THE REBIRTH OF A MYTH: A POSTHUMAN ELEMENT ANALYSIS OF *LOKAH CHAPTER 1: CHANDRA*

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Abstract

This paper examines Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra by Dominic Arun, as a profound cultural critique that uncovers the posthumanism concealed in its own mythic source material. This study illustrates how the film uses the pre-modern ontology of South Indian folklore to create a decolonial model of corporeality, echoing Karl Steel's claim that posthumanism is intrinsic to humanism's attempt to define its own boundaries. It is assessed in the study that the film's narrative redefines the very basis of heroism by reconsidering the posthuman body as an affective and relational entity rather than a technological assemblage through a close examination of the protagonist, Chandra, a modern-day version of the mythological yakshi, Kalliyankattu Neeli. Lokah exposes and challenges the humanist impulse to domesticate anything within its sphere of influence by way of depicting an acceptance of the figure of the non-human "other" which the original myth narrativized orally. Through this close reading, the article examines how marginalized cultural narratives can act as a medium for reinforcing a culturally and politically better Anthropocene; this is managed through extending the thread of the myth (which is related to a value enhancement) to a posthuman framework, where a similar value enhancement in the current times is aimed at.

Keywords: *corporeality, folklore, other, yakshi, Anthropocene*

Introduction

The cyborg body connected by wires and made sentient by silicon chips has been the face of Western posthumanism for decades. The field of posthumanism is characterized by this technologically oriented understanding of transcendence. This ignores significant pre-existing humanist challenges that exist outside of the Global West. By focusing on ancient history rather than the future, the Malayalam movie *Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra* drastically interrupts this conversation. The film relives and reimagines posthumanism hidden in its own mythic source material, which is rooted in the South Indian myth of the *yakshi*, named Kalliyankattu Neeli. One can easily assess a unique depiction here where the myth, or rather a series of connected mythical stories (as more chapters are already teased to be coming soon), is given a very symbiotic coexistence with the modernity of the cosmopolitan. Similar western depictions generally root the story in the ultra-futuristic time frame where the superhero figure acts as an agent of the times to come. *Lokah* stands out from this crowd as both the narrative and the superhero here are deeply rooted in the past, where there is a strong mythical subtext available.

This essay contends that *Lokah* is a "landmark win for Malayalam cinema" and a "clutter-breaking piece of work" (Das, 2025, p. 1) for both genre and theory. It also examines the movie's background and offers a potent, decolonial critique of Western posthumanism.

According to its historical definition, humanism is a project of establishing boundaries. It defines what it means to be 'human' by excluding the non-human, like the monster, the animal, and the spirit. This exclusion of non-human positions means some identities or bodies are considered "disqualified from humanity" (Chemers & Santana, 2025, p.2). Posthumanism arises as a response to this exclusion. Braidotti, in her work *The Posthuman* (2013), writes: "Humanism's restricted notion of what counts as the human is one of the keys to understand how we got to a post-human turn at all" (p. 16). Karl Steel's assertion that posthumanism is fundamental to humanism's effort to establish its own limits also serves as the framework for this essay. Importantly, there is historical depth to this inherent connection; research on Medieval Posthumanism shows that pre-modern periods, like the European Middle Ages, offer "vantage points from which to trouble present certainties" (Montroso, 2017) regarding what it means to be human.

This paper argues that *Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra* performs a decolonial critique by demonstrating a pre-existing posthuman ontology within its mythic source. The film transforms the traditional monster, yakshi, here named Chandra, by way of reliving the myth and redefining corporeality as an affective and relational entity. The movie also depicts heroism as a radical acceptance of the other. The analysis will proceed by detailing the original humanist containment narrative of the *Yakshi*. It analyzes how she is the film's mythological hybrid body and examines its ethical reversal of heroism to conclude how such narratives can act as a medium for reinforcing a culturally and politically better Anthropocene.

The first chapter of *Lokah* focuses on Chandra, her neighbor Sunny (played by Naslen) who is romantically interested in her, and her accidental mission to dismantle a terrifying network involved in organ trafficking. The film, directed by Dominic Arun, offers a powerful decolonial and feminist critique by subverting the patriarchal superhero genre. Chandra's heroism reframes the mythological 'other' into a necessary, affective protector as it is entirely self-authored and driven by empathy. The film thus presents a non-technological, culturally specific model of posthumanism. It underpins the ethical and moral uprightness of the monstrous figure who would later intervene to protect humanity from its own self-destructive greed.

Redefining the Myth: From Containment to Subversion

As Karl Steel contends in his work on medieval monsters and animality, posthumanism is "intrinsic to humanism's attempt to define its own boundaries" (Steel, 2011, p. 19). The way humanism affirms itself is through the subjugation of the monstrous 'other,' which makes the creation of monsters and their containment simple. The legend of Kalliyankattu Neeli is a good case study in the construction (and maintenance) of these boundaries in Kerala's social structure.

The need for *yakshi* to be contained reflects the humanist idea of controlling and taming the posthuman other. In Kerala's oral and literary traditions like *Aithihyamala*, the *yakshi* is the embodiment of dangerous, untamed materiality—an alluring female figure that morphs into a blood-drinking demon. The origin of this figure is deeply rooted in the caste and gender politics of pre-modern Kerala. This legend acts as an effective containment narrative. In its most potent forms, the Neeli myth functions as a cautionary tale designed to restrict the movement of high-caste Brahmin men who sought to exploit or engage in informal relationships with lower-caste women outside of socially sanctioned hours and spaces. The monstrous body of the *yakshi*, with "uncontrollable *kama* or sexual urge" (Bini, 2016), therefore, is not merely a supernatural threat, but a phobic object of the abject. According to Kristeva, the abject "is simply a frontier, a repulsive gift that the Other, having become alter ego, drops so that the 'I' does not disappear in it but finds, in that sublime alienation, a forfeited existence" (Kristeva 1982). Here, *yakshi* can be considered as a phobic object. She induces fear in viewers as her existence discusses the otherness of the wronged posthuman body:

The phobic has no other object than the abject. But that word, "fear"- a fluid haze an elusive clamminess- no sooner has it cropped up than it shades off like a mirage and permeates all words of the language with nonexistence, with a hallucinatory, ghostly glimmer. Thus, fear having been bracketed, discourse will seem tenable only if it ceaselessly confronts that otherness, a burden both repellent and repelled, a deep well of memory that is unapproachable and intimate: the abject. (Kristeva, 1982)

The anxieties of gender, purity, and the disruption of caste hierarchy are projected onto this phobic object. As Bini (2016) argues, this "diabolic feminine" is frequently "tamed and domesticated in some of the narratives" (p. 33). The archetype of the hero, the 9th-century priest Kadamattathu Kathanar, represents rational control and human piety, whose mission is to fix the problem posed by a powerful woman, a clear articulation of the monstrous force that must be contained or destroyed by a human male. Kathanar also reflects a colonial idea as the folktale features a Syrian Christian priest taking control of the vengeful nature of a posthuman lower caste woman. It is also the symbolic victory of human reason, formalized social order, and masculine clerical authority over chaotic, feminine, non-human vitality. The containment narrative fundamentally reinforces the humanist paradigm: any force that violates the boundaries of the norm must be domesticated or destroyed to ensure the supremacy of the normative human subject.

The proof that posthumanism and humanism are concurrent diachronic activities can be seen in the very existence of the *yakshi* myth, which posits a hybrid entity that transgresses the boundaries of life, gender, and death. This is against the universalizing idea that posthumanism is about machines and the post-digital world. The fascination and fear of the beyond-the-human is as ancient as human consciousness. This is done through re-living the myth of *yakshi*. This featured Indian mythic tradition shares an underlying thematic continuity with Western narratives of monstrous hybrids that emerged concurrently with the Renaissance's humanist surge.

Figures like Christopher Marlowe's Faustus, with his entanglement of non-human knowledge, or Mary Shelley's Frankenstein's creature, are all part of this long chain of activity. *Lokah* operates in conscious dialogue with this historical thread, utilizing the *yakshi* not as a terrifying new cyborg, but as a mythical, pre-existing creature hybrid, thereby positioning its critique outside the technological lens.

Chandra, played by Kalyani Priyadarshan, is a modern, grounded transformation of this mythic spirit. Unlike being controlled by Kathanar in the folklore, Chandra is often contacted by Moothon, another unfamiliar, mysterious, and posthuman being who supervises other non-human creatures like her who live among the humans. There are many clues hinted towards the origin of the posthuman figure of Moothon, as well as the Mesopotamian Goddess Ishtar in the animated title sequence of the movie, but much of it is not unveiled. The opening scene of the movie itself mentions Ishtar when Prakash, played by Nishanth Sagar, shows Chandra in an urban battlefield. He tells her that "Ishtar's guys will be all over that place soon" (Arun, 2025, 3:23). He encourages her by mentioning their commander, Moothon, and instructs her to flee with the valuable cargo she has obtained. The title sequence also features Moothon and Ishtar fighting. This is followed by the image of a woman in a floating pod, which might indicate that this is Ishtar, who has been beaten. An image of numerous young people with similar appearances follows this shot; this also points to the idea that the gods of today were nothing other than posthuman alien creatures who visited Earth, who were later idolized by primitive human intelligence. *Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra* directly confronts the humanist containment narrative by subverting the two most crucial elements of the traditional myth: the *yakshi's* origin and her relationship with the exorcist. This confrontation is executed using two strategies in the movie.

Firstly, the film provides Chandra, the modern-day *yakshi*, with a decolonial, material origin. Her posthuman existence is not divine or purely demonic, but the result of a viral transformation contracted in the aftermath of precolonial-era religious violence against her tribal family. Her transformation began in her childhood-- she was bitten by a bat while hiding in a cave from the king who executed her tribal family. This traumatic event is the origin of her immense, non-human powers. With the film integrating the mythological shift (*yakshi*/vampire) with the idea of a viral infection, it backs the folklore with a scientific rationale. Chandra's existence is re-coded and re-mythified from a supernatural threat to a living historical archive.

The second strategy of subversion that the movie uses is when the film unveils the secret of *yakshi's* containment—the subjugation by the Kathanar. The exorcism was a staged event. It conceals an ancient, interspecies alliance between the spiritual hero and the supposed monster. This revelation achieves the philosophical state of ambivalence: the priest, the representative of human authority, is simultaneously the monster's protector and co-conspirator who guides her to work with Moothon. By invalidating the myth's core containment function and establishing a millennia-old working partnership, *Lokah* immediately defines Chandra's "otherness" not as a problem to be solved, but as the source of a necessary, affirmative, and affective agency required to combat ongoing human failures.

This also features the villainous figure of Nanchiyappan, a corrupted police officer with a god-complex, who later transforms into a vampire/*yaksha* himself. Even though the villain of the movie gets transformed into a creature like Chandra, he is still governed by humanist morals and ideals. The film thus fulfills its decolonial function by demonstrating that the capacity for ethical co-existence and non-human agency has always been present in the cultural archive, concealed beneath a humanist overlay of fear and control.

Understanding Posthuman Corporeality

The film's intervention in posthumanism is very explicit and crucial when it comes to the handling of the body. The posthuman subject is usually defined in terms of the cyborg or the technological assemblage in Western posthumanist discourse. This is mostly derived from cybernetics and information technology. While the body can be viewed as "a close assemblage and interface with animals, machines and environments, in its most popular articulation" (Nayar, 2023, p. 75), this framework frequently reduces corporeality to a simple collection of elements that can be "reformatted" and "mathematicized" (p. 94). However, by breaking from this framework and creating a mythical hybrid, *Lokah* carries out an essential decolonial tactic. This calls for a reassessment of the fundamental brutality of human designation.

To fully understand the magnitude of this move made by Arun, the film's posthumanism must be framed by the historical and ontological critique put forth by Karl Steel in his work How to Make a Human (2011). Steel argues that the category of the 'human' is not a stable, prior fact. Human is made through the exclusion and categorization of the non-human. In his view, the human is perpetually defined by its anxious insistence on maintaining its boundaries, described as "the animal who knows it must maintain the distinction between the animal and the human at all costs" (Steel, 2011, p. 25). The mythological *yakshi* figure, contained and tamed in the traditional narrative, represents precisely this excluded, boundary-challenging figure.

Lokah refuses the technological challenge of the cyborg in favor of the ontological challenge of the mythic being. Chandra's body is a living, walking representation of the remnants of humanism's project. Her mythological hybridity, the fusion of human form with ancestral alien power in the movie, is not a futuristic upgrade but a historical re-assemblage that forces a confrontation with the original, violent terms of human construction. By centering this posthuman body, the film is not just imagining a new future. On the other hand, it is eliminating the space or gap that humanism has opened. This makes Chandra's body inherently posthuman, not because it is technologically advanced, but because it is the 'Other' that humanism needed to defeat to establish its own stable, rational, patriarchal self.

Along with the ontological nature of the body, it also examines how the posthuman body functions. Here, Chandra's body is beyond the mechanical interface– it is an affective and relational entity. Chandra's extraordinary powers are not hard-wired systems like cyborgs and robots; they are tied to emotion, memory, and cultural lineage. When the young Neeli is bitten by a bat in a cave, she inherits the virus that transforms her into a creature known as a *yakshi*.

It is evident from the sign behind the statue present in the cave—an eight-pointed star, the most well-known representation of the Mesopotamian goddess—that this occurs in front of a headless figure of Ishtar. However, shortly after gaining her abilities, Neeli witnesses her family being slaughtered, the last words from her mother being "Flee!" (Arun, 2025, 55:11). She has kept wandering for centuries, as if her mother's final words were her destiny. She is made into a posthuman being through the virus, as well as her mother's precolonial mythical morality.

This emphasis on the affective body positions Chandra's consciousness and power far from basic rational control. Her body is a vessel for history and cultural memory, spanning over centuries. As a young girl from a tribal family who watched her parents die centuries ago, to an immortal goth woman in the 21st century, her body can be considered as an "embodied and gendered site of subjectivity" (Nayar, 2013, p. 115). Her hybridity is an inheritance of an alien force, not an invention, meaning her body is fundamentally relational. It is also tied to the external extraterrestrial world, her own community's history, and the moral guidance passed down through generations. This is what Nayar (2013) refers to in his larger framework of distributed subjectivity, where the self is not a singular, rational unit but a node in a broader network.

This distributed subjectivity paradigm in posthumanism treats the human form as an interface rather than a self-contained structure, closed off and independent. More interestingly, the body is treated as a means of access to the virtual. The virtual is not simply a realm out there. Rather, the virtual envelops us just as the body becomes the means of access to that virtual. (Nayar, 2013, p. 91)

Here, the 'virtual' in Chandra's case does not mean the virtual world of technology, but the power beyond human, the extraterrestrial virus she was infected with. Chandra's power is effectively distributed across the mythological and emotional network of the *yakshi* history, making her body a "node in a network" (Nayar, 2013, p.90) of marginalized, sovereign power.

Furthermore, this relationality subverts the individualist hero narrative inherent in Western humanism. Her very existence carries the weight of a mythic history where a powerful female entity was contained. Therefore, every act of violence she commits against the human antagonists is not just an isolated act of vengeance. It is an act of self-reclamation for the entire mythological lineage she represents. The film thus successfully aligns posthumanist concerns like fluid identity, networked being, with decolonial objectives such as reclaiming history, asserting agency, and using the non-human body as the site of power. The ultimate political power of *Lokah* lies in the decolonial model of corporeality. It reclaims the gendered monster. In the movie, the domestication of *yakshi* is subverted. The idea of Kathanar exorcising and controlling Neeli is demystified as they are shown to be colleagues who asked her for help to take down other evil spirits. In Kerala, these tales reflect "the cultural anxiety related to traversing the unknown and the encounter with the 'Other'." (Meenu, 2020, p. 330). The *yakshi* was the ultimate 'Other' whose power was weaponized as a cautionary tale to maintain humanist-patriarchal order.

Lokah's decolonial model directly dismantles this containment. By focusing on Chandra's internal life and her moral mission, the film transforms the power that was once deemed dangerous kama into a source of sovereign agency and ethical clarity. Chandra's beauty is still a source of enchantment to the audience as well as the characters, highlighted in the party scene where she wears white, like the stereotypical *yakshi*. But here, her mythological body becomes the symbol of unregulated, powerful, and ethical subjectivity.

This can be considered as a political move. The film keeps the idea that the challenges to human supremacy are not only necessary for a better future, but they are also within the collective memory of the marginalized. *Lokah* forces the viewer to accept that the very entity that the non-human 'other' that humanism rejected is the only figure with the moral and physical authority to protect the world from the self-destructive greed of the human subject. The reclaimed body of Chandra thus stands as a testament to the power of decolonial posthumanism. She is a model for resistance that is historical, embodied, and fiercely sovereign.

Ethical Reversal of Heroism

Through the project's reversal of the original myth's containment strategy, it radically redefines what it means to be a hero. The traditional legend of Kalliyankattu Neeli required Kadamattathu Kathanar a male, pious hero to domesticate or destroy the powerful female 'other'. *Lokah* makes that 'Other' Chandra, the moral and physical center of salvation who fights those who exploit the powerless. So, Kathanar the hero is erased, and Chandra is shown as the new heroine. This moves away from the humanist perspective. Even the male love interest in the movie is the one in need, a damsel in distress, powerless and scared of the antagonists. This change from exclusion and anxiety to radical acceptance is the core idea of of the film's posthumanist vision. This extends the film's scope from a mere critique of humanism to the proposition of a new posthuman heroine.

Thus, there is a systematic decentering of the patriarchal male savior that is very common in superhero movies of the West. The main antagonist is also a god-like patriarchal male who drinks the blood of his own mother after becoming a *yaksha*. So, this move is not merely a gender swap, but it is an ideological restructuring of heroic action and moral agency, especially in a heavily gendered South Asian social landscape.

The gendered body in South Asia becomes a site variously claimed and sought to be defined by myth and history, nature and culture, psyche and soma, affirmative materialities and symbolic valencies. The gendered body is a result of patriarchal prescription and cultural codification through hidden curricula but also through constant slip page and excess, resisting, interrogating and subverting these codes. (Malhotra et al., 2023, p. 3)

Lokah subverts this by making Chandra's heroism self-authored. There is no male hero to fix her, except for the mysterious posthuman Moothon figure, voiced by Mammmooty, whose presence always looms around. This mysterious figure might be a paternal force, as seen in the introductory conversation: "You are indeed a daughter to Moothon. Never doubt that." (Arun, 2025, 3:35). The film thus transforms the historically policed feminine power, associated with destructive desire, into ethical active energy.

In addition to Chandra, the movie also features the female power of Ishtar, the Mesopotamian goddess who is shown as an alien being. The film's opening sets this stage. This is an idea that has been explored earlier. Hollywood superhero movies like Marvel's *Eternals* (2021) and *Thor* (2011), and other works feature aliens that come to Earth. These alien beings are worshipped as Gods by primitive humans as they have unknown powers and unfamiliar technologies. In *Lokah*, Moothon is even shown to give humans fire. Ishtar lieutenant Moothon spends his time helping humans, probably against Ishtar's wishes. The oppressed earthlings turn to Moothon, who rebels against Ishtar. Even though the villain of the movie is the humanist patriarchal male, the multiple chapters to come might feature a posthuman, extraterrestrial female power to be the antagonist as well.

Chandra thus gives importance to her agency, and not external validation. Her fight against the villains is not just for herself or her friends, but on the other hand, she is asserting the legitimacy of the power that the patriarchal order tried to destroy. This patriarchal male is presented through the corrected police force, led by Gajendran, and specifically, Nanchiyappan, a policeman with a god-complex who later gets turned into a *yaksha* himself. His posthuman body is new and governed by humanistic morality– he even kills his own mother. He lures her in to a false sense of security, later telling her, "One thing is certain. Nobody can kill me. I don't need to fear a damn soul." (Arun, 2025, 2:05:52). This shows that his human ego hasn't yet completely eroded despite his posthuman transition. But Chandra, who converts him, is the real God like figure who can be seen through the act of creation and destruction– she creates him as well as takes his life at the end of the movie. There is a clear difference between these posthuman bodies and Chandra herself admits it. When the *yaksha* Nanchiyappan asks her why Moothon would come to kill him even though he is one of them, she replies: "Doesn't matter whether you are human or not, you deserve to die." (Arun, 2025, 2:20:47). Santanu Das's review mentions that the film "has done the impossible. It has created space for a female superhero to exist in the blatantly testosterone-charged genre of superhero films in India", highlighting that "she is just a girl who wants nothing of the bravado or attention" (Das, 2025) that defines male heroism. Chandra's heroism is therefore a reclamation of the gendered body as a site of moral and physical sovereignty.

Chandra's heroism has "restraint and reserve" (Das, 2025). This can be considered as a critique of the destructive spectacle that is commonly associated with Western and Indian male superhero fantasies. Her abilities are used with surgical precision, frequently to prevent rather than simply reacting to damage. She uses search places and abandons buildings to avoid causing social disruption, unlike Western male superheroes, who make their battle scenes public spectacles. It's a philosophical and posthuman declaration and not just a stylistic choice. The display of destruction in many superhero films symbolizes the humanist ego's belief that a performance or spectacle is needed for human salvation.

Chandra, the non-human hybrid, recognizes that true power is employed for morality and not for humanist ego. She works outside of the urge for public praise, which is a key aspect of the humanist movement. Her reserve reflects her posthuman wisdom, which recognizes that the human urge for recognition is the same drive for destructive greed.

Her posthuman understanding is also not limited; she is constantly seeking knowledge about herself and the posthuman world in general. She does not stop at Aitheehyamala, but instead, in the movie, she is featured reading multiple books, primarily a text titled They Live Among Us that contains information about Neeli, Chathan (Tovino Thomas), and Odiyan (Dulquer Salman).

Her distributed subjectivity, as discussed previously, gives rise to actions that are relational and transpersonal. She is not simply driven by ambition but by a higher moral standing as a posthuman being that sees the connection between beings and creatures. Her heroism is quiet, subtle, and persistent, and it is tied to morality and ethics. It is rooted in care for her surroundings, which is a necessary shift for a better posthuman society. Thus, she acquires trans-species and posthuman agency through her hybridity. This gives her an epistemological advantage when it comes to her agency, which helps her transcend anthropocentric, destructive, thought. She realizes the reality of the Anthropocene.

This 'reality beyond' is the space of posthuman existence, where the self is not isolated but networked with the historical and posthuman environment. This might be related to her extraterrestrial origins, as well as her networking with other posthuman beings like Chathan and Odiyan. Her hybrid body, the fusion of the human and the mythic *yakshi*, allows her to access a form of ecological consciousness that involves an understanding of interconnectedness. This affective posthumanist nature of her power positions her morality outside of cold, humanist rationality:

This affective posthumanism which values the connections across species entails, no doubt, a detachment from 'origins and gene sources– 'human', 'animal', 'plant', 'alien'– but concomitant with this detachment is the awareness of how each species is linked with these other species for both vulnerability and survival. (Nayar, 2013, p. 209)

The human characters' inability to see beyond their own self-interest is the epistemological failure of humanism. This humanism primarily revolves around the villains of the movie; the seemingly human character of Sunny might seem to follow Chandra out of self-interest, but in reality, it is done to ensure the safety of his friends. At the same time, Sunny need not be necessarily human in his origin. Sunny is shown to be a good marksman, and it is revealed that Sunny looks just like Neeli's dead boyfriend, who was a British soldier. This might not be due to fantastical reincarnation, but it can be indicative of the posthuman nature of Sunny as well, as posthuman powers are being explained as viruses and alien science.

The movie, along with the critique of humanist ego, proposes a commentary of late capitalist greed, which is also associated with humanism. The posthuman subject's morality is not an invention; it is an inheritance of resistance to humanist violence. Chandra's actions are always measured against the corruption of the human antagonists. The crime of the organ traffickers—reducing human bodies, particularly those of the marginalized, to profitable commodities—is the ultimate expression of humanist reductionism and late capitalist greed. They, even Nanchiyappan, are not motivated by supernatural evil, but by simple, self-serving financial profit.

This choice makes a powerful, contemporary statement: the monstrous force threatening the world today is not a dark posthuman entity, but the logic of anthropocentrism enhanced by capitalism. When Nachiyappan gets converted into a *yaksha*, he is still driven by his human mindset because he is developing his posthuman sensitivity. He used to think of himself as a god, and now he believes that his vampiric powers have made him uncontrollable.

He says moments before killing his own mother, "...Everyone should fear me! People will fear me and then worship me. I am like a God now. I am invincible." (Arun, 2025, 2:05:52). This shows that his humanist sensibility is in control, not his posthuman subjectivity. Their actions represent the final, self-destructive stage of human supremacy. The capitalist monster is the humanist who sees the marginalized body as nothing more than an economic unit. Their greed is a symbol/microcosm of the large-scale exploitation that defines the Anthropocene—the consumption of others for self-benefit.

Alan Johnson critiques the film's representation of the villain as a mere "chauvinistic caricature" (Johnson, 2025), and that making a woman fight this caricature makes them "look worse, too as toxic bullies rather than compelling heroes". This reductive view, according to Johnson, eliminates the severity of having a nuanced, psychologically motivated villain. But in reality, this chauvinistic, patriarchal villain(s) can be considered as a necessary decolonial strategy used by Arun. The villains are not simply sexist, but their chauvinism is the ideological justification for their economic violence. Secondly, Nanchiyappan, the human subject, defined by his anxious insistence on its own superiority, is ultimately exposed as inept when confronted by true, morally grounded power. Even after he physically loses his humanness, and becomes a *yaksha*, his self-justifying godly ideology persists. The first moments of Neeli as a *yakshi* were shown as trying to save her mother, while Nanchiyappa as a *yaksha* drank the blood of his own mother. Chandra's triumph is not about conquering a strong man; it is about the assertion of posthuman sovereignty over the morally bankrupt humanist. Her power is not validated by the strength of her opponent, but by the moral weight of her mission, which is rooted in a posthuman sensibility to overcome the ideals of the Antropocene.

Conclusion

Lokah executes a brilliant inversion: the mythological monster is recast as the ethical hero, while the metropolitical human is reeling in self-made darkness. *Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra* functions as far more than just a feminist superhero narrative– it acts as a decolonial intervention in the posthumanist side. By rejecting the Western, techno-scientific premise that implies that posthumans must be technologically augmented, the film reclaims a pre-modern, mythological ontology of the non-human.

Chandra/Neeli's transformation is not an act of technological assemblage. It is a return to an ancient, affective, and relational corporeality. This serves as a direct challenge to the humanist containment narrative that restricted her in the original folklore.

Thus, *Lokah Chapter 1*, and the chapters yet to come, provide the idea that the posthuman is not a destination but the very journey itself, where the current human project requires a moral and ethical uplifting.

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