



# Betrayal, Guilt, And The Human Condition: An Existential And Psychoanalytic Reading Of K. R. Meera's *Yudasinte Suvishesham*.

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## Abstract

K R Meera's *Yudasinte Suvishesham* offers a radical reinterpretation of the biblical narrative of Judas Iscariot, portraying him not as a simple traitor but as a complex, morally ambiguous human being. This paper examines K R Meera's *Yudasinte Suvishesham* through the twin lenses of existentialism and psychoanalysis to explore the interwoven themes of betrayal, guilt, and the human condition. Through an existential lens, Judas's internal conflicts and choices are analysed as reflections of freedom, ethical dilemmas, and the burden of personal responsibility. Simultaneously, a psychoanalytic approach highlights the psychological dimensions of guilt, repression, and unconscious drives that influence his behaviour and interactions with others. By combining these perspectives, the study analyses how Meera challenges traditional moral binaries, situating betrayal as both a deeply human condition and a site of ethical and psychological complexity. The paper ultimately argues that *Yudasinte Suvishesham* not only reconstructs biblical narratives but also offers profound insights into human fallibility, conscience, and the existential struggles inherent in moral decision-making.

## Keywords

K. R. Meera; Judas Iscariot; Existentialism; Psychoanalysis; Betrayal; Guilt; Human Condition; Malayalam Literature; Biblical Rewriting

## Introduction

Judas Iscariot is commonly known in Christian history as the disciple who betrayed Jesus in exchange for thirty pieces of silver. According to the gospel accounts, his deed was a turning point that resulted in crucifixion. This representation has influenced religious instruction and cultural imagination for ages. Judas has come to stand for treachery in general. He is rarely given psychological or emotional depth, and his character is essentially determined by a single act.

*Yudasinte Suvishesham* questions this simplified portrayal. K. R. Meera depicts Judas as a conflicted person who struggles with doubt, disappointment, and moral confusion rather than as a one-dimensional evil. The novel shifts attention from the act of betrayal to the inner life of the betrayer. Through this shift, Meera transforms a religious symbol into a human subject

This article makes the case that existentialist and psychoanalytic viewpoints are useful for analysing *Yudasinte Suvishesham*. While psychoanalysis shows the underlying conflicts and shame that influence Judas's behaviour, existentialism emphasises the weight of freedom and responsibility in his decision. When combined, these methods enable us to view betrayal as a complicated human experience that stems from internal conflict rather than as a straightforward moral transgression.

### **Rewriting Judas: Beyond the Archetype of Betrayal**

In traditional Christian narratives, Judas is presented primarily portrayed as the traitor. His role is unambiguous, unchangeable, and immoral. Over time, theology and popular storytelling have reinforced this image, reducing him to a symbol of treachery.

In contrast, *Yudasinte Suvishesham* offers a different perspective. Judas is portrayed by Meera as thoughtful, emotionally fragile, and profoundly distressed. His betrayal does not arise from simple greed. Instead, it emerges from disappointment, ideological conflict, and confusion. By giving him psychological depth, Meera invites readers to reconsider their assumptions.

This narrative shift has important implications. When Judas is shown as fully human, betrayal becomes more than a moral label. It becomes a decision shaped by belief, doubt, expectation, and emotional struggle. The novel does not excuse Judas's actions, but it encourages understanding rather than condemnation.

Through this portrayal, Meera challenges the strict division between loyalty and treachery. Judas is neither completely evil nor entirely innocent. He exists in a morally uncertain space, reflecting the complexity of human life. In this way, the novel moves beyond stereotype and explores the fragile nature of moral judgment.

### **Existentialism and the Burden of Freedom**

Existential philosophy provides an important framework for understanding Judas's internal struggle. Jean-Paul Sartre argues that human beings are fundamentally free and wholly responsible for their actions. In *Existentialism Is a Humanism*, he famously declares that "man is condemned to be free," emphasizing that individuals cannot escape responsibility for their choices (Sartre 29). Freedom, therefore, is not a privilege but an unavoidable condition of human existence, one that produces anguish because every action becomes a personal moral commitment.

In the novel, Judas gradually comes to understand that his betrayal was not imposed by prophecy or fate. Although Jesus does not appear directly in the narrative, Judas reflects on his past action and realizes that it was the result of his own choice. He once believed that his act served a higher or necessary purpose, but over time he recognizes that he acted out of his own expectations and inner conflicts. He can no longer attribute his decision to destiny or divine will. This realization reflects existential thought, which emphasizes individual freedom and responsibility. As Judas becomes aware of his freedom, he also experiences deep anguish, because he must accept that he alone is responsible for the consequences of his action.

Similarly, Søren Kierkegaard characterizes anxiety as the fear stemming from the weight of possibilities and the requirement of making choices. In *The Concept of Anxiety*, he explains that anxiety emerges from human freedom and the awareness that one must choose among different possibilities (Kierkegaard 42). This idea helps illuminate Judas's psychological state in the novel. Before his act of betrayal, Judas experiences deep inner tension marked by doubt and unfulfilled expectations. His decision does not arise from simple malice but from this state of anxiety, where conflicting possibilities and uncertainties weigh heavily upon him.

After the act, he cannot escape its consequences. His suffering is not simply punishment from others; it is the result of recognizing his own freedom. From an existential perspective, Judas's tragedy lies in the burden of choice. He must live with what he has done.

Through this lens, betrayal transforms into a human action influenced by freedom and accountability instead of fate

### **Psychoanalysis: Repression and Guilt**

Existentialism clarifies conscious decision-making, while psychoanalysis aids in uncovering the concealed psychological influences behind Judas's behaviour. Sigmund Freud contends that unconscious desires and suppressed thoughts shape human behaviour. Unexpressed feelings might stay concealed and subsequently influence choices.

In the book, Judas experiences uncertainties and discontent that he keeps to himself. These repressed feelings slowly create stress. His loyalty coexists with irritation. This illustrates the concept of suppression. The uncertainties remain; they affect his actions.

Following the treachery, guilt becomes overwhelming. Freud states that guilt occurs when the moral aspect of the mind judges the self negatively. Judas's anguish illustrates this psychological truth. His guilt amplifies inside him, defining his character.

Jacques Lacan further develops this idea of psychic division. In *Écrits*, he argues that the subject is fundamentally split, divided between the conscious ego and the unconscious structures that shape desire (Lacan).

In psychoanalysis, betrayal is seen not as an abrupt wrongdoing but because of emotional turmoil and psychological strain. Judas's downfall is found not just in his betrayal but also in the ensuing suffering.

In the novel, Judas experiences doubts and dissatisfaction that he does not openly share. These suppressed emotions gradually build tension. His loyalty exists alongside frustration. This reflects the idea of repression. The doubts do not disappear; they influence his behaviour.

After the betrayal, guilt becomes overwhelming. Freud explains that guilt arises when the moral part of the mind condemns the self. Judas's suffering reflects this psychological reality. His guilt grows within him, shaping his identity.

Jacques Lacan further argues that the self is divided. People often experience a difference between their outward identity and feelings. Judas appears loyal outwardly but internally feels divided. This inner split contributes to his final decision.

Through psychoanalysis, betrayal appears not as a sudden evil act but as the result of emotional conflict and psychological pressure. Judas's tragedy lies not only in betrayal but in the suffering that follows.

### **Moral Ambiguity and Human Fallibility**

A significant contribution of the novel is its examination of ethical uncertainty. Rather than illustrating a straightforward separation between good and evil, Meera demonstrates that human behaviour is frequently influenced by uncertainty and intricacy.

Judas is accountable for his actions, but he is also vulnerable. His suffering reveals that betrayal is not simply an external event but an internal struggle. The novel suggests that human beings are capable of moral failure because they are imperfect and conflicted.

By humanizing Judas, Meera encourages readers to reflect on their own capacity for error. Betrayal becomes a universal possibility rather than a unique crime committed by a single villain.

## Conclusion

*Yudasinte Suvishesham* reinterprets Judas, moving him from a mere emblem of betrayal to a nuanced human character. Using existential and psychoanalytic viewpoints, the novel uncovers betrayal as a profoundly human experience influenced by freedom, suppression, and guilt

K. R. Meera challenges traditional moral judgments and invites readers to reconsider inherited narratives. Judas becomes not merely a biblical figure but a representation of human weakness, responsibility, and inner conflict.

In the end, the novel reveals that ethical choices are seldom straightforward. They are influenced by fear, desire, belief, and uncertainty. Through examining these aspects, *Yudasinte Suvishesham* provides a profound reflection on the human experience and the delicate nature of moral decision-making

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