, Surendran also considered Ganga as nothing but a mad dog who is supposed to be killed if it enters the house. The point is that both Johnny and Surendran did not provide them with the status of a human because of their marginality. All of the details mentioned are

revealed through the movements of each character whether it be mobility towards a place of work or rest. For instance, the mobility of the characters towards their homes helped in creating a clear picture of the difference all these characters had in terms of their capabilities, capitals and existence.

The movie exhibits itself through a form of fragmentation. The director employs media res to capture the attention of the audience and shows a consistent series of revenge. First of all, the marginalised characters undergo a cycle of revenge and migration. The majority has the tendency to go into hiding whenever any physical assault or violence occurs. Additionally, almost in every case the injured or the friends of the injured come back to take revenge. The beginning itself exposes violence against the weak. Later as a form of revenge Balan attacked Jose who is a member of the Porkkumkoodu gang for which he receives a jail sentence. Balan always ends up in a fight against Porkkumkoodu gang members along with the recently mentioned group of friends including Krishnan, Ganga, Abu and Majeed. The group of friends always helped Balan whether the fight takes place in a cinema theatre or a market. Balan also makes himself available for these friends whenever they are involved in any problems or fights without any hesitation.

Later as revenge for the slap, Johnny killed Balan. Following this incident, the above-mentioned group of friends from Kammattipaadam took revenge upon Johnny and in the process, they lost Abu. Subsequently, everyone dispersed to live their own lives until Johnny's brother swore to take revenge for his brother. Later, Ganga provoked Surendran as a means to escape from Johnny's brother. However, he ended up being

killed by Surendran out of rage. Lastly, Krishnan had to trace and follow the mobilities Ganga had taken up until his death to find the culprit and take revenge.

After taking revenge, Krishnan mentions going into hiding and elaborates on the matter of hiding in a way that implicates a never-ending cycle. Therefore, the epilogue Krishnan provides at the end is really meaningful as he says, “We are going to hide, ok? Count out loud. Let’s hide in the dark. Come here, this is a good spot. We have time. Let’s see if he comes here. He will find us wherever we may hide but he won’t come into the dark. He is afraid of the dark. He won’t look here, so let’s be at peace. If you are scared hum a song” (02:46:52- 02:47:25).

The last mise-en-scene in the movie is that of Krishnan moving in a vehicle alongside Majeed. The final scene of the movie and the mobilities through which Krishnan and Ganga passed have a specific prominence in the detailed analysis of the film. The tracing of the mobilities and the continuous series of revenge shows the presence of a cycle in the story. The cycle is similar to the continuous projected image of a circular motion in the movie *Churuli*. The figures given below are the projected images of a circular cycle in the movie.





Fig. 1. Still from Pellissery, *Churuli* (01:25:55).



Fig. 2. A Still of the Space from Pellissery, *Churuli* (01:48:25).

The first image (Fig. 1) is a thematic representation of the ongoing cycle whereas the second image (Fig. 2) displays the bird's view of the village Churuli which in itself suggests the role of the space in the existence of the repetitive cycles. The

structure of the space suggests that there is no escape from the cycle or the space considered as Churuli. Here, the jeep is moving in a circular direction along with Shajivan, Joy and Antony and even the final mise en scene displays a spiral motion of the jeep along with the people in it. Pellissery has provided multiple visually moving images to portray the concept of the never-ending cycle. Similarly, in *Kammattipaadam* the cycle of mobilities shown in the movie highly resonates with the figures as it also portrays a never-ending cycle of hiding. The tracing of these mobilities would inspire the formation of a widening gyre which is full of repetitions in a circular motion. Coincidentally, the image that the movie *Churuli* displays regularly is nothing but a gyre. The image of the gyre can be seen below.



Fig. 3. Mann, Neil. The Structure of a Gyre. 17 Oct. 2004. Yeats Vision.

<https://www.yeatsvision.com/Geometry.html>.

The above-mentioned figure (Fig. 3) is a three-dimensional view of both fig. 1 and fig. 2. It suggests a cycle of repetitions. This image resonates with the metaphor used by W. B. Yeats called the widening gyre. According to the metaphor, history is always

repeated and therefore cyclical in nature. With each cycle, the circles get widened which suggests that it may lose control as it goes wider. It suggests that the repetitions are consistent in nature. However, the coordinates may be different. This proposes the idea that history may repeat itself but it won't repeat the exact same way as there exist some differences in variables. For example, in the fight between Surendran and Ganga, it was the former who killed the latter. Later it was Krishnan who killed Surendran that too at the exact same site at which Ganga was killed. The next scene portrayed in the movie is about the mobility toward hiding. Here, there exists a never-ending cycle of revenge and hiding. With each cycle, the patterns may not change drastically however the variables tend to differ. That is exactly why the variables tend to die differently and seek a different hiding place despite the cycle of revenge. For example, the places to which Krishna went to hide were different places with few similarities including the existence of water to separate the land from mainstream areas.

Hence, the differences are considered to be variables. In the last scene, as Krishna calls for hiding, he talks about the fears of the people who are after them. He is speaking collectively here to represent the marginalized people. It indicates a repetition where the process of hiding has happened numerous times and each time they were not caught as they were in the dark. The darkness in here could mean invisibility and inaccessibility. After all, they were only caught when they were out of their hiding place. It is similar to the space of Churuli as it is also a land which is inaccessible without the help of the insiders. Each inhabitant living in Churuli had come there as a part of the migration. Most of them shifted to Churuli because of one or more reasons for hiding. For example, Phillip's migration had everything to do with the failure of his business and accumulated

debt. He was no longer welcomed in his land. Such factors are similar in both *Churuli* and *Kammatipadam*. Thus, the variables or characters are always in movement creating a cycle of mobility which forms a gyre which is circular and repetitive in nature.

## Chapter 3

### Homo Sacer on Being an Exception

The major hardships faced in the attainment of human freedom, needs and rights are first manifested through a place of deprivation. A place of deprivation gives way to desperation and only through desperation can a person be made to give up on their rights, ideals and needs. In times of desperate conditions, people tend to hold on to lives as their most valuable assets. The state propagates the idea of emergencies by using the concept of life as leverage. In the earlier days, emergencies were declared as a means to protect people during the war. However, in the modern world, emergencies or a state of exception is put into practice at the instance of any threat that may be formed against the nation. Such emergencies are even made to last for years. Here, the government in the state is stripping off the rights of the people as means to protect their life.

Most of the constitutions put forwards the right to be alive as the major right of a person. In such cases of exception, their life is being reduced to bare life. Agamben finds this practice to be very dangerous as the people could receive continuous abuse if left alone in the state of exception without any regulation or if they are left alone with a bare life. Hannah Arendt suggests that “We became aware of the existence of a right to have rights and a right to belong to some kind of organized community, only when millions of people emerged who had lost and could not regain these rights because of the new global political situation...the right to have rights, or the right of every individual to belong to humanity, should be guaranteed by humanity itself” (*The Origins of Totalitarianism* 296-298). The ‘global political situation’ in here refers to a state of exception. However, in

this state, the assurance of rights is being guaranteed by humanity. The people in such states are being called homo sacer.

The idea of homo sacer is first mentioned in the roman law which was later studied by Giorgio Agamben and produced *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. This work extensively explores the concept of homo sacer. The work provides a definition of the homo sacer based on the roman law which suggests that

The sacred man is the one whom the people have judged on account of a crime. It is not permitted to sacrifice this man, yet he who kills him will not be condemned for homicide; in the first tribunitian law, in fact, it is noted that 'if someone kills the one who is sacred according to the plebiscite, it will not be considered homicide.' This is why it is customary for a bad or impure man to be called sacred. (71)

Thus, such lives are neither under the protection of human law nor divine law and therefore always under survival mode. The life of such is considered sacred based on two rational thoughts. The first rational thought suggests the ambivalence in the concept of something being considered as sacred or holy. The ambivalence suggests that the holy entity can be sacred and terrifying at the same time.

For instance, in Churuli, Ittichen speaks about the goddess who is named as Theechamundi visiting her sister Mary in the church. This is based on the myth that the goddess and Mother Mary are sisters and visit each other often. Theechamundi can be seen as the goddess of the forest who throws fire. Here, someone who is supposed to be holy would also seem as terrifying at that same moment. There also exists another

example which would explain sacred being as holy and filthy at the same time. It indicates the transformation of Ittichen's Toddy shop into a place of worship commonly termed as the church. A church is considered as a sacred place where God resides. Yet the filthiest place in Churuli was transformed into a place of worship.

The second idea of sacred suggests that his life is in the hands of God as he is excluded from the profane sphere which is secular in nature. Nevertheless, the irony is that he is also not accepted by Gods. As the definition suggests, a homo sacer can be murdered by anyone and yet cannot be given as a sacrifice and therefore has no right to his life. It shows the double exclusion that is of human law and divine law. Thus, a homo sacer is neither accepted by the divine nor the humans and their life is reduced to bare life.

For example, in Churuli, there are instances which visually indicate corpses being buried without any sentiments. The drunkard mentions about the smell of the buried corpses, on his way toward Shajivan. In addition, it also shows a random scene of a person being left dead near the water. Shajivan's mobilities at night definitely gave the audience insight into the murder he committed. Yet he was very indifferent towards it and adamantly denied any allegations that came his way and acted as if he never left the Toddy shop. In addition, the villagers did not seem to care much about the deaths that happened in Churuli. It suggests that the victims were *homines sacri* who neither have the protection of human law nor divine law. In fact, everyone in that space is in a state of exception that no one would care if some dies or is murdered.

To demonstrate further Agamben traces two different ideas of life described by the ancient Greeks known as *Zoe* and *Bios*. The *zoe* represents the bare life or the fact

that something is alive. Whereas, bios refers to the way of life where it takes a certain distinguishable form. For example, academic life and modern life.

However, it is nearly impossible to separate zoe from bios. This is mainly because even bare life can be made into a specific form of life. For example, the way of living in Churuli is a bare life which has been made into a specific form of life. The way of living or rather the performance of the villagers outside the boundary of Churuli is different from the way they behave once they are inside. Thus, the inside life can be seen as the zoe and the other form as the bios. Now in the movie Churuli, some of them do act decently both inside and outside Churuli at certain points of their life. This is especially true for Thankan and Ittichen. As a result, it would be nearly impossible to find the separation, If the outside view and the differences in behaviours that happens with it were not revealed in the movies. Nevertheless, the fact that their zoe is separable from their bios shows that they are at risk of being reduced to a homo sacer. They tend to have separate bios and zoe because of the risk of being lowered to bare life. A bare life indicates that they are always in a survival mode. Hence, is always at the risk of being in a state of exception.

The most dangerous aspect of bare life is the submission to the sovereign. As mentioned earlier, bare life mainly concentrates on survival. In the case of survival what matters most is being alive. Such a situation is really problematic according to Agamben, as people are more prone to any type of injustice and harm, they would not mind continuing to be in a state of exception as long as they are able to live or survive. For example, in *Kammattipaadam* when Balan and his group of friends forcefully evacuated his brethren out of their only land, their life was turned into a state of exception. When



they threatened people by bringing in the lorry to crush everything that was in their way, his brethren and their family had no way out other than to sell their land as demanded and to leave the place. The only thing that mattered to them was to be alive. Thus, they are always threatened against being a homo sacer or in a state exception.

State of exception or state of emergencies in the earlier days used to hand over power or authority to a military institution. For example, the history which happened in Germany during the 1930s used the same structure of sovereignty employed by the authority to put the Jews in a state exception.

However, even if the military has taken a back seat in the democratic world, the relevance of homo sacer in our society has not yet changed. In fact, the only difference is that the authority or power has been transferred to a legal and political jurisdiction. It has a higher risk of being normalized in the present condition. When the state suggests emergencies, it becomes nothing but a mockery of legality. According to the legal system, the citizens have rights and freedom. However, when a legal system approves the state of exception as legal power, it is basically nullifying all the rights in the constitution. When a state of exception is legally activated, it is also destroying the existence of the legal system. Consequently, it is contradicting or rather paradoxical in nature. The longer such situations last, the longer they will threaten humanity and because of it, there is a higher risk of abuse and control over the people. In the modern world, there is a higher risk of emergencies happening for a longer period of time to create peace but the question is to who the peace is being attributed.

According to Carl Schmitt, the decision of who gets to be in a state of exception is vested on a person of authority. In contrast, Agamben believes that authority is passed on

to a single body. The body here refers to a state or a government. They have multiple infrastructures and mobilities which help in its functioning. It is certainly not an entity. The authority passes through multiple mobilities of people to and from, mobile and immobile entities and infrastructure. The power is often vested upon people and it comes into action through performativity. For example, the two police officers in the movie *Churuli* are individuals upon which state powers are vested. Thus, in a single body, there are multiple participants who are a part of it.

Additionally, the police officers in the movie *Kammattipaadam* also have such authority vested upon them. They have the power to turn one into a state of exception. For example, Krishnan was arrested at night because of random suspicious situations. Later, he was left alone as there was not much evidence of anything illegal happening in their precinct. This incident focuses on the fact that people like Krishnan who are in a marginalized position can always be looked through the eyes of suspicion and arrested for no reason at all. It suggests that even though he is a citizen of India and a part of the state, he will still be considered to be an exception.

In society, there are many similar communities that are a part of India and yet seen as an exception. This puts the people of the Dalit community in a position where they are all *homines sacri* mainly because they are not being accepted in their own native land. They are not desired on their own land. Ganga being mentioned as a waste to the city is just a fraction of the total moments in which such ideas were openly revealed in the movie.

Thus, in both the movies the state passes on its authority through the police officers in a basic level. As a result, the declaration of the state of exception will always

be authoritarian. There requires an existence of performativity to pass on the state authority, for which a single body which may contain numerous participants including judge and police officers are needed. John L. Austin forwards the idea of the performativity of legal utterances through his theory of Speech act. He uses the example of the marriage ceremony to exemplify the idea of performativity. When the phrase, 'I pronounce you as husband and wife' is put into action through the words of a marriage officiant, it evokes performativity. The words pronounced by the marriage officiant became a performative act because he or she has been vested with the power to officiate a marriage. According to Judith Butler,

Performatives acts are forms authoritative speech: most performatives, for instance, are statements that in the uttering, also perform a certain action and exercise a binding power...performatives tend to include legal sentences, baptism, inaugurations, declarations of ownership statements which not only perform an action, but confer a binding power on the action performed. (*Bodies That Matter* 225)

Every performance cannot induce performativity without a force of authority. The force of authority is gathered through repetitions, reiterations and citations of an authoritative practice. This is exactly why the two police officers Shajivan and Antony try to arrest Joy Mayiladumkunnu and bring him to the court of Idikkoodu. When Shajivan is uttering those words, he is exercising the power that is vested on him to make Joy into a homo sacer. Similarly, Krishnan is also turned into a homo sacer using the same method.

Nonetheless, there is something very unique between the two films. It suggests that a person can never be always in a state of exception. For example, the two police officers are surrounded by the men of Churuli and are in a way forced to submit for a while. Thus, the role just got reversed as the sovereignty is always with the people. The state forces a particular way of living out of the citizens and in such case the state is the sovereign.

However, when a group of people or a body force another set of people to follow a particular way of life, the people who are part of the body are considered sovereign. In Churuli, we see the two police officers incorporating a particular way of living in order to adjust and survive in Churuli, Thus, the representatives of the state are put into a state exception. But it does not mean that the people of Churuli are sovereign all the time. They are still considered as beings who could be killed anytime and no one would consider it to be a murder, in Churuli in fact the villagers do not even care. The murder of Kodugan is an example of that. Hence, in a way the role reversal is a means of resistance to the state of exception.

However, such resistance has to follow a pre-condition without which the resistance to the state of exception is not possible. In Churuli, all the villagers are people, who migrated to Churuli, mainly because they are no longer accepted by their native lands. In addition, the land to which they migrate, should be inaccessible and separated from the mainstream land. The analysis of the spaces into which Krishnan goes into hiding also has similar features. Both of the places to which he migrated were separated by water from the main city. In Bombay, the area in which he resided was part of a slum, which was separated from the city or his place of work by water. In addition, the place in

which Krishnan and Ganga went in for hiding was also surrounded by water. The existence of water plays a major role here because no law can be enforced on water or sea. All these factors aid in challenging the authority which puts them in a state of exception.

In *Kammattipaadam*, Krishna speaks about hiding in the dark. One point that he mentions here is the authority's inability to find them in the dark as they are scared of it. Here, it is important to ponder upon the reason behind their fear. Surprisingly, the movie provides an answer to it. The main reason behind the fear is the inability to identify home sacers because in the dark there would be no differences between both sides. When both sides are in the dark at the same time, their boundaries get blurred and would cease to have any differences. As a result, they will also be in a state of exception. The movie *Churuli* successfully portrays this fact by blurring the boundaries between the criminal and the police officer. The last surrealistic shift between Shajivan and Biju proves to be a representative example of the same.

The mobilities that these people undergo are collectively called as subversive mobilities. Subversive mobilities provide a form of resistance to mainstream mobility regimes and hence challenge them. A mainstream mobility regime is part of the bios. The mainstream mobility regimes follow the conventional way of living. It follows an exclusive inclusion whereas the state of exception follows an exclusive inclusion. Exclusive inclusion indicates a position where only a selected group is accepted, for instance, an elite group. Whereas an inclusive exclusion implies that accessibility is available to anyone who is not in a state of exception. For example, in *Kammattipaadam*, Balan is not welcomed in places where his master is welcomed despite being a part of

their business. In short, an inclusive exclusion implies that everyone is included or given access, however, a few among them are excluded while being given accessibility. For example, the men often tend to gather at the Toddy shop in Churuli. However, especially in the beginning, the two police officers were excluded from gaining information about the inhabitants. In addition, they were subordinated by the villagers with their behaviour which includes their abusive language. In both cases, some are included while others are excluded the only difference is the way in which it is portrayed.

Hence there are two subversive mobilities which are identified here. The mobilities include the migration to Churuli and migratory mobilities as a means of escape in *Kammattipaadam*. In a way, both of these subversive mobilities are a means of escape from a place which no longer wants them because they cease to be protected in their native land.

In any case, the sovereignty with which the police officer came to Churuli did not work out in that particular space because of its invisibility or darkness but not in the literal sense. The darkness is a thematic representation of inaccessibility. The villagers or the inhabitants can enter but cannot exit the village without the inhabitant's help. The space in *Churuli* has major prominence because of its gyre-like structure and the bridge. In Churuli, the bridge acts like a boundary. Boundaries are an undeniable part of society as it facilitates a way to assert control. In order to provide validity to the law in a society, it is important for that society to have a boundary. Different places have different laws and different ways of living. In order to exist on land, one may have to follow the laws of the land. Churuli also has a boundary which is marked through the existence of a bridge.

The bridge clearly acts as a third space. A third space is a space in between two contrasting spaces. It acts as a hybrid space or the in-between space which bridges the outside world to Churuli. The third space is particularly dangerous because of its structure. This is an ambivalent space where everyone would want to escape as soon as possible.

The state of exception is always rendered through the performative acts. For example, the violence and abusive language used by the inhabitants of Churuli is a means of submitting the other. Here, the performance becomes performativity because of the effect that it has on the listener and that is submission. It was also a performance in a literal sense because the villagers already knew about the police officers and the inhabitants were acting as if they did not know. Their performance turned into performativity because of the repetition of social practices which in turn provided them with authority.

There is a form of reaffirmation that happens with performativity. In the climax scene, Biju suggests Churuli as a paradise. Furthermore, he mentions the story of the Monk and the Madan, and the story of the policemen who came to catch him.

As the story unfolds, Biju mentions about

the duo settled, eating and drinking their fill. They put on fat eating wild meat and drinking arrack! What's lacking here, sir? There are enough whores, need more? We have other options too, right? Want to kill someone. You can do that too. No question asked. Isn't this paradise, sir? Is there anyone who has not killed or raped at least in their mind?... Finally, we asked them: who the hell are you? He began

to recall then, the Monk, er, the policeman decides to catch me! (Pellissery  
01:46:25-01:47:21)

These dialogues suggest that the police officers had already committed the crimes that Joy is infamous for. In fact, at this point, there is not much difference between the police officer and the criminal as both are criminals. Thus, there is a distinct blurring of boundaries. The blurring of boundaries points out the inability to assert any form of control. By the blurring of the boundaries, the distinction between homo sacer and the body of authority is nullified which leads to the world of posthumanism.

This blurring of boundaries is also a means to challenge the idea of homo sacer and the state of exception which clearly mentions the role of separation of bios and zoe in the formation of the state of exception. These exceptions are mostly grounded on binaries and the blurring of such boundaries between them completely dismantles the idea of the binary system and in turn the separation of zoe and bios.

It is to be noted that performativity is the means through which the homines sacri tend to challenge the system of authority and the state of exception. However, migration to an inaccessible or dark place as referred to in *Kammattipaadam* is the precondition for performativity to work as a means of resistance to the idea of exception.

The relations of performativity are said to be rhizomatic because of their arbitrary nature. According to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, “The rhizome includes the best and the worst... any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order... There are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. There



are only lines” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 7,8) Based on this concept every movement, mobility or immobility is connected to each other. The connections are similar to lines which link everything to each other. For example, subversive mobility remains a precondition for performativity to work as a means of emancipation. The mobilities affect not only the accessibility but also their existence and identity. This conclusion is an example of rhizomatic relation. In addition, “a rhizome, increase your territory by deterritorialization” (11). This technique aids in forming connections between the two primary sources including *Kammattipaadam* and *Churuli*. Thus, it facilitates the production of ideas relating to the existence of individuals in the sources.

Violence and abusive language act as a common means by which performativity is practised. For example, Krishnan who is a homo sacer uses violence to destroy the land mafia boss Surendran. *Kammattipaadam* also shows that it is through negative performativity, marginalized people like Krishnan are able to threaten or challenge the system which favours the upper class. From both the movies, it can be concluded that violence, verbal abuse and negative performativity is the only way to challenge sovereignty while being inside the system. Homines sacri or the marginalized people are fighting the battle while being inside the system. As a result, they have used the same unfair and unjust means to overpower a system which terms them as an exception. Most importantly subversive mobilities are always involved in this process and without which the resistance will not be able to become a success.

In *Churuli*, geography plays a huge role in moulding the people. However, it cannot be proven as the only factor because of the overlapping of the two cultures. As we mentioned earlier, it is difficult to separate bare life from their multiple forms of life due

to which they seem to overlap. The food and especially the raw materials used are highly dependent on the space in which they live. For instance, Ittichen uses the meat of wild animals to cook up dishes that go with liquor in the toddy shop. He is able to make use of the wild meat only because of its unregulated availability. As most of their mobilities are restricted to the boundaries of the Churuli, they have no other source of income.

However, the cuisine is a part of pre-existent culture and heritage. It is the practices and beliefs that they have brought from their previous forms of living. They have brought in their cuisine, social practices and religion as they moved into Churuli.

Additionally, whenever they are in need, they bring along their mainstream customs and social practices to which they are presumably faithful. The perfect example would be the mass that they conducted. However, the geographical feature and aspects of Churuli also aid in the formation of new social practices while sustaining some of the pre-existent forms of social practices. As a result, the inhabitant's way of living suggests an amalgamation of the old and new practices. This would suffice as their reasoning behind turning the toddy shop into a church for performing the mass. Therefore, we can certainly prove that these inhabitants are part of the system and yet in a position of exclusion. This is what Agamben suggests as the included exclusion.

In Churuli, people have multiple names and identities. For some, Ittichen is Phillip and for others he is Karia. The same goes for all the characters present in it. For example, Thankan goes by the name Joy Mayiladumpara based on his Id. Joy Mayiladankunnu is also known by his name Biju. All of this evidence proves that they do not have a fixed identity. In addition, Antony the police officer considers the criminals hiding in Churuli to have no name on the voter's Id or on the ration card. This is partially

true as most of them came into Churuli as a part of migration in order to escape from the law or the state. As a result, the new identity that they have created by living in Churuli may not be recorded by the system. It leads to the idea that their existence does not provide any meaning. Based on the perception of Rasmus Ugit, “the sacred life is a life that is being given up from the point of view of human action; it is being left to itself; it is placed in the realm beyond any possible use” (*Giorgio Agamben* 48).

Despite being given up by human and divine law, they are still existing on the surface of the earth running among the people. In any case, they are dead to the world despite being alive. Ittichen, Kodugan, Veerapan and Ganga transpire to be known as examples of such existence. Churuli is a carnival space. According to Bakhtin,

Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part. Such is the essence of carnival, vividly felt by all its participants. (*Rabelais and His World* 7)

The inhabitants and the recent additions in the space of Churuli accept their way of living with great joy. Antony, the police officer who is comparatively new to the world of Churuli speaks in a manner which suggests that he enjoys living there because of the freedom and has no intention of leaving Churuli any soon. The transformation of the new additions and their acceptance of the particular way of living indicates the universality of this space. In such spaces, the idea of being a homo sacer does not last. From the outside

view, the inhabitants are seen to be in a state of exception. However, once the same specimens of the outside world get inside the carnival space, they will no longer see a state of exception. Thus, a homo sacer does not exist once inside the carnival space as anyone who enters this space transforms themselves into the inhabitants making the binaries and the boundaries to fade away by itself.

Meanwhile, in *Kammattipaadam*, the rebelling marginalised people like Krishnan are always in search of a dark place to hide themselves away. The dark place that Krishnan mentions is similar to a carnival space. It is their safe space as there would not exist any distinction between the homo sacer and state. The darkness would blind everyone and anyone who enters the place to accept the universality which eventually destroys any distinct forms of living. Thus, in order to challenge and resist the concept of homines sacri and the state of exception one needs to undergo subversive mobility and accept the universality. Performativity plays a huge role in creating such acceptance. As a result, the rhizomatic working of performativity in a carnival space and subversive mobilities are required to emancipate people from the identity of a homo sacer.

## Conclusion

This dissertation provides an appraisal of two contemporary Malayalam movies which belong to the golden age of new wave cinema and what it portrays. The analysis has been based on various concepts and theories including mobilities, rhizome, state of exception and homo sacer. The results are based on the study of mobilities, space, relations and existence. According to the analysis, people's validation is required to make use of their network capital or rather consider it as capital. Noticeably, an individual's freedom of mobility increases with the increase in network capital. However, that does not mean that the person with high network capital moves the most. It is homines sacri who moves the most with the least network capital. Subsequently, there is a high chance of losing the value of their capital based on the space and the people which surround them which is why Shajivan and Antony had to submit to the people in Churuli.

The study on the mobilities in both movies reveals the detail that free mobility showcases power and control. The ability to freely move suggests extra control over their surroundings. The marginalised characters in *Kammattipaadam* do not have the freedom to freely move and therefore have less control over their surroundings. Inhabitants of Churuli are able to move freely except for the two officers in certain situations. The capacity of the villagers to move freely despite being a homo sacer for the outside world implies a form of success in resisting and challenging the ideas like homo sacer and the state of exception. The main difference between *Kammattipaadam* and *Churuli* is that the former mentions the mode in which one can escape from the clutches of the state of exception, whereas the latter literally exemplifies the way in which the idea of a state of exception and homo sacer can be dismantled.

The study discovered the significance of abusive and foul language in the life of an individual who is in a state of exception. Abusive language helps to find power or control over others, especially if the one using it is in a marginal position. Violence is also a means of power and control, especially for the weaker set of people in society. Most of them turn towards violence and abusive language not because they are bad but rather because it's the only way through which they can gain access to power and control while being in an included excluded stage. The root cause of the continual existence of homo sacer is due to uneven distribution of network capital which in turn leads to uneven mobilities.

The lack of mobilities or the subsistence of uneven mobilities has the power to destroy lives and relationships. *Kammattipaadam* and *Churuli* provide examples of how individuals lose relationships and connections because of the non-existence or lack of mobility. Therefore, mobility plays a huge part in maintaining social relationships. In addition, the lack of mobility affects different categories of network capital variedly. As a result, the absence of particular mobility can negatively affect the various capitals an individual may have.

Furthermore, being able to live an unrestrained life suggests the extent to which a certain society is beyond the control of the state. Consequently, leading an unrestrained life challenges the power of the state. However, it is possible with only certain pre-conditions. Firstly, an individual or a society should be living an unrestrained life in a land which is inaccessible and separated from the mainstream. It is made possible by subversive mobility. Secondly, the space should be turned into a carnival through the

performativity of the individuals. Both these actions led to a subversive reality which defies the sovereign authority of the state.

By doing the same it is nullifying the difference between a homo sacer and the privileged inside the particular geography. Thus, performativity establishes a lack of difference under the pretext of subversive mobility. As a result, subversive mobility nullifies the existence of a homo sacer by blurring the boundaries between the homo sacer and the privileged in both the movies. Thus, the state or the concept of homo sacer can only be challenged through performativity with a precondition of subversive mobility. Negative performativity is a constant factor in both *Kammattipaadam* and *Churuli*. In *Churuli*, the homines sacri are already challenging the state through subversive mobility. Whereas, *Kammattipaadam* is in the process of doing the same mainly because of the different storyline and endings.

Identities are not fixed. However, this is the same reason why we can form and change identities. In *Churuli*, there exist multiple identities. Thus, by deterritorializing their inhabited lands they are growing their territory. *Kammattipaadam* and *Churuli* showcase the life of homines sacri who are in a state of exception according to the state or the mainstream world. However, these marginalised people who are forced to leave their native lands outsmart and challenge the authority of the state by undergoing a subversive mobility and hiding away in a place which is invisible or inaccessible to the body of authority. Additionally, the only means by which a homo sacer can confront the unjust systems and the sovereignty of the state is through negative performativity. It includes violence and foul language. In reality, the usage of swear words masks the privileges of the upper-class system and emancipates both the sections into equals.

Furthermore, geography plays an important role in achieving all these results. The inaccessibility or the invisibility is caused by the features of the land. The features include the land surrounded by water or sea and the dangerous bridges and road. In addition, the features of the geography also mould the social practices of the people, yet not completely. This is mainly because their bare life cannot be separated from their different forms of living. Therefore, they continue to practice some of their social values, culture and beliefs. Both the movies do not circle around the emancipation of women. Nonetheless, women in *Churuli* have more agency than the women represented in *Kammattipaadam*. This is precisely why every inhabitant in Churuli including women has more freedom than women in the main lands. Hence, inaccessible or 'dark' places like Churuli emancipate marginalised people more than the mainstream city or land would ever do. That is why Churuli is a carnival space and Krishnan is aiming to go to a similar place for hiding. Moreover, in the world or land of darkness, as the character, Krishnan would call it, have no existence of homo sacer as there exists a blurring of the boundaries.



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