

Dhruval Bhatt

November 14th, 2019

ANTH 35110

Kali's Tongue

Background

In “Kali’s Tongue: Cultural Psychology and the Power of Shame in Orissa, India”, a chapter in the book, *Emotion and Culture*, authors Usha Menon and Richard Shweder, explore “emotional functioning in a different cultural tradition by examining the stories told about a core cultural symbol” (Menon and Shweder 243). In their study, they interview 92 people from a temple town in Bhubaneswar, Orissa in India. To each of these informants, they show a picture of the Hindu Goddess, Kali (see figure 1 in appendix) and record their spontaneous narration of the story about the icon followed by questions probing into the feelings that the icon expresses, occurrence of that expression in everyday life and their thoughts on why Shiva was on the ground and their perception of dominance. Having gathered the narratives representing what these interviewees knew about an important symbol of their culture, the authors analyzed the transcripts to ascertain if the probability of identifying a certain meaning increase if there is a normative cultural meaning and if there is a pattern on how that meaning is shared.

The results from this study further the understanding of the growing field of cultural psychology. Cultural psychology uses the cultural differences in psychological processes to in fact gain a better understanding of the universal human psychology. The importance of culture goes much deeper than commonly appreciated cultural activities such as dance, music, festivals. In the article, *Cultural Psychology: Studying More Than the Exotic Other*, Snibbe describes that, “[c]ulture shapes individual minds and behaviors as much as the minds and behaviors shape the culture” (Snibbe). This shift in understanding and essentially the approach to psychology motivates deeper ways to analyze culture and its impact on human psyche.

In the study of Kali's Tongue, Shweder and Menon, focus on the on the cultural psychology of emotions by focusing on the following:

What particular emotional meanings (e.g. Oriya lajya) are constructed or brought "on-line" in different ethnic groups and in different temporal-spatial regions of the world? How are these emotional meanings brought "on-line", socialized, or otherwise acquired? What is the role of core cultural symbols (e.g. the icon of the Great Goddess and the storytelling norms associated with its interpretation) in the activation of emotional meanings? ... [W]hat evidence is there that the various meanings (psychological, metaphysical, social) narrated about a core cultural symbol such as the icon of Kali are normative meanings? (Menon and Shweder 243)

Such a framework of thinking can be applied to different ethnic groups, age groups or regions to expand the understanding of cultural similarities and differences and in the process reveal the universal patterns.

Introduction

In this paper, a study is conducted that is modeled after the study of Kali's Tongue conducted in Orissa, India by Shweder and Menon. The goal of this study is to explore how the patterns of emotional meanings differ when a Hindu cultural icon, a picture of Kali, is shown to a completely different cultural group than the ones studied by Menon and Shweder. Using a similar methodology they used to gather information by interviewing people, this paper analyzes the responses received to understand the impact of one's cultural background on their perception of the picture and how the interviewee's responses reflect their beliefs and assumptions on topics such as gender, emotions, bodies etc.

The interviews are conducted using similar prompts to the ones that Shweder and Menon used. These span from the informants' recognition of the picture, interpretation of the image and inference of the male-female relation. The interviews are conducted informally with a conversational tone to establish that it is not a knowledge test but an attempt to capture their interpretation and the meaning generated.

The interview is conducted in two ways: In person where a printed picture is showed, and the answers are noted or over the phone where the picture is texted right before the start of the conversation and the answers are noted. The notes are made directly, and no conversation is recorded. However, a sincere attempt is made to capture the tone or the feeling of the interviewee by writing down the conversation as heard. This includes fragments, ideas that may start in one way and end in another, use of “I don’t know”, etc. The transcripts of this conversation for all eight participants is included in the appendix. No person is identified by name, but their age and gender are identified with the transcript and additional background information is shared in the following section.

Who are the Interviewees?

In this study, responses are collected from 8 people who are all Hindu Indian diaspora, born and raised in the United States. Families of all 8 of them originally come from the western region of India. All participants are at least bilingual with native proficiency in English and spoken fluency in one or more Indian languages. Of the eight participants, 6 of them are female while 2 of them are male. All of them have at least an undergraduate degree from a four-year university in the United States. All are employed full time, except one participant who is a full-time student and 2 of the 8 participants are married. The age of the participants ranges from 22 to 31 years old. The table below summarizes this information.

Table 1 Basic Information about Interview Participants

Person	Gender	Age	Highest Level of Education	Marital Status	Employment Status
A	Female	31	Doctorate	Unmarried	Employed Full Time
B	Female	26	Bachelors	Unmarried	Employed Full Time
C	Female	24	Masters	Unmarried	Employed Full Time
D	Male	30	Bachelors	Unmarried	Employed Full Time
E	Female	22	Bachelors	Unmarried	Full Time Student
F	Male	29	Doctorate	Married	Employed Full Time
G	Female	30	Doctorate	Married	Employed Full Time
H	Female	30	Doctorate	Unmarried	Employed Full Time

Assumptions

This group of people is selected for the study with the assumption that people from this subculture would have most likely seen this icon in their lives but may not be familiar with the background legend associated with it. Even if they are familiar with some background story, it may be different from the one commonly known in the Oriya temple town as there are many versions of the story of Kali. For the purpose of this study, no attempts are made to verify the version of the background legend commonly accepted in western India as the study assumes that even though the participants come from a Hindu tradition practiced in western India, their own knowledge would be limited due to their American upbringing. Additionally, the focus of analysis will be on the meanings based on the description of what they think is happening. The table summarizes the respondents' knowledge on the matter.

Table 2 Summary of Image Recognition and Knowledge of Background

Person	Gender	Age	Had Seen the Image	Recognized Kali	Knew Some Background
A	Female	31	Yes	Yes	No
B	Female	26	Yes	Yes	Yes
C	Female	24	Yes	No	No
D	Male	30	Yes	Yes	Yes
E	Female	22	Yes	No	No
F	Male	29	No	No	No
G	Female	30	Yes	No	No
H	Female	30	Yes	Yes	No

As seen in the table, all except one person has seen the image but only 50% can definitively recognize that this image is of Kali. From those who had seen the image but could not recognize it as Kali, Person C was not sure if it was Durga or Kali but had an inclination she was a Goddess while Person E debated between the figure being of Ravan (the antagonist in the Hindu epic of Ramayana) or Kali. Person G was also inclined to think it was Ravan due to familiarity with the legend that he had 10 heads. It was clarified to all three of them that they were in fact looking at Kali. The criteria to classify if a person knew some background story was if they could recognize it was Kali and that she had stepped on Shiva, who had

intentionally come in her way to stop her from continued destruction. 2 of the 8 people were familiar with such a background. Additionally, 2 other people were able to recognize Kali and Shiva but had no inclination for why she might have stepped on him. Based on this, we see that from a randomly selected group of Hindu Indian Diaspora, most had seen the image, but a majority did not have a concrete notion of what is happening.

Analysis of the Narratives

Though the group of people have many common traits, such as, being first generation American from Hindu families originally from western India, having graduated from an US based university and being in a similar age group, their responses fell on a spectrum based on their knowledge of a version of the background story. In the table below, the responses are arranged from having no idea to having a defined version of the narration.

Table 3 Summary of Responses

	No Idea about Icon or Story		Somewhere in Between				Had a Pretty Defined Idea	
Person:	F	G	C	A	H	E	D	B
Background Knowledge	Never seen the image	Seen the image, can't tell who it is. Maybe Ravan	Confused if it is Kali or Durga	Knows it is Kali, but doesn't recognize Shiva till a detailed view later	Recognizes Kali and Shiva, but can't guess why she would be stepping on him	Recognizes Kali and Shiva and thinks Kali has just defeated him	Recognizes Kali, thinks she has been destructive and Shiva tries to stop her. Is doubtful about the accuracy	Recognizes Kali and Shiva and knows that Shiva was lying there intentionally to stop her from destruction
Themes	Evil's dominance	Evil defeating the Innocent	Power of Women over Men; Justice	Warning the bad people; protector of good people	Destroying Evil. Victory	Victory over Shiva	Reminder to reign in anger and control	Calm after realization of being destructive
Kali's Emotions	Proud	Powerful and Negative	Happy	Brave, courageous, perhaps angry	Victorious	Displaying strength of a woman. Fierce and angry	Shock and Regret	Shock, of coming back to reality
On Bare Breast	No comment recorded	No comment recorded	She is a not demure or hiding her feminine self. Though no other Goddess is shown as such	A feminist symbol of liberation; No oppression	No comment recorded	People in olden days dressed as such and the jewelry covers her	In older Indian art women were shown bare breasted sometimes	Older Indian depictions have less clothes and the jewelry covers her
Tongue	It's an evil tongue. Like a monster would do	Holding back from saying something or not being able to speak	Mocking with her tongue. A show of power and she is having fun doing this	Thirsty for blood	Not biting it. tongue for victory	Anger, fierce, Stopping her over- rage, accomplishment	Indian way of saying "oops"	Kind of like an "oops" or that of shock; Suppressed rage
Expression in Everyday Life	No. Maybe on a creature in a movie	Maybe on a dog	When people are having a good time; A wild time	On a dog but not a person	When someone wins	Women do it all the time when a male figure stops her. bites her tongue from saying something	Moms do it when they have said something that they shouldn't have or if she is joking and to show that is not serious	When one has stubbed your toe
Stepping or Dancing?	Stepping. Symbol of I killed him	Stepping. Being disrespectful or to show power	Stepping on him, when she killed him. Don't know why	Stepping and killing. Overpowering the man. Maybe to take over the man's vices?	Stepping. To show she is stronger - she defeated Shiva being a woman.	Stepping with one foot. Conquered the male in the picture. Here to tell him that I am here to get what I want.	Stepping. Kali Ma would not dance upon her victims. That's the kind of stuff bad guys or girls do.	Stepping. She wouldn't be dancing on her husband
Who is dominant?	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female. Why does it matter? They are both equal.	Transition of dominance

From this sample of eight people an interesting pattern emerges. When they have no idea or association for the image, they perceived Kali in this picture as evil. Person F on the left most side of the spectrum initially thinks that figure is a man and feels unsure about what is going on when it was pointed out that she is a female. To him, the expressions and the imagery not only felt evil but not even like that of a human. Therefore, in the discussion was not centered around gender role but power dominance of evil. There was no association to human expression, but it looked like that of a monster. Yet, in line of thought of dominance, the emotion that he sees in Kali is that of pride. On the other hand, Person G had seen this image but the narrative association that formed in her mind was that of Ravan, the antagonist in Hindu epic Ramayan. Her response was inspired by the number of heads she saw in this picture which she connected with the legend that Ravan had 10 heads. However, seeing the rest of the image and being told that she is Kali, there was a hesitation and confusion created and the narrative formed was removed from any other textual or commonplace knowledge. The interpretation focused on what she saw in the image and based on the serene expression of the person at the bottom, she felt that it was an innocent person that was overpowered by a powerful, negative person. Her attention was drawn to the weapons and the heads of the other men and evoking a negative image of Kali. The tongue biting did not register as any known image in human but she thought of a dog. Once again, showing that with a lack of background, it is easy not to create a divine or even human association. Both these participants went on to express how overwhelming the image is and it has a lot going on which makes it hard to understand what exactly is happening.

The next four people on the spectrum, recognized the image as Kali or at least a Goddess. With this, there seemed to be a marked shift in their perception of the image. None of them viewed the figure of Kali as evil. In fact, they viewed her show of strength and anger as positive force that is used to destroy evil and to emerge victorious. The heads of the men were assumed to be evil. Within this group, Person C and A do not notice and immediately recognize the male figure on the floor. To them Kali is a strong,

feminine figure who is overpowering evil men. They both see her as someone who uses her force and power for the good. For the protection of good people and for justice. Person C has a stronger stance that she is exhibiting the power of women over men and that she is serving justice to evil men who have wronged women. While Person A maintains a view of good versus evil. Interestingly, they were the only two participants who interpreted the bare breast of Kali as a symbol of liberation; of freedom from oppression; of not being demure or hiding their feminine self. No one in the study noticed the fact that Kali was bare breasted and upon being told that, rest of the participants had no response or accepted it as a common occurrence in ancient Hindu artistic depiction of women and did not view it as something noteworthy. As the probes lead Person A and C's focus to the man on the floor, their position softens and creates some quandary – why would she be stepping on someone who looks innocent? Person A recognizes that it is Shiva and Person C incorrectly identifies him as Ram, the divine incarnation in the Hindu epic Ramayan. Person A offers an explanation where she is not killing the man but his vices. The observation of her stepping on a divine person did not register as odd or evil but took a tone of “there must be some reason” that justifies her rage. In the probe regarding the tongue and its interpretation, Person C stays consistent with the expression of happiness as she served justice which makes her stick her tongue out in a wild, carefree manner. This is often seen in people as they are having a good time. Person A however sees it as “thirsty for blood” and could only associate it with a dog. This seems like an anomalous interpretation given that she sees her as a force of good. It is possible that the way the question was posed and without further probing this was an instinctive first response. In retrospect, this should have been a good place to ask further questions and explore the matter but given it was the first interview of the sample, that aspect was missed. Nonetheless, the emphasis of feminine power and the Goddess' role in protection and destruction of evil was evident in both these interviewees.

The other two people in the group, Person H and Person E recognized she was Kali, but they also noted that the person she was stepping on was Shiva. There was no reference to him being her husband

or why he may be there. This certainly left them puzzled. In fact, Person E goes from confidently identifying the picture as that of Kali, Shiva and a weapon that looks like Ganesh to doubting if the person is Ravan. It is possible that this doubt crept in as she struggled to justify why she would step on Shiva while she is out to destroy evil. Consequently, we see in the narrative of what is happening for Person H and E, there is less emphasis on destroying the world's evil but upon her victory on Shiva. Both mention how she is displaying true strength of a woman as she is victorious over not just any man but the almighty God, Shiva. Person H sees the show of tongue as victory but Person E registers fierceness and anger in her expressions and interprets the tongue biting as a restraint from uncontrolled rage or stopping herself from taking a defensive stance against a man hampering her true potential. This act of restraint sounds to be self-motivated not with a societal consideration in mind or reminded by anyone. This set of participants certainly emphasize on woman's strength and her ability to be victorious with the right mindset, but it does not take the strong female dominance over evil stance that Person A and Person C take. Considering their background is quite similar, the role of the recognition that the male was Shiva seems to have an important place in understanding the variation of the perception of feminism portrayed.

Finally, the last two participants fall on the right most end of the spectrum where they recognized Kali, Shiva and knew the story that Shiva had intentionally come in her way to stop her. This set seemed to align closely to the Oriya interpretation and viewed the emotion similar to *lajya* (*shame*). Though none of the participants explicitly mention that word, the description of her expression is that of shock or regret. To them, they did not see her as evil or asserting her power. Both Person B and Person D believe that she was out to destroy evil, but she had exceeded the appropriate amount rage and was causing unintended destruction. To remind her that her work is done or to pacify her, Shiva stepped in and intentionally came in her way. Given this knowledge of the story, both Person B and Person D found the question of her stepping or dancing on the man inappropriate or unnecessary. Why would she be dancing on her husband or even on her victims being a divine force? None of the other participants seemed to be bothered by this

question and just responded stepping without dwelling on to why it wouldn't be dancing. Additionally, both Person B and Person D interpreted that biting the tongue was an "Indian way of saying oops". They had a strong association of seeing this expression in everyday life. For Person D, the image was specifically associated with female figures like mother and grandmother. Concepts such as appropriate social behavior, having the discretion when to stop and characterizing stepping on anyone, but especially her husband as disrespectful emerge from these responses. Furthermore, the view on domination is different from the other participants. Person D notes that in the picture Kali seems to be dominant but goes on to wonder how that is relevant and in light of the narrative known, sees that they are ultimately equal while Person B see the domination as a transition. She thinks that Kali was dominating when she was destructive but with the realization that she stepped on her husband, she is calming down. Both these answers did not lean towards female domination but also did not suggest that she was weaker in any way.

In this set of interviews, we notice that even for those who had a concept of Kali or a version of the narration, the emphasis was on her destroying evil men and there was no idea of male gods' dominance or their mistakes or an uncontrolled rage due to humiliation. Unlike the canonical story presented in Shweder and Menon's study, in the participants' story there was no mention of the buffalo demon, Mahisasura or a condition that she had to be naked to defeat him (Shweder and Menon 244). This is most likely because in the western region of Indian, the killing of the demon Mahisasura is attributed and strongly associated with Durga and there is no colloquial knowledge of the condition to be naked.

Discussion

Overall, this study provided an interesting insight into the perceptions and interpretation of first-generation Hindu Americans whose families immigrated from western India. As the sample was selected, there was no expectation of anyone knowing the narrative behind this icon and the assumption was that they must at least know who she is or have seen this picture. At the start of the study, we would have

thought that their responses would be similar to each other but different from someone who has never seen the picture and has no familiarity with Hindu culture. However, interestingly, it was distributed over the spectrum of never seen it to knowing the background. This allowed us to analyze how the responses changed with their knowledge of the story behind this picture of Kali. The storytelling norms associated with this cultural icon shifted their perceptions of the picture – including emotions and expressions.

If we look at the responses of the two male participants, though they both are close to 30, males, with jobs and born and raised in an immigrant family in America, their responses widely differ as does their knowledge of the background legend. Elements in their upbringing and exposure to this part of Indian culture have cultivated differing norms and ideology and that is seen in how their answers changed. A similar trend is noticeable in the females as their knowledge varied. Between the female and male responses, the females were more positively struck by her show of power, courage and dominance. The intensity of that lessened as their knowledge of the background story increased.

Additionally, the impact of the symbolism or imagery in the picture was more poignant in those who are less familiar with the background. For the person who had not seen it before, it evoked many questions as to what is going on, what is she holding, what are these weapons and intense reaction that “I was not expecting such a picture.” On the other hand, those who seemed knowledgeable about the figure and story, which may indicate they have been exposed to Hindu art and icons, were not fazed by all the things going on in the picture but more evoked by what it means to them. The relatability to the icon dramatically transformed with the acceptance of the background story. The figure looked like a monster to Person F, who had never seen this icon, but Person B on the other hand of the spectrum, described her expression as “we all do it”.

Through these observations of the responses, the importance of the role of socialized narratives in constructing one’s viewpoints, expression and activation of emotions is evident.

Conclusion

From this it is difficult to ascribe a common interpretation of Great Goddess Kali and the emotions or ideas it generates, that would be prevalent in first generation Hindu Americans. However, it does reveal that this subculture should be further studied to understand the influence of dual culture on individuals. This study should be expanded to a larger number of people who identify with this cultural group to notice the distribution pattern of the cultural norms and stories that are passed on and socialized and how that impacts one's views. In this study, smaller clusters of responses that shared patterns emerged, but it would be interesting to see if that holds true in a larger study. Another interesting comparison between fundamental differences between eastern and western ideology could be made by studying people in dual culture influence, such as Indian American. If we used the knowledge of the background legend as a proxy for being more or less influenced by Indian culture and controlled for age, gender, education etc., would this be able to reveal a distinct American way of thinking versus Indian way of thinking and what would that distinction be? This study was too small and not enough information about the participant's social and familial background is considered to make any substantial argument on this, but it would be an interesting next step.

Furthermore, as the world continues to globalize and mix, the notion of same cultural group should be reevaluated. While it may have been true that race, religion, gender, ethnicity etc. gave strong sense of identity to people at one time, it is certainly changing. Different factors in upbringing, including immigration, media, multicultural friends, mixed race parents, etc. affect the knowledge and one's exposure to previously common cultural norms affecting how they fundamentally view the world.

References

Kitayama, Shinobu, and Hazel Rose. Markus. *Emotion and Culture: Empirical Studies of Mutual Influence*. American Psychological Association, 1997.

Snibbe, Alana Conner. "Cultural Psychology: Studying More Than the 'Exotic Other'." *Association for Psychological Science - APS*, <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/cultural-psychology-studying-more-than-the-exotic-other>.

Appendix



Figure 1 Image of Kali Used in the Research

All interview notes are included here.

Person A (Female, Age: 31)

Q: Do you recognize this picture?

A: *Yes, it is Maha Kaali Mata*

Q: Can you tell me what is happening in the picture?

A: *She is killing all the demons. She is warning the bad people to be ware. She has multiple hands and demon heads are decorations – this shows support for the good people as she is the protector. It is like a reach of the law. She has a skull garland.*

Q: Upon pointing out that the woman is bare breasted

A: *It wasn't noticeable but maybe a feminist symbol of liberation? No oppression, nothing holds her back.*

Q: In this picture, how would you describe the woman's feelings?

A: *Woman looks brave, courageous, perhaps angry*

Q: Why is she biting her tongue?

A: *Tongue is out because she is thirsty for blood. It is so red.*

Q: Have you seen this expression in everyday life? (Who and under what circumstances?)

A: *Tongue sticking out? Not in real life. On a dog but not a person.*

Q: Is the female stepping or dancing on the male? Why?

A: *Oh, the man is lord Shiva. She is stepping and killing the man. She is overpowering the man. Maybe to take over the man's vices?*

Q: Who is more dominant in this picture, the female or male figure?

A: *Dominant? Female. I didn't even notice the male before. His eyes are closed, and he is on the floor.*

Person B (Female, Age: 26)

Q: Do you recognize this picture?

A: *Yes, I recognize this event, but I have seen other versions of it.*

Q: Can you tell me what is happening in the picture?

A: *This is Maha Kaali who is killing all the rakshasa (demons) but she has so much rage that she was damaging others in the way. That time her husband, Shankar came in her way and she stepped on him. Her rage was calmed down. This picture is a snapshot of her reaction after she stepped on him.*

Q: Upon pointing out that the woman is bare breasted

A: *I don't think much of it – older Indian epics have less clothes and the jewelry covers her so it doesn't seem to matter.*

Q: In this picture, how would you describe the woman's feelings?

A: *The emotions she is portraying – eyes of shock, of coming back to reality.*

Q: Why is she biting her tongue?

A: *Depends on the picture –What happened? It could be a suppressed rage or that of shock.*

Q: Have you seen this expression in everyday life? (Who and under what circumstances?)

A: *We all do it. Kind of like an "oops" or that of shock. The kind of reaction we have when one has stubbed your toe.*

Q: Is the female stepping or dancing on the male? Why?

A: *She is stepping on him. I have dance experience and that does not look like it. She has one step over. And she wouldn't be dancing on her husband.*

Q: Who is more dominant in this picture, the female or male figure?

A: *It is a transition of domination – she was overpowering over others. The power level was changing. Shankar is calming her down. She was dominant and now she is not*

Person C (Female, Age: 24)

Q: Do you recognize this picture?

A: *Yes, I recognize this picture – I have seen it. This is... but I am not sure is it Durga or Kali?*

Q: Yes, this is an image of Kali

Q: Can you tell me what is happening in the picture?

A: *All the dead people are men. Kali is a woman killing men. This shows the power of women over men. It is about femininity. The power of woman over evil men. She has killed a lot of evil men. They look alike – a lot of men have similar negative attributes. She is killing the negative attributes. The one weapon on the top left corner looks like Ganesh. Not sure why but I just noticed it.*

Q: Upon pointing out that the woman is bare breasted

A: *Bare breasted? Hmm, didn't notice that. Come to think of it, she is the only Goddess like this. It might be as she is a not demure or hiding her feminine self. She is here to win.*

Q: In this picture, how would you describe the woman's feelings?

A: *She looks happy. She is elated that she is able to do justice to bring justice to other woman who have been wronged by other men.*

Q: Why is she biting her tongue?

A: *She is mocking with her tongue. A show of power and she is having fun doing this.*

Q: Have you seen this expression in everyday life? (Who and under what circumstances?)

A: *We see this expression when people are having a good time. That there is nothing to hide. Having a wild time.*

Q: Is the female stepping or dancing on the male? Why?

A: *She is stepping on him, when she killed him. Does it look like Ram? But I don't know why she would be stepping on him.*

Q: Who is more dominant in this picture, the female or male figure?

A: *Female figure for sure. She takes up the whole page and all men are literally accessory to her. Female is definitely dominant. She is most contrasting in the picture too.*

Person D (Male, Age: 30)

Q: Do you recognize this picture?

A: *Yes, I do. That is Kali Ma.*

Q: Can you tell me what is happening in the picture?

A: *Mataji [Kali] has done something where she had to exert physical force. In her state as a warrior, she was being destructive. In order to stop her, Shankar Mahadev had to stop her and remind her that her work is done. Shankar confronts her and she steps on him and in realizing that... I don't know. She is stepping on him like victory because here she has stepped past him. Initially, I thought she was shocked that she stepped on her. It maybe shows her strength. She can take down Shankar.*

Q: Upon pointing out that the woman is bare breasted

A: *In a lot of older Indian art women were shown bare breasted. I don't think there is any significance.*

Q: In this picture, how would you describe the woman's feelings?

A: *She is feeling shock and regret.*

Q: Why is she biting her tongue?

A: *I think that is an Indian way of saying "oops". I have seen my mom and grandma do it.*

Q: So, you have seen this expression in everyday life? (Who and under what circumstances?)

A: *Yeah, I have seen my mom do it when they have said something that they shouldn't have or if she is joking and to show that is not serious.*

Q: Is the female stepping or dancing on the male? Why?

A: *She is stepping on the body. Given what I know about Kali Ma, she would not dance upon her victims. You would not see our deities dancing over people. That's the kind of stuff bad guys or girls do.*

Q: Who is more dominant in this picture, the female or male figure?

A: *The female figure is the dominant one. Why does it matter? I don't see it to think who is dominant or who is not. But she has a bunch of dudes on her, that says she is not to be messed with. I wonder why one of the men on her belt is blue.*

Person E (Female, Age: 22)

Q: Do you recognize this picture?

A: *Yes, that is Shiva and Kali and the sword has Ganpati in her hand. Hmm, wait. Is it Ravan or Kali? I don't really know.*

Q: It is Kali.

Q: Can you tell me what is happening in the picture?

A: *She had defeated Shiva and she has conquered her quest and she has different weapons. She is victorious over him.*

Q: Upon pointing out that the woman is bare breasted

A: *Yeah, my attention didn't go to the bare breast. It is covered. People in the olden days people didn't wear clothes all the time. And there is jewelry.*

Q: In this picture, how would you describe the woman's feelings?

A: *She is displaying strength of a woman. She has defeated God with right motivation and reason she has been able conquer. The reason behind matters not just physical strength.*

Q: Have you seen this expression in everyday life? (Who and under what circumstances?)

A: *Women do it all the time. When a male figure stops her. She is better intellectually and in other ways, but she bites her tongue from saying something. We see that.*

Q: Why is she biting her tongue?

A: *Hold on let me think. That's a good question. I think it shows – her being fierce, also angry. Want to stop her from being out of control. Accomplishing what she is here to do. She is stopping her over rage. Stopping from over doing it*

Q: Is the female stepping or dancing on the male? Why?

A: *In the picture she is stepping with one foot. But it is more meant as she has conquered the male in the picture. She is here to tell him that I am here to get what I want.*

Q: Who is more dominant in this picture, the female or male figure?

A: *Definitely, the female. She has a foot on him, and her facial expression is that that she is not to be messed with. Her rage and anger show and that she is ferocious.*

Person F (Male, Age: 29)

Q: Do you recognize this picture?

A: *No.*

Q: Can you tell me what is happening in the picture?

A: *The blue dude has killed the person in the bottom. He is proud about it. He is wearing a belt of people's head. Looks like he has killed other people and made a belt out of it.*

Q: Would like to point out that it is a bare – breasted woman.

A: *I had no idea. Looks like a dude. What is this picture?*

Q: In this picture, how would you describe the woman's feelings?

A: *She is proud.*

Q: Why is she biting her tongue?

A: *I thought it was a like evil tongue out not biting it. She is a creature. Kind of an ahhh – like a monster.*

Q: Have you seen this expression in everyday life? (Who and under what circumstances?)

A: *People that come to mind are evil people. No, I don't know anyone who looks like that but maybe in the movies.*

Q: Is the female stepping or dancing on the male? Why?

A: *She is stepping on him as a symbol of I killed him.*

Q: Who is more dominant in this picture, the female or male figure?

A: *The female for sure.*

Person G (Female, Age: 30)

Q: Do you recognize this picture?

A: *Umm not this exact picture but something like this. Is it Ravan with heads? Not sure. Is it Ravan?*

Q: It is Kali. She is a woman and bare breasted

Q: Can you tell me what is happening in the picture?

A: *She is holding a head. Some bad guy has defeated an innocent person. The woman is an evil person who has stepped on a good person.*

Q: In this picture, how would you describe the woman's feelings?

A: *She can't be defeated. She has a lot of weapons. She is powerful and negative. Look at the skulls on her.*

Q: Why is she biting her tongue?

A: *She is holding back from saying something or not being able to speak.*

Q: Have you seen this expression in everyday life? (Who and under what circumstances?)

A: *Reminds me of a dog – our tongues don't go like that. She is sticking out her tongue in a playful, mocking way.*

Q: Is the female stepping or dancing on the male? Why?

A: *Stepping. Because she is being disrespectful or to show power.*

Q: Who is more dominant in this picture, the female or male figure?

A: *More dominant? In the whole thing, the female looks more dominant.*

Person H (Female, Age: 30)

Q: Do you recognize this picture?

A: *Yes – it is Kali ma.*

Q: Can you tell me what is happening in the picture?

A: *She is basically destroying evil. I don't know why she would be stepping on Shiv, but she is destroying evil.*

Q: In this picture, how would you describe the woman's feelings?

A: *She is angry and powerful.*

Q: Have you seen this expression in everyday life? (Who and under what circumstances?)

A: *It could be basically to show when someone wins. Victorious feeling.*

Q: Why is she biting her tongue?

A: *She is sticking her tongue out not biting it. I don't know. She is showing her tongue for victory.*

Q: Is the female stepping or dancing on the male? Why?

A: *The female is stepping on Shiva. To show strength. Shiva is always the most powerful, but she is stronger because she defeated him being a woman.*

Q: Who is more dominant in this picture, the female or male figure?

A: *The female is more dominant.*