Conclusion

The foregoing discussion of the works of W.B. Yeats and Edasseri Govindan Nair has revealed and exemplified certain aspects of sacrifice, which has remained an ever-changing social institution from the pre-historical time to the present. The kernel element or the deep structure of sacrifice is the scapegoat, "a necessary evil that society tolerates only in the hope of preventing worse ills" (Norris 42). The scapegoat serves as a mechanism for diverting or redirecting violence of all forms and contents with relatively least harm to the individual or society. The ancient Greek city states maintained a group of scapegoat-individuals or the pharmakos-community, who were posted or positioned at the "margins" of the system, and who problematised the very outside/inside binary that the system upholds and/or is upheld by. Modern societies maintain similar individuals or groups who can be termed the "other." The distinctions and brandings like class, caste, gender, race and nationality make certain groups the "other" in the dominant discourses. Various degrading, discarding and denigrating epithets like "useless," "effeminate," "inferior," "weak-willed," "non-believing," "sinful," "criminal" and "wretched" exist to describe the "other." But the very constitution of a society depends on the "other," for society has meaning only in relation to the other as the other serves as a contrast. The good angels are known as a foil to the bad. The dominant and the central exist as contrasted to the marginalised. Mankind survives as
there is womankind. When there was matriarchy, male-consorts were the pharmakos. Pururavas's plea to save his precious life is turned down by Urvasi. Kosambi interprets the hymn in Rg Veda (X.95) thus: "Pururavas is to be sacrificed after having begotten a son and successor upon Urvasi; he pleads in vain against her determination" (54). Kali in "Kavile Pattu," the Pootam in "Poota Pattu" and the Queens in A Full Moon in March and The King of the Great Clock Tower decapitate young heroes and lusty lovers and drink their blood. The goddesses or queens dance or sing in glee and the blood bath is termed as sacrifice. As women wield the upperhand in society, as in matriarchal times, mother goddesses or queens confirm their power by slaying the relatively powerless male consorts. They are "lusty" and quarrelsome. They cannot be fed and kept for long. But they are inevitable, for "conceiving," constituting, containing and continuing the community. Male consorts are the "other" in such a society. The citizens of the Greek city states sacrifice the pharmakos when the city or the system is threatened by a famine, drought or the threat of external aggression or war. The pharmakos bear the burden of the crime or sin or the threat of violence. The matriarch or her mythical counterpart, the mother goddess, also does the same. When an epidemic, famine or dearth is widespread, she demands the blood of young martyrs or lusty devotees. Suitors or male consorts living temporarily with queens or young women pose a threat to the female-centred system. Their virginity is violated and their fecundity decreased. Such a desecration or violent threat can be nullified and the purity
and sanctity regained by the ritual purification in blood immolation. The sacrifice of male consorts achieves this desired effect with no danger or harm within the female system. It is the "other" who are destroyed. The male consorts are the "pharmakos" in both senses of the term—they are the saviours of the system and, at the same time, its scapegoats.

Patriarchal colonisation inverts the pattern. Mankind becomes the dominant and womankind, the "other." Whenever catastrophes come the women are found fault with. In spite of Deirdre’s warnings, Fergus and Naoise land her in inescapable difficulties. They scold her for her apprehensions and arguments. They denigrate her, indicating her inferior status in society as the "other" sex. King Conchubar wants to possess her. Deirdre’s feminine physical beauty, an advantageus attribute and a cause for admiration and adoration in matriarchal setup, becomes a source for curse which attracts the jealous male ruler’s aggressive encroachment. Similarly, the images of decoration associated with Kubja throughout "Varadanam" show that she is an ornamental object. The background of the game of chess presents her as a piece to be thrown away when the game suggests so. She is at first posted at the doorway of Kamsan’s palace, not exactly a part of the system and not wholly outside it as the King needs her embrocation. Krishnan also does not fully accommodate her. She is in a state of limbo, neither a queen nor a servant. Her job of smearing others with sandal and saffron is lost. Instead, Krishnan transforms her body. Nobody in the
palace considers Kubja one among them. She has been dispossessed of all spaces to occupy, in a territorial sense. Krishnan, the male coloniser leaves his newly conquered territory and goes back to his former palace. Kubja, being a non-passive and non-silent sufferer, a female subaltern who speaks, raises her protest and finds, later, a space in Krishnan's palace. The mother in "Vivaha Sammanam" feels that her elder unmarried daughter is a source of permanent heart-burn. If a man remains unmarried, the society will not ridicule or crucify his family. But, if a woman remains so, her family has to suffer calumnies and aspersions. The elder daughter is the former lady love of her sister's bridegroom. For a time, he rouses hopes in the elder, but later he turns away from her. Alienated from every adult member of the society, she drowns herself. Were she to continue her wretched existence, the patriarchal society would have called her a man-eater demoness or a blood-sucking vampire. As the husband in her imagination has "died," she, by suicide, observes sati. Another alienated and castaway woman discussed in this study is Moll Magee. Her husband turns her away from the house when their child dies. The entire responsibility of the catastrophe is transferred upon the female scapegoat.

The successive continental settler colonisers with their Christian gods and male discourse and the Aryan brahminical and other settler colonisers with their male-dominated pantheon of gods and patriarchal discourse made the native deities marginalised, unattended and dispossessed in Ireland and Kerala respectively. Thenceforth, the native deities have been the
"other" in relation to the settlers' dominant ones. Many inauspicious and evil happenings are associated with the "other." The Christian discourse brands them as fallen angels or evil spirits. The dominant brahminical scriptures find them related to left-handed worship or black magic. Still, they are worshipped and maintained by villagers and subaltern natives. The native Irish call them "Good People" and their counterparts in Kerala are termed to be Ugra Moorties [Fierce Deities]. Their presence and influence can be seen in "Kavile Pattu," "Poota Pattu," The Countess Cathleen, Cathleen ni Houlihan, The Land of Heart's Desire, At the Hawk's Well and The Herne's Egg. The imprints of different levels of colonisation—territorial, economic, gender and religious—are seen in the present plight of the native deities. Their dwellings are in remote, hilly regions, far away from the city centres. They are underfed and shrunken in size. Most of them are female deities. Official and institutionalised religious worships rarely recognise their identity but as the "other." Even those who adore them often do it on the sly. This reminds one of Frantz Fanon's statement: "A national culture under colonial domination is a contested culture whose destruction is sought in systematic fashion. It very quickly becomes a culture condemned to secrecy" (Fanon 191). The socio-historical fact revealed here is that the natives are treated as the "other" by the settler-colonisers. These "outsiders" are characterised as threatening peaceful and settled life. The elder sister's argument that the Pootam should be given donation and the similar one related to the giving of alms
to Cathleen ni Houlihan have the intention of taming and propitiating the "others." The term "other" encompasses within itself all the marginalised and dispossessed sections of society. For example the subaltern peasants and labourers in "Puthenkavalavum Arivalum," "Panimutakkam" and "Kudiyirakkal" are also the "other." For the rich dominant landlords, they are needed for clearing and cultivating farms and fields. If a drought or flood comes, the whole burden of crop-failure will be thrust upon the shoulders of the peasants. If the yield is good, it will be confiscated by the landlord. Labourers like Raman are necessary to run the textile mill. But they should not ask for more wages. They have rights and freedom only to work hard for the benefit of the lords and the welfare of their systems. As workers they are inside the system. But, as they have no ownership rights or share in forming the policy of running farms or textile mills, the subaltern peasants and workers are outside the system. When the landlord "feels" that there is a threat from them to his interests, they are evicted. The sub/altern or pharmakos-farmers have no claims to occupation or existence.

The patterns of sacrifice associated with mother-goddess figures in the works analysed reveal the relationship between the degree of power possessed by them and their "grade" or position in the sacrificial events. Every reduction in their dominance in the hierarchical societal structure is seen reflected as a corresponding reduction in the "quality" of the sacrificial victims. The gradual socio-historical evolution from matriarchy
to patriarchy can be read from the nature of the sacrificial events described in the literary works discussed here. The chorus in "Kavile Pattu" sing about the glorious state, position and period of the mother goddess in the distant or remote past. She used to get a "highly qualified" and ritually brought-up hero as her sacrificial victim. The young hero is perfect in all respects: belonging to a noble family, trained in martial arts and shining with physical beauty and effulgence, with moral virtues like discipline, obedience, humility, devotion and courage. The Queens in A Full Moon in March and The King of the Great Clock Tower get degraded fellows like swineherds and strollers. They are uncommonly lusty and risk their lives in love of the Queens. The Pootam in "Poota Pattu" plays the role of a corrective force in society punishing the recalcitrant cowherds by sucking the milk of their cows and chewing the blood of wayward and lusty young men who engage themselves in suspicious nocturnal wanderings. The Queens indicate a period when the goddess possessed power to perform decapitation in public and the ritual dance of blood-bath. The King in The King of the Great Clock Tower pertains to a stage in which the female's authority to immolate men is being eroded. The Queen has power but only to immolate a surrogate, not her current consort, the King. Even the good old days of the Pootam reveal a further deterioration of female dominance. She can drink blood and its surrogate-substitute, milk, on the condition that her sacrificial performance should be according to the interests of the existing patriarchal system or society. The Queen can kill
the Swineherd; but, the dethroned queen or goddess, the Pootam, can drink the milk of the cows only when the cowherds do not tend the cows properly. The Pootam can come out into the open only during nights. And the lady in "Her Vision in the Wood" can do so at midnight and stand upon the path in the woods, and she can only dream of men’s blood. When the funeral procession of the male-victim is going on, the lady has to join and curse "the beast that gave the fatal wound" (CP 312), though the beast is herself. All the above works show that the power of the mother goddess "to cut the throats of thousands and drink blood" (JK 509) was later questioned. The mothers in "Kavile Pattu" and "Poota Pattu," the King in The King of the Great Clock Tower and the people in "Her Vision in the Wood" question the authority of the goddess. The subversive signs of questioning, at first secret and then open, show the gradual advance of patriarchy and the retreat of matriarchy. The old order recedes to yield space to the new. The audacity of the Swineherd in A Full Moon in March and the presence of the patriarchal ruler, the King in The King of the Great Clock Tower, sound the notes of the crumbling of matriarchy. The male-heroes Congal and Cuchulain enter in The Herne’s Egg and At the Hawk’s Well to break and dismantle the last citadels of female centrality even in the remote parts of the world. The mother goddesses cannot rule with full power and perform sacrifices even in the "un-discovered" and unattended margins and hilly woods. The period of transition when the two systems were locked in conflict is inscribed in myths and legends. Mother goddesses are subjected to competitions on
deceptive, false and biased conditions fixed by male heroes. For instance, Siva challenges Kali for a tandava-dance-contest. Emain Macha is forced to race against Conchubar’s horses, when she is pregnant (Chadwick 1.284). The complete and compendious establishment of patriarchy reverses or inverts the positions of the sacrificer and the sacrificed in customs and rituals. The ritual killing of male consort is replaced by sati or widow-burning. Instead of immolating men, the mother goddess lacerates herself. The queens that behead their lovers are no more. Deirdre performs a kind of sati or suicide, creating a chance for that under the pretext that she has to discharge some funeral obligations to her dead husband. Pondering over the loss of her husband in imagination, the heroine in "Vivaha Sammanam" kills herself. Kali in "Kavile Pattu" wounds her own head and draws blood. The lady in "Her Vision in the Wood" lacerates her loins to see blood.

The female/male power tussle is absent in works thematically related to the liberation of the motherland. As Bruce King observes: "Long traditions of women’s movements have... been sacrificed to nationalist concerns" (1121). Irrespective of the general degradation of female-figures and their powers, the mother-goddess figures acquire privileged attention or emerge as prominent. The death of Parnell and the martyrs of Easter 1916 can be seen as sacrifices at the feet of motherland. The head of the singer-lover rolls to the feet of the queen in "The Binding of the Hair." "Vandippinammaye" exhorts Indians to bow down
before the motherland. "Palippin Matavine" addresses freedom fighters to liberate the mother from the foreign yoke. "Chantuvum Otenanum" requests heroic mothers to inspire young men so that they can fight against injustice and foreign reign. "Bharata Puzha" presents the Bharata river as the mother goddess Durga who demands the blood of brave martyrs. Cathleen ni Houlihan even kidnaps bridegrooms for the liberation struggle. The Countess Cathleen is reincarnated in the famine-struck Ireland to supply food for all. The resuscitation of mother-figures has a two-fold significance in forming the alter/native discourse. In terms of gender, these figures form a foil to the predominantly patriarchal discourse of the colonisers’ religions. The figures revived are a part of the native racial memory. Bruce King remarks:

"Nationalism is both political and a state of mind. It begins in the preindependence period as a means of organising the masses behind native political groups that want to eject the colonizer or those felt to be alien. To organise others and to distinguish the national from the foreign, a typical, representative native culture and past must be discovered and asserted. (1115)"

The rebirth of native myths, legends and folklore in general, and the mother figures, in particular, in the works analysed in this study should be read as a part of global anti-colonial movement and ideological resistance against imperial discourse: "The creation of a usable past or a cultural tradition accompanies the
social or political demand for equality and independence, since people with a history, a language, customs and myths of their own deserve to govern themselves" (King 1115).

The works discussed in this study are post-colonial in a broad sense of the term, that is, the sense in which postcolonial works are defined by Ascroft et al: "They emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre" (Ashroft 2). The resuscitation of the mother-figures at the gender level, the subaltern peasants and other dispossessed natives at the socio-economic and territorial level, and the native myths, legends, folklore and primitive and marginalised deities at the religio-cultural level, thematically and ideologically, serves a contrast to the dominant imperial discourse and the regional discourses which imitate or follow the imperial. The colonisations at these apparently different levels are ultimately related and integrated as part of the global colonial projects: "European colonizers...consciously undermined the predominance of the matrilineages through such agents and apparatuses as Jesuit missionaries and the teaching of patriarchal Christianity" (Amariglio 497). In India, even before the wide-spread advent of Christianity and Europeans, the Aryan settler-colonisers with their male-dominated Vedic pantheon of gods had started the patriarchal religiosity. Inscriptions and imprints of such colonisations make the works discussed here
distinctively post-colonial. Analyzing the native intellectual’s response to the inter-action and in-flow of colonization, Frantz Fanon observes that it has three phases (178-79). At the first phase, the native intellectual gives proof that he has assimilated the culture of the occupying power. His inspiration is European. The native works of the second phase betray the uneasiness and disturbance felt by the native. Out of the depths of his memory, past happening of the bygone days of childhood and other similar themes are brought up. Old legends may be reinterpreted in the light of a borrowed aestheticism. The third is the fighting phase. The native, after having tried to lose himself in the people and with the people, shakes the people:

Instead of according the people’s lethargy an honoured place in his esteem, he turns himself into an awakener of the people; hence comes a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature.

(Fanon 179)

The characters and themes in the works discussed in this study have this fighting spirit. Cathleen ni Houlihan comes to the Gillane house and demands the dedication of young men like Michael for the cause of freedom. Countess Cathleen manages to feed all the hungry in famine-struck Ireland. The martyrdom of the heroes on Easter 1916 causes the birth of a "terrible beauty" (CP 205). When the dead body of Parnell is lowered into the grave, "a brighter star shoots down" (319). Seanchan refuses to bulge even before the King, in spite of various temptations, and prefers to die at the King’s threshold. The re-establishment
of native rights desecrated by the settler-coloniser-king is more valuable to Seanchan than his life. Deirdre refuses to be subjected to the male-coloniser-king's patriarchal verdicts. Mary, in The Land of Heart's Desire, is not convinced by the postulations of the father, Hart, that the native deities are unholy and evil. She goes with the "Good People" to their world releasing herself from the control of the well-settled, patriarchal and Christian household. Kali, in "Kavile Pattu," is a very powerful and prominent figure, whether she sacrifices others or herself. Even though circumstances are unfavorable or adverse to herself, the Pootam, sometimes, manages to kidnap children. She was used to drinking the blood of young men. Kubja, in "Varadanam," unlike the Kubjas of puranic discourses, raises her protest before male-coloniser princes like Krishnan and Raman. She implies that even a poor female subaltern servant girl like her should not be thrown away like a piece on the chessboard. Koman, in "Puthenkalavum Arivalum," and Raman, in "Panimutakkam," shout slogans of open fight against their lords. The landlord comes to the paddy field to reap the crop with the support of the court and police. Koman and other peasants line up in a circle and raise their sickles. They jointly cry: "First we must reap power;/And after that the Aryan crop!" ("The Cooking Pot and the Sickle" 123). Raman and his wife who join the procession of agitators shout a similar revolutionary refrain: "Buried be the wrenching sorrows/Leap toward rocky fortitude!" (EK 248). Such exhortations or calls for armed rebellion by united peasants and workers have, at
regional and universal levels, an anti-colonial or decolonizing significance. Such protests should be read in the context of British imperial reports on the peasant's revolts in British India of the 1920s and 30s. Certain lines from the report of the Home Department, British Government of India, on Kisan Sabha Agitation in 1921 deal with such a situation. A part of the report is quoted in *Subaltern Studies* (Guh: 1. 192-197): "The Bolshevik idea is rapidly spreading... that it is the cultivators who plough, sow, irrigate and reap and are thus entitled to the whole of the produce of the land" (194). The increased awareness among the subalterns about their needs and rights and the readiness to organise strikes drawing inspiration from the Russian Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 are seen reflected in some of the works of Edasseri Govindan Nair. Such a note is absent in Yeats. The possibility of decolonizing reading at all levels, social, gender and religious, is realised as the works emerged ultimately out of the victim position occupied by Ireland and Kerala in relation to the imperial centre. The cry for political freedom unleashes the sub-notes of economic, social and cultural liberations. As Bruce King opines: "One liberation leads to another" (1121).

The terms, "possession" and "dispossession," often crop up during the discussions of different works in this study. The common lexical significance of "possession" are related to the ownership of property, the control over something or somebody or the "keeping in" a spirit or deity or the "instrumentality" of a
spirit or deity. In connection with land or territory, the successive colonisations and the consequent confiscations have resulted in the eviction of the natives from the central and important places and positions and the occupation of such areas by the settler-colonisers. This has resulted in the marginalisation, landlessness or dispossession of the natives. Fanon points out "the banishment of the natives and their customs to outlying districts by colonial society" (190). Such expropriations make the natives either the slaves or servants of the settler-colonisers or the wandering outcasts or the shrunken primitives who live in hills and woods. The representatives of such a native racial memory, by displacement and distortion, figure forth in the works of Edasseri and Yeats, as dispossessed, wandering or wild deities. The Pootam and Cathleen ni Houlihan are such deities. Occasionally or periodically they come to the households of the settler-colonisers and demand a portion of share or dividend of their former possession rights. The origin of many beliefs like "It's sin to deprive her of her due" in the context of giving cloths and paddy to the Pootam ("The Ballad of the Pootham" 56) and "Shame on you, Peter. Give her the shilling and your blessing with it, or our own luck will go from us" when monetary gift is given to Cathleen ni Houlihan (CPl 83) has a concrete socio-economic foundation. The inherited recollection of sacred matriarchal possession right is also inherent in such sayings. Their apparent ambiguity can be solved only in the context of historico-socio-economic factors. Donation or gift-giving "is a means of controlling others by winning followers and
by placing those who accept the gift under obligation" (Thapar 107). If donation is viewed as a form of worship or a metaphorical or metonymical scapegoat ritual, it transfers the evil look, "the look the native turns on the settler's town...a look of lust, a look of envy" (Fanon 30) to the money or material donated. Besides the Pootam and Cathleen ni Houlihan, the evicted peasant in "Kudiyirakkal," Deirdre, who belongs to a wandering caste and who is born and brought up in a remote hill, Kubja, who can stand only at the gateyard of the Lord's palace, and the "tamed" Kali in "Kavile Pattu" re/present certain aspects of the marginalised natives. The priestesses in The Herne's Egg and At the Hawk's Well maintain their female-centred systems and small horticultural holding or bird-farms in remote, woody or hilly regions. The decrease and degradation of the female power and prestige is seen reflected in the deterioration effected in their possession of central territory and significant position in rituals.

"Possessed" in the sense of "possessed by a spirit" comes in At the Hawk’s Well (CPI 215), "Kavile Pattu" and "Puthenkalavum Arivalum" (EK 504,254). The priestess becomes possessed by the deity, the Hawk and the oracle by the goddess Kali. Such "possessions" are effective and meaningful only when the society acknowledges and approves the deity's power and prestige. Otherwise, "possession" will be interpreted or read as subnormality and sickness. Koman is said to be running as if he is possessed. He is possessed by a diabolic deity that causes
anger, despair or dejection. He is possessed as he is afraid that his crop will be ruined. The prospective loss of his possession makes him possessed. The Queen in A Full Moon in March grows possessed after beheading the Swineherd and sings (CP 628). The King in The King's Threshold thinks that Seanchan possesses the magical power to rouse the people against the ruler. Fergus misreads that he possesses influence over the natives to lead a successful rebellion against Conchubar. Hence the notes of possession throughout the works under study are related to the power and prestige of the possessed. The dispossessed deities are the representatives of the dispossessed and marginalised natives. All the levels or phases of dispossession and marginalisation are transforms of the concept metaphor which identifies the native land as the dispossessed and marginalised in relation to the imperium.

In spite of non-confluent factors like race, culture and nationality, the two writers, W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) and Edasseri Govindan Wair (1906-1974), express certain aspects of life in this world in such a way that such responses and re/presentations can be placed side by side for a comparative study like the one attempted here. The imprints of colonisations which acted upon their respective motherlands, Ireland and India, account for the resemblances in their re/writings. Ireland got freedom in 1922 and India in 1947. Year-wise the works were written during similar stages of the respective nations' relation or reaction to the British imperium. The works that boost national sentiments
continue to be produced during post-independence years marking "cultural nationalism" (King 1116). At the time of the production of these works Ireland and India were "third-world" countries going through identical stages of socio-economic growth. Such similar conditions and stages in the socio-cultural spheres of Ireland and India conditioned and generated parallel motifs and comparable themes. "Polygenesis of motif...is...the result of identical or parallel psychological traits and social circumstances, and as such motifs may sprout simultaneously and independently of each other in different places" (Maurya 11). The global waves of nationalism and decolonization swept through Ireland and India and they caused the production of the works discussed here from the standpoint of the motif of sacrifice.
Select Bibliography


