



**The Image of the Other in Malayalam Travelogues: Readings of
*Kappirikalude Nattil and Sanchariyude Vazhiyambalangal***

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Abstract

This paper primarily constitutes readings of two travelogues written in the Malayalam language in order to see how the image of the other evolves across narratives over time. My reading focuses on the dynamic and formative nature of the image of the other as it transcends the fixed theoretical positions and postulations. The image of the other presented in the event of reading could be better understood as a relational construction; which contradicts the essentialist claims made by theories about the identity of the other. The first travelogue *Kappirikalude Nattil* (1951) was one of the pioneering works of travel writing in Malayalam. Whereas the second book *Sanchariyude Vazhiyambalangal* (2018) presents a more nuanced and contemporary idea of travelling and exploration. To explore how the performance of travelogues in the event of reading contradicts the theoretical notions of the other, this paper contextualises the travelogues in the context of two theories related to othering. Those theories are Homi K Bhabha's 'mimicry', and Pierre Bourdieu's 'habitus'. Importantly, this paper exclusively focuses on the 'use' of these theories in literary readings, and therefore the sociological or psychological validity of these theories will not come under the scope of this paper. To expand the idea of 'self and other' dynamics as a 'relational construction', the paper incorporates Martin Buber's concept of 'I and Thou' and Levinas' ideas about the ethical approach towards the other. However, the paper does not intend to be an exploration of the intricacies in the philosophical and theoretical understandings of the other. Instead, it attempts a demonstration of how the theories of 'othering' work in the context of travel writings and how the philosophical understanding of otherness sheds light on the reading of travelogues.

Keywords: Relational Construction, Habitus, Mimicry, Otherness.