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**THERIOCIDES OF SERPENT AND MONGREL IN THAKAZHI
SIVASANKARA PILLAI'S *IN THE FLOODS* AND S. K. POTTEKKAT'S *THE
NIGHT QUEEN***

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Abstract:

*Theriocides demarcated as the human activities which central to the cause of animal death. Animals and reptiles are slayed inhumanely for human fortification even before they bourn. Snakes are killed in huge numbers especially for the reason of its venom and human protection. Even though there were many cultural and mythical beliefs in killing snakes it still endures. Dogs and human have lasting ties than any other animal. Dogs are considered to be a loyal animal. They afford a good company and a social support to human beings. Human-Dog relationship is intimate and co-evolved than any other kind. In S. K. Pottekkat's *The Night Queen* the serpent is killed viciously. The snake stayed in a bush and it did not hurt anyone but it was slaughtered by humans. In Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's *In the Floods*, a faithful dog which is trustworthy to its master till its demise was killed because of the reckless attitude of the master. This paper explores how the human actions cause death of a snake and dog by associating two short stories.*

Keywords: *Theriocide, Humanity, Affiliation, Human Actions, Fortification, etc.*

S.K. Pottekkat's *Nishaagandhi* is interpreted from Malayalam to English as *The Night Queen* by Gita Krishnankutty. Sankaran Kutty Kunjiraman Pottekkatt is a Malayalam writer. He has penned many short stories, travelogues, poems, novels and essays. His works have been translated into many major languages including Indian languages. He has received numerous awards which includes Sahitya Akademi Award and Jnanpith Award.

Nishaagandhi flower is known as night queen in English. It is best known for its fragrance. The scent from the small flower entices everyone with intoxicating pleasure. "The night queen is a prostitute among flowers: after sleeping all day, she creeps through the darkness at nightfall, embraces people without their being aware of it and seduces them! Yes, that fragrance that intoxicates the mind is well suited to a prostitute" (Asher, *WF*, 44). The author has equated the beauty of a bloom with a woman. This beauty even fascinates a snake by its fragrances. But he says he would never plant Nishaagandhi in his garden. The man has attractive orchard with variety of flowers but in his garden



not even a single Nishaagandhi plant is seen. Here counts an old tale behind it. He was a seventeen-year college student at that time. He feels that this age is treacherous in a young man's life where one intercedes with love affairs. At this age everything looks virtuous and he envisages all the beautiful girls are goddesses. He has anticipated for them surreptitiously but ended up with discontents.

Love at tender age is out of excitement and feelings. The emotional turmoil attracts them with another person. He says that at this phase even an idiot would constitute a poetry concerning many words. The ardent feelings towards the partner make them feel content. The narrator in the story says that he had researched on many girl exquisiteness and character. He finally found his idyllic girl Malathi. He conducted experiments and research based on character and beauty. He appraises the girl character by her trustworthiness and compassion. He regards her as a full moon. Women's beauty is often associated with the beauty of moon because of its radiance. The full moon represents a completion and women are considered to be complete feminine symbol. The narrator was engrossed with the intoxicating eyes which are similar to the intoxicating smell of Nishaagandhi. He liked Malathi because of her momentousness and dislikes girls who were laughing all the time roaming here and there. According to him her walk was a like stunning female swan walking. To his senses everything that she does looks attractive.

Indescribable feelings and emotions in heart are exposed through poetry. He began to write poetry thinking about her. He feels that his love is divine and ideal. In Malathi's home there was a thick bush of Nishaagandhi. The exhilarating fragrance of the flower fills his nostrils and it has provoked his thoughts and dreams. He likens the flower as "not only a mother but anyone at all would feel like picking her up and kissing her.." (Asher, *WF*, 47). All humans are addicted to the beauty of the florals and its perfume. He started deifying the beauty of the flower day and night. Two things never go out of his cognizance and they were Malathi's lotus face and the scent of the flower. Malathi's father instructed to her brother that the plants in the garden are dense and they have to be cleared. This was appalling to him because garden is his favourite spot to watch the actions of his lover Malathi. He feels that "If my love-refuge was going to be destroyed what would my condition be? All my pleasures and dreams were gathered there. I would become like a bird whose nest had broken. Where would I go?" (Asher, *WF*, 47-48). He has an anxiety that he would not see her again. He needs to sojourn cutting the bushes. He writes a letter to Malathi stating that his father is going to cut the bush tomorrow in which he is a silent devotee. But things become upside down when he arrived to her home to deliver the letter many people were gathered in the yard. There was a venomous snake which was crushed to death. It was three feet long. There was a hole and the snake peeped out and they killed it. He was very much petrified that these days it has been living inside the Nishaagandhi bush. He without awareness of it is sitting and flattering his girl friend from there. The stripes and spots of the snake never faded from his reminiscence. The blood from snake head that he has saw is never forgotten.

Extreme distress of snake is said to be Ophidiophobia. The prevalent fear about snakes is quite common but the extreme fear of its results to problematic. He says "I was growing insane with fear when I realized that while I had sat in the darkness of that bush savouring Malathi's divine beauty, a fearful serpent had been next to me, its mouth wide open to breathe in the fragrance of the nishagandhi" (Asher, *WF*, 49). He tried his best but he could not erase those recollections from his mind. The poisonous snake gave him worse nightmares. He was psychologically pretentious "I felt there were serpents everywhere I looked. A snake on the canopy of my bed: innumerable snakes crawling in through the bars of the window; a poisonous snake poised on the box with its hood raised; a snake hanging upside down next to me. 'Ayyo! A snake, a snake!' I screamed" (Asher, *WF*, 49). Even in his nightmares he saw his girlfriend Malathi having a serpent face with a woman body. He grieved from dreadful fever. After that Malathi shifted to other home and he heard that she got married



and was a mother of two. The story ends with whenever he sees Nishaagandhi old pleasing memories surrounds him. The anxiety in him never allows him to plant a Nishaagandhi.

Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's Vellapokkathil was translated from Malayalam to English as *In the Floods* by Gita Krishnankutty. Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai is a Malayalam writer. He has penned many short stories and novels. His themes influence much on the lives of underprivileged class and social aspects. He belongs to the literary movement realism. He has received numerous prestigious awards which include Padma Bhushan Award, Jnanpith Award and Sahitya Akademi Award.

Natural disaster causes many indemnities. The story begins with flood scenario. Temple is the loftiest building in that village. Everywhere the water is bounded and there was no dry land. In the temple all the villagers and the domestic animals stayed. Chenna Parayan, has been waiting for three days that anyone will rescue him. He hoped that the water will regress from his hut but it has disenchanting him. He was terrified that his hut will sink and his whole family is nearing its end. After a long skirmish Chenna somehow fled with the help of a boatsmen. Chenna hauled his wife, children, dog and cat in the boat but the dog did not get into the boat as it tried its best. Chenna in a panic did not notice whether the dog has come or not. The dog came back to the rood and the boat moved in a distance. It was helpless "The animal began to moan as if it were in death throes; waves of sound that resembled a helpless human voice emerged from it" (Asher, *WF*, 38). But nobody was there to hear the moaning of the dog. It has no food. Nobody was there to care take of the dog. It was much worried that its master did not notice its presence. And a awful storm came once again. The master of the dog meanwhile reached at Ambalapuzha. On the water a crocodile floated and the dog was very much scared on seeing it. It dreaded for the gloom and its cries grasped in a distance. The dog thinks that his master has elapsed it and thought that few kind hearted people will hear its voice and would feel "Ayyo, there's a dog moaning on top of that hut! Its master will be eating his evening meal now, on the seashore. He is sure to roll a ball of rice, as usual, and it aside for the dog" (Asher, *WF*, 39). It is actually the inner voice of the dog and its pithiest condition.

Dog's moaning sustained and it shouted as much as it can till anyone came to rescue it. It felt like its throat was ready to break. It barked despondently and keenly observed the human voice. "Dawn came; the dog began to moan softly; it began to elaborate on a raga that would have easily melted any heart" (Asher, *WF*, 39). The suffering of the dog is easily associated with its sound. The dog saw a small boat at a distance and it began happy that it is going to be saved. But the boat vanished from its sight and it disappointed it. The rain again began forcefully and the dog grieved a lot. It thought the human did not give it food. Whether the flying parrot, crow, frog that was there would provide food for it. But it also disappointed it. After sometime another boat came and two men were in it. The dog tried it best to convey vulnerability in its language. One person said there is a dog and the dog became happy that they are going to rescue it. But the other man said let it stay there and the boat moved in a distance. The dog saw the disappearing boat "Growling as if saying its last farewell to the world, it climbed to the top of the hut. It must have been telling itself that it would never care for a human being again" (Asher, *WF*, 41). Human are hard-hearted and they have a low esteem on animal lives.

Dog smarted from deprivation and fear for life. It muffled to express its agony that even humans could recognize its language clearly. Once again there was a heavy cyclone and rain. The dog howled furiously. There came few thieves to steal the banana palm and the dog even at this situation barked at the thieves to save the bananas. Dreading for the dog the man who climbed the banana palm glided. The dog barked very irritably and its throat has the danger of busting. They overloaded the banana palm in the boat and the dog bite thieves' leg. They escaped and it persisted in hunger. At midnight a dead crow floated in water. It tore its flesh and began to eat. Its fierce hunger was gratified. The roar of the cyclone began and a sudden blow came the dog was seen nowhere. The moans of the



dog were heard nowhere. There were no impediments for the robbers to steal because the dog was not there. There was an emptiness encircled everywhere. The hut in which the dog was standing was distorted and submerged in water. “the devoted dog has watched over its master’s house until it was dead” (Asher, *WF*, 43). At the end of the story the master Chennan came in search of his dog. He was swimming and splashing the water to search the dog. But at the time of his arrival the dog was dead and it laid under the coconut palm. Its one ear and skin were torn completely. The dog lost its life due to the negligence of its master. If he has rescued it earlier it would have been alive.

In two short stories, human actions fall out in the bereavement of the innocent reptile and animal. The snake did not bite anyone but for human security they killed it. Even though it is in the bush for a longer period of time it did not offend anyone. Similarly, the dog is a faithful animal which detriment its life to defence its master’s property. If the master has seen properly whether the dog has jumped into the boat or not its life it would have been protected. Both the snake and dog were the victims of human actions and their distress of life is clearly illustrated by the author.

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