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Minds under Control: Identity as a Social Construct in *Kazhcha*

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Abstract

The effects of natural disasters are not mere environmental and developmental destructions, but also psychological trauma with long-term impact on the victims' minds. The sudden change of identity as refugees without their desire and the reverse Cinderella myth, completely transform the individuals from being "normal" to "abnormal." Especially in the case of children, when they are just on the threshold of establishing their unique identities, the sudden change in path shatters and more than anything else makes them helpless in front of the world. In such a situation it is not the children but the society that develops an identity for them, which is the identity as "refugees." By doing thus the society is disabling them from transforming the innate potentialities which have the capacity to become abstract, into concrete ones. It is such a situation that Blessy tries to portray in the film *Kazhcha*, where the protagonist is a child, Pavan. Set in the 2001 earthquake of Gujarat, the story clearly proclaims that it is not the disasters which create refugees, but the society itself with its red-tapism. Even when Pavan gets the opportunity to establish a different identity after his meeting with Madavan and his family, the political and societal disturbances do not let him use it.

Keywords

Acculturation, assimilation, attachment figure, developmental psychology, environmental migrants, identity, refugee.

Oneness and Wholeness from Remnants: A Reading of “Ghadikarungal Nilakkunna Samayam”

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Abstract

Natural disasters are, most often, Nature’s strategies for leading Man to the corridor of retrospections. A deluge or an earthquake hurls man into odd realms of awakenings. Against the backdrop of the macabre flood of 2018 in Kerala, it is highly relevant to have a literary insight into natural disasters. The story “Ghadikarungal Nilakkunna Samayam” by Subhash Chandran thematises the Lathoor earthquake which took the lives of thousands of people and caused the isolation of orphaned children. Lathoor earthquake is recreated as Khillari earthquake in the story. Khillari earthquake, an unwelcomed visitor to the Khillari village, turns the place upside down. In the ruins of the hypocritical social constructs, Bukaram Mithal, a thief in the village, searches for retrieving his identity through the reminiscence of his dismantled childhood. When the village is struck by earthquake, it stops walling in and walling out so that now Bukaram is visible to any native as a person of consequence. On the dismantled plain of remnants, the victims witness oneness and wholeness. When man-made clocks are broken due to a disaster and time indicators stop, man falls into the boundless expanse of the perennality of Time, whereupon he finds convergence of men bound by the mantra of oneness.

Keywords

Disaster, trauma, schema, remnants, oneness, wholeness.

Dealing with Disaster: Metaphysical and Oblique Reactions in Murakami's *After the Quake*

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Abstract

Literary works contain weather events as motifs or elements that take the plot forward, mapping the reactions of characters, the first of its kind in canonical literature being Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The calamities not only cause materialistic destruction, but takes down the psyche of the population encompassing them with an air of despair and emptiness. The Great Hanshin Earthquake that ravaged Japan in 1995, which was the country's worst earthquake in the twentieth century, took countless lives. The prolific Japanese author, Haruki Murakami, in his *After the Quake*, a collection of six short stories whose plot is situated at the aftermath of disaster, captures their myriad responses and how they cope with it. In this paper, these short stories are analysed to show how a destructive event that occurred far away can affect the minds of people.

Keywords

Climate, trauma, self-recognition, psyche, displacement, longing.

Natural Disaster: Agent of Unmasking Characters

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Abstract

Natural calamities have been a terror striking phenomena from time immemorial. Apart from causing natural, economic and social damages, they leave the cultural and psychological facets of human lives amputated as well. Each of such disasters shows the vulnerability and the dire need to shift masks to ensure their own survival. A close inspection on the aftermath of any natural calamity reveals copious opportunities to notice victims go beyond their self-constructed mask of identity, religion, social status, gender, sexuality and race. Such a need springs forth from man's basic crave for survival which surpasses all other entities that have been responsible for one's recognition so far. Natural calamities when depicted in literary works, convey not only the stark images of pain and suffering, but also works as an agent of getting the characters out of their confined masks. The moralising effect of disaster which cannot be so easily neglected justifies man's efforts to survive. This paper extensively deals with the natural calamity, a flood, and how it unmasks the characters, based on the work "In the Flood" by Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai. Man, who considers himself as superior to everything, is proven to be nothing before the fury of nature. The so-called philanthropic man runs for life leaving his dog to perish in the flood. The bandits form another category when they steal material things instead of saving human lives. Only the dog is left to feel the bitter pain of being used and thrown, but still stays honest until its death. The author while unmasking the characters and revealing their animal instincts, places the dog that carries out its masters wishes and remains loyal to the end in a superior position.

Keywords

Natural disaster, flood, survival, shattered identities.

Demystifying Natural Disasters: Contrapuntal Reading of the Plagues of Egypt

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Abstract

The most striking and yet forgotten aspect about religion is its evolution across time. Undoubtedly, every mainstream religion is a product of borrowing. Morality, mystery, magic and miracle are elements that these religions and their texts share in common. Mystery remains an integral part of every religious text that ironically provides validity to the actions and events in the text. Similarly, the Old Testament mystifies several historical events that can be rationally interpreted resulting in the rereading of divine narratives. The ten plagues mentioned in the Old Testament are represented as God's hand against the Egyptian empire for their nonconformity towards the divine will. The Old Testament and its associated narratives have mystified ten natural disasters as divine animosity. This paper examines the rationale behind the mystification of ten natural disasters as God's curse. The mystification was an output of subaltern aversion towards former masters. The colonised were passively raging against the colonisers. The mystified narrative was adept enough to defame the Egyptian civilisation marked for its unparalleled cultural and social progress during the age. The colonised presented the colonisers as merciless despots who propagated tyranny. Additionally, the colonised emphatically asserted their identity as the "chosen community" of an Omnipotent Creator, by which their religious cult was exalted beyond comprehension. Hence, the paper attempts to explore the postcolonial perspectives of the ten plagues of Egypt mentioned in the Old Testament.

Keywords

Demystifying, natural disasters, God, ten plagues, mystification, plague narrative.

Mental Trauma and Shattering of Humanity: Reading Malayalam Film *Kazcha* in the Backdrop of a Natural Disaster

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Abstract

Media, the fourth pillar in our democracy is always keen and instrumental in portraying the dangers associated with natural disasters and calamities. In the dawn of twenty-first century, an era that witnessed several natural disasters, the role undertaken by films in depicting the intensity of the sufferings faced by the victims are to be noted. We have before us a series of movies that reflect the grave situation faced by them and these films analyse the causes, effects and aftereffects of disasters, and also suggest solutions for the same. This paper attempts to analyse the movie *Kazcha*, a Malayalam movie released in the year 2004, in the backdrop of Gujarat Earthquake which had tremendous effects on the lives of many. The movie helped in raising consciousness regarding the mental trauma faced by the victims and the perilous and pathetic condition faced by them. Their survival struggles and problems with existence are typically portrayed, and the need for their protection is also pointed. This paper also focuses on the plight of the refugees after such incidents and looks at how humanity and humanism got shattered after an earthquake and how the victims had to live like fishes out of the pond. How an event happened in Gujarat had far reaching effects in South India is looked in detail in this paper. The emotional significance of the film points to the role played by families in the society and also towards the need for such establishments. The social, cultural, and political impacts of natural calamities are studied and how they actually affect the identity of an individual is also highlighted. The necessity of developing a mind to lend supporting hands to the needy is the need of the hour and therefore the social responsibility of movies and other media is truly relevant and significant.

Keywords

Media, film, earthquake, trauma, existence.

Natural Disasters and Sustainable Development

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Abstract

In the wake of the unprecedented flood witnessed by Kerala in the year 2018, there has been much discussion about the vulnerability of the state to natural disasters. However, the anthropogenic facet of the topic is also worth inquiring into. Delving deep into the relationship between sustainable development and cataclysms of this sort, this paper attempts to study how unsustainable developmental plans can turn natural disasters all the more disastrous, severe in magnitude and measure. The study is conducted with specific focus on how the flood has affected the economic and emotional well-being of the people of Ward No. 12 of Pazhavangadi Panchayath, one of the worst affected areas of the Taluk of Ranni in Pathanamthitta District, Kerala. The major research questions pertain to the anthropogenic aspects of the disaster with special emphasis on the economic, social and emotional impact of the flood on the survivors. Attention is also given to analyse whether it is a healthy practice to sacrifice long-term and sustainable developmental plans to achieve short-term ones, at the cost of the lives and livelihood of innocent people.

Keywords

Sustainable development, natural disasters, flood, economic, social, emotional impact.

Restoration and Resilience of Handloom Textile Industry at Chendamangalam: A Study on the Background of Kerala Flood, 2018

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Abstract

The recent flood in Kerala 2018, narrates the story of survival through the togetherness and co-operation of people in the state. The heavy rains in Kerala wreaked havoc in many parts of the state. The flood has been termed as the worst to hit the state in the century. According to the Kerala Govt., one-sixth of the total population of Kerala had been directly affected by the floods and related incidents. Eranakulam is one of the districts in Kerala which is severely affected by the floods. North Paravur, a thickly populated area which is 36 km. from Eranakulam, was also very much affected by the flood. The flood destroyed infrastructure, agricultural land, small-scale industrial units, homes and everything on the land. The handloom industry in Chendamangalam Panchayat, North Paravur was badly hit by the flood. It is one of the most popular handloom industries known for its quality weavers. It is good to have such topics discussed in educational institutions so that academicians and educators can be made aware about what their role is for developing such traditional cottage industries which in turn lead for the economic development of the state or nation.

Keywords

Natural disaster, resilience, kudumbasree, survival, GDP, vulnerable, empowerment.

A Study on Socio-Psychological Impact of Flood on School Students with Special Reference to St Aloysius School, North Paravur, Kerala

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Abstract

As per the preliminary estimates, the Kerala flood of 2018 caused the death of more than 440 people and economic damage exceeding \$3 billion. The aim of this study is to understand the psychological and social impact of the flood in North Paravur region of Ernakulam district of Kerala, India, specifically on school students and management of St Aloysius School, North Paravur. This provides an analytical review of how this man-made disaster affected the mental health, routine educational process and schooling of children. Data was gathered from a survey conducted on school students of Upper Primary and High School levels and through an interview with teachers and local municipal authorities.

Keywords

Kerala, flood, mental health, educational process, children.

Introduction

An Economic Impact of Kerala Flood 2018 on Suburban Regions of Ernakulam City: A Study on Livestock Farmers

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Abstract

Kerala flood of 2018 caused many deaths and displacements. Hundreds of farmers lost their livelihood. Cattle had been left, behind by their fleeing owners when the water level rose. Kerala Agriculture Department was able to rescue at least 50000 cattle and house them in relief shelters. But a section of the farmers who lost their livelihood have to start from initial stage. This study considers livestock farmers who maintain livestock as their only livelihood have been affected tragically by the flood.

Keywords

Livestock, farmers, flood, climate change, diseases.

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