
Beyond the Murder Mystery: Mapping Marginality in Kalpana Swaminathan's *Greenlight* and Ankush Saikia's *More Bodies Will Fall*

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Abstract:

This paper examines Kalpana Swaminathan's *Greenlight* (2017) and Ankush Saikia's *More Bodies Will Fall* (2018) as works of contemporary Indian crime fiction that use murder investigations to represent hidden social and cultural inequality. Through a comparative textual analysis, it argues that the two novels transform crime fiction into a mode of mapping gendered vulnerability, racialisation and regional marginality. *Greenlight* presents the city as a gendered space where women move under the constant pressure of fear, suspicion, and social surveillance. *More Bodies Will Fall*, on the other hand, brings attention to the North-East India, a region often underrepresented in Indian crime fiction, and explores its uneasy relationship with Delhi, state power and racial prejudice. Read together, the novels show how cities and regions are shaped by unequal structures of vulnerability, exclusion, and belonging. The paper focuses on how these novels represent urban space, gender, race, and marginalised identities through the conventions of crime fiction. It argues that the murder investigation becomes a means of uncovering hidden structures of power, including patriarchy, class privilege, racialisation, and state violence. By linking crime with broader social realities, Swaminathan and Saikia redefine the detective novel as a literary form that foregrounds the voices and experiences of marginalised communities in contemporary India.

Keywords:

Indian Crime Fiction, Cultural Representation, Urban Space, Marginalisation.