

# Ritualism and Tradition in Aniruthan Vasuthevan's *One Part Woman*

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## Abstract

Cultural Translations is studied through cultural anthropology, a field of anthropology that focuses on cultural issues among humans. Translation studies are not only based on language issue but also on cultural context among people. **One Part Woman** is a translated work of Perumal Murugan's *Madhorubhagan*. Perumal Murugan is an eminent scholar of contemporary Tamil Literature. He is an award winning writer, poet and scholar. He has governed both critical acclaim and commercial issues. **One Part Woman** is the best known work of Vasuthevan which was short listed for the crossword award. It is a story of a childless couple Kali and Ponna having a strong desire towards a child is depicted with admirable, sensitive, anguish and gentleness. Rituals and tradition is mainly discussed in this novel. The Woman who had went for the chariot festival of Arthanadeeshwarar temple in Thiruchengode for doing the rituals by the advice of her mother and in –laws to wishing for stands as an example. This article will focus on the ritualism and traditions in Aniruthan Vasuthevan's **One Part Woman**.

**Keywords:** Ritualism, Tradition, Cultural Anthropology

Ritualism is a form of rites which is connected with the religious ceremony handing down of opinion customs from one generation to another. Ritualism is followed by the people as their tradition. Actually, rituals are superstitious belief. This paper intends to discuss on the ritualism and traditions in Aniruthan Vasuthevan's **One Part Woman**.

Perumal Murugan is a great scholar and also a writer. He is a renowned writer of contemporary Tamil literature. He has garnered both critical acclaim and commercial issues. 'MADHORUBAGAN' is a fifth novel of Perumal Murugan and was short listed for the Crossword Award. **One Part Woman** is a translated work of Anirunthan Vasuthevan a great scholar and also a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin. He won Sahitya Academy for **One Part Woman**. The novel was published in 2010 and was well received, but began to attract controversies in 2014, after the local caste board religious Hindu group objected to the fictional portrayal of traditions at the temple.

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Culture is still deep rooted in the contemporary society. An Indian typical woman faces many struggles in their life. The woman would be dominated in the places where they can survive. They don't live their life with their own thoughts and dreams. They are enslaved to even their husband and children. Women are more suppressed by their surroundings to live because they lead a life depending on others. They force them to do things which are accepted by the society. In Indian culture most of the woman is suppressed by their traditional and cultural views. The society dominates the woman who has no children. If the couple is childless, they accuse the woman gender not the male.

**One Part Woman** is a novel about the young couple Kali and Ponna who are childless for more than twelve years. Kali's relatives arrange for a second marriage to him, but he refuses. His mother and mother-in-law advice them to perform a rituals at the temple of Arthanadeeshwarar during the chariot festival so that they will be blessed with a child. As per this belief, on who performs the ritual that is Ponna has to make love with someone who acts as god to be blessed with a child. As Kali and Ponna refuses to perform the ritual, till the end of the novel the couple was childless, they don't get a child. There are umpteen idols on the Thirunchengode hill each one proficient of giving a specific boon. One of them is the Arthanadeeshwarar, an idol of Lord Shiva, who has given the left part of his body to his consort Parvathi. It is said that it was the only place where Lord Siva is venerated in this mythical form. The god Murugan was enthralling on encountering several men in the part the age of 50 who were called **Ardhanai (half woman)** or **sami pillai**.

The couple had run towards the gamut of prayers to various deities, vows ,and penances but of no use. Kali's mother forewarn him that his family is cursed by Pavatha, a ferocious female deity in the forest for a past crime against a damsel and that the males in her family are foredoom to remain infertile or if a child is born to them it will be short lived. Kali and Ponna offers sacrifice at the altar of pavatha and climb the VARADIKKAL barren woman rock on the hill of Thirunchengode, but this effort also didn't bear fruit. The couple endures in their own way a minified stream of torment and innuendo from everyone around them, including strangers, tether a ride with them to the temple. Ponna's family and her in-laws conspire to send Ponna alone to the festival to receive the blessings of a child from an anonymous god.

Kali and Ponna, the couple are impotence for more than twelve years. They do lot of rituals in the temple of Arthanadeeshwarar temple. It's not a real fact that doing rituals will help them to get a child. It is just a superstitious belief to do rituals to get a child. In the present scenario, we have lot of innovative technologies and treatments to cure impotence and other deadly diseases. In India, many women succeed in their life, though they are treated as slaves in

some traditions. Ponna's is blamed for their childlessness and she is tortured to do the rituals their family members and in-laws asks her to do, especially the ritual on Chariot Festival.

Ponna goes to every astrologer in the area who picked cards using a parrot and said good happening in future. They were few who made predicted future by drawing lines. If she mentioned that she'd been married for over twelve years. They would say "*you will get it late but you you will get it for sure*". Her meeting with the astrologers gave her only hope. Though these superstitions are not the entire solutions for the problem, Ponna's neighbours made her to take the decision to do the rituals by their superstitious belief as traditions. The superstitious belief made some guiltiness en route for love with others for one night. This could be against to our culture. In Indian customs monogamy policy is followed by the people. The superstitious belief doesn't give a definite solution for the couple. Even they do lot of rituals they don't get a child and they will never. The novel considers the hindrance of tradition as a great drawback for Kali and Ponna's plight as well as their happy life. **One Part Woman** is so rooted within the soil of tradition in more fortuitous and poignant way.

The work of Perumal Murugan can be eulogize as modern mythology for its quirk axis to cultural memories of land and languages and extraordinary courage with which it dealt. In the novel *Vicar of Wakefield*, the adherent proclaimed that rituals and traditions must be followed as god's interest. It is given by the god. One might live a godly life but without involving deeply into traditions. In order to live happily in heaven one must endure the hardship in their life. Accept your religion, traditions and follow the rituals said by your family. Being religious is more than worship and a protocol. Eventually Ponna accepted that ritual for the welfare of her family.

Elizabeth Gilbert says about rituals as "*This is what rituals are for. We do spiritual ceremonies as human beings in order to create a safe resting place for our most complicated feelings of joy or trauma, so that we don't have to haul those feelings around with us forever, weighing us down. We all need such places of ritual safekeeping. And I do believe that if your culture or tradition doesn't have the specific ritual you are craving, then you are absolutely permitted to make up a ceremony of your own devising, fixing your own broken-down emotional systems with all the do-it-yourself resourcefulness of a generous plumber/poet.*" Rituals and traditions are the things used to create belief in god . Religious minded people do the rituals for the satisfaction to get away from their trouble but performing rituals are not the definite solution for the problems.

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