TRAUMA AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF-DESTRUCTION: AN OVERVIEW OF THE EXASPERATING EMOTIONAL IMBALANCE IN K R MEERA’S THE UNSEEING IDOL OF LIGHT

TRAUMA Y AUTODESTRUCCIÓN PSICOLÓGICA: UNA VISIÓN GENERAL DEL EXASPERANTE DESEQUILIBRIO EMOCIONAL EN EL ÍDolo INVISIBLE DE LA LUZ DE K R MEERA

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Abstract
The present article discusses trauma and its impact on human emotions, particularly on women, in literature, with a focus on K R Meera’s novel, The Unseeing Idol of Light. The research paper highlights the rise of trauma theory in literature and explores the cultural and psychological influence of trauma in literature. It also analyses the characters in the novel through the lens of emotional imbalance and interdependency and examines the interrelation between vision, love, and trauma. The prevalence of negative emotions over positive emotions in the novel has been discussed. The paper
emphasises the importance of mental stability in contemporary society and discusses various themes such as psychic changes, loss, longing, and transformation. The researcher aims to analyse and relate the selected work with critical thinking to shed light on the cultural and psychological impressions of literature.

**Keywords**: trauma, vision, love, self-destruction, emotion, insight

### 1. Introduction

The idea of trauma, which itself is a fount of criticism, is frequently recognised to be the stressful component affecting the company of personal emotions and the belief of the out-of-doors global. Trauma research observes the influence of trauma on literature by examining its cultural and psychological importance. “Trauma or traumatising means a traumatic event which involves a single event or experience; it involves the feelings and emotions.” (Heidarizadeh 789)
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Trauma research began to be carried out within the nineteen nineties and trusted Freudian concept to expand a trauma version that thinks of intense enjoyment of demanding situations, and language obstacles and even breaks the meanings completely. The term “trauma” has been etymologically derived as a “stress or blow that may produce disordered feelings or behaviour” to a “state or condition produced by such a stress or blow” (Erikson 184). This trauma model indicates that suffering isn’t always representable. In 1996, the literary condemnation’s domain of trauma research gained significant recognition after the release of Kali Tal’s Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma and Cathy Caruth’s Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History. It is a “product of modernity” (Sütterlin 11). Pederson presents an argument on the topic, “critics seeking to engage trauma in literature should turn their focus from gaps in the text to the text itself” (Pederson 338)

The idea that traumatic occurrences restrict language boundaries, break the soul, or even wreck that means has completely set the stage limits and keeps contributing to vital conversation although substitutionary approaches dispel this perception. The task of recalling creates psychological ache but additionally, it explains the importance of the previously suppressed experience of unconsciousness and “cleansing of the soul” (Freud 10). The criteria for assessing the impact of distressing pressure on a character’s psyche, as presented in this version, are often utilised to gauge a character’s response to a traumatic event within the text. This facilitates the establishment of connections between personal experiences and cultural or political worlds, the “brute reality” and “the world as it is” (Baudrillard 11). The early or traditional Freudian model of trauma places significant emphasis on the criteria of latency, pathology, dissociation, and fixation. According to this model, trauma is an unresolved event that fundamentally divides the mind. The notion that traumatic experiences cannot be fully comprehended without a recurrent absence highlight both the fragmented nature of trauma and the limitations of language. “[T]he impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time.” (Caruth, Trauma 9)

K R Meera is a prolific writer with several accomplishments, including short stories, novels, and essays. She has been recognized with numerous esteemed writing awards, such as the Vayalar Award, the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award, and the Odakkuzhal Award. Meera’s novel Aarachaar
Hangwoman published in 2012 is widely regarded as one of the most pleasant books ever produced in the Malayalam language. The Unseeing Idol of Light has already acquired sizable opinions with the aid of critics. Braille readers may not consider the writer, but they will remember it. It is miles from a novel wherein there may be love and there’s loss. There are subject matters of mild and darkness, of vision and blindness, in a figurative sense, and they’re sincerely associated with the identical problem that Penrose is interested in.

2. Exploration of Blindness

The Unseeing Idol of Light explores blindness and sight, infatuation and struggling - as well as sad verbal exchange between the characters. Ministry S.’s translation is to the point. The luxury and economy of Meera’s prose are skillfully duplicated, which allows the readers to live targeted on this well-designed and well-mentioned tale. The Malayalam title of the work Nethronmeelanam is a tantric word with layers of meaning. The term describes the eye-establishing ritual of the photo of a deity, which later becomes an idol worthy of worship. Netra means eye whereas Unmeelanam refers to opening. The disappearance of a young pregnant woman Deepti forms the crux of Meera’s novel. The book speaks of Deepti who, on a hard day, disappeared mysteriously. annoyed by her vanishing and filled with misery, her partner Prakash loses his eyesight. To him, Deepti’s mysterious loss was devastating due to the fact she was pregnant with their baby and no comfort can deliver him consolation in the years yet to come. It “always inflicts a wound in the everyday course of history, in the ordinary repetition and anticipation of all experience.” (Borradori 96)

Rajani, a woman with a distressing history, proceeds to ascend the vacant staircase. Despite the initial animosity, she finds herself drawn to her. According to Foucault, women are utilising “technologies of the self” to recreate themselves and achieve a heightened state of being by transforming their “bodies, souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being” through “their means or with the help of others” (Foucault 18). And even though a strong preference made them close, Prakash fails to offer Rajani the affection she longs for as he is not powerful enough to erase Deepti’s luminous memories. In the initial pages of this intricately crafted work of fiction, the protagonist Deepti, a young woman, becomes disoriented during a nocturnal excursion. The latter portion of the literary work delineates Prakash’s yearning over the ensuing decade to locate his spouse. Prakash, who experiences visual
impairment as a result of a distressing incident, receives assistance from his childhood companion Shyam. At that factor, Prakash starts by dating Rajani, an orphan woman with a tragic beyond. However, he can’t love her because of her desire for Deepti. The plot is full of fragments and twists, featuring characters who struggle with their literal or symbolic blindness as they engage in warfare and “narrate the unnarratable” (Whitehead 4). Prakash’s social network comprises various individuals, namely his father Justice Ravi, Madhav Menon, the father of Deepti, Rajani, an orphan woman who harbours romantic feelings for Prakash, Chandramohan, Rajani’s spouse whom she wedded in an unsuccessful effort to sever ties with Prakash, Abha Das Munshi, a young Naxal lady whom Ravi fell in love with during his stay in Kolkata, before his return to Kerala, and Sooraj, a visually impaired boy with whom Prakash shares an inexplicable bond. As LaCapra opines, “The traumatic event has its greatest and most clearly unjustifiable effect on the victim, but in different ways, it also affects everyone who comes into contact with it” (9).

Even though the tale unfolds with characters and events vividly defined, in complex prose complete with forensic info, “same trauma” (Hartman 134), The Unseeing Idol of Light is built more of a cutting-edge novel than an informative legend. The search to find Deepti, usually pointless and despairing, comes as frequently as a Sisyphean disaster. Several characters are blind due to start, or blind, introducing readers to different visible senses — via hearing, smell, and contact — that work equally properly, as well as different styles of love and affection. At least four characters pick to commit suicide as a manner to find a solution to an unresolved issue.

viable conferences, as if pre-organized, in far-off regions, alternate lives in sudden approaches. Contemporary society is currently residing in a “trauma culture” in which “extremity and survival are privileged markers of identity” (Luckhurst 2). The world at the end of the tale is usually filled with savagery, where none, not even a pregnant woman is out of whack. Through those mysterious occasions, which include goals, we comprehend that our visual problem will continually be a reminder of lifestyles and dying, “the loss of one’s true self” (Ashmore and Jussim 85) also “identity can also affect how trauma is perceived, interpreted, and experienced” (Berman et al. 276).

3. Vision
This research paper is also a look at ways people address blindness and vision. Seeing is nothing but mild and partial creativeness. One notices
what time one wants to see and also keeps away from what one no longer wants to cope with. Blind human beings, like Prakash, face the project of their condition with the strength of their wandering and other senses visualise without escaping. The friendship of Prakash and Shyam constitutes contrariety and connection. Shyam, a professional in the field of residential architecture, employs deceitful tactics and falsehoods to reestablish a relationship with Deepti. Notwithstanding the obligations imposed by his familial responsibilities and his challenges, he withdraws to an isolated site to reestablish command over his existence. Regrettably, Madhav, the father of Deepti, succumbs to his intended self-delusion as he erroneously recognises a female individual as his daughter, ultimately resulting in a calamitous outcome. Regarding Prakash, Deepti is a beloved individual who holds a significant place in his recollections and contemplations. Notwithstanding her nonattendance, Prakash exhibits fidelity to his emotions and inner illumination by demonstrating his affection for Deepti and his compassion for the unfamiliar individual she introduced into his existence. As Barthes suggests, “The more direct the trauma, the more difficult the connotation ... is inversely proportional to its traumatic effect” (31).

The noteworthy achievement of this literary work lies in its portrayal of visual impairment as a prevalent condition that affects all individuals, regardless of their physical abilities, and not solely limited to those who are blind. The primary motif of the fable revolves around the capacity of love to effectuate a metamorphosis, enabling the sightless to gain insight and drawing fresh devotees to the cherished countenance. This idea is effectively conveyed through the artistic prowess of Meera. Prakash, Shyam, and Deepti’s father dedicated a decade to searching for their beloved with distinctive facial features and curly hair, scouring various medical facilities and blood banks. Upon the father of Shyam and Deepti presenting a frail and unresponsive female at the medical facility, the siblings are resolute in their belief that it is indeed Deepti.

According to Caruth’s argument, in trauma, “the outside has gone inside without any mediation” (Trauma 59). Prakash, who is currently visually impaired, harbours doubts regarding the identity of the destitute woman claiming to be Deepti. Unexpectedly, he opts to discontinue his pursuit of his spouse and instead, pacify himself in the company of his female companion Rajani, who expresses her desire to wed him. Shyam exhibits a strong sense of displeasure, while Deepti’s father adamantly advocates for the domestic transportation of the unfamiliar female to the clinic. However, over time, a
sense of uncertainty begins to pervade their thoughts. Subsequently, Rajani elects to terminate her relationship with Prakash and enter into matrimony with another individual. Additionally, she acquaints the visually impaired boy whom she was aiding in school with her newly-wedded spouse's family. To alleviate any apprehension, she opts to abstain from engaging in sexual intercourse with her husband.

Each character exhibits a nonchalant demeanour, strategically manoeuvring actions comparable to a billiards game. Meera's written work pertains to the language employed in contexts of violence, infatuation, and anger. The literary works in the Malayalam language frequently contain themes of suicidal ideation. However, *The Unseeing Idol of Light* stands out for its remarkable portrayal of intense emotional and psychological distress. “Traumatized people chronically feel unsafe inside their bodies: The past is alive in the form of gnawing interior discomfort. Their bodies are constantly bombarded by visceral warning signs, and, in an attempt to control these processes, they often become experts at ignoring their gut feelings and numbing awareness of what is playing out inside. They learn to hide from themselves” (Van Der Kolk 97).

Prakash, who’s blind but may not see it, appears to be abusing both Shyam and Rajani. The individual in question exhibits a countenance reminiscent of a philosopher, yet his romantic endeavours appear to prioritise passion over genuine affection. The significance behind the vanishing of the Deepti is a notion that the reader may have foreseen as well. At that moment, Rajani became disoriented while the readers could observe Meera narrating a tale of a single woman, yet applicable to all women. seems that the events depicted were plausible, however, the persistent exasperation of the characters dissipated and ultimately resulted in a less satisfying experience and in the long run it “changed into troubling and life-long oppression.” (Ganzevoort 20)

The ability to perceive and analyse issues is an essential aspect of global experience, often occurring subconsciously as a fundamental aspect of human nature. The ability to envision and plan for the future is also influenced by one’s internal experiences, which may be characterised by anxiety and a sense of immediacy. To maintain a sense of security and sensory awareness, it is advisable to voluntarily subject oneself to various worldly fears, distress, and interpersonal relationships. Trauma in simple words is, “any assault to the body or psyche that is so overwhelming that it cannot be integrated into consciousness” (MacCurdy 16). Individuals often derive a sense of solace from unfamiliar territories that remain largely unknown or unexplored to
them. The establishment of social order, encompassing the domains of family, community, and workplace, engenders a set of obligations that may give rise to ethical and moral shortcomings, particularly concerning the treatment of women and children.

4. Emotional Imbalance

*The Unseeing Idol of Light* by Meera explores the themes of vision impairment and blindness in individuals, while also invoking depictions of feminism among the forebears established in Kerala. The novel is characterised by its imaginative setting. In her novel, Meera, a former journalist for Malayala Manorama, delves into the complex themes of physical and ethical blindness, violence against women, unjust treatment, loss, resentment, friendship, helplessness, and suicide. The work is accompanied by a series of photographs that serve to illustrate the aforementioned themes. The book holds significant meaning for Meera, as it marks a pivotal moment in her life when she was compelled to relinquish her creative pursuits. This occurred in 2007 when the newspaper she was affiliated with instituted a new regulation that prohibited its employees from engaging in artistic writing for publications in other books.

In *The Unseeing Idol of Light*, like a lot of her works, Meera makes use of this extreme narrative to show and explore the irrational, toxic nature of deeply expressed feelings, “[t]rauma is a piercing or breach of a border that puts inside and outside into a strange communication. Trauma violently opens passageways between systems that were once discrete, making unforeseen connections that distress or confound” (Luckhurst 3).

Typically, the primary protagonists exhibit irrational behaviour, driven by their darker emotions and with minimal consideration for the potential impact of their actions on others. Prakash serves as a noteworthy illustration of this phenomenon. Following the disappearance of his wife Deepti, the protagonist, who is visually impaired, embarks on a journey with his companion Shyam to search for her, thus initiating the narrative. Upon arrival, they encounter an individual who is afflicted with a mental illness. Both Shyam and Deepti’s father, Madhav, acknowledge the veracity of the affected individual Deepti, whereas Prakash dissents. Alternatively, he enters into matrimony with his beloved partner, Rajani. This initiates a series of purportedly numerous instances in which the characters repeatedly demonstrate their ability to harm and injure themselves. Davis and Meretoja provide a definition of trauma, as “emotional wounds, traces left on the
mind by catastrophic, painful events. Trauma refers to psychological injury, lasting damage done to individuals or communities by tragic events or severe distress” (1).

Despite the abundance of characters and plot intricacies, Meera’s capacity to offer profound insights into the complexities of human emotions and behaviour remains unbridled. The author’s comprehensive examination of the theme of blindness is all-encompassing, utilising it as a structural device, metaphor, and philosophical concept throughout the entirety of the non-traditional work. The manifestation of Prakash’s visual impairment, or the absence thereof, is a mere surface-level indication of a more complex underlying issue. Several characters in the narrative may possess a personal form of blindness, such as Shyam or Deepti’s father, or Rajani who clings to the fervent hope that Prakash will manifest differently despite numerous contradictory indications. The act of perceiving, both concretely and abstractly, is indeed limited and evokes a sense of finality upon concluding the reading material.

The interpretation of Meera’s writings continues to gain momentum. Understanding “responses to trauma requires examining aspects of psychological functioning within the social or cultural environment that may suppress the acknowledgement of trauma” (Vickroy, “Voices” 130). This could motivate confusion in the proper sense, but it quickly will become apparent that it’s a term of love, which is the simplest one the reader has to recognize to keep away from breaking the flow of the story.

The straightforwardness of written expression, however, does not necessarily enable one to definitively discern hyperbolic storytelling, and over time, this can become a source of significant concern. The narrative’s excellence aside, the tragic and toxic circumstances surrounding these characters surpass conventional boundaries. Balaev proposes trauma “returns to haunt the survivor later on” (6), the author’s perspective is limited in its conceptualization of the psychological aspects of trauma, as well as the various types of traumatic experiences and corresponding responses. The aforementioned proposition is subject to scrutiny, taking into account the need for prudence when dealing with intense emotions. The veracity of this claim is left to the discretion of the reader, “collective trauma remains hidden in the dark abyss of the unconscious” (Kellermann 33-34).

Prakash’s behaviour is deemed impure and inciting. The protagonist’s affection for Rajani during his quest for his beloved spouse appears to contradict the expectations of typical readers. Prakash takes advantage of both
Rajani, an orphan who sympathises with his herbal remedies for blindness, and Shyam, who spends his time and energy accompanying him to various locations in pursuit of Deepti. Rajani has decided to terminate her romantic relationship with Prakash and enter into matrimony with Chandramohan. The individual in question incorporates the familial unit of her recently-wedded spouse, Sooraj, who is visually impaired and is purportedly the offspring of Prakash and Deepti. Rajani’s decision to abstain from sexual relations with her husband Prakash precludes the possibility of an actual separation between the two. However, Rajani also vanishes. It appears that he is situated at the apex of the radical before Prakash and Chandramohan, an event that holds significant renown. Deepti goes missing, however, Rajani discovers her whereabouts in Jyoti. Jyoti is contentedly wedded to a photojournalist through a stroke of good fortune.

_The Unseeing Idol of Light_ is packed with bat symbolism, blindness and mildness. Prakash’s father freed himself whilst he turned into simply eight years old. According to MacCurdy’s proposal, it can be inferred that “[w]hen accompanied by other factors, such as social isolation, repeated traumas, or horrific images, it can lead to delayed and uncontrollable, repetitive, intrusive phenomena such as nightmares and flashbacks” (16). The utilisation of symbolism is perceived to be highly exaggerated. However, readers may retain the atypical elements in their memory for several days. According to Mucci’s argument, “[t]he event happens in a different place from which it returns; it is like living in two different worlds, one in which the event dramatically represents itself, while the event does not exist in the other. The memory is frozen in an in-between space” (Mucci 82), this underscores the incongruity of traumatic memory.

### 5. Existence

Jayaprakash is depicted as a paradoxical subject. The individual is aware of the fact that he is inherently connected to Deepti, yet finds solace in Rajani on occasion. At the end of the day, it is widely acknowledged that she has issued a challenge to him, specifically instructing him to refrain from returning to anyone other than Deepti, as it is known that the “desire of shamed individuals to conceal or hide in an attempt to protect against feelings of exposure” (Bouson 6). This literary work may not be suitable for individuals seeking a consistently positive and uplifting narrative. This literary work evokes a sense of melancholy yet possesses a certain charm that persists in its ability to provoke contemplation.
Amid a rainy June day, Jayaprakash is identified as a refuge for the homeless, where he is tasked with identifying a woman who is believed to be his estranged spouse. Deepti had been absent from the education system for a decade and had subsequently become inconspicuous. Deepti’s family and acquaintances hold the belief that he possesses a certain quality, whereas Jayaprakash, an individual with visual impairment, does not share the same assumption. The collective entity of a kaleidoscope, akin to Prakash’s father, is composed of a multitude of distinct characters. The novel reflects a sense of intense aggression towards women. Shyam reported that he had visited a distinct mortuary around 250 times to identify the unidentified female corpses during the Deepti investigation. In the author’s prior publication, *The Poison of Love* (*Meerasadhu* in Malayalam), which was released in English last year, the plight of numerous women in Vrindavan, as well as forsaken fathers, loved ones, and spouses, were highlighted. The author has now progressed to her latest work. According to Meera, the idea of unconventional thinking occurred to her when her esteemed educator asserted that her perception had been shattered on the day of her spouse’s demise. The day dawned with a realisation of perception and ultimately, one’s principles regarding sexuality and equity.

The author’s adeptness in constructing narratives that address issues of gender and justice reveals numerous shortcomings in a society that is often lauded for its tranquillity and concordance. Kerala, commonly known as “God’s Own Country,” is considered to be a developed economy owing to its high social indicators, including education and healthcare. However, underlying the aforementioned persuasive evidence, there may exist a profound inclination towards aggression directed towards women, a topic that warrants further examination and discourse within scholarly investigations.

Ten years ago, Meera authored a novel in the Malayalam language which, in present times, would not have exhibited any greater efficacy. A growing number of young women, men, and civil society organisations are beginning to voice their opposition to the silent plight of women, both domestically and internationally. Meera’s latest novel is a noteworthy contribution to her impressive body of work in the realm of Indian literature. However, readers must approach the text with an awareness of the intricate complexities that characterise contemporary society in Kerala. Prakash highlights that despite some individuals’ inability to perceive violence within their immediate community, it is still within their capacity to gain insight into the occurrences.
transpiring in their surroundings. The novel by Meera underscores the capacity of writers and artists to comprehend the trauma prevalent in their communities and incorporate it into their creative choices.

The experience of trauma compels individuals to embark on a journey from reality to the realm of the imaginary. Individuals draw upon their examinations, recollections, and reminders to muster the courage to break their silence and articulate their traumatic experiences, seeking to overcome their victimisation. The entity in question is endeavouring to persist and is often associated with heightened levels of stress and anxiety, which can lead to fluctuations in emotional states because they “shatter expectations and defy meaning in part because their impact is inherently emotional. Our bodies and minds clash with phenomena that defy our capacity to reason, thus triggering a range of powerful emotions” (Hutchison and Blaker 388). The outcome of self-awareness is undeniably linked to the preservation of one’s existence.

6. Conclusion

Theoretical perspectives on trauma have been put forth by scholars such as Caruth, who developed the psychoanalytic post form. The present approach postulates that trauma represents an unresolved matter of the unconscious that underscores the fundamental conflict between pleasure and language. A deeper understanding of the evolutionary theory of trauma can potentially augment its application in the field of literary criticism can be enhanced by examining the psychological connotations of trauma and the limited, incomprehensible, and communal issues that constitute a portion of literary and social trauma analyses.

The concept is perceived as being either excessive or deficient. Individuals who possess an abundance of resources are often identified by their inclination towards maintaining a positive reputation and engaging in numerous social interactions, which are believed to contribute to their overall sense of well-being and psychological health. Nonetheless, humans are distinguished by their negative behaviours and adverse social exchanges. Self-adverse behaviour is observed in individuals who experience a state of low mood or perceive a sense of threat. Although humans possess a relatively low threshold for stress, it is correlated with an increased likelihood of experiencing depression, anxiety, and emotional distress. This tendency towards maladaptive behaviour may serve to facilitate adjustment to positive circumstances and promote personal growth. However, it is also closely
linked to the phenomenon of human impulsivity, which arises from an individual's inability to exercise proper self-control.

The notion of *The Unseeing Idol of Light* can be interpreted as a fallacious belief and a regrettable phenomenon. The remarkable aptitude possessed by Meera resides in her ability to facilitate her readers in recognizing the similarities between their own life experiences and the challenges faced by the imperfect characters depicted in her literary works. The author presents a comprehensive overview of Prakash's perspective, which assumes a central role in the radical. Self-destructive behaviour, a phenomenon that can be observed in individuals, is often characterised by various symptoms such as depression, self-reproach, and feelings of culpability. By examining the unique experiences of men and women, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on gender differences in psychological well-being. The identification of predictable variables that contribute to self-destructive behaviour is a crucial aspect of treatment interventions focused on improving individuals' comprehension and awareness of self-harm. The phenomenon of self-harm is a complex and multifaceted psychological issue that has garnered significant attention in mental health. The present analysis explores the depiction of the trauma principle in the literary work, focusing specifically on its association with the themes of mortality and subjugation. By examining the text, each of us seeks to understand how these themes shape the portrayal of trauma within the narrative. The conveyed distressing events encompass both direct and indirect forms of communication, effectively shedding light on a range of issues about grief, frustration, and emotional detachment. In the pursuit of understanding literary works, it is crucial to adopt a critical inquiry approach that enables a thorough exploration of the authors' underlying intentions and the messages they seek to convey. The understanding of figurative language utilised by authors facilitates readers in acquiring a deeper comprehension of the intended message. Therefore, it can be inferred that readers possess the ability to interpret and comprehend the notable psychological strain that writers endeavour to underscore. In the realm of profound contemplation, readers need to engage in their analysis to fully grasp the entirety of the literary work and recognize its grandeur.

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