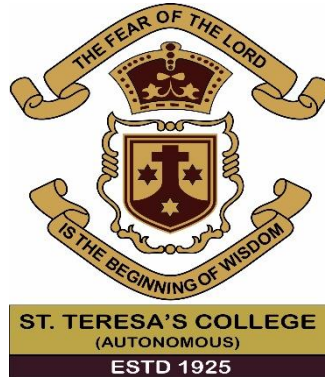


**SPIRALING LIVES: DECIPHERING THE PSYCHEDELIC
EXPERIENCES IN LIJO JOSE PELLISSERY'S *CHURULI***



*Project submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University in partial fulfilment of
the requirement for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS in
English Language and Literature*

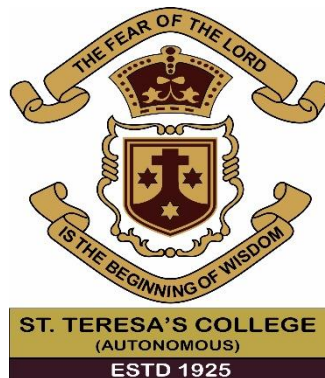
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “Spiraling Lives: Deciphering the Psychedelic Experiences in Lijo Jose Pellissery’s *Churuli* ” is the record of bona fide work done by me under the guidance and supervision of Ms. Lissy Jose, Assistant Professor, Department of English and Centre for Research, 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 project entitled “Spiraling Lives: Deciphering the Psychedelic Experiences in Lijo Jose Pellissery’s *Churuli*” is a record of bona fide work carried out by Amala Anna Thomas under my supervision and guidance.

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An Abstract of the Project Entitled

Spiraling Lives: Deciphering the Psychedelic Experiences in Lijo Jose

Pellissery's *Churuli*

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Human nature is a complex phenomenon which includes ways of thinking, feeling and acting. The temporary altered state in human mind results in visual distortion, subjective loss of self-identity and a mystical experience which results in psychedelic experience. This altered perceptions in human mind often serves plot for films. Film is a medium of communication which highlights the trippy nature with visual effects and changing rhythms in music. This project aims at emphasizing the altered state of human mind and the transformative nature of an individual in a drug inducing world through the lens of psychedelic literature. For this purpose, researcher has taken Lijo Jose Pellissery's *Churuli* (2021). The first chapter is an exploration of Psychedelic Literature. The second chapter analyses *Churuli* with the characteristics of psychedelic movie. The entire study focus on an individual's journey of transformation in a drug induced world results in apparent expansion of consciousness.

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Sneha P

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INTRODUCTION

Lijo Jose Pellissery the Malayalam filmmaker has been considered one of the finest talents of the contemporary Indian film industry. The man behind Malayalam films like *Nayakan* (2010), *City of God* (2011), *Amen* (2013), and *Double Barrel* (2015), Lijo Jose Pellissery is an Indian filmmaker and actor, born in Thrissur District of the Kerala State in India. His 2017 release includes the comedy-drama movie *Angamaly Diaries* and *Ee.Ma.Yau* starring Chemban Vinod, Vinayakan T.K. and Dileesh Pothan in lead roles. In 2018, he acted in Rafeek Ibrahim's directorial debut, *Padayottam*. He is on a roll, having directed some of the most critically acclaimed Malayalam movies in the last decade as well his 2019 movie *Jallikattu* was the Indian entry for the Best International Feature Film at the 93rd Academy Awards. The supremely talented director has won millions of hearts with his extraordinary filmography, which consists of some exceptional films. Lijo Jose Pellissery is a filmmaker who believes in not repeating the genres, and wants to try something new with every film. There is a common misconception that cinema is a means for entertainment, an idea born out of decades of a 'commercial reconditioning' of sorts of the medium that tapped into the sense of monotony amongst the masses. Despite global cinema being a byproduct of capitalism, it is in fact rooted in the idea of expressionism from the early 20th-century modernist movement of philosophy through art and literature. Lijo Jose Pellissery's *Churuli* occupies this space of exploring themes through artistic expression, staying true to the core idea of what defines cinema. Pellissery has approached this film with a unique aesthetic, which is unlike some of his previous films such as *Angamaly Diaries* (2017), *Ee. Ee. Ma. Yau* (2018), *Amen* (2013), and *Jallikattu* (2019). However, he has retained certain elements in *Churuli* from these films such as the biblical references, a narrative set in

an obscure yet vibrant town, and grounded realism in the screenplay. Pellissery has undoubtedly left his signature style whilst adopting a fresh filmmaking style - one that is more than likely to be examined and analyzed in film schools across the country and beyond. Film's use of sound and surreal visual imagery, with psychedelic elements, certainly adds layers of symbolism and allegories.

Churuli is a 2021 Indian Malayalam-language science fiction horror film directed by Lijo Jose Pellissery and written by S. Hareesh, starring Vinay Forrt, Chemban Vinod Jose, Joju George, Soubin Shahir and Jaffar Idukki in key roles. The film was produced by Lijo Jose Pellissery and Chemban Vinod Jose under the banner of *Movie Monastery* and *Chembosky Motion Pictures*, with Jestto Varghese, O Thomas Panicker and Naushad Salahudin as co-producers. The original story and characters are based on a short story Kaligeminarile Kuttavalikal from the book '*Mullaranjanam*' written by Vinoy Thomas. His film *churuli* is such an absurd act, one that has gone down well with many critics despite its artistic elegance. The movie mainly deals with life of two cops named Anthony and Shajivan travel to the remote mountain village to hunt for a criminal named mailadumparabil joy. *Churuli* belongs to the category of psychedelic films. This mainly contains the visual distortion, experimental narrative often emphasizing psychedelic imagery. They might refer to the drugs directly or present a distorted reality.

This movie contributes to the core of this thesis, which has been divided into two chapters. The first chapter "Exploring Psychedelic literature", is aimed at providing a detailed study of this theory, which form the basis for the subsequent chapter. The second chapter "Traversing the labyrinthine world of *churuli*" is concerned with the study of the depiction of the transformative nature of an individual when they are under the control of a drug-induced world. Along with it, the study progress on the

distorted imageries or visual effect results as a synonym of disillusioned psyche. The movie is also analyzed as an endless cycle which possess the characteristics of psychedelic movie such as experimental plot. The role of Bible as a God's step to recover from the addiction of evils is widely brought into point.

Chapter one

Exploring Psychedelic Literature

Psychedelic literature was a minor literary movement but had a significant contribution in both cultural and medical discussion regarding the use of psychedelic drugs. It emerged in medical community especially in psychology and psychiatry for considering therapies that used psychedelic methods. Psychedelics (serotonergic hallucinogens) are powerful psychoactive substances that vary perception, mood and affect multiple cognitive processes. They are generally assumed physiologically safe and do not lead to obsession or addiction. Their origin predates written history, and they were employed by early cultures in several sociocultural and ritual contexts.

The term 'psychedelic' was first coined by psychiatrist Humphry Osmond in 1956 to describe hallucinogenic medications in the context of psychedelic psychotherapy. It derived from the Greek words soul, mind and manifest leading to the meaning 'mind manifesting'. Aldous Huxley a friend and supporter of the drug's therapeutic usage, coined the phrase 'phanerothyme' from the greek words for 'manifest' and 'spirit'. Because it was 'clear, euphonious, and uncontaminated by other associations,' Osmond ultimately decided on this phrase. Richard Evans Schultes, an American ethnobotanist, detested this errant spelling of the word 'psychedelic', but Timothy Leary defended it because he thought it sounded nicer. Due to the elaborated use of the term 'psychedelia' in pop culture and perceived an incorrect verbal formulation, Carl A.P. Ruck, Jeremy Bigwood, Danny Staples, Jonathan Ott, and R. Gordon Wasson proposed the term 'entheogen' to describe the religious or spiritual experience. Psychedelic literature has also been formulated as textual works that arose

from the addition of psychiatric and psychotherapeutic research with hallucinogens around 1950s and early 1960s in North America and Europe.

The Doors of Perception (1954), *Heaven and Hell* (1956), and *Island* (1962) by Aldous Huxley; *A Drug Taker's Notes* (1957) by Richard Heron Ward; *Exploring Inner Space* (1961) by Jane Dunlap; *Myself and I* (1962) by Constance A. Newland; and *The Joyous Cosmology* (1964) by Alan Watts; *The Discovery of Love* (1963) by Malden Grange Bishop; and *The Psychedelic Experience* (1964) by Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner and Richard Alpert described psychoactive drug experiences with hallucinogens. These works are referred to as psychedelic literature collectively, and their conversation, which is mediated by psychiatry, demonstrates that they represent a minor literary and cultural trend.

A post war intellectual elite Aldous Huxley's autobiographical book *The Doors of Perception* was the birth of psychedelic literature. The work explores his psychedelic experience with mescaline. Huxley talks on the philosophical and psychological ramifications of the discoveries he had, ranging from the 'purely aesthetic' to the 'sacramental visio'. He released *Heaven and Hell* in 1956, an additional essay that elaborates on these thoughts. Huxley's interest in religion gave him the opportunity to change the conversation by being one of the first Western intellectuals to mention the potential theological significance of hallucinogens.

The book and Huxley himself had a significant impact on and inspired *The Doors of Perception*. The Hippie movement and music, including those of Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, were also affected. Huxley also experimented with other psychedelic substances, including LSD, which he claimed to be more profound than mescaline. It's crucial to note that Huxley's exploration of psychedelic literature went on, with his

most significant contribution being the notion that one might use 'tripping' to become the mastermind behind their written work. He wrote about the significance of self-realization and self-improvement through drug use in *Heaven and Hell*, published in 1956. Huxley explored hedonistic intoxication for the purpose of building a purportedly utopian world in his final novel, *Island*. Huxley's fascination with the literary significance of psychedelic substances led to his transformation into a sort of utopian hero who believes that drugs could play a part in creating a utopian society.

An influential American writer and visual artist William S. Burroughs experimentation with heroin took shape of semi-autobiographical work titled *Junkie: Confessions of an Unredeemed Drug Addict* (1953). As Burroughs moves to the accounts of his heroin addiction and the consequences it had on his lifestyle and work, this novel has radically altered what is actually meant to be a junkie. At the time, it was a contentious and unpublishable work, but because to the memorable, aloof, dry, yet honest and eye-opening language on feelings, ideas, and acts while using heroin, it quickly became a must-read. This text is unique in the history of literature, and many believe that Burroughs' drug trials even contributed to understanding the neurological effects of drug use.

On analyzing the relationship between writing and drugs in English literature M. H. Abrams' *The Milk of Paradise* (1934), is one of the earliest examples which examined imagery in the works of nineteenth-century authors who were known opium users in the hope of establishing a universal opium effect in their works (Hayter 1968; Milligan 1995). Hayter came to the conclusion that, rather than being directly related to any particular book, the relationship between drugs and literature could only be understood in terms of how opium affected the author's life. In other words, before

examining any literary effects of opium in De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1822), one must first analyse De Quincey the author. In this regard, Hayter's book was somewhat moralizing as it criticized the harmful effects of opium on the authors and, thus, on their writing. Even though the tradition of examining the relationship between opium and literature was well established, it would take a few years after Hayter's work for R.A. Durr to bring up the subject in *Poetic Vision and The Psychedelic Experience* (1970). In a manner similar to Hayter, Durr analyses Romantic poetry using current accounts of hallucinogenic experiences rather than opium. According to Durr, using hallucinogens allows one to have a pure literary experience, experiencing the world as great writers do (Durr 1970). The end result is an awkward attempt to explain textual accounts of drug experiences as the outcome of the author's imagination, as if the text and the experience were created from the same pure material.

Within the critical drug literature, new terminologies and evaluation techniques started to appear. For instance, David Lenson first used the term 'pharmacography' in *On Drugs* (1995) to refer to all of the texts that discuss writing and drugs. This helped pave the way for a number of subsequent pharmacographies, such as Sadie Plant's *Writing on Drugs* (1999), Marcus Boon's *The Road of Excess: A History of Writers on Drugs* (2002), and Lindsey Michael Banco's *Travel and Drugs in Twentieth-Century literature*. These works established the link between drugs and texts through social and cultural dynamics, where any pharmacography becomes indicative of any given dynamic rather than the author's brilliance. Boon suggests the following for this kind of pharmacographical analysis: An open field of interdependent cultural activity, including both drugs and literature, where science, biography, literary analysis, and ethnography are used as necessary (Boon 5). Therefore, drug texts are generally

viewed as partaking in a social and cultural sphere and are seen as evidence of a debate that extends beyond the purview of any particular author.

According to Marcus Boon, "From the 1930s to the 1960s, it is a rarely accepted truth that persons of conservative or right-wing bent were one of the major sources of interest in psychedelics, aside from the attention of researchers working on specific therapeutic purposes" (Boon , 258). Boon continues to make a compelling case that writers prior to 1960, like Huxley, were able to access researchers and, consequently, medicines by using their author reputations and social networks. These authors started to vanish from the drug literature when the counterculture of the 1960s absorbed the drug discourse, and the inference is that, politically, the space shifted from the right to the left. Looking at the two ends of this period, Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* (1954) and *The Psychedelic Experience* (1964)—is highly instructive in understanding this transition from a personal, inward trip to a manual intended to be used across a much larger social collective. The use of drugs had turned into a social issue. But it will be claimed here that this cultural change is what caused LSD to evolve from a research tool to a useful therapeutic tool inside psychiatric discourse. The requirement for therapists to practice their trade in the social was what drove the transformation and made the "psychedelic experience" acceptable to a wider socio-cultural audience, not the counterculture merely rereading the worth of LSD in light of a social, left-wing politics. It is shown that Huxley's early writing already contained an implicit reference to this action.

Psychedelics tend to qualitatively alter ordinary conscious experience. Whereas stimulants cause energized feelings and barbiturates drugs produce a relaxed euphoric state, the psychedelic is often compared to non-ordinary forms of consciousness such

as trance, meditation, yoga, religious ecstasy dreaming and even near-death experience. From these experiences a vast amount of psychedelic culture has been created and shared over the realm. Included in this cultural movement from the 20th century is cinema and the moving image of film.

Psychedelic movies can be divided into visual and narrative conceptual styles. The visual is made up of movies that use graphics to change every day conscious experience. The same is done in narrative psychedelic movies, but they tell stories about the passage of time and other events. A visual psychedelic movie would feature pictures, tones, or lights that in some way affect awareness, perception, or both. Even if the picture they depict is hyperrealistic, it may be claimed that Godfrey Reggio's renowned non-narrative movies, *Koyaanisqatsi* (1982), *Powaqqatsi* (1988), and *Naqoyqatsi* (2002), as well as *Ron Fricke's Baraka* (1993), are psychedelic movies. In these stunning movies, perspective, colour, and point of view are all tested. Films that tell stories or depict changes in time and space in accordance with different types of narrative arcs and by utilizing particular narrative conceits (such as characters, action, travel, quest, crisis, etc.) are considered narrative psychedelic cinema.

The films created in the 1960s and early 1970s, at the height of the first widespread western psychedelic culture, are largely responsible for the popular image of psychedelic cinema. *The Trip* (1967), *Point Blank* (1967), *The Flicker* (1965), *Peyote Queen* (1965), *Ray Gun Virus* (1966), *Acid Mantra* (1968), *Lapis* (1966), *Psych-Out* (1968), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *I Love You Alice B. Toklas* (1968), *Head* (1968), and *Easy* (1968) are a few examples of Anglo-American movies in this category. In other words, these films demonstrate "a mediatized reversibility between cinema and psychedelic drugs that was not just rhetorical, but also had a real-world

influence upon the contextual effects these drugs might produce in the user." Some of these films do not contain actual references to psychedelic drugs, but the sense of spatiotemporal perception they create from the visual image, including perspective and point of view, replicate the psychedelic experience.

The first films that could be considered psychedelic before the seminal decade of the 1960s included visual abstraction, pictures that frequently had no basis in fact, and that tested our conceptions of space and time. *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) by Louis Brunel and Salvador Dali, as well as Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943), all broke down preconceived limits that restricted cinema to the representation of truth. Filmmakers like Ira Cohen (1935-2011), who created lush visual fields of difference in movies like *Invasion of the Thunderbolt Pagoda* (1968), and continued to create movies that challenged the conventional awareness through their use of visuals. Older movies like 1902's *A Trip to the Moon/Le Voyage dans la Lune* sought to portray something possible, even though it was a fantasy. The visual plane transforms into a pliable medium in psychedelic movies, challenging the viewer's perceptual categories. The criteria used to make the photos does not include the physically possible. Some of the earliest methods for challenging visual perception in cinema included photomontage and double exposure. However, Humphrey Osmond, a psychiatrist, did not use the name 'psychedelia' until 1956, some 13 years after Dr. Albert Hoffman had first discovered the hallucinogenic effects of LSD-25. Then the 1960s arrived, ushering in an era of hallucinogenic personal delight. Prophets like Michael Hollingshead, Ken Kesey, Richard Alpert, and Timothy Leary disseminated a certain type of psychedelia to anybody who would listen. The idea of truth at the conclusion of the drug experience or trip, which would later come to define psychedelic cinema, was central to the message. The real purpose of using

psychedelics was to realize how perfect you already are. According to a myth that has been popular since the time of the Bible, the Earth was submissive to humans in this vision. As a key element of the counter culture of the 1960s, this notion was transmitted back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean. The main principles of trans-Atlantic psychedelia in the 1960s can be summed up as follows: Everything is contained within the human. A 'new' being was created as a result of the psychedelic, one who was 'turned on' and conscious of the depth of one's own being.

Mysticism from the East combined with psychology and self-awareness. These well-known allusions were coupled with a mishmash of cool individuals doing cool things through the prism of self and developing their own self-awareness. The greater currents of human culture and the sciences that were prominent at the time are extensively woven throughout much of this work on the self. The driving force behind this endeavour was desire. The 2002 documentary series *Century of the Self's* third episode, *There is a Policeman Inside All Our Heads; He Must Be Destroyed*, provides a more thorough explanation of this system.

Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper's film *The Trip* from 1967 is a good illustration of the psychedelic as a personal experience. The person "tripping" encounters dimensions of their own awareness, frequently in abstract forms. It is a mirroring experience. These movies use variations of this fundamental structure to explore the nature of the self. You're one with and a part of an ever-expanding, loving, cheerful, wonderful, and harmonious cosmos, as said by Denise Hopper's character in the movie *The Trip*. This strategy dates back to Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner, and Richard Alpert's 1964 book *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead*. "Awareness can grow beyond the extent of your ego,

yourself, your known identity, beyond anything you have learnt, beyond your concepts of space and time, beyond the divisions that separate people,"(Timothy Leary).But even in this limitless extension, the 'You' is always at the centre of the psychedelic experience. The self-improvement movement that grew in popularity in the 1970s has clear cultural ties to the ideas of Leary, Metzner, and Alpert.

There is still a 'you' in the projections of the first widespread wave of psychedelic movies, despite the universe's limitless size. However, an alternative to this unchanging fundamental idea started to appear in movies only after the first manned spaceflights, along with the realization that humanity is nothing in the grand scheme of things. In psychedelic cinema, the fixed central point of ultimate human awareness was still present, but Stanley Kubrick's genius was the one who first anticipated the move away from it.

Stanley Kubrick produced *2001: A Space Odyssey* in 1968. The movie is a visual spectacle with very little language, and in some ways it is similar to the experiments of the earliest non-realist movies. However, as the focus shifted from narrative to montage, the visual image externalized and took center stage in the meaning-making process. Thus, in a psychedelic movie, the individual was no longer the focus of awareness and observation.

Coincidentally, with the beginning of the 1970s, psychedelic music possibly the most inward of all musical forms started to vanish from public consciousness. The emphasis switched to Pink Floyd's stadium extravaganzas and the electronic explorations and unusual forms present in the so-called Krautrock bands. With psychedelic visuals and concepts, however, film continued to be a significant experimentation site throughout the 1970s, portraying or even inciting extraterrestrial

forms of consciousness. Psychedelic favorites from the era include Jodorowsky's *El Topo* (1970) and *The Holy Mountain* (1973).

However, psychedelic filmmaking did not end in 1970. A material culture that placed an increasing emphasis on an individual's ability to own, produce, consume, and succeed as a means of expressing self identity quickly challenged the "altered states" of psychedelics as escapist false paradises. The closing sequence of the Lionsgate television series *MadMen*, which takes place in November 1970, alludes to the passing of a more deeply interconnected psychedelic consciousness and offers 'new ideas, a new self'.

After the 1970s, there was a change in how the psychedelic experience was portrayed in movies. In the 1980s and 1990s, a type of holy psychology replaced the contradiction that gave rise to the self in psychedelic cinema: a truth principle of a self in what is ultimately a beneficent world vs material consciousness and social expectations. This new perception of the individual having a psychedelic experience is no longer at odds with specific aspects of their own identity. Instead, they merge with something bigger that exists outside of their own particular sense of awareness and stop being just a self or an interior that can be examined. In this approach, personality disappears and other important issues or things take the lead. The society, with its rules, standards, and expectations, gradually gives way to a greater consciousness that, in some ways, is a product of the same forces that led to the emergence of the first wave of popular psychedelic culture. *Enter the Void* (2009), *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013), *A Field in England* (2013), and *The Embrace of the Serpent* (2014) are recent psychedelic movies with this erasure of self.

The term "psychedelic" (which means "mind-manifesting" in the original language) could equally well refer to an aesthetic sensibility, an affective-sensory encounter, or, in retrospect, a historical era from the late 1950s to mid-1970s in which recently discovered consciousness-expanding substances like psilocybin and LSD gained greater social significance and a diverse range of art films, experimental films, exploitation films, and the occasional Hollywood production attempted to approximate the audiovisual fireworks of drug-altered states. Visionary images were used at the time for sensationalistic and self-experimental purposes. For viewers who had not personally used psychedelic drugs, these films might promise some touristic insight (however dubious) into the era's counterculture; however, for others, the films themselves were intended as aids to recreational drug use while viewing. The psychedelic cinema proper dedicates lengthy segments to stunning effects that audio-visually evoke hallucinogenic experiences, frequently through avant-garde (or avant-garde-inspired) techniques. It might be argued that taking psychedelic drugs could turn any film into an avant-garde experience. As much as proponents of psychedelics like Timothy Leary stressed the significance of 'set and setting,' which refers to a person's state of mind when ingesting a psychedelic drug and the environment in which the subsequent trip occurs, these films are defined equally by their aesthetic strategies and their conditions of reception, both of which are crucial to their full cinematic effect.

The reciprocity of two technologies drugs and film working together in the specific context of psychedelic movies, then, produces significant synesthetic effects that effectively close the distance between spectator and screen. For instance, Harry Benshoff hypothesizes that watching films that simulate LSD trips may stimulate the brain in ways similar to the drug itself. William C. Wees notes in his investigation of

avant-garde film aesthetics that most drug-induced hallucinations begin with basic geometrical patterns and colors (such as lattices, cobwebs, tunnels, and spirals) before progressing to "more complicated patterns and even full-scale scenes," all of which bear striking resemblances to the mystical visions and symbols (such as mandalas) found across many religious traditions. Such cross-cultural hallucination similarities suggested a 'Other World' in the 'mind's antipodes' that might be explored like the landscapes and wildlife of an undiscovered continent for early 'psychonauts' like Aldous Huxley.

The psychedelic experience is a rite of passage from everyday consciousness to a different level of consciousness heightened by an altered state of mind. The trip to hyperspace ends in liminality which becomes the ritual space for self realization and growth through 'social critique, subversive behaviour and transformed understanding of consciousness'. Victor Turner, an anthropologist, significantly improved anthropology by restoring the idea of "liminality" into the field's discourse. Turner was interested in understanding civilizations via dynamism and chaos, viewing society more as a dynamic and dialectical process than as a static "object."

The term "liminality" was first used by renowned French ethnographer and folklorist Arnold Van Gennep (1873–1957) in his *Rites de Passage*, which was published in 1909 and is crucial to the development of the idea of liminality in the context of rituals in small-scale cultures. The word liminal comes from the Latin word "threshold". *The Rites of Passage*, the English version, was released in 1960. The book was published by Routledge (London) & Kegan Paul and translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. Van Gennep listed the several types of ceremonies at the beginning of his book. He made a distinction between changes that

result in a change in status for an individual or social group and changes that mark the passage of time. In doing so, he gave special attention to rites of passage with a three-fold sequential structure.

Victor Witter Turner was a British anthropologist who lived from 1920 to 1983. He is well recognized for his research on rites of passage, rituals, and symbols. Turner is credited for rediscovering the significance of liminality after first encountering Arnold van Gennep's work in 1963. (Thomassen , 322). He released *The Forest of Symbols* in 1967, which contained the essay "Betwixt and Between: the Liminal Phase in Rituals of Transition." The concept of liminality started to stray from its limited use in ritual passages in small-scale communities in Turner's work. He found several links between tribal and non-tribal communities in the different publications he produced while performing his fieldwork among the Ndembu in Zambia, "feeling that what he argued for the Ndembu had value much beyond the unique ethnographic context" (Thomassen , 14).

Victor Turner's writings in the second half of the 20th century helped popularise the words 'liminal' and 'liminality'. In a broader sense, it designates the location, line, or boundary at which a passageway can be created between two spaces. Relationships and social standing are negotiated at the threshold; one is either rejected from or welcomed to the other side. Such a spatial structure has a crucial impact on social interactions. Threshold conjures up ideas of entering and exiting, routes, crossings, and transformation. It would be strange to think of it as a place to stay, a place of permanent existence, because it denotes the point at which judgements and choices must be made in order to move forward. Nonetheless, there are some circumstances in people's life where transfers from one scenario to another, or from one social status to another, are difficult or impossible. Those who are stuck between two developmental

phases and do not have clearly defined roles within their social structure feel alienated, marginalised, and without identity or power. Rituals of initiation were viewed by Van Gennep as being the most common. Looking at one particular ritual of initiation, the initiation of "youngsters into adulthood," which Turner thought to be the most typical rite, to better comprehend the "tripartite structure" of liminal situations (Turner, *The Ritual Process* 155). Such rites of passage involve highly planned experiences. The child must experience a separation from his family at the first stage (the rites of separation), which entails his or her "death" as a child because childhood is essentially abandoned. In the second stage, an initiate who is transitioning from childhood to adulthood must pass an exam to demonstrate that he is prepared for adulthood. If he is successful, the third stage incorporation involves celebrating the adult's "new birth" and reintegrating that being into society.

Van Gennep demonstrates a strong interest in the transitional stage, which is the time between one's previous and future social position or magico-religious state. He uses those early periods in human history when nations were divided by a neutral zone rather than by direct borders in order to prove his point. Due to the fact that neither of the neighbouring countries' laws applied in this zone, travellers were placed in a unique scenario where they 'wavered between two worlds' (Gennep 18). Non territorial transitions also include a liminal period, a moment or period of ambiguity, like this territorial passage. A life crisis usually precedes or corresponds to such a time period. The word 'crisis' in this context is an unusual choice of words that is also open interpretation. Van Gennep does not use the phrase exclusively in a psychological context. During a transition, a person's state is uncertain because they have been cut off from a previously defined state in the past and have not yet been incorporated into a clearly defined future state. He uses his phrase to denote the

unstable social or magico-religious position of the person going through a change. Anthropologist Victor Turner developed Van Gennep's beliefs further. Turner contributed significantly to the study of ritual symbols. Turner conducted a significant theoretical investigation into the role of ritual transitional phase and their resemblance to other cultural dramas of change in personal and social life using Van Gennep's idea of rites of passage. Turner articulated the theory that human social life is defined by an altering between structured social roles and the blurring of social roles (i.e. , anti-structure) that occurs in the ritual context in his works *The Ritual process* (1969) and *Dramas , Fields and Metaphors* (1974). According to him, anti-structure is a necessary component of human existence because it allows people to discover their humanity and spirituality. In a dialectical relationship, structure and anti-structure both reinforce the importance of discontinuity while the former provides continuity.

Turner claims that liminality creates a condition he refers to as 'communitas.' According to Turner, Communitas is a society that is mostly devoid of structure, built on relationships of equality and solidarity, and that is in opposition to the conventional social structure. Communitas' significance is shown through the dismantling of this established order. Turner claims that the communitas is the pinnacle of a culture. The existing social order is dialectically reinforced by liminality and communitas, which are often transient, structurally defined, and limited.

According to Tuner, culture is characterized by an ongoing conflict between structure and anti-structure. Van-triadic Gennep's model of the Rite of Passage, which Turner expands to incorporate other cultural occurrences, serves as the foundation for his work on liminality. Van Gennep divided the process of rising through the social ranks into three phases: 1. disengagement, wherein the person is metaphorically cut

off from society and his own identity 2. the liminal stage, during which the person is isolated from society and constantly watched upon. 3. The post-liminal or reunion stage, during which the person is reincorporated into society with his new statuses.

In terms of social structure and time, liminality is a condition of being "in between" where people lose their typical identities and the social differences that make them up as they approach a personal or social shift. It should be observed that Turner's understanding of liminality complements or corrects Mary Douglas' somewhat static and dichotomous depiction of "ritual uncleanness" in many ways. The four primary categories of liminal zones are as follows: 1. Modifications to Social Status: This involves initiation rituals, in which a person who was formerly an outsider in a group is now a recognized insider. This might happen, for instance, when someone receives citizenship from a country. The liminal space is the room used for citizenship ceremonies. 2. Physical Activity: This happens when someone moves into a new home, when their place of employment is moved, when they move abroad, etc. 3. Situational Alterations: This may entail experiencing a divorce, beginning a new job, finishing college, receiving a large inheritance, learning you have cancer, etc. 4. Time's Passing: We recognize the passage of time with a variety of events, including notable birthdays, New Year's Eve, harvest festivals, etc.

The concepts provided by psychedelic literature in such a short period of time were unique and ground-breaking. Psychedelics, usually referred to as hallucinogens, are a group of psychoactive drugs that alter perception, mood, and cognitive functions. All of the senses are affected by psychedelics, which change a person's thinking, perception of time, and emotions. The impact of psychedelia and the effects of psychedelic substances are characteristics of the film genre known as "psychedelic

film. The impact of psychedelic drugs did continue to be popular and even gained popularity despite culture and governmental regulations passed earlier. Even now, psychedelic literature movement and the psychedelic subcultures of the day continue to impact writers, painters, musicians, and filmmakers.

Psychedelic film is a genre characterized by the influence of psychedelia and experience of psychedelic drugs. Psychedelic film typically emphasizes psychedelic images while also containing visual distortion and experimental storylines. They may make explicit drug references or merely depict a reality that has been warped to resemble the effects of psychedelic drugs. Their experimental stories frequently aim to mislead the audience's perception of reality or normalcy. The Indian film maker and actor Lijo jose pellisery's latest film, *Churuli*, tests the boundaries of conventional filmmaking with psychedelics elements.

Chapter Two

Traversing the labyrinthine world of *churuli*

The short tale adaptation *Churuli* begins with a parable about a Brahmin who goes to a forest to catch a ghost named Perumadan. The narrative claims that the Brahmin continues to roam the forest in search of Perumadan while carrying the shape-shifting phantom on his head. The film appears to be moving further into the forest in quest of a fable-like tone, and the eagle eye view adds mystery and tension to the proceedings. The story revolves around two undercover police officers who travel to *Churuli*, a village, in order to find a criminal named Joy who is hiding there. They introduce themselves to the villagers as Anthony (Chemban Vinod Jose) and Shajivan (Vinay Forrt), labourers who have come in search of employment. Yet, the man whose rubber plantation they are to excavate is not there. They are thus employed as waitstaff at an arrack bar/restaurant managed by a husband and wife. There is boarding, lodging, and drinking but no compensation. As long as the focus is on the two inept, bantering cops, the movie is light and entertaining. Shajivan is eager to do the task right away, but Anthony, who is a senior, is approaching this as a calm retreat. The officers start having strange occurrences and seem to have put themselves into a situation from which they might not be able to escape.

When the setting is taken into account, the characters' actions make perfect sense. After crossing a perilous wooden bridge (a scene that is reminiscent of William Friedkin's 1977 film *Sorcerer*), the two main characters discover themselves in the company of people who make them feel uneasy only moments after making them feel at home. The location, *Churuli*, seems to be exempt from the laws that govern our

planet. This characteristic also applies to LJP's filming approach, which is as free as it gets.

Psychoactive substances often bring various changes in consciousness and mood. It affects the brain's function in resulting temporary changes in perception and behavior. This psychoactive substance can result in hallucinogenic effect in an individual which may result in pleasant or harsh behavior. The drugs (psychoactive) administered into one's system affect the whole mental system, such as perception, cognition, consciousness and emotions. In the movie *Churuli*, the toddy shop acts as a psychoactive substance or drug which makes the natives act according to their wish. The land is devoid of any rules. The toddy served in the shop plays a key role in the people who visit there and alter their mindset. This toddy brings a hallucinogenic effect in their consumers. As a result, one is free from all negotiations and acts according to the altered perception and mood. Anthony, who came to the village in search of criminal mayiladumparabil joy, finally seems to adjust with the natives and forgets about his task. Anthony, who consumes the toddy, results in an adaptive behaviour. The people in the *churuli* mainly depend upon toddy and hunting. Anthony tries to follow them because these activities make him free from all his burdens. The natives in the land who have no history indulge in all abuse. The land *churuli* plays a platform for Anthony to exercise his repressed emotions. After consuming the toddy from shajivan, he says "This is life, my boy! I am going to have some fun" (Anthony, 00:50:30). He adds "I last held a gun as a trainee 20 years ago. I want to shoot a man! But haven't even shot a mouse! Today, I will kill a pig! I will shoot a buffalo today" (Anthony, 00:50:35).

Liminal spaces are physical spaces, but they are used in literature and film to enhance the narrative. They fit to convey emotions, mislead spectators and make

uncomfortable and foreshadow plots. The term Liminality is used to describe the psychological process of transitioning across boundaries and borders. The Malayalam movie *churuli* is littered with such examples. Through the character of Antony and shajivan, their transition stage from the outside world to the native of *churuli* is portrayed through their actions and dialogue. It is through the character of shajivan the liminality of existence is highlighted widely. He is in a state of confused identity. *Churuli* is manifested as under the control of aliens. *Churuli* the place itself can be referred to a trap where one is lived with anti-structural social order. There are three stages of liminality. The first or pre-liminal stage is the stage of separation; the middle or liminal stage is the stage of transition; the third or post-liminal is the stage of reintegration into the community.

The first stage or pre-liminal stage of separation is manifested when they cross the bridge. The bridge is symbolic of a path to transition. The human world where one must live with all the social order and values is contradicted by entering the world of *churuli* where one lives with their desire. Therefore, the bridge act as a separation or leaving the familiar world and entering to unfamiliar world. The intensity of this stage is witnessed by sound effects from the movie. After the cops cross the bridge, the co-passengers behave differently to them. Initially they never uttered any word and accepted the cops. But this attitude abruptly changes along with crossing the bridge. This scene brings the idea of man's way of obeying the social order initially and violating it when they get a chance. By entering to the works of *churuli* the people revealed their real behaviour and it is clear from their verbal configurations. *Churuli* is portrayed as a world one can exercise the repressed emotion without guilt. The transformation of place is witnessed through the attitude of the jeep driver and passengers. Initially the jeep driver said, "so what brothers? Just hope in, we'll make a

fun trip of it”(Jeep driver, 00:12:43).After crossing the bridge and entering to the place the *churuli* , his conversion leads as“why the hell are you piling on? Get off asshole. You think they all are standing for nothing! His Dublin bag”(Jeep driver,00:19:21).The initial acceptance of jeep passengers also drastically changed in their attitude towards shajivan and Antony .“Get in you motherfuckers “. What the hell are you staring at? Blushing against me? Move cretin”(Jeep passenger,00:19:52).This initial separation of liminal space is intensified with the sound effects which is a feature if psychedelic film. This transformation is noticed by both cops in their conscious stage .“Shajiva , this seems like a different place”(Antony,00:20:05).

The beginning of change means the end of something. When a phase of life comes to an end, a lot of emotions can come up. It can feel sad or heartbreaking to let go of the past. The second stage or the liminal stage is the stage of transition. In this movie, the character Shajivan is going under the process of transition. He loses his initial conscious identity and adapt to the natives in the world of *churuli*. It is through this stage that shajivan's identity is recreated along with crossing the bridge. *Churuli* is portrayed as an anti-structural social world where all culprits live. Along with it, it is noticed under the control of aliens. Transformation of his identity is witnessed from the home of the tapioca plucker. While looking at the water, the scene is transformed with moving chain representing the world where shajivan acts the role of an alien or influenced under the aliens. From this moment his attitude changes from uncertainty to certainty. He acts as an earlier native and is evidenced by other characters. For example , during the clash from the toddy shop, he the says to the hunter “Hey , hey that's enough dickhead”(Shajeevan,00:59:22).This dialogue shows his perceived power under recreated identity. The hunter who is the native of the land made under his influence

through his verbosity. In addition to it, Shajivan didn't spoke courageously to the native initially expecting their behavioral response. Another scene which indicate his transformational state is noticed from his conversation with Antony "What if our chief was wrong? If mayiladumparabil joy is not here?" (Shajivan, 1:00:08).

During the initial stages of investigation, it is noticed that shajivan was sure about the presence of joy in the *churuli*. Once is made under the control of aliens in the land, he is projected with the absence of the culprit in the land. He emerges the doubt of existence of Mayiladumparabil Joy. From this scene, it is clear that the land is under the control of some aliens who can divert the mind according to their wish. Here shajivan possess the transformed identity as natives of *churuli*. Shajivan, one among the cops who came to caught mayiladumparabil Joy occurs as the earlier native of land *churuli*. The evidence from the dialogue adds clarity towards his earlier nativity. "Who are you, boy? I have seen you around before? You look familiar" (old lady, 00:37:31) "How many times will the two of you show up to dig the damn pits?" (Drunkard, 00:55:38). Though he is at the stage of transition, he is perplexed with his conscious identity and actions. The combination of his identity and his conscious awareness is presented through the music and sound effects. During a scene where he losses the mobile network, which can be interpreted as the distortion of hybridity, a music emergence takes back to his initial identity. And along with it he is aware of his new identity and it contradict with earlier identity is intensified through the geographical space and background sound effects. The movie reminds a distorted hybrid identity that exist in between shajivan and the space so called *churuli*.

The third stage or the post liminal stage is the stage of reintegration into the community. *Churuli* is a place where all the mischievous attitude takes place without any regret. The land itself portrayed for the people to conduct their repressed

memories or dreams. *Churuli* is designed for such activities of human to practice their 'rules'. Therefore, it's occupied by the masters of all illegal activities against the morality and humanity. This is grasped from the conversation between a drunkard and Shajivan. "Does anyone who hasn't screwed up come here, you half shit?" (drunkard,00:55:35).

This words clearly indicate what is *churuli* and the people inside it too. Shajivan's adaption to the land of *churuli* is substantiated by his later activities. Introductory, he came as a police officer who possesses the morals and values of rights and rules. Later, his adaption to the lands varies in his actions without morality. Both police officers came to catch mayiladumparabil Joy who is tagged with lots of petitions including pocso. Transformation in shajivan's character resulted in several violations of rules. He indulges in murder and sexual assault. The emergence of shame in shajivan after the slapping competition made him to commit a murder. The instance of looking at the mirror and closing his eyes reveals he is under the control of alien and his prevailing identity as a native to *Churuli* who neglect human emotions and commit crimes under his satisfaction. He murdered the man who won the slapping competition to satisfy his shame and lose in the match. But there is an instance in the movie where shajivan reveals his innocent nature to Antony. "Where did you go last night? Bastard don't lie. You weren't there when I woke up. (Antony,1:09:02). "Where would I go? You must have dreamt. I wake up only in the morning" (Shajivan,1:09:04). One more instance that shows his reintegration into the community is when he commit the same things the Mayiladumparabil joy commit. It is noticed while pengal thanka reveals about it. "What did the hell you do to the small boy at last night? And sneaking off shamelessly without paying a penny? Scoundrel!" (Thanka,1:27:52).

Structure to society deals with morality and humanity. The anti-structural moral order prevailing in society results in murders, assaults etc. Here shajivan's adaptive or post-liminal stage to the community in the *churuli* is showed up by repeating the crimes and sexual assault committed by natives there. Liminal offers dependable background and framing for a new cultural paradigm that incorporates both material, ecological, and political requirements as well as inner experience—the realm of the Psyche. The mind's nature resembles a dreamy trip from one condition to another as it switches from sober consciousness to the psychedelic experience. The modification of consciousness can assist in identifying and resolving differences between how the world appears to an individual and how the world actually is. An individual is capable of perceiving, interpreting, and responding to events taking place in the "actual" world while in "normal" states of consciousness. The same person creates a personal cosmos throughout time to explain the larger universe and serve as a framework for activities.

Every movie has a form or shape that determines the narrative and aesthetic presentation of the content. Psychedelic movies frequently emphasize psychedelic images while also containing visual distortion and experimental storylines. *Churuli's* world architecture is primitive, enigmatic, and masculine; it is set in the folk horror subgenre and is a labyrinth that leads to astray while seeking to bring one closer to one's evolutionary nature. Two gatekeepers of the law, Antony and Shajivan, arrive in *Churuli* with a sense of fairness and the conviction that their work helps to uphold societal order. There are no rules of government, laws, or policing in *Churuli*. The names of the characters are interchangeable, and they use profanity naturally. For instance, kariyachan possess different names in the movie.

People on the planet *Churuli* are held captive in an unending cycle that has been set up by an alien settlement carrying out an experiment. The alien settlement in the

plot of movie is remarkable for an experimental narrative. Perhaps aliens are running the entire operation like well-oiled machinery, which explains why Shajivan keeps seeing wheels. The following are hints that this is being driven by aliens. The frequently occurrence of the weird creatures in Shajivan's visions, the discussion concerning aliens that two other guests at the little eatery brought up early in the movie. And finally, those lights that eventually group together to form a miniature moon. Normal people behave in an unorthodox way when they enter *Churuli*, signaling to the audience that something is strange about the location.

Churuli is an endless cycle. The movie begins with a priest search for a malicious forest entity. The spirit leads the priest farther into the jungle while posing as an anteater. The movie's actions are comparable to this tale, in which a pair searching for a criminal who eventually loses them in the woods. In each cycle, four crucial roles are played by several individuals, including: A criminal engaged in murder, child abuse, and poaching serves as the bait. The Victim: The unwary prey. The Persuader is an enchanted individual who uses the Bait to travel from *Churuli* to locate the following Prey. The Dead: A victim of The Persuader's final murder. The Persuader convinces The Prey to travel to *Churuli* by claiming that The Bait is there hiding. Being bewitched, The Persuader is unaware that he is luring The Prey to *Churuli*. As The Persuader arrives in *Churuli*, he starts carrying out the same purported crimes as The Bait. The Persuader murders a *Churuli* resident in the process. The Prey injures himself and is brought to an Enchantress, who heals him while working a spell. The cycle starts over when The Prey and The Persuader try to escape *Churuli* with The Bait. Yet the roles are reversed this time: The Bait becomes a permanent resident of *Churuli* after being imprisoned there. The Persuader turns into The Bait and becomes paralyzed or bedridden. The Prey changes into The Persuader, who leaves *Churuli* in

search of the following victim without realizing he is a part of a never-ending cycle. Joy, who was The Persuader in the previous cycle, was enchanted and sent forth to locate a victim. Shajivan, The Prey, is located by Joy, and the two travel to *Churuli* in search of The Bait, an unknown criminal. Eventually, Shajivan (The Prey) injures himself and is brought to the Enchantress, who curses him. Joy (The Persuader) is a criminal who has engaged in murder, child abuse, and poaching. Although it is not known who Joy killed, it happened in *Churuli*. As that mini-moon tries to stop Joy (The Persuader) and Shajivan (The Prey) from fleeing *Churuli* with the unknown criminal (The Bait), a new cycle is initiated. Joy is now The Bait and immobilized.

According to the plot of the movie, Shajivan (The Persuader) claims that a criminal named Joy (The Bait) is hiding there, so he brings Antony (The Prey) to *Churuli*. Shajivan is unaware that he has been charmed. They pose as trench diggers who have come to work for a man by the name of Thankan. While this is Shajivan's second visit to *Churuli*, he feels as though he has previously been there, and the locals also recognise him. But, because they are all so entranced, including Shajivan, their memories are foggy. Shajivan recalls the Enchantress' home, which he has already visited as part of the previous cycle, when he takes part in the slapping game. What he witnessed during the previous loop may also be responsible for Shajivan's dreams and images of extraterrestrial activities. Antony (The Prey) injures himself this time and is brought to the Enchantress. Shajivan (The Persuader), among other things, kills the man from the slapping game and engages in child abuse and poaching. Shajivan and Antony approach Joy, who is lying motionless, and confess that they are police officers. As the villagers come and mock Shajivan and Antony, Shajivan shoots at them, revealing that they are under a collective trance, but they are unaffected. Joy consents to take the group out of *Churuli*. When Joy (The Bait) and Shajivan (The

Persuader) attempt to flee *Churuli* with Antony (The Prey), that mini-moon intercepts them in order to begin a new cycle. *Churuli's* conclusion reveals that, just as the prologue's narrative, Joy, under the direction of an enigmatic entity, leads Antony and Shajivan astray to the middle of a spiral route in the forest. The strange moon's emergence signals the beginning of a new cycle. Joy's enigmatic recovery from his paralysis demonstrates how he has likewise fallen under the spell and was never in charge to begin with. It is observed that Joy and Shajivan have shifted places as the jeep moves up. As a result, Shajivan is now The Bait, and the movie ends. Shajivan has the impression that he has already been here even after just one day. His face keeps being described as being recognizable by various persons, and the hint from the residents that a tale of two policemen who visited the area to apprehend a criminal but were unable to arrest him. It's interesting to note that Antony doesn't experience the same level of Shajivan, thus it doesn't matter if Shajivan is once again stuck in a time loop and has brought Antony with him. Because of this, in the final scene, once Joy closes his eyes, Shajivan does likewise, followed by Antony, who might be the group's last strange addition.

It's interesting to observe that despite the lack of etiquette, the women are safer here than they would be outdoors. In *Churuli*, the women do have some influence and can stand up to the men in specific circumstances, but they are almost constantly working for the men or taking care of them in other ways. The inner self of Antony, which is in opposition to conditioned morality, is born in the home of Pengal (Geethi Sangeetha). Although taking control of her sexual cravings, Pengal nevertheless serves a traditionally feminine role in the plot by giving birth and mending. A narrative's conscience is not gender equal merely because women swear alongside males. The issue is how much influence women have in it.

Also, the Bible the director's favourite text is mentioned. The movie is bookended by two passages from the books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, a poor attempt to tie up the loose ends and add some profundity to the thin texture of the movie. Yet when the men are determined to defend nonsense, God can only do so much. *Churuli* is a modern-day homage to the New Testament's Book of Revelation, a fascinating fanciful narrative that is still the subject of numerous, sharply divergent interpretations more than 2,000 years after it was written. This final book of the Bible has clearly served as a source of inspiration for director Lijo Jose Pellissery's eerie, frustratingly abstract horror fantasy, which is based on a screenplay by S. Hareesh that was itself adapted from a story by Vinoy Thomas. Although Pellissery's story is bookended by quotations from the Old Testament prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah, the tumultuous, exasperatingly obscure, yet never-less-than-interesting Revelation primarily reverberates through it - both at a philosophical and literal level, with two instances in the movie where characters actually read passages from the book out loud. There are certain references in the movie which connects with the Bible. The entire plot of the movie can be connected to it. One among it is the great tribulation period. The narration of the lady in the toddy shop in accordance with the child's first communion is related to the great tribulation period.

Then one of the elders asked me ,who are these dressed in white robes? where do they come from? And I said to him: My lord ,you know .And he said to me:They come from the great tribulation.They have washed their robes in the blood of the lamb,and made them white. Therefore ,they stand before the throne of God. And serve him day and night in his temple(lady in toddy shop,00:53:49)

According to biblical prophecy, the tribulation is a seven-year period that will occur immediately following the rapture. Evil will perpetuate without restraint. The

diseases, natural disasters, wars and devastation in the world we see today are the taste of the atrocities to come. Towards the end, the Antichrist would come sit at the center of the tribulations' evil as he personifies Satan. There is nothing that can do to prevent the tribulation from occurring but one can equip one selves with a thorough knowledge of god's word. It reveals everything one need to know about the earth's final days. Initially the inhabitants include all types of people like murderers, thieves etc. By the end of 3 years the antichrist put an end to it and the cruelties increased. Connecting this with the story *churuli*, maadan can be termed as antichrist and people in the *churuli* is noted as cruel inhabitants. After the 3 years of the period Antichrist stopped offering and serving foods to them and asked them to worship him. While taking the entire movie, the middle scene represent it . The great tribulation end when the God comes in anger, in the movie the kodakan can be interpreted as God. Since the kodakan died the tribulation period doesn't come to an end and it repeats. Then there is a scene where shajivan turns to madan and it maybe the joy that exist after killing the kodakan.

The unmarked settlement in *Churuli* might be an analogy for the idea of purgatory, which the Catholic church continued to hold onto in its theology and utilize to gain wealth in the Middle Ages .According to various Christian religions, purgatory is an intermediate state used for atonement cleansing after physical death. Purgatory is the final purification of the elect, which differs greatly from the damned's punishment. According to tradition, the procedure involves a purifying fire, which is supported by certain biblical scriptures. Several varieties of Western Christianity, especially those found in Protestantism, contest its reality. Purgatory is viewed as a place by other branches of Western Christianity. It may be filled with fire. Judaism has some ideas about Gehenna that are similar to purgatory. In the movie *churuli*, Chemban and

vinay is considered as the souls after death .The final scene where they move towards moon can be considered heaven as their destination. Although there are visions of the horrific and unfathomable, a boy with his foot in fire, for example—this is not yet hell. The folks in this area can be lost souls who show a semblance of normalcy at daybreak. According to Christian mythology, this might be the redeeming attribute that could have saved them from being sent to the place set apart for the worst. Also, a priest visits them and offers them ‘communion’ in an effort to spare them from an eternity in hell. Strangely, an arrack store was picked to serve as the temporary church.

Along with experimental plot, psychedelic movie confronts visual distortion. Psychiatrist Hermann Rorschach from Switzerland created the Rorschach Inkblot Test in 1921. Clients/patients are shown ambiguous inkblots during the test. Students must describe the image they perceive on the ink smears. According to the projective hypothesis, when faced with ambiguous inputs, humans would perceive many shapes. What is present in one's thinking at a deep level manifest itself in the shapes one sees. Most often, it stems from their internal conflicts, concerns, or motivations. The same process is essentially applied in *Churuli*, but in film form. *Churuli* is an ambiguous inkblot that the filmmaker uses to probe the depths of the human psyche ,much like the Rorschach Inkblot test. The power of one's unconscious mind is the only factor in the interpretations.

Fraser spiral illusion is the most widely used optical illusion in this movie to give power of unconscious effect and transformation of an individual. Sir James Fraser, a British psychologist who lived from 1863 to 1936, initially reported the Fraser spiral illusion in 1908. The twisted rope illusion is another term for the illusion, as well as the misleading spiral. Although the black arc segments that overlap seem to create a

spiral, they are actually a collection of concentric circles. Combining a regular line pattern mainly circles, with misplaced pieces results in the optical distortion the differently coloured strands. Like many other visual effects, Zöllner's illusion and the café wall illusion are founded on the same idea, which is that a series of tilting elements causes the eye to perceive phantom twists and deviations. The spiral elements in the checkered background add to the illusion. It is a distinct illusion in which the viewer can manually confirm the concentric strands. A distinct color used to emphasize the strands makes it clear to the viewer that there is no spiral present.

One of the most common and naturally occurring patterns in nature is the spiral, a curve that extends into a sequence of looping circles. *Churuli* liberally employs spiral motifs as though to suggest that the village's map is an endless, spiralling circle, similar to the loop the Monk becomes caught in. *Churuli* is established early on as a setting distinct from modern society. The locals exhibit a ferocious sense of unreliability and band together to defend their land. Shajivan gets drawn into *Churuli's* unsettling atmosphere right away. He feels that he may have been in *Churuli* for a longer period of time than he is aware of. The two copes continue their covert operation while trying to elicit details on Joy, the culprit they are looking for. But they are in for something else, though, thanks to the serpentine landscape of *Churuli*, with its legends, lawlessness, and primitive liberties. The genre-hopping movie seems to be trying to persuade us that we're all trapped in a simulation. Since the release of *Angamaly Diaries*, Lijo Jose Pellissery's thematic involvement with the animal within the human has been prominently on display.

Visual effects is accompanied within the psychedelics experience . Colour enhancement is one of the visual effects widely used in the movie *churuli* . An augmentation of the brightness and vibrancy of colours in the surrounding

environment is referred to as colour enhancement. Reds and greens may appear 'redder' and 'greener' respectively throughout this experience, and all colours are likely to appear considerably more distinct, detailed, and visually vivid than they would typically do in normal sober life. Higher levels of this effect might occasionally cause the perception of colours that seem unreal or bizarre. The improvement of colour frequently has concomitant benefits that also improve visual sharpness and pattern recognition. Most frequently, low doses of psychedelic substances like LSD, psilocybin, and mescaline are used to induce it. Yet, it can also happen to a lesser level when certain stimulants and dissociative are being used. Green color represents nature, growth, rebirth, health, hope etc. It resonates the nature cycle of birth, death and then rebirth with transformation and new start. In *churuli* green colour is highly intensified to satisfy the surreal environment. It also resonates shajivan's earlier memory of being the native of *churuli*.

Recursion is characterized as a visual distortion that, by repeatedly repeating particular portions of itself across itself in a self-similar way, substantially modifies the appearance of one's surrounding surroundings. It causes fractal-like patterns to manifest, which frequently zoom in or out of the original image. Usually occurring on its own, this impact rarely lasts longer than a few seconds. Most frequently, moderate doses of psychedelic substances like LSD, psilocybin, and mescaline will cause recursion. Recursion confronts when shajivan visits tapioca plucker's home, he experiences moving wheels. In addition to it, his earlier existence in the land of *churuli* is also portrayed through this visual effect.

Churuli plays a role in enhancing the sharpness and clarity of vision in the environment. An improvement in vision's sharpness and clarity is known as visual acuity. As a result, the external environment's visual features are sharpened to the

point that the edges of things appear to be exceedingly focused, crisp, and defined. The sensation of this acuity improvement is comparable to sharpening a camera or projector lens that was a little out of focus. A person may have the capacity to concurrently perceive and understand everything in their field of vision, including their peripheral vision, at its greatest level. In contrast, when a person is in a sober default state, they are only able to detect the limited area of their central vision in detail. This visual illusion is used in the movie *Churuli* to highlight the fact that *churuli* is a surreal fantasy. There is a scene where a part of tree undergoes visual acuity.. In that land there is no values, laws and rule,so the people can act according to their wish. The moral order floats in the air. This effect is combined with colour enhancement in the movie with intense green colour. People frequently see patterns and subtleties in their surroundings that they may have never noticed or appreciated before while experiencing this impact. When observing scenes, the natural world, and common textures, for instance, it is often possible to see the complexity and perceived beauty of the visual input.Improvements in colour perception and pattern recognition frequently occur along with improvements in visual acuity.

After images, also known as palinopsia, are described as persistent visual sensations in one's field of vision following the cessation of exposure to the initial image. The bright glow that appears to float in one's vision after staring into a light source for a short period of time is a typical example of an after image. The difference between this effect and tracers is that the former does not produce soft blurs behind moving objects. Moving things may leave a trail of layered, stationary images in their wake during psychedelic experiences. As a result, one's visual field is filled with a succession of images of a moving object that are superimposed over one another and become increasingly faded the longer the object has been at that point in space.

Another frequent occurrence of this phenomenon is the ability to see a faint image of the surrounding surroundings after closing one's eyes for a few seconds before it gradually vanishes. These visual effect is mostly evident in shajivan's confused state of identity and his transformation in the land of *churuli*. Other coincident effects, such as tracers and drifting, are frequently present in after pictures.

Drifting is the sensation of seeing items and surroundings become gradually twisted, melted, and transformed over themselves in terms of texture, shape, and overall structure. These changes steadily intensify while a person stares at you, but they are only momentary, returning to normal as soon as you perform a double take. The final scene in the *churuli* where the jeep floats along with Anthony ,shajivan and joy intensifies the effect of drifting.

Lijo jose pellissery's *churuli* which is an absurd art satisfies most of the characteristics of psychedelic movies with experimental plot and visual distortions. The inhabitants in the movie speak a scriptless language called Shurulmozhi or Shurulalam. Psychological optical illusions gives the ability to view mind blending things like impossible images and geometric illusions. Moreover it reveals the act of individuals when there are living in a world free from all moral orders and rules.. The movie's outlook on people is overly simplistic. The villagers are primitive, raw meat-eating animals that slaughter, swear, and engage in fornication like beasts. They have no history. The socioeconomic background of the locals' animosity towards foreigners is not addressed in the movie. There also doesn't seem to be a future. The villagers congregate around the police officers in a scene near the climax and discuss various ways to murder them. Their disregard for morality and the law is exaggerated absurdly for comedic effect.

The characters appear to have attained the sense of liberty that comes with accepting their animalistic identities since *Churuli* is shown as a place removed from reality that is hidden deep within the world. *Churuli's* clear thesis is made visually plausible by the employment of religious and mythological symbols along with the secrets of black magic. The occasional appearances of aliens, the Theechamundi (fire ball) that travels back and forth, and the possible time machine discovered in one of the residents' homes all seem incredibly natural in the world created by Madhu Neelakandhan's visual sorcery, supported by background music by Sreerag Saji and sound design by Renganaath Ravee.

Lijo overdoes the usage of intriguing details in the story to build an absurd setting for the perumaadan fable. The movie doesn't care much for its natural surroundings, despite the plot's inherent connection to the setting. Every frame features extravagant visual effects that cruelly deface the dense rain forest. In every shot, characters bring attention to themselves by being loud and impolite. There isn't any time for reflection. The police are hired to work in a toddy shop inside a forest run by a local whose identity they are unable to ascertain. The shop has the fake aesthetics of Kochi's contemporary cafés, which seem like traditional country restaurants. The neighborhood around it transforms into a horror theatre at night. Through the jungle, glowing apparitions flicker. Unarmed tuskers bellow in close proximity. Lijo uses tangled editing that appears more improvised than deliberate to produce a space-time discordance a loop. To be fair to the plot, among all this mess may have been a thrilling movie. By leveraging technical difficulties, outrageous production design, and intricate narration, Lijo makes sure that the audience doesn't immediately discover the solutions to these concerns.

Conclusion

Movies have always been an imperfect representation of reality because they display the idealized perceptions of their producers. The experiences of high school or falling in love, which are universally relevant, have served as a steady source of inspiration for moviemakers. Although less frequently depicted, less common concepts like drug usage and psychedelic experiences have also served as the basis for timeless storytelling.

Churuli manifested the consciousness of a character under tripping. It serves the adaptive transformation of Anthony to the land of *churuli*. Being a police officer he was meant to follow the laws in his society. But his days in *churuli* made him to break all the laws that he followed in his earlier land. *Churuli* serves as a land for him to exercise his dream world. His actions and conversation with Shajivan reveals that he had dreamt of a society where he could live freely without any laws that contribute his joy. His journey of experience highlights the insight to his unknown perception. The character shajivan from the movie confronts the stages of liminality. His search for his identity is ideal question. Though he is perplexed with his earlier existence from the land, confused stage of identity is resulted throughout the movie. Shajivan's state of committing crime and sexual assault adds the critical nature of the inhabitants of *Churuli*. The permanent state of his identity is revealed through the entire plot.

Through the thread of narrative the movie succeeds in dealing with different genre and themes. Trip with experience also leads to spirituality. The hidden biblical reference to the plot adds novelty. There is a representation of God who acts as a saviour of his human from all evils. It is suggested that psychedelics may offer original insights into the nature of consciousness because they cause strange and

intriguing shifts in conscious experience. This shift in consciousness is portrayed through visual distortion. Likewise, the visual treat also strengthens the confused state of identity. As a result an individual's environment constitute in the transformation of identity. Psychedelic substance use can elicit pronounced and lasting changes in individuals' subjective well-being. Here in the movie, *churuli* acts as a drug where all are trapped. It is an addiction where no rules are bothered. The toddy shop functions as subsequent part of it.

The movie *churuli* puts forward concepts of an individual's deep psychology with the help of imagery, action and deep variation in music. The unusual portrayal of the mind is strengthened with the music in the movie. Psychedelic music typically recreate the experience of altered consciousness. Overall the movie *Churuli* satisfies the characteristics of psychedelic experience.

The entire study indicates that an individual's journey of transformation in a drug induced world results in apparent expansion of consciousness. Human beings are judged based on their actions. The unconscious mind of an individual consists of suppressed feelings. The drug or place like *churuli* acts as a platform to fulfill their restrained emotions and actions. Movies acts a source to highlight the unconscious state of mind. Lijo Jose pellissery 's *Churuli* serves a medium of expression of an individual's 'other' state of mind. Here one is not conscious of any structure of society. Therefore movie serves as a channel to depict the deep psychology of human with images, symbols and music.

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