

Article

Semiotic Analysis of Dalits Identity in Sarpatta Parambarai (2021)

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A B S T R A C T

Cinema is one of the oldest forms of entertainment. It was used as a medium of communication by one person who puts his ideas and thought for the world to see. There is a rise in the number of Dalit films and Dalit filmmakers, which is a welcome sight. visual representation of the Mise en scene in a frame plays a key role in strengthening the movie's reality among the audience. The lighting & color tone, composition, costume, props, set design, of the objects in each frame, interpret the meaning to the audience. The researcher's study is to analysis the movie Sarpatta parambarai (2021) through the variables found in the mise en scene, & to signify the narrative of the film. In this movie, Mise en scene analysed through signifiers, through Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of semiotics. This research paper uses a qualitative analysis method. To show cause and effect, to communicate the filmmaker tries to show in his film sarpatta parambarai (2021).

Keywords: Ambedkarism, Dalit , Identity, Mise En Scène, Political

Introduction

Film is considered one of the huge industries for people to express their feeling and skills. The film is the most complex and powerful art in the present world. Cinema is one of the oldest forms of entertainment. It was used as a medium of communication by one person who puts his ideas and thought for the world to see. In 1891 the Edison Company successfully demonstrated a prototype of the Kinetoscope, which enabled one person at a time to view moving pictures. The Lumiere Brothers, the inventors of cinematograph, were the first to import and exhibit motion pictures in India on July 7, 1896, when they unveiled six soundless short films at the Watson Hotel in Bombay. The first exposure of celluloid in camera by an Indian took place in 1899 when Harishchandra Bhatvadekar (Save Dada) shot two short films and exhibited them using Edison Projecting Kinetoscope. The history of Tamil films began in

1897 when M. Edwards screened the first-ever movie show of South India at the Victoria Memorial Hall in Madras.

The first Indian-owned cinema-house in South India was 'Gaiety', built-in 1914 by R Venkaiah Kalidas', the first Tamil talkie was screened in 1931, which was directed by HM Reddy, with TP Rajalakshmi playing the lead role AV Meiyappan (1907-1979) created a sensation in South Indian cinema by introducing playback singing in his film 'Nandakumar' (1938). He also launched the AVM banner of movies and produced the first 'dubbed' film in Tamil, 'Harishchandra' (1943), which was dubbed from Kannada. In film semiotics helps in deepening its hidden meaning and that every sign which take form as words, images, sounds, gestures and things can be defined as semiotics.

This research paper analysis the Semiotics in the film Sarpatta parambarai (2021) with the help of mise en scene. The film is mostly based on the life of Chennai-

based boxers, had influences of political ideologies, unlike Ranjith's previous films *Madras*, *Kabali*, *Kaala*, which focus on the life of the lower-class people and the Caste system in Hinduism. The researcher has taken screenshots of 297 shots for the interpretation.

Review of literature

Many research papers focus on semiotically interpreting a film as a part of film analysis, but there aren't many that also analyse the role of *Mise-en-scène* in effective storytelling. The researcher likes to discuss some basic concepts and articles and journals related to the topic to study in this paper.

(Ambedkar, 1948) The history of the Dalits from back to the ancient Indian days. There were tribes and broken men who didn't belong to tribes, these are the people who later were later named as untouchables. Untouchables were then referred to as broken men, which was translated to Dalit.

AK Divakar, V Natarajan (2018) The conditions of women across the castes still remains irrespective of where her caste is situated in the vertical hierarchy of the caste system. Researcher says the film is both women of upper and lower caste both these women from films are not from the lower caste, they choose by themselves to get married to males from the so-called lower castes. The directors must pay utmost attention, to how these out-of-low-caste women are treated by the protagonists from the alleged low caste.

Anbayin Hasanli (2017) the researcher found in his analysis of the movie *Bandit*. He wanted to know the relationship between cinema and semiology in the theories of semiotics to the movie *Bandit*. He explained the use of codes, images and signs in cinema through cinematic method in cinema. The different codes and signs are presented in the entire movie like the lake, train journey, etc. To his analysis the signs and codes were actually showing the state of Istanbul at that period and the lives of people there and also the mental state of the character and the happenings in their life.

Roland Barthes (1915-1980) was the first to apply thoughts of semiotics as it was created from etymology to visual pictures, the models are commercials, photography, movies. Barthes' work offers a valuable rundown of the significant parts of semiotics talked about above. He tried to investigate how the implications we attach to pictures are not a "whiz" aftereffect of what we see; that is, pictures are not plainly obvious and all-inclusive by the way we get what we see.

R. Monica Maria Bastina (2019). findings tell us that the director has made use of symbols and signs in his movie to convey the messages. Semiotics in the film is dependably an essential and astounding component in any image. It is

the implication and correspondence of signs and images to build up a plot and characterize certain occasions that occur inside the plot. The first is that the film itself is as of now a symbol.

Erikson (1951, 1968) Erikson used the term identity in ways synonymous with what others have termed self-concept. However, the term identity can also be conceptualized as a way of making sense of some aspect or part of self-concept.

Abram (1994) Identities involve the knowledge that one is a member of a group, one's feelings about group membership, knowledge of the group's rank or status compared to other groups. This definition does not focus much on the content of ingroup membership beyond knowledge, regard, rank, other definitions have highlighted that social identities include content.

Objectives

- To identify and interpret the codes used for Dalit identity as a signifier in *Sarpatta Parambarai* (2021)
- To analyse the meaning generated in *Sarpatta Parambarai* (2021) using codes to Signified

Methodology

Sarpatta parambarai (2021) movie is taken into consideration for this research for semiotic analysis to determine the role of *mise en scène* in an effective film narration. In this research paper qualitative methods are used for semiotic analysis. Analysis is to be done by Ferdinand de Saussure's theory. Interpretation is done through only relevant shots that contribute to the importance of the dalit's identity through the codes analysed from *mise en scene*. Qualitative research techniques are intended to assist you to understand how a target audience behaves and thinks about a certain theme. Sampling, Data collection, Analysis, Interpretation are the steps in which Qualitative methods are conducted. It incorporates a number of iterative processes between data gathering and analysis, where fresh perspectives and practical knowledge may prompt the development of the initial strategy.

Sampling has been done by collecting *sarpatta parambara* (2021) every shot from 60 sequences in the *sarpatta paramabarai* (2021) movie. This movie analyzing is done through the *mise en scene* for signifiers. 297 shots from 60 sequences that contribute to the important storyline are identified and the signifiers are through the codes in the movie.

Theoretical Framework

Sarpatta parambarai movie was taken for the research of semiotic analysis of Dalit's identity. Qualitative methods are used for semiotic analysis. Analysis is to be done by Ferdinand de Saussure's theory.

Semiotic Theory

Semiotics is the study of sign systems. In semiotics, a sign is something that represents anything other than itself. In the semiotics system of signs which ties them together that meaning is conveyed by sign systems. The study of meaning, communication, interpretation and significance. This research is done through Ferdinand de Saussure which says that the Sign constitutes the Signifier and the Signified. American philosopher Charles Sanders pierce which says Sign constitutes three elements. The representamen, An object, an interpretant which is the triadic model.

Data Collection and Interpretation

movie 'Sarpatta parambarai' and interpreted semiotically. mise-en-scène is used to analyses the film and to identify signs in the frames.

Data is collected by the researcher based on the context of the situation or the presence of hidden meaning in the scene. The sampling is done by collecting screenshots. Each and every shot is interpreted based on the elements present in the shot, their significance in the story development, similarity to the contemporary world.

Table I

S. No	Figure/ Running Time	Mise En Scene				
		Lighting & colour	Composition	Costumes	Props	Set Design
1.	 00:02:45	High key lighting and Orange color are used to bring a warm tone and blue tone has been used to show a 70's retro look	Mid wide shot(capturing the partial view of the background while being close enough to show subtle movements of the subject)	Porter costume (brown shirt and pant, blue scarf)	rice bags cycles weight machine lorry	Harbour (godown)
2.	 00:08:35	Two point lighting and natural lighting used. Orange color used to bring warm tone and blue tone has been used to show as 70's retro look	Mid wide shot (it gives the emotions and their setting clearly), wide shot(it gives how the character fits into the area)	Porter costume (brown shirt and pant, blue scarf)	-	boxing stadium
3.	 1:02:58	Soft lighting is used through the natural lighting. Orange color used to bring warm tone.	Mid wide shot (it gives the emotions and their reaction capturing clearly)	Porter costume (brown shirt and pant, blue scarf).	sack	Wall posters
4.	 01:22:19	Soft lighting and high key lighting and natural lighting used. Orange color used to bring warm tone.	Establishment shot (used for geography and the relationship between characters and story world)	Shirt Lungi	Budha statue Cycle Rope bag Cycle tires Oil can	Huts Mechanic shop

5.	 01:22:45	Soft lighting and two point lighting used. Blue tone used to show the ambedkarism Orange color used to bring warm tone.	Mid shot (captures partial view, background and enough to show subtle movements of the subject).	Shirt	bulb	Hut (office of the republican party of india in north madras).
6.	 02:33:36	Ambient lighting is been used. Orange color is used to bring a warm tone.	Full shot (framing of a character from head to toe and can help establish who they are).	Shirt, pants, lungi	Boxing kit bag, Knife.	-
7.	 02:35:56	Soft lighting and high-key lighting and natural lighting are used. Orange color is used to bring a warm tone.	Mid shot (captures partial view, background and enough to show subtle movements of the subject).	Bird's eye view is used in this shot to establish the magnitude and doom.	This is shot is set to cover the whole environment around the tree of souls with the rib cage-like tree structure that forms a shield around it.	-
8.	 02:48:50	Practical and high-key lighting is used, the orange tone used brings the night effect inside the boxing stadium).	Full shot (framing of a character from head to toe and can help establish who they are).	Boxing costume	Boxing gloves, Bells, clock	Boxing stadium

Signifier and Data Interpretation of Mise en scene in Sarpatta Parambarai(2021)

S.No	Time	Signifier	Interpretation
1.	00:02:45	This scene shows the working in the harbor. Having a blue color cloth around their head and shoulder.	This scene it represents the Dalits working in the harbor, under the supervisor. The first shots show the working place of the kabilan and his working position. So Kabilan wants to leave the working place to watch the match before it starts. When the time gets over he rushes towards his cycle, It represents the workers, the blue color scarf signifies as Dalits.
2.	00:08:35	A close shot for kabilan while everyone is blurred.	This shot signifies the emotions of kabilan and after winning the battle, the next shot will be to kabilan it shows he is going to be the main board boxer to beat the opponent clan's main board boxer.

3.	01:02:58	In this shot, kabilan will be sitting and talking and his friends will be talking. Poster of Dr.Ambedkar at the backside wall.	In this scene, kabilan and his friends will be sitting near the wall, where they are working. And his friend will be motivating him “opportunities don’t come our way easily, this is our chance, make your enemy tremble in fear, move with courage, our time has arrived to prove”. This line makes the entire Dalits community remember their struggle in society without any opportunity to prove themselves. There will be an Ambedkar backdrop on the wall portraying the Dalit identity. Kabilan represents all those who were never given an opportunity. During that dialogue, the camera movement will be a pushin shot towards kabilan and his friends, there will be a Dr.ambedkars poster backside, it conveys Dalit’s time as came to prove themselves as Ambedkar wished, make your enemy tremble in fear. In India, if you look at the last 70 years at least 75,000+ movies have been made. But the frames that were missing in cinema are now appearing.
4.	01:22:19	There is a budha statue and everyone dancing in front of that statue.	In this scene there will be a song for the celebrartion of kabilans victory against the vembuli. This victory is not for him alone, it’s for everyone in the Dalit community. Everyone there will be celebrating him. Kabilan name came from budha’s name and the director wants to show budha’s teachings are very important in these recent times.attaining the self-awareness of who he is. and should know that liberty is within himself, he should understand this and break away from his oppression
5.	01:22:45	Kabilan talking with his neighbors and friends. Showing his boxing skills in front of his friends.	In these song sequence we can notice that at the backdrop there will be a mentioning of ambedkar’s established republic party of India with the symbol and at the top there will be Jai bheem. And the year at what period the movie is going also will be mentioned. and there will be a quote “ unaku neeye oilli ah iru, which connects the song neeye oli, in the sarpatta param-abari movie. In that scene, he’ll be explaining how he knocked the dancing rose in two rounds.
6.	02:33:36	Kabilan and his friends standing in front of the person who has the knife in his hand.	After the practice, kabilan goes to the match, while thaniga who is waiting to take revenge on kabilan, as fixed someone to kill kabilan to not come to the match.
7.	02:35:56	Kabilan holding the screen in one hand.	Kabilan wearing a blue color overcoat, it was given by a member of the republican party of India to represent the entire Dalit community. blue signifies the Ambedkarism, at that time neeye oli song bgm will be played which means, freedom is within us, we have ton prove and overcome.
8.	02:48:50	Kabilan standing on the rope of the boxing ring, at the back everyone from his team is standing with their hands lifted up.	Kabilan after winning the battle against the vembuli, shouts his sarpatta parambarai name and his coach Rangan name to show the world he is his coach. And goes to the corner of the ring and climbs top and celebrates his victory with the audience and his friends, his family.

Findings

Totally 637 shots in the film are interpreted for scene interpretation and it is founded that this film has followed certain themes. The film has followed themes such as social class, Dalit identity, Ambedkarism, Buddhism, class differences. As the data collected from the shots is

interpreted, the findings of the film are to show the lower-caste people alps as the power to prove they are equal to everyone. Also, 297 unique shots that contribute to the main storyline are identified and the signifiers in the scenes are interpreted semiotically to establish the role of mise en scene in film narration.

Conclusion

The Film has conveyed the message to the entire Dalit identity. In every frame, they didn't want to show the power of the Dalit hero, the director, cinematographer framed each and every frame to convey meaning to the Dalit's identity through mise en scene. Completely understanding the semiotic analysis is an important approach that intends to establish the relationship between the Signifier and the Signified and how they produce a meaningful interpretation. In this film, Pa.Ranjith used references to Ambedkarism, Buddhism, periyarism, Marxism. He used three color elements in this film (red, black, blue). He also used political influences. He showed the problems faced during his growth. From the Interpretation and Findings of the data collected from the movie Sarpatta parambarai (2021) we could see that the color, lighting, set design, composition of every visual element are aesthetical codes and like the costumes and props, background elements have played a major role in carrying the hidden message to the audience.

This study, it as being useful to explore the usage of mise en scene in films in narrating stories. Although understanding them would require knowledge of aesthetics and codes used in the film, they needed to express the story almost closely to the visualization.

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