

Chapter 1

Introduction

The proposed research work is based on the reading of the films of Adoor Gopalakrishnan (Adoor), which foregrounds the power implications embedded in the socio-political milieu of Kerala in the twentieth century and investigates the resistance in that context. The study examines how all levels of society share in the circulation and representation of power relations. The reading attempts to explicate how the culture produces and internalises constructs such as family, caste, and gender, which are irreplaceable sites of power. His plots on power discourse are set against the transition of Kerala from feudalism to modernity.

Adoor, born in Kerala, is a well-known Indian film director. He has made twelve films and over forty documentaries, most of which are set in his native state of Kerala, in southern India. They are *Swayamvaram* (*One's Own Choice* 1972), *Kodiyettam* (*The Ascent* 1977), *Elepathayam* (*Rat Trap* 1981), *Mukhamukam* (*Face to Face* 1984), *Anantaram* (*Monologue* 1987), *Mathilukal* (*The Walls* 1989), *Vidheyam* (*The servile* 1993) *Kathapurushan* (*Man of the Story* 1995), *Nizhalkuthu* (*Shadow Kill* 2002), *Naalu Pennungal* (*Four Women* 2007), *Oru Pennum Randaanum* (*A Climate for Crime* 2008), and *Pinneyum* (*Once Again* 2016). Most of his feature films, with a few exceptions, investigate the power structures and relationships in the Travancore region, which was a princely state prior to 1956. Adoor himself has experienced some of the most momentous periods in the history of this region, and he recreated the same through the narrative medium of cinema. This research project shall try to discover the power structures embedded in the socio cultural history of Kerala that the films of Adoor

apparently narrate. The films also reflect Adoor's writing of the history of Travancore.

The reading of the films will concentrate on the dynamics of culture, its historical foundations, practices, and manifestations. The field of cultural studies encompasses a range of theoretical perspectives to unearth the history of a narrative. Adoor actually tries to transcreate his own experience with a particular age in his films. It not only gives enjoyment but also makes the viewers think and relate to a universal experience. The films chosen for the study to analyse power relations are *Kodiyettam*, *Mukhamukam*, *Elepathayam*, *Kathapurushan*, *Anantaram*, *Vidheyan*, and *Naalu Pennungal*. Here, the select films are read both as literary and visual texts. A close reading of the literary and non-literary signifiers in the select films of Adoor could reveal how he interprets the political scenario of Kerala in a certain period, especially its impact on the culture, action, and attitudes of characters and subsequent shifts in power relations.

Cinema plays an important role in societal representation, echoing the voice of the times. The films of Adoor, in particular, showcase the nuances of the structures of society through meticulous, lengthy, and close-up shots of individual actions and expressions. The films of the earlier generation also influenced him in his work. There are also influences from the film movements, foreign cinema, Indian art cinema, and world cinema in his perspective and contributions. It is relevant to look at a brief history of Malayalam cinema to study how Adoor was influenced and created a unique signature in filmmaking.

Vijaykrishnan in his work *Malayala Cinemayude Katha* traces a brief history of Malayalam cinema. J. C. Daniel made the first film in Malayalam, called *Vigathakumaran*, in 1928. He himself acted, directed, produced, and wrote the screenplay for the film. He founded the first film studio, Travancore National Pictures Ltd., in Kerala. C. V. Raman Pillai directed a historical film, *Marthandavarma*, in 1933, based on his own novel. *Baalan* by S. Nottani was the first talkie in Malayalam. *Jnanambika*, directed by Nottani, and *Prahlada*, by K. Subramanyan, were released at the beginning of the 1940s. *Prahlada* is the first mythological film in Malayalam. The directors of these films were non-Keralites. P. J. Cherian's *Nirmala* was the first Malayalam film to incorporate a song and dance sequence. *Udaya* by Kunchacko and *Maryland* by P. Subramanyan were the first studios and produced several films in the 1950s and 1960s.

The films *Neelakuyil* and *Newspaper Boy* of this decade, to a certain extent, confine themselves to the problems of society. Realistic problems have started to take on narrative roles. Untouchability became a core area of discussion in the film *Neelakuyil* by P. Bhaskaran and Ramu Kariat. The theme of Italian neo-realism influenced the theme of the story in the film *Newspaper Boy*, as it represented the theme of poverty in all its bleakness. It is also called the first Malayalam cinema in the tradition of art cinema.

It is difficult to pin point the general characteristics of films in the first half of the twentieth century. As it was the birth of the Malayalam cinema industry, the films of this era discuss multivalent themes. The commercial benefit was the aim of the directors. But certain filmmakers played a didactic role in the thematic concerns of good and evil and spiritual stories. *Kandam Bacha Coat* (1960) was

the first Malayalam feature film in colour. The genre of adaptation became common in the 1960s, and *Chemmeen* by Ramu Kariat was based on a novel of the same name by Thakazhi Sivasankarapillai. The film *Iruttinte Aatmavu* by P. Bhaskaran adopted the short story of the same name by M. T. Vasudevan Nair. *Oolavum Theeravum* by P. N. Menon in 1967 heralded the entry of art cinema, or parallel cinema in Malayalam, and it gave a new sense of thought to the new wave of cinema in the 1970s.

The decades between the 1970s and 1990s are described as the 'golden age of Malayalam cinema'. There is a shift in the aesthetics and narration of cinema compared to the earlier generation. The development of art cinema was significantly aided by K. G. George, Padmarajan, John Abraham, K. R. Mohanan, and others. In addition, this was the time when G. Aravindan first appeared with his masterpieces, like *Utharayanam*, *Kummatty*, *Thampu*, etc. The second part of the 1970s saw the release of Adoor's *Kodiyettam* and P. A. Backer's *Kabani Nadi Chuvannappol*. By fusing the characteristics of the new wave with the mainstream, Padmarajan and K. G. George paved the way for a new Malayalam film genre called medium or semi art cinema (Babu 91).

Malayalam cinema becomes modern with the release of Adoor's film *Swayamvaram*. Though films like *Oolavum Theeravum*, *News Paper Boy*, *Neelakuyil*, and *Chemmeen* experiment with viewers' tastes, Adoor's film *Swayamvaram* took Malayalam cinema to national and international acclaim. He made innovations in the composition of shots, music, and knowledge of time. Adoor's *Elepathayam*, *Anantharam*, *Mukhamukam*, and other regional fervors have achieved international acclaim. The political turmoil in Kerala became a

theme for the avant-garde film makers of the decade. The cinemas of John Abraham and Shaji N. Karun were discussed for aesthetic and thematic concerns of the age.

The 1990s brought into society blockbuster cinemas, which are focused more on the plot and story such as *Manichitrathazhu* by Fazil and *Swaham* by Shaji. Malayalam cinema received national and international acclaim for films such as *Marana Simhasnam* by Murali Nair, *Guru* by Rajeev Anchal, and others, which received national and international acclaim for Malayalam cinema. Adoor made three films, *Mathilukal*, *Kathapurushan* and *Vidheyan*, during this decade, and they are some of the notable productions in art cinemas during the decade.

The first decade of the 21st century contributed films of different genres. Slapstick comedy was employed by directors such as John Antony, Lal Jose, and Sasi Shankar. Kamal's *Meghamalhar* and *Perumazhakalam* were different, with music and rain as significant signifiers in the development of the plot. The films which reflected the characteristics of art cinema in general are Adoor's *Nizhalkuthu* and *Naalu Pennungal*, Sarath's *Sayahnam* and T. V. Chandran's *Susanna*. The revolutionary middle cinema that emerged in the 1980s has grown into the contemporary Malayalam cinema, which is characterised by the combination of popular and art (Babu 92). The social issues are discussed and narrated through post-modernistic representations in the films, and the experimental films are called new generation films, such as *Ozhimuri* and *Kammatipattam*.

Films by Adoor, *Oranum Randu Pennnm and Pinneyum* take a pragmatic approach to contemporary issues. Malayalam cinemas adopt different themes to suit the voice of the ages. Innovative techniques are used to capture the themes in the new generation of films. High-budget and low-budget films are produced according to the theme and form of narration. Earlier Malayalam films reflected the crux of Kerala, such as the influence of reformist forces such as Sree Narayana Guru, class renaissance movements, land reform bill, Agrarian Relations Bill, and the Congress Party Struggle. The plots of the films trace the context for the setting of the films. The films *Navalokam* (1951), *Neelakuyil* (1954), *Newspaper Boy* (1955), *Rarichan enna Pouran* (1956) etc. reflect the rise of society against class caste discrimination and the deprived condition of the lower classes.

Malayalam Cinema entered a new phase with parallel changes in the policies of the state. This produced changes in the political, economic and societal phases. Later, film societies and art cinemas created a new aesthetics and critical appreciation. Man is examined as a lonely or in an existentialist phase rather than a social animal. The trends of the Malayalam cinema in the new direction can be discussed under the influence of world art cinema in general and Indian art cinema in specific.

Art Cinema is quite different from the commercial or main stream cinema in its content and narration. David Bordwell describes art cinema as a different genre with its own characteristics (Barry 152). The initial phases of art cinema can be seen in Italian silent film *L'Inferno* and D. W Griffith's *Intolerance*. Indian art cinema is unable to create its own path in the onslaught of mainstream cinema.

The art cinema got influence from other sources such as leftist and nationalist Indian People's Theatre Movement (IPTA) which started in 1940s. The art cinema excludes songs, dances and the established narrative formulae of commercial cinema. It made experimentation with form style and structure. The characters exhibit more realism. Comedy is employed as a satire to bring the social sense. The language of the film is experimented to bring together the visual signification.

Art cinema concentrates more on the identification of the film as an art form. John Hood says that the surface characteristics such as props and mise en scène, the costumes, dwelling and domestic décor (Hood 7) are important. The art films are slower in action compared to the commercial films. The author says that the slowness is deliberately employed by the film makers to enhance and intensify the impact of the theme. The films of Satyajit Ray provide the viewer time for reflection and absorption and it is essential to the understanding and experiencing the film as an art form. The mode of slower action leads to lack in the spectacular. There is little special effect and even the violence is "restrained and nonphysical" (8). The art films rather provide an aesthetic and cerebral experience for the viewers.

According to John W. Hood in *The Essential Mystery*, art films represent the marginalised and socially inferior in its realistic form. Women are also delineated in art cinema with admiration, respect and compassion. But this is often ambiguous as it speaks about gender disparities embedded in a culture. The criticism often raised forward against art cinema is that it always emphasises on the darker side of India ridden with poverty; it may narrow down the image of the country.

The art cinemas provide a great space to the regionalism. The 'Indianness' of Indian art cinemas can be derived from the socio cultural context. The contextualisation and settings of the films in urban areas with grand architecture and costumes may fade the Indianness. Films set in rural India are often necessarily marked by reference to certain traditionally determined social structures made fast by history as well as to traditional forms of livelihood and traditionally honoured customs and values, giving these films a notably Indian character.

The art cinema is also known as 'regional cinema'. It studies the nuances of the socio cultural strata of a region. Adoor and Aravindan made films in their own regional language, Malayalam. Ritwik Ghatak and Satyajit Ray made films in Bengali. Shyam Benegal and Govind Nihalini directed films in Hindi. Bengal and Kolkata are safely featured in the films of Ghatak and Dasgupta, respectively. The art cinemas of these film directors often chose villages for their locations.

Geography is one of the significant factors that contribute to regionalism. At the same time, taking into consideration the characteristics of art films, it is observed that geography does not contribute to the crux of the study. But Bengal and Kolkata are featured in the films of Ghatak and Dasgupta. Regionalism is less visible in films set in cities. W. Hood observes that the regional identity is more drawn from the particularities of the history of a region. He opines that "regional cinema" is a better term to describe the non-Hindi commercial cinema. The main transformations in regional history that influenced the lives of people often form the plot. Mrinal Sen has brought out the references to the Bengal famine of 1943 in his films. Dasgupta made films that are set in the context of naxalism but with a personal focus on history in the background.

There are Hindi commercial films that have proven artistic and technical excellence. The capitalist marketing mode works by creating a popular need and cultivating a belief in people that they will provide what they need. The vast publicity in the press and on television ensures income, viewership, and success for commercial cinema. Though the commercial film industry represents the bulk of Indian cinema, there is an alternative Indian cinema whose films have a greater respect for the intelligence of an audience and whose directors try to depict the nuances of the real world.

The national art cinema influenced the Malayalam directors, and Adoor pioneered the same in Kerala. Adoor rejects the label of being addressed as 'parallel cinema' for this genre. According to him, maintaining these films as a separate genre is a very narrow and absurd perspective. He prefers the term 'new cinema'. It attempted to examine the conditions of human life. Adoor graduated from the Film and Television Institute of India in Pune in 1965 and founded the Chitralekha Film Cooperative in Thiruvananthapuram as an agency for the more efficient production and distribution of noncommercial films (Hood 157). Adoor relies on the aesthetics of the language to produce the desired effect. He examines the power entanglements at all levels of society. He evaluates and critically modifies the established systems of film aesthetics. He keenly analyses the social scenario of Kerala in detail to discuss and translate that into a realistic narrative.

Power is seen everywhere in the society. It is mandatory in all forms of relationships. Art copies society in different manifestations. When power is inherent in society it can be reflected in art forms such as literature, film, dance forms, painting, folklore art etc. Since the study aims to focus on films the

concentration will be limited to the layers of power structure in films. The films in general capture, the heroic attributes pertained to masculinity in relation to gender, fantasy, horror, science, violence etc. The study aims to analyse the realistic conditions of social, cultural and economic existence. Power is established through different norms. Adoor uses paradigmatic set of signs in the form of mise en scène. It probes into deeper meanings together with the plot of the story.

Michael Foucault, a French historian has investigated the delineation of power in the culture and the society which is constituted not only through political ideologies but also through the inculcation of invisible and abstract ideologies. The application of Foucault's perception of power in the text identifies the operations of power not only in the form of dictatorship. It rather concentrates how the self and the society mutually intersect in the problematisation of power. Foucault's theories are associated with the post structuralist and post modernist perspectives. Paul Rabinow in *The Foucault Reader* cites what Foucault himself has told about his conceptualisation of power:

The goal of my work during the last twenty years has not been to analyse the phenomenon of power, or to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis. My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our analysis, human beings are made subjects (208).

Power is understood and studied in various realms and aspects both knowingly and unknowingly. Foucault in an interview with Michael Bess says:

Power should not be understood as an oppressive system bearing down on individuals from above, smiting them with prohibitions of

this or that. Power is a set of relations. Power should not be defined as a constraining force of violence that represses individuals, forcing them to do something or preventing them from doing some other thing. But it takes place when there is a relation between two free subjects, and this relation is unbalanced, so that one can act upon the other, and the other is acted upon, or allows himself to be acted upon. Therefore, power is not always repressive. It can take a certain number of forms. And it is possible to have relations of power that are open (Bess 2).

The study investigates how human beings are made subjects and objects, which is an ongoing process in the arena of power relations. It is a never-ending process in which oppressor and oppressed never take fixed positions. It may vary according to economic, social, and cultural factors. This work attempts to look at the films from the perspective of power relations. Power is impossible to define unless it is defined within a specific set of relationships.

Adoor's films are solely based on the relationship between human beings and society. The society is made up of a complex web of power mechanisms, including visible and unseen manifestations of power. The thesis tries to look at how Adoor, as a film maker, reflects it through the plot and narrative aesthetics of the film. The function of power is visible in both human beings and animals. It is difficult to live in a society which has no hierarchy. Power can be defined in the terms of oppressor-oppressed relationship and in the productive aspect in terms of the well being of a society.

The study follows the methodology of Michael Foucault's conception about power in general to look at the power relations implied in the plot of the

film. Man/woman is the centre or the locus tied up with constructed signifiers of the society. State, gender, caste, normativity etc. form the core concepts in the study based on select films. These are often perceived as the sites of power. The study probes into how human beings are made objects and subjects in the complex relationship with these sites of power.

Semiotics and related structuralist and poststructuralist perspectives on aspects of modern society and popular culture provide powerful conceptual and analytic tools to study the cinematic representation of class, gender, race and other socio cultural realities in a more precise fashion. This include the leading structuralist idea of signification working through prominent, culturally constructed binary oppositions, for example, culture/ nature, male/ female, white/ black, West/ East, to which value laden meanings are attached (Chandler 102).

Foucault aims to isolate techniques of power. This is explained in *The Foucault Reader* edited by Paul Rabinow. Foucault “overemphasised the inner articulations and seemingly self-enclosed nature of social scientific intercourses” (Rabinow10). Foucault speaks about three modes of objectification. The ‘constituted subject’ is not a ‘subject’ in the first mode. “Rather the constituted subject can be seen as a victim caught in the processes of objectification and constraint-most obviously the case for prisoners and mental patients” (10). The second mode of objectification involves a scientific classification and so the relation to domination is more oblique. In Foucault’s work *The Birth of the Clinic*, he speaks about how body is treated as a thing in 19th century in the clinics. The spatial, temporal and social compartmentalisation brought dividing practices among human beings. The third mode is subjectification. He says: “It concerns the way human being turns him-or herself into a subject” (11). The dividing practices

seen in the first two modes show an inclination towards domination and brought dichotomies such as vagabond populations, working class, marginalized etc. This contributed to the various studies of power and recognised by theorists.

The persons or the object forms an active self through the isolation techniques. He further says that the self formation takes place through a variety of “operations on [people’s] own bodies, on their souls, on their thoughts, on their conduct” (11). Foucault says how sex was brought as a holding key to the self understanding. He further explains about the growing obsession with sexuality and show how the individual and race joined in a common set of concerns. So, he says that it is important not to draw sharp line between the processes of subjectification and dividing practices (11).

Foucault in the “The Subject and Power” speaks about the ‘state’ as a new form of political power. The study makes use of these theoretical percepts to read the conceptualisation of state in the films of Adoor. Foucault states:

Most of the time state is envisioned as a kind of political power which ignores individuals, looking only at the interests of the totality, or I should say, of a class or a group among the citizens. But I’d like to underline the fact that the state’s power (and that’s one of the reasons for its strength) is both a totalising and individualising form of power (14).

The select films for the intended study can be analysed with the Foucauldian notions of sovereign power, disciplinary power and biopower. Foucault specifies about the new links between the state and the individual in Europe with the advent of renaissance. The analysis of power in these films can be explained in terms of sovereignty. He says that it is “a theory that goes from subject to subject that

establishes the political relationship between subject and subject” (43). According to him sovereignty is related to a multiplicity of power relations. But the power is not defined exactly in the political sense. Rather they are capacities, possibilities and potentials.

The political sensibility can be established only if there is a fundamental unity between possibility and power. The aspects of power derive from this unitary power. He further says that power works in accordance with certain legitimacy and it allows the law to function as such. Foucault in his work *Society must be Defended* attempts to bring out the operators of domination (45). The study attempts to find out the effects of authority of state on the people and also how these people react to the imposed dominance. They are analysed in a plethora of web of power relations. The power of the state becomes inevitable and it is studied through the percepts of new historicism. The state plays a dominating role and the culture becomes an instrument of the state apparatus in the centralisation of the power. Adoor recounts history of the Kerala.

Foucault speaks about the “art of the government” and its scope is wider in “On Governmentality” (1978). They spoke on “governing of household, souls, children, a province, a convent, a religious order, or a family” (8). Political formation was implemented as it included all forms of activity, “from the smallest strings of the soul to the largest military maneuvers of the army”. He says:

The art of government ...is concerned with...how to introduce economy, that is the correct manner of managing individuals, goods and wealth within the family...how to introduce this meticulous attention of father towards his family, into the management of the state (Foucault 10).

Society is the target according to Foucault. When he says about the concerns of the government it looks into how to introduce economy and order from the top of the state through all aspects of social life. Foucault concludes in “On Governmentality”:

the things which the government is to be concerned about are men, but men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those other things which are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation fertility, etc. men in their relation to that other kind of things which are accidents and misfortunes such as famine, epidemics, death etc. (11).

This becomes a semantic article in locating the terminals of power relations between man and society. Here the society is represented by government or the state. The involvement of administrative power of the state in Kerala becomes the subject of the study in the select films. Though the study looks at subjectivities and self formation it also details the forms of subjugation embedded in the mode of objectification.

Foucault’s line of thought goes in well with Adoor’s representation of state in the films *Elepathayam*, *Mukhamukam* and *Kathapurushan*. The study discusses how the protagonists are subjugated and the sovereignty is operated in the act of subjugation. The reading also tries to locate the narrative of history in terms of new historicism. So, it again emphasises the need to the read the filmic text as a space where power relations are made visible. It is studied not to analyse the features, for example, matrilineal nair families or the impact of land reform bill on

the land lords. Rather it makes an attempt to trace the power relations of a particular age.

The ideologies of class, religion, community and the society in general are traced in the films. The ideological structures of the above construct the normal and natural and those who deviate from the norm are considered uncivilized and abnormal. They occupy the position of the 'other'. So, the study attempts to investigate how it constraint individual identities. The legitimisation of power is seen or it can be analysed as an act of indirect domination.

The state considers it as their concern to foster the growth and life of the population. It rather becomes a duty embedded in the art of government. Foucault details about the regime 'biopower' in *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1*:

Bio-power brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge power an agent of the transformation of human life...Modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question (143).

The films of Adoor, as in regard with the relations of power, looks into how the other pole of the bio power 'body' is studied in different manifestations of power. It becomes both subject and object, master and slave, powerful and powerless in the relationships. Foucault extends the definition about 'body' in *Discipline and Punish* as "an object to be manipulated and controlled" (260). It is also examined to complement the general study of power relations in the proposed chapters.

Foucault also speaks about the concept of 'technologies' that is also pertained to the objectification of the body. It comes as an object of study in the select chapters of study. The methods of oppression or subjugation can be studied

in terms of ‘disciplinary technology’. Foucault speaks about this in the work *Discipline and Punish*. He says that disciplinary control can be found in different forms such as prisons, workshops, schools, hospitals etc. He says that this can be achieved through specific means.

Adoor makes frequent use of tropes such as court, prison and police. They are forms of disciplinary control in the films of Adoor. *Mukhamukam*, *Kathapurushan*, *Vidheyam*, *Naalu Pennungal*, *Mathilukal*, *Nizhalkuthu*, *Oru Pennum Randanum* etc are the films in which the disciplinary procedure is intended to assure orderly behaviour. Of course, it is linked to the intricacies and complexities in the plot. But the study shows how it is perpetuated to bring control and how it is related to complex power relations of the state and the formation of the self.

Foucault says that it is linked to capitalism. He emphasises the techniques of disciplinary control such as spatial control and the other methods integral for capitalism. Adoor brings out the conflict in *Mukhamukam*- the bourgeoisie and the workers, and the self of Sreedharan trapped in the mechanisms of power and discipline. This becomes more enigmatic in the spheres of subject and power. Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* draws Jeremy Bentham’s model of panopticon and it serves as a ‘shorthand’ to state other technologies of power. Foucault’s core perspective on the concept of panopticon defines power and, its design is a “diagram of the mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form” (205).

The analysis of the films becomes incomplete if it confines only to the literary analysis. The study intends to encapsulate the visual signifiers which are replete with meanings. They are considered as signs. The ‘signified’ gains meaning in the contextual analysis. Adoor concentrates on the *mise en scène* of

every shot. Adoor himself has rejected the idea that he has used symbols in his films. He concentrates on inner reality rather than surface reality in the films. To represent the inner reality on screen the actions are important. It is impossible to speculate the meanings or thoughts in the mind of a character without his/her actions. Similarly, Adoor has intellectually used props to complement the dialogues and the mindset of the characters in each shot. Adoor prefers to label them as metaphors as it stands for something.

The connotative reading of the film involves the study of non literary modes of representation in cinema. The reading of the films attempts to discover the metonyms and it is associated with interplay of meanings. Adoor has employed metonyms to invest plurality of meanings associated with the psyche of the characters. The psyche is not something which cannot be directly represented. The visual art is supplemented with more devices to incarnate abstract meanings to signs.

Adoor says that film has a specific language of its own. The film constitutes images equivalent to words in poem, colours in canvas and sounds in music. The film maker makes creative edition of images and sounds. They do not have an independent existence of its own (Gopalakrishnan, *Cinemayude Lokam* 6). Christian Metz's work *Film Language: A Semiotics of Cinema* formulates the study on the expressiveness of cinema through the methods of linguistics developed by Fredinand de Saussure. He makes use of the study of digesis and Fredinand de Saussure's structural study of paradigmatic and syntagmatic signs, both literal and visual elements in cinema. Metz perceives paradigms as cinematic techniques to represent objects. It is meant to represent different types of shot scales such as close shots, medium shots and long shots. It also focusses on types

of lighting, types of camera movements, as well as transition between images such as straight cuts, wipes and dissolves etc. (Yacavone 246).

Metz analysed images in the form of shots. He considers different ways of editing images and sees how it becomes a 'self contained syntagma' (247). The study of semiotics provides a space for the film directors to effectively use its language to represent the socio cultural realities. Pierce speaks about how the signs are differentiated from the conventional ones which resembles direct meaning. A symbol may not necessarily relate to what it represents. It is different from icons. Icons work according "to recognisable formal or structural resemblance between the material sign token (e.g. representational picture) and its (absent) object" (248).

Peirce uses the term 'index' in *Peirce on Signs: Writings on Semiotic* to define how a sign is used to refer the mind to referent object or an event. The relationship between the two can be based on a connection that is natural or motivated (Pierce 281). Yacavone in "The Expressive Sign: Cinesemiotics, Enunciation and Screen Art" says that the films have a multi faceted symbolic dimension (Yacavone 248). The connotations in films can be brought under this category. The symbolic can be used to meant the "narratively submerged thematic deep structures of cultural binaries" (249). He further talks about that culturally mediated signification is always in operation in both the construction of film images and their comprehension (251). Adoor makes use of the props in the shots which are imbued with the meanings of culture. He prefers to define these props as the metaphors than symbols. Adoor can be considered as an auteur in his uniqueness in the use of metaphors. Peter Wollen in *Signs and Meaning* extends the definition of *auteur*. The *auteur* theory does not limit itself to acclaiming the

director as the main author of the film. It implies an operation of decipherment; it reveals authors where none had before. For years the model of an author in cinema was that of the European director, with open artistic aspiration and full control over his films (Wollen 77).

Wollen speaks about two main schools. He distinguishes between *auteur* and *metteur en scène* (78) and his distinction is based on connotative, expressive and, denotative representations in a film. He elaborates their functions:

The work of the *auteur* has a semantic dimension, It is not purely formal; the work of the *metteur en scène*, on the other hand, does not go beyond the realm of performance, of transposing into a special complex of cinematic codes and channels a pre-existing text: a scenario, a book or a play...The meaning of the films of an *auteur* is constructed *a posteriori* – the meaning semantic rather than expressive- of the films of a *metteur en scène* exists *a priori* (79).

Wollen admits that there exists a controversy in the distinction between *auteur* and *metteur en scène*. Adoor prefers to address himself as an *auteur*. Wollen also adds what Geoffrey Nowell Smith tells about the uniqueness of an *auteur* and *auteur* theory. According to him the purpose of the criticism is to discover as follows:

superficial contrasts of the subject and treatment a hard core of basic and recondite motifs. The pattern defined by these motifs...is what gives an author's work its particular structure, both defining it internally and distinguishing one body of work from another (80).

Wollen mentions about the director Howard Hawks to extend the understanding of *auteur* theory. It becomes possible to uncover certain features which marks a

unique Hawksian signature in his films. Wollen comments that his films exhibit same thematic preoccupations, motifs, visual style etc. (81) "...Roland Barthes constructed a species of *homo racinianus*, the critic can construct a *homo hawksianus* the protagonist of Hawksian values in the problematic Hawksian world" (81). Wollen says that "What the *auteur* theory does is – to take a group of films- the work of one director- and analyse their structure" (104). There is obviously an "Adoorian approach" (Baruah 39) reflected in the films of Adoor. The props in the films of Adoor are poignant to represent both the narrative and the aesthetics of the film.

Adoor in the interview (See Appendix) does not admit that he has used symbols in his films. He says that he prefers to understand them as metaphors. Adoor shows metaphors related to village life in *Kodiyettam*, communism in *Mukhamukam* and ancient heritage in *Elepathayam*. They are vital in those shots. There are shots in his films which focus only on the props. It wholly ignores the presence of characters. They do not function as a symbol, but it produces different meanings for a viewer. Windows serve as a meaningful prop and metaphor in his films. Adoor uses the bars of windows as props in almost every film. He takes close shots of characters behind the window bar. It may signify the entrapment in the lives of the characters. The window bars which appear with out the presence of characters are also a recurring metaphor in his films. The open window and close window in each shot have significance in relation with the narrative of the plot.

Adoor says that the most important aspect about the filmic language is the artistic integrity. It encompasses many things such as the intention of the film maker, the form of conveyance, the approach and the mode of its representation.

The film maker needs to invent a unique method of representation to convey the message. He/she should know about the craft to present it with the art of aesthetics. Unless the film maker has sound knowledge about the craft of the film he/she has to dependant on others. Then the film fails to inculcate the self incarnation of the film maker. Adoor noted 'plasticity' as one of the limitations of the film. In a film viewer has to overpower the artistic uniqueness of the actors to comprehend crux of the film, in comparison with a novel (Thomas 79).

The mise en scène of the film contributes to the preferences of the filmmaker. Adoor has his own choices in the selection of elements for the mise en scène. That too distinguishes him as an *auteur*. The originality of an auteur lies not in the subject but rather in the technique, that is, the aesthetic use of mise en scène. It is through mise en scène that everything is represented. The meaning or the communication between the film maker and the viewer through the intellect use of mise en scène is perceived as "implicit or symbolic meaning" and "symptomatic or repressed meaning". David Bordwell in *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema* speaks about the four kinds of meaning produced from the reading of a text. They are referential meaning, conceptual or abstract meaning, implicit or symbolic meaning and repressed or symptomatic meaning. In the case of first three meanings it is clear for the text what it is doing. The symptomatic or repressed meaning goes well in tone with the artistic representation of *auteur*. Symptomatic meanings are meanings that the text divulges involuntarily and are assumed to be at odds with the referential, explicit or implicit ones. Taken as individual expression, the symptomatic meaning may be treated as a consequence of the artist's obsessions

or phobias. Taken as a part of social dynamics, it can be traced to economic, political or ideological processes (Bordwell 8).

Adoor's special preference for the cultural and contextual props in shots shows his identity as an auteur. Adoor intellectually uses paintings and pictures in the background especially in the films *Elepathayam*, *Mukhamukam*, *Naalu Pennungal*, and *Oru Pennum randanum*. He brilliantly uses animals as metaphors to convey the meaning. The street cat in *Swayamvaram*, elephants in *Kodiyettam* and *Kathapurushan*, rat in *Elepathayam*, hen in *Anantaram* and lamb in *Nizhalkuthu* function both as signs and props. They add meanings to the plot of the film. The rat functions both as a metaphor and character in the film.

F. M Thomas says that the life is visible in the films of Adoor. The tradition surroundings and more than that the very familiar Kerala is implicit in the films of Adoor. Though the study intends to read the multifarious power operations in the select films, Adoor's other films discuss the complicated relationship between individual and society.

Adoor in an interview with Anil S. says:

Every minute detail used in his film is not a coincidence. Every bit is willfully put there. Every bit of object that you see on the screen is willfully kept there. Each and every composition is willfully created. Also each and every moment has got a meaning. Let's talk about the camera movement. For me if camera moves from one object to another, it should reveal a better idea about something. It should reveal something more. Otherwise it cannot be done.

Because each and every moment, the audience is expecting something more than what you have already shown. (Gopalakrishnan, *Samakalika Malayalam* 76).

He says that it is quite hard to notice the visible camera movements. Adoor dismantles the conventional use of sounds in his films. The other films of the same era employ the sound of music to add intensity to the mood of emotions. According to Adoor the music of violin in a particular scene is used to signify the emotion of melancholy. So, he says that it is not a contribution rather a representation of overemotions. It conditions preconceived emotions of the viewers.

Adoor speaks about the aesthetic innovativeness in the use of sounds in his films. It works at a sub conscious level. The music becomes a leit motif in his perception. Sometimes it has sub themes. It unites at the climax. According to him background music has its own form. It is not subservient to the plot. It has its own entity and existence. This is same in the case of sound. Adoor brought the innovativeness in the use of sounds in his debut film *Swayamvaram*.

The very first scene of the film is a lengthy continuous shot which captures a long journey. It takes four minutes in the screen without any dialogues. But Adoor says that the viewers are not visually trained to grasp the movie. They are conditioned to understand a film only through the mode of storytelling. Adoor emphasises the role of visual signs to read a film. The silence or the absence of the sounds highlight the significance of visual signs and it further unfolds the plot of the stories. There are many references underlined in such films (78).

The sound of rain in the film *Swayamvaram* acts a metaphor of joy and bondage for the character Viswam. Again, the sound of rain becomes an apparent

signifier to reflect the pensiveness of the scene. The sound becomes a dominant trope compared to the other factors which contribute to a scene. Adoor hardly uses background music. Adoor generally uses natural things, trees, birds, and animals as props. The coconut trees and crows play a significant role. It is intentionally added to prioritise the natural props which nullify the prioritisation of plot and story. Adoor says that he was the first one to use sync sound in the country. He speaks in an interview titled “Always on my Terms” given to *The Hindu* about the use of music in his films:

The decisions on music are taken based on the theme of the film, not to heighten the emotions in the dramatic scenes or to reinforce what is shown on the screen. You resort to such gimmicks when the scene that you created fails to convey the emotions. In *Kodiyettam* the protagonist is aimless. If there’s music, it tracks the whole thing in particular direction, which I wanted to avoid. I have used a Kathakali song in the final sequence though. The study of the select films also discusses in general with the use of sounds and how it works in relation with the production of meaning (Gopalakrishnan 3).

This thesis acknowledges the different studies based on the films of Adoor. Most of the studies focus on individual films of Adoor which appears as seminal papers. There are quite exceptions such as Suranjan Ganguly, Parthajit Baruah and Gautaman Bhaskaran who have analysed the films on the basis of textual reading. Rateesh Radhakrisnan and Pradeep. K. have attempted to look at the themes of masculinity and space, respectively, in the films of Adoor in their dissertations. Suranjan Ganguly offers a compelling analysis of socio historical contexts of

Kerala in the films of Adoor Gopalakrishnan through his work *The Films of Adoor Gopalakrishnan: A Cinema of Emancipation*. He examines how Kerala's abrupt displacement from a princely feudal state into twentieth century modernity has shaped Gopalakrishnan's complex narratives about identity, selfhood and otherness, in which innocence is often at stake and characters struggle with their conscience.

Lalit Mohan Joshi and C.S Venkiteswaran in the work *A Door to Adoor* discusses how Adoor's films map the history of region from inside, for all his films are autobiographical in a way and are about different aspects of Kerala society and life. They deal with human conditions at the most elemental level and it is their keen observation and intense sensibility about the 'local' that makes his films universal in appeal.

Prathajit Baruah in the biography *Face to Face: A Cinema of Adoor Gopalakrishnan* has highlighted the importance of the works of Adoor in showcasing social concerns and social interpretations in his movies.

Rateesh Radhakrishnan's "Masculinity and the Structuring of the Public Domain in Kerala: A History of the Contemporary" examines masculinity discourse alongside Kerala modernism. He investigates the portrayal of Unni in *Elepathayam*, as well as the relationship between masculinity and the breakdown of matriliney. Pradeep.K's "A Discourse Analysis of Spatial Practice and Women in Adoor Gopalakrishnan's Films" highlights the spatiality of women as well as modalities and social practices of space.

Adoor Gopalakrishnan's *Cinemanubhavam* consists of two parts. The first section deals with the narrative style and the aesthetic sensibility, and the second

part is about the personalities associated with his film life. Adoor's own collection of the published screenplays of 11 films discusses the setting and plot and the objective analysis of his works. *Adoorinte Chalachitra yathrakal* discusses literary and non literary textual critical analysis of films.

The intended study seeks to present methodology in terms of power relations in the selected films. Despite the fact that his films are studied in the context of Kerala's journey to modernity, the subsequent analysis questions the specific conceptions of power discourses. These signifiers have both oppressive and generative functions. The study dissects the constructs by employing filmic text and visual signifiers.

The second chapter is titled "State as a Norm: A study of films *Elepathayam*, *Mukhamukam* and *Kathapurushan*. The protagonists Unni (*Elepathayam*), Sreedharan (*Mukhamukam*) and Kunjunni (*Kathapurushan*) are docile in the power knowledge correlations but at times, they are resistant and make struggle. Their docility further tends to confrontations and instability. The self and society undergo in a perpetual conflict of power relations. The formation of knowledge takes place at both levels. Foucault explains the theory of sovereignty in "Society must be Defended". Foucault does not believe in the juridical model of sovereignty. Rather he explains it in terms of "subject to subject cycle" (43). Foucault abandons the concept that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended. Also, he says that we should not think that the power makes mad. Rather it produces conditions of knowledge. Paul Rabinow briefly talks about the power knowledge correlation in "The Body of the Condemned":

We should admit, rather, that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. These “power knowledge relations” are to be analyzed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system; but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known, and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of knowledge and their historical transformations (175).

The third chapter is titled “Normativity as a Construct: A Study of Films *Kodiyettam* and *Anantaram*”. The films are intended to analyse with the percepts of Foucault’s conceptualisation of disciplinary power. Disciplinary power is practiced through surveillance and knowledge. The concept of gaze is important as the people tend to regulate themselves as they think that they are being watched. Foucault defines an individual action in terms of society. The individual actions are realization and forced to discipline themselves. Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* provides insights to examine how the characterisation of the protagonists can be looked at as “fields of comparison, a space of differentiation and the principle of a rule to be followed” (182). All individuals are defined in terms of particular norms defined by sovereignty and society. The norms are analysed in this chapter according to how society

normalises the notion of masculinity. Foucault says that disciplinary power shapes and normalises subjects who eventually become, speak, think and act in similar manners (177-84). Deborah Johnson perceives disciplinary power as system of knowledge and considers individual as an object to be known in relation to the others. He further says that those who deviate from the norms are labelled abnormal. The corrective or therapeutic techniques are used to rehabilitate them in the margins or norms (Johnson 149–69). The non conformity with the norms is deviation. The indifference or uniqueness is considered as inferior. When the indifferent ones are forced to being disciplined, it becomes an act of subjugation and subordination to an order by disciplinary strategies.

Sankarankutty is a naïve character who does not adhere to a particular ideology or thought. He lives in the moment and never possesses a serious outlook towards life. The study analyses how the traits of hegemonic masculinity attempt to overpower or influence his identity. The reading explores to analyse the transformation in the characterisation of Sankarankutty. Ajayan in *Anantaram* is an object on whom the power is exercised. The masters of the school, caretakers of the home induce the mechanisms of punishment. He is always under a hierarchical surveillance. Ajayan introduces himself as ‘a case’ and adopts a documentary technique. Foucault extends his philosophical analysis in “The Means of Correct Training” how the techniques make each individual a case. The case is no longer, as in casuistry or jurisprudence, a set of circumstances defining an act and capable of modifying the application of a rule; it is the individual as he may be described, judged, measured, compared with others, his very individuality; and it is also the individual who has to be trained or corrected, classified, normalized, excluded etc. (Rabinow 203).

Foucault speaks about the concept of madness or perversion in the society. He re (reads) the actions that is declared 'unnatural' or 'sick. He critically looks into the practice that how it becomes legitimate to use force on 'deviants' or 'even imprison them in order to try and make them normal'. The study finds to see the ambiguities and power orientations in the seclusion of the unnatural or non normative.

The fourth chapter is titled "Home, Class and Gender as Apparatuses: A Study of *Vidheyan* and *Naalu Pennungal*". The sovereign power and disciplinary power act in the process of subjugation and power relations in the discussion of the select films. Gender, class and home are significant factors which contribute to the operations of power in these films. The depiction of 'caste identified women' contributes to the investigation of how the women exercise her sexual autonomy. Megha Anwar and Anupama Arora observes in their study: "In emphasising caste as a significant analytic, we explore if and how the defining characteristics of the new women morph when caste intersects with gender under a neo liberal regime" (Anwar 152). The analysis of the women characters in the select films of this chapter probes into the representation of women whose identity is "reconstituted or destabilised within patriarchal relations that are cross-hatched by caste" (152). The investigation allows to track the abstract relations of power according to the hierarchical manifestations of class. The chapter also looks into the complexities that originate from the intersection of the signifiers family, caste and gender.

The dalit representation is significant in the reading of power relations in this chapter. The lower caste, who are known as dalits, "are found to be in deep turmoil, face constant humiliation and growing erosion of their identity and sense

of being part of civil society, the nation and the state”(Kothari 1589). Farhana Naaz speaks about the structural violence on the subjugated category (163). The economic precariousness, caste status and patriarchal status are the domains on which hegemony is structured. The study analyses how these factors act in the operations of power. Gayathri Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern speak?” explores the ways in which hegemonic structures are oriented. This chapter also looks at the discourse analysis of Michael Foucault. The characters are in a process to build a space of their own. Louis Althusser’s The “Ideological State Apparatus” and Antonio Gramsci’s “Hegemony” are studied to dismantle the power operations through master- slave relationship and the man- woman relationship. The home also becomes a significant trope in the narrative and the study will investigate how the absence of home becomes a pragmatic tool in the exploitation of the subjugated.

Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* says that “discipline makes individuals; it is the specific technique of power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise” (170). His concept of panopticon can be extended further to how he defines a norm. In the case of norm or in system of normalisation there is no particular pivot to make judgments or to impose will. Foucault in *The Foucault Reader* says that “A system of normalisation is opposed to a system of law or a system of personal power” (Rabinow 20). Foucault defines it in *The History of sexuality Volume 1*:

a power whose task is to take charge of life needs continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms...Such a power has to qualify, measure, appraise, and hierarchize, rather than display itself in its murderous splendor...it effects distributions around the

norm...[The] juridical institution is increasingly incorporated into a continuum of apparatuses (medical, administrative and so on) whose functions are for the most part regulatory (28).

The “normative rationality” underscored the authority of sovereign power and law. Later the advent of medicine, psychiatry and other social sciences in the nineteenth century formed what Foucault calls ‘systemic normalization of law’ (21). It is explained further that it means what is normal and what is not in a given set of population rather than strict adherence to the codes of right and wrong (21). The gender normalizations attributed to the understanding about the notions of masculinity and femininity can be explained in the light of Foucauldian normative rationality. The character of Ajayan in Adoor’s film *Anantaram* can be studied through the lens of normative rationality of Foucault.

Foucault studied the power of knowledge over the minute behavioural aspects of people in a society. Those are forced to occupy the position of ‘other’. Apparatuses are used as part of normalizing technologies. Dossiers entail authorities to produce a ‘totalizing web of control’ (22). It attempts to achieve an ‘increasing specification of individuality’ (22). Foucault says in “The Subject and Power” that the liberation from the web of power means:

...to liberate us both from the state and from the type of the individualization which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries (216).

When the individualisation and the liberation are read in the light of the Adoor’s films, there are characters (Sreedharan of *Mukhamukam*, Kunjunni of

Kathapurushan, Ajayan of *Anantaram*, Thommie of *Vidheyan*, Kamalamma of *Oru Pennum Randanum*, four women characters (Kunjupennu, Kumari Chinnumamma, Kamakshi) who tried to shackle the individuality intertwined with politics, state and intra familial relationships. They succumb to different forms of subjectivity, at times, subjected to self. Unni of *Elepathayam*, Sankarankutty of *Kodiyettam*, Madhu of *Swayamvaram*, Basheer of *Mathilukal* and Kaliyappan of *Nizhalkuthu* are representatives of society who are subjected to the individualization and totalisation of power structures. Foucault in *The Foucault Reader* speaks about punishment in the work *Discipline and Punish*. Obviously, it is explained as a power exercised on the body. He makes general proposition:

systems of punishment are situated in a certain “political economy” of the body: even if they do not make use of violent or bloody punishment, even when they use “lenient” methods involving confinement or correction, it is always the body that is at issue- the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission (Rabinow 172).

Foucault again says about the power inflicted on the body in “The Body of the Condemned”:

body is also involved in a political field; power relations have immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs
(Rabinow173).

Adoor uses the tropes of subjected body and objected body in his films. The ‘body’ is deciphered as an object on which the power is exercised upon. Adoor captures the scenes of physical brutality in the films *Anantaram*. It often takes the form of punishment and repressive effects. It takes the means of judiciary and

state and often practiced as the means of reform. Foucault's study of microphysics on the power defines as "it is not the 'privilege' acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic position-an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated" (Rainbow 174). Kaliyappan in Adoor's film *Nizhalkuthu* becomes only an instrument in the act of capital punishment. Though he assumes power it is problematic.

Though the study primarily focusses on the select films for the representations of power there are adequate references to the multifarious nature of power in his other works. Adoor's films *Swayamvaram*, *Mathilukal*, *Nizhalkuthu*, *Oru Pennun Randaanum* and *Pinneyum* trace and develop the sense of power dislocations. The search for "home, self and identity" (Ganguly, *The Films of Adoor Gopalakrishnan: A Cinema of Emancipation* 80) become significant issues in these films.

Adoor's *Swayamvaram* dismantles the pre conceived perceptions about the aesthetics of cinema and adapts the language of neo realistic cinema. It explores and opens up the frustrations and dilemmas in Kerala in the post Nehruvian period. Viswam and Sita who leave their home to live together, confront a society of grim realities. Adoor documents the perplexities of the unemployment and economic crisis of middle class society in the decades of 1960s and 1970s. The society plays a pivotal role in shaping the lives of this couple. Viswam is a representative of the generation who struggle in the confrontation with the society. They are unable to recognise the indirect involvement of power in the moulding of their lives. Sita and Viswam live in a precarious space of power entanglements.

The resistance is meagre though they attempted to break the boundaries in the decision of wedlock.

The film *Mathilukal* brings out the solitude and confinement of the character Basheer. The film is an adaptation of novel of the same name by Vaikom Muhammed Basheer. The film foregrounds the dislocation of the character Basheer as he is arrested during Gandhi's Quit India movement. Rather than an analysis of how reality coincides with fantasy through the characterisation of Narayani and Basheer the film looks into how the prison cell serves as a trope of subjectivity. He finds himself suddenly transformed into an outsider in the alienating precincts of the jail (121). The jail as a signifier serves as a metaphor of power. Ganguly speaks that it can be signified as a reading of human condition and also relates to the condition of India under the rule of British. Basheer's attempt to discover liberty, creative freedom and personal transcendence enables him to define sense of humanity (123) and it can be read as an act of resistance .

The film *Nizhalkuthu* narrates the tale of 'otherness' through the characterisation of kaliyappan. He is the official hangman of the state and he is forced to do an act of execution. Kaliyappan is reluctant to take that job. But the state insists that he should take up that deed. His conscience never allows him to take that act and the he suffers from an inner conflict. The physical dislocation to boarder village as part of the designation of the duty underlines his identity of otherness. The state offers him rewards such as nontaxable land and monetary benefits. This can read as an indirect mechanism of oppression of the Repressive State Apparatus. The ideological and repressive apparatuses of the state come into conflict.

There is virtually no scope for subjective choices, for stepping outside the rigid codes and rituals that govern almost every aspect of human behaviour. It is a feudal world that exists outside time and history, its people trapped in a relentless cycle of recurrence. In fact, the sense of inevitability is so pervasive that it is accepted without question as a fact of existence. Kaliyappan's identity as the other is constituted by and exists within this paradigm. As a creation of the state, he must live exclusively on its terms (132).

Though Kaliyappan fails to make the resist will of the state he escapes the fate. But the power as a chain is dispersed in the society. Kaliyappan's son Muthu becomes the victim to continue the act. The otherness and subjectivity are addressed in the narrative of the jailer through the story of two lovers.

The film *Oru Pennum Randanum* (A Climate for Crime) portrays three stories "Kallante Makan" ("The Thief"), "Niyamavum Neethiyum" ("The Police"), "Oru Kootukaran" ("Two men and a Woman" and "Pankiyamma" ("One Woman, Two Men"). These stories reflect the voice of disillusionment and disintegration after the second world war. Unemployment and the shortage of the basic amenities prompt people to indulge in crimes. The plot of the narrative is Kuttanad in Travancore. The first story "Kallante makan" revolves around the character named Neelantan. He finds theft as the only job for his survival and the sustenance of his family. The ideological and repressive power apparatuses in the form of police/state, school, neighbourhood and family deny Neelantan his own identity. The second story looks again into the concept of justice as a problematic concept. Power acts as coercive and oppressive. The story portrays the picture of two police officers and how they manipulate power as a weapon against the

powerless. The rickshaw driver of this story is denied justice and he is forced to remain silent. If the previous story speaks about the power as oppressive in the form of state, “Oru Kootukaran” narrates about power as chauvinistic in gender relations. It portrays the story of a man who impregnates a woman. He attempts to escape from the responsibility. The family and society became crucial factors for him to make a choice. Justice becomes problematic here as it is an abstract notion. But Krishnankutty takes the decision to take up the responsibility to marry the woman. The last segment of the film “Pankiamma” (Two Men and one Woman”) is a narrative of resistance which dismantles the conventional moral codes ascribed for a woman in the patriarchal society. She is bold enough to establish her freedom and makes own choice about the male partner in the sexual relationship. When the first three segments trace the ambiguities in relation with power structures of ideological and repressive regimes such as class, state and gender, “Pankiyamma” deals with the resistance and productive aspects of power. The wife of Neelantan in “The Thief” and the character pankiyamma in “Two men and a Woman” represent the ‘new woman’ and attempt to reverse the cliché roles attributed to women.

The film *Pinneyum* deals with the contextual plot of murder by a person named Sukumara Kuruppu to fake his own death to claim the amount from insurance, in 1984. Adoor employs this as the background of the plot through the characterisation of Purushothaman Nair.

The resistance becomes passive and at times, rebellious in the films. The study also documents the analysis of the back ground music, sound and actions to represent the resistance. As the study documents on the plurality of power operations it also attempts to read the co existence of resistance in the films.