

THE PANGS OF TRAUMA AND THREADS OF ATTACHMENT. ENVISAGING THROUGH THARUN MOORTHY'S SAUDI VELLAKKA' WITH JOHN BOWLBY'S ATTACHMENT THEORY

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"We all bear scars, Dorian. Mine just happen to be more visible than most" -Sarah J. Maas,
Throne of Glass

ABSTRACT:

The characteristics of wounds are that some just bleed a little and heal on their own, then there are others that can take quite a time to stop the pang and finally, there are the worst - that can never heal, that take with it the suffering body to end the throbbing pain. Going through the Malayalam movie 'Saudi Vellakka' (2022), directed by Tharun Moorthy that showcases the poignancy of wounded individuals, and was one of the best cinematic experiences that the post-covid Malayalam film industry has experienced. Displaying the delay in the legal proceedings and the people who are

trapped in the labyrinth of legalities, the film raises questions on crime, punishment, and repentance, portrayed through the prism of life. The paper aims to envisage primarily on the themes of trauma and attachment that pervade through the characters of the movie considering the following premises: -

- * How trauma is channeled by different characters.
- * How traumatic experiences mould people - strengthening some, thrashing and perishing others, confusing and exacting for a few.
- * How John Bowlby's concept of attachment finds its expression among the selected

characters of the movie.

- * How Bowlby's phases of mourning can be applied.

Keywords: Trauma, attachment, Saudi Vella Mourning, John Bowlby, Attachment theor

INTRODUCTION

Envisaging into the trauma and dilem experienced by a person or a group in real reel can be like throwing a boomerang and t watching certain art forms or movies can its be a traumatizing act. As evident from the ti the paper aims to indulge in the trauma a memory that permeates through the charact of the Malayalam movie, 'Saudi Vellakka' (2022), directed by Tharun Moorthy. poignant portrayal of the local flavor, 'Saudi Vellakka' deviates from most of the mainstrea movies, delving into the life of a local area call 'Saudi' located near Cochin. More often th not, life perils under those unsaid words th that of the outspoken truths. The entire mov that revolves around this fact, opens up with wholehearted public apology to those beautif performances that got trimmed in the final cu and to all those souls with whom they fought denied, hurt, and have forgotten in the course the movie making ('Saudi Vellakka'). The peop represented in the movie can be grouped und the aforementioned adjectives- the ones wh

struggle and compete with their lives, who get denied of their basic rights, who are hurt and carry the bleeding live sores, who are forgotten not just by others but by themselves while they smother their lives in their insecurities.

METHODOLOGY

The paper envisages into the textual analysis of the movie *Saudi Vellakka*, delving into the concept of the trauma experienced by the characters within the shade of Attachment theory and mourning stages. The foundation of Attachment Theory, one of the most celebrated child development theories, was set in the books of Edward John Mostyn Bowlby, the renowned British psychologist, psychiatrist, and psychoanalyst. Bowlby's theory of attachment revolves around the child and his/her relationship with his mother. Bowlby extends the theory to older ones and into relationships other than mother and child. In the final part of the paper, Bowlby's idea on mourning and bereavement concerning the loss of an individual's loved one is discussed on behalf of the character Nazi from the same movie.

ANALYSIS

I have a smack of Hamlet myself quotes Samuel Taylor Coleridge (Roberts xxvi). Hamlet's crisis reminds the dilemma and indecisiveness one has encountered at one point or the other, the revisiting of the existential, traumatic, procrastinating tragic hero who is all pervasive in part among every one of us. The trauma of the characters that infiltrates through the narrow prism of the movie gradually finds its way toward the audience and acts as the prime exchange. It is an assault from outside that breaks into the space one occupies as a person and damages the interior (Kai Erikson 455). The definition of trauma by Erickson throws light into the plight of the characters of the movies and its portrayal

of how trauma, befalls as a huge blow, quite unexpected in its approach, devastates the lives often beyond repair. To be effable about one's traumatic encounters itself can be painful in its course. It has taken years of hard work, considerable toil, and awareness from different sections of the world to break the shackles around the term trauma to emancipate it from a purely physical outlook. A bleeding hand receives more attention than an ailing heart. The tangibility, sight of the gore, and the often- accompanied painful whimpers of the victim make the former one a graver incident than the latter. On the contrary, the impalpable affliction and the lack of direct bloodshed along with the reluctance of the victim to speak out about their emotional and mental ailment on most occasions, endows mental trauma a less significant stature. Thus, it is imperative to come across individuals who share their personal stories of depression, bipolar disorder, and an array of emotional and mental unrest, which can often serve as a lighthouse for the vulnerable ones in their silent struggles.

THE SECURE BASE- AISHA AND SATHAAR

The idea of a secure base as put forward by Bowlby finds its place in the relation between children and their parents or caretakers. A secure base gives a person a foundation to explore the world and develop greater autonomy, growth, competence, eventually resulting in better self-regulation and psychological development (Simpson et al. 223). For Sathaar his mother Aisha is the secure base and anything that disrupts it is intolerable for him. When he bursts out, *Enik ningalu mathre ollu* (I have you only), (Saudi Vellakka, my trans.) to Aisha, the undertone is his attachment to her and his profound fear of losing her. Loss of a loved person is one of the most intensely painful

experiences any human being can suffer. And not only is it painful to experience but it is also painful to witness, if only because we are so impotent to loss help (Bowlby, Loss 15). Overhearing Nazi's taunts on Sathaar in his decision to support Aisha in the case, Aisha decides to move out of the house. Aisha's decision puts Sathaar in shock and helplessness as he fails to convince Aisha to revert her decision. Added to this was the accusation of Britto, Sathaar's bosom friend on the same. Sathaar simultaneously lost his secure base and had the gut feeling that he was solely responsible for it. The disappearance of Sathaar after the incident stands as an enigma, whether he absconds or takes his own life, is a choice left to the audience.

TRAVERSING THROUGH THE MOURNING PHASES- NAZI

Nazi is indeed the character who has embraced all the hatred initially only to reveal her vulnerability towards the end. The wife of Sathaar and daughter-in-law of Aisha, Nazi vehemently opposed Sathaar in helping Aisha with the court proceedings. Hailing from a family history of a prodigal brother who was involved in money laundering, Nazi has a clear picture of the legal labyrinth they are up to. However, the unexpected turn of events including Sathaar's disappearance devastated her.

According to Bowlby, the first phase of mourning is numbing which usually lasts from a few hours to a week after the incident and may be interrupted by outbursts of extremely intense distress and/or anger (Bowlby, Loss 70). Nazi's numbness is conspicuous as her character sharply contrasts from the first half of the movie after Sathaar's disappearance. The second phase starts with, yearning and searching for the lost figure,

which can indeed last from months to years (70). Nazi desperately comes to Aisha seeking help and accompanies Britto and her father to identify unidentified corpses, in her desperate attempt to find at least the mortal remains of Sathaar. As the movie progresses, Nazi is shown as highly disorganized' and in a state of utter despair which marks the third stage. However, the second and third stage often gets entangled in Nazi's life. She concomitantly searches for Sathaar while still in desperation. Nazi reacts bitterly in the police station when Britto and Nazi's father ask the Sub Inspector for Sathaar's death certificate. Her whimpering rambles then show that she was still hopeful and went to the police station with the expectation of an inquiry rather than having a closure with a death certificate. The fourth and final stage of mourning as proposed by Bowlby was a state of organization which, unfortunately, Nazi never attains while she keeps on pining away in grief.

CONCLUSION

Carrying trauma and living with it, isn't a walk in the park, the struggles and the perils that accompany it burn from inside out. Traveling with the characters of the movie enables the viewers to share a piece of their trauma, even though in a less intense manner. The study particularly focuses on Aisha, her son Sathaar and his wife Nazi from the movie, even though most of the characters of the movie suffer trauma at some point or the other. The paper employs John Bowlby's Attachment theory to analyze the underpinnings of the bond between Aisha and Sathaar and the theory of mourning to permeate over Nazi. Sathaar's case throws a conundrum directly and indirectly, influencing others around him. For Sathaar, his mother has been the secure base and her decision to leave him left him

perplexed. Analyzing the mother's role in Bowlby's attachment theory, Marga Vicedo argues that Bowlby considers family as a 'natural home group', and any breakdown of the group would result in a disastrous event (406). The sudden spur of emotion by Aisha resulted in the disintegration of their family beyond repair.

Nevertheless, the perseverance of Aisha is not to be belittled as she is the sole survivor and her journey was almost alone. The one who visibly perished in the struggles was Nazi, which is evident from her mourning stages. Struggling to reach the final morning stage Nazi secludes herself in the prison of the previous stages.

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