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# Research maGma

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### **INTERFACING FILM STUDIES AND LITERARY STUDIES: A PSYCHOANALYTICAL STUDY ON AMEER'S *PARUTHIVEERAN***

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Earlier, the world was divided into many nations but now the borders of the nations are fading away and are becoming a single cosmopolitan village. Similarly, the realms of the traditional subjects in the academic discipline are vanishing and pave way for the interdisciplinary studies. Film studies are one such interdisciplinary subject which depends on many disciplines especially on English Literature for its existence in the academic field. Though it is youngest of arts, it invited many theoretical studies to reveal its actual nature and its function in society. This theory which is borrowed from the field of Psychology to the field of Literary Studies is also used as a Film Theory to critically analyse the films. This paper is an initiative to understand the Tamil movie *Paruthiveeran* using the Dream Analysis technique of Psychoanalysis. The film is analyzed as the dream of the patient is analysed by the Psychoanalytical Psychotherapist. The analysis proves the importance of each and every detail projected in the film carries some content that contributes to the deeper understanding of the story. This study of the regional film from the perspective of widely used literary theory is yet another example of transcending borders of academic disciplines which induce the interdisciplinary studies, contributing itself to the repository of knowledge.

#### **KEYWORDS:**

Psychoanalytical, Film studies

#### **INTRODUCTION**

"Knowledge cannot be singularly claimed as belonging to or originating in any one discipline." These words of Tanya Augsburg clearly suggest that knowledge does not belong to any specific field but it can be acquired by learning the contents of different fields. Earlier, the world was divided into many nations but now the borders of the nations are vanishing and becoming a single cosmopolitan village. Similarly, the realms of the traditional subjects in the academic discipline are vanishing and pave way

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for the interdisciplinary studies.

The subject Film studies is interdisciplinary in nature which depends on many disciplines especially on English Literature for its existence in the academic field. Earlier, films in India were seen only as the tool of entertainment. People went to watch movies just to relax themselves from the monotonous and tension filled lives. It became the part of our society by portraying the culture, the life style, language, etc. In the twenty first century, Indian films stepped into a new arena. Though it is youngest of arts, it invited many theoretical studies to reveal its actual nature and its function in society.

Films incarnated itself into an Academic discipline in 1960's and 1970's. The important reason for this was the movies taken by certain Hollywood directors made the intellectuals and scholars to feel that the films were as important as canonical works in Literature, music and other fine arts. The scholars began to realize that the status of a film maker who create movies were equal to the status of an author who create the literary pieces. They understood that the process which a film maker undergoes to create a movie is almost equivalent to the process which an author undergo to create a literary piece

Film Studies was inculcated in the discipline of English Literature to sustain its growth in the academic discipline. Similarly, the Films got a new identity in the academic discipline through the literary theories in the Literature discipline. So, from this dissertation we can understand that both the disciplines mutually help each other in its growth and for its existence. Hence they are interdependent. Slowly, the Film studies as an academic discipline gained popularity among the students because of this almost all the Universities inculcated this course in their institutions.

There are many international institutions like University of California, University of Warwick, Boston University, Film Studies Association of Canada, The Art institute of California etc offer Film Studies as a course in a Humanities stream. A combined degree scheme in Film Studies and English offers an opportunity for the critical study, in their own right and in relationship to one other, of two major forms of artistic expression and cultural representation. They study both Literature and Films in the alternative papers. The impact of Films on Literature and the impact of Literature on films are stressed.

The films are studied or analyzed (even criticized) based on these film theories which were mostly modelled upon literary theories. Some of the film theories like Formalist film theory, Feminist Film theory, Marxist film theory etc were modelled from already existing literary theories. Psychoanalysis is one such literary theory which deals with the reality of the human's psyche. This theory came into existence in 1920's by Sigmund Freud. He developed Psychoanalysis as form of Psychotherapy through which he tried to find some remedy for some neurotic disorders. He was the first psychologist to work on human dreams. He strongly believed that an individual sleeps when he/she is tired of receiving or responding to external stimuli. So, the sleeping withdraws him/her from reality.

It is important to note that a complete withdrawal from the reality is dangerous to any human being. So during the process of sleeping, it is only the conscious part of the mind which shuns itself from the real world. Meanwhile, the unconscious part of the mind brings the desires and traumas that are repressed by the Super Ego of the individual to the surface as dreams. The censored desires/traumas are transcribed into acceptable symbols in the dream which when gets interpreted give the underlying content.

Kevin Wilson in his essay "Introduction to Sigmund Freud's Theory on Dreams" explained the

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process of sleep in following way,

When we go to bed, the curtains are drawn, the lights are turned off and in effect we are attempting to disconnect from our reality by extinguishing all external stimuli. During the night, the mind protects the sleeper from being disturbed by reacting to further external stimuli (noise, temperature, light, the need to urinate, numb arm/leg, pain etc) as well as all internal stimuli (emotions, fears, dissatisfaction, desires, previous day's activity) by manufacturing dream.

Freud termed the literal subject matter which an individual sees as a dream as Manifest content and the underlying hidden meaning as the Latent content of the dream. In his book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud says,

It is merely necessary to observe that our doctrine is not based upon the estimates of the obvious dream content (Manifest dream content), but relates to the thought-content (Latent dream content), which, in the course of interpretation, is found to lie behind the dream. (114)

This theory of psyche later widened its horizon into other disciplines. It made its impact especially in the field of literary studies as a literary theory through which a literary text is approached to understand its Manifest and Latent contents. This theory is adapted in the field of Film Studies to unearth the different layers of meanings that are concealed in the films. In the initial process of analysis, the film that is taken for the study is treated as a dream. The dream of the patient becomes the text to the Psychoanalyst and the story of the film becomes the text of Psychoanalytical film critic. With the Latent Content of the patient's dream, the Psychotherapist understands the concealed desires and the traumas of the patient. Similarly, the Psychoanalytical film critic unravels the real characteristics of the characters and their psychic content through the Latent Content of the film.

Firstly, the critic uses Freud's Dream Analysis technique to understand its Manifest Content or the story which the director wants his/her spectators to watch on the screen. Then, he/she analyses the symbols that are projected in the Manifest Content of the film to understand the hidden meaning or the Latent Content of the movie. This paper is an initiative to understand the Tamil movie *Paruthiveeran* using the Dream Analysis technique of Psychoanalysis. To analyse the Latent Content of the movie, the different landscapes that are shown in the backdrop is taken for a thorough analysis to infer the meaning out of it. The film *Paruthiveeran* was directed by Ameer. A promising actor Karthick made his debut in this film that was paired with the renowned actress Priya Mani. This box office hit film has a smell of raw rustic flavour. The South Tamil Nadu dialects especially of Madurai and Ramnad district are used in a brilliant way. The characters in this film were presented in a very lively manner and the whole movie is completely free from exaggeration. Most of the scenes were shot in available or natural light, with a yellow tinge that goes along with the sunny territory. So when the spectators watch the movie they can feel the realism in it.

The whole film is taken in the village called Parithiyur. Veeran (Karthick) is a criminal, who is jailed often along with his paternal uncle, Sevvalai. He always drinks, gambles, lies with the prostitutes and is considered as the epitome of bad behaviour. He has a cousin named Muthazhagu (Priya Mani) who loves him so madly and chases him to prove her love. But her father, his maternal uncle, hates him because of his caste. As the movie progresses, Veeran understands the true love of Muthazhagu and decides to marry her. But her father denies giving his daughter to him in marriage. When the couple

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realizes that they have no other go, they decide to elope from the village. And in the climax, he leaves her in the motor shed where he and his friends used to enjoy the prostitutes to save his paternal uncle's life. Meanwhile his friends, who come there, mistake her for another prostitute and rape her.

When Veeran returns, she is almost dead. She requests him to slaughter her body into many pieces so that no one should know that she was raped by others during her cremation. With this request she breathes her last after which, he slaughters her at her request. On seeing the bloody sight of his dead daughter, her father kills him. With this tragic ending the curtains are drawn. This film is analysed from the psychoanalytical light by considering its landscapes as the symbols. This film's director needs to be appreciated for his efforts in selecting apt landscapes which can be classified into two. One of the landscapes is basically a dry one which is dominated by dry red sand and strong rocks. The other landscape is the pastoral land which is covered with green plants and trees. The former landscape is shown whenever the hero is shown on the screen and the second landscape is shown on the screen whenever the heroine appears on the screen.

The landscape shown as the hero's background can be further classified into two. One is the landscape which is shown before he falls in love and the other, after he falls in love. These two landscapes itself differ so widely. The main difference is the intensity of heat which is high in the scenes before he falls in love. It is experienced not only by the characters but also by the spectators who watch it. The landscape of the hero is so wide and so dry that we cannot find any kind of living form (green plants or healthy animals) on it. It has no sign of water that signifies new birth or newness. Similarly, the hero's psyche is very dry, harsh and rude. He has no proper aim in his life. The lack of fertility in the land reveals the lack of fertility not only in his life but also in his psyche. There are many scenes in the movie which can be quoted to prove this point. The analysis of the scenes according to the sequence of the film as follows.

In the scene in which Veeran talks with his uncle Sevazhai about his ambition to visit Chennai jail and become famous one day is taken in a rocky landscape. This rocky landscape reflects the mind of the hero in this scene. The first important characteristic of this landscape is the presence of dryness. The second characteristic of the rock is its unquenchable thirst and its lack of productivity. The third important characteristic of the rock is that even in the midst of dryness and harshness it stands tall above everything with admirable strength. These qualities of rock clearly give us the mental picture of the hero. The first similar quality is the presence of dryness in him. His dryness cannot be quenched by the alcohol and hence he goes to the prostitute to satisfy himself. This dryness leads to the second quality: the lack of productivity. Since his psyche was dry he was not able to produce anything healthy. Instead of producing anything he first destroys anything and everything which comes his way and hence he arms himself with weapons every time. The third similar quality which the hero and the rock share is that even in the midst of dryness and ruined life he stands tall above everyone and everything.

The intensity of the heat in this landscape reflects the intensity of heat in him. The cause for this inner heat is his social environment. All through the film we can see the heroine's father treating him very badly because of his birth. He is born to an inter-caste couple. His uncle treats him like a mongrel. In another scene we see his paternal uncle saying that he made him to discontinue his studies because of his teacher who ill-treated him because of his birth. From this it is clear that he is ill-treated by the society because of his birth. This becomes the reason for his unproductive and unruly life. In the scene where the hero fights with wrestlers a land full of red sand is portrayed to the background of the sky. The

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colour of the sand, red, signifies the human characteristics like rage, violent, furious etc. We see the presence of all these traits in him. The large stretch of sky signifies freedom. The psyche of the hero also knows no constrain and it is free. He just carries on with his brutal behaviour because he has no social constraints. His freedom is limitless just like the stretch of the sky. The other landscape which can be taken for the analysis is the land covered with the dry and thorny plants. The dominating colour in this landscape is the faded yellow which is very well known for its dryness. It is seen when Veeran and his paternal uncle Sevazhai walks together talking about Muthazhagu. In this scene, two paths are shown which are narrow and hindered by thorny dry plants. It reveals the narrowness of the hero's psyche which is hindered by the unruly thoughts.

The second classification of the landscape is the heroine's which is dominated by the colour green. For the analyses of heroine's landscape, we can take the song which is sung by her on her birthday. The trees and plants are shown in this landscape are sprung out from the same red sand. The presence of different living forms in this landscape proves that the heroine's psyche is filled with newness and some aspirations. The life in this landscape reflects the liveliness of her psyche. The colour green in it suggests her fertile thoughts. She is fertile because of her love in her heart. She has compassion along with sense of consideration in her heart. The scene in which the heroine waits for her love on her birthday has a landscape with thickly populated green trees. It brings freshness to the eyes of the spectators. The greenness enters the life of Veeran when he begins to love Muthazhagu. This can be called as the second phase of the hero's life. There is a scene in which Muthazhagu desperately tells her love to him. This kindles his anger as a reaction to it he pushes her into the puddle of water. She steps out of the water with the wet clothes and places her feet on the dry red sand. The wetness of her clothes wets the red sand. This is shown in a separate shot. This is the turning point in the movie because it cracks the rough surface of the hero's heart and love blossoms in his heart.

This idea is effectively communicated through the landscape which has a wide dry land with a small puddle of water in the centre. This puddle of water hints the spectators of the rejuvenation which Veeran is about to experience in his life. From this scene onwards the greenness in the landscape of the heroine slowly creeps into the dry landscape of the hero. His psyche slowly changes. He changes his ways, his attitude, his behaviour etc for her sake. Liveliness and fertility slowly gets into his psyche and his life. This idea of transformation in hero's psyche is reflected in the scene in which the heroine wets the red sand.

To prove his love for Muthazhagu, Veeran etches her name on his chest and shows it to her. This scene is shot in the bricklin. The bricklin is the place where the red sand is moulded into bricks. In other words, it is the place where dry sand is transformed into a hard brick for a purpose. This landscape has a significant role in this scene as it portrays the mind of the hero to the spectator. As the sand is transformed into a brick, his meaningless life is transformed into a meaningful life.

After this point, we can see the change in the intensity of heat along with the hero's landscape. A pleasant landscape is shown along with the pleasant climate. At the end of the duet song "Aiyayo en . . ." the setting of the sun is shown. This marks the period of transition in their life. After this song, the scenes take place in the night time. No sunlight or heat is felt in the second phase of the hero's life. When there is no sunlight then it's understood that darkness is spread. The darkness shown on the screen not only signifies the night time in the real world but it also reflects the darkness in the hero's psyche. In the climax, we see both the hero and the heroine trying to elope from their dry village to

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protect the greenness of their lives but their attempt becomes fruitless. As a dry land percolates the water, leaving no mark of it, the fertile lives of Veeran and Muthazhagu were sucked by the cruel people of the dry (brutal) village.

### CONCLUSION

So, the analysis of the movie *Paruthiveeran* studied from the perspective of Psychoanalysis, picturizes the psyche of the characters just by analysing the significance of the landscapes that are shown in the backdrop of the movie. In other words, the Psychoanalytical perspective proves the importance of each and every detail projected in the film carries some content that contributes to the deeper understanding of the story. This study of the regional film from the perspective of widely used literary theory is yet another example of transcending borders of academic disciplines which induce the interdisciplinary studies, contributing itself to the repository of knowledge.

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