



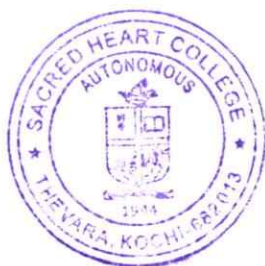
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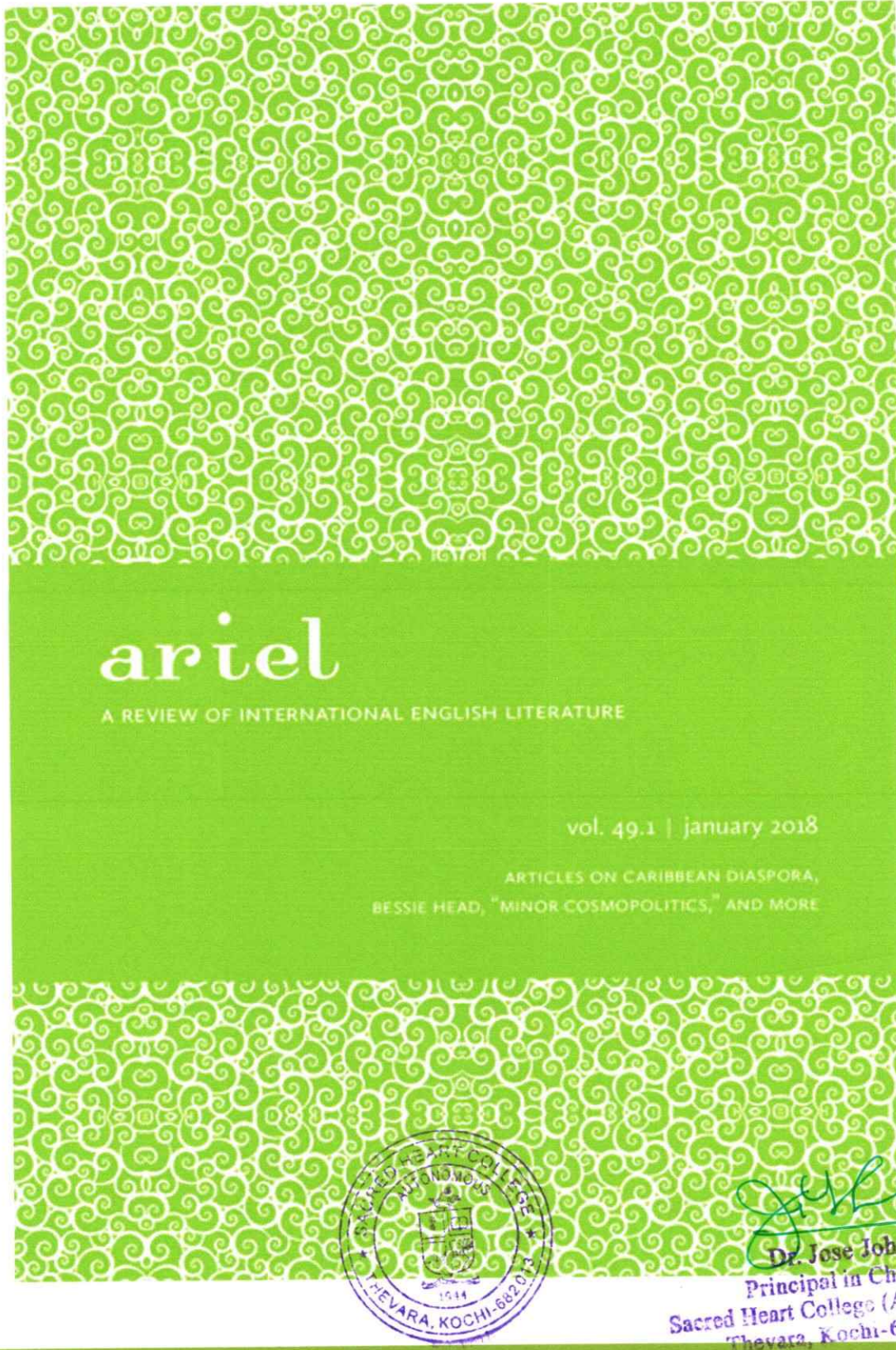


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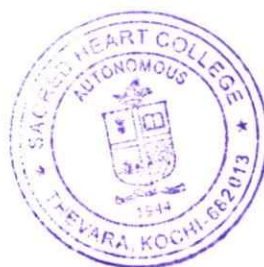
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Interview

**Mapping the Margins:
An Interview with Meena Kandasamy**

Conducted at Sacred Heart College in Kochi, India on 12 November 2015¹

Sathyaraj Venkatesan and **Rajesh James**

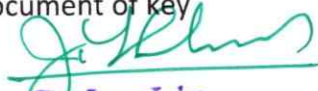
Abstract: Caste-based discrimination is a grotesque socio-political reality in India. The term “Dalit” (or “untouchable”) refers to a person belonging to the lowest caste in the traditional Indian caste system. Inspired by B. R. Ambedkar, a Western-educated intellectual and the chief architect of the Indian constitution, Dalit writers have produced stories of resistance, stories of caste discrimination and social ostracization, and alternative and parallel visions of casteless societies. As an author of contemporary Dalit writings, Meena Kandasamy describes a broad spectrum of Dalit experiences, and she voices concerns that are often unarticulated in the mainstream Indian literary canon. In so doing, Kandasamy not only helps to interpret the reality confronting Dalits but also reclaims their lost voices and identity. In conversation, Kandasamy speaks very much the way she writes—with bluntness and warmth.

Keywords: Dalit, caste system, autobiography, translation, *The Gypsy Goddess*

Meena Kandasamy is an Indian poet, translator, fiction writer, and Dalit activist based in Chennai, India. Unlike many of her contemporaries such as Preeti Shenoy, Kiran Manral, and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, her oeuvre is a response to issues related to caste politics, feminism, and gender violence that plague contemporary India. As the first Indian woman writer to champion the cause of Dalit individuals and their com-

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