

Article

Semiotic Analysis on the Movie 'Yaavarum Nalam' (2009)

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A B S T R A C T

This study is a semiotic analysis of the 2009 movie "Yaavarum Nalam" using Saussure's dyadic Theory. The ultimate aim of the horror genre is to bring the extreme emotion of deep fear inside the viewers. This research focuses on the Mise-en-scène the composition, lighting, costume, props, any other object on frame can carry a meaning to the audience. The filmmaker's structure their visualization with the layers of volatile metaphors in the mise - en - scene for the narrative. However deep the verbal information is, the visual representation of properties, acting, symbols, the everything inside the frame plays a key role strengthens the narration. This research uses a qualitative method of analysis. The study is done analysing the signifier and the signified is interpreted using the elements of Mise – en – scene. The conclusions shows new camera angles introduced to represent the character's feel in the situation, similar colors were used in both positive and negative aspects.

Keywords: Semiotics, Mise – En – Scene, Horror, Signified, Signifier

Introduction

Cinema is seen as a language that everybody can easily grasp, it conveys a substance that envelops the viewer and imparts meaning at a particular moment and place. The early 19th century saw the beginning of the movie industry as we know it today. This was made possible by a number of technological developments, including the invention of photography, the discovery of the ability to simulate motion by combining separate still images, the study of human and animal locomotion. In keeping with modernist movements in poetry and literature like multiple perspective, stream of consciousness, symbolism, imagism, the art of film has developed significantly over time. Before everything else, consumers must understand that they may get movies, TV shows, other media from

anywhere. Cinema is currently considered as an art form since it has assisted people in uniquely expressing their feelings and thoughts by utilising a variety of visuals, colour schemes, lighting, camera angles, other components that, as art has developed over time, have deeper meaning. The works of George Mellies are where the horror movie genre got its start. Despite the fact that cinema was invented in the early 1800s, George Mellies' short films from the late 1890s marked the beginning of the horror film genre. Horror movies first became an element of the German expressionism aesthetic, which is still used in modern filmmaking, in the 1910s. The symbolist movements of the late 19th century served as an inspiration for expressionism. Expressionism frequently employed the method of distorting or exaggerating faces and colours in order to generate the terror in the pictures.

Review of Literature

There are several research scholars who have done semiotic analysis on different movies and have different findings on the importance of signs and symbols from the movies, and also have shown different cultural values 'Black Panther' (2018) has been the subject of a semiotic analysis employing Charles Pierce's semiotics theory of the Icon, Index, Symbol. Semiotic analysis can help uncover numerous hidden messages in the film "Black Panther" that are easy to overlook. The majority of the film's critical acclaim can be attributed to its enormous cultural significance, which qualifies it as a suitable subject for semiotic analysis. The primary information source, a video, is downloaded from the internet. The symbols and images do in fact convey a message, showed the African and American culture.

The connotation and denotation method was utilized in H.W. Demanty's study of the film Oceans 11, which he conducted as a research scholar. The narrative of the eight women from different backgrounds who stole the Toussaint, the largest piece of jewelry from Cartier, is told in the film Ocean's 8. This study aims to look at how the eight main female characters in the movie Ocean's 8 portray female masculinity. The researcher analyzes the data using Roland Barthes' semiotics theory. This study made use of both Peter Lehman's masculinity theory and Judith Halberstam's feminine masculinity theory.

Yulia Sofiani Zaimar's "Semiotic Analysis of Valak and Lorraine in "THE CONJURING 2" (2016) Film" revealed that the horror film Conjuring 2 is thoroughly semiotically analyzed in this study. Horror films aim to create a terrifying atmosphere for the audience. As a result, it is via the portrayal of unpleasant emotions like horror, anxiety, suspense, terror, disgust that we are jolted from our complacency in the ordinary world. Horror does this by addressing anxieties that are simultaneously universally taboo and that also respond to anxieties that are historically and culturally specific. This study focuses on the main characters Valak and Lorraine, who make this film into a terror. A semiotic investigation of the paranormal and an examination of modern horror fiction, Lorraine.

According to "Content Analysis of Lighting and Color in the Embodiment of Fear Concept in Horror Movies: A Semiotic Approach," lighting and color are very important in creating a sense of dread in horror films. The current study looks at how lighting and color can be artistically employed to improve cinematic circumstances based on the source of the light, the angle at which it falls, its contrast, color-controlling, as well as horror films. The inventive use of lighting language in horror movies is analysed semiotically. It employs the descriptive-analytical

method. The results demonstrated that, despite the fact that low contrast and muted lighting are frequently linked with horror movies, innovation can occasionally be found violating the rules.

Objectives

To analyse symbolic representation from the movie 'Yaavarum Nalam' (2009).

Methodology

Yaavarum Naalam, a 2009 horror film, employs the same standard template as other horror films but is set in an urban environment, deviating from the genre's established conventions. The researcher utilized the qualitative approach to analyze the mise en scene of the film. Additionally, it is implied that the supernatural force does not exist or does not show up anywhere in the movie, yet it captivates viewers' imaginations. In order to understand concepts and experiences, the mise – en – scene is done by collecting data like texts, images, which is used to understand concepts and experiences. Yaavarum Nalam (2009) is the only movie the researcher chose, has done a shot-by-shot shot by shot analysis of the movie. 75 example screenshots from the movie have been gathered, their interpretations have been examined using the elements of mise en scene. In order to identify the signifier and what it means, the researcher conducted a qualitative analysis using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics theory. Yaavarum Nalam (2009) is the only movie the researcher chose, has done a shot by shot analysis of the movie. 75 example screenshots from the movie have been gathered, their interpretations have been examined using the elements of mise en scene. In order to identify the signifier and what it means, the researcher conducted a qualitative analysis using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics theory. Yaavarum Nalam (2009) is the only movie the researcher chose, has done a shot-by-shot shot by shot analysis of the movie. 75 example screenshots from the movie have been gathered, their interpretations have been examined using the elements of mise en scene. In order to identify the signifier and what it means, the researcher conducted a qualitative analysis using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics theory.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher has done a study using Qualitative research on the movie 'Yaavarum Nalam' (2009), has used the Saussure's Dyadic theory which has two major components, signifier which represents something and signified, which is the underlying concept which is interpreted and associated with signifier. The mise-en-scene will be observed carefully, that is the lighting, properties and the color tones and how it is signified according to the researcher and how it is narrated in the film.

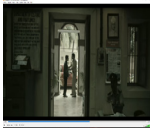
Data Interpretation

The data collection is done by watching the film analyzing it frame by frame to identifying the signifier and signified.

A total of 75 sample screenshots are taken from the film 'Yaavarum Nalam' and the mise-en-scène is used to analyse the film and to identify signs in the frames.

Table I

S.No	Image	Lighting	Color	Composition	Properties	Set Design	Costume
1		The lighting used in this shot is set with ambient light	The color maintained in this shot is a low tone of blue, which represents unfriendliness	The camera angle is set as a wide angle for this shot. The pictures in the walls show the situation of the character and the situation	The properties in the shot are characters bag, small plant pots, a painting of a clock and another painting of spiral staircase	The shot is taken in the apartment corridor in front of the lift	The character is seen wearing a white coat and a black pant
2		The lighting used in this shot consists of ambient lights to create a contextual mood	The colors used in the shot are blue and green, where the green represents materialism and the blue represents a calm feeling	The camera angle set up in this shot is a close up shot	The shot consists of properties like sofa, television, lamp and pictures	The shot is taken in the living room of the flat. The text in the television also represents something	The characters are seen wearing chudidhar and sarees
3		The lightings set in this shot is set up with ambient lighting having only a key light	The colors used in this shot are blue tone and red, the blue indicates sorrow, anxiety. The red color indicates danger and aggression	The camera in this shot has been set as a bird's eye view showing the drops of blood	-----	The shot has been set in the prayer room in the apartment	-----
4		The shot has been set with a single point lighting on the object	The colors used in this shot are a mild tone of yellow symbolizing suffering and anxiety, black representing suffering and grey indicating grief	The shot has been set to show the property at a Dutch angle which creates tension	The character is seen to be holding a phone	-----	-----

5		The shot is set up with a hard light placed on the top of the character	The colors used in the shot is dull grey and yellow indicating anxiety and caution	The camera angle has been set up as a medium close up shot	The properties in these elements include phone, watch and a painting	The shot is set inside a room in the apartment	The character is wearing a maroon color shirt
6		The shot is set up with ambient light settings	The colors used in this shot is white representing peace, black representing class maroon representing the depth of emotion	The camera is set as a wide angle shot. There is a frame in frame in this shot. The television is elevated showing power	The properties in this scene are television, tables, doll toys, curtains and dining table	The shot is set in the living room of the house	The character is seen to be wearing a formal shirt and pant
7		This shot is set up with ambient light setting using a flat light	The color used in this shot are a yellow grey tone to indicate anxiety, suffering and horror	The frame has been set in a wide angle shot. The televisions are placed where they form leading lines and are elevated to show the dominance	The properties in this shot includes the televisions	The shot has been set in a television showroom	The character is wearing a grey color suit and a black color pant and formal shoes
8		The shot is set using natural lighting technique	The colors used in this shot are mild yellow indicating anxiousness, mild grey indicating neutral	The shot is set using extreme long shot, a frame in frame composition is constructed in this shot	The properties in this shot are calendar, LED light, a white board, doors, a red car	The shot is set in the hallway of a police station	The characters are wearing a police uniform and a formal dress
9		The shot is set with a back light which creates a mysterious mood	The colors used in these shots are mid tone of green which indicates danger, immortality and vulnerability	The shot has been set as a high angle shot, showing a silhouette creating a horror and mysterious mood	The properties in this shot are hammer and a cloak	The shot is set in the staircase portion of the apartment	.the character is seen to be wearing a cloak

Signifier and Signified using Mise – en – Scene

Table 2

S.No	Duration	Signifier	Signified
1	11:05 - 11:18	This scene shows the character going in a lift but does not work for him, he decides to take the stairs and sees his watch before leaving the lift	The pictures in wall signifies the character is repeating the same actions. The pictures symbolize his life. The staircase in the painting signifies the real staircase. The color tone signifies an unfriendly feeling
2	15:10 - 15:13	A TV show starts playing at 1 P.M at channel 13, when converted hours the 1 P.M gets converted to 13 hours. The logo of the channel resembles a face	The channel number, show telecasting time, door number, floor number all signify the same number 13 which signifies death of an individual and birth of a spirit. The channel logo signifies that there is someone watching them continuously
3	21:02 - 21:15	An incident occurs where the protagonist tries to hang a picture and hurts himself and starts to bleed badly. The blood drops in a B shape	The B shape signifies their home number 13B. The blood drops signify that something bad has is going to happen in the family
4	43:15 - 43:18	The protagonist tries to take a picture inside the home to test the negative energy and is shocked to see the distorted image in his phone after taking the picture inside his house	The distorted image conveys a horror feel. It enhances a visual impact of void
5	58:29 - 58:35	There is a distraction for the protagonist for diverting him from preventing an accident occurring to his wife	It is signified that the protagonist is tensed by a disturbance. The picture in the background represents loneliness
6	1:02:54 - 1:02:59	The protagonist rushes to his home from the hospital to foresee his wife's situation through the television program and feels relieved to know of her survival	This scene signifies the power of the television program or the negative energy by bringing the protagonist to his knees
7	1:11:19 - 1:11:40	The protagonist travels to find about the television program and goes to the studio to find a different program and rushes to a television showroom which telecasted a different program from what they watch	This indicates the dominance of the negative energy and the control using technology. It signifies that the negative energy is playing mind games with the protagonist
8	1:24:46 - 1:25:03	The protagonist had found a clue about the incidents and is talking to his friend about it in the entrance of the police station	The door of the police station signifies a way or a solution to the problem they are facing. The color tone indicates dark times
9	1:55:44 - 1:55:45	The character in the black cloak bends over and sees the protagonist once	It is signified that the negative energy cannot be stopped physically. The low angle shot shows the power of death and is unstoppable

Finding

The researcher has found different new findings using the elements of mise – en – scene from each scene and different shots, each element helps in giving the hidden detail of the story in the movie, The number 13 is commonly used in the movie and the number is considered unlucky psychologically, which can be linked to Leonardo da Vinci's painting from the last supper where there are 13 people on the table before Jesus was crucified thus considering the number unlucky, There are pictures represented in distortion which connects with psychological aspects of cognitive distortion, where there are irrational thinking pattern, anxiety and depression. The character wearing a black cloak is linked with death, in accordance to and color psychology black is referred to as absence of light, culturally it also signifies mourning, loss and hopelessness.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to identify and discuss how the objects that are present in the frames of the film 'Yaavarum Nalam' (2009) contributes and constructs meanings and guide in building up the story to move forward. The researcher has analysed and interpreted what is being signified using the elements of mise – en – scene using Saussure's theory of semiotics. There is a common use of colors which represent different meanings in both positive and negative aspects like yellow which is used to indicate happiness and illness, blue which represents calmness and stability or sometimes signifies coldness and an unfriendly feeling, black and white and grey shades are used to commonly indicate sorrow, death and horror. Speaking of camera angles mostly the Dutch angles are used to indicate confusion and tension, at the same time there is a continuous camera shake indicating shock and horror. The movie is set to be in a low lighting standards which are used in most of the horror films, the set design has been set showing the unique style of storyline set up in an urban place and mostly uses of technology according to the trend.

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